

**Putting Tenants First**

Spring 2012

## ACHA's 'Garden in Bloom' Competition 2012

Win a trophy and cash prizes or nominate a friend or neighbour with 'green fingers'. Cut out this section of the newsletter, fill in the coupon below and send to your local ACHA office. Applications must be received by us by Friday 29th June 2012. Good luck.



I would like to enter the 2012 ACHA Garden Competition.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Phone no: .....



Everyone will be aware from the news that there are big changes ahead to the benefits and tax credit systems. ACHA has its own welfare rights service - the FISH project - which over the past two years has helped tenants claim or appeal **£3 million** in

unclaimed benefits and tax credits. We can help you make sense of the changes, find out what you are due now and help explain how future changes by the Government might affect you.

Contact David, Fiona, Corrina or Garrick now for a chat in confidence about what you might be due.

Call your local ACHA office and ask for an appointment - you'll be glad you did.

While the primary objective of the Association's investment work is to improve our 5,100 homes by 2015; new build housing also plays a key part in the organisation's strategy to meet housing need.

The Association, in its short time in existence has built 100 new homes across Argyll and Bute. Currently we are on site with 34 in Campbeltown, 24 in Dunoon and 4 in Lochgoilhead. I am also pleased to announce that the Association has been successful in securing funding from the Scottish Government to assist in the financing of 8 new homes to be built at Scott Terrace in Dalmally. Work on this project is due to start in May.

The second piece of good news is that the Association has also been successful in securing funding from Argyll and Bute Council to assist us in building 8 new homes at Leodamus Place, Port Ellen on Islay. We hope to start work on this project in September. Both of these projects will allow desperately needed affordable homes to be built in both villages. At the present time there are over 4,000 applicants on waiting lists in Argyll and Bute, looking for a home to rent. It is therefore imperative that in partnership ACHA, the Scottish Government and Argyll and Bute Council bring together the sum of our parts to try and meet this need. The Association is committed to doing all it can to build for the future. Presently we have the potential to deliver over 800 new homes across Argyll and Bute on sites we own or have affordable development agreements. The challenge is, in these difficult financial times, to deliver the resources to build. The Association will continue to make the case for investment which is vital to the future of housing and economic needs of the area.

Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive



ACHA has been operating a factoring service to private owners over the last few years. This is a service which enables maintenance and repairs to be carried out to common parts of buildings which are shared among private owners and ACHA.

If any of your neighbours are owners and are worrying about having work done to shared parts of buildings please ask them to contact our factoring team to discuss how the factoring service could be of help.

Jane MacQueen, Factoring Officer  
ACHA, 63-65 Chalmers Street,  
Ardrishaig, Argyll, PA30 8DX  
Telephone: 01546 605854  
e-mail: [jane.macqueen@acha.co.uk](mailto:jane.macqueen@acha.co.uk)



Lochnell Street,  
Lochgilphead  
where external  
works have been  
done.



← before

ACHA was approached recently by tenants at Glenside, Campbeltown where they were having problems arranging for the maintenance of a large common drying green, used by 24 households. ACHA consulted all the tenants on this and it was agreed that from April, ACHA would organise a grass cutting contract and a small weekly service charge would be paid by the tenants. This is a pilot that ACHA hopes may be used elsewhere.







before

Tenants of Glen Road, Bridgend, Islay are delighted with their newly refurbished homes. The houses have had structural repairs, new kitchens and bathrooms, new doors and windows, new heating systems, new roofs and external insulation and have been rewired.



before

Tenants in Port Ellen, Islay were delighted recently when the muddy track they'd been using as a foot-path was given a proper surface and edging by ACHA. This work was done under the 'Related Assets' budget which is used to repair or replace walls, paths, car parks etc.

I know that Spring is a strange time to be talking about Christmas but we forgot to tell you in the Winter edition about our youngest prize winner yet. Little Zoe MacDonald from Oban (aged 4) won the prize-winners cup for designing the lovely ACHA 2011 Christmas Card.

The story and photo went to the local paper (who shall remain nameless) who only printed the story and not the photo! Zoe's Mum contacted us to say that Zoe was really upset .....

.....so here you are Zoe and we all think your card was **brilliant** so well done.



Picture by Zoe aged 4



## We asked you what you think about ...

All your comments are included in each report to the Board so they can see what you've said.

ACHA consulted with all 5,115 tenants during January of this year on the proposed rent increase of 6.6% for 2012.

We received in total, only 3 responses to the consultation and these responses were passed to the ACHA Board when it considered the rent increase for approval at its February Board.

After careful consideration, the Board approved an increase of 5.8% which will be added to rents from April 2012.



A new playpark at Bayview, Machrihanish on the Kintyre peninsula has just been completed. A local residents group called LOAF were successful in obtaining funding and ACHA contributed to this as part of our Play Area Strategy. Congratulations to all those whose hard work paid off.

Just a quick reminder to anyone who is on the HOME Argyll waiting list or transfer list; if you are going on holiday you should let us know the dates you'll be away ... other wise you may miss out on an offer of housing.

*Thankyou*



In the last edition of Tenants First the front page story was all about the awful weather. Since then, stories from all over Argyll and Bute have been coming in demonstrating some very heart-warming community spirit. During the storms there were lengthy power cuts, road closures and ferries not sailing. ACHA staff jumped into action to make sure that vulnerable tenants were safe and sound. Pictured right are staff from our Rothesay office (left to right): Harry, Gillian, Susan, Kim and Angus who were kindly offered hot food by 'The Boat' (a local pub) to distribute to the residents at sheltered housing complexes. A huge **thankyou** to the owners of 'The Boat' and to everyone who helped out during the power cuts.





Why don't ACHA members join their local Area Committee? In the coming year we hope to be involved in judging the Garden Competition, approving grants for local charities, reviewing policies on allocating houses and managing estates. The Area Committee is the eyes and ears of ACHA.  
*Sandra MacKenzie*

## ACHA's Area Committees

Area Committee Chairs (left to right):  
Sandra MacKenzie, Mid Argyll / Kintyre  
Michael Brown, Helensburgh / Lomond  
George Farquhar, Oban Lorn / Isles  
Margaret MacGregor, Bute / Cowal



I've been chair of the Bute and Cowal Area Committee for four years. I thoroughly enjoy being part of a worthwhile group, supporting and representing my community. I would like to encourage the people in Argyll and Bute to become members of ACHA and consider joining their local Area Committee.  
*Margaret MacGregor*

We are actively seeking to recruit Area Committee members – only some life experience needed! It's a good way to be actively involved in your community and to have your say in housing estate issues. You live here, you decide. *Michael Brown*

Area Committees are an important link between the tenants and ACHA but they need more input from tenants to engage effectively. Don't sit quietly, pay your £1 and get involved.  
*George Farquhar*

**Dates of the Area Committee's 2012 AGM's:**  
Helensburgh and Lomond - Thursday 5th July  
Mid Argyll and Kintyre - Wednesday 4th July  
Oban, Lorn and Isles - Monday 2nd July  
Bute and Cowal - Wednesday 4th July



All our future editions of Tenants' First will bear this logo. FSC means that the paper that this newsletter is made from has been approved by the Forest Stewardship Council meaning that it comes from forests which are managed and are sustainable.



32 new homes at former Park Square site, Campbeltown

In our Summer 2011 edition we reported the official opening of the site for new homes at the former Park Square site in Campbeltown. Work began in September 2011 to build 32 new homes, employing local tradesmen through MacLeod Construction Ltd. The site looks across to Aqualibrium (just seen in the left of the photo) and the sea front. The Council will begin to construct the new road to give better access to the harbour which will be of benefit to the economy in Campbeltown and Argyll and Bute.

## How to Contact ACHA:

**Customer Service 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

**AGM**

If you are a member of ACHA, our annual general meeting this year will be held on Wednesday 19th September in Inveraray. If you would like to apply for membership, ask at any local ACHA office.

There isn't space to include all the charities that ACHA staff support by fund-raising. In the last four months staff have raised over £900 for; Breast Cancer Awareness, Children in Need, Samaritans, British Heart Foundation and the Laura Currie Twilight Foundation.

## ACHA's Community Action Fund

Oasis

Befrienders

Helensburgh and Lomond Games

Tarbert Youth Group

Multiple Sclerosis Mid Argyll

Mid Argyll Music Festival

Mid Argyll Youth Development Services

Innellan and Toward Family Centre

Enable Gathering Games

Young Cowal and Bute Carers

Lochgoil Community Trust

If you are part of a registered charity that could make use of a grant up to £500, then contact ACHA on 01546 605922 and ask for our Community Action Fund application form - it's only one page. Good luck!



Driving the adoption of **e-learning**  
within the **Housing** sector

In our Autumn 2011 edition we gave you some information about short courses that you can do, free of charge, from your home computer. There are mini modules on;

- Internet safety
- Starting out on the internet
- Pest awareness
- Preparing for interviews
- Hate crime
- Anti social behaviour
- Gypsy and traveller culture
- Cultural awareness
- Respect

To find out more just log on to:

<http://housingea.vc-tms.co.uk/>

[selfregistration.aspx](http://housingea.vc-tms.co.uk/selfregistration.aspx)

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 Gillian McInnes on 01546 605801 or [gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk](mailto:gillian.mcinnnes@acha.co.uk)

All our newsletters are available on our website [www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk)