

THE ARGYLL TENANTS PANEL

19th June 2007

George Hotel, Inveraray

Present

Bill Shipley, Clachan (Strachur) TRA
Jane Lindsay, Helensburgh Central TRA
Kirstie Reid, Clachan (Strachur) TRA
John Croy, Craigendoran TRA
Sonja Aitken, Kirkmichael TRA
Rae Strattan (Helensburgh Central TRA)
Rose Colquhoun, Cardross TRA
Cath Derries, Cardross TRA

Gillian McInnes, Community Development Manager, ACHA

1.	APOLOGIES Steve Byrne, Dalintober & Millknowe TRA, Ronnie Finnighan, Craigendoran TRA, Susan McGladdery, Milton West TRA, Bill McIntyre (Kirkmichael TRA)	
2.	MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING – 15th May 2007 Minutes were approved – proposed by Kirstie Reid and seconded by Cath Derries.	
3.	MATTERS ARISING a. <u>Letters to Owners</u> - Gillian investigated this and what happened was the Helensburgh/Lomond houses sold prior to reorganisation in 1996 are held on a separate database (given to us by Dumbarton District Council) and consequently were not sent the letter. Apologies, this will not happen again. a. <u>Constitutions</u> – Helensburgh Central TRA has adopted a new constitution. b. <u>Owners Reporting Repairs</u> – for communal areas. Alan Lamont has said that staff taking the repair should record this in the notes section on the screen. c. <u>Open Day</u> – Strachur Open Day is being held on Sunday 2 nd September – all welcome. d. <u>Tenants Contents Insurance</u> – question raised last month – payments will be made over a 50 week year (same as the rental payments at the moment). If the cycle for rental payments changes so will the Tenants Contents Insurance cycle. e. <u>New Kitchens and Bathrooms</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Will each house be rewired prior to kitchen contracts or can a kitchen be rewired separately? If the two contracts are relatively close together we will try to carry out at same time.• Can tenants decide the position of electrical sockets. Yes, within the regulations.• Will sockets and light switches be installed at appropriate heights? At the latest recommended heights unless there are disability issues.• Will baths have handles on them to assist elderly tenants?	

	<p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can a tenant request a shower instead of a bath? Not unless there are medical requirements for a shower. • Can the tenant request that wall units, floor units (and worktops) be installed slightly lower (to make top shelves easier to reach or for wheelchair access to worktops)? This will be taken into account with the tenant at the design stage. • What style of taps have been chosen – hopefully ones that are easy to use for people with arthritis etc.? <p>Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can someone with a particular disability (or very elderly) request lever taps? <p>Yes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can taps be situated leaving enough space to get a bucket or a large pan into sink? <p>Yes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will tenants be given the opportunity to re-design their kitchen (within reason, technically and financially)? <p>Yes</p> <p>f. <u>Anti Social Behaviour Strategy</u> – This was approved by the Board of Management on 13th June.</p> <p>g. <u>Cleaning of Communal Areas</u> – Helensburgh Central TRA had requested some advice in terms of cleaning of communal walkways/stairs and obligations through: Title Deeds (for owner occupiers) - It is unlikely that this issue is particularly mentioned in Title Deeds – the Area Office should check these and develop a suitable strategy. Tenancy Conditions (for tenants) – the obligations in the Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement gives area staff various tools to enforce tenancy conditions. Service Charges – ACHA cannot make these mandatory but will perhaps look at this issue in the future. Groups of tenants and owners are at liberty to set up a common close fund to pay for the cleaning of their close should they so wish. Factoring – ACHA will be looking at this issue over the next 6 months and will involve consultation with owners (especially those with common responsibilities).</p>	
<p>4.</p>	<p>CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>In his absence Kirstie read out an email from Steve Byrne. The email is regarding the recent close fire in Helensburgh which was as a result of items left in the common close area being set on fire. Gillian provided answers:</p> <p>Q As ACHA will be instructing tenants to move items from closes for fire safety reasons what provision will they be making for safe storage of things like prams and bikes?</p> <p>A I'm sure most people have a shortage of storage space and tenants living in flats can't be treated any differently. It has never been permissible to store items in common areas (Scottish Secure Tenancy agreement).</p> <p>Q If ACHA cannot provide alternative safe storage would tenants be allowed to erect sheds on common ground?</p> <p>A Each application for permission would be treated on its own merits – it would</p>	

	<p>depend on the size of shed, available space and if there were any other owners with a 'right in common' to that piece of ground.</p> <p>Q If an owner has items stored in a common close and refuses to move them what action can ACHA legally take?</p> <p>A We would hope that residents would act reasonably and responsibly and I'm sure a visit from the Fire Master would help them understand the risks. Owners do not have a legal right to store items in common areas.</p> <p>Q When tenants purchased their home from the Council they entered into a contract regarding common areas etc. With stock transfer did each individual owner have to agree to a new contract with ACHA or were the existing contracts signed over to ACHA as part of the transfer?</p> <p>A There is no 'contract' as such, each owner has a Title Deed to their property and this outlines an owners rights and responsibilities in terms of common areas ie they would have a 'right of access' but not a right to change the use of the common area to a storage area.</p> <p>Q If there is no mention of not using common close areas for storage in the existing contracts can ACHA legally impose new conditions on owners?</p> <p>A As above the Title Deeds should by law contain a section on 'common areas'. If there is no mention made of common areas in an owners Title Deeds, it does not automatically give them the right to do as they wish and put lives at risk.</p> <p><u>Disability Rights Commission</u> – action has been taken against an agency for failing to make a document available in large print. Noted.</p> <p><u>Community Planning Partnership (CPP)</u> is hosting a seminar on Alcohol Issues in the Council Chamber, Lochgilphead on 6th July.</p> <p><u>The Mid Argyll & Kintyre Area Committee</u> have invited Panel members to attend their next meeting on Tuesday 26th June at 6.30pm – anyone interested please phone Susan Turner at ACHA on 01546 604828.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>WEBSITE UPDATE</p> <p>Ile Tec sent Kirstie an update on what has been added to the site. There were 41 first time visitors in April and 45 first time visitors in May.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p>ACHA UPDATE</p> <p>a. Councillors nominated on to ACHA's Board by the Council: Cllr John McAlpine (Kintyre & the Islands) Cllr Roderick McCuish (Oban South and the Isles) Cllr Alister MacAlister (Dunoon) Cllr Rory Colville (South Kintyre) Cllr Al Reay (Helensburgh Central, Garelochhead and Cove)</p> <p>b. Cavity Wall Insulation – potential failures in previous installations – Linda Haig, Director of Investment and Regeneration has a list of actions approved by the Board to gather more information and recommend action.</p> <p>c. Term Maintenance Contracts – the Board approved the following Bute – George Hanson Cowal – Extend existing arrangements and re-tender Kintyre – McKinven and Colville Lomond – PME/Mowlem Lorn - Extend existing arrangements and assess work packages Mid Argyll - Extend existing arrangements and assess work packages</p> <p>d. AGM of Board of Management – this will take place on Thursday 13th</p>	

	<p>joining Argyll with Highland for national engagement issues would be the best scenario. Argyll reps on the Steering Group are: Elsbeth Daldry, Rose Colquhoun, Steve Byrne, Sonja Aitken, John Croy Dates of future meetings- 13th August and 25th August (Dunblane Hydro) Update for Tenants Panel on 21st August</p>	Kirstie
11.	<p>CUSTOMER COMPLAINTS POLICY & CUSTOMER CARE CHARTER Draft was circulated for comment at the next meeting.</p>	
12.	<p>Any Other Competent Business <u>Grants for Owner Occupiers</u> Is there a budget set aside for this or is this to come from right to buy receipts? Gillian will get formal reply for next meeting. <u>Communities Scotland</u> Tenant Involvement in the Inspection Process – copy of powerpoint presentation distributed. Contains good ideas for getting tenants more involved in the quality of services provided by a landlord. <u>Community Action Fund</u> This is the donations policy that ACHA operates – distributed the new policy and application form. Maximum of £300 grants for projects which have a housing connection or a connection to the Aims and Objectives of ACHA. <u>New Minister for Communities and Sport</u> Distributed a copy of an article from SFHA (Scottish Federation of Housing Associations) magazine about Stuart Maxwell, the new Minister for Communities and Sport. <u>Right to Buy Booklet</u> Distributed a copy of a new leaflet for anyone considering buying their home from ACHA – gives some information on what is involved in being an owner. <u>Setting the Agenda</u> Version 4 was distributed. <u>Newsletters</u> CGL Printers (Oban and Helensburgh) have offered a more streamlined and cost effective service for the production of Tenants Association newsletters. At the moment newsletters are printed on a ‘one off’ basis. CGL have said that if we agree an approximate template (colour palette, % of photos to text) and a timetable it means they can give us a better deal and hopefully speed up the print time. To be discussed at a later meeting. <u>ACHA Staff – Names and Jobs Functions</u> A request was put forward for a list of ACHA staff in each area. Gillian will pass this to Colette Benham, Director of Human Resources & Corporate Services. <u>Buteman</u> The Buteman newspaper has an Information Page and ACHA’s contact details are not on this. Gillian will check this. <u>Cardross Play Area</u> Discussions have begun with ACHA on the refurbishment of this play area.</p>	<p>Gill</p> <p>All</p> <p>Gill</p> <p>Gill</p>
12.	<p>DATE OF NEXT MEETING Tuesday 17th July 10.30am, George Hotel, Inveraray Chairperson – Jane Lindsay</p>	

