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Myrekirk

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Free
Prize Draw!!

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wedding
celebrations

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Summer
2014

Abertalk



Estate Walkabouts

Residents working together with Abertay to “Enhance the quality of life in our communities”

In response to feedback from the customer satisfaction survey last year, we have recently introduced Estate Walkabouts to help improve the management of your estates. These started in April and give all residents an opportunity to get involved in making the area where you live even nicer! We hope that both owners and tenants will walk the estate with staff from Abertay and help highlight any issues, problems or concerns they may have so we can put these right.

Your opportunity to get involved

You can help shape the changes in your area by coming along to the walkabouts pointing out issues on your estate and have a say in how they should be resolved.

You should have received a leaflet with a timetable of dates and times for your area. All you have to do is

tell your Housing Officer that you would like to take part in the Walkabout and turn up on the day. If you are living in sheltered housing then a Scheme Manager will also accompany you. If you have not received your leaflet and would like further information please contact the Customer Services Team on Tel No. 903545, or email queries@abertayha.co.uk. Alternatively you can view the timetable along with the outcome of our walkabouts on our website at www.abertayha.co.uk.

For those of you who cannot attend walkabouts we would still like to hear from you. Please contact us by any of the above methods and we will act on your concerns and add it to our plan of actions and outcomes. These can be viewed on our website or in the Main office. Alternatively we can email you a copy if preferred.



A recent walkabout with residents at Dykehead/Brougham Gardens

Date for your diary

The Fintry Gala Day is to be held in the grounds of Fintry Parish Church at 11a.m. on Saturday 16th August. Abertay Housing Association will be present at the Gala along with a pipe band, parades and kiddie rides. We will be sponsoring the Climbing Wall once again this year. This is always a very popular and free attraction for children at the Gala.





YOU SAID, WE DID

Basin at Myrekirk

In last year's satisfaction survey, residents from Kingsway West & Dunholm Road expressed concern about the condition of the perimeter fence around the basin (duck pond) on Myrekirk terrace.

When the estate was completed in 2008, we erected a timber fence to provide a protective barrier even though this was not a legal requirement. However the

fence has become a target for vandalism resulting in Abertay spending a lot of time, money and resources continually repairing it.

In light of your feedback a robust galvanised metal fence was erected in May 2014 replacing the damaged timber fencing - we hope that this will deter vandalism in the future and looks much better for residents living in the area.



Website Improvements

We are always looking at ways to help improve our communication with tenants and owners - one of these methods is our website. A number of changes have been made over the last few months so please click on www.abertayha.co.uk and have a look.

Changes include the ability to make payments on-line and an improved owners section with up to date estate plans to help prevent billing queries.

A small working group of staff has been set up to look at further improvements to the look and feel of the website. These include making the website easier to use on tablets, phones and other mobile devices plus actions plans from the estate walkabouts will be uploaded soon too.

If you have any suggestions to help us improve the website, please get involved and let us know at queries@abertayha.co.uk or speak to a member of staff.



Get Involved – help us to help you



Finding ways to have more residents involved and making it easier for you to get involved is really important to us.

This is why we are introducing a more flexible range of options to replace the more formal Abertay Residents Organisation (ARO) which tenants have recently agreed to disband.

It's a bit like choosing a meal from a menu in a restaurant - sometimes you just want a starter, other times you might fancy something more. Also we've included a take-away option which we call Armchair Membership in case you can't attend meetings easily or have travel difficulties.

So have a look at our menu, and if you would like to help us, please complete and return the postcard and we'll do the rest. No stamp is required.

• Register of interested tenants

We hope that many tenants will want to join this register. It's ideal if you just want to be consulted on things like policy changes so we can get your views or be invited to various events.

Participation is voluntary and confidential. You can also let us know if you just want Armchair Membership – this still allows you to be consulted and informed without the need to travel to meetings, especially if you are busy or have difficulty travelling.

Some of the specific things we will write or e-mail tenants about include:

- Customer surveys – we will phone, write or e-mail you (according to your preference) to check your level of satisfaction with a particular service or to ask you your opinion. We will always try to make sure the survey is quick and easy to complete.
- Mystery shoppers – a fun and enjoyable way to help us check that we are providing the right level of service in key areas. This might be checking how we answer the telephone,

deal with a query at reception or a completed void or repair.

- Resident Walkabout inspectors - if you would like to accompany the Housing Officer and Maintenance Officer on regular estate walkabouts (see front page article). These can be either where you live plus other estates if you wish.

• Focus groups

This is about getting tenants and staff together to look at a specific topic, maybe with one or two short meetings (at times to suit everyone). For example, could you help us to review the Tenant handbook so it contains the information you want to see in it or the Sheltered Housing handbooks? You can also tell us what you would like to focus on improving.

• Tenant Scrutiny Panel

Sounds formal doesn't it – but don't worry. This is just a small group of residents who can help us look at our performance on a regular basis, perhaps meeting just 3 or 4 times a year and help us shape the changes you want to see for tenants.

This might include:-

- Reviewing our performance in areas like Repairs and comparing it with other Housing Associations
- Refreshing the Tenant Participation Policy
- Looking at the results of our mystery shopping
- Making recommendations following survey feedback
- Overseeing our planned maintenance programme

In the satisfaction survey carried out last year tenants were asked how they would like us to report our performance. The majority of responders to our survey (62%) indicated they preferred this information to appear in the Newsletter. So although our Annual Landlord Report will be made available to tenants in September 2014, Abertay have included a summary version for you of our performance for last year from April 2013 to March 2014.

Our Homes

Total number of Abertay homes	1762
Total rent due for year 13/14'	£6,909,220
Percentage of average weekly rent increase	3.2%

Total number of each apartment size and average weekly rent for each







Stock by type, apartment size and rent	House	High rise	Tenement	4 in a block	Other flat /maisonette	Total	Nos. of lettable units	Average weekly rent £
1 Apt	1	0	2	0	0	3	3	55.14
2 Apt	95	0	115	16	1	227	227	82.55
3 Apt	302	56	428	83	0	869	867	70.87
4 Apt	210	25	311	58	0	604	602	79.51
5 Apt+	25	0	24	10	0	59	59	103.32
Total	633	81	880	167	1	1,762	1,758	76.4

Satisfaction

Percentage of tenants satisfied with the overall service provided by Abertay	86.9%
Percentage of tenants who felt that Abertay was good at keeping them informed about services and outcomes	88%
Percentage of tenants satisfied with the opportunities given to them to participate in their landlords decision making progress	75%

Comment - Abertay have been looking at ways to improve our Website including the introduction of on-line payments along with more detailed information on any planned maintenance etc. Residents will also be able to get access to information on the outcomes of Estate Walkabouts and if they cannot attend or do not have access to a computer then we are happy to discuss any issues residents may have and add it to any actions identified from the walkabout.

Abertay are giving tenants the opportunity to volunteer and become more involved in the decision making process. Tenants now have the opportunity to be able to do this in a range of different ways. Please see the article on getting involved elsewhere in this newsletter, along with the freepost postcard.

Housing Quality & Maintenance			
	2013/14'	2012/13'	
Percentage of our stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS)	82.7%	58%	
Average length of time taken to complete emergency repairs	1.9 hours	2.9 hours	
Average length of time taken to complete non-emergency repairs	6.1 days	8.2days	
Percentage of reactive repairs carried out in the last year completed right first time.	80.9%	69%	
The percentage of repairs appointments kept	99%	96.5%	
Percentage of tenants who have had repairs & maintenance carried out in the last 12 months satisfied with the service	99.7%	99.4%	




Comment - A great improvement in the number of our homes now meeting SHQS standard. Our target is to reach 100% by March 2015. Improving performance in getting your repair fixed quickly and right first time is important to us. This is reflected in the high levels of customer satisfaction with the repairs service.

Neighbourhood & Community

Number of cases of anti-social behaviour reported in the last year	639
Number of cases resolved within locally agreed targets in the last year	572

Comment - Locally agreed targets for antisocial behaviour were agreed and set in partnership with the Abertay Residents Organisation at the end of 2012. This means that our performance in 12/13 cannot be reported as targets were different. Although 90% of cases were resolved within target, we are aiming to improve further this year.

Getting good value from rents & Service charges

	2013/14'	2012/13'	
Average length of time taken to relet properties in the last year	32 days	38 days	
Percentage of rent lost through properties being empty in the last year	0.8%	0.8%	
Rent collected from tenants as a % of total rent due in the reporting year	99.2%	97.8%	

Comment - Abertay is working hard to reduce the time it takes to relet properties. Although there has been improvement from the previous year we believe this could be improved further. Our target has been reviewed and changed from 28 to 21 calendar days. We are pleased that in the last 3 months from March – May 2014 our average days to relet a property have reduced to 16 days

Sheltered Housing Report

We are pleased to announce the positive outcome of the Care Inspectorate's recent visits to two of our seven sheltered schemes, which took place in March. An overall rating of 'very good (5)' was awarded for each of the three quality standards – Staffing, Care & Support and Management & Leadership, including three individual top scores of 'excellent (6)'. The Care Inspectorate said "This is a well run and high quality service

which is committed to promoting tenant involvement, safety and community involvement".

The results achieved are due entirely to the hard work and dedication of Sheltered Scheme Managers, and Housing staff who are thoroughly committed to enhancing the quality of life in our communities. Abertay would like to thank all those tenants who participated in the review of our sheltered service either by survey or interview.

We are very proud of the quality of service we provide to our sheltered tenants and we are pleased that this has again been recognised by the Care Inspectorate.

New Way to Make Payments

It is now even easier to pay your rent or other bills to Abertay. An on line payment option is now available at www.abertayha.co.uk. Under Tenant Services, choose the Paying Rent option, then choose the Internet option. This will let you make a payment by credit or debit card at a time that suits you.

Prize Draws for Direct Debit Payers

As from 1st July 2014 all Direct Debit payers are to be entered into our free Prize draw. These will be held every 6 months in July and December. The lucky winner will be awarded a £50 voucher of their choosing. Winners will be announced on our website and in our Newsletter. Please note – The Association will enter all names of those who have paid by Direct Debit for a minimum of the last 6 months. More information can be found on our website or by contacting the Customer Services Team at Tel No. 903545.

Voucher Reward* And Free Prize Draw!!

Switch to Direct Debit

Don't delay, set up your direct debit today and you could be rewarded with a £25 voucher and free entry into our prize draws for Direct Debit payers!

For further details please contact our Customer Services Team on Tel No. 903545 or alternatively details can be found on our website at www.abertayha.co.uk under Pay Rent and Direct Debit.



** Please note - voucher will be rewarded after 6 months of consecutive payments are received.*

Stop press
Further funding available

If you are currently liable for the bedroom tax and you have not been awarded a Discretionary Housing Payment to cover this, please contact Anna on Tel No. 513826 urgently.

Here to help



Two years ago we combined several specialised staff into one generic Customer Service Team. Our aim was to make it as easy as possible for you to access our services to get the help you need. The Team can now deal with most enquiries including repair requests, housing applications, anti-social behaviour concerns, and estate matters. If the enquiry is not something they handle themselves (such as rent enquiries), they will pass you to the person best able to help.

Our team (pictured left) are Customer Service Assistants Charlene Jones, Lynne Anderson, Carly Ward, Linzi Carmichael, Sharon Clinton, Joanne Clark, Cindy Walker (not pictured) and Team Leader Liam Radford.

Your feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and was confirmed in last years Satisfaction Survey when over 90% of you said you were fairly or very satisfied with the service we provide.

As part of our mission to 'enhance the quality of life in our communities' we are always looking to improve and your ongoing feedback is vital. You can let us know your thoughts on our existing services and anything else you think we can help you with by

Calling (01382) 903545

Emailing customerservice@abertayha.co.uk

Visiting or writing to us at 147 Fintry Drive, Dundee DD4 9HE

Or accessing the 'Customer Feedback' section of our website www.abertayha.co.uk

Did you know?

- **The average amount spent by households in Scotland on gas and electricity went up 50% in real terms between 2002 and 2012 and now represents over 5% of household income**
- **The average household in Scotland spends £112 each month on fuel**
- **Retired households pay a greater percentage of income on energy than non retired households**
- **26% of Scottish households were wrongly billed in the last 2 years. The average discrepancy is £300**
- *** Source: U-Switch and Office of National Statistics**

Abertay Housing are in partnership with Dundee Energy Efficiency Advice Project (DEEAP) and help fund the cost of an energy advisor to help our tenants. We have recently agreed to fund DEEAP for the next 3 years so they can help Abertay tenants with advice on fuel tariffs, how to reduce bills, energy efficiency measures, advocacy work resolving individuals debts with energy suppliers, and other advice and referral work.

From April – December 2013 Abertay Tenants benefitted from financial savings in excess of £62,000 which have included:

- Re-negotiating fuel bills
- Energy Advice
- Heating demonstrations
- Warm Home Discount
- White goods (courtesy of SSE).

This is a **free** service for Abertay tenants. We would be happy to refer you to DEEAP, if you feel you would benefit from this service.

Please contact our Customer Services Team (Tel No. 903545) for more details.



Abertay bid a fond farewell to Jane Cowie and Margaret Gourlay on 24th June.



Margaret retired after working 10 years as a Sheltered Scheme Manager. Margaret started working at the Dura Street Complex, moving on to be Scheme Manager at Fintry Mains Complex for the last 6 years. A very conscientious and caring employee, we are hoping her

tenants will not miss her too much as she still intends going along regularly to the line-dancing classes held in the complex.

Jane was a Senior Housing Officer and her main responsibility was managing the sheltered housing service. She has been an employee of Abertay Housing Association, (previously Scottish Homes) for 25 years. There is no doubt that the recent excellent report from the Care Inspectorate on our sheltered housing was in part down to her hard work, dedication and commitment to the service. Jane is looking forward to spending more time with her family and supervising her husband's DIY projects.

Abertay wishes Jane and Margaret many happy years in retirement and our best wishes for the future.



Double Diamond wedding celebrations

Mr and Mrs Whitton, Dryburgh Gardens and Mr and Mrs Honeyman, Caldrum Street celebrated their Diamond Wedding anniversaries in March.



Mr and Mrs Whitton



Mr and Mrs Honeyman

Congrats from Abertay!!



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

Getting In Touch

Telephone:

01382 903545

Fax:

01382 903575

Email:

queries@abertayha.co.uk

Introducing Fiona Ferguson.

Fiona joined Abertay as a Senior Housing Officer in June. She brings with her over 15 years of experience in Housing Support Services with Angus Council and Dundee City Council. Fiona is looking forward to working with staff in our sheltered housing schemes and being actively involved in tenant participation.



And a Change in our Admin Team

Moving to pastures new - After 16 years of service, Elaine Moyes, Human Resources Officer, left Abertay in May to join Cornerstone as Regional HR Advisor. We wish her well in her new role and are very pleased to welcome Roz Clark (pictured) who replaces Elaine and joined us on 7 July as our new Corporate Services Officer.

