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Summer 2011

Abertalk



Abertay's 15th AGM

You are cordially invited to Abertay's 15th Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 21st September 2011 in Fintry Parish Church at 6.30 pm.

As in previous years, there will be a report from our Chairperson, Russell Rowbotham, along with the presentation of our Annual Accounts.

All Shareholders will have the opportunity to vote and stand for committee. We are a tenant led organisation and in order to maintain this we need more tenants on our Committee of Management. If you are interested in becoming a member, or would like to come along to one of our committee meetings as an observer, please let us know.

Further information can be obtained by contacting our Chief Executive, Ian Thomson. We have been entertained for the last 3 years by the wonderful Dryburgh Gardens Versatiles, who have provided us with songs and dance from a bygone era. This year, however, we aim to entertain you in a different way and have booked a youth group dance troupe named Showcase. They are an award winning organisation who combine hip hop and streetdance and who will no doubt have you all swaying in your seats! Our ever popular prize draw and renowned buffet will follow the evening's entertainment.

We do hope you will come along and look forward to seeing you there...

NEWS FLASH

Proposed change to Rent Debit Cycle : We recently consulted you on a proposal to change the rent debit cycle from monthly to 4 weekly. Only 15% of tenants replied and Abertay has decided not to progress this meantime. Thank you to all those who responded with their views.

Complaints Procedure

Abertay Housing Association is committed to providing a first class service, but there may be occasions when you're not happy with the service we have provided.

If this is the case it is important for you to tell us so that the problem can be resolved quickly and efficiently.

We appreciate you taking the time to inform us of any incident where you feel we have not provided an excellent service as this allows us to make amends, and also to keep an eye on the quality of service we provide so that we can continually work to improve it.

We always aim for excellence in providing a respectful, friendly, professional and timely service to all our customers, whether tenants, owners or other members of the public. All complaints will be taken seriously and we aim to resolve these informally, and at an early stage. If this does not prove possible, however, and you wish to make a formal complaint, you should contact the Chief Executive's PA, preferably in writing. This will be acknowledged within 3 days and a full response given within 14 days. Leaflets and complaints forms can be found in Abertay's office at 147 Fintry Drive, Dundee.

Changes to your household

It's very important that you tell us about any changes in your household, as this can often affect your housing benefit. So please tell us if:

- If you START work
- If you STOP working

- If you take in a lodger
- If your child reaches the age of 18

Letting us know about these important changes to your circumstances helps us to provide you with right advice!

Welcome to new Staff Members

Abertay is delighted to welcome on board 5 new staff members this year:



Ron Skea has been appointed as our new Operations Director. Ron will lead and direct our housing, property management and related services, and joins us with a wealth of experience in change management.



Hailey Wilkie has joined our finance team as the new Accountant and Business Analyst. Hailey will improve and develop the use of business information throughout Abertay as well as ensuring the appropriate financial controls are in place.



Dean Lyon has been appointed as our new Maintenance Support Team Leader and, along with being a qualified Clerk of Works, comes with a wealth of knowledge of building maintenance and customer service standards. Dean will lead the reactive repairs team.



Russell Headridge, who some of you may recognise from his days with SSHA through to Carillion; has recently joined us as our new Maintenance Officer. Russell, along with the other Maintenance Officers, will assist the reactive repair service and the overall maintenance and stock improvement works within Abertay.



Eleanor Carroll has joined our Sheltered Housing Team as a Supply Warden. Eleanor has gained vast experience in the 'caring' environment and is welcome addition to the Team.

And finally, as is normally the case when new staff members join us, they are replacing some former staff members who have moved on for a variety of reasons.

We said goodbye to our former Technical Services Director, **Ron McArthur**, who has taken up a new position elsewhere. Next we had to say goodbye to **Brian Taylor**, our former Senior Maintenance Officer, who retired earlier this year. **Don Barnett**, our former Housing Services Director, who also retired in the Spring. And finally, we have had to say goodbye to **Lesley Ferguson**, our Corporate Services Director, who has relocated with her family down south. We wish them all well for the future!



Barbecues

Tayside Fire and Rescue recognise that in the summertime more people use barbecues and cooking with a proper barbecue is safer than using an open fire but you still need to take care.

Tayside Fire and Rescue recommends that:

- site barbecues in the open, well away from fences, bushes, trees and garden furniture
- secure lighter fluids and blocks and put them away - well away - before lighting
- never throw lighter fluid or any flammable liquid on a lit barbecue
- if you're using a disposable barbecue, place it on a concrete or stone slab, not on the grass
- never light a barbecue indoors or in a tent
- coals remain hot for a long time and can start fires - douse with water when you're done

The Scottish Housing Regulator wants to hear your views



Scotland has a new, independent housing regulator.

From next April its role will be to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants and others who receive housing services from local authorities and housing associations. It will replace the existing regulator. Before taking on its role, the new Scottish Housing Regulator is consulting on its approach. It wants to hear the views of tenants, landlords and others with an interest in social housing. Kay Blair is the new Regulator's Chair. Kay said: "The quality of housing and landlord services have a direct and lasting impact on people's lives. We will regulate to protect tenants' interests and to drive improvements in social housing."

We will assess each landlord's performance regularly. In doing so, we will take account of the views and experiences of its tenants. We will publish a range of information on landlords' performance, including progress against the Scottish Government's new Social Housing Charter. This will help tenants to hold their landlord to account. And we will take action where we find a landlord is failing to deliver for tenants.

The new Regulator would like to get wide feedback on its proposed approach. The consultation runs from early September. You can respond until late November.

There will also be events across the country, open to tenants and others, to discuss the proposals. You can get a copy of the proposals and find out more about the events by visiting the new Regulator's website, following the consultation on Twitter or contacting its office.

You can find the details below.

website: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk/newregulator

phone: 0141 271 3810

e-mail: consultation@scottishhousingregulator.gsi.gov.uk

twitter: www.twitter.com/SHRconsultation

GAS BOILER SERVICING

Annual Gas Servicing is Essential for your Safety

It is a statutory obligation of Abertay Housing Association to ensure that all gas boilers are serviced on an annual basis. If you have a gas boiler we will arrange for a service engineer to call. They will be from a company called WRB Gas who we have a contract with to service all our boilers.

Prior notice of the appointment will be given at least 1 week in advance so that you can arrange to give them access. If you cannot arrange for them to have access on the date arranged, then we ask that you telephone them on 01382 204030 to cancel the appointment. And arrange another at a more suitable time and date.

Allowing the service engineers access is part of your tenancy agreement and is necessary to allow us to fulfil our statutory duties as a Landlord. However, it is for your own safety as well.

Gas leaking from gas boilers can be deadly. Faulty boilers can produce a gas called Carbon Monoxide which without warning can be a silent, but deadly killer.



While WRB Gas are in your home, they will also check and service your Carbon Monoxide and Smoke Alarm. Ensuring you are safe within your home.

Every year we experience problems trying to carry out servicing in some homes.

Please permit access to your house, failure to do so puts lives at risk and also puts you in breach of your tenancy agreement. In extreme cases we may have to take action against you, which could ultimately result in your tenancy being terminated.

If you wish to install any gas appliances in your home you need to seek our permission before you have them installed. These must be installed by a registered GAS SAFE engineer.

A LIGHT-HEARTED APPROACH TO Pest Control

If you don't clean up, and get rid of your muck.

Well I am sorry to say, you're in for bad luck

And if you're having bother, with nasty wee grubs.

Hoover your carpets, and under your rugs.

If you're feeling itchy, when you're in your bed.

It may be the bed bugs, are just being fed.

So if you wake up, all covered in blisters.

It will be the wee mites, all their brothers and sisters.

If you don't ventilate your rooms, you'll get condensation.

Which may bring to your house, another infestation.

Dampness and clutter, with the odd dirty dish.

Are conditions that will bring in, the silverfish?

If you don't clean up the crumbs, the dust and the fluff.

The dermestes beetles, will call your bluff.

They will lay their eggs, at the edge of some wall.

The kitchen or bedroom, your lounge or your hall.

So if we keep things clean, in and out of our house.

It should help to avoid, us getting a mouse.

Cleaning is cheap, and tidying is free.

So don't wait until spring, to go for that spree.

Don't encourage the insect, the bug or the mite.

These little critters just love to bite.

They feed on your blood; they will give you a rash,

Best way to avoid them, is to throw out your trash.



You have to laugh! But remember, we all need to take care to prevent an outbreak.

Home Improvements

Although Abertay realises the importance of upgrading their housing stock to comply with current standards and regulations, we also appreciate that tenants often wish to make their own home improvements or alterations to the properties they live in.

We also appreciate that not everyone has the skills to carry out such works and therefore, such tasks should be carried by a competent person. However, we at Abertay are also here to help and we try to make it as easy as possible for tenants to submit an application and receive authorisation to carry out alterations or improvements.

Our Alterations/Improvements Application Form will assist the applicant with any queries they may have, as well as providing guidance in relation to important Building Regulation and SHQS requirements, which must be complied with.

The overall aim is to provide a One-Stop service to the customer, whereby they can pick up an application form at the front desk in our Fintry Drive office and receive assistance from a member of staff to fill out the form. We will also give the customer Technical Leaflet/s, giving advice regarding workmanship standards and mandatory requirements expected of the person carrying out the works. This will ensure that all parties can be satisfied that the works are carried out properly and safely.

Whilst the applicant will be required to sign a disclaimer form, to confirm that they understand and intend to follow the required guidelines, they will also benefit from the reassurance that we will offer to inspect the completed works after a period of 3 months, if required. This arrangement will also allow Abertay to build up a comprehensive record of our housing stock and give our staff the ability to answer any queries you may have regarding your home.

THE GREEN GREEN GRASS OF HOME

Many hands make light work in the garden!

Once again this year, Abertay Housing would like to pass on our sincere thanks to the volunteers of the Fintry Mains Church, who, under the watchful eye of Helen Brough, gave up their time during the school holidays to assist with some gardening work for residents struggling with their vastly overgrown gardens.



This assistance is invaluable to a few specially selected residents who, for a variety of valid reasons, are genuinely unable to keep on top of their garden responsibilities.

In a busy world, the garden can offer a tranquil haven and is there for you to enjoy!

PLEASE BE REMINDED, THE GARDEN IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TENANT. FAILURE TO KEEP YOUR GARDEN IN AN ACCEPTABLE STANDARD MAY LEAD TO LEGAL ACTION.



"Couldn't believe it was the same garden when they were finished! It has inspired me to keep it looking this good!"

A TENANT

Stop That Pigeon !!

Feral Pigeons are causing a bit of a doo for residents of Abertay properties!

They have thrived by adapting to Life in the city, learning to roost and breed in the seemingly inhospitable environment provided by tall buildings, and to survive on the food available.

Feeding pigeons is an unhygienic and anti-social practice. It encourages them to gather in increasing numbers, which leads to nuisance, and annoyance. Pigeon feeding is harmful because it makes pigeons dependent on people. If they were less depended they would arguably be less susceptible to disease and other health risks. Pigeons are wild birds and are capable of fending for themselves. People who feed pigeons often end up feeding more than they bargained for. On occasions when food is plentiful, pigeons may not always eat everything left out for them. The remaining food goes bad and may attract rats and mice, which can spread disease to humans.

So... the message is clear!

Don't do it!!

Pigeon droppings are not only unsightly; their acid content can eat into soft stone and cause long-term damage to buildings. The nest droppings, and feathers also block gutters and rainwater pipes causing water damage. Their droppings can lead to severe hazards on pavements, especially for the elderly, and can carry pathogenic organisms. Pigeons can carry a number of potentially infectious diseases such as salmonella, tuberculosis and ornithosis (a mild form of psittacosis - pneumonia-like symptoms). They are also a source of allergens, which can cause respiratory ailments like pigeon fancier's lung and allergic skin reaction.

Lets work together to eradicate the problems highlighted here - STOP THAT PIGEON !!



Count on us...

We would like to remind all our tenants that if you are struggling financially or would just like to see if you can improve your financial situation, help and support is always available.

Our newly created Tenancy Sustainment Service offers housing association tenants across Dundee information and guidance on any of the following:-

- Benefits you may be entitled to
- Managing your money or paying your bills, especially rent
- Repaying debts
- Budgeting and the costs of running a home
- Accessing furnishings and kitchen appliances
- Lowering fuel bills
- Home Contents Insurance
- Opening savings and bank accounts
- Accessing low cost loans

For a free, confidential and impartial appointment please do not hesitate to contact TSS on:

T: 01382 458515
E: tss@hillcrest.org.uk

Or visit their office at
7 - 11 Arbroath Road,
Dundee, DD4 6EW

Open mornings only



Caldrum Street

In March we had our first Fish Supper Night for 2011 with entertainment by Rab Clark.

April saw our first bus drive to Blairgowrie British Legion, a favourite with our tenants.

In May we held a fundraising night with a forces theme in the complex and raised £425 for Help for Heroes.

The Lord Provost attended an afternoon tea party in June to be presented with proceeds of the Help for Heroes fundraiser. Our oldest tenant Mr Jim Kennedy made the presentation and we had our photo published in the Evening Telegraph.

Several tenants attended the Help for Heroes concert in the Caird Hall at the beginning of July and at the end of July we are going on our annual joint bus drive with tenants and friends from Rosebank Place.

We recently started a games morning and this is proving to be another popular weekly event in the complex.

We have lots more planned for the coming months with one of the highlights being the Angus Minstrel Show in November.



Dryburgh Gardens

Dryburgh gardens have had a busy few months.

We celebrated the royal wedding with a three course lunch and the Dundee Instrumental Brass Band played after the lunch.

We have started weekly Zumba classes and everyone is enjoying them.

We also enjoyed a jewellery afternoon, the jewellery is made in Lima, Peru by a group of women through the Fair Trade initiative and it is sold to give them an income.



Our June trip was to Brechin Garden Centre then onto the Red House Hotel for High Tea.

We also had a trip to Broughty Ferry and then onto Dobbies and High Tea at the Monifieth Golf Club.



Dura Street

Dura Street residents have been busy:

March, April and May

March saw Gordon and Dura Street tenants visit the Royal British Legion in Blairgowrie for High Tea, Bingo and entertainment from Jay Henderson.

April saw a social evening with a mince roll then entertainment from "Pearl the Singer". **May** included attending the "Foster & Allen concert at the Caird Hall, pie and beans and a quiz night in the complex lounge, followed by a talent contest among Dura Street's finest.

Scheme Manager Ken was quiz master, penalising "interrupters" with "One Di & 3 others" the winners. The Talent show was won by Vi Spalding with Chrissie McDonald the Runner-up. Judging panel were Johan McLeavy (Amanda Holden), Agnes Clark (Cheryl Cole) and Lorna Smith (Lorna Smith). Ken (Where did he get these specs) Scheme Manager was the bungling compere.

June and July

A lovely dry day in **June** for our visit to the Dunfermline Glen with High Tea at the City Hotel with Gordon Street tenants joining Dura Street for the trip. For those who could not make the trip, an afternoons entertainment showing DVD's of Foster & Allen on the big screen took place in the Dura Street Complex with tea and biscuits provided.

July saw Dura Street on their travels again with a trip up to the Queens View for a picnic lunch, shopping in Pitlochry followed. Tenants then enjoyed the scenic route home over Moulin Moors to Kirriemuir where tea and drinks were enjoyed at the Thrums Hotel before heading home. A buffet in the complex lounge, followed by a Quiz night and the game show Take Your Pick brought July to an end.

But the fun doesn't end there, in **August** we have a fully booked evening to Monikie to see Irish country star Philomena Begley in concert with Pearl the Singer returning to the Complex later in the month.

Other Dura news... A successful lottery application for a new computer and we await the outcome of our grant application to the Dundee Partnership to allow us to fit mono blocking to the patio.



Fintry Mains

Since the last newsletter Fintry Mains has introduced two new Activities to their already busy weekly schedule. We now have a craft class on a Wednesday Evening and a computer class on a Thursday morning. We are also hoping to introduce a Zumba Class in the near future. This should help keep the tenants fit.

April - We celebrated the

launch of the new Abertay Logo. A cake with the new logo on it and balloons were donated by Abertay. You can see by the pictures that the tenants enjoyed their lunch that day.

The Royal Wedding - Because Fintry Mains don't have a TV in the Complex the tenants had to watch the Royal Wedding in the comfort of their own homes. But they never miss an opportunity to have a good old knees up, so they celebrated the Royal Wedding with a Buffet and entertainment in the Complex. This was a great night!! Jay Henderson along with a tenant (Derek Linton) played the part as the Royal couple.

The no TV situation is about to be resolved as Fintry Mains has just been granted a conditional offer of £3,495 from the Big Lottery Fund. Yippee!!! This will also provide new laptops and enable the tenants to continue with their computer lessons.

May - We enjoyed a Bus Trip to Glenrothes we enjoyed a lovely meal, a game of Bingo and entertainment. A good time was had by all.

June - Once again the tenants put on their walking shoes and did their yearly sponsored walk in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support. So far the total raised is £547 with sponsor money still to come.

We also had a Bus trip to Arbroath where we hired a function room in the Portculis Pub. There we had a Buffet, Bingo and Entertainment. This was something different as we usually only go to Arbroath to attend the Theatre or for a Fish Supper.



Gordon Street

Gordon Street tenants have been enjoying themselves:

March: A Lottery Grant allowed the purchase of a large screen TV and a DVD Player installed in time for the tenants to watch the Royal Wedding together. Money to purchase a Wii console for games like bowling will be utilised soon!

April: The Lottery Grant also paid for the tenants to have Beauty Therapy and Reflexology sessions on alternate weeks, very popular with the ladies, all looking well groomed and relaxed as a result!

"The Royal Wedding" saw tenants and friends arriving from 9.30am to watch the event unfold on the new "big screen", the place 'buzzing with anticipation' All enjoyed seeing guests arrive, commenting on the ladies outfits and hats, worthy of a Milan fashion show! Lots of OOHs and AHHS for the Bride and the Maid of honour's dresses, all agreed the Middleton's "scrub up well". We all thought the Queen was lovely, and the men in their usual standard Uniforms. Tay Cuisine provided a lovely wedding banquet, followed by a party with drinks and

cakes to toast the newlyweds. Jay Henderson got the party started with dancing and sing-along. A great time was had by all.

May: Tessa and Gillian the musical Duo entertained our tenants at a VE party and Celebration Meal on 7th May. Memories of the end of the war and some great sing along tunes were order of the day.

Our Day trip to Glasgow for shopping /sightseeing inviting some friends from Dura Street along, a good day with High tea at The Inchture Hotel on the way back home.

June: Freida, Theresa and Elsie, all smiles on the coach, looking forward to going to Aberdeen, theatre and shopping trip, with high tea at the Glass Pavilion on the way home. Later that month some of our tenants joined with their friends from Dura Street and enjoyed a day out and High tea in Dunfermline.

It has been a busy few months with regular gatherings in the lounge for the various therapies or just for a cuppa together. The tenants have also bought a new camera to continue Gordon Street's pictorial history!



Patons Lane Easter is always a favourite time and the complex held its annual Easter Bonnet competition.

Pictured are selections of the bonnets produced by our own fair hands. A really colourful sight to behold. Stella Mitchell was the winner of this year's event and she is seen here being presented with a voucher by our resident judge

Duncan Mitchell. (Not related).



April saw the biggest event of the year with the Royal wedding between Kate and William. A party was held at the complex to celebrate this great occasion. The hall was decorated with Royal Regalia as were the residents. The champagne was cracked open for the toast to the happy couple.

It was a memorable occasion and the day is one which the residents say will always remain a favourite of theirs.

In May an outing to Dobbies and high tea at the picturesque Forbes of Kingennie was enjoyed by all. The weather was lovely as was the beautiful views of the surrounding area of the restaurant.

Our Nuline dance class has been going for several months now and it has been a great success. Nuline dancing is line dancing incorporated into all kinds of music, such as modern, jazz etc. We were mostly beginners when the class started and we can now complete many of the popular dances. The dancing helps keep us fit while providing some very humorous moments. The classes are well attended and so much fun.





April – we did some fundraising in the complex with a bingo night. This was well attended and it boosted our funds. The other big event in April was the royal wedding; we showed the wedding on the TV in the lounge and had a lovely buffet lunch.

May – we went to Dundee City Councils show Stars in their Eyes. Everyone had a great time. It was also the Volunteer Arts and Craft teachers birthday so the group had a small party for her.

June - we were off again on our annual trip to Ikea in Edinburgh. As usual we were treated very well, free lunch and refreshments for everyone on the bus.

July – went to Caird Hall to see the Heroes concert. We have a coffee morning organised for later in the month. Our summer drive which is also this month is a joint one with Caldrum Street and we are off to Glenrothes.

COMPETITION CORNER

Colouring Competition Winner :

Eilidh Towns -
age 6



PRIZE DRAW WINNERS

JANUARY: Ms Hunter –
Dryburgh Gardens

FEBRUARY: Mrs O'Donnell –
Dryburgh Gardens

MARCH: Ms Jackson & Mr Murphy –
Findhorn Street

MAY: Miss Carrington –
Findchapel Place

JUNE: Mr Bowman – Fintry Mains

KIDS COLOURING COMPETITION
WINNER: E. Towns – Findowrie Street

ANNUAL GARDEN COMPETITION

BEST GARDEN:

Mrs McConnachie 58 Finella Place

BEST BALCONY:

Mr & Mrs Gray 8 Fintryside

B&Q experts judge the Abertay 2011 Gardens and Balconies competition!

Thank you to all Abertay tenants for their efforts with gardens and balconies. Staff have been out and about with the Abertay camera, before handing over the entries to the 2011 Judges - Vicky Gould, Trading Manager and Heather Dobson from Perth B&Q chose the winning entries, each receiving £50 B&Q Vouchers from Abertay.

The Judges told us... "This was a really difficult task for us; it's clear Abertay tenants love and take lots of pride in their gardens"

Best Balcony -
Mr & Mrs Gray 8 Fintryside

Heather said "A great effort made here in such a small area with a colourful display encompassing wind chimes, hanging basket and potted plants"

Best Garden -
Mrs McConnachie 58 Finella Place

Vicky said "Impressive use of structure in laying out the garden shows well maintained ground and good use of pots to provide colour"

Right: Vicky and Heather judge the entries in the Perth B&Q Kitchen Showroom.

New for this year! Two runners up Heather and Vicky were so impressed with the amount of garden entries; Perth B&Q's General Manager Roger Bodden donated £25 B&Q vouchers for two runners up prizes saying:

Garden Runner up -
Mrs Dodds, 25 Baltic Gardens

"What an impressive effort to dress up an otherwise plain wall with a colourful display of potted plants"

Garden Runner up -
Mr Maver 91 Finella Place

"The clean lines show a really well groomed and maintained garden"

