

## Putting Tenants First

Autumn 2011

### .....Good Neighbour Award 2011.....



Pictured either side of the plaque are Hughie Sweeney (son) and Eilidh Sweeney (grand-daughter). In front (left) is Mary Ferguson and front right is Helen Livingstone who wrote the nomination letter.

It was a day filled with happy memories for neighbours, friends and family of the winner of this year's award. Mary Sweeney won the award posthumously and was nominated by her neighbours in Ford Spence Court, sheltered housing complex in Benderloch. They said 'Mary was a champion of community spirit and selfless acts of kindness shown to one and all, every day in life'. The award plaque was unveiled on 27th September by Mary Ferguson who celebrated her 100th birthday last year and was one of the first people to hold Mary Sweeney as a baby.



**Financial Inclusion  
Services in Housing**

# £2 million !



The team of 4 FISH Welfare Rights officers have now brought in a fantastic sum for tenants. Welfare benefits are complicated to claim so if you think you may not be getting what you are due, please ask to speak to one of the team. It only takes 10 minutes for a free and confidential chat with David, Fiona, Garrick or Corrina so don't delay - **phone your local ACHA office and ask for an appointment.**



It's hard to believe that we are on the verge of entering another winter. The last two years have been challenging with respect to storms and sub-zero temperatures in many parts of Argyll and Bute. Both examples have posed challenges to Association tenants in terms of home contents, of the consequences of burst pipes and storm damage. In the past two winters, temperatures in parts of Argyll and Bute have dropped to as low as minus 17°C and there were incidents of temperatures being below zero for weeks. This has highlighted to all of us the need for adequate home contents insurance. Many, but not enough, tenants have home contents insurance. The consequences of not having insurance can be seen in the damage display boards in the Association's offices. I would strongly recommend to you if you do not currently have home contents insurance, speak to an Association staff member. The Association organises insurance for our tenants and it can be paid in weekly instalments with your rent. While the cost of home insurance may be another bill, the cost of not having it if something goes wrong, as can be seen from the examples of the last two winters, is not worth contemplating.

On a different note, could I thank everyone who participated in the Garden in Bloom competitions this year. The hard work put in resulted in some fantastic displays despite the challenges of the wet weather this summer. Well done and please enter again next year.

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive

## **The Scottish Housing Regulator wants to hear your views**

Scotland has a new, independent housing regulator. From next April (2012) its role will be to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants and others who receive housing services from local authorities and housing associations.

Before taking on its role, the new Scottish Housing Regulator is currently consulting on its approach. It wants to hear the views of tenants, landlords and others with an interest in social housing.

The consultation runs from early September until late November 2011.

There will also be events across the country, open to tenants and others, to discuss the proposals. You can get a copy of the proposals and find out more about the events by visiting the new Regulator's website or contacting its office.

phone: 0141 271 3810

e-mail: [consultation@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk)

website: [www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/newregulator](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/newregulator)

twitter: [www.twitter.com/SHRconsultation](http://www.twitter.com/SHRconsultation)



Driving the adoption of e-learning  
within the Housing sector

Tenants can now access on-line learning modules via a new service providing courses such as 'Preparing for Interviews', 'the Power of the Internet' or 'Saving Energy to Reduce Bills'. If you're interested, all you have to do is e-mail the Housing Academy on [info@housingea.co.uk](mailto:info@housingea.co.uk) with the subject 'free tenant training'.



# Garden Competition 2011—Winners



Mrs Graham, Jubilee Terrace, Lochgilphead. Presented by Sandra MacKenzie, Chair of Area Committee and Chris Tranter from ACHA's mid Argyll office.



Ms Watt, Benmore View, North Connel. Presented by Brian Murphy from ACHA's Oban office.



Mrs Kennedy, Ben Bouie Drive, Helensburgh (on left). Presented by Sonja Aitken, Vice Chair of the local Area Committee.



Mrs MacPhail, Albyn Avenue, Campbeltown



Mr and Mrs Coughlan, Hillside, Dunbeg



Mr and Mrs McDade, The Glebe, Dunoon



Anne and Belle MacGilvray, Mansefield Road, Port Ellen, Islay



Ms McDougall, Scott Terrace, Dalmally. Presented at the Dalmally Show.



Mr and Mrs MacGregor, Longhill Terrace, Rothesay. Presented by Councillor McIntyre.



Mr and Mrs Erskine, Java Houses, Mull

Well done to everyone who entered the competition this year. Thankyou for making our communities more beautiful.





It was a happy day on 29th July for these new tenants at the opening of their lovely refurbished homes at Millknowe Terrace, Campbeltown. Mike MacKenzie, list MSP for Highland and Island cut the ribbon on the 16 new homes, a mixture of one, two and three bedroom flats and houses. The block was originally built in the early 1900's - the first affordable homes in the town which were purpose built for workers. ACHA redesigned the property from 21 homes to 16 to meet the current demand for smaller homes. In addition to this, each home has solar panels to heat hot water and enhanced insulation including sheep's wool, in walls and roof spaces. The work was carried out by Argyll builders, John Brown of Strone Ltd. ACHA wishes all the new tenants every happiness in their new homes.

### ACHA's 5th AGM

The AGM was held on 21st September and Norman Beaton stood down as Chair as he had served his maximum allowable term. Many thanks to Norman for all his hard work over the last 5 years. Taking over as Chair is Bill McIntyre, a tenant from Helensburgh with Vice Chair now George Farquhar a tenant from Dalmally. Prior to the AGM there was a Special General Meeting held specifically to vote on the issue of ACHA becoming a registered charity—this was passed with a unanimous vote. Charitable status will now be applied for and should be in place by your next issue of *Tenants First*.



Pictured above are some of ACHA's new Board of Management. Back row, left to right: Cllr Rory Colville, Cllr Alister McAlister, Cllr Roddy McCuish, Bill McIntyre, Lesley Lindsay (PA to the Board), Mike Brown and Norman Beaton. Front row, left to right: Cllr Neil MacKay, Lorraine Anne Drysdale, Marri Malloy, Alexandra Glazsher, Margaret MacGregor, Sandra MacKenzie and George Farquhar. not pictured - Catherine Winton, John Muir, Elizabeth Rhodick



ACHA are working with SOLAS in the **HEAT Argyll** project which offers FREE home visits to help you reduce your energy costs. HEAT Argyll can help you with:

- Advice on the efficient use of your heating system and general electricity costs.
- Advice on how to monitor your usage and read your meters.
- Checks to make sure that your metering and the tariff you are being billed is correct.
- Information on budget methods available and where required, help to arrange this.
- Where applicable, advice and assistance on the Warm Home Discount (known previously as the social tariff).
- Impartial advice on changing energy suppliers and access to Solas' own Supplier Switching Service.

With energy prices continually rising there's never been a more important time to have an impartial check on your energy usage and bills. Solas are confident that every home visit will result in energy savings and reduced bills for you. Home visits already made to ACHA tenants have uncovered wrong tariffs and meter timers being set incorrectly resulting in higher bills. Why don't you take advantage of the HEAT Argyll project and have your system checked out. Contact any ACHA office to ask for a FREE home visit.

ACHA has also awarded a contract to SOLAS to carry out insulation work to tenants homes. This work may include loft insulation, pipe lagging, cavity wall insulation etc which will all help keep out winter chills and save on heating bills.

SOLAS staff from left to right; Aaron, Holly and Paul.

All Solas staff carry photographic ID badges and work on an appointment only basis. Solas is a social enterprise and a registered charity.



## Rent Payments

ACHA's new payment cards are being well received by tenants.

Mr Avraham (pictured right) from Arrochar said he was very impressed with how easy the system is to use and how quickly the payment is processed. Lindsay from Helensburgh said "I'm able to use my local convenience store to pay my rent after hours, which is great as I work full time".



## How to Contact ACHA:

**Customer Support Centre 0800 028 2755**

(Freephone but mobile charges will apply)

### Helensburgh & Lomond

31 James Street, Helensburgh G84 8AS

e-mail: [housing.lomond@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.lomond@acha.co.uk)

telephone 01546 605920

### Cowal

Dolphin Hall, Manse Ave, Dunoon PA23 8DQ

e-mail: [housing.cowal@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.cowal@acha.co.uk)

telephone 01546 605950

### Bute

Union Street, Rothesay PA20 0HD

e-mail: [housing.bute@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.bute@acha.co.uk)

telephone 01546 605870

### Mid Argyll

Dalriada House, Lochgilphead PA31 8ST

e-mail: [housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk)

telephone 01546 605800

### Kintyre

Old Quay Head, Campbeltown PA28 6ED

e-mail: [housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk)

telephone 01546 605880

### Islay

Jamieson Street, Bowmore PA43 7HP

e-mail: [housing.islay@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.islay@acha.co.uk)

telephone 01546 605890

### Oban, Lorn and Isles

Glenshellach Business Park, Oban PA34 4RY

e-mail: [housing.lorn@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.lorn@acha.co.uk)

telephone 01546 605930

### Mull

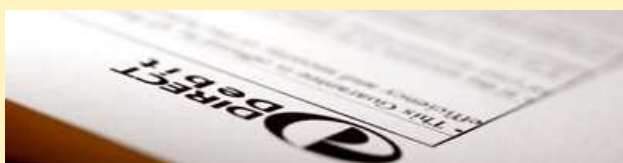
Breadalbane Street, Tobermory, Mull PA75 6PX

telephone 01546 605930

Every year ACHA has a prize draw for everyone who pays their rent by Direct Debit. The draw was carried out at the AGM and the lucky winner of £100 was

Mrs McEntee from Benderloch.

Congratulations to her. If you would like to discuss paying your rent by Direct Debit please contact your local ACHA office.



If you would like this newsletter in larger print, in an alternative language, on audio cassette/CD or in an electronic format or you would like someone to read it or explain any of it please contact Gillian McInnes on 01546 605801 or [gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk](mailto:gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk)

All our newsletters can be downloaded from our website [www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk)

## ACHA's Community Action Fund

Rothesay Pipe Band  
Cove/Kilcreggan Youth Cafe  
Bowmore Primary School Gaelic Choir  
Dalintober/Millknowe Tenants Assoc.  
Christmas Lights for Helensburgh  
Kintyre Amateur Swimming Club  
Arrochar and Tarbet Gala  
Home Start MAJIK  
Enable (Helensburgh & district)  
Tarbet Music Centre  
Cardross & Helensburgh Senior Citizens

If you are part of a group that could make use of a small grant, then contact ACHA on 01546 605922 and ask for our Community Action Fund application form - it's only one page. Good luck!

**now you can  
apply for up  
to £500 !!**

We now ask tenants who are leaving their tenancy to fill in a short questionnaire. For the year 2010/11 there were 142 responses

*How would you describe the services provided to you during your tenancy?*

	% Very or Fairly Satisfied
REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE	79%
NEIGHBOUR COMPLAINTS	76%
HELPLESSNESS OF STAFF	92%