New Era of Housing in Tullibody

As you may have already read in the press, the first phase of the Newmills redevelopment project (now Paterson Place) is complete.

The £2.9 million development was jointly funded by Ochil View and The Scottish Government. There are 26 new semi-detached 3 and 4 apartment family homes, including 2 wheelchair accessible bungalows. 50% of the applicants were nominated by the Council.

The re-development has been achieved thanks to partnership working between the Council and Ochil View Housing Association, which will continue into the second phase.

Councillor Sam Ovens, said: “We have been working with Ochil View Housing and local tenants’ representatives on this project for several years now and I am delighted that the first tenants are now moving into their new homes.”

Environmental impact has been kept to a minimum, as the houses achieve a high Eco-homes rating, using building materials from sustainable and eco-certified sources and have highly efficient heating and insulation systems, meaning minimal Carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions.

Work has begun on the second phase which is being built on the site of the adjacent Newmills long block, demolished in 2007. The development of 14 homes is due for completion by January 2009.

The first new residents are welcomed to their new home by members of the Housing partnership.
Please Let Us In!

The Council is obliged to carry out an annual service of gas heating systems in its properties. It has the power to gain access to carry out these services where tenants do not respond to postcards and letters requesting access. We understand that tenants may not be at home when the engineer calls, however appointments can be made by responding to postcards and letters sent.

Please don’t force us to break into your home. The annual gas service is not only a legal requirement. It is all about your safety.

We would ask for your cooperation in ensuring that you, your family and close neighbours remain safe by allowing access to your home.

The Council will not compromise on safety and will force access when tenants do not respond to repeated requests for entry. Tenants will be billed for the costs incurred.

Joint Conference gets three thumbs up from Tenants

Clackmannanshire Council, Ochil View Housing Association and Paragon Housing Association have declared their joint tenant conference a resounding success.

100% of tenants rated the conference as a whole as either “Good” or “Very Good”. Every individual workshop received over 90% evaluation as “Very good” or “Good”. This excellent feedback will help the planning of future events to make them even better.

The three landlords have a joint Tenant Participation Strategy and recently held a conference which was attended by tenants from all landlords, from the four Council areas where they have housing stock.

Tenants heard about current developments in Tenant Participation from Anne Cook, Tenant Participation Manager with the Scottish Government and Gold Service schemes from Alasdair McKee of Glen Oaks Housing Association.

They could choose to attend workshops on Healthy Eating, Fuel Poverty, Protecting your Money and Fire Safety.

Transport to and from the conference and catering was provided.

Based on this strong support, the landlords will now consider making the conference an annual event. One tenant said “I’d like to get more involved and I am glad that I came today. I learned a lot from the day that I did not know”

More Information is available from:

Graeme Wilson, Ochil View Housing Association. Phone: 01259 722899

Michelle Flynn, Clackmannanshire Council. Phone: 01259 452404

Sheelagh Norris, Paragon Housing Association. Phone: 01324 664944
New Multiple Choice For Tenants

In November 2006 we introduced a new Allocation Policy and are now introducing a “Multiple Offer” scheme.

How are properties allocated?

The new system is based on bands, points and quotas. Everyone making an application will be assessed and placed in the appropriate band, according to their circumstances. Properties are then allocated to each band according to pre-set quotas. The quotas ensure that applicants in every band will have an opportunity to be housed. You will receive information about which band you have been placed in (some bands attract points which we would also let you know about).

In order for applicants to participate more fully in the way our properties are allocated we have now introduced a “Multiple Offer” scheme. This means that when a property becomes available, the first 10 eligible applicants on the waiting list now receive a letter advising that they are well placed and to return a tear off slip if they would like to be considered for the offer.

After 5 days, we will consider all the applicants who have expressed an interest and allocate the property in line with Council policy.

This scheme is part of our ongoing commitment to increasing people’s choice and involvement in the allocation process and is currently used to let properties in Bands 1, 3 and 4.

If you would like any more details regarding this scheme, please do not hesitate to contact the Voids & Allocations Team at Lime tree House on 0845 055 7070 (Option 2).

Independence Event

Considering leaving home to live elsewhere?

If you are aged between 16 to 25 and are thinking of or about to leave home, we have organised a special event at the Alloa Town Hall on Thursday, 3rd July 2008.

The event will give you tips and ideas on keeping a home, managing your finances, healthy eating on a budget and general advice about what you need to consider when leaving home.

Why not just pop in for a coffee and chat. It’s free, so don’t miss out.
Reporting our Performance

A key role for managers within the Housing Service is to ensure that our tenants receive prompt, efficient and cost effective services.

At the start of each financial year the housing Senior Management Team look at key areas of work and set specific objectives for each part of the service. Every member of staff has a part to play in meeting these targets.

Achievement against the targets is then formally monitored on a monthly basis and where necessary improvement plans put in place.

The charts below show just some of the areas of work, which are monitored and the performance achieved. We plan to provide an annual report of our performance in this magazine.

If you would like any further information about how performance is monitored, please contact the Performance & Information team on 01259 452389.

The indicator showing the average void turnaround time is a useful measure of overall performance on void management. The average turnaround for all voids let in the year is 6 weeks. This is well below our target which was set at 11 weeks or less.

A high number of voids were let in March (46) with an outstanding average turnaround time of 3 weeks (21 days).

Our target is to let most of our voids in 4 weeks (28 days) or less. With 83% of all voids let in 4 weeks or less in March, performance in the last month of this financial year is excellent.

This chart shows the rent loss due to unoccupied dwellings in 2006/2007 compared against 2007/2008. Every month in 2007/2008 shows a significant improvement from the previous year.

At the year end rent loss due to voids reached 1.56% which is just short of the ambitious target to reduce to 1.5%.
This chart shows the number of houses sold in 2006/2007, 115 properties and 2007/2008, 88 properties. It also shows the number sold within the target period of 26 weeks.

There have been fewer house sales in this financial year. 79.6% of sales have been completed within 26 weeks, an improvement on the 68% recorded in the previous year.

Rent loss was significantly less in every month of 2007/2008 when compared against the previous year.

The 2006/2007 financial year started with a rent loss of 8.4% and ended with an improved figure of 7.3%

2007/2008 started with 7.5% in April 07 and ended with a loss of just 5.9% which is a significant improvement.

The new allocations policy was introduced in November 2006. This system is based on bands, points and quotas. Everyone making an application will be assessed and placed in the appropriate band, according to their circumstances.

Further information about bands is available in Applying for a Council House

Properties are allocated to each band according to a pre-set quotas. The quotas ensure that applicants in every band have an opportunity to be housed, while giving reasonable preference to those in the most need.

488 houses were allocated in 2007/2008. 251 were allocated to those assessed as statutory homeless.
Free and Friendly Support to Learn

Clackmannanshire Council has a team of friendly tutors dedicated to supporting adults who want to improve their everyday skills.

The team can help with reading, writing, spelling, numbers and computer skills. The help is free to all adults living in Clackmannanshire.

The tutors can arrange an appointment to meet you wherever and whenever suits you — even in your home or at the weekend.

Their aim is to help you improve your confidence in everyday life and together you can discuss and set goals and how to reach them.

You could improve your skills to help you:

- read bills and letters
- assist with children’s homework
- with shopping and budgeting
- to use the internet
- with reading books and newspapers
- to write letters
- to send texts and emails
- with booking and budgeting for holidays
- to fill in forms
- with using computers
- to improve your job prospects

Call the team and ask to speak to Rosa on 01259 452487 or call into Alloa Library in Drysdale Street and ask to speak to one of the tutors.

Tenant Participation Strategy Review 2008

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed a duty on Landlords to prepare a Tenant Participation Strategy giving new rights to tenants in relation to tenant participation and consultation.

“Tenant participation is about tenants taking part in the decision making processes and influencing decisions about Housing policies, Housing conditions and Housing related services.

It is a two way process which aims to improve the standard of housing conditions and service.”

The current strategy 2003 – 2006 requires to be monitored and evaluated on an annual basis as agreed by tenants to ensure that the milestones and outcomes within the document are being achieved. All tenants in Clackmannanshire are invited to attend an evaluation session on Thursday 21st August 2008 at 10.00am till 12.00pm in the Bowmar Community Centre Alloa.

The Strategy is available from Lime Tree House and on the Councils’ website for review, any feedback received will be discussed with the current review focus group.

Anyone who requires transport to attend the event or wants to become a member of the review focus group should contact Michelle Flynn, Community & Tenant Participation Co-ordinator on 01259 452404 or e-mail mflynn@clacks.gov.uk.

Clackmannanshire Tenants & Residents Federation

The Clackmannanshire Tenants & Residents Federation promotes the rights of tenants and residents throughout Clackmannanshire and is working for the improvement of their housing conditions, amenities and environment.

Membership of the Federation is open to all tenants and residents associations, community councils and other community organisations which apply for membership and are accepted by the Federation as members. Associate membership is open to individuals living in Clackmannanshire in an area not covered by a constituted local community organisation.

If you are interested in finding out more, enquiries should be made to:

Clackmannanshire Tenants & Residents Federation
Unit 6/7 Alloa Business Centre, Whins Road, Alloa FK10 3SA.
Telephone: 01259 725757 or email clackstf@btinternet.com

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Coming your way soon!

As a responsible landlord Clackmannanshire Council continually reviews its processes, so in June 2006 we sent you out an independent customer satisfaction survey as shown, which was completely confidential.

The survey focused on allowing tenants to give their views and comments on seven key areas of the housing service, with the results being used to influence service improvement. To ensure that we continue this process we will be sending you out this confidential survey again very soon.

Last year’s winner Ms Beveridge is presented with her cash prize from Housing Manager, Jennifer Queripel.

As the survey is confidential, your name does not appear, only a prize draw number. One lucky tenant who returns the completed survey will win £100 cash, with two runners up receiving £25, so don’t delay in returning.

Cyclical Maintenance

You will probably be aware that you can report a repair to your home by calling our Repairs Helpline on 0845 055 7070.

However, were you aware that the Housing Service carries out regular inspection of the external parts of your home.

To ensure that your home is kept wind and watertight the Councils’ Housing Service operate a cyclical maintenance programme to inspect and repair any external defects to your home.

This programme is based on a 5 year rolling programme.

What Work Is Carried Out?

At your home the roof, windows, front and back doors, chimney, walls, guttering, downpipes, external woodwork, footpaths, fencing, steps, clothes poles and whirlines are all inspected and any required repairs or renewals are arranged.

In addition to this, the internal loftspace is checked for insulation and water tank maintenance (access to the house will be required to carry out this work and a separate appointment will be arranged).

Common staircases and closes are also maintained and decorated as required.

External walls - Following on from the cyclical maintenance, a programme of painting and spraying of the external walls is carried out.

How is it funded? - Cyclical Maintenance of Council houses is funded directly from rents and recharges from Owner/Occupiers of flatted dwellings whose properties share the repairs which are carried out to their property/block.

This Years’ Programme (2008/2009) will be working in the following areas:

- Alloa: Fairyburn, Inglewood, Town Centre, Smithfield Loan areas.
- Alva: East and Erskine Street areas.
- Cambus Village
- Clackmannan: Lochies, North Street, Zetland Street and Backwood areas.

If you require any further information on cyclical maintenance, please contact Sandy Smith at Lime Tree House on 01259 225171.
The overall objective of the team is to maintain Clackmannanshire Council’s housing stock and estates in the best possible condition.

This is done via planned/cyclical maintenance and area regeneration which provides good quality housing which, with energy conservation measures, is affordable to Tenants.

Our two main functions – a traditional technical service and a construction client service deliver the Clackmannanshire Standard and the Scottish Housing Quality Standard which is already improving your living standards.

WE PROVIDE:

Project Management Services

This gives support to the housing service covering a broad programme of works from major structural repairs to wholesale refurbishment projects. We take projects through from conception to completion liaising with appropriate partners and ensure all projects are delivered to a high standard.

Cyclical Maintenance Services

These are used to carry out regular improvements, be it one house or an entire block. Each type of improvement has its own timescale which depends upon what the improvement is and its location.

These programmes improve the condition of the housing stock and so enhance living conditions and is more cost effective than ordering individual repairs.

Mechanical and Electrical Management Services

We carry out annual checks to help make your home safe. It is essential that all our gas and electrical appliances are safe and meet with all safety standards. We also give technical advice to tenants and other Housing staff when required.

Investment Planning and Business Service

We have to have good up to date records relating to our houses. This is really important to ensure we can plan for future investment needs.

Asbestos Management

We maintain an Asbestos Register which holds all asbestos related information. We also provide information and advice to Tenants and Housing staff when required.

Contract and Administration Support Services

This ensures we provide an efficient and value for money service. We need to have reliable systems in place to monitor expenditure and the quality of services that is provided to our customers.

Regeneration

Our team play a key role in aiming to improve the quality of life for people in Clackmannanshire. We do this by working with our partners to invest in projects that will improve their surroundings.

For more information on any of the services offered, please call us. We are based at Lime Tree House, Alloa.

Telephone: 01259 225165

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WORDSEARCH COMPETITION

Wordsearch gives you a sporting chance

We have another bumper wordsearch for you, in this Summer Issue, we want you to find as many sports hiding in the puzzle opposite.

Below we have printed a full list of all the sports you should be looking for.

Tie break: How many times does the word MAINTENANCE appear in this issue of Homing In?

Answer: __

All entries must be returned by Friday 1st August 2008.

WIN a £25 Shopping Voucher!

Once you have completed the wordsearch, cut out this page and send it to Michelle Flynn, Housing Services, Lime Tree House, Alloa. FK10 1EX.

Name: ..................................................
Address: .......................................................... ..........................................................
Postcode .................................. Tel. .................................