



Winter issue >> December 2022

Together we can...

30th Annual General Meeting



As you will see from the comments below, it was a great night had by all!

Thomas O'Neill - May I thank the Executive Officers the Board of management and all of the staff of the association for hosting a terrific AGM at such an iconic location - I for one enjoyed the meeting and the fine hospitality which was on offer - thanks once again folks

Andy Cameron - Just a short note to thank you for all the effort you went to last night to enable me to join the AGM by Zoom. It was greatly appreciated and no easy task. Thanks again for your help.

Keith Jackson - A definite good time had by all and a good team running the association, thanks for last night.

Christine Baker - A good night was had by all thank you



This year's AGM was extra special, not only was it our 30th meeting, but it was also our first in-person AGM in two years. Covid limitations had previously limited our AGM's to virtual meetings, so it was great for members to be able to again meet face to face. We have however also adapted our systems to allow for hybrid meetings, so tenants that could not attend in person could still link in via Zoom.

At the AGM the members heard from the Chair, Sephton MacQuire, about the Association's performance in the last year and they received a copy of our accounts and Annual Report. In spite of the many challenges the Association has faced and is facing, particularly Covid and the Cost-of-Living Crisis, the Association continues to perform well across all of our key performance indicators.

Members also heard from Steven Cunningham, of external auditors Alexander Sloan Ltd. Steven provided the members with a comprehensive summary of the Association's financial position and confirmed that the Association had been

satisfactorily audited and was in a sound financial position.

The Chief Executive Officer, Allan Murphy, provided a presentation reflecting on the progress the Association has made in the last 30 years, rising from having no properties in 1992, to providing almost 1000 homes. Allan detailed the important role that has been played by the Board and the staff members in rising to our current heights as a top performing Housing Association.

In accordance with the rules, all current Board members were re-appointed, and the Board agreed on the reappointment of Sephton MacQuire as Chair and the appointment of Elizabeth McCurdy as Vice-Chair.

The evening was rounded off with the awards ceremony and the ever-popular raffle. A special thank you to our contractors Central Timber Construction, D Mitchell Services, FMD, Ledgerwoods, Shiels Builders, NBM Construction, and Zurich for supplying the prizes for the raffle.

Office Closure over Christmas & New Year

The Office shall close at midday on Friday 23 December for the festive break. We shall re-open on Thursday 5th January at 9 am

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Kitchen upgrades

We are delighted to announce that in collaboration with our contractor BRB and Magnet Kitchens, we completed phase four of our kitchen renewals at properties in Rhu and Garelochhead.

Twenty-four kitchens were installed in total, the kitchens range from small to medium size installs. Our tenants were given an initial visit from the contractor and Magnet to carry out an inspection of the work area and discuss the layout and kitchen choices.

This programme proved slightly more difficult due to the composition of the internal walls and the requirement for minor additional electrical work. Along with the kitchens we also needed to provide a new minor works certificate for the electrics within the property.

All kitchens are inspected by Dunbritton and all snagging works are completed before payments are signed off. We hope all of our tenants are enjoying their new kitchens.



Top tips to heat your home for less

1. If you are warm enough, try turning down your thermostat by one degree to save around £145 a year. For most, the lowest comfortable temperature to set your heating is between 18°C and 21°C (as advised by the World Health Organisation).
2. Keep a gap between your radiators and furniture, make sure curtains aren't hanging in front of radiators and remove radiator covers to get the most heat. Bleeding radiators to remove cold spots will also help them to work effectively.
3. It costs less to set your heating to come on when you need it and just in the rooms that you are using, rather than keeping it on low all day.

Fire Fighting Equipment: Dry Risers, sprinkler systems and addressable fire panels



As part of our fire safety responsibilities, we carry out yearly checks on the sprinkler systems and dry risers within our buildings.

This work is vital to ensure all equipment is working correctly and we are compliant with safety legislation. Servicing ensures all riser cabinets are accessible, landing valves are eased and adjusted for easy operation, and cabinet locks are working correctly. The Sprinkler system pump is pressure tested and the bearings are checked. A test is carried out at the pump room to ensure all is working correctly.

Weekly bell tests are carried out on our communal fire panels by ASCO. If an alarm is activated a remote monitoring station is alerted, and emergency response services are sent to the building.

Annual Awards!



Our 30th AGM allowed for the celebration of individual achievements with our annual awards being presented by the Chair.

Mr and Mrs Sienko of Fisher place collected the garden competition award for Argyll and Bute and Mrs Fotheringham of School Lane was the winner for West Dunbartonshire. Dunbritton's tenants pride themselves on keeping stunning gardens, and it is a positive reflection on both winners that they have succeeded in the face of some tough competition.

Mrs Brown, from our new Dumbarton Harbour development, collected our good neighbour award; a reflection of her tireless work looking after the estate.



In the staff awards, Sean Harwood won the Customer Service Award. Sean has worked tirelessly throughout the year as part of our Asset Management Team. This has been a particular challenge as the team strove to catch up with repairs delayed due to Covid, yet even under this pressure, Sean maintained his positive can-do demeanour, with customers always finding him approachable and helpful.

Marie Clare Freke of our Finance Team won the Business Initiative Award. This was in reflection of the significant amount of work she had put into reviewing our factoring processes including developing our website, issuing an updated written statement of service, creating a new owner pack, and updating our policy.

Congratulations to all our winners!



Tenants Scrutiny *Together we can...*

Do you want to review our services and report on our performance directly to our Board of Management? Why not join our Tenant Scrutiny Group to meet with like-minded people who are keen to make a difference and help us improve the way we deliver our services to our customers.

The Group's main aim is to ensure the Association is providing a quality service that offers tenants value for money.

We realise there is always room for improvement, and we actively encourage tenant's suggestions on how we can make things better.

We are thankful to the Tenant Scrutiny Group for the valuable contribution it makes to the Association, unfortunately, their work had to be postponed due to the pandemic, however, we have resumed the group and had our first meeting in November 2022.

If you feel that you could offer some of your time each month and would be interested in joining our Tenant Scrutiny Group - we would love to hear from you!

To find out more about Tenant Scrutiny and how you can get involved in shaping our services, please call the Housing Services Team on 01389 761486 and select Option 2 for more details.

Tenant Participation

Dunbritton Housing Association's aims to provide the highest possible standards of service to our tenants.

Our overall purpose of supporting tenants to have a better quality of life, whilst living in their homes, means that we are committed to:

- Working with our tenants, staff, and partners to achieve our vision.
- Providing good quality housing and

services that are affordable and accessible to all.

- Supporting the physical, social, economic, and environmental regeneration of our estates and communities.
- Enhancing the quality of life in diverse communities that are safe, sustainable, and attractive.

We understand and recognise that to

achieve this and our ethos of "Together We Can", it is important to seek and listen to your views to help us shape and continue to improve your homes, communities, and the services we deliver.

We aim to ensure our tenants and customers are at the heart of our decision-making.

During 2021/22 we engaged the services of the Tenants Information Service (TIS) to develop our temporary Participation Strategy. During 2022/23 we plan to work together to redevelop our Tenants Scrutiny Panel and progress with our Tenant Participation Strategy.

Community Support Fund

The Dunbritton Community Support Fund panel has again been busy providing assistance to local community groups. In the second half of the year, we have provided grants to: West Dunbartonshire Food for Thought, the Vale of Leven Academy, Cardross Climate Action Network, and the Vale of Leven Football Club.

Food for Thought is based in the Artizan Centre in Dumbarton and provides aid, including emergency food parcels to people in need throughout West Dunbartonshire. They are open from 10 am to 4 pm Monday to Friday.

A local school, the Vale of Leven Academy, applied for a grant to allow them to provide children in need with a Christmas lunch, attend a pantomime, and receive a Christmas parcel. At what will

be a difficult time of year for many families, this allows children to continue to participate in the festivities.

Cardross Climate Action Network used their grant to fund hosting the event of a warm home on the 12th of November, this provided residents of Cardross with essential advice on addressing fuel poverty and efficiently heating their homes during a challenging winter.

The Vale of Leven Football Club has set up a 2017 team and Dunbritton has helped them with purchasing training equipment. This continues Dunbritton's tradition of promoting local football teams for children. We are aware of how important it is for youth clubs to provide inclusive opportunities and exercise for children within our communities.

Near Me in Housing

Earlier this year, Dunbritton Housing Association signed up for a new digital service Near Me, a free video appointment service to communicate with our tenants and customers using devices such as mobile phones, tablets, iPads, and computers with a webcam. This service has allowed a virtual appointment to meet and discuss matters including rent arrears and housing applications.

Near Me was created by the NHS originally to aid doctors, nurses, and GPs to meet patients during the covid pandemic to provide help and support. The NHS has seen the benefit of virtual appointments and has partnered up with the social housing sector to introduce this service in organisations.

Many organisations including local authorities and housing associations across Scotland are using Near Me and seeing great benefits. Due to our geographical location, it takes up a lot of your and the staff's time travelling to appointments, the Near Me tool prevents travel time, and costs and enables you to have a longer appointment to resolve any



issues.

The service can make communication and exchanges between staff and tenants more personal than over the telephone, which is great if you are feeling vulnerable or if there is a sensitive issue to discuss.

Becoming more digital will bring several advantages to Dunbritton the main feature increasing interactions with our tenants and increasing our services and support to sustain their tenancies, for them to feel heard and part of the organisation.

If you wish to arrange an appointment using Near Me, please contact us on 01389 761486 and choose option 2 or email housingmanagement@dunbritton.org.uk and a staff member from the housing team will arrange an appointment and send you the details either via text or email to join the call on the agreed date and time.

Join the Association!

The Housing Association is owned by the Shareholders.

The membership is open to all tenants with a single payment of £1 providing lifetime membership.

As a member of the Association, you will be able to attend the Annual General Meeting and vote on any key issues raised at the AGM. You will also be able to compete in the AGM raffle. This year some lucky members left with great prizes that were donated by our contractors including a top-of-the-range laptop, a wide-screen television, a hamper, and supermarket gift vouchers.

If you would like to find out more about membership or apply to join, please call our Corporate Services Team on 01389 761 486, selecting option 5.





Remember to Pay Rent this Christmas

At Christmas, it can be a challenge to find the money for all the additional expense that is associated with this time of year. Especially with the cost-of-living crisis and increase in energy prices.

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

Your rent pays for essential works to your home and community which includes:

- Our Repairs and Housing Services.
 - Communal and close maintenance.
 - New Build Developments.
- 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 2022.

If you want to set up a direct debit payment, please call the office on 01389 761486 option 3 or speak to your Housing Officer.

For customers who pay rent by standing order, debit, or credit card over the telephone, please note that our office will close at 12.00 pm on Friday 23 December 2022 and will not open again until Thursday 5 January 2023 at 9 am.

If you are experiencing any difficulties in paying your rent, having problems with your benefits, or struggling with household bills, please contact us for help on 01389 761486 and press Option 2 and ask to speak to your Housing Officer.

Rubbish & Recycling

There have been issues in our developments with regard to rubbish and recycling, including:

- Disposing of household items in bin stores and within the bins themselves.
- Loose bin bags being left outside the bins.
- Bins being overfilled and as a result not being emptied by the Council.

It is important to keep the bin areas clean and tidy and create a good environment in which people wish to live in and we need the tenant's assistance with this.

Loose rubbish or bin bags placed outside the bins reduces the cleanliness of the area and also increase the risk of vermin including rats.

With Christmas coming up, we are aware that tenants are likely to have more rubbish including cardboard boxes and packaging and may be having a clear-out in the run-up to Christmas.

We have put together a list of handy hints that tenants can do to help maximise the bin capacity and keep the area tidy at the same time:

- If you have your own individual bin, please put a number on this to clearly identify which property this belongs to. This will help reduce issues of people using the wrong bins.
- Ensure that all cardboard boxes are broken down and placed into the recycling bins. Putting in full boxes reduces the capacity of recycling that the bin can take.
- Please ensure that you put the correct rubbish in the correct bins, contaminated recycling or food waste bins will not be uplifted. If you are unsure of what should go into your recycling bins, please check your local council website for clarification.

- If you are in a flat and have shared use of the euro bins, please do not overfill the bins, if other bins have capacity then please use these. If all bins are full, then please take any excess rubbish to your nearest waste disposal centre. For West Dunbartonshire area your nearest site is Dalmoak Recycling Centre, Renton Road, Dumbarton, G82 4HQ. For Argyll & Bute area, the nearest is Blackhill Recycling Centre, Luss Road, Helensburgh, G84 9EE.
- Any bulk items should not be disposed of in the bins and should be taken to your nearest Recycling Centre as above or contact your local council to arrange for a special uplift. If you have arranged for a special uplift, please contact your Housing Officer to advise them.
- If any spillages occur whilst taking your bins out, please clean these up immediately.

Your cooperation is appreciated and will hopefully make our areas of operation a better place to live.



Emergency arrangements over the holiday period

Our office will be closed from 12 noon on Friday 23rd December 2022 until 9 am on Thursday 5th January 2023.

During this period, if you need an emergency repair carried out, please call Hanover Telecare on 0131 524 1418. Please state clearly that you are a Dunbritton Housing Association tenant and that you are reporting an emergency repair. (Please see the list of repairs categorised as an emergency)

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

1. Electrical emergencies: Ledgerwood Electrical
01389 752944 (07783 594543)
2. Gas Heating and Plumbing repairs: City Technical Services
0333 2020 708
3. Central Timber Construction
01436 677930 (07384220296)

EMERGENCY REPAIRS:

- 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
- 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/blocked WC (if only one WC is in the 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

During the winter season, it is advisable to take precautions to avoid frozen pipes.

- Ensure you know where your mains water stop valve is located and make sure you can turn it off and on.

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

- Leave your heating on at a low temperature as this will help to stop pipes from 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 from 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 it. them until they have been checked by our electrician.
- If you are in doubt, turn off your electricity at the mains.
- Remove belonging from the affected area.

Drying out:

- Leave windows, doors, and built-in cupboards open during the day if possible.
- Keep the affected rooms heated.

Please note that the Association is not liable for damage to the contents of your home.



Contents Insurance

It is vital that you have insurance in place for your home as the Association does not provide insurance coverage for your household furniture, floor coverings and effects. For further information please contact our office on 01389 761 486 (selecting option 2).

Direct Contact with Your Housing Officer

We know how important it is for tenants to be able to get in contact with their Housing Officer. Housing Officers are here to help you manage your rent account, discuss a move (transfer), ensure your estate is maintained and assist with any neighbour disputes.

Your Housing Officer is available at our new office or by telephoning through their office direct dial or through their dedicated mobile:



Lyndsey McGillion,
Housing Officer for
Helensburgh

Direct dial -
01389 310890

Mobile number -
07717 782 791



Sharon Kane,
Housing Officer for
Alexandria

Direct dial -
01389 310891

Mobile number -
07717 792 894



Lindsey Reid, J
oint Housing Officer
for the Lochside and
Dumbarton

Direct dial -
01389 310892

Mobile number -
07976 708 077



Elaine Mackechnie,
Joint Housing
Officer (Temp) for
the Lochside and
Dumbarton

Direct dial -
01389 310908

Mobile number -
07849 830 003



WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT

Macmillan Coffee Morning

We hosted our first Macmillan Coffee Morning in our new offices on 30 September. We welcomed along tenants of our Harbour development to enjoy our staff's home baking along with a cuppa and a chat. This allowed us to raise money for a great cause, providing support and assistance for families impacted by cancer.

We would like to thank all staff and tenants that supported the event, raising an amazing £170 for the charity.



Changes in Housing Services

We were delighted to welcome two new members to the Housing Services Team: Yvonne Sweeney and Lyndsey McGillion.



Yvonne joins us from Faifley Housing Association with a plethora of Housing experience. She joined Glasgow Housing Association in 2008 and worked there until 2019 in Customer Service

dealing with "Wheatley Subsidiaries" and has a broad range of housing knowledge. She joined Faifley Housing Association in Sept 2019 and was responsible for all

office administration, responsive repairs, and gas servicing.

Yvonne is office based as one of our Housing Services Assistants and will be able to help customers with all housing-related enquiries from allocations to rent management.



Lyndsey joins us from Glasgow West Housing Association with a wealth of experience in social housing having worked in the sector for more than 25 years.

She has previously

worked across Housing Associations in Glasgow including Glasgow Housing Association and Blairtummock Housing Association. She holds a level 4 diploma in Housing Studies and is a chartered member of the Institute of Housing.

Lyndsey shall be taking over from Laura Cuthbertson as the Housing Officer responsible for Helensburgh and looks forward to meeting our tenants when she is out and about in our communities.

Our temporary Housing Officer, Gemma Connell has left the organisation for pastures new and will be replaced on a temporary basis by Elaine Mackechnie who will jointly cover the Dumbarton and the Lochside areas and hopes to see our tenants when she's out and about.

Thank you George

After four years on the Board, George Morrison decided to stand down at the October Board meeting. These have been an eventful four years in which the association has taken on the challenges of Covid, the Harbour development and an office move.

The CEO, Chair, and Board all wish to convey their thanks to George for his tireless work over this time.

Aico Community Clear up at the Harbour



Dunbritton Housing Association welcomed Tony and Gregor from Aico. Over the last two years Aico has been providing Dunbritton with smoke detection technology and remote monitoring of fire detection equipment at our properties.

As part of the Aico group's community commitment they visited us and carried out some litter picking, weeding, and sweeping up within the Dumbarton Harbour development. Thank you to Tony and Gregor for helping to keep our area looking its best.

Festive message from Allan Murphy C.E.O.

Here we are again at this special time of year.... how time has passed quickly in the last 12 months.

Hopefully, we have now turned a Covid corner, and our lives and daily living are almost back to normal. It has certainly been good for staff to return to the office and be available in person to assist our tenants and maintain service delivery.

However, we appreciate that this year has not been without its challenges due to the cost-of-living crisis. Indeed, the Association has noticed a sharp increase in material costs and labour which will impact on our repairs team as they look to ensure you feel safe and secure in your home.

During the last 12 months despite these challenges, we have strived to continue to provide a good service and have managed to attain good key performance figures in relation to lets, arrears management and repairs.

I am pleased that we have resurrected our Tenant Scrutiny Panel as your input is vital to ensure we can provide the services that you wish to receive from the Association. Over the coming months, the panel will focus on key aspects of our services and identify any further improvements that can be made. If



you wish to help shape our services, please contact the office for further details.

If you are worried about finances or feel you may struggle with your bills or rent during the winter, please get in contact with your Housing Officer or call us on 01389 761 486 (option 2) and they will be happy to help signpost you to all the resources that are available to help.

On behalf of the Board and all the staff at Dunbritton may I extend my warm wishes to you for the festive period and hope you enjoy quality time with your nearest and dearest.

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.

Dunbritton Housing Association Ltd, 1 Hatters Lane, Dumbarton, G82 1AW
Serving the Communities of Helensburgh & Lomond, Dumbarton and Vale of Leven since 1992
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Opening Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday: 9am – 5pm
Wednesday: 9am – 12.30pm (closed in the afternoon for staff training)

