

## Putting Tenants First

Summer 2011



**new ACHA  
payment cards**

### Another new way to pay your rent and other payments

We reported to you in our winter edition that rent payments could be made using the ACHA website ... we've now added another way to pay by using one of our specially designed *Allpay cards*. These swipe cards are really simple to use in more than 150 locations in Argyll and Bute including any Post Office or anywhere displaying the PayPoint symbol. So now you can pay at the supermarket at 10pm or at a shop in your own village. You can also pay using outlets across the country so you can even do it if you're away on holiday! This new service is free and all tenants will be sent a card (there's a separate card for insurance payments).

The design on the card was kindly gifted to ACHA by the internationally renowned artist Jolomo who lives in mid Argyll. In return for this, ACHA has given a Community Action Fund grant to the charity nominated by Jolomo, the Dochas Fund, which gives help and support to carers. The lovely painting is of Gott Bay, Tiree, in the moonlight.



Dalmally Primary School children enjoyed filling up their planters with a lovely selection of flowering plants this May. ACHA and the school developed this project together and one of ACHA's contractors (ISS Facility Services) kindly donated the plants and expertise on the day. Well done to everyone.

the ACHA  
website had  
3,361  
hits in June  
[www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk)



In this edition of Tenants First I am really pleased that we have been able to announce the start of two badly needed housing developments in Dunoon and Campbeltown. These developments will, between them, provide 56 desperately needed affordable homes. The Association is also building 4 new properties in Lochgoilhead this year. However, with the housing waiting list in Argyll and Bute now exceeding 4,000 what we are currently providing can only scratch the surface in terms of meeting housing needs. The Association has, and will continue, to campaign for resources to deliver affordable housing in Argyll and Bute. The issue is not just about bricks and mortar, housing construction is labour intensive and provides good quality jobs in the local economy. The housing developments that ACHA is currently building provide jobs through three different Argyll-based construction companies. However, the issues are wider than that, affordable housing allows our people to live in our communities which can challenge population decline and sustain local schools and other facilities. ACHA currently has the opportunity to provide 477 new homes throughout Argyll and Bute, either through sites we own or affordable development partnerships we have with others. The missing link at the moment is sufficient resources to take them forward. We appreciate that we live in challenging economic times but there is an increasingly accepted argument that we have to invest in Scotland's infrastructure to provide jobs and homes for the future. We look forward to taking that debate forward in the hope that we will be able to secure the commitment from Government to resource the much needed housing that we need in our communities.



Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive

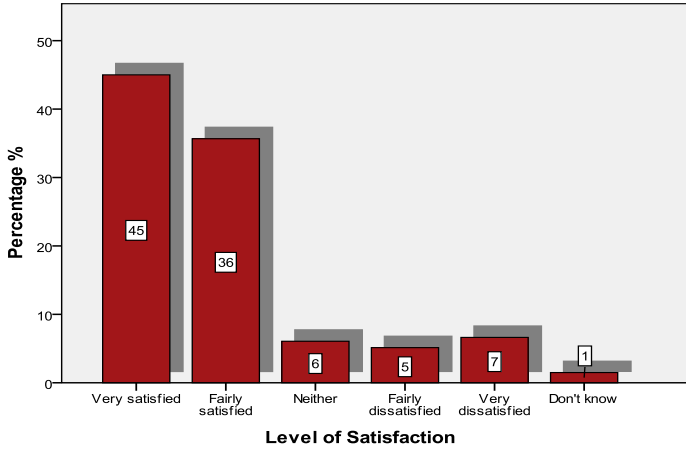


On the 8th July Michael Russell, MSP for Argyll and Bute and Councillor Dick Walsh, Leader of the Council launched a £5.2 million regeneration project at the former Park Square site in Campbeltown. The new housing led regeneration of this part of the town will see 32 new affordable homes built, a new street-scape and a new access road to the harbour. The funding for the project has come from the Scottish Government, ACHA, Argyll and Bute Council and Scottish Water. This project brings new homes, jobs and some assistance to Campbeltown's economy in the longer term.

Staff, Area Committee, Councillor Marshall and ACHA Chair, Norman Beaton, gather to celebrate the launch of another site for new affordable homes. The site at the Cowal Golf Club at Ardenslate in Dunoon will provide 24 badly needed new homes.



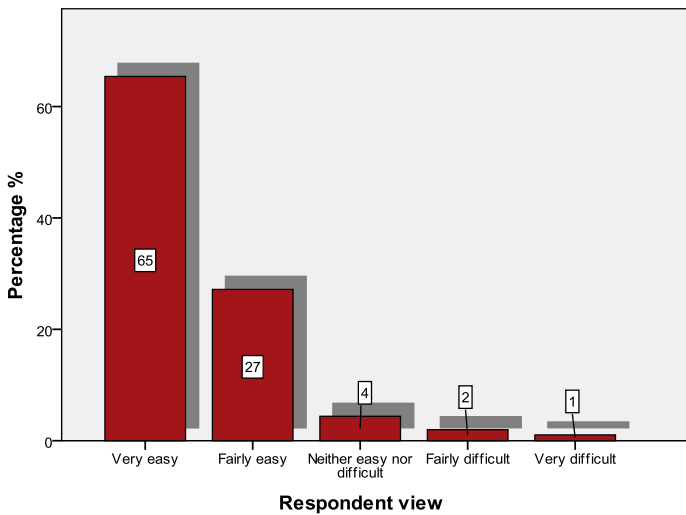
In the Spring edition we gave you some of the results of our first full satisfaction survey. Here are more results and some of the detail from our Action Plan to make improvements on the areas where you've told us that we need to do better.



## Satisfaction with the Repairs service overall



Satisfaction with repairs overall is fair with 81% respondents stating that they are very or fairly satisfied. There were 12% who stated they were fairly or very dissatisfied and 6% who said neither or don't know.

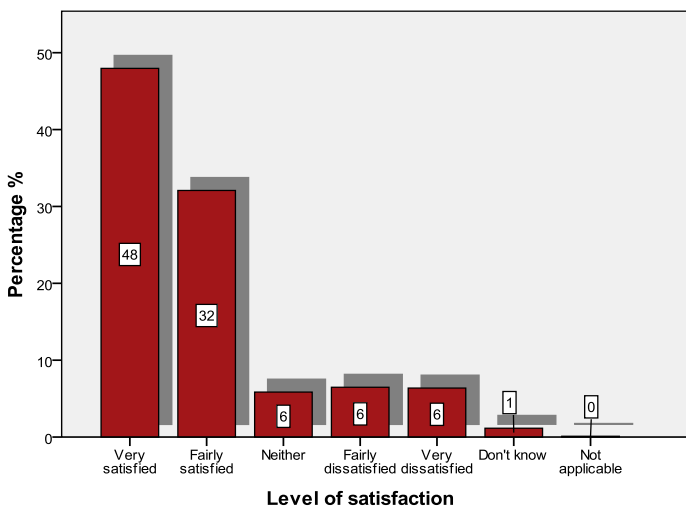


## 'Is it easy to report a repair?'

92% of you said yes



92% of respondents think it's very or fairly easy to report a repair. There were 3% who said it was fairly or very difficult and 4% said neither one way or the other.



## Were you satisfied with the quality of your last repair?

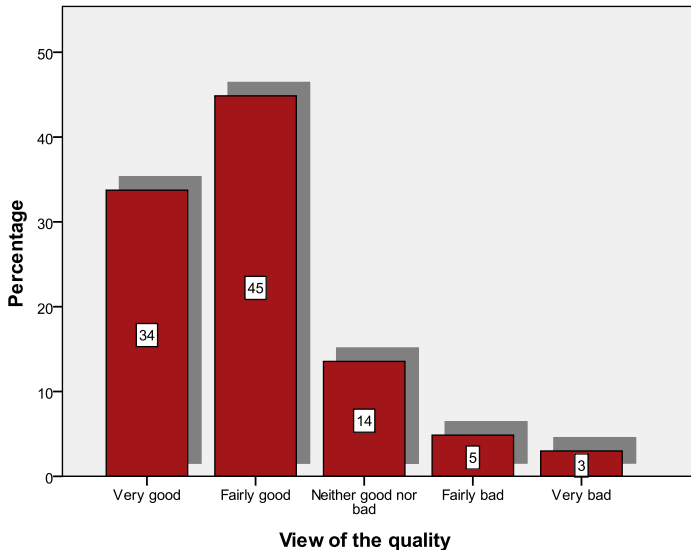
80% of you said yes



There were 12% who said they were fairly or very dissatisfied and 7% said neither one way or the other.

**Reminder to all ACHA Members .....**

**SGM (Special General Meeting) and AGM (Annual General Meeting) will be held on Wednesday 21st September 2011 at 1pm in the Argyll Hotel in Inveraray**



**Are you satisfied with the services provided by ACHA?**



79% of respondents said yes to this question.  
8% said fairly or very bad and 14% said neither good or bad.

In our Spring newsletter we said we would give you some information on the Action Plan that we've developed to improve services to you as a result of what you told us in the Tenants Satisfaction Survey last year. Below are some of the things we've put in place or are developing through this action plan.

***Prior to becoming a tenant, what did you think about the quality of information you received from ACHA?*** From the survey 5% of you thought it was poor.

We are working on a brand new Tenants Handbook and New Tenant Welcome Pack and are consulting with the Tenants Panel and Tenants Consultation Register on these.

***Would you like to receive more information about ACHA?*** Almost 30% of you said you wanted more information about repairs.

The new Tenants Handbook has much more information about repairs including some diagrams, information about timescales and tenant - landlord responsibilities.

***How convenient do you find the methods available to pay your rent?*** There was a mixed response to each method of payment but to make things even easier for you we have since introduced payment via our website and our new Allpay card.

***How do you pay for your electricity?*** Almost 53% of you said you used a card / key meter and 19% of you said you paid each bill by cash or cheque.

We have extended the project called HEAT Argyll until the end of 2011- this project aims to ensure that every tenant is paying by the cheapest possible method (as well as looking at the tariff you are on, fuel efficiency and insulation of your home).

***Are you a member of ACHA?*** Only 15% of you said you knew about our Membership (£1 for life) so to boost information to you we put an article into our Winter newsletter.

***How good do you think ACHA is at taking account of tenants' views?*** Almost 13% said we were bad or fairly bad at this. We hope that this newsletter article demonstrates that we *do* listen to what you tell us. We have also developed a new strategy to help us do better in this area and to also make sure that we always give you feedback to the comments you give us in questionnaires.



ACHA is committed to ensuring that solid fuel equipment installed in your home is maintained and operating correctly and safely. Two home visits per year are carried out by us, one for sweeping the chimney and servicing the solid fuel appliance and a second visit just to sweep the chimney. Any major repairs identified will be noted and attended to in due course. If you are not at home on the pre arranged date, the contractor (ACHA's In-house Repair Team) will leave a card asking you to telephone to make an alternative appointment. We hope you'll agree that this work is essential but ACHA does have the right to gain access to your home to carry out this work under the terms of your Tenancy Agreement. Chimney fires are just one of the hazards of not having this work done.

Inside your chimney before and after cleaning



## Complaints

ACHA thinks the best way to improve services is to listen to what you, our customers say. We ask for your views through surveys and questionnaires and we welcome any complaints or suggestions. If you don't tell us about your complaint then we don't get the chance to put things right. To help us we have a policy and a database to track customer feedback. The database lets us see where there may be recurring problems but hopefully we'll be able to sort out any problems first time round. We'll report complaints statistics in our Annual Report (which will be included with our next Newsletter but in the mean time if you have anything to say - good or bad - please let us know. You can do this by phoning or writing to us - details on back page.

## Worried about money?

If you're struggling to make ends meet or finding it difficult to pay all of your bills and payments then why not ask a member of staff to refer you to our **new Debt Advice service**.

It's simple, all you need to do is sign a form which we will pass on to ABCAB (Argyll and Bute Citizens Advice Bureau). ABCAB will then contact you directly to discuss your money issues.

This new service is completely confidential and free. All of the information you give to ABCAB will stay with them and will not be shared with ACHA or anyone else. A fully trained ABCAB advisor can help you negotiate with companies that you owe money to and give you impartial advice on a whole range of issues.



Tenants from the sheltered housing complexes at Dunmar Court, Oban and Ford Spence Court in Benderloch came together in June for an Open Day and combined it with a fundraiser for Marie Curie .... £438.46 was raised so well done to everyone involved.



working in  
partnership  
with



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Membership—ask any member of  
staff for an application form

## How to Contact the ACHA Area Offices

### 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



## ACHA's Community Action Fund

Mid Argyll Link Club  
Kintyre Link Club  
Ford Spence Court Tenants Group  
Islay & Jura Youth Wind Band  
Campbeltown Running Club  
Oban Phoenix Cinema  
North Mull Community Woodland  
Islay / Jura Dolphins (swimming)  
Cardross Tenants & Residents Assoc.  
Mid Argyll Community Swimming Pool  
Argyll Couple Counselling  
Tarbert Christmas Lights  
Friends of Oban Hospice

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!



Karen Heath from our Oban office did a fantastic fund-raising effort in June when she did the Edinburgh Moon Walk. She walked 26.2 miles in 7½ hours and raised a fantastic £450 for the Breast Cancer charity.  
Well done Karen!



These delicious cakes spelling out the words 'Putting Tenants First' were made by member of staff, Fiona Ewing, to celebrate the start of new ACHA homes being built in Dunoon. Well done Fiona



### Bogus Callers

We have had reports of nasty individuals who are trying to con people by cutting their grass and then asking to be paid. They are not contracted by ACHA so never give anyone money. Always ask for an ID card!

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)