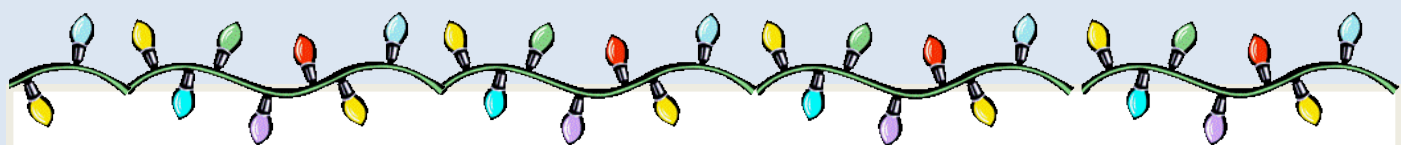


# tenants first

## Autumn/Winter 2016



### Good Neighbour of the year winner 2016

**"We Couldn't Ask for a Better Neighbour"**

Each year ACHA run our Good Neighbour Award which recognises and thanks un-sung heroes within our communities, who show so much kindness to their neighbours. We are delighted that this year's winner is Mr Archie Greenlees from Campbeltown, who received 3 nominations for this award. The judging of the 2016 Good Neighbour Award was carried out by the Chair of ACHA's Board of Management and Chairs of two of ACHA's Area Committees.



Mr Greenlees' neighbours presented him with the award of £100 in high street vouchers along with the Good Neighbour Award 2016 plaque. He said "I am delighted to have received the award and am very grateful to my neighbours for nominating me".

Mr Greenlees cares for his neighbours in many ways such as cutting their grass, helping with gardening, dropping off newspapers and shopping to less able neighbours, taking out bins and holding keys when workmen are carrying out repairs. Mr Lang and Mrs Gray (pictured below presenting Mr Greenlees with his award) said "We couldn't ask for a better neighbour and he deserves to win the award".



If you have a great neighbour, who is an ACHA tenant, and want to show your appreciation then pick up a nomination form for the 2017 Good Neighbour award from your local ACHA office or download one from our website—[www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk)

## Alastair MacGregor, Chief Executive

On the 21<sup>st</sup> November ACHA celebrated 10 years as a landlord. It is hard to believe that 10 years have passed since Argyll and Bute Council transferred its housing stock to ACHA.



These past 10 years have seen many milestones. Modernising our 5,000 plus homes to meet the Scottish Housing Quality Standard is probably the biggest achievement with us investing more than £120million into our homes. 2009 saw ACHA build its first new homes in Garelochhead and since then we have been able to build 317 new homes throughout Argyll and Bute. As the years went by the Association developed new services such as the Customer Service Centre and our own Welfare Rights Service. Our Community Action Fund was also established to provide grants to community organisations to help others. In 2013 we established our own subsidiary company - Argyll Homes for All ( AHFA) to carry out day to day repairs to our tenants homes and we have seen a steady rise in satisfaction levels with our repairs service.

Our tenants and other customers continue to get involved with how services are delivered or how decisions are made by joining in the many participation opportunities open to everyone - the most recent being our “Your Voice” tenant scrutiny panel.

ACHA has always seen its role as more than “bricks and mortar” and we have tried to use our resources to support wider economic development and training.

We have not always got everything right but as an organisation we are committed to improving service quality year on year, learning from what has worked and tackling what hasn't.

So what will the next 10 years bring. ACHA will not rest on our laurels. Much work is still to be done to meet housing need, most notably the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing, and to build new homes to meet housing shortfalls in certain parts of Argyll and Bute.

To recognise this significant milestone ACHA's Board have agreed to set up its 10/10/10 initiative. This initiative will invest £10,000 each year for 10 years in 10 schools within Argyll & Bute and allow us to work in partnership with Argyll & Bute Council to support young people in areas where there are clearly identified needs. One of the main aims is to assist our young people to develop, work and remain within their communities in the future.

We have come a long way in 10 years and I would like to thank you, our tenants, for all the support and assistance you have given on that journey.

Alastair MacGregor  
Chief Executive

### Ten Year Timehop

Pictured below are, Mr Frier, ACHA's very first tenant who, along with his wife, signed up for their home on 21 November 2006 along with, Mrs Middlemiss our first tenant to sign up for a new home, ten years later on 21 November 2016.



Pictured left to right, ACHA's Jane Hepburn, Mrs Middlemiss, along with Mr Frier, ACHA's very first new tenant and ACHA Regional Manager Yvonne Angus.

## 2016 Biggest Sunflower Awards

Every year ACHA supplies local pre school education units in the Mid Argyll, Kintyre and Lomond areas with sunflower seeds with the challenge to grow the tallest possible sunflower. Well this year, despite the lack of sunshine, our green fingered youngsters have once again wowed us with their fantastic sunflowers.

Mulberry Bush Nursery's Elephant Group, from Lomond is pictured below with Area Committee Member Bobby Beggs and ACHA's Seonaid Cameron, Cathy Bradbury and Ashley Rogers



Pictured right with her winning sunflower of 131 cm is Emily Balkeen, from Badden Farm Nursery, Lochgilphead



Pictured left is ACHA's Fiona Paterson and Jessica Ferguson, of Southend Pre-5 unit who received a certificate for her 125 cm high sunflower

If you know of a group that would like to take part in the competition please email us at [communications@acha.co.uk](mailto:communications@acha.co.uk) with contact details.

## Thistle Wordsearch Competition

In the last newsletter, we ran a word search competition in partnership with Thistle Home Contents Insurance Services.

Congratulations to Mr & Mrs Cunningham from Rothesay who were picked as the winner of the word search competition and won shopping vouchers worth £25 which were provided by Thistle Insurance.

The winner was drawn by Douglas Prophet from ACHA's Board of Management - pictured right with Christine Johnston, Director of Housing & Neighbourhood Services.

If you would like further information on home contents insurance, please contact our customer service centre on **0800 028 2755** or by email: [achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk](mailto:achacustomerservicecentre@acha.co.uk)







### "Tap the App"

There are now two new ways to pay your rent via your smart phone or device. All you need to do is download the free **Allpay** or



**Pingit** app from the app store and follow the quick and easy on screen instructions. When making a payment via our website, select **Pingit** from the options, and you will be guided through the process. The **Allpay** app can be used on its own without the need to go via our website. There are dedicated helplines for both apps if you need further assistance.

For tenants paying by Direct Debit, you can choose to make payments on the 1st, 8th, 15th or 22nd of every month, giving you greater flexibility when managing your money.



These new payment methods are in addition to the internet payments already available at [www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk), calling our Customer Service Centre free on 0800 0282755 and using your Allpay card at any PayPoint outlet.

Should you have any difficulty paying your rent, please contact us immediately on the number above or call in to your local ACHA office. The Customer Service Team will be happy to discuss your options.



The winner of this year's Direct Debit draw is Miss L Redliha from Dalmally, and she is the lucky winner of £100 high street vouchers.

Every year we hold a prize draw for everyone that pays their rent by Direct Debit—this draw takes place at our Annual General Meeting in September. If you would like to discuss paying your rent by Direct Debit, please contact your local ACHA office.



Miss Redliha receiving her vouchers from ACHA Local Manager, Brian Murphy

### Email address prize draw

We offer our tenants various ways to contact us - all tenants who register their email address with us are entered into a prize draw to win £100 worth of vouchers. **Congratulations** to this years winner Mrs G McAffer, from Rosneath, who will receive £100 of high street vouchers. To register your email address simply contact your local office (as per the contact details on the back page).

## Contents Insurance - have you got it covered?

What would you do if your possessions were stolen or perhaps damaged in a fire or flood? Take a look round your home just now – how much would it cost to replace **everything**? When you add up the value, the chances are you would not be able to replace it all without some help.

While most people hope that nothing will happen to their belongings, sometimes things can go wrong unexpectedly and that is when Contents Insurance is invaluable.

ACHA **do not** insure your furniture, belongings and other personal items against theft, fire, flood, vandalism, burst pipes and other household risks.



A recent report from the Scottish Government shows that during 2013/14 instances of house breaking in Scotland rose by 4% and, with most households having thousands of pounds worth of personal possessions in their home, it is really important to make sure that Contents Insurance is in place.

The Thistle Tenant Risks scheme can offer ACHA tenants the chance to insure the contents of your homes easily and gain peace of mind knowing if the unexpected happens you have cover.

Free information packs are available at any ACHA Office or by visiting our website

[www.acha.co.uk/Services/homecontentsinsurance.html](http://www.acha.co.uk/Services/homecontentsinsurance.html)

You can also phone Thistle Tenant Risks on **0345 450 7286**



[www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk](http://www.thistletenants-scotland.co.uk)

You don't have to join the Thistle Insurance scheme – there are lots of other insurance providers available. For peace of mind just make sure you do have Contents Insurance.

## 2016 Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 in the Inveraray Inn, Inveraray

Twenty seven of ACHA's 250 members came along, that's just under an 11% attendance rate.

The Chairperson presented his formal report on the Association's principle activities, achievements, and challenges during the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016. The Director of Finance and IT presented the Group's Accounts. Members present then approved the adoption of the Group Annual Accounts for 2015/16, and the appointment of Alexander Sloan (Chartered Accountants) as ACHA's auditors for 2016/17.



Pictured: Back row (left to right) – Neil Mackay, Danny Kelly, Councillor Bruce Marshall, Douglas Prophet, Jim Milne, Cameron Grant, Bob Munro, David Carmichael, Councillor Richard Trail

Front row (left to right) - Malcolm Campbell, Councillor Donnie McMillan, Lorraine Anne Drysdale, Sandra Glazsher, John Muir

## "Your Voice"—Lochaber Visit

The willingness to share experiences is central to the development of Tenant Participation in Scotland and enables tenants to see what has been happening in other parts of the country and gain insight and inspiration themselves.

It was to this end that our "Your Voice" tenant scrutiny group met with Lochaber Housing Association's "Your Voice group" and Aberdeen City Council's Tenants Service Review group at a recent information sharing day in Fort William.

In a packed full day event, each group gave a presentation outlining the scrutiny work they had carried out to date and what they felt their achievements have been. The presentations were followed by questions and discussion.

ACHA "Your Voice" member, Ian McIntyre commented that he was heartened by the enthusiasm with which each group shared their knowledge and that it was surprising, given the disparity in size between the organisations, how much the tenants had in common. Celia Kennan added "Aberdeen's group have been running for ten years & during that time have had lots of training, so that they were knowledgeable & are full of enthusiasm. They had good ideas and excellent tenant involvement".



## Connecting Cowal and Bute – we need your help!

Are you over 16 and a Cowal and Bute Resident?

Are you aware that the ACHA Cowal and Bute Area Committee is currently not in operation due to a lack of local members?

Are you aware that decisions affecting Cowal and Bute are now having to be taken to ACHA's full Board?

Are you aware that ACHA have Councillor Bruce Marshall as an Independent member on the Board, in an attempt to keep Cowal and Bute issues prominent?

Are there enough of you locally to resurrect the Area Committee?

Local representation and decision making is all about providing opportunities for local people to have a say on issues that may affect them within their local community.

Area Committees are part of ACHA's Governing Body and have delegated powers from the Board of Management. Each Area Committee has a maximum of 9 Members, the majority of whom must be tenants. The Area Committee must have at least 5 members to operate. ACHA aims to help support 4 Area Committees throughout our areas of operation – can you help represent Cowal & Bute?

If you can attend 6 meetings a year and have an interest in the local community in Cowal and Bute please let us know by contacting [garrick.collier@acha.co.uk](mailto:garrick.collier@acha.co.uk) or pop into either of our local offices.

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PRIZE DRAW – only £1 for life membership



Did you know that every year we hold a prize draw for our members—one member in each of our four areas will be picked to receive a Christmas food hamper. If you would like to become a member application forms are available in all ACHA offices, at [www.acha.co.uk](http://www.acha.co.uk) and by phoning Lesley Lindsay on 01546 605971.

Winners will be announced in the Spring edition of the Tenants First newsletter.

**Oban Lorn & the Isles Area Committee** Members were delighted to attend a tour of South Lorn during June 2016.

During the tour which cover areas including Kilmore, Kilninver, Luig and Easdale to name but a few. Members also carried out the judging for this year's Garden in Bloom Competition for South Lorn. Members were very impressed with the standard of gardens and would like to thank in particular the tenants who welcomed Members to a tour of their garden. Pictured are the winners for South Lorn—Mr & Mrs Roberts, Toberonochy, Luig—a very big “well done” to everyone who entered the competition.



A full list of the 2016 Garden in Bloom competition winners is available on our website.





## Argyll & Bute Council Introduce changes to your refuse collection

Argyll and Bute Council is introducing a new refuse and recycling service across the area – keeping recycling services as they are and moving to a three-weekly schedule for general waste (green) bins.

They have just implemented the second phase in Mid-Argyll, Helensburgh and Lomond, following on from the successful implementation of the new services in Kintyre and on Mull, Islay, Jura and Bute in early October.

The third and final phase will go live in Oban, Lorn and Cowal and on Lismore, Tiree, Coll and Colonsay on Monday 28 November.

Councillor Ellen Morton, Policy Lead for Roads and Amenity Services, explained: “Like all councils we have to change the way we do things because of drastically reduced funding, with £10million of savings this year alone. At the same time we have to reduce the amount of waste that goes to landfill because we pay over £80 in tax for every tonne.

Argyll and Bute Council is totally committed to recycling, which is why we have protected that part of the service. Recycling arrangements will be staying the same as they are now. By taking advantage of the recycling options available people can save space in their green bin, save money for council services and save money for themselves. By throwing away less food people could save hundreds of pounds each year; money which is better in their pocket than in the bin!

The more we can work together to recycle the more money we can save. We can then protect the services people have told us are important to them like investing in regeneration projects, educating our young people, improving our road network and supporting vulnerable people.”

### Some of the key points about the new service are:

Additional recycling bins will be available free of charge.

Arrangements can be made for some households to have a second green bin – where there are five or more people, where someone has a medical condition that generates waste or where families have children using nappies and all other recycling options have been considered.

Environmental wardens are available to advise on what can be recycled and how householders can recycle more.

Waste and recyclable material can be taken to any of the council’s civic amenity sites.

Further information also at [www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/bins](http://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/bins)

To request additional recycling bins, contact an environmental warden, or to find out about a second general waste bin if you qualify for one, please call Argyll & Bute Council on 01546 605514.





## **Popping into one of our offices? We have a duty officer who can answer your queries!**

Did you know that we operate a Duty Officer system in each of our seven offices to help answer any queries or issues you may have.

If you pop into your local office with a query simply ask to speak to the duty officer.

All Duty Officers are trained to deal with enquiries in relation to:

- ⇒ Housing waiting list enquiries
- ⇒ Enquiries about your tenancy
- ⇒ Arrears
- ⇒ Debt and rechargeable invoices
- ⇒ Factoring
- ⇒ Neighbour complaints
- ⇒ Estate Management issues

While you are very welcome to drop into our offices to discuss any issues you may have, if you want to make sure you can have a private conversation with the Duty Officer, you should call in advance to make an appointment as our offices generally only have one private meeting room.

Don't forget you can also contact our Customer Service Centre on **0800 028 2755** to report repairs, pay your rent or make any other enquiries.

## **ACHA's Community Action Fund - apply and help make a difference!**

The **Helensburgh and Lomond Area Committee** would like to remind all local groups throughout Argyll & Bute that If you are part of a registered charity and could make use of a grant up to £500, then pop into your local ACHA office or contact us on 0800 028 2755 and ask for our Community Action Fund application form - it's only one page!

Your application is then considered by your local ACHA Area Committee who are able to award Charities with Grants of up to £500.

### **Some recent grant recipients:**

- Argyll and Bute Youth Forum
- Argyll and Bute Third Sector Interface
- Ross of Mull and Iona Community Transport Scheme
- Dunoon Link Club
- Project 81, Garelochhead
- Helensburgh Addiction rehab team

The application form can also be downloaded from our website at

[www.acha.co.uk/Services/Communityactionfund.html](http://www.acha.co.uk/Services/Communityactionfund.html)

## Argyll & Bute Care & Repair Services

Argyll & Bute Care & Repair (ABCR) is an independent charity funded by Argyll & Bute Council and the NHS to assist Health and Social Care by offering vital support to older and/or disabled people and those with long-term health issues residing in Argyll and its islands.



They provide **free** advice, guidance and assistance on adaptations, building repairs and improvements that may be required to your property to enable you to live independently in safety and comfort in your own home for as long as possible.

The services on offer are as follows:

### Major Adaptations

### Housing Support Service

### Small Repair Service

Major Adaptations and Housing Support Service are considered in conjunction with Occupational Therapists and Care and Repair should be contacted if these services are required.

**Small Repairs Service - for which there is a small fixed charge of £10 per half hour, includes:**

- Minor electrical works
- Minor plumbing works
- Flat pack furniture assembly
- Minor painting jobs
- Erection of shelves



**Please note that you should contact ACHA directly for any of the following specific repairs:**

- Replacement of alarm batteries (smoke and CO)
- Replacing locks (external)
- Changing tap washers
- Easing of doors and windows
- Mending bathroom/toilet fixtures.

Argyll and Bute Care and Repair has achieved much in fifteen years and have become a trusted and valued service for its many clients and to its funders. Besides the adaptation and repair work ABCR officers undertake they also provide signposting services to a variety of agencies and charitable bodies that may be able to assist you with other specific problems that you may be experiencing. The “Care” part of ‘Care and Repair’ is extremely important to ABCR, whose staff are trusted and genuinely care about the service they provide.

If you require any of ABCR services or if you have any comments or suggestions to make on the service you can get in touch by calling:

Oban Head Office -

**01631 567780**

Email -

[enquiries@abcarerepair.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@abcarerepair.co.uk)

You can also write to the following address - Argyll & Bute Care & Repair, 5 Stafford Street, Oban, Argyll, PA34 5NJ.

For more information visit their website at - [www.abcr.org.uk](http://www.abcr.org.uk)

## Performance Feedback

**We asked you ... 85%** of tenants told us in our 2015 tenant satisfaction survey that they are satisfied with the management of the neighbourhood they live in. ACHA wants to continually strive to improve our neighbourhoods. With that in mind, we've created a new contact for you to let us know if something in your area needs attention. You can now email us at [myestate@acha.co.uk](mailto:myestate@acha.co.uk) and we'll pick up your information. You can add pictures of the area to your email to give us a better idea of the problem. Also, if you have a suggestion about how you think your neighbourhood can be improved, please send your suggestions to [myestate@acha.co.uk](mailto:myestate@acha.co.uk).

*your feedback is  
important to us and  
helps us to improve  
our service*

One of the main issues which causes many tenants and other residents concern is the maintenance of open spaces. However, did you know that ACHA is not the only owner of grassed areas and flower beds within your local area? In most areas the responsibility for the upkeep of these areas falls to Argyll & Bute Council, other Housing Associations, owner occupiers or ACHA.

We cut grass equivalent to **973** football pitches each year— that's a lot of mowing! If you are aware of any open space areas which need some attention but you're not sure who is responsible just contact your local ACHA office and we'll check it out for you.

In October we published our third Landlord report, a copy of which 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)



## Help us review our Policies, Strategies and Communications.

Every year we introduce or review policies and strategies which impact on the way we deliver services to you.

Your opinions and feedback are important to us and we would really like you to consider taking part in our review processes. Please let us know if you would be interested in being contacted on any of the following which are due for review during 2017:-

- Estate Management review
- Youth Strategy
- HOME Argyll Allocations Policy
- Gypsy Travellers Strategy

**Christmas and new year opening hours**

Our Offices will be closed from 2pm on Friday 23rd December, re opening on Wednesday 28th December. Closed from 2pm on Friday 30th December, reopening on Wednesday 4th January.

Emergency repairs can be reported by calling 0800 028 2755.

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

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



The Board of Management and ACHA staff wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a peaceful and prosperous New Year.

**Bute**

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 Avenue, 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**

Jamieson Street, Bowmore PA43 7HP, 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)



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