Dunbritton delivers!

Things don’t stand still at Dunbritton. Since we were established in 1992 we have developed an excellent reputation as a developing housing association by working in partnership with local authorities, the Scottish Government, contractors and lenders.

We are delighted to report on real progress being made at our most recent development of new-build houses at Dumbarton Harbour. The first phase of this exciting development is well under way and we’re looking forward to seeing 150 new homes for rent being handed over to the Association during 2019-20.

These partnerships have enabled us to keep on building new affordable homes for rent across both Argyll & Bute and West Dunbartonshire local authority areas. In October 2018 we successfully let all 26 of the superb new homes at our development in Succoth, Arrochar. We would take this opportunity to highlight our excellent relationship with Argyll & Bute Council, TSL Contractors, and the CAF Bank. This popular development has assisted in meeting local housing need in the area.

We are working in partnership with our main contractor, Cullross Ltd will see us take possession of 150 new homes next year. Our well established relationships with West Dunbartonshire Council, the Scottish Government and the Bank of Scotland enables us to take advantage of opportunities and deliver high-quality homes at affordable rents for people across our wide area of operation.

We’re proud to be able to provide energy efficient new homes that comply with the industry standards in a stunning location with superb views across the River Clyde and beyond.

New homes are a key element of the ongoing regeneration of our communities and we’re happy to be part of making Dumbarton a place where people are proud to live.

Prestigious new development at Dumbarton Harbour

This stunning development of 150 new homes at Dumbarton Harbour is well underway on the site of the former Ballantine’s Whisky distillery.
IT’S “GROWING” GREAT

Our Plot to Pot project, which is funded by the Climate Challenge Fund and Keep Scotland Beautiful, is going very well with a real flurry of activity in the run up to Christmas.

In November, Carol Henry our Project Co-ordinator, has held information sessions with Lochgoilhead Primary School pupils, our community gardener Rob, and our local volunteer Anna, on growing food, reducing waste and composting.

A Christmas wreath making session was held on the 14th December in the Village Hall with local residents and children invited to take part.

In Haldane the local primary school children have been learning how to grow vegetables in the raised beds and we held a free cookery class on how to cook with seasonal vegetables on 3rd December in St Mungo’s Hall in Alexandria.

There are plans to have some cookery classes for our tenants in Helensburgh linked to the community garden project in the Churchill estate – we are still trying to find a suitable venue to hold the classes as the Dunfork Centre is still being refurbished. We will advertise these when we have a suitable venue - look out for announcements on our Facebook page and website.

The raised beds at Churchill are looking good and we have had a number of gardening sessions over the last few months. There will be more events held in the New Year.

In Alexandria we have held a couple of Cookery sessions and we are holding the next one on 21st January 2019 in the Church Hall.

If you are interested in coming along to any of the sessions you can get in touch with Carol on 07980 609 240 or email chenry@dunbritton.org.uk

PLOT TO POT

EVENTS TIMETABLE

Date: 14th December 2018
Event: Wreath Making
Lochgoilhead Village Hall
Time: 1.00 – 5.00 pm

Date: 21st January 2019
Event: Seasonal Cookery Classes
Haldane Youth Services
Annex Building
Jamestown Primary School
Main St, Jamestown, Balloch
G83 8PN
Time: 10.00 –12.00 pm

Date: 21st January 2019
Event: Seasonal Cookery Classes
St Mungo’s Church Hall
337 Main street, Alexandria G83 0BP
Time: 1.00 – 3.00 pm

We also hold weekly gardening sessions at St Mungo’s run by our Partners for the Project – The Leamy Foundation – all are welcome.

Housing Scotland Act – Changes affecting your Tenancy

REMINDER TO UPDATE YOUR HOUSEHOLD DETAILS

We wrote to you at the end of October 2018 to tell you about changes that can affect your tenancy as a result of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2014.

Within this letter we enclosed a form for you to fill in and tell us who is living in your property. We provided you with a freepost envelope to help get the information to us.

So far we have had 290 tenants send back their completed forms.

This information is very important to us and to you.

If you have not yet completed this form could you please do this as soon as possible and send it in to:
Dunbritton Housing Association
32 High Street, First Floor
Dumbarton, G82 1LL

If you do not have the form please contact the office 01389 761 486, press Option 3, and we will arrange to get your details over the telephone.

A reminder letter will also be sent out soon.

Thank you for helping keep your records up to date.
At Christmas it can be a challenge to find the money for all the additional expense that is associated with this time of year.

Paying your rent is very important – rental income is a key factor in paying for the services we provide to all our customers.

Our Housing Officers carry out regular checks to rent accounts and carry out visits to customers if rent is not paid.

Rent is due in advance from the 1st of each month. It is important not to miss a payment – even missing one month’s rent can be difficult to get back on track – rent debt can quickly build and put your tenancy at risk.

We offer a range of payment methods including direct debit. Direct debit reduces the risk of missing payments, especially at Christmas. We are asking all customers to make sure that they do not miss their rent payment due in December.

If you want to set up a direct debit payment please call the office or speak to your Housing Officer.

Rent Consultation for 2019/20

We value your opinion - opportunity to win a £50 gift card

We are preparing financial information for the upcoming Rent Review to consult with our tenants and Board for proposed changes to our rent charges to be implemented in April 2019.

We normally hold evening consultation meetings but this year we are going to have our meetings during the day to encourage as many tenants as possible to take part in the discussions.

These events will be held in January 2019 – we will be holding one session in the Argyll and Bute area and one in West Dunbartonshire.

For West Dunbartonshire tenants the meeting will be held on Monday 21 January 2019 at 2pm in the Abbotsford Hotel, Stirling Road, Dumbarton.

For Argyll and Bute tenants the meeting will be held on Thursday 24 January 2019 at 2pm in Helensburgh Civic Centre Annex, 38 East Clyde Street, Helensburgh.

Transport can be provided for tenants who wish to attend.

We will send invitation letters along with consultation information early in the New Year. Your views are important to us so please Save the Date and come along.

Tenants who take part in our consultation meetings this year will have the opportunity to win a £50 gift card on the day.

Last year tenants at the consultation sessions asked us to provide more information on the proposed changes to rent in advance – we have listened to you, and this year the summary information on what the rent changes will mean in terms of value for money and investment works, will be sent to all tenants before the meetings are held.

If you cannot attend the consultation meetings there will still be an opportunity to give us your views by responding in writing, through our consultation survey.

If you want any more information please speak to your Housing Officer or call the office on 01389 761 486, and press Option 3.
How are we doing?

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

The results below are taken from our customer surveys which were carried out by Management Information Services on behalf of the Association. MIS carry out surveys face to face – they will have Identification badges and will show these to you when they come to visit you at your property.

Your views are important to us and help us review how we do things and enable us to shape services that work for you.

The Association would like to take the opportunity to thank all of those customers that have taken part in these surveys. Your views are invaluable to us.

Responses from the tenants surveyed between July and September 2018 can be seen below.

Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by your landlord?

Reasons for dissatisfaction:
One tenant suggested that they felt we could listen more to tenants. Two tenants detailed repair issues.

Learning outcome:
The Association is committed to giving tenants a voice in how we work: to assist this we have set up a Tenant Scrutiny group. Tenants are always welcome to join the group.

Although we strive to carry out repairs as quickly and as efficiently as possible, where a repair has not been completed to a tenants satisfaction or when it is necessary to reschedule an appointment, we would ask tenants to contact us as soon as possible so that we can rectify this.

How good or poor do you feel your landlord is at keeping you informed about their services and decisions?

Reasons for dissatisfaction:
We were unable to contact the tenants that expressed dissatisfaction with this survey question. This highlighted to us the need to ensure our records are kept accurate and up to date.

Learning outcome:
We have contacted all tenants seeking to update our records to ensure that we have the most up to date contact numbers and e-mail address for all of our tenants. We would ask all tenants to keep us informed of any changes to phone numbers, this will allow us to reduce postage costs.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that with opportunities given to you to participate in your landlord’s decision making processes?

Reasons for dissatisfaction:
We are pleased that we continue to perform well in this area however the 2 tenants who were dissatisfied could not provide any particular reason for their response.

Learning Outcomes:
We hope that through the Tenants Scrutiny and Resident Consultation groups we will be able to assist tenants to directly influence the running of the Association. We will also continue to seek the views of all tenants through surveys to ensure that we are providing a quality service.
Thinking about the LAST time you had a repair or maintenance carried out, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you the repairs and maintenance service provided by your landlord?

Reasons for dissatisfaction:
Three repairs were not completed adequately first time and required follow-up work.
Two tenants detailed dissatisfaction at being unable to arrange repair times that suit.

Learning Outcomes:
We consult with our Contractors regularly to ensure that instances like these are minimised and that we continuously improve our service.
We have explored different booking systems however due to the geographical make up of our stock we can only offer a value for money service with am or pm appointments.

Taking into account the accommodation and the services your landlord provides, to what extent do you think that the rent for this property represents good or poor value for money?

Reasons for dissatisfaction:
Four tenants detailed that there property required to be modernised. One tenant detailed dissatisfaction with the repair service.

Learning Outcomes:
We have carried out a large amount of investment work within the year, replacing kitchens in Helensburgh and Alexandria and we have an equally ambitious plan for the coming year. We are conscious that the investment programme links directly into the rent charge and we seek to ensure that properties are kept modern whilst still seeking to keep rents at an affordable level.
We held our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on 12 September 2018 at the Duck Bay Marina. We had a record number of people attending, both tenants and Members, and there were presentations from our External Auditors and our Chief Executive Officer, Allan Murphy.

Attending the AGM gives you the opportunity to find out what’s happening at Dunbritton and, if you are a Member, you can vote on important issues that affect the Association.

We also announced the winners of the ‘Good Neighbour Award 2018’ – Mr & Mrs Johnstone of Arrochar; and the Garden Competitions who were Mr & Mrs Cook of Rosneath and Mr & Mrs Hamill of Alexandria.

The Board of Management is made up of volunteers who work closely with the Management Team to agree the Association’s long-term strategy, and to monitor how we perform against our identified targets. Board Members give their time freely, and without them the Association could not operate.

At the AGM one of our long-standing Board Members, John O’Connor resigned due to ill health and in November we were sorry to hear that Terry Smalls had also decided to resign for similar reasons. Both John and Terry served on the Board for many years in a variety of roles and their invaluable contributions were really appreciated.

Three new Board Members were appointed at the AGM George Morrison, Julie Smillie and Darren Clark who bring with them many years’ experience in Housing and Finance gained both in local government and housing associations.

The Chair of the Board of a housing association can only serve for five consecutive years. Therefore Sephton MacQuire stood down at the AGM and the Board elected the new Chair William Clark. William has served on the Board since 2016 and he will be supported by Sephton, who was elected as Vice Chair.

William said “I really enjoy participating in the positive changes we have seen at Dunbritton recently and I’m confident that we can continue to develop services for our customers that we can all be proud of.

Here at Dunbritton we are happy to see the new development of 26 high-quality homes built at Succoth and we are really looking forward to delivering 150 new homes for rent at Dumbarton Harbour during 2019.

As part of the Harbour development the Association will have a new custom-built office in the heart of the town. This will make a real contribution to the ongoing regeneration of Dumbarton town centre. As our strapline says... Together we can...”

Changes at Dunbritton – New Receptionist

Patsy Urquhart, our Receptionist, decided to take early retirement. Patsy had been with Dunbritton for over 5 years, and began working here as a Customer Services Assistant in 2013. Her commitment and dedication to her role were really appreciated and we will miss her. We wish her well in future.

We’re pleased to announce that our new Receptionist, Claire Gallacher, joined us on Monday 10 December 2018. Claire brings a wealth of experience of working in a busy customer service environment and we’re sure she’ll settle in quickly at Dunbritton.
The EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) Excellence Model is a business excellence framework that is designed to help organisations become more efficient and competitive. Dunbritton began its ‘Journey to Excellence’ back in 2013 and in 2016 we achieved the coveted ‘Committed to Excellence Assessment – 2 Star’ award.

Since then we have reviewed and improved all aspects of our business involving our staff, Board, tenants and other stakeholders to develop a culture of continuous improvement across the Association.

We have now completed our submission document for the next level on the Journey to Excellence – Recognised for Excellence (R4E) – and handed it in to Quality Scotland. The R4E assessment involves a rigorous review of all aspects of Dunbritton’s business systems. A team of 5 independent Assessors, appointed by Quality Scotland, will spend a full week at the Association in April 2019 and the outcome will be announced at the prestigious Scottish Awards for Business Excellence awards ceremony in Glasgow in June 2019.

We’re looking forward to the assessment, and whatever the outcome is our customers can be assured that we’ll remain focused on developing and improving high-quality services for our customers in everything that we do. Look out for an update on our Journey to Excellence in the summer edition of DHA NEWS.

Thinking about getting involved at Dunbritton?

Since 2014 we have seen a steady increase in the number of people getting involved at Dunbritton and our membership has grown steadily since then from 63 members to 84 at present.

We’re always keen to see new faces and there are various ways to get involved in the way the Association delivers its services.

We currently have 84 shareholding members of the Association. We are keen to increase our membership levels and would encourage you to join us: it only costs £1 for a lifetime membership.

Becoming a member of the Association does not help you get either a house or a place on the housing list; it does, however, give you a vote at the Association’s A.G.M, lets you have a say in the running of Dunbritton Housing Association and allows you to stand for election to the Board of Management.

The Board is made up volunteers from a range of backgrounds including tenants who want to see improved housing opportunities for residents in our areas of operation in both West Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute local authorities.

The Board works closely with the Management Team to agree the Association’s strategic objectives, monitor how it performs against its targets, and drive continuous improvement by giving customers a say in how the Association delivers its services.

As a member, you can decide how much or how little you want to be involved. It’s not a big commitment in terms of your time, and if you’d like to know more about it please contact Pat Bradley, Corporate Services Manager on 01389 761486 for an informal chat or email him at pbradley@dunbritton.org.uk

Well done Sharon!

At Dunbritton we actively encourage our staff to develop their skills and knowledge to enable them to deliver the highest possible standards of customer service.

Sharon Kane joined the Association in 2005 as an Admin Officer and was promoted through the ranks to her current post as a Housing Officer in 2012. She successfully completed 2 years study at Glasgow University, gaining the Postgraduate Diploma in Housing Studies. Sharon is a Member of the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Sharon said “Studying for the Diploma was hard work but well worth it.

Mixing with other students gave me a real insight to a range of other housing organisations and broadened my knowledge of housing in general”.

Allan Murphy, Chief Executive Officer, said “We firmly believe in investing in our staff to support their personal and professional development, as this can only improve the services we deliver to our customers. Sharon has a wealth of practical experience in Housing and her Postgraduate Diploma confirms her status as a housing professional. Well done Sharon!”
Emergency arrangements

Winter break

Our office will be closed from 2pm on Monday 24 December 2018 and will re-open on Friday 4 January 2019 at 9.00am.

During the period we are closed, call Hanover on 0131 524 1418 for emergency repairs. You must state that you are a ‘Dunbritton Housing Association’ tenant and that you would like to report an ‘emergency repair’

In the event Hanover is unavailable, individual contractors can be called directly: (Hanover must be first point of call)

1  Electrical emergencies: Ledgerwood Electrical
   01389 752944 (07783594543)

2  Gas Heating and Plumbing repairs: City Technical Services
   0333 2020 708

3  John Duff Joinery
   01389 767102 (07852840025)

ONLY THE FOLLOWING EMERGENCY REPAIRS WILL BE CARRIED OUT:

- Fire (tenants should immediately contact the emergency services on 999)
- Gas leak (tenants should contact the national gas emergency number immediately on 0800 111 999)
- Loss of heating where there is no other form of heating available
- Boiler fumes leak
- Major water leak or flood within the property (or flat above)
- Loss of electrical power or lighting or electrical fault which may endanger a building or resident (but not a power cut from the electricity grid)
- Burst radiator (but not a minor leak)
- Insecure property
- Broken windows
- Broken/block WC (if only one in house)
- Blocked drains
- Total common stair lighting failure
- Safety related problem
- Smoke alarm/carbon monoxide detector continually beeping but only after batteries have been replaced and eliminated as a fault

Avoid the misery of frozen pipes

With winter getting in to full swing, it is advisable to take some precautions to avoid suffering damage to your home from frozen pipes.

- Ensure you know where your mains water stop valve is located and make sure you can turn it off and on
- Report any dripping taps to the Association as soon as possible

If you are planning to go away during the winter period:

- Leave your heating on while you are away as this will help to stop pipes freezing
- Open your loft hatch door. This will allow warm air from other parts of the house to circulate in the loft and help prevent pipes freezing.

If your pipes are frozen:

- Turn off the water at the main stopcock
- Call the emergency repairs number

If a pipe has burst:

- Turn off the water at the main stopcock
- Call the emergency repairs number
- If water is coming through the ceiling, collect it in a bucket to reduce any damage to floor coverings
- If wiring or any electrical appliance has been affected, do not touch them until they have been checked by our electrician. If you are in doubt, turn off your electricity at the mains

Drying out:

- Leave windows, doors and built-in cupboards open during the day if possible
- Keep the affected rooms heated but do not over heat them as this could cause further damage

Please note that the Association is not liable for any damage to fixtures or fittings including floor coverings. You should have your own contents insurance* and you need to contact your contents insurer to report any loss of this kind.

*Contents Insurance – You should arrange contents insurance if you don’t already have any. It is vital that you have insurance in place for your own home, the Association does not provide home contents insurance. You are provided with details about insurance from your housing officer when you sign your tenancy agreement. To cover all your possessions from only £6 per month call SFHA Diamond Insurance on 0845 718 172, quoting “SFHA Diamond Scheme” for more information.

Having difficulty reading this? Our newsletter can be made available on talking book or as a text only large print version. Please contact us if you would like to be added to our list for either of these, for this and all future newsletters.