



Area more secure due to project  
SEE P2 ▶



Be safe for bonfire night fun  
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Service makes a big impact  
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NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

# Tenancy matters

THE MAGAZINE FOR NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL TENANTS

SEPTEMBER 2009 / ISSUE 23



**GREAT PLACE!** Housing register tenant gets new home  
SEE P2 ▶

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ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ, ਸੀ ਡੀ 'ਤੇ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ। ਮੰਗ ਆਉਣ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।  
 یہ دستاویز دیگر شکلوں میں بھی دستیاب ہے، جیسے آڈیو ٹیپ، سی ڈی، بریل اور بڑے حروف کی جھپٹائی میں۔ درخواست کرنے پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں بھی مہیا کی جا سکتی ہے۔

該文件還有其他形式，如語音磁帶、CD、盲文版本及大字體版本。如有需求，還提供其他語言版本。

Ten dokument jest do uzyskania w różnych formatach: na taśmie dźwiękowej, płycie CD, brajlem i dużym drukiem. Na życzenie, można go także otrzymać w innych e otrzymać w innych wersjach językowych.

The cost of producing *Tenancy Matters* is approximately 23p per tenancy

## WELCOME TO TENANCY MATTERS ▶

SEPTEMBER 2009/ISSUE 23

The *Tenancy Matters* working group has been very busy writing articles they think you'd want to read about.



We hope you'll take the time to read the various articles filling these pages.

This issue is jammed full of great news and features to keep you up to date with what's happening, such as on office closure dates. Also look out for the publication *Performance Matters* inserted in this edition.

We hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and, as always, extend an invitation to anyone who wishes to contribute or participate in the making of this publication.

To get involved, contact the Tenant Participation Team on 01294 471501 or email [tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

**THIS ISSUE IS JAMMED FULL OF GREAT NEWS AND FEATURES TO KEEP YOU UP TO DATE WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING**



### QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ▶

If you have any comments about *Tenancy Matters* or would like to contribute articles or images to the next issue, please call the Tenant Participation Team on 01294 471501, or email the team at [tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)



Please recycle this magazine

# Looking good, and secure...



A robust plastic fence replaces old and dangerous single brick walls

## First on the register

Pictured, from left, is Carol Nelson, North Ayrshire Council Divisional Manager, Nicola Thom, Executive Director (Operations), Irvine Housing Association, Cllr Tom Barr, Bill McGhee, North Ayrshire Council Housing Projects Manager, Mr David Dunlop, tenant, and Jim Munro, Housing Manager, ANCHO



## Residents in two streets are seeing major improvements to their common areas thanks to an Estate Based Project

The maisonettes at Warrix Avenue and Broomlands Drive in Irvine have greatly benefited from the Estate Based Projects scheme.

The project addressed a number of issues ranging from a lack of security to the general appearance of the area.

The improvements included:

- Erecting perimeter fencing on a brick plinth
- Replacing old and dangerous single brick walls with a robust plastic fence
- Landscaping and planting
- Formation of a garden in the drying areas with resurfacing, new paths, planters and seating area
- Ramp access to the main entrance

- Upgrading to a robust door entry system.

In addition, street sign plates were erected and internal closes painted. All of these enhancements have made a vast improvement to the overall appearance of the area.

Letters and a copy of the plans were issued to tenants affected by the work, inviting them along to a consultation session in British Red Cross House. A small number of tenants attended and were able to view the plans and also ask any questions.

Craig McEwing, Area Housing Manager, said: "I am extremely pleased with the outcome. The landscaping is very attractive and has been thoughtfully



Tenants can now enjoy the benefits of a garden in a drying area

### THIS INVESTMENT WILL ADD TO THE LIFE OF THE MAISONETTES. I BELIEVE THAT TENANTS WILL ENJOY THE IMPROVEMENTS FOR YEARS TO COME

Craig McEwing, Area Housing Manager

designed. This is a good investment for North Ayrshire Council as it will add to the life of the maisonettes. I believe tenants will enjoy the improvements for many years to come."

A tenant from the maisonettes said: "I love what the Council has done for our area. I am really proud of

where I live and feel much more secure. All my visitors comment on how lovely everything is. It is like having your very own garden although it is a common area." □

➤ **If you would like more information on this project, call Craig McEwing on 01294 324781.**

## for a new home



Mr David Dunlop is one of the first people to be allocated a new home via the new North Ayrshire Housing Register (NAHR).

Since 1 June, North Ayrshire Council, Cunninghame Housing Association, Irvine Housing Association and ANCHO have been letting their empty houses from the NAHR.

This means they are assessing applicants through one common allocation policy and selecting applicants from one common housing register.

Applicants now only have one application form to fill out and have one assessment made of their housing need. They can then be considered for housing by the four landlords anywhere in North Ayrshire.

### DID YOU KNOW?

North Ayrshire Council's Tenancy Support service can provide support to council tenants who:

- Are having problems managing their tenancy
- Are at risk of becoming homeless
- Have been homeless in the past.

Contact the team on 01294 601723 or ask for a referral at any local housing office.


## Need details on support?

The House Key, a new web-based Scottish directory and telephone helpline, has now launched to give tenants details of housing support that's on hand across Scotland.

Information available includes the name and contact details of the service, who the service is aimed at, current availability,

and accommodation details such as facilities on offer, disability access and whether pets are allowed.

➤ **If you would like more information on The House Key, visit [www.thehousekey.org](http://www.thehousekey.org) or call 0131 244 5518.**



Remember, remember the dangers of the 5th of November, and heed some important advice...

# Light the night safely

Traditionally, the run up to 5 November (bonfire night) sees an rise in the numbers of bonfires and rubbish fires attended by Strathclyde Fire & Rescue. With this increase in calls, comes an increase in the potential for injuries to members of the public, particularly children.

Strathclyde Fire and Rescue's advice is that to maximise enjoyment and reduce the risk of injury, members of the public should attend an organised public fireworks display.

However, should you wish to organise a display for your family or friends, here are some tips to ensure that your bonfire night is one to remember for the right reasons.

## DID YOU KNOW?

If you misuse fireworks, you may be liable for a spot fine of £80, or fined up to £5,000 in court

### Fireworks

Having fireworks at home can be great fun, as long as they are used safely. Figures show that more children than adults get hurt by fireworks. Over the past five years, in excess of 350 pre-school children, some only a year old, were treated in hospital for fireworks injuries.

So, follow the fireworks code:

- Don't drink alcohol if you're setting off fireworks
- Store fireworks in a closed, metal box and take them out one at a time
- Keep a bucket of water nearby
- Follow the instructions on each firework – read them by torchlight, never by a flame
- Light fireworks at arm's length, using the taper provided
- Make sure everyone stands well back
- Never go back to a firework that has been lit – even if it hasn't gone off it could still explode
- Never put fireworks in your pocket or throw them
- Always supervise children around fireworks and never give sparklers to a child under five
- Light sparklers one at a time and wear gloves
- Keep pets indoors

- Don't set off fireworks late at night
- Take care around open flames such as bonfires and barbecues – all clothes, even those labelled "low flammability", can catch fire.

### Bonfires

If you light a bonfire, at your fireworks display, then, remember to:

- Site well away from houses, garages, sheds, fences, overhead cables, trees and shrubs, and always away from fireworks
- Before lighting the fire, check that no pets or children are hiding inside it
- Build the stack so that it is stable and will not collapse outwards or to one side
- Never use flammable liquids – paraffin or petrol – to light the fire
- Don't burn foam-filled furniture, aerosols, and tins of paint or bottles
- Keep everyone away from the fire – especially children, who must be supervised at all times
- For an emergency, keep buckets of water, the garden hose or a fire extinguisher ready
- Pour water on the embers before leaving.



# Equality's a high priority

## Policies

Housing Services is aware of, and values, the different groups of customers that it serves. The introduction of the new equality and accessibility policies will ensure all tenants and customers receive equal treatment and access to the services we provide now, and in the future.

The key aims of the new policy documents are:

- To create inclusive and sustainable communities in North Ayrshire that are free from discrimination

and harassment

- To increase public confidence and encourage greater diversity in the take up of services

- To ensure all residents and service users have equal access to high-quality services that meet their needs, and recognise that in achieving this aim, there are some people who may need additional support

- To promote equality and eliminate any form of discrimination within Housing Services on the grounds detailed within the policies.

## Offices close for training

Please note that all Housing Service offices will be closed to the public from 1.30pm on the following dates for staff training and development:

- Thursday 10 September
- Thursday 8 October
- Thursday 12 November
- Thursday 10 December.



## Interested in a bedsit?

Sheltered and amenity bedsits within Dalrymple Place and Kiln Court in Irvine and Crofthead Court in Bourtreehill, as well as in other areas, frequently become available for let.

If you are interested, we will consider you for current and future lets in these units.

Applicants showing an interest should be an older person, as many of these bedsits are located within a sheltered housing complex.

If you are interested, call 01294 324870.

# Great job!

## Inspection

The Scottish Housing Regulator, as part of Housing Services' inspection process, last year audited the service provided to those affected by antisocial behaviour.

The Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Team (ASBIT) was found to be of a high standard, particularly its case investigation process and its approach to multi-agency working.

ASBIT's recent customer satisfaction surveys also indicated a high level of

customer satisfaction with the outcome of their cases.

The feedback provided by these surveys is used to help develop the service. One such development was the introduction of a Welcome Pack for new complainers who are referred to ASBIT.

The pack provides useful information and an introduction to the various agencies in North Ayrshire that deal with antisocial behaviour complaints and those organisations that provide support for victims.

## Property visits to be quick and easy

### Home surveys

North Ayrshire Council has instructed JMP Construction and Property Consultants to complete a condition survey of all of North Ayrshire Council's 13,400 properties over the next 12 months.

The survey will allow us to report on our progress towards Scottish Housing Quality Standard compliance by 2015.



The survey involves a visit by a surveyor who will carry out an internal and external survey of the property.

The survey is not disruptive and tenants will not be required to move any furniture or lift carpets. We hope to minimise the inconvenience by keeping the time in each property to less than one hour.

Due to begin in August, every tenant will receive a letter in advance of the survey, advising of an approximate time that the surveyor will be in your area. There is no need to wait in, but if you wish to contact us to make arrangements, a freephone number will be listed on the letter.

The Council aims to survey as close to 100% of properties as possible. We hope that tenants will help us to achieve this.

## New service already makes a big impact

### Homelessness

North Ayrshire Council's centralised Homeless Assessment Prevention and Advice Service, which launched in January 2008, is already having a major impact on homelessness.

New figures show that during 2008/09, the Council's levels of homelessness has dropped by 10%, which exceeds the Scottish average.

Also, the number of households represented as homeless also remains below the Scottish average.

# You said,

Feedback is really important to us – whether it's good or bad, we want to know. Here, we show you how we respond to what you tell us...

- **You suggested...** during an Estate Management Inspection in Warrix Avenue, Irvine, the installation of new secure door entries and perimeter wall/fencing and other landscape solutions.
- **So...** as part of the Estate Based Projects scheme, a proposal was put forward and as a result, work was carried out in the area. The benefits of this proposal can be seen on pages 2-3.
- **Feedback...** from the recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey showed that only 28% of tenants were aware of North Ayrshire Council's Tenancy Support service, and only 36% are aware that the Council can arrange for a member of staff to visit them in their home.
- **So...** we will raise awareness of the support service, and the home visit service, through letters and leaflets, for example.
- **Tenants in Montgomerie Street, Ardrossan, asked...** for the appearance of close landings to be improved.
- **So...** we consulted with



For the year 2008/09, 1,369 people presented themselves to North Ayrshire Council as homeless

## New policies are praised

North Ayrshire Council recently carried out a consultation on new allocation sub-policies.

Views were sought on our Succession, Assignment, Mutual Exchange, Joint Tenancy and Name Change policies.

The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Tenants rated their overall satisfaction with the layout and presentation of the policies.

We would like to thank all those who took part in this consultation exercise.

Your views are appreciated and provide a key role in shaping our policies and service delivery.

## Be part of the solution...

Are you interested in housing-related issues?

The Housing Forum meets twice a year to identify and discuss local housing challenges, and to contribute to the development of the Local Housing Strategy. This is the strategy that details how these housing challenges will be tackled in North Ayrshire.

The next forum has been scheduled for 30 October. To allow you to participate, we can help with transport, childcare and will cater for your dietary requirements.

➤ **If you are interested in coming along to the Housing Forum, please contact Jeanette on 01294 324638.**

# we did!



Montgomerie Street Tenants & Residents Association on the colours for the landings and had the work carried out in the blocks where there were 100% council tenants. Also, new door entry systems have been installed along with new windows in the closes and currently new flooring is being installed (pictured above). ■

### FEEDBACK WELCOMED ▶

Send your comments or feedback to Tenant Participation Team, FREEPOST RRUH-BAUB-AYLJ, 1 Main Street, Stevenston KA20 3AB. Or you can email [tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

## DIRECT DEBIT

Let North Ayrshire Council help you pay your bills

Looking for an easier more convenient way to pay your rent & council tax?

By converting to direct debit, everything is done for you; no more queues, no more cheques or visits to your bank.

North Ayrshire Council can make switching to Direct Debit easy for you.

### Move to Direct Debit today

The Direct Debit hotline for Rent on 01294 324603

Set up Direct Debit over the phone for Council Tax on 0845 6030592

or pick up a direct debit instruction from your local housing office. [www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

# Event honours two decades of top work

## Conference celebrates Tenants Information Service birthday

This year's Tenants Information Service (TIS) Annual Conference took place on 20-21 June in the Beardmore Hotel, Clydebank.

It was attended by four tenant and resident representatives and James McKee, Tenant Participation Officer.

At this conference, TIS celebrated its 20th anniversary and showed delegates the key changes and achievements

that have taken place over the past 20 years.

Jeanette Higgins, Vice-Chairperson of Corsehill Tenants & Residents Association, was one of the four tenants attending from North Ayrshire. She said: "The first workshop I attended was 'Involving young people – food for thought' and was very good. It was about young people causing problems in Slateford

Green, Edinburgh and how tenants worked together with the police and youth workers to make things better."

The conference also gave North Ayrshire tenant and resident representatives a chance to share good practice with similar representatives from across Scotland and to keep tenant participation in North Ayrshire flourishing.

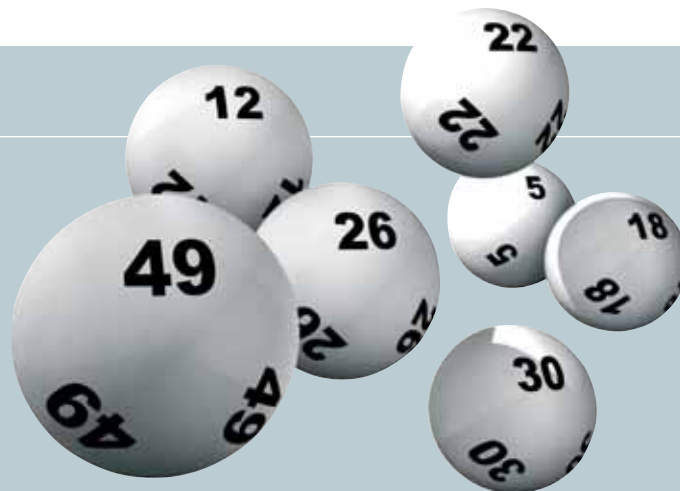
## Round up...

### Promote your association

Calling all tenant and resident associations out there! If you would like to promote your group in a future issue of *Tenancy Matters* or advertise for new members to join the committee free of charge, then contact the Tenant Participation Team. You can also contact the team if you would like more information on the work being done by the tenant and resident associations in your area. Call 01294 471501 or email [tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:tenantparticipation@north-ayrshire.gov.uk)

### Hitting the jackpot

Following a successful Annual General Meeting, where a new committee



was elected, Darg Road area Tenants & Residents Association in Stevenston held another bingo night.

The night was a great success and a number of tenants and residents in the area attended.

This has become a regular social event in the calendar of Darg Road Area Tenants & Residents Association and it is hoped that many more will be held in the future.

### Keeping you informed

Anderson Terrace Area Tenants & Residents Association has produced and issued another newsletter to all households in their area.

The committee have been working hard over the summer and held a barbeque for everyone.

Contained within the newsletter is a section that allows readers to highlight or promote special occasions or events.

## Contact us



Useful contacts to keep you in touch

### Area Housing Offices

**Ardrrossan**  
01294 605258

**Beith & Dalry**  
01294 835355

**Dreghorn**  
01294 221860

**Irvine**  
01294 324870

**Kilbirnie**  
01505 685177

**Kilwinning**  
01294 552261

**Largs**  
01475 687590

**Saltcoats**  
01294 602611

**Stevenston**  
01294 605281

### Other useful numbers

**Repairs Contact Centre**  
0800 0196 444  
(24 hours)

**Tenant Participation Team**  
01294 471501

**Tenancy Support**  
01294 601723

**Homelessness Assessment Prevention & Advice**

0800 0196 500

**Cleansing Hotline**  
0845 603 0594  
(including special uplifts/general enquiries/litter/recycling)

**Website**  
[www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk](http://www.north-ayrshire.gov.uk)