



## Wider Role



## Community Work



## Arts



## Employability

ISSUE NO 2

# FLAIR review 2010

## Federation of Local Housing Associations

Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire

## Welcome to the second addition of our FLAIR Review! So what have we been doing in 2010?

The six members of FLAIR (Federation of Local Housing Associations In Renfrewshire) have been really busy during 2010. The current housing association members are Barrhead, Bridgewater, Ferguslie, Linstone, Paisley South and Williamsburgh and we've now been working together for approximately 11 years.

While we all remain separate, independent local community controlled organisations, as housing associations, we have similar goals and objectives. Over the years we have learned that working together can assist us in a range of ways. While 2010 has been a difficult year economically, we have still managed to achieve a great deal. Here is a summary of our achievements through partnership working over the last 12 months.

### FLAIR has:

- Delivered a wider role programme during 2010 consisting of 14 projects totaling £567,041 in grant funding from the Scottish Government. These projects have delivered improvements and benefits to our communities in a wide range of areas covered within this report. Total funding received for these projects from wider role, individual Associations or from external match funding amounts to £1,201,775. A substantial investment!
- Revised our FLAIR partnership constitution and provided a service level agreement for adoption between the members when delivering shared services.
- Provided over 16 locally based training sessions for staff and committee tailored to the needs of our members.
- Directors have met every 6 weeks throughout 2010 and discussed a wide range of issues including responses to the Scottish Government's policy consultations, benchmarking our performance against each other, reviewing section 5 homelessness issues, discussed strategic housing investment issues, and provided feedback from local authority meetings and issues for joint consideration.
- Directors have also been involved in lobbying the Scottish Parliament to secure a future for wider role funding, have organised our first FLAIR conference for staff

and committee with over 80 attendees who listened to the Council leaders of both Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire giving interesting presentations on local issues.



- Directors have met with a variety of housing professionals during the year including the chief executives of Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA) and Glasgow & West of Scotland Forum and representatives from Renfrewshire Council. We have also participated in the GWSF's 'Keep it Local' campaign – further information is available at [www.gwsf.org.uk](http://www.gwsf.org.uk)
- FLAIR has met with Inverclyde housing associations, Cloch and Oak Tree and with East Renfrewshire's Arklet housing association to consider jointly procuring our planned maintenance projects – I-FLAIR is now taking forward a 5-year programme of works with an estimated value in excess of £40m. We hope this will bring economies of scale from procuring bigger programmes and save time administratively as we pull together resources.
- Provided shared services between Associations including development agency support,

management services for supported housing, finance agency services, and property maintenance services.

- Property managers have continued to work together to jointly procure services including our gas maintenance contract, and our cyclical paintwork contract.

You will find more information on our work within this report. We continue to believe that this long-established partnership working between the FLAIR members has been hugely beneficial, not just for the FLAIR members, but to our local communities. We have contributed to the fast changing housing environment and policy consultations documents submitted by the Scottish Government. We all worry about what lies ahead during the difficult years to come with lack of housing investment in affordable housing and the impending welfare reform but we will respond and work with our communities to continue to deliver excellent services to our customers. We will continue with our joint wider role strategy to attract funding to deliver long and lasting improvements within our local communities, particularly when faced with such difficult economic times.

We hope you enjoy reading our second review and we would welcome any feedback or comment on its contents.

We would like also to express our thanks to housing consultant Dave Alexander for keeping I-FLAIR on track over recent times and we wish him a long, happy and active retirement.

### Inside News.....



#### Credit Munch

A very popular project with people learning a range of cooking skills and techniques that they can try out at home.



#### Streetlinks Youth Diversionary Programme

This project provides a range of streetwork, youth mentoring opportunities and sport sessions for young people within their communities.



#### Fundraising

Cash for Kids Christmas Event.



#### Wider Role

SFHA's Wider Role reception at the Scottish Parliament on 28th September 2010.

# Wider Role Activities

## Dunterlie Family Support Project

Barrhead HA is working with council partners to deliver a family support and mentoring project for problematic families living in Dunterlie. Working with social work staff, the project uses mentors to work with children aged between 8-12 years with the aim of diverting them from anti-social behaviour. A Council placement trainee has also been given employment for 12 weeks as part of this project. The social work department and housing staff at the Association will work with the families to ensure further advice and assistance is provided. This is a pilot project with wider role funding and an application has been submitted to Children in Need for further funding.



## Credit Munch

Barrhead HA has commenced a number of taster cooking sessions in local venues across Barrhead to teach people how to cook. The project is proving very popular as people learn a range of cooking skills and techniques that they can try out at home. If you are interested in this project, please contact Barrhead HA's office.



## Money Matters (Fuel Poverty) Project

Linstone is the lead association working with Solas and 8 other associations in Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and West Dunbartonshire to provide guidance to tenants in both reducing their fuel costs and energy efficiency. Solas, who are specialists in this field, visit the tenant and ensure they are using appliances efficiently (particularly heating) and provide guidance on the best tariffs, together with advocacy services if people owe money to energy suppliers.

Between October 2010 and March 2011 Solas will be visiting those tenants referred by their association. If you are interested in receiving this service please contact your Housing Officer who will make a referral.

## Community Learning Coordinator

Barrhead HA has continued to employ a Community Learning Coordinator throughout 2010 to provide a range of services locally. Support is being offered to the Auchenback Resource Centre to ensure smooth delivery of community led training courses provided by Reid Kerr College. The Coordinator also offers administrative and professional support to the Board of the ARC. Support has also been offered to a range of other projects including Dunterlie Hall Users Group, community researcher projects, employability partnership, and Community learning and development local partnership. The project has been successful in attracting additional grant income through the Lottery's Awards for All funding and the Government's Cashback for Communities funds.



## Art/Litter Awareness Project

This project involved artists working with primary 5 children from the St John Ogilvie School in Paisley. Aimed at raising awareness in terms of recycling and litter-free environments, the children's art work has been encapsulated in panels mounted on litter bins, supplied by Renfrewshire Council. The Council have agreed the location for the bins and their on-going maintenance.



## Johnstone Castle Community Learning Centre

Johnstone Castle Community Learning Centre is the focal point for community learning, information and regeneration in Johnstone Castle. Linstone HA successfully attained wider role funding to support the salary costs involved in employing a Centre Coordinator.

The Centre, established in 1999 in response to the closure of the local library, runs a range of activities including youth clubs, IT training, and mother and toddler groups, designed to encourage and support the local community.



Lord Provost McKay (centre) with group visiting good quality affordable housing in Barrhead.

“ It has been a great pleasure to visit the new housing developments in Barrhead that have been delivered thanks to the hard work of all the individuals who contribute to Barrhead HA. The dedication and vision of local tenants, residents and our housing professionals will continue to have a direct and positive impact on the day-to-day lives of local people in and around Barrhead, and makes an invaluable contribution to the ongoing regeneration of the town. ”

Lord Provost McKay, East Renfrewshire Council

## Financial Advice Project

Since 2007, FLAIR has been providing welfare benefits advice to our tenants. In the last 18 months, we have supported over 700 tenants, helping them obtain almost £200,000 in actual benefit gains, with another £1/2 million of anticipated income.

Welfare Rights Officers provide invaluable assistance, helping tenants increase their income and understand the benefits system.

They also secured funding from Cash for Kids at Christmas, to provide vouchers for young children whose families had been involved with the project.

If you are interested in receiving this service please contact your housing association who will make a referral.

## Project OsKar

Linstone HA has set up a partnership with Project OsKar, a local reuse and recycling centre. Project OsKar has 3 aims:

- To reduce the amount of waste going to landfill in Renfrewshire.
- To offer employment, training and stability to young people, particularly those further from the job market.
- To supply good value household items to members of the public, particularly low income families or housing association customers.

New tenants, who need help with furnishing their home, receive a grant which can be used at Project OsKar's shop in Paisley to purchase quality, affordable furniture, white goods and even paint. Not only does this initiative help tenants set up home and maintain their new tenancies, it offers opportunities to young people and benefits the environment by recycling unwanted furniture.

## Digital Inclusion

Williamsburgh HA continues to promote the ongoing availability of IT training in conjunction with the University of the West of Scotland.

PCs are provided to those residents who successfully complete one of the three courses supported by the Association; 1st Steps, Next Steps in IT and Microsoft Office Specialist.



# Employability

## Landscape Training and Environmental Employability Projects

FLAIR supports two projects which are managed by Community Links Scotland (CLS), Williamsburgh and Paisley South HA and delivered by the Wise Group throughout Paisley, Barrhead and Erskine. These projects build on the success of the original FLAIR landscaping scheme which, during 2008–10, improved the quality of the environment and amenities available to the local communities. It served also to enhance the safety of residents through fencing, car parking, backcourt and common area improvements.

The training programme was implemented over the course of 2010/11 with 2 squads supporting 12 training places, with a throughput of 13 trainees; supported at all times by a supervisor.

Priority was given to unemployed local individuals and those requiring additional support to progress from Incapacity Benefit. The training programme will enable participants to update their skills, while earning a weekly wage. On completion of the employment and training programme, trainees achieved:

- SVQ Level 2 General Building Operative ( 11 trainees)
- Work training places for local unemployed people (12 trainees)
- CSCS Site Safety Card ( 9 trainees)
- CIEH Manual Handling Certificate ( 11 trainees)

This will enable participants to go on to accredited further education courses or into the employment market. 50% of the trainees gained employment.



## Apprentices

Williamsburgh HA is continuing to encourage contractors to support the employment of apprentices through the procurement of our maintenance work. Consideration is also being given as to how we can build in broader benefits of local employment through the I-FLAIR maintenance procurement process, currently under development.



# Youth Work

## Streetlinks Youth Diversionary Programme

Bridgewater, Linstone and Williamsburgh HA continue to invest in the Streetwork and Youth Diversionary Programme by retaining the services of Streetlinks, who provide a range of streetwork, youth mentoring opportunities and sport sessions for young people within their communities.

The programme aims to increase young people's links to current youth resources and create opportunities for them to develop existing and new skills, in areas of interest, by being supported through youth work practice and in particular streetwork.

Each RSL area has benefited by raising the profile of their work on the street. A key focus of this youth work project is to connect RSL and Scottish Government Wider Role investment to the needs of young people. This creates opportunities for young people, in terms of personal growth, participation and making positive choices about their use of time.

Our half yearly review of the project identified that there had been 80 youth work sessions, almost 1500 contacts with young people and 207 young people registered with Streetlinks. Subsequently, despite the severe weather conditions, 20 street work sessions took place throughout the three areas, together with several cross boundary youth work sessions. This proved a huge success and, as a result, a further cross boundary initiative was launched, involving 21 young people who had not previously participated in youth work.

The project, funded by the three Housing Associations, the Scottish Government and the Hugh Fraser Foundation, has proved very successful in terms of the numbers of young people, within our communities, diverted from risky behaviours.



## The Haven Employment Project

After 3 years, we have come to the end of the Haven Employment Project, which all but one of the FLAIR Associations participated in. The project involved the Associations providing meaningful employment and mentoring for five people who were registered disabled. The success of the project hinged on the support and quality of work which the Associations were able to offer the 'Associates'.

Part of the support provided included establishing a 'buddy' system of supervision where each Associate, in addition to being supervised, could call upon the support of a buddy to assist them deal with any issues arising in the workplace. An unintended consequence of establishing the buddy system has meant that in each Association, there is at least one member of staff who has learned about the particular issues which surround employing and working with someone who has learning difficulties.

The Project was established with funding from each Association and the Scottish Government in association with Haven, a charitable organisation employing people with learning difficulties in the Renfrewshire area. Although one of the objectives, which was to prepare the Associates to take on more permanent positions either within FLAIR or another organisation has not been fulfilled, each Associate is now far more equipped to compete in the open market, for employment within an office environment.

All of the Associates have become integral parts of the Associations' staff team and have been providing valuable work, allowing staff to concentrate on other activities.

Funding for the project from the Scottish Government has come to an end and consequently most of the Associates will revert back to their former Haven employment in Hillington.



# Healthy Lifestyles

## Twilight Basketball

This project aims to use basketball to provide a pathway for young people in the areas where FLAIR operate. By learning about, experiencing and playing basketball, through coaching and physical training sessions and competitions, participants in the project will be able to make more informed lifestyle choices, thereby improving fitness levels, behavioral patterns and their aspirations.

We are now in the fourth year of this programme which is funded by a combination of grant from the Wider Role fund, Big Lottery Awards for All and Children in Need, supported by contributions from the two participating Associations, Linstone and Williamsburgh.

As with last year's programme, the target areas for the project have emerged from discussions with staff from the Youth Outreach Programme, delivered for FLAIR by Streetlinks.

This year's programme commenced at the end of October 2010 in Renfrew, picking up from where last year's programme finished off. There has also been a concerted effort to establish activity in Johnstone and Linwood. The greatest need was identified to be in the Sandyflats area of Johnstone, where promotional work and taster sessions are being delivered. Twilight sessions are also being delivered at Linwood Sports Centre, where transport is being provided.

## Tenancy Sustainment

This project, which was led by Ferguslie Park HA, came to an end on 31st March 2011 when the funding ceased. The project involved the employment of two officers who were tasked with taking referrals from housing staff. The officers provided a hands on role to assist tenants in making the appropriate contact and links with a range of service providers and sources of support, to assist with the difficulties sometimes associated with young adults and vulnerable people sustaining their tenancies.

FLAIR are keen to build on the achievements of the project in terms of training and supporting existing housing staff in carrying out this work on an ongoing basis.

# Development Activity

Acknowledging the overall reduction in development activity within Renfrewshire, the FLAIR members, determined to retain existing expertise in this area, are committed to offering existing technical staff employment in projects being delivered by Group members. This involves not only development staff but maintenance and clerks of work.



## Big Lottery Fund

### Our Place – Renfrew West

Our Place is funded by the Big Lottery Fund in Scotland. Funding of at least £1m will be made available to each of five specific communities in Scotland. A development support provider will help people to get involved in Our Place and support communities to prioritise what they need in their area.

The areas participating in the Our Place programme are:

- Bellsmyre, West Dunbartonshire
- Moorpark, Renfrewshire
- Newmains, Wishaw, North Lanarkshire
- Roystonhill, Glasgow
- Greenock Town Centre and East, Inverclyde



The outcomes of the programme are:

- Local areas better identify their needs and have a shared vision for the future
- Local organisations have increased capacity to develop and run projects which make a difference
- Local people have services and facilities that meet their needs and matter to them.

Through extensive community consultation during the summer of 2010, a Vision Statement was agreed and seven community themes were identified. From these themes, a number of project ideas evolved.

Williamsburgh HA have taken the lead role in the 'Growing Grounds' project. This initiative aims to investigate opportunities for creating new growing grounds within Renfrew West. Supported by promotional activities and pilot schemes, the objective is to enable the community to establish and manage a new allotment facility in the area.

## I-FLAIR

### Procurement of Maintenance Work

The nine locally based housing associations operating in East Renfrewshire, Renfrewshire and Inverclyde, have been engaged in the development of joint working initiatives for some two years. Initially, the focus of this work was on the delivery of a development programme.

Exploratory work, however, indicated that with a combined stock of 10,000 houses and planned maintenance expenditure over a five year period amounting to £40m, there would be merit in setting up a common framework agreement which I-FLAIR members could use to procure the majority of this work.

The benefits of procuring such activity in this way are primarily:

- A more efficient and less demanding procurement process
- A simpler means to procure individual packages of work
- Reduced risk
- Economies of scale through purchasing in greater volumes

Preparatory work identified the need to clarify the scope, scale and nature of the work to be covered by the framework. The programme indicated the need for a firm commitment from those wishing to take part in the framework, by January 2011. Our hope is that the framework will be established by August, with procurement commencing by the end of 2011.

## Glasgow and West of Scotland Forum

As part of the GWSF's 'Keep It Local' campaign, FLAIR has been highlighted as a positive example of partnership working, illustrating what community-controlled housing associations can achieve in their areas by working together.



Charity No. SC036265.



Charity No. SC035819.



Charity No. SC027454.



Charity No. SC035350.



Charity No. SC035589.



Charity No. SC037942.

If you would like to find out more details or information on FLAIR please contact: Ralston House, Cyril Street, Paisley PA1 1RW  
Tel: 0141 887 8613 or Email: admin@williamsburghha.co.uk

## Nanette to speak out for FLAIR!

At FLAIR's last general meeting in January 2011, Nanette Reid, Vice Chair of Linstone HA, was elected as the spokesperson for the group, with Claire Boyd of Barrhead HA being elected as her depute.

Linstone HA has recognised the benefits of working with its partners in FLAIR, since it was established in 1998. FLAIR is more than a forum for staff, but also an opportunity for committee members to meet, share training and also plan for the future.

Nanette Reid (pictured) said that she thought being a member of FLAIR provides associations with "new avenues for sustainable growth and partnership working", for example in wider role projects. She said "The variety of wider role projects delivered by us brings benefits to tenants and communities across Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire".



FLAIR is also represented on various other housing and community organisations - for example SFHA, GWSF, CLS, Employers in Voluntary Housing and Engage Renfrewshire, ensuring that issues relevant to our area are taken on board and progressed.

Nanette said "I really do think that this Annual Report demonstrates the benefits of collaboration and equal partnership on a local basis between the FLAIR associations."

## Benchmarking

Given our close working relationship, FLAIR members can learn from one another. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in benchmarking, where we share information on performance and highlight good working practices.

## Key Performance Indicators

	Barrhead	Bridgewater	Ferguslie Park	Linstone	Paisley South	Williamsburgh
Key Performance Indicators	09/10	09/10	09/10	09/10	09/10	09/10
Void rent loss	0.77%	0.77%	0.32%	1.61%	0.65%	0.98%
Current rent arrears	2.66%	2.03%	5.76%	4.44%	4.16%	3.20%
Housing Benefit: Full	35.00%	48.17%	55.11%	44.62%	44.99%	44.55%
Housing Benefit: Partial	26.00%	18.15%	18.95%	17.42%	17.13%	16.70%
% Turnover of stock	12.33%	7.54%	9.54%	13.73%	12.33%	9.14%
No. of repairs processed/year	2749	3114	4668	4121	4186	5915
Response times:						
emerg.	99.83%	99%	100%	99.6%	95.7%	100%
urgent	99.04%	96%	100%	95.7%	89.7%	99.3%
routine	97.89%	98%	98%	95.65%	89.6%	97.4%
% Stock meeting SHQS	97%	82%	100%	62.5%	54.96%	99.38%
% With valid gas certificate	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.4%	100%
% of working days lost (staff illness)	2.9%	9%	3.16%	3.26%	3.9%	2.48%

## Residents Satisfaction Survey

Following the success of previous joint working in the area of Resident Satisfaction Surveys, it has once again been agreed that Williamsburgh HA will lead in co-ordinating the 2011 survey. Following a comprehensive tender process, the successful consultants will be commissioned to undertake this exercise on behalf of FLAIR and Arklett HA. The brief aims to identify:

- household compositions and income,
- satisfaction levels with existing accommodation,
- satisfaction with services provided by the association,
- satisfaction with the local area,
- the affordability of rents.

Survey work will be undertaken in the Spring, with a view to members receiving their final reports, by late Summer 2011. As with previous joint surveys, not only will the data allow each Association to compare their performance against previous surveys but to benchmark performance against other FLAIR members.

## Work Experience for Students

FLAIR is committed to providing opportunities for students and young people to enjoy work experience. This has involved offering placements to both Enable trainees and university students, thus enhancing key skills, providing training and development, before their return to further education.

## FLAIR'S First Annual Conference

On 11th June 2010, FLAIR held its first annual conference. Eighty delegates attended from FLAIR member associations. Key speakers included the leaders of Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Councils, Derek Mackay and Jim Fletcher, as well as the director of the GWSF, Jim Harvey.

Feedback from the conference reflected the success of the day and it is envisaged that this will feature as an annual event on the FLAIR calendar