

Tenant Participation ACHA WANT YOU!!



Online

You can take part in our online surveys by visiting: www.acha.co.uk. If you are interested in providing your opinion through email please contact your local office. (contact details on page 6). When you register your email address you will automatically be entered into our prize draw to win £100 worth of vouchers.

Tenant Scrutiny “Your Voice”

We think that there will always be ways to improve on the services we deliver. If you agree with this you might want to consider joining us to look at performance and the policies and processes behind that performance.

The ‘Your Voice’ group was set up to encourage tenants and other service users to get directly involved in making Argyll Community Housing Association the best possible landlord.

If you think you might like to find out more (with no obligation) then please get in touch with alison.rafferty@acha.co.uk

ACHA provides a whole range of opportunities for tenants to share views and make their opinions count. There are a variety of ways you can take part and we welcome all feedback which will help deliver a better service to you, our tenants.

Want to be consulted on how we deliver services?

We have a register of tenants who are interested in being consulted. By registering you can provide valuable input from a tenants perspective.

Are you aged between 16-34?

Tell us how you rate ACHA as a landlord and what you would do to improve our services. Get in touch with alison.rafferty@acha.co.uk

Text Messaging

We have recently developed our text messaging service which we are using to consult with you. If you wish to be consulted using text messaging please provide your mobile number to your local office (contact details on page 6)

In many ways it only seems like yesterday that the housing stock transfer took place on the 21st November 2006. The Association has until November of this year to bring all of its existing 5,100 properties up to the Scottish Housing Quality Standard.

Since the summer of 2007 when ACHA's investment programme started we have been moving towards that aim. We anticipate that, by March 2016, 99.5% of all the elements requiring improvement will have been met. The Association has 27% of properties with exemptions and abeyances due to tenant refusal, owners not agreeing to common works and technical issues around energy efficiency and we are reviewing the best means of reducing them. At March 2015, 24,795 elements will have been improved with an investment of £110 Million. That has been a huge achievement and I would like to thank the Association's staff involved in the programme of works and tenant liaison, and to all our tenants for their patience while that work has been on-going.



The Association has been able to run a Welfare Rights service for our tenants with external grants assistance over the past 4 years. I am delighted that we have been able to secure funding from the Scottish Government's People and Communities Fund and Argyll and Bute Council to allow us to continue the service for a further year.

In most parts of Argyll and Bute demand for the Association's houses is high but in some parts of Kintyre and the Isle of Bute demand is lower and we have some properties immediately available for let. If you know somebody who might wish an ACHA property in the areas I have mentioned but didn't think it worth applying, could you get them to contact ACHA on the following numbers; Kintyre area, 01546 605880 and Rothesay, Isle of Bute on 01546 605870.

Since our last newsletter we heard of the sad passing of Bill MacIntyre from Helensburgh. Bill served on ACHA's Board of Management from the Shadow Board in 2004 until his retiral in August 2013. He served as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Association and gave so much on a voluntary basis to improve housing in Argyll and Bute.

Alastair MacGregor
Chief Executive

Calling all Tenants with "Green Fingers"

ACHA appreciates the hard work and effort our tenants put into maintaining their gardens.

Enter ACHA's Garden in Bloom Competition now at your local office for a chance to win a trophy and vouchers.



Would you like peace of mind knowing if the worst was to happen you would be able to replace your belongings?



New Home Contents Insurance Scheme

Argyll Community Housing Association does not insure your furniture, belongings and personal possessions. However we have joined forces with Thistle Tenant Risks to be able to offer all our tenants the chance to insure their home contents and belongings in an easy affordable way. Premiums start from as little as £1.02 per fortnight (for tenants living in sheltered accommodation) for a £4,000 sum insured, and just £1.16 per fortnight (for tenants aged 55 and over), for a £6,000 sum insured. All other tenants premiums start from just £1.71 a fortnight (for £9,000 sum insured). Just a few of the benefits are:

- All postcodes are included
- No excess to pay
- You don't need to have a special door or window locks or an alarm
- Covers theft, water damage, fire, flood and other household risks
- Covers lost or stolen keys and freezer contents
- Covers theft from sheds and garages as standard
- Flexible, regular pay-as-you-go payment options. You can pay by cash, direct debit, postal order, credit or debit payment.

There are many more benefits and it's so easy to apply.

Either complete a simple application form or contact **Thistle Tenant Risks** by calling **0845 601 7007** (or it may be cheaper to call 01628 586 187 from a mobile). Terms & conditions, exclusions and limits apply. A copy of the policy wording is available on request.

Visit

www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk
and request a call back today



We asked you what you thought about ...

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

We consulted with all our tenants in December of last year on a proposed rent increase of 3.3% for 2015.

We received a total of 29 Responses (which is 0.6% of our tenants) to the consultation and these responses were passed to the ACHA Board when it considered the rent increase for approval at its February Board meeting.

After careful consideration, the Board approved an increase of 2.6%, which took effect from 30 March 2015.



More recently, tenants have been consulted on our Tenant Involvement Strategy. We will also be carrying out consultation on Rent Setting and our Communications Strategy. If you would like to get involved in either of these please email us at communications@acha.co.uk or ring us on 0800 028 2755

Storage of LPG and Paraffin

Properties which use LPG for cooking must have adequate provision for storage outside the house and must not store the LPG containers in the house.

Storage of paraffin and other combustible liquid fuels or gas, whether inside or outside the house is not permitted.

Gas safety

What should I do if I smell gas or I am concerned about the safety of any gas appliances?

If you smell gas or suspect there is a gas leak you should immediately call National Grid's Gas Emergency Freephone number: **0800 111 999**

Open all the doors and windows

Shut off the gas supply at the meter control valve (if you know where it is)

It is illegal for anyone to use a gas appliance if they suspect it is unsafe. Turn the appliance off and do not touch it until it has been checked by a

Gas Safe registered engineer

If you intend to install any gas appliances e.g. cookers or stoves, you must obtain permission first.

Share your views and help shape the direction of ACHA by joining your local area committee.

The **Bute & Cowal Area Committee** still needs tenant and independent members. For details of how to join, please contact Garrick Collier on 01546 605950.



Dear Reader,

My name is Bobby Beggs. I am ACHA's newest Committee Member. Before I became a member I was invited to the AGM on the 19th September 2013. I met a lot of new friends. The AGM was well organised and very informative. (Catering was excellent). I then went to all area meetings and I was amazed at the work they do. I wanted to be a part of it and was accepted onto the **Lomond Area Committee** as a casual member last August. I believe all tenants should come and see for themselves, the good work ACHA and its Committee have done. Its only £1 to join. So come along and see.

Bobby Beggs

Our next meeting is on 14th May 2015 at 11am at the Kirkmichael Centre, Townhead Road, Helensburgh, G84 7LY. Please contact your local office if you wish to come along on 01546 605920

Oban Lorn & Isles

During December 2014, 4 local nurseries were invited to participate in ACHA's create a Christmas Card Competition. OLI Area Committee Members had the immensely difficult task of picking a winning entry from some very talented young artists aged from 3-4. The winning entry was from 4 year old Anna MacKellar from Happy House Nursery.



Pictured above Anna with proud dad Walter and ACHA's Sheila Henry

Mid Argyll & Kintyre

An important part of ACHA's activity is the provision of social rented housing. The first social rented houses built in Tarbert for many years were opened on 30th January by Sandra MacKenzie, former sheltered housing warden and ACHA Committee Member. Sandra said how delighted she was to be opening the houses and how impressed she was with the standard of the properties. The flats were built by builders M&K MacLeod. All houses have been allocated and some tenants attended the opening. Frances MacFarlane was looking forward to her "own front door, a lovely living room and lovely bedroom." Scott McNicol (below) is moving back to Tarbert, where he grew up, with his fiancée. It is encouraging for Tarbert to be attracting young people back, and ACHA are delighted to be able to assist.



**How to Contact ACHA:
Customer Service Centre
0800 028 2755**

(Freephone but mobile charges will apply)

Bute

Union Street, Rothesay PA20 0HD
e-mail: housing.bute@acha.co.uk
telephone 01546 605870

Cowal

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

Islay

Jamieson Street, Bowmore PA43 7HP
e-mail: housing.islay@acha.co.uk
telephone 01546 605890

Helensburgh & Lomond

31 James Street, Helensburgh, G84 8AS
e-mail: housing.lomond@acha.co.uk
telephone 01546 605920

Kintyre

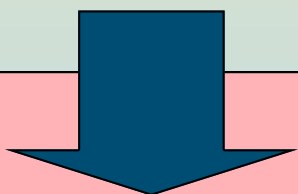
Old Quay Head, Campbeltown PA28 6ED
e-mail: housing.kintyre@acha.co.uk
telephone 01546 605880

Mid Argyll

Dalriada House, Lochgilphead PA31 8ST
e-mail: housing.midargyll@acha.co.uk
telephone 01546 605800

Oban, Lorn and Isles

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



If you are a member of ACHA, our annual general meeting this year will be held at the Argyll Hotel, in Inveraray on Thursday 17th September 2015.

ACHA's

Community Action Fund

If you are part of a registered charity that can 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!

Some recent grant recipients:

Soroba Young Family Group Nursery
Oban Bran RBLs
Kintyre Youth Café
Curam Thiriodh
Glenorchy & Innishail Community Orchard
Tarbert & Skipness Community Trust
Tarbert After School Care
Ross of Mull and Iona Community Project 81
Fyne Families

Every year, at our AGM we hold a **Prize Draw** for tenants who pay their rent by Direct Debit. If you would like to discuss paying your rent by Direct Debit and have a chance to win £100, please contact your local office.

Did you know that for £1 you could become a Member of ACHA for life?

We will also enter you into draw for a chance of winning a lovely food hamper. Each year, just before Christmas, a member of our Board of Management will select 1 winner per each of our 4 administrative areas to receive a £100 food hamper. If you would like to become a Member, please ask at any ACHA office for an application form.

Please note that all ACHA offices will be closed on 4th May, 22nd May, 25th May, 25th September, 28th September, 12th October, 25th December, 28th December

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