

# tenants first



## Spring/Summer 2019

**Putting Our Tenants and Our Communities First**

### **ACHA's second Tenants and Members Conference builds on success of the first**

Argyll Community Housing Association (ACHA) has held its annual Tenants and Members Conference in Inveraray on 16th February 2019.

The Conference focused on three key themes; getting involved, planning services for the future and rents and value for money. Breakout sessions focused on ideas and priorities going forward.

The Conference was very much focused on tenant and member feedback and opinions on services which were incorporated into the Association's strategic plan.

Alastair MacGregor, ACHA's Chief Executive commented

"This year's Conference gave our tenants and members an opportunity to input into the Association's priorities going forward.

At last year's Conference, our tenants and members told us we needed to increase external investment and add to communication tools. As a result of these steers, ACHA's Board have committed an additional £1.5million to estate management capital initiatives from April 2019 for 5 years, and we will be launching an Association Facebook page to add to our communication strategy."



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of John Muir, former Board and Mid Argyll and Kintyre Area Committee member and Danny Kelly, Board and Lomond Area Committee member. Both John and Danny worked with ACHA to bring about positive change for our tenants and will be sadly missed but fondly remembered.



ACHA held its second Tenants and Members Conference on the 16<sup>th</sup> February in Inveraray. From my perspective it was refreshing to see so many enthusiastic and committed tenants and members of the ACHA family. There was a unity of purpose around identifying what our key priorities should be going forward. There were a number of intense discussions around planning services for the future, value for money, and identifying priorities. The Association wants to take forward those ideas coming forward from the Conference. Two examples from last year's Conference, investing in our estates external environment and improving communication, have both been agreed. The former will see £1.5million invested in neighbourhood initiatives to improve the external environment in our estates and, with respect to communication, the Association has just set up its Facebook page.

ACHA is a community based housing association, that's what it says on the tin. Initiatives like our Tenants and Members Conference allow us to get the feedback from our community to input into our priorities going forward.

Alastair MacGregor  
Chief Executive

## Are your household details up to date?

To ensure that your tenancy rights are protected it is very important that you advise us of any changes to your household.

This includes telling us about anyone who moves in or out of your property.

**If you need to let us know about any changes to your household or if you are unsure if you had already told us about changes, please enquire by:**

- ♦ **Writing or calling into your local Housing offices**
- ♦ **Calling our Customer Service Centre on 0800 028 2755**
- ♦ **Updating your tenancy information on our website at [www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk)** Click on the link "[View More Useful Information for tenants](#)" and from there you can submit your details online to us.

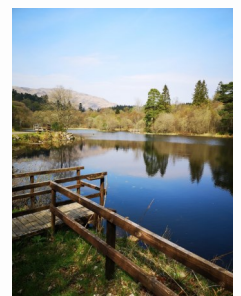


**We will acknowledge receipt of your notification.**

## Beautiful Argyll & Bute Photography Competition

Walk through Argyll & Bute and there is inspiration to be found with every step, whether it's a beautiful sunset, wonderful architecture or morning fog rising off a lake. What's your inspiration?

Share your most treasured photographs of Argyll & Bute to be in with a chance of winning a **£50 high street voucher and your photograph to be on the front cover of ACHA's Landlord Report.**



Send your photographs via email to [communications@acha.co.uk](mailto:communications@acha.co.uk) by 12<sup>th</sup> July 2019.

At ACHA's **Tenants & Members 2019 Conference** attendees were asked to complete a suggestion card and all those returned were entered into a prize draw. The winner was Robert Good from Dunoon who won £25 in high street vouchers.

Following the conference all attendees were sent satisfaction card surveys and all those returned were entered into a prize draw. The winner of the draw was Betty Rhodick from Lochgilphead who won £25 in high street vouchers



Robert Good is pictured with Jim Milne, Chair of ACHA's Board of Management.

Betty Rhodick is pictured with Jim Milne, Chair of ACHA's Board of Management.

## Feedb@ck Forum

The Feedb@ck Forum is an easy and flexible way provide feedback on services from the comfort of your own home via surveys or questionnaires.

By joining the Feedb@ck Forum you will see new policies and procedures first. With your help we can ensure that all documents are user friendly and provide the information you want to know. Pick and choose what you would like to give your views on and the way you wish ACHA to communicate with you. Assist ACHA to address any issues and challenges. See your ideas and opinions being valued and supported.

If you want to know more, please contact [communications@acha.co.uk](mailto:communications@acha.co.uk), visit our website: [www.acha.co.uk/get-involved/](http://www.acha.co.uk/get-involved/) or visit your local office.



**Argyll Community Housing Association – ACHA Group**  
**Join us online to get the latest news and information**



## Your Area Committee News

### Back in Business

After a number of years without an area committee, **Bute & Cowal Area**

**Committee** are happy to report that great strides forward have been made and we are on the cusp of once again having local people making the decisions on local issues.

A recruitment campaign was run at the end of 2018 and after 2 preliminary meetings held in the spring, we are confident that the Area Committee will be up and running by the end of the summer with a full complement of tenant and independent members.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Bute & Cowal Area Committee, please contact Garrick Collier on 01546 605957 or [garrick.collier@acha.co.uk](mailto:garrick.collier@acha.co.uk)



During December 2018, **Oban, Lorn & Isles Area Committee** Members had the immensely difficult task of judging Christmas Card designs from some very talented young artists, aged between 3 & 4 from Soroba Young Family Group. The winning entry was from 3-year-old Imogen pictured with the winners' cup and copy of her Xmas picture which the Association used for their Christmas e-card.



## Get your garden buzzing with wildlife!

### The **Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area**

**Committee** are welcoming entries for this year's '**Garden in Bloom**' competition. As an opportunity to recognise the hard work and commitment from tenants in maintaining their garden, tenants and neighbours are able to nominate ACHA gardens from April until July 2019. Categories include, '**best garden**'; '**best container**', '**best allotment**' and new for the Mid Argyll area this year is '**best wildlife garden**'. Members from the Mid Argyll & Kintyre area will judge nominated gardens at their Annual General Meeting scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> August. Winners will receive a trophy and vouchers from a garden centre of their choice. **Fiona Devlin**, member of the Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee said, "tenants can create their own mini-ecosystem by adding a few wildlife friendly features to their garden. This in turn can help address the threat of extinction of pollinators and also help the species that rely on them."



If you would like further information or a nomination form, please contact your local office on 01546 605800 (Lochgilthead), [housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk) or 01546 605880 (Campbeltown), [housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk).

### **Helensburgh & Lomond Area**

**Committee** Members are delighted that Phase 1 of Castle Wood Court is now complete with all 16 new tenants having received the keys to their brand new homes.

Phase 2 is well underway and is expected to be completed late Summer. An opening ceremony will be organised following the completion of the development. Pictured right are some of the Area Committee members visiting the site when Phase 1 was underway.



## Our Rothesay office has a new name!

In honour of our late Director of Investment and Regeneration, Linda Haig, our offices at 13-16 Longhill Crescent have been named Haig House. Linda's family have connections to the island going back many years. A plaque was unveiled by family members and witnessed by friends and colleagues who praised Linda's hard work in improving the existing stock and building much needed new homes for Argyll & Bute.



## ACHA's 10 10 10 Schools Award Scheme

During 2017/18 we were able to assist a number of local schools through the 10 10 10 schools awards scheme. The initiative was launched in November 2016 to commemorate ACHA's 10-year anniversary as a housing association with a bequest of up to £10,000 per year over 10 years to support projects and initiatives in schools in Argyll and Bute.

Some of the exciting projects that the funding was used for, were to set up an after school club, enhance outdoor learning, purchase of new technology and to fund swimming and fitness classes.

We heard from Drumlemble Primary that their pupils had attended fitness and swimming lessons at the local swimming pool, joined by children from Carradale and Southend Primary schools, so as well as getting fit and learning skills they also had the advantage of mixing with their peers.

Park Primary School in Oban used their funding to purchase STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) kit boxes to provide valuable resources for hands-on activities and experiments. The pupils in Primary 2 chose Our Bodies as their project and took part in a number of experiments to explore their senses. One of the pupils from Primary 2, said "My favourite was the digestive system experiment. I like messy things".



Mrs McLaurin, who is the Primary 2 teacher told us

"The best outcome was the children's enthusiasm and curiosity. The experiments really provoked thinking and many questions – that's when you know that learning is happening in class."

Strone Primary used their award money to purchase outdoor learning equipment and waterpumps. The waterpumps are allowing the children to access the outdoor areas all year round.



The photograph below shows staff and pupils from the school receiving their award from Alastair MacGregor, ACHA's Chief Executive, and Bruce Marshall from ACHA's Board

All local authority schools in Argyll and Bute are eligible to apply for an award and information on how to apply and applications forms are sent out each year by Argyll and Bute Council.

## You asked ... We did ...

During August 2018 ACHA undertook a tenant satisfaction survey with 400 tenants taking part and providing feedback on services. As a result of the comments received we have taken action.



**You said:** 89.25% of tenants felt that ACHA is good at keeping them informed about their services and decisions with many encouraging comments being received. We received a number of suggestions from our 2018 Tenants & Members Conference regarding using Facebook as a way to keep people informed and up to date.

**We did:** The ACHA Facebook page was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 which will provide feedback and update to our tenants and members. **Please give us a like!**

**You said:** 84.75% of tenants were satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlord's decision making processes. The majority of comments received were very positive although we are always looking to improve and provide more ways for tenants and members to provide their views.

**We did:** ACHA is one of only eight Landlords who successfully bid for a place on the Scottish Governments "Next Steps" programme which is aimed at housing organisations across Scotland. Next Steps has been developed to help landlords and tenants who want to review, improve, and develop current tenant participation and scrutiny arrangements and develop an action plan for doing so. We hope that this programme with help for our tenants will identify areas which we can work on and develop new ideas.

**You said:** 85.25% of tenants were satisfied with the quality of their home. A number of comments were received regarding your wish for more information being provided regarding major works being carried out to your home.

**We did:** During the first half of 2019 we reviewed the way in which we communicate with our tenants regarding major works being carried out to your home and have developed a new approach to ensure that you are kept up to date.

**You said:** 82.25% of tenants were satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in. However we received some negative comments in relation to the external environment around the areas in which you live.

**We did:** Over the next 5 years ACHA will be spending £1.5 Million improving the external environment within the estates. We hope you will take part in future consultation on the improvements we hope to make. In addition we are currently reviewing our Estate Management Policy and are seeking the views of our tenants & residents.

The Estate Management policy refers to the physical upkeep and use of the common parts of each development or estate and also to individual garden areas. We want to ensure that we offer the highest standard possible in both the service we provide to our tenants and other residents, and the quality of living conditions and environment we offer.

Please let us know your views by visiting our website—[www.acha.co.uk/get-involved-surveys](http://www.acha.co.uk/get-involved-surveys) and completing a short survey. Alternatively, please contact our Customer Service Centre on 0800 028 2755, [achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk](mailto:achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk), if you would like the survey posted to you.



## Two minute interview, with David Phillips, Member of Helensburgh & Lomond Area Committee ..

### How did you find out about ACHA?

A staff member from ACHA was in my local area and during conversation they asked me if I would be interested in getting involved with the Area Committee.

### Why did you want to get involved?

As I'm now retired and had some time on my hands I thought it would be a good time to get involved in something which can help my local community.

### What has been the best bit so far?

I enjoy attending the meetings and I have made new friends on the Area Committee. It has also opened the door to me joining other Groups, which has given me the opportunity to attend conferences, which have been really interesting.

### What has surprised you the most?

As a tenant I didn't realise how much of a voice I actually had, and how much I can influence changes in our community to make a positive difference.

### If someone was thinking of joining the Committee, what advice would you give?

I would certainly encourage them to get involved as you can really make a difference.

### Interesting fact about yourself?

I am one belt off a black belt in karate and I was a member of the Scottish Karate team.



## 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, or any other communication preferences, contact one of our local offices (as per the contact details on the back page).

## Annual Membership Prize Draw

Did you know that for just £1 you can sign up for life membership of ACHA.

Membership is open to anyone over the age of 16 and lives in Argyll & Bute. As a member you are entitled to attend the Associations Annual General meeting, and

take part in the election of Area Committee and Board of Management members. For more information, call into your local office, contact Lesley Lindsay on 01546 6056971, or email [Lesley.lindsay@acha.co.uk](mailto:Lesley.lindsay@acha.co.uk) or visit our website—[www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk).

As a member of ACHA you will also be entered into our annual prize drawer. Mr D Martin from Rothesay (pictured left) and Mrs J Lindsay, from Helensburgh (pictured right, with ACHA's Rhiannan Murphy) are two of last years winners.



## Stock Condition Survey

### We Need You!

We are carrying out a 100% stock condition survey over the coming months to gain up to date information about all of our houses and your homes. The surveyors will be assessing the condition of both the inside and outside of your home visually only. There will no disruption of any kind.

It is really important that you grant access to the surveyors to carry out this survey. This information is really important as it will be used to plan how we improve your home in the future.

Please can you ensure that when you are contacted that you make some time for the surveyor to visit.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation.

**If you have any questions please contact our  
Customer Service Centre on 0800 028 2755**

## £600 ...down the drain

This is the cost for an out of hours' drain clearance with a gully motor. Hardly a day goes by without us having to clear blocked drains. The cause of blocked drains is usually grease poured down the kitchen sink, or items such as wet wipes, cotton buds and sanitary products that have been flushed down the toilet. Even products which claim to be "flushable" should not be disposed of via the toilet.

Blocked drains force sewage to back up, commonly into the bath and toilet. On one occasion recently there was so much backed up sewerage it forced the lid of a manhole cover from a drain which was over a metre deep!

This could have been avoided if containers and bags were used and the items disposed in waste bins.

The best way to keep your drains free from blockage is to:

- \* only put down your toilet waste and paper that readily dissolves in water;
- \* dispose of large amounts of kitchen grease by allowing it to solidify, then scraping the waste into a bag and disposing off in your bin.



Regular cleaning of toilets and drains will also keep your water flowing smoothly

If you create a blockage by inappropriate disposal of grease or other products, you will be charged with the cost of the repair. **We don't want to recharge any tenant for clearing blocked drains, so help us to help you! For further information on keeping your drains flowing freely go to [www.scottishwater.co.uk](http://www.scottishwater.co.uk)**

**It would be nice if we didn't have to clear these drains and give us all a breath of fresh air!**



**Did you know** that between April 2012 and April 2018 there were 132 claims against ACHA's property insurance, with an estimated cost of £1.1m.

Fire was the cause of 30 of these claims. Fire damage makes up over 60% of the estimated cost - over £650k in 6 years. That's £100k each year up in smoke. We have been able to identify the cause of 21 of these fire claims – 7 due to wilful fire-raising, 7 started in the kitchen, 3 started in bedrooms, 2 related to cigarettes with 1 each in a living room and a bathroom.

**Insurance costs you money** – part of the rent you pay goes towards the cost of property insurance. Please help us cut down on property insurance claims. There are better ways we can use your rent.

Remember where there is a fire its not just the property that gets damaged, your contents will also likely to be damaged.



ACHA's insurance does not cover your contents or personal belongings so please make sure you have your own insurance to replace your possessions at a stressful and difficult time.

ACHA work in partnership with Thistle Insurance, please contact your local office or our Customer Service centre for information. Other insurance services are available.

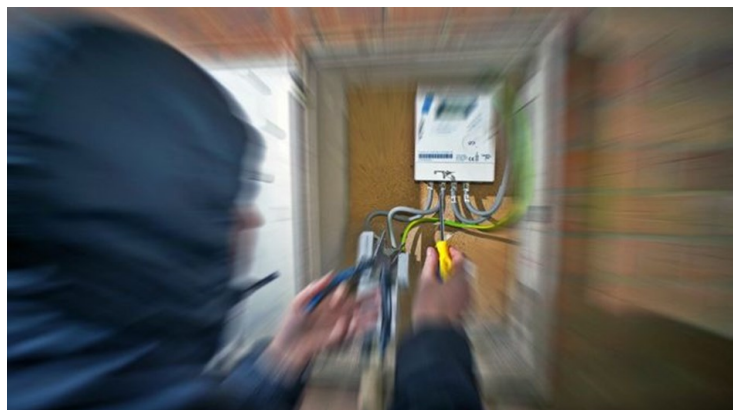
## Energy Theft

Energy theft, or meter tampering, is sometimes thought of as a "victimless crime", however the selfish action of a few can put their own and their neighbours lives on the line.

Around 80% of people are not aware that energy crime hits them in the pocket, with around £20 per year being added to all our energy bills.

**Argyll Community Housing Association has a Zero Tolerance in respect of this highly dangerous activity and will always report tenants who have committed this crime to the relevant authorities. Don't risk losing your home due to energy theft.**

**If you have any information on anyone committing an energy crime you can contact stayenergysafe on 0800 023 2777. You can also fill out a secure online form and find out more information at [stayenergysafe.co.uk](https://stayenergysafe.co.uk).**



## Are you thinking about installing a satellite dish or a TV aerial?

Have you asked for permission? Many people don't realise that permission is required, from ACHA, to attach satellite dishes or TV aerials to the outside of the building. In some cases, planning permission is also required. We don't want to spoil your viewing enjoyment but incorrectly installed satellite dishes and TV aerials can damage the external fabric of the building which could result in YOU having to pay for repairs and having to remove the dish or aerial.



If you are thinking about attaching anything to the outside of the building please contact [achacustomerservices@acha.co.uk](mailto:achacustomerservices@acha.co.uk) or your local ACHA office for an application and guidance form. Please don't take the risk - ask for permission first.

## Good Neighbour Award 2019

Is your neighbour one in a million? Do they make a difference to your life or the lives of the people in your community? Are they an ACHA tenant?

We're looking for nominations of tenants for this award for 2019. This is a chance for neighbours to say 'thank you' to an ACHA tenant who goes out of their way to help others, someone who shows kindness and consideration. The winner will be selected by representatives from our Area Committees. The winner will receive a **£100 worth of vouchers** and a commemorative certificate. We would also like the winner to be featured in a press release on the award and to highlight why they won it.



The closing date for nominations is **Friday 30th August 2019**.

To nominate your neighbour please download the nomination form from [www.acha.co.uk/services-good-neighbour-award/](http://www.acha.co.uk/services-good-neighbour-award/) or visit your local ACHA office.



## Congratulations to Jenna, ACHA Employee of the Year 2018

Jenna Philips, Administration Officer for the Mid Argyll & Kintyre beat off the other Employee of the Season winners to take the ACHA Group's Employee of the Year award for 2018, which was presented to her by Betty Roddick, Chair of the Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee at their meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Jenna was the winner of the Autumn Employee of the Season award, in recognition of her exceptional hard work relating to the review of ACHA's Void Processes, which has resulted in ACHA now being able to accurately report Void and Relet information to the Board of Management and to the Scottish Housing Regulator for the Annual Return of the Charter (ARC).

The "Employee of the Season" scheme is to give recognition and reward to employees who have performed particularly well each quarter. Any employee or group of employees can be nominated for this award and nominations can come from colleagues, management or customers. Customers can complete a nomination form which is available in any of the Group offices and our website, [www.acha.co.uk/get-involved-surveys/](http://www.acha.co.uk/get-involved-surveys/).

## Could ACHAs Community Action Fund help you out?

2018/19 has been another busy year for ACHA's Community Action Fund.

26 registered charities benefitted from awards ranging from £250 to £500 to help with their work in Argyll and Bute. These grants can make a big difference to an organisation and if your charity could make use of some extra funding it may be worthwhile applying.

Some of the groups which have received awards recently are:

Trustees of Connel Hall	£250
Heads Up Mid Argyll	£250
Isle of Bute Resilience Team	£500
Route 81 Youth Project	£500
The Roses Charitable Trust	£250
Benmore and Kilmun Community Development Trust	£500
Tarbert Castle Trust	£296
Mid Argyll Music Festival	£417.63
Tarbert Academy Parent Council	£417.63
Youth Impact	£399.99

**Tarbert Youth Group** received an award of £250 during the year for their "Lifeskills for Life" initiative. Heather Bellshaw from Tarbert Youth Group told us

"The young people of Tarbert meet three times every week, two evenings and a Sunday. We do lifeskills, arts, crafts, baking, sports, training, outreach and much more. Small grants are an integral part of our day to day funding and we make good use of it to provide activities that young people want and have fun participating in."



The **Community Action Fund** is open for applications of up to £500 from registered charities and application forms can be requested by telephoning 0800 028 2755, emailing [achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk](mailto:achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk) or they can be downloaded from our website at [www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk).

Our annual Landlord report is currently under production and will be available later this year. Copies of previous Landlord reports can be found on our website [www.acha.co.uk](http://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](http://www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk)



## Our Commitment



Argyll Community Housing Association is committed to providing equal opportunities across all services and to avoid discrimination.

If you would like this report in larger print, an alternative language, on audio or electronic format, or if you would like someone to read it or explain it to you please contact Corporate Services



on 01546 605855,

or email us at



[communications@acha.co.uk](mailto:communications@acha.co.uk).



Do you want to pay your rent by Direct Debit, and be entered into our prize draw (with a chance to win £100 of high street vouchers,) you can download the form from our

website - [www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk), contact your local office, or call 0800 028 2755 and we can arrange to supply you with a form.

The form is quick and easy to complete - Direct Debits are a simple, convenient and safe method to pay your bills, and also has many advantages to other payment methods.

You can find more information at [www.directdebit.co.uk](http://www.directdebit.co.uk).



**Customer Service Centre 0800 028 2755, [achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk](mailto:achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk)**

### Bute

Haig House, 13-16 Longhill Crescent, Rothesay, Bute, PA20 0JT  
telephone 01546 605870, e-mail: [housing.bute@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.bute@acha.co.uk)

### Cowal

Dolphin Hall, Manse Ave, Dunoon PA23 8DQ, telephone 01546 605950,  
e-mail: [housing.cowal@acha.co.uk](mailto: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](mailto:housing.lomond@acha.co.uk)

### Islay

11 Flora Street, Bowmore, PA43 7JX, telephone 01546 605890,  
e-mail: [housing.islay@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.islay@acha.co.uk)

### Kintyre

Old Quay Head, Campbeltown PA28 6ED, telephone 01546 605880,  
e-mail: [housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk)

### Mid Argyll

Dalriada House, Lochgilphead PA31 8JL, telephone 01546 605800  
e-mail: [housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk)

### Oban, Lorn and Isles

Menzies House, Glenshellach Business Park, Oban PA34 4RY,  
telephone 01546 605930, e-mail: [housing.lorn@acha.co.uk](mailto:housing.lorn@acha.co.uk)



**OSCR**  
Scottish Charity Regulator  
[www.oscr.org.uk](http://www.oscr.org.uk)

Registered Charity  
SC042713

Registered under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, Reg. No. 2661R(S)  
Registered with the Scottish Housing Regulator as a Registered Social Landlord – RSL No. 360  
Vat Registration Number: 155542607  
Registered with the Scottish Government, Property Factor Registration Number PF000302