

Annual Review 2015/16

working together, growing stronger



Spokesperson's Review, our 7th edition!



As FLAIR spokesperson, I would like to welcome you to our 7th Annual Review. As well as FLAIR's spokesperson, I am also chairperson of Bridgewater Housing Association in Erskine. I am also a tenant of Bridgewater Housing Association. I was elected in November 2015 as FLAIR Spokesperson. FLAIR represents the Federation of local housing associations in Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire – we are Barrhead, Bridgewater, Linstone, Paisley South and Williamsburgh housing associations.

I'd like to start by thanking Nanette Reid BEM, our previous FLAIR Spokesperson for her contribution to FLAIR. She is a great ambassador for FLAIR and has worked hard to promote FLAIR over the last few years. She never missed an opportunity to mention FLAIR at any conference or to any Government Minister.

It's been another busy year for FLAIR and a lot has happened in the political landscape which has and will, have an effect on our businesses. The result of the Independence Referendum is now behind us and we can probably score this off our

risk registers – at least for the time being. We have a new Scottish Government which doesn't have the majority that it did before, so that will make for interesting negotiations, in terms of its Programme for Government. It might also present opportunities to place housing further up the priority list. It is true that if the Government is to meet their own target of 50,000 affordable homes over the course of the next parliament – they won't do it without the Paisley South's, the Williamsburgh's, the Linstone's, the Barrhead's and the Bridgewater's of this world. There's only so much that larger regional associations can do.

There are a few highlights from the last year that are worth noting and reading more on from this Annual FLAIR Review. Here are just a few things that I'd like to summarise...

- Congratulations to Barrhead HA in reaching their 30-year milestone and for completing and opening 15 new homes in Rankin Court. They also led on the recruitment of a new community regeneration officer post earlier this year to help progress the FLAIR regeneration Strategy.
- IFLAIR – I recently spoke at the launch of our new property maintenance framework event where the contractors were signed up the second Framework which covers the next four years. We shouldn't underestimate this achievement – we are one of a few housing groups across the country who collaborate in this way and we now have considerable experience of framework working thanks to John Livingstone the lead partner from Williamsburgh Housing Association.
- The strength of organisations is built on the quality of our staff and in some case their longevity. Recently EVH recognised over 150 years' service from members of staff at Williamsburgh Housing Association.
- At the other end of the spectrum, is the

work that we are doing with young people. Some FLAIR associations were involved in employing young modern apprentices, many whom celebrated their work at the SFHA conference this year. We also work with Community Jobs projects providing worthwhile job experience, sometimes permanent jobs and certainly learning new approaches to dealing with old problems. Paisley South has been tackling youth unemployment with two young people joining their new estates team.

- I'd like to congratulate Linstone HA for winning their Customer Excellence award at the Scottish Home Awards for 2016.
- Bridgewater HA, who never intended developing has three new developments under its belt and also recently secured external funding for the Care and Repair project, for the handy person service and for the older person housing service.
- Bridgewater and Barrhead were positively mentioned in the recent Regulator's thematic study for factoring.
- Bridgewater are also taking a leading role on the Renfrewshire Poverty Commission, helping to ensure that the views of local associations are heard and actions hopefully taken to alleviate child poverty in Renfrewshire.

That's just a few things I've highlighted over the last year – there is lots more to read in this Report. I hope you enjoy reading about our work and as always we welcome your feedback. Kind Regards...

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hugh Cameron'.

Hugh Cameron
FLAIR Spokesperson

Front page: Housing Minister, Margaret Burgess MSP congratulates Barrhead's Shirley Robison at the opening of Rankin Court.

FLAIR Annual Conference June 2016

Glynhill Hotel Paisley

Once again, our successful conference took place at the Glynhill Hotel in Paisley. Hugh Cameron, FLAIR spokesperson opened the 6th conference welcoming over 60 guests to the event. He introduced the programme for the day which would tackle some hot topics facing our housing environment at this time as well as some lighter events that bring benefits to our communities.

The conference is successfully administered for FLAIR by Paisley South Housing Association. The workshops included the following:

- **Value for Money** – a hot topic across the housing sector, Cairn Housing Association gave an overview of their recent value for money strategy and scorecard.

- **Village Storytelling Group** – provided a new approach to engaging our customers with the simple use of storytelling. All conference attendees provided a simple story about their childhood that was shared across the group. In a few short minutes, participants were chatting and communicating with one another as if they were old friends.

- **New Rules Around Procurement** – SFHA's procurement advisor provided an update on the new Procurement Rules that are now in place. Given our recent work with IFLAIR, our staff teams have learned a lot about what the new Rules mean, the

risks involved in not getting it right, and some good examples of how the rules will apply going forward.

- **Digital Renfrewshire** – Renfrewshire Council's digital assistance project manager, Diane Webb gave delegates an update on what is happening across Renfrewshire to improve technology and its accessibility across Council owned facilities for the future.

- **Paisley Bid 2021** – Stuart McMillan, Regeneration Manager, from Paisley's City of Culture 2021 bid also provided a good presentation on Paisley's bid and how people can get more involved.



Our new spokesperson paid tribute to Nanette Reid BEM at the conference as our previous spokesperson.

IFLAIR Procurement – £27m housing deal is signed with contractors

Communities are set to reap the rewards of a deal worth £27m following our group of eight housing associations, known as IFLAIR, securing the services of 27 contractors to deliver maintenance programmes to homes across Renfrewshire, East Renfrewshire and Inverclyde. As part of the deal, contractors will have to provide benefits to the community where the value of work exceeds a £100,000. This can be anything from doing a presentation at a local school, promoting work experience in the building trade or hiring a modern apprentice or graduate.

IFLAIR which includes Arklet, Barrhead, Bridgewater, Cloch, Linstone, Oak Tree, Paisley South and Williamsburgh Housing Associations met with contractors in April 2016 to sign the paperwork. The deal follows on from a previous collaboration which involved £23m of work.

Benefits to the housing associations include senior staff saving time by not needing to approach contractors individually and getting quicker quotes for work. Contractors are given guidelines on what is expected of them when they access peoples' homes and how to deal

with complaints. Project leader, John Livingstone from Williamsburgh HA said: *"Collaboration on procurement is actively promoted by the Scottish Government and, given the successful track record which IFLAIR carried on from its previous initiative, it was obvious to all associations involved that this would be the way forward"*. IFLAIR manages more than 8,000 homes.

Contracts will include window and door replacements, kitchen and bathroom upgrades, roofs and gutters, external walls, painterwork, electrical and gas maintenance.

Launching the event in April 2016, Hugh Cameron IFLAIR spokesperson said: *"We now have quite a long history of working collaboratively in Renfrewshire and Inverclyde and extensive experience of frameworks. We have tried to build on what works from the previous framework and discard those arrangements which*



potentially hindered successful outcomes. And so what we have now is a new improved framework which we anticipate will provide both tangible benefits that our Boards will be able to see for themselves and perhaps not so tangible, but equally important, benefits in terms of the new

community benefit clauses which we have introduced”.

Pictured below is an example of IFLAIR work completed – new external render and roofs at Auchenback, Barrhead.



Healthy Working Lives



Many of the FLAIR Associations are working towards various levels of the Healthy Working Lives awards. The programme helps people to think healthily about their diet and activity and encourages good attendance at work.

Pictured below is Bridgewater staff at a recent away day.



Healthy Working Lives

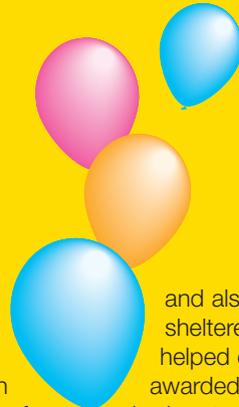
Barrhead HA – 30th Birthday, 1986-2016



A whole range of events are taking place in 2016 as Barrhead celebrates 30 years operating within the local community. The official 30th Birthday party took place on 16th June 2016 with a Fun Day in the local car park at Cochrane Street. Kicking off the celebrations with local radio station presenters Pulse FM and music provided by the excellent duo The Moonlighters, local residents were entertained with 80s theme music and activities all afternoon. All staff were dressed up for the day in 80s costumes. The free afternoon provided local people with a range of activities including slides, bouncy castle, beat the goalie, sumo wrestlers, face-painting and a caricaturist. For those feeling fit, you could

watch a short film by peddling two bicycles, as well as join in with the rubix cube competition. 30 hidden golden tickets were found by local schoolchildren – each winner receiving a 80s themed jar of sweets. Children were able to handle owls and small birds and the Glasgow based Storytelling Village Company provided children with some entertaining and interactive funny stories.

Working with Barrhead Housing Association, many of the events and preparations were also delivered by creative Glasgow based organisation, Impact Arts and sponsored by local companies. Local young people training on the Creative Pathway employability project



and also our Craft Café at the sheltered housing complex both helped out on the day. Prizes were awarded to two local schools. They both entered the Association's competition to design a 30th birthday badge. Three winners came from P4 pupils of St John's primary school and three winners from S1 students from St Luke's secondary school. Both schools also received a donation from the Association as a thank you for getting involved. Staff organised a swap shop with books, toys, DVDs, and clothes were offered out – local people gave a donation for each item and the Association raised nearly £50 for the local St Vincent hospice charity.



Barrhead HA's official opening by the Housing Minister, Margaret Burgess MSP, March 2016

The opening of 15 new homes in Rankin Court, Barrhead took place on 15th March 2016. The £1.6m development was formally opened by Margaret Burgess, MSP and Minister for Housing and Welfare. On the site of the former St John's Primary School, the land was successfully transferred from East Renfrewshire Council early last year to allow for the demolition of the existing building. The developer, McTaggart Construction, commenced on-site last April 2015. The Association received funding of £837,000 from the Scottish Government to complete the site. Development agency services were provided by Atrium Homes based in Kilmarnock and the design team was led by Robert Potter Architects from their Ayr office.

Of the new homes, Barrhead HA's chairperson Rena McGuire BEM said: *"The Association is delighted to complete this development – the first new build completed by Barrhead HA since 2010. All new homes have been allocated from the East Renfrewshire Housing Register."*

Formally opening the development, Mrs Burgess said: *"The Scottish Government has invested more than £800,000 to help Barrhead Housing Association to deliver these 15 high quality homes. The completion of the £1.6 million development is good news for local families who have been given access to much-needed affordable homes."*

Soon to be getting her keys to her new home, prospective tenant Mary McDade said: *"I'm absolutely delighted with my new home – it's just lovely. It will be easy to heat and there is space for everything I need. Thanks to the Association."*



Community Regeneration Officer for FLAIR

In January 2016, FLAIR appointed Tania Morlan as Community Regeneration Officer. She will develop a FLAIR wide Community Regeneration Strategy in consultation with partners and the wider communities. Tania was able to get off to a great start working with the Auchenback Resource Centre where she achieved a successful application for an energy project with funding of £96,000 from the Climate Challenge Fund.



Linstone HA win Customer Service Excellence Award, 2016



Linstone Housing Association was honoured at the **Scottish Home Awards 2016 for Customer Service Excellence** earlier this year. The event took place at the Corn Exchange, Edinburgh in June 2016. Linstone was crowned winner for Customer Service Excellence over a number of public and private sector entries throughout the country, and were also shortlisted in the Large Housing Association of the Year category.

Linstone's Chairperson, Nanette J Reid, BEM, said *"This award means a great deal to everyone connected with Linstone. For the staff it recognises their hard work and dedication to improve the services we provide. Through a number of community events, getting to know our customers and*

enhancing our online services we are making a positive difference within our communities and for our tenants."

The impact locally has been evident, with improved performance in a number of areas including quicker times to re-let properties, less empty homes and significant improvements to their repairs service.

One of Linstone's tenants made the following comment *"We have been in our property since October 2015 and would just like to say a big thank-you from the Bell family. Your staff have been brilliant, any issues addressed quickly. We are very happy with standard of high tenant service, a special mention to Laura the housing officer for Johnstone Castle; she is a great asset to Linstone. Many thanks to one and all."*



Linstone's Community Connector Programme



Community Connectors is a project co-ordinate by Linstone HA which links GP services, Recovery Across

Mental Health (RAMH) and Active Communities to provide one inclusive service. Through this, Linstone provide a housing advice service, open to anyone in Linwood and Johnstone regardless of their tenure. We have helped not only our own tenants, but factored owners, private sector tenants and owners out-with our stock area.

John was referred by the Community Link Worker based in the Johnstone surgery. John is currently living with family as he recently returned to the area. He wanted to explore getting a home of his own but had only ever lived in the private sector. In total John had three appointments with a Housing Advisor. Initially he was rather unsure of the project and was concerned that he was wasting our time as he was not sure if he was in a position to move at the time. Through discussion with the Housing Advisor, they explored John's current housing situation and where he would like to live. As the area identified by John as his preferred choice was out-with Renfrewshire it was agreed that the Housing Advisor would do a bit of research on his options for other areas. By the end of the three sessions, John was equipped with the information he required to make an application for housing in the area of his choice. He had the relevant application forms and an understanding of the assessment process and how properties are allocated. It was agreed that if John felt he needed help to complete the application forms he could contact the Housing Advisor for assistance.

Williamsburgh HA's staff awarded for long service



Williamsburgh HA were delighted to see the long service of five of their staff members recognised at an awards ceremony, hosted by Employers in Voluntary Housing (EVH).

The ceremony took place in EVH's Glasgow office and was attended by both Board and staff members from housing associations throughout the West of Scotland. Awards were presented to long-serving voluntary Board members, as well as those staff members who had achieved the milestone of 30 years or more service.

The awards went to: Owen McMillan (Maintenance Manager); Sheena Gordon (Admin Officer); Lesley Adie (Admin Assistant); Gaynor Corry (Admin Assistant); Sandra Doherty (Housing Officer).

Williamsburgh's App – Keeping Tenants Informed

Over the past few months, the Association has been working with our design consultants on developing a WHA App for mobile telephones.

The App contains useful facilities such as 'reporting a repair' and 'paying your rent'. It also contains information on local events and WHA news. It is hoped that customers, including tenants, factored owners and housing applicants will find this a useful source of information.

The App is available to download FREE to mobile phones and Ipad. The App will be regularly updated, keeping residents advised of what is happening within WHA.



Bridgewater HA develops FLAIR Partnership Plan

Each year, FLAIR Directors set out a full list of scheduled meetings covering 12 months when they will meet. As part of this review, they have developed a more strategic plan, called the Partnership Plan, to map out what work we intend to do collectively. It also maps out which organisation will lead on any specific task. Essentially the Plan describes what areas there is common agreement for a partnership approach. Part of the Plan for 2016 will see the formal agreement to include Ferguslie Park Housing Association re-establishing itself as part of FLAIR, following an exit in 2013.

FLAIR is not formally constituted, but we've worked together for nearly 20 years. We remain autonomous and responsible for our own individual organisation, however through this collaboration, the group has achieved a significant amount of work that benefits each organisation and our communities.

For 2016, the Partnership Plan has been agreed and work will focus on the following areas – policy development in areas including risk management, donations and equal opportunities; in sharing a value for money strategy developed by the housing sector; producing this Report annually which has been confirmed as very useful in promoting FLAIR; deliver training locally for our staff and our Board members on common issues; producing and sharing benchmarking information and good practice; procuring services wherever practicable for example planned and cyclical maintenance; sharing services for development or finance or clerk of works and for community regeneration; and to develop a strategy to support the Paisley City of Culture bid for 2020.

Development in resident participation

All FLAIR Associations have been strengthening the work we do with our tenants and residents. A number of FLAIR organisations got together to undertake mystery shopping which helps improve services to tenants and residents by focusing questions from telephone callers on specific areas including allocations, repairs and rent arrears. The results demonstrate a commitment to improving services for customers.

Paisley South HA's Tenant Participation Working Group has also undertaken training on tenant scrutiny which was delivered by TPAS. It has identified the Association's Letting Standard as its first scrutiny exercise. The Association's Governing Board and staff have completed the Chartered Institute of Housing's course 'Stepping up to Scrutiny' with everyone committed to achieving the positive outcomes that scrutiny can bring the organisation. For Williamsburgh HA, they are delighted at the on-going success of their Residents Focus Group. The Group, comprising of tenants and owner occupiers, meets 4 times per year to discuss various matters, ranging from setting local timescales for dealing with cases of anti-social behaviour, to helping design the Association's report on the Social Housing Charter. The informal and relaxed structure of the meetings encourages feedback and discussion, thereby allowing the Association to obtain a clear indication of what residents think of the services provided.

Linstone Housing marks a new beginning for older people's living in Linwood

Linstone Housing Association is planning to transform a multi-storey block of flats into an innovative development for older people. An integrated flexible approach to social inclusion and health will mean residents can stay in their homes longer, enjoy group activities and provide a valuable hub to the surrounding community. Linstone are now looking to the future of the development, and seek funding to help deliver great homes to meet the needs of the aging population.

Linstone's Chairperson, Nanette J Reid BEM said "Linstone has made an application to the Scottish Government for funding to provide community facilities for any older person living in the Linwood area."

The Belmar Court development has already begun, with a large scale insulation programme completed; which provides a new look for the external walls.

Director of Housing and Property Services, David Adam said "We are excited to see plans for Belmar Court going ahead. The first stage of external development is complete, with new door entry systems, lighting and CCTV implemented to ensure our tenants are safe and secure in their homes."

Linstone has also seconded a full-time member of staff to work both at Belmar and Asbury Courts. Margaret Baillie is busy getting to know tenants and has started a programme of activities for tenants and residents in the area.

Training Opportunities for Young People across FLAIR

Each FLAIR association has been involved in a range of training opportunities over the last year – encouraging housing as a career through modern apprenticeships and employing community job funded posts for young people to work within our estates. Barrhead's young apprentice, David Adam took part in the SFHA's modern apprenticeship challenge this year. Having only been employed for a matter of a few weeks, he managed to complete and upload a video of Barrhead's newest development at Rankin Court for inclusion in the challenge along with 18 other apprentices. An overall winner was announced and they all were congratulated on their entries.



Benchmarking information to 31.03.16

How well do we perform?

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 2015/16

Category	Barrhead	Bridgewater	Linstone	Paisley South	Williamsburgh	FLAIR Ave
Total stock	902+6=908 (+1)	850	1579	1204 (-1)	1623 (-3)	1233
Total rent due	£3,597,063	£3,935,249	£6,159,211	£4,842,997	£5,710,297	£4,848,963
% rent increase 2016/17	2.0%	1.5%	1.5%	2.02%	0.70%	1.54%
Average weekly rent	£82.05	£89.05	£72.75	£79.31	£69.60	£78.55
Satisfaction with overall service	95.9%	88.95%	85.5%	89.8%	86%	89.25%
Satisfaction – being kept informed	98.6%	91.9%	91.3%	94.4%	90.3%	93.3%
Satisfaction – opportunities to participate	58.6%	69.8%	70.1%	63.5%	71.9%	66.78%
Meeting SHQS	98.45%	97.4%	76.09%	99.75%	100.00%	94.34%
Emergency repairs	2.45 hours	2.02 hours	1.37 hrs	1.87 hours	3.50 hours	2.24 hrs
Non-emergency repairs	4.46 w/days	5.02 w/days	4.8 w/days	3.67 w/days	3.86 w/days	4.36 w/days
Repairs completed right first time	89.01%	86.3%	96.12%	96.89%	92.98%	92.26%
Appointments kept	96.5%	n/a	95.8%	98.23%	97.60%	97% (4)
Satisfaction – repairs in last 12 months	93.2%	92%	94.75%	78.01%	94.34%	90.46%
Anti-social behaviour cases resolved within local target	59 cases/94.9%	13/30.8%	113/92.9%	146/90.41%	272/72.43%	121/76.31%
Total rent collected	99.34%	100.6%	101%	98.66%	94.97%	98.91%
Gross arrears	3.82%	1.6%	5.13%	4.5%	6.17%	4.24%
Rent lost – empty homes	0.26%	0.61%	1.43%	0.52%	0.91%	0.75%
Time taken to re-let	11.6 days	27.5 days	32.47 days	15.7 days	28.23 days	23.10 days
Days lost to sickness	3.2%	5%	5%	1.39%	5.0%	3.92%

flair = community regeneration • community work • partnership • employability



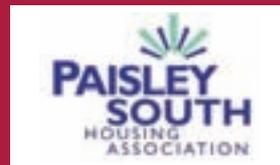
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