

and the **WINNER** is...

'Your Voice' Scrutiny Group



Pictured proud winners —

(L-R) David Rae (ACHA),
Jennie Niven, David Phillips,
Ian McIntyre, Bobby Beggs,
Susan Morris (TIS) and
Yvonne Angus (ACHA)



ACHA Is delighted to announce that our very own Your Voice Scrutiny Group was the Winner of the **"Most Inspiring Scrutiny Newcomer Award"** at the 2018 Tenant Information Service (TIS) National Excellence Awards.

Jenny Niven, Bobby Beggs, Ian McIntyre and David Phillips, who are voluntary members of the Your Voice Scrutiny Group, were there to collect the award and enjoy the celebrations afterwards. This award recognises excellence in scrutiny practice that others can learn from and that will inspire future tenant scrutiny development in Scotland.

We were advised that there had been an exceptional quality of entries this year and finalists were selected from a longlist of entries by an independent judging panel that consisted of tenant representatives and representatives from housing organisations from across the social housing sector.

The TIS National Excellence Awards recognise and honour housing organisations, tenants, residents, and community groups who are leading the way and making a difference within the Scottish social housing sector.

If you are interested in joining our winning team by becoming a member of the Your Voice Scrutiny Group, please contact David Rae on 01546 605912 or email to David.Rae@acha.co.uk. You do not need any particular skills or experience to join—just the enthusiasm to make ACHA services better!

Turn to page 9 to read all about the group's latest scrutiny conference exercise.

ACHA tries hard to be a community based and led organisation with our priorities determined by our tenants and members. Throughout this newsletter you will see examples of community involvement in the work that we do. Examples of this are our local area committees which allow ACHA tenants and supporters to become involved with us in their own communities.

We also have our Your Voice Scrutiny Group which won the 2018 “Most Inspiring Scrutiny Newcomer Award” at the 2018 Tenant Information Service Annual Excellence Awards. This Group allows ACHA tenants to scrutinise the Association’s work and make suggestions for change and improvement.



ACHA is currently on a recruitment drive to bring into our participatory structures, people who want to be part of ACHA, who are interested in housing and the benefits good quality housing can bring to our communities up and down Argyll and Bute. The participation can be varied. If you are interested in ACHA’s local area committees, Your Voice Group, the main Board or our repairs subsidiary, AHFA, we wish to hear from you. Full training and support will be given to allow you to fulfil your ambitions. The most important qualifications we are looking for are interest and commitment.

If this might interest you please contact me either by [email](#) or phone on 01546 605922. Jim Milne, ACHA’s current voluntary Chairman gives an interesting case study in this edition of how he got involved. It could be you next.

Alastair MacGregor

Chief Executive



West Loch, Tarbert

ACHA holds First Tenants and Members Conference



ACHA Services stand— Mr & Mrs Owens, speaking to Yvonne Angus, Regional Manger



Your voice stand—Bobby Beggs, David Rae and Danny Kelly

ACHA hosted a successful tenants and members conference in Inveraray on Saturday 17th February.

The conference was designed to allow attendees to input and ideas to be discussed and brought forward to the Association's strategic planning days in February.

37 delegates from all over Argyll attended the conference focused on three participative strands. Firstly, a presentation and question and answer session on the history of ACHA and the achievements and challenges of the first 10 years. This was followed by a review with participants of the Association's current objectives with input from tenants present to add new areas for consideration by the Board at its away days. The third strand was an information gathering hub which provided stalls from Get Involved with ACHA, ACHA's Services, ACHA's Investment and Regeneration, Scottish Fire and Rescue, ALI Energy and Argyll and Bute Council's Amenity Services.

Attendees were asked to complete a satisfaction survey on the conference and all those returned were entered into a prize draw. The winner of the satisfaction survey prize draw is Mr Philips from Helensburgh who won £25 in high street vouchers.

Mr Philips said *"The Tenant's Conference was a really great day and the Chairperson was a very good speaker. I learned a lot from the day and became a member of ACHA. I now wish to become more involved with the Association and am looking to participate through the 'Your Voice' group. I would highly recommend attending the conference!"*

In a survey at the end of the conference those attending voted by a huge majority to hold a similar event in Inveraray next year. ACHA's Board of Management approved this on 24th May 2018.



Jim Milne, ACHA's Chair , welcoming tenants to the Tenants Conference



Mr Philips, being presented with his £25 voucher, by ACHA's Ashley Rogers

Your Area Committee News

Lomond Area Committee Need You!

Did you know, you can become a Member of ACHA for just £1. Being a Member allows you to keep abreast of the work and new developments of the association, and you will receive invitations to regular meetings and events organised by ACHA.

It also entitles you to be considered for membership of our Area Committee. Members are automatically included in the annual hamper prize draw! A Membership application form can be downloaded from our website www.acha.co.uk or contact our local ACHA office and we can send one out to you.



We currently have two Tenant Member spaces available on our Area Committee – interested? If yes, please contact us on 01546 605920

ACHA's Modern Apprentices Earn and Learn

The **Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee** were really interested to hear about Rachael MacIndeor and George Williamson, two of ACHA's Modern Apprentices. Both are based in the Housing & Neighbourhood Services team in the Mid Argyll office.

Since starting with ACHA, Rachael and George have participated in an intensive training programme, working in both the Mid Argyll & Kintyre offices. Their placement will provide them with a wide range of skills and knowledge as well as the opportunity to obtain an accredited qualification.

During November 2017, they undertook a day course on Routine Playground Inspections, which is aimed at those who are responsible for carrying out weekly inspections of our play parks. They successfully passed this course and they have both received their RoSPA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) certificate.

George said, "I have really been enjoying the apprenticeship, there is such a wide range of jobs to be done and it's great getting experience working within the department while studying. It's also been great to have the chance to experience working in the different area offices"

Rachael added, "I enjoyed the course and am looking forward to assisting the area team in carrying out the weekly inspection of our play parks. I look forward to progressing in my apprenticeship and look forward to receiving my qualifications."

Sandra MacKenzie, Vice Chairperson of the **Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee** said, "Rachael and George are gaining excellent experience as Modern Apprentices in preparation of their future careers"



Pictured: Rachael and George undertaking their RoSPA training



Oban, Lorn & Isles Area Committee Seeking New Members

Members of Oban, Lorn & Isles Area Committee are seeking motivated individuals with an interest in the decision making processes of the Association within their local area.

The Committee currently has vacancies for 1 tenant and 1 independent member.

Meetings are held bi-monthly at ACHA's Oban Office: Menzies House. Area Committee membership is voluntary and unpaid, but expenses covering travel, subsistence and child care costs are paid.

If you would be interested or would like to nominate someone, please contact Amanda MacKenzie on 01546 605930 for further information or to express interest.

ACHA Job Opportunities Go Digital!

If you have a Facebook account, this may be of interest to you! The ACHA Group recently started a Facebook page to advertise all our job opportunities and Area Committee positions. Our profile is called "ACHA/AHFA Group Recruitment", make sure you "like" our page to see all our posts in your newsfeed. Don't forget to "share" our posts on your profile for your friends and family to see too.

If you have any recruitment queries, you can send a message to the page and a member of the Recruitment Team will get back to you as soon as they can.



Growing Our Own

The Argyll Community Housing Association Group is committed to "Growing its own" and currently employs six Modern Apprentices within ACHA; HR & Training, Business & Administration, Housing, Information Technology and Architecture. Our repairs subsidiary, Argyll Homes for All (AHFA), also has two Modern Apprentices; one in Joinery and another in Plumbing / Gas. All Apprentices are given the opportunity to complete a qualification whilst learning valuable skills within the workplace from their colleagues.

In March, the Group welcomed Ryan Caskie (pictured) to the role of Modern Apprentice as a new addition to the IT section. Ryan is based in Dalriada House, Lochgilphead and his duties will include managing and responding to IT support calls from staff, raising purchase orders with suppliers and dealing with general IT issues across the group. He will also learn skills through shadowing other members of the team in order to gain an understanding as to how the IT team supports staff across the organisation. As well as learning new skills and undertaking tasks in the office, Ryan will also be attending college where he will gain an IT related qualification.



You asked ... We did ...

At our recent Tenants and Members Conference, we were asked if we could look at improving the external environment of our estates. We are pleased to announce that a small working group has been set up to develop this suggestion and soon we'll be looking for your views on what can be done to help improve the appearance of our neighbourhoods.



Tenants also asked that we improve our communications with them in regards to any major work happening to their homes. We've taken this on board and will aim to let you know as early as possible when we are planning to carry out any major work.

Email Address Prize Draw

Do we have your email address? if you register your email address with us you will be entered into a prize drawer to win £100 of vouchers. To register your email address, contact one of our local offices (as per the contact details on the back page)

Keep Safe Place

I Am Me Scotland is an award winning charity that works in partnership with Police Scotland to educate on, raise awareness of, and tackle disability hate crime.

[Keep Safe](#) is a partnership initiative which works with local communities to create a network of places where people can 'Keep Safe'. Keep Safe places are checked and approved by Police Scotland and staff within are trained. All Keep Safe places can be found on the [I Am Me website](#).



All ACHA offices are registered as **Keep Safe Places**

Two minute interview, with Jim Milne Chair of ACHA's Board of Management

How did you find out about ACHA?

Following my retirement I was looking around for something to occupy my time. Driving for the Red Cross, Invigilating examinations, and annoying the wife at home were not keeping me sane. There one day in the Helensburgh Advertiser was an advert looking for Independent Board Members for ACHA involving one and a half days a month in Inveraray. I applied and to my surprise was accepted.



Why did you want to get involved?

As I have already said I was looking for something to occupy my time. I had been lucky in my life and was very willing to volunteer without recompense so that others could benefit. As I knew nothing about social housing I did some research before the interview and decided even before the interview that this was an area about which I knew very little – but, if successful in my application – I could learn.

What has been the best bit so far?

At the first opening ceremony I attended (Campbeltown) I met a family who were in the property they had been allocated and were totally overcome by the emotion of the moment. They had never thought in their wildest dreams they would ever be living in such a property. At that moment I realized that the 'end product' of the work of all ACHA staff was right in front of me – the happiness of the tenants.

What has surprised you most?

I have a military background so teamwork and getting along with people is something I am used to. Considering the geographical spread of the ACHA Group workforce and the pressures which the workforce is under, I am continuously, and happily, surprised by the results obtained. Within ACHA there is the same teamwork, the same will to get the task done, sometimes against all odds, as there is in the military.

If someone was thinking about getting more involved, how would you encourage them to get involved?

Presumably the question refers to someone who is currently not involved in ACHA Group activities? On that assumption my response is that they should be invited to view the activity they may be interested in, be it in Governance matters or in applying for a post as a Housing Assistant. The chance to talk to and ask questions of either ACHA Group volunteers or employees in a relaxed atmosphere may also encourage the person to take their interest further.

Tell us something about yourself which might surprise people?

I am a member of the Goldfish Club. Membership is limited to those aviators who 'ditch' into the sea. My ditching was into the Moray Firth in February 1963 in a Wessex HAS 1 operating from the aircraft carrier HMS Ark Royal following engine failure. We were acting as 'planeguard' (Search & Rescue aircraft) to a fixed wing landing and were somewhat embarrassed to find ourselves in the water!!

Annual Membership Prize Draw

Every year we hold a prize draw for our members, one member from each of our four administrative areas will be the lucky winner of a Christmas food hamper.

Membership forms are available from your local office, via www.acha.co.uk, or by phoning Lesley Lindsay on 01546 605971.



Building New Homes

The Association currently has 95 new homes under construction on-site in Bowmore, Helensburgh, North Connel and Oban. The 20 units in Bowmore Phase 3 are due for handover in October this year. 32 units at Castle Wood Court in Helensburgh are currently planned to complete in two phases in October 2018 and August 2019. 42 units at Phases 11 & 12 at Glenshellach, Oban, will handover at different times up to September 2019. At North Connel a specially adapted house is being progressed on land owned by the Association at Benmore View for completion early in 2019.



Bowmore Phase 3, Islay



Castle Wood Court,
Helensburgh

For your Safety- Did you know?

As your landlord, Argyll Community Housing Association has a legal responsibility to carry out an annual safety check on all gas and solid fuel owned by us. We also need to carry out Electrical Inspections on a periodic basis. Gas, solid fuel and electrical safety inspections all require access to your home.



In advance of the safety check is due to your home, our staff will contact you with an appointment. The Engineers will check that all the appliances are safe to use, that they are working efficiently and that any other items in your home, for example Smoke Detectors and Carbon Monoxide Detectors are working too. Your safety is very important to us and we cannot stress enough the importance of allowing these safety check to be carried out in your home.

**Please ensure access is made available to your local contractor.
Should you fail to allow access for these checks, we will be
forced to take steps to gain access to your property!!**



DD or not DD?

if you are one of our tenants who choose to pay your rent by standing order, have you considered switching to a Direct Debit?



Direct Debits are a simple, convenient and safe method for paying bills. It has many advantages to other payment methods, these include:

1. Easy to set up – Fill in a Direct Debit Mandate form and return to us, we will do the rest.
2. Saves you time and trouble – Unlike Standing Orders, any future changes to payment value will be updated by ACHA, with you being given advance notice (at least 10 working days' notice is given).
3. It is more secure – Payments are covered by the Direct Debit Guarantee meaning that, in the very rare event of any error, you are entitled to a full and immediate refund.
4. Flexible – We offer 4 different dates for payment within the month (1st, 8th, 16th or 23rd).



If you want to change to a Direct Debit, contact your local office or call 0800 028 2755 and we can arrange to supply you with a form. It is quick and easy to complete and every Direct Debit is entered into a prize draw to win £100 of high street vouchers. You can find more information at www.directdebit.co.uk.

Your Voice Group Make Further Improvements to Services

Having looked at how ACHA manages the turnaround of empty houses and deals with repairs requests in their first two scrutiny exercises, the Your Voice group decided to examine how ACHA manage common areas and play parks for their third activity.

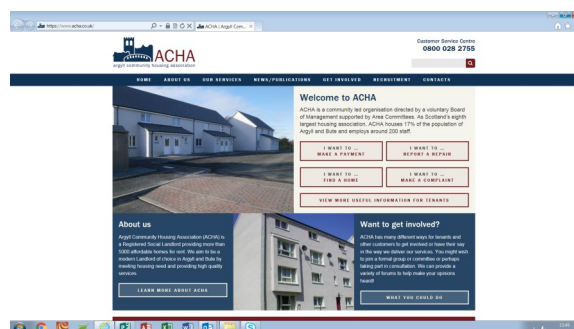
A major part of this involved members of the group “shadowing” members of staff as they went about their work inspecting common closes, backcourts and play parks. The group members then returned to the ACHA office to see how the staff member dealt with all the issues noted during the inspection and how these were resolved.

“We were out in all weathers and were surprised to see how much was involved” commented group member Bobby Beggs. “We found furniture dumped in backcourt areas, dog fouling on drying areas as well as some really well looked after closes and came to appreciate the amount of work this involved for staff. We were able to make a number of recommendations to help make improvements. The exercise was both interesting and fun”, Bobby observed.

Website Redesign

In September 2017, ACHA launched their new redesigned website. The refreshed design is inviting, user-friendly and retains the links to make external payments, as well as the recruitment system that we use. The website is now responsive which means the size reacts to the size of the screen that the visitor has. It also means that visitors who view the website on a mobile device are able to access the same information as those on a laptop or a tablet, but in a view that ensures they don't have to zoom in or out to read the content.

If you have any comments on the new design please email: Communications@acha.co.uk or telephone: 0800 028 2755



Performance Feedback

Sheltered Housing Survey

The annual Sheltered Housing Survey was carried out at each of ACHA's 11 sheltered complexes at the end of 2017. Of the 194 surveys issued, 99 were returned, 14 more than the previous year. The overall satisfaction of Sheltered Housing tenants is 86%,.

Repairs & Maintenance

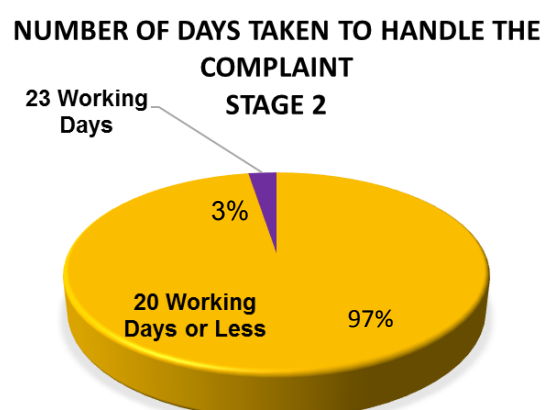
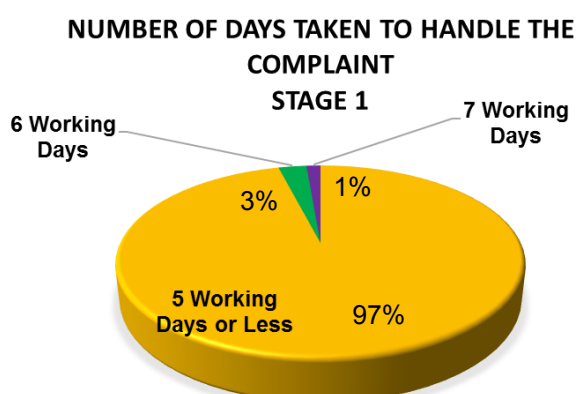
Across Argyll and Bute, ACHA owns and maintains over 5,000 properties. Repairs performance and customer satisfaction are areas that are closely monitored within the Investment and Regeneration department. Performance is monitored by the number of jobs completed within particular timescales. Each job is different and will be categorised as; Emergency repairs, Non-emergency, or repairs to an empty property. This reporting year a total of **18,066** repairs have been carried out, **4820** of these have been emergency repairs. The average response time being **3.5 hours** for emergency repairs and **8.7 days** for non-emergency repairs.

Once a repair has been completed the maintenance operative will leave the tenant with a survey card to complete and return to the ACHA offices, so that responses can be collated. Feedback is recorded and consolidated in a monthly report. This information is fed back at monthly contractor meetings where anything arising is promptly dealt with. It is encouraging to hear that overall tenant feedback is positive. Customer satisfaction is paramount to the organisation therefore it is important that these satisfaction surveys are completed and returned. This will assist in highlighting any areas needing improvement as well as letting us know what we are doing well. We always like to hear when our operatives have done a good job or gone over and above to get your repaired rectified.

Complaints

Last year we received **114** Formal Complaints;

- * **75** complaints were dealt with at Stage 1, with an apology, an explanation as to what had gone wrong or immediate action to resolve the issue. We resolved 97% Stage 1 complaints within our target of 5 working days or less.
- * **39** complaints were Stage 2— some of these complaints were not resolved at Stage 1, or needed further investigation. 97% were resolved within our target of 20 days or less.
- * **53%** of the complaints received were Upheld.



ACHAs Community Action Fund

Did you know that if you are part of a registered charity, and can make use of a grant of up to £500, you can ask for our Community Action Fund application form by contacting us on 0800 028 2755. Alternatively you can download it from our website at acha.co.uk. So far this year we have awarded the following amounts:

Loch Long Jetty Association	£500
Blarbuie Woodland Enterprise Ltd	£500
Mid Argyll Youth Forum	£500
Benmore & Kilmun Community Development Trust	£650
South Islay Development	£500
Islay & Jura Highland Dancers	£500
Islay & Jura Community Enterprises Ltd	£500

Good Neighbour Award 2018

Do you have good neighbours? We would like you to tell us about them

- Do they spend hours of their own time contributing to your community?
- Perhaps they have helped you with your garden, shopping or putting out your bin?
- They may have been there when you needed someone to talk to?
- Are they an ACHA tenant?

Good Neighbour Award nomination forms are available from your local ACHA office or can be downloaded at www.acha.co.uk. The closing date for nominations is Friday 31st August 2018.

The winner will be selected by representatives from our Governing Body and will receive £100 worth of high street vouchers, along with a commemorative certificate.

We would also like the winner to be featured in a press release, with a photograph highlighting why they won.

Employee of the Season

Any employee or group of employees can be nominated for the title of Employee of the Season.

Nominations can come from colleagues, management or customers. Customers can complete a nomination form which is available in any of the ACHA offices.

All nominations must be sent to the HR department using the appropriate nomination form. All nominations will then be collated and forwarded to the relevant Area Committee for judging.



Our annual Landlord report is currently under production and will be available in October. a copy of previous copies can be found on our website www.acha.co.uk. This report provides tenants with information on ACHA's progress towards meeting the performance requirements of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. You can also view and compare ACHA's performance against other landlords on the Scottish Housing Regulators website at www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk

ACHA Wants Tenant Views

ACHA is pleased to report that a short tenant satisfaction survey will be carried out during August.

A sample of ACHA tenants from across the Argyll and Bute area will be telephoned by staff and asked to contribute to the satisfaction survey. The questions will be focused around key services and the results will be reported to tenants and also to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

All information given will be entirely confidential and participants will be entered into a prize draw to **WIN a TV or device up to the value of £200.**



If you would like this newsletter in larger print, in an alternative language, on audio CD or in an electronic format or you would like someone to read it or explain any of it please contact Charlene Munro on 01546 605855 or communications@acha.co.uk

All our newsletters are available on our website www.acha.co.uk

Customer Service Centre 0800 028 2755, www.acha.co.uk

Bute

13-16 Longhill Crescent, Rothesay, Bute, PA20 0JT,
telephone 01546 605870, e-mail: housing.bute@acha.co.uk

Cowal

Dolphin Hall, Manse Ave, Dunoon PA23 8DQ, telephone 01546 605950,
e-mail: housing.cowal@acha.co.uk

Helensburgh & Lomond

Lamont House, 9-19 Stuckleckie Road, Helensburgh, G84 7NL, telephone
01546 605920, e-mail: housing.lomond@acha.co.uk

Islay

11 Flora Street, Bowmore, PA43 7JX, telephone 01546 605890,
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Kintyre

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