

Barrhead MATTERS

Barrhead Housing Association



Barrhead Housing Association
Limited
SCOTTISH CHARITY NO. SC 036265

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR READERS...HO...HO...HO...HO...HO...HO!

WINTER 2011

Tenant Road Shows



Jean Bryan of Barrhead receiving her prize from Claire Boyd, BHA Chairperson.

We invited our tenants to a series of road shows over the last few months to meet staff and receive information from us about our ongoing works. For example, tenants were asked about proposals for the fencing and play park in Auchenback and their views have been incorporated into the latest plans. We also were able to talk to residents about the forthcoming heating replacement works

at Saunders Court. We finished off in Neilston in November 2011.

Everyone attending was entered into a prize draw to win a flat screen television. We are delighted to confirm that the winning ticket went to **Jean Bryan** from Barrhead. Congratulations and thanks to all those who came along.

Festive Holidays

During cold spells, protect your home from burst pipes and broken down heating. Keep your heating on at all times and turn the boiler down to low. Know where your stopcock is so that if you do get a burst pipe you can stop the water. If you are going away, please ask us to drain down your house.

Office Opening Hours

Thursday	22nd December closes at 1.00pm
Friday	23rd December open 9.00am – 2.30pm
Monday	26th December closed
Tuesday	27th December closed
Wednesday	28th December closed
Thursday	29th December open 9.00am – 5.00pm
Friday	30th December open 9.00am – 2.30pm
Monday	2nd January closed
Tuesday	3rd January closed
Wednesday	4th January closed
Thursday	5th January re-opens 9.00am

For emergency repairs during times when the office is not open call:
0800 652 0633.

Free Energy Advice!

The Wise Group is offering free energy advice to Association tenants. If you are struggling with your fuel bills they may be able to help you find a cheaper supplier or offer you advice on how to save energy. Please contact the energy advice centre on **0800 512 012** for more information.



The Wise Group energy advice centre helps householders, communities and small businesses throughout West Central Scotland to save money, reduce their energy usage and impact on the environment.

Cash for Kids Success!

Our Welfare Rights Officer, Robert Findlay, assisted by our Clerical Assistant, Sadia Jabeen, have succeeded in getting £1425 from Radio Clyde's Cash for Kids Scheme. This will help 57 children from 29 families have a better Christmas. Santa will be visiting the Auchenback Resource Centre on 15 December 2011 to give these kids their Christmas treats!



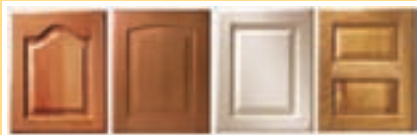
IN THIS ISSUE 2012/13 RENT REVIEW • HOW WELL ARE WE PERFORMING? • COMMUNITY PROJECTS • BHA SPONSOR LOCAL FOOTBALL TEAM

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY? • CONTACT US AT: Tel: 0141 881 0638 • Web: www.barrheadha.org • Email enquiries@barrheadha.org • or follow us on



Association secures £150,000 grant to replace electric heating!

Replacement of all the Association's remaining electric heating systems with gas central heating has been made possible with over £150,000 of funding from Scottish Power and Scotia Gas Networks. This means that all our properties at Saunders Court and Centenary Court will have gas central heating installed over the coming months. Residents affected will receive information about the expected timescales over the next few weeks. If you have any queries about this then please contact the office.

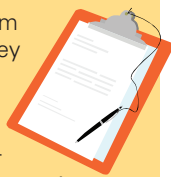


Kitchen Choices – we need your help!

The Association is about to undertake a large number of kitchen replacements over the coming years. We are seeking volunteers to help choose the style, colour and type of kitchen units and worktops we will offer to our residents. Please contact Dougie McIntyre, Property Manager at the office if this would interest you.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey Action Plan

We reported the results from our tenant satisfaction survey in our Summer Newsletter. It highlighted that there is high levels of satisfaction but also indicated a number of things we can try to improve. As a result we have developed an action plan to help address these issues. For example, the survey highlighted a need for us to provide better information about how rent money is spent to demonstrate that our rents are value for money, and we have set a target of February 2012 for producing better information and will be holding a consultation event at a local venue in the New Year. Similarly, we will be reviewing the cost of employing/introducing an estate caretaking service for our properties by February 2012. Copies of the full action plan are available from our office.



2012/13 Rent Review

We have started the process of looking at next year's budgets. A key part of this is reviewing rents and service charges and consulting with tenants prior to any proposed increase on 1 April 2012.

The Association is committed to providing value for money and quality services for all our tenants. We are aware of the current difficult economic circumstances, but we are also under pressure to ensure we meet our operating costs particularly in relation to our future planned maintenance programme and repayment of outstanding loans. The Management Committee will therefore consider a draft budget in December 2011 which is based on an estimated rent increase of between 4.5% - 5% but will keep an eye on inflation that is currently running at approximately 5%. The budget includes a commitment to spend over £800,000 on planned maintenance next year. We are also committed to keeping our costs down but we need to plan for the future. We continue to rigorously tender services in the current

climate to ensure we get value for money. Savings achieved allows further reinvestment in our stock.

The Association will be consulting with tenant groups in the New Year on the proposed level of increase, and we would encourage you to attend any of these meetings. Alternatively, you can contact us directly to discuss with a member of staff. Information will also be available on our website www.barrheadha.org and on our Barrhead TV screens located in and around the area. The consultation will be completed by 10th February 2012.

We are also reviewing our service charges based on the actual cost of delivering services during the last year. We are proposing to roll out our garden maintenance scheme to our housing in the centre of Barrhead, and those affected will be consulted in the New Year.

The Management Committee will approve the final budget in February 2012.



How well are we performing?

Every year we set targets for improvement and we monitor these internally but also against other housing providers. Here are some results for the first six months of the year:

Key Performance Indicator	Actual Performance to 30.09.11	Target
Current rent arrears	2.3%	2%
Technical arrears (Housing Benefit outstanding)	£8401.31	N/a
Former tenant arrears	1.9%	1.8%
Rent loss from void properties	0.7%	0.5%
Properties let within 13 days	55%	65%
Properties let within 14 - 28 days	25%	25%
Properties let more than 28 days	20%	10%
Average days to re-let	18.5	11
Number of people on the housing list for BHA and average time to join the list	1549/10.2 days	n/a/28 day target
Number of complaints received about anti-social behaviour – all categories	36/94.5% responded within timescales	100% within timescales
Number of abandoned properties/evictions	2/3	n/a
Emergency repairs completed on time	100%	100%
Non-emergency average days for repairs completed on time	3.7 days	3.5 days
Repairs satisfaction survey for period	100% satisfied	100%
% gas safety checks completed on time	99.75%	100%
Scottish Housing Quality Standard % complying with standard	98.5%	100% by 2015
Medical adaptations completed	£14,262.50 (14)	£22,000
% of days lost to staff ill-health	0.48%	2.5%

Complaints feedback to tenants



As most of our tenants know, we have a Complaints Policy which can be used where tenants or customers are dissatisfied with our service. It is therefore useful to provide some general feedback on issues arising from complaints and how these complaints help us review our services and our commitment to improvements. The following are examples of complaints raised so far this year:

Anti-social Behaviour: One complaint we received was about us not taking action quickly enough to deal with alleged anti-social behaviour. Anti-social behaviour can be very stressful, but dealing with it needs a co-ordinated approach by the Association. This means dealing with other agencies including the police, council services and departments, social work department etc and this can take some time. The complaint, however, highlighted that we need to give better information to complainants about timescales for dealing with complaints and we also need to improve our feedback on progress in dealing with complaints. We are working on improving these parts of our service.

Sharing Owners: We have a number of properties where sharing owners have purchased a % share of the property, renting the remaining share from the Association. Generally a mortgage is paid on the share owned and rent paid to the Association for the remaining share. However, sharing owners are 100% responsible for repairs and maintenance for their own homes. Sometimes this is not always understood and has led to complaints. The Association is currently reviewing ongoing arrangements with sharing owners; some sharing owners have sold their share back to the Association and become a tenant. Anyone needing further information on this should contact the office.

Garden Maintenance: Gardens that are part of a tenancy are the responsibility of the tenant to maintain and sometimes this responsibility is not carried out for a number of reasons including age of tenants and medical conditions. The Association's Committee agreed to roll out a programme of consultation to include garden maintenance as a service charge. This has successfully made a difference in Dunterlie over this summer and we will be consulting tenants in Barrhead centre over the coming months for next year and then hopefully within Auchinback the following year. Anyone requiring information should contact the office.



These are a just a few examples of complaints we have dealt with so far and some ways we have used these to improve our services. Using guidance from the Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman we are also proposing to introduce an improved and simplified two stage complaints process from next year. Stage one will mean front line staff members are able to deal and resolve the complaint quickly. Where someone remains unsatisfied the Director will be responsible for a second stage formal investigation and response to a complainant. Thereafter, the complainant will still be referred to the Ombudsman. This policy is currently out to consultation with residents and we will then wait for the Ombudsman's final consultation to be completed before we implement the new policy. Any queries, again please ask to speak with a member of our staff.

Community Projects...



Grant Funding

We have successfully secured Scottish Government Wider Role Grant Funding until March 2012 to help fund the continuation of our Community Learning and Events Coordinator Post. In addition we have also secured funding until March 2012 for our Family Mentoring Project and also for Credit Munch Project. If you want more information about any of these projects please contact Jim Munro at our office.

FAB PAD

In September 2011 in partnership with Impact Arts we launched the Barrhead Fab Pad Project. It is an innovative youth housing project, working with young people in the Barrhead area to decorate and personalise their home. The project is free for tenants to join and you get £100 from Impact Arts to help decorate your home.



The response so far to the project has been very good with seven young tenants participating in the project. If you are interested in finding out more information about the project contact our housing management staff or **Alex Murray at Fab Pad - 0141 575 3001**.

Streetlinks - Volunteer Participation Project

Over the last few months we have been working with a youth work organisation called Streetlinks on a Volunteer Participation Project. The



project provides volunteer training opportunities in youth work and sporting events. As part of this we have held 9 events across our stock with the climbing wall and street games have proved particularly popular with young people. Streetlinks have recruited four volunteers who are getting youth work training and potentially a Scottish Vocational Qualification. Streetlinks are planning another three fun events over the next few months, and will be advertising these over the next few weeks.

Development Activity

The Association has grant funding from the Scottish Government to purchase three or four properties in the Eastwood side of the local authority and so far three properties have been bought. But what else are we doing to increase the supply of accommodation? We are in the process of buying four properties in Barrhead from open market sales – these are mainly one bedroom in the centre of Barrhead. These are being bought without grant and are being offered to people from the East Renfrewshire Housing Register at affordable rents.

We are continuing to participate in the Scottish Government's Mortgage to Rent scheme where owners are facing eviction. We can help them stay in their property and become a tenant of the Association. We are seeing increasing numbers coming through this route due to the current economic climate.

New name for Factoring Services



The Association has set up a new subsidiary company called **Levern**

Property Services Ltd. The new company will take over the existing factoring services of our owners after full consultation.

The main reason we are creating this new company is for tax and regulatory reasons however the change will allow us to further the charitable aims of the Association and allow future diversification. This may include expanding and delivering additional services and in the longer term creating employment opportunities.

We will be writing to the owners affected early in the New Year to arrange meetings to discuss the proposals. It is hoped the subsidiary will be 'live' by 1st April 2012. Should any factored owners have questions about this process please contact our Property Manager Dougie McIntyre at the office.

Welfare Rights Services

With changes already being implemented by the Coalition Government and lots of changes ahead, there is no better time for Barrhead Housing Association tenants to get in touch with the Association's Welfare Rights Officer Robert Findlay. He will do a thorough check to ensure entitlement to benefits is correct. If you are worried about the potential changes, contact Robert for help. He is in our office every Tuesday, so please call ahead to make an appointment.

Barrhead Housing Association Sponsor Local Football Team



The Association is delighted to have recently sponsored £500 for football strips for the Dunterlie football team. Formed from the Dunterlie area, there are now 17 boys who train and play three times a week; have a coach in place to keep them on their toes and recently joined a local football league.

Most of the boys are teenagers and are totally committed to turning out on a Friday night and a Saturday morning to play with their teammates. Hopefully their new bright orange football strips will get them noticed and we will see some winning results. Good luck to the boys!

Scottish Government invites application to extend the Modernised Right to Buy beyond September 2012

Many of our tenants will know that the Scottish Government is to make further changes to the modernised Right to Buy, which is due to end on 30th September 2012. As this affects many of our tenants, the Association will be preparing a submission to the Scottish Government before 31st March 2012 requesting a further extension to this ruling for our area of operation. Over the last 10 years the Association has lost 25 properties through the Right to Buy and we have had many enquiries from tenants with the modernised RTB awaiting the 2012 deadline. We therefore intend seeking a further 10 year extension to the modernised RTB to protect our investment in the provision of rented properties and to protect the longer term viability of the Association. New tenants no longer have the Right to Buy. We would

clearly like to hear your views and would appreciate a response to this by 31st January 2012. We will write individually to all those affected by this possible change before the end of December 2011.



If you have any comments or complaints to make about any of our services, please contact the office:
Barrhead Housing Association Ltd
 60-70 Main Street, Barrhead G78 1SB
 T: 0141 881 0638
 E: enquiries@barrheadha.org
 W: www.barrheadha.org

