

11th AGM - a Milestone Year



Some 41 members, staff and guests gathered on Tuesday 25th September for the eleventh Annual General Meeting and heard Danny McMillan report on another successful year, a year which was dominated by Larkfield's ongoing Succession strategy in response to the planned retirement of former Director, Jim Pollock, and ongoing proposals to join the Link Group. After many months of planning and discussions Larkfield HA was delighted to announce in January 2007 that it was now a subsidiary of the Link Group. Danny commented that this unique partnership was the only one of its kind in Scotland and that we have retained our assets, our landlord status, our name and our local identity and we are already seeing the benefits from becoming part of the Link Group in terms of financial savings and access to additional resources.

The members were also updated on the continued activities of the Larkfield Community Safety Group and achievements over the year included further progress on the Off Road Biking Project, Community Greenspace Project, a 5th Environmental Schools Art Project and Larkfield's 2nd Community Fun Day.

Ward Councillor, Ciano Rebecchi, from Inverclyde Council (speaking on behalf of the three Ward Councillors) talked to the members of his hopes for the Larkfield community and the positive approach which he was taking along with Councillors Ken Ferguson and Gerry Dorrian to allow joint working to take place across the political parties on behalf of the Larkfield residents. Mr Ernest Mukumba won the prize draw for £30 of Argos Vouchers. A question and answer session followed and the Chair closed the meeting and invited all in attendance to stay on to enjoy the buffet!

The members also heard that Danny McMillan would be standing down as Chairperson following the AGM as per the rules of the Association. Danny thanked everyone for their support in previous years and wished his successor all the best for the future. On behalf of Larkfield HA, Elizabeth Bradley expressed the Committee's gratitude and thanks to Danny for his dedication, and contribution to Larkfield over the past 5 years. Danny will remain very much involved with Larkfield Housing Association as a Committee Member.

New Committee Elected

Immediately following the AGM the new Committee met for the first time and welcomed back Gordon Ritchie, Margaret Bell and Danny McMillan back as fully elected members for 3 years. The Committee also welcomed 4 newly elected members: Sharon Bannister, Ernest Mukumba, Mary Dineen and Robert Lowry. The Committee were also pleased to endorse Margaret Grant back onto the committee for another year as a professional co-optee. Officer bearers for the next year are: Agnes McMillan . Chairperson, Elizabeth Bradley . Vice Chair and Jim Canning . Secretary.



Whilst we are delighted at the number of new members joining the Committee there remains one unfilled post on the Committee should any shareholding member wish to come forward and fill this space. If you would like more information please contact Lynne Griffin, our Area Manager, at the office.

Repairs Prize Draw

The winner of the £20 TESCO voucher for June/July is Mr McGeehan of 64 Banff Road, Greenock,

Congratulations. Please remember to return your repair receipts to ensure your entry to the next prize draw.

Garden Competition 2007



Tenant's Winner

Owner's Winner

- ❖ **First Prize** for the Tenant's Competition went to Mr Crumlish 44 York Road
First Prize for the Owner's Competition went to Mrs Wilson 114 Banff Road both prizewinners received £100 garden vouchers redeemable at any garden centre
- ❖ **Second Prize** for the Tenant's Competition went to Mr McGrath 75 Berwick Road
Second prize for the Owners Competition went to Mrs Carroll of 192 Westmorland Road both prizewinners received £65 garden vouchers redeemable at any garden centre.
- ❖ **Third Prize** for the Tenant's Competition went to Ms Morrison of 120 Banff Road
Third Prize for the Owners Competition went to Mr Arthur of 1 Chester Road both prizewinners received £35 garden vouchers redeemable at any garden centre.

Many thanks go to our sponsors **Patten & Prentice Solicitors, Land Engineering and Carillion PME** for the very generous donations they gave in order to make the prize vouchers even better this year.

Tenant Participation Strategy

We are currently reviewing our tenant participation strategy and have established a focus group comprising committee members, tenants and

officers from the Association. As part of our strategy we are reviewing our existing action plan and developing new objectives and targets. The group are looking at a number of issues including how the Association communicates and consults with residents of Larkfield, through public meetings, surveys, newsletters, website and information leaflets. We are also assessing the potential for Mystery Shopping & Tenant Led Inspections, reviewing our Environmental Arts project and the Community Safety Group.

The group have met on two occasions and discussions have been lively and the contributions and ideas from each of the participants will hopefully help the Association in developing our new strategy. If you would like to express your views on our Tenant Participation strategy please contact the office on 01475 630930.

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

Tel 01475 630930 / fax 01475 636111 e-mail info@larkfieldha.org.uk Web: www.larkfieldha.org.uk

Office Opening Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.30pm to 4.00pm
Wednesday 9.00am to 12.30pm Closed Wednesday afternoon

Major Repairs Update



Larkfield Housing Association is pleased to announce that the programme of works for the coming year is as follows:

- The Upgrading of Loft Insulation to 124 Wimpey No Fines Houses and Flats.
- As part of our commitment to meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard we will be installing Extract fans in 10 properties to improve the air quality
- External Refurbishment of 1 Atholl Steel Block.
- Painter work to 1 block of Wimpey No Fine Houses.

There will be more information provided nearer the time to those homes, which are affected by these programmes.

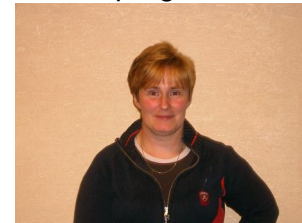
Did You Know.?
 Larkfield Housing Association will be spending **£161,000** on these works.

Another Addition to the Larkfield Team



Hi my name is Martin Mc Kendrick and I am delighted to join Larkfield Housing Association. For the past 12 years I worked for West Dunbartonshire Council and I was involved in all aspects of housing management. These are exciting times to join the Association as our partnership with the Link Group develops and presents new opportunities and challenges. Living locally in Greenock I am fully aware of the progress the Larkfield area has made in recent years and I am hopeful that this progress will continue. I look forward to meeting many tenants and residents in the coming months!

New Committee Member Profile



As you will have read earlier the Association's Committee of Management has 4 new members following the AGM. One of these new members is Sharon Bannister. A Larkfield tenant for the past 7 years and a resident in Larkfield all her life, Sharon became interested in joining the Committee recently as she wanted to find out more about how the Association's processes work and what goes on behind the scenes. As a new addition to the Larkfield Team, we asked Sharon some crucial questions to know you+questions:

QUESTION	ANSWER
Pizza or Pasta	Pasta
Coronation Street or Eastenders	Coronation Street
Tea or Coffee	Tea
Nights in or Nights out	Nights out
Pop or Rock	Pop
Flowers or Chocolates	Chocolates

New Mums



Inverclyde has the lowest rate of breastfeeding among new mums in Scotland. Inverclyde's

Breastfeeding Co-ordinators are hoping to change this. They say, Breast milk is a Mum's way of providing her baby with all the nutrients he/she needs. Breastfeeding not only benefits the baby but Mum too. The World Health Organisation recommends exclusive breastfeeding for at least 6 months for full benefits to be gained, although it is widely agreed that some breast milk is better than none. If you would like to find out

more about the benefits of Breastfeeding got to www.realbabymilk.info or contact Inverclyde's Breastfeeding Co-ordinators Catriona Maclean or Karen Callery on 506039.

Evictions

The Association is disappointed to inform you that we have had to carry out 2 Evictions recently. One eviction was for non-payment of rent and the other was for non-payment of Rechargeable Repair Accounts and not Maintaining Garden to an acceptable standard. We do not enjoy having to do this but it is at times necessary. If you are experiencing difficulty in maintaining your tenancy please contact the office and speak to one of the housing management team on 01475 630930.

Financial Fitness Resource Team

The Financial Fitness Resource Team is Inverclyde's only independent Welfare Benefit advice service, offering outreach services through

surgeries, home visits and one-off events. Since the Team was established in March 1999 they have helped their service users claim a staggering £11 million in unclaimed benefits. The Team can offer advice on all benefits as well as help with form filling, better-off calculations, basic money advice and many other valuable services. They hold a surgery at Youth Connections (formerly John Reid library) at Burns Square on the last Thursday of every month between 2-3.30 pm for which you do not require an appointment. Alternatively you can contact the Team on 729239 or visit their website, www.financialfitness.uk.com, for a full list of local surgeries.

Rechargeable Repairs

On occasion there are repairs, which we are requested to carry out which are not the responsibility of the Association. In such instances we will recharge the cost of the repair to you. These repairs can include: clearing blocked sinks where something has been put down the plughole that shouldn't have been or changing locks because keys have been lost. We will also recharge you where damage has been done to our property through acts of vandalism or criminal behaviour if you do not provide us with a police incident or crime reference number. An extensive list can be found in your Tenant's Handbook and Tenancy Agreement. Above all, try to make sure recharges do not arise in the first place as this can add to your household expense. To minimise the chances of being recharged for repairs, which are your responsibility, you should:

- Ensure you call out the correct contractor if you have an emergency out with our opening hours. Details of which can be found in your handbook;
- Take all reasonable steps to resolve routine problems yourself i.e. plunging sinks, resetting window handles, resetting electrical trip switches, resetting boilers, re-igniting pilot lights, checking there is gas/electricity in the meter etc. When a problem arises during office hours you can call the office and ask for advice.
- Make sure you are in when you say you will be. The Association is charged even if the tradesman does not gain access and this charge is then passed on to you;
- Make sure that the fault does not lie with faulty electrical goods/non-standard power or light fittings which may be causing the fuse board to trip;
- When giving up your tenancy make sure your property and garden are as clean and clear as they were when you moved in and remove all non-standard items;

If you would like more information on rechargeable repairs or any other aspect of the Association's repair service please contact us on 01475 630930

Useful Numbers



- ❑ **Gas Repairs Out of Hours Emergency – 01475 788080,**
- ❑ **All other Repairs out of hours Emergency – 0845 930 3031,**
- ❑ **Problem Solving Unit – 0800 0131701**
- ❑ **Community Police – 01475 492855**
- ❑ **Community Wardens – 01475 714242**

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