



# NEWSLETTER June 2009



Welcome to our June newsletter.

In this edition you will find key information about our annual garden competition, committee membership, allocations policy, rent free weeks and office closure. If you have any views on the content of our newsletter or on the work of the Association please complete the tear off slip below and return it to the office. On behalf of the Committee of Management and all the staff at Larkfield Housing Association I wish you and your family a happy and hot summer holiday.

**Agnes McMillan, Chairperson**

## AGM

The date for your diary is 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2009. The venue this year will be the new Inverclyde Academy on Cumberland Road at 6.30pm.

The AGM is an opportunity for you to hear what the Association has been doing all year and to let us hear your opinion regarding our services, etc. If you are not a member of the Association and would like to join please complete a form at the office and submit your £1 fee before the end of July to allow for consideration and approval at the August Committee and eligibility to attend the AGM.

## Office Closure

Please note that this year the Association office will be closed on the Greenock July & September public holidays. These are **Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July & Monday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2009** and in September the dates are **Friday 4<sup>th</sup> September & Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2009**.

## Committee Membership



Want to make Larkfield a safer and more attractive community? Interested in tenancy and repair issues? Financial matters? Want to learn new skills? Got some spare time? Then why not consider joining the Association's Committee of Management? The Committee of Management has responsibility for overseeing the work and strategic direction of the Association.

Currently our Committee consists of a wide section of residents, both young and old, with a variety of experience and skills. All new members receive full training and ongoing support throughout their time on the Committee. It is a very rewarding role and provides an opportunity for people to become involved in the management of the Association.

If you wish to find out more information on the work of the Committee or become involved please contact the office for more information.

Larkfield Housing Association, 14 Lothian Road, Larkfield, Greenock, PA16 0PG

Tel 01475 630930 / fax 01475 636111 e-mail [info@larkfieldha.org.uk](mailto:info@larkfieldha.org.uk) Web: [www.larkfieldha.org.uk](http://www.larkfieldha.org.uk)

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# Garden Competition

Its that time of year again when staff are out and about in the estate carrying out garden

inspections but instead of the staff compiling lists of the best gardens, this year the Management Committee thought it would be a good idea for Larkfield **RESIDENTS** to Nominate a Garden which you think should win a prize. This year we are also looking for the Most Improved Garden and best garden maintained by a disabled person. **Prize Info:** as in previous years there will be 2 competitions – a Tenant Competition and an Owner Competition with a First and Second prizes to be won and additional prizes for the most improved garden and best garden maintained by a disabled person. You can make your nominations either by completing our tear-off slip or by phoning or visiting our office. The Short Listing of entries and judging will be as in previous years. **Nominations must be in no later than 18<sup>th</sup> July 2008.**

## Rent Free Weeks

The summer rent-free weeks are on **6<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> July**

**2009.** Remember however, if you have an arrangement to pay towards any rent arrear, you should

continue to make payments during this period. If you are unsure please contact a member of the Housing Management Team on 01475 630930.

The winner of Feb/Mar is Caroline Gillan, 136 Burns Road, Greenock. The Winner of Apr/May is Heather Jeffers, 44 Devon Road, Greenock **Congratulations,** Please remember to return your repair receipts to ensure your entry to the next prize draw.

## Repair Prize Draw

## Rent Arrears Focus Group

The Association will shortly be undertaking a review of our

Rent Arrears Control Policy, which will include looking at our rent setting policy. To help assist in this process we are looking to establish a focus group. It is envisaged that the focus group will consist of 8-10 members including officers, Committee Member's and other residents residing in Larkfield. Meetings will be held here in our offices and are expected to last no longer than one and a half hours. All participants in the focus group will qualify for vouchers. If you would like to participate in the group please contact the office.

Meantime, if you have any suggestions about how we can improve any aspect of our rent control policy, please contact a member of the housing management team.

## NEW CONTRACTOR

As you will all be aware we have a new Gas Repair and General Repair contractor who is **CITY BUILDING**

**GLASGOW LLP.** Over the coming months you will see their silver vans running about Larkfield carrying out all the necessary work to keep your house in good working order. If you have a repair out-with office hours City Building can be contacted on **0800 595 595.**

## Fundraising

If you have visited our office recently you would have noticed that all the staff

have been involved in a sponsored Cycle to raise money for the 6 local Primary Schools Eco Groups to enable the children to have some play equipment in the Community Garden at Burns Square. The Staff cycled the 11miles around of the Isle of Cumbrae on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June and as you see from the picture they all enjoyed themselves. If you would like to donate to this worthy cause please pop into our office or contact a member of the team on 01475 630930.



## Major Repairs Programme 2009-2010

The major repairs programme for this year has been finalised and approved by the Committee of

Management. It involves the following works:

- Roughcast repairs (Wimpey No-Fines) – 27 Properties
- Fan Installations – 30 Properties
- Loft Insulations – 56 Properties
- Back Boiler Replacements- 12 properties.

We will be in contact with all tenants, whose properties are involved in this years programme prior to the commencement of any works.

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# Right to Repair

Tenants have the right to have a small number of urgent repairs (up to the value of £350) carried out by the Association within a given timescale.

This is called the Right to Repairs scheme. If the Association's primary contractor fails to start the repair on time or starts the job on time but fails to complete the repair within the time limit set, the tenant has the right to instruct another LHA listed contractor to carry out the repair instead. In such circumstances, the tenant is also entitled to a compensation payment from the Association and levels of compensation are detailed below.

## Qualifying Repairs:

Blocked flue to open fire or boiler; blocked or leaking foul drains, soil stacks or toilet pans where there is no other toilet in the house; blocked sink, bath or drain; insecure external window, door or lock; unsafe access path/step; leaks or flooding from water or heating pipes, tanks, cisterns; loss or partial loss of gas supply; loss or partial loss of space or water heating where no alternative heating is available; toilet not flushing where there is no other toilet in the house; unsafe power or lighting socket or electrical fitting; loss of water supply.

The following repairs must be completed within **3 working days**: (after the date of receipt of notification of the repair/inspection)

Partial loss of electric power; partial loss of water supply; loose or detached banister or hand rail; unsafe timber flooring or stair treads.

The following repairs must be completed within **7 working days**: (after the date of receipt of notification of the repair/inspection)

Mechanical extractor fan in internal kitchen or bathroom not working.

## Compensation

If our primary contractor fails to start the qualifying repair within the set time limit, the tenant may instruct another contractor from our list to carry out the repair. The second contractor will then advise the Association of this and we will pay £15 compensation to the tenant for the inconvenience caused. If our primary contractor has started, but not completed, the repair within the maximum time, the tenant will also be entitled to £15 compensation. The second contractor has the same length of time to carry out the repair as the primary contractor. If they fail to carry out the repair within the time limit set, the tenant is entitled to a further £3 compensation for each working day until the repair is complete, up to a maximum of £100 per any one repair.

There may be circumstances under which it is not possible for the Association to complete the repair within the maximum response period. The following circumstances may fall into this category:

Repairs within a property's defects liability period, which the contractor is responsible for. Repairs, which might involve an element of recharging to the tenants, Repairs, which are not the Landlord's responsibility where the repair was made safe whilst awaiting specialist components.

If you would like further details regarding the Right to Repair or would like a leaflet please contact a member of our Housing Management Team on 630930.



# Mutual Exchange

If you are already a tenant with Larkfield Housing Association but you would like to exchange your house with another person who is a tenant with a Local Authority or Housing Association, you must complete a Mutual Exchange form for both Landlords, which you can obtain from our office. We advertise our Mutual Exchange list in the reception area and if you require a copy or would like to have your details included in the exchange list, please contact a member of our Housing Management Team on 01475 630930.

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# Allocations Policy

The Committee of Management recently approved some changes to the Allocations Policy. The most significant change to the Policy involves where an applicant refuses 2 offers of rehousing within a period of 12 months, their application for rehousing will now be suspended for a period of 6 months. At the end of this period their application will be reinstated.

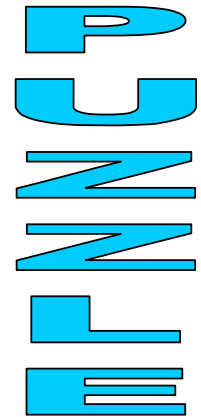
Any applicant or existing tenant wishing to amend their application to remove or include specific areas of choice within Larkfield should contact any member of the housing management team. If you would like a full copy of our Allocations Policy please contact the office.

## Financial Fitness Resource Team

The Financial Fitness Resource Team were established in March 1999 to provide welfare benefit advice on an outreach basis to the residents of Inverclyde. The aim of the project is to tackle poverty by ensuring local people have access to welfare benefit advice and financial information in their own communities. The project therefore attempts to tackle social exclusion issues by providing a range of grass roots services, which are free, independent, impartial and confidential. Furthermore, these services are provided in local communities, through home visits or the use of various local venues. If you would like to contact FFRT Team they have recently moved to 5 Sir Michael Street, Greenock, Tel 01475 729239, website, [www.financialfitness.jk.com](http://www.financialfitness.jk.com) or email them at [finfitteam@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:finfitteam@yahoo.co.uk).



Once again here's a chance for you to WIN!! There are 10 well-known kitchen appliances in the grid going any which way – forwards, backwards, horizontally, vertically and diagonally. When you've found all ten just send the completed grid attached to the tear off slip to the Larkfield office, address below, or hand it in to us. The winner will be picked at random from all entries received before the closing date of **28<sup>th</sup> August 2009**. The prize is a £10 gift voucher for Tesco stores.



The winner of last issue's wordsearch competition was Elizabeth McQuillan who took home a £10 gift voucher for Tesco.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN YOUR NEWSLETTER: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

How can we improve the services we provide to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please put your answers to the puzzle on a separate sheet and attach it to your tear off slip.