

February 2008

in this issue

- Rent Setting Policy Consultation
- Highland Housing Register
- Pat Gordon Good Neighbour Award
- Key Safes

Energy Efficiency Awards 2007

Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association has won the Highly Commended award in The Community and Voluntary Action Category of the 2007 National Energy Efficiency Awards.



The award is in recognition of the Association's work towards improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions and fuel poverty. The

Association has embarked

on a programme of installing heat pumps in its properties and is also currently constructing a district heating scheme at Home Farm, Portree which will serve 128 homes and which will be fuelled by locally-sourced timber.

The Association's Director, Lachie MacDonald, said:

"We are delighted to have won this award. We need to embrace renewable technologies as a landlord if we are going to make an impact on fuel poverty and also reduce our carbon footprint. Every time we develop new properties we will look at the best options that provide long-term solutions for our residents and the environment alike".

The National Energy Efficiency Awards is an initiative of the UK Centre for Economic and Environmental Development. This year, the Awards attracted 170 entries nationwide.

New Committee Members

We have vacancies on our Management Committee, and are looking for individuals from different locations who have a variety of skills. Applications from our tenants would be particularly welcomed.

Management Committee meetings are held monthly in Portree and Broadford, alternately, and normally last no more than two hours. Management Committee members are not paid but can claim all reasonable out of pocket expenses including travel costs, childcare, etc.

Application forms and further information can be obtained from Morrison House.

Digital Switchover

Starting in 2008 and ending in 2012, TV services in the UK will go completely digital, TV region by TV region. This process is called **Digital Switchover**. The UK's old television broadcast signal - known as **analogue** - is being switched off and replaced with a digital signal. Any TV set that is not converted to digital when the switchover takes place will no longer receive TV programmes.

If you would like further information about the digital switchover, you can telephone Digital UK on **0845 6 50 50 50** or visit their website at

www.digitaluk.co.uk.

Rent Setting Policy Consultation 2008/2009

Each year the Association is required to review its rents and service charges and this is your opportunity to comment on our proposals for the charges that will apply from 1st April 2008.

What does your rent pay for?

All rental income received by the Association is set aside to pay for the cost of the services we provide to tenants. Included within these costs are:-

- The management of our housing stock, including items like staff costs, insurance premiums and office expenses.
- Day-to-day repairs, e.g. faulty heating systems, electrical problems, burst pipes, etc.
- Cyclical Maintenance which includes our external painting and ground maintenance programmes.
- Planned Maintenance involving installing replacement kitchens, bathrooms, doors, windows and heating systems.
- Loan charges on the money we borrow to construct our properties.

How do our rents compare to other similar landlords?

As part of our Policy, we need to ensure that our rents are comparable to the rents charged by similar social landlords in Scotland and we have consistently managed to achieve this.

A comparison of our rents and those of other rural housing providers is shown below.

What is the proposed rent increase in 2008/09?

The Association is proposing to increase rents from 1st April 2008 by the Retail Price Index +1%. This is the increase we calculate that we require in order to continue to provide the level of services that tenants require.

Why the increase?

The Association's costs are subject to inflationary pressures and many of our costs are increasing by more than the rate of inflation, particularly insurance premiums, repair charges and building costs.

Will Service Charges increase?

Yes. It is proposed that these increase in line with the change to rents.

What happens next?

We are inviting all our tenants to respond to this consultation exercise by **Monday, 18th February, 2008**. All comments and submissions will be considered by our Management Committee who will take a final decision on rent levels for 2008/09. We will then advise tenants of their new rent figure no later than end of **February 2008**.

This table shows average **Weekly Rents charges for 2007/08**, sorted by **All Units**:-

Housing Association	2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5+ Apt	All Units
Eildon	42.82	52.58	57.44	59.60	47.58
Clydesdale	45.13	49.06	53.36	66.47	49.07
Pentland	41.88	44.08	51.58	55.60	49.93
Kingdom	45.22	50.74	56.62	61.01	49.95
Lochalsh & Skye	46.38	50.41	54.85	58.88	50.42
Loreburn	48.16	53.77	62.21	66.87	52.09
Aberdeenshire	50.16	48.13	58.28	70.68	52.20
West Highland	44.26	54.00	63.83	74.93	52.76
Albyn	46.26	53.31	59.50	69.10	52.79

The Highland Housing Register

The Association has formed a partnership with all the other social landlords in the Highlands to set up The Highland Housing Register. This will result in a simpler method of applying for housing from 1st April 2008.

All of the landlords have agreed to use a single Housing Application form, allocations policy, medical assessment process and a shared computer system. When you fill in the Housing Application form, you can choose to be housed by any of the partner landlords in any part of the Highlands where they have housing.

If you are currently on a housing list of one of the partner landlords, you will automatically be sent the new Housing Application form for completion. You will also receive an Information Booklet which explains in detail how the new system works. The partner landlords taking part in The Highland Housing Register are:-

Albyn Housing Society	Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association
Cairn Housing Association	Pentland Housing Association
Lochaber Housing Association	The Highland Council

For further details, contact [Maureen Beaton](#), Housing Services Officer, email: mo@LSHA.co.uk.

A Skye social enterprise developed from a local craft group is set to offer employment opportunities for people with mental health issues and disabilities.



The **Rag Tag 'n' Textile Collective** is being part-funded by over £17,000 from Communities

Scotland's Wider Role programme, which encourages housing associations to develop projects that help make life better for local communities.

As well as providing employment opportunities, the project aims to divert waste textiles from landfill by re-using them to create products for

the fashion industry and soft furnishings. It also provides training in traditional handcrafts such as sewing, knitting, crochet, weaving and rag rug making.

The money will help Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association support the employment of a business manager and a part-time assistant for the collective as well as finance the general running costs of the business.

Lachie MacDonald, director of Lochalsh and Skye, added: "Lochalsh and Skye is delighted that Communities Scotland is funding the collective through a Wider Role award. This funding will help towards creating jobs, training people in hand craft skills, reducing waste and lowering the stigma associated with mental health issues."

Pat Gordon Good Neighbour Award



Pat Gordon was a founder Member of Lochalsh and Skye Housing Association and served on the Association's Management Committee for many years. Pat also served on various

other Committees throughout Skye and Lochalsh on a voluntary basis and generally did a lot of good in the community.

We are looking for tenants who voluntarily look after their neighbours and community by way of good spirit. One who offers a helping hand after someone has been in hospital; someone who helps with household chores, shopping, taking them to the doctors/hospital, etc.

The **Pat Gordon Good Neighbour Award** is an opportunity to recognise and reward all the good work by tenants which goes unnoticed. Through this award, we will publicly acknowledge those tenants who make a real difference to the lives of others.

A panel of Management Committee Members and Staff will award three prizes (First Prize of £150 and two additional prizes of £50 of shopping vouchers). All tenants will be sent an application form to nominate a neighbour to the Scheme. Anonymous nominations will not be accepted.

Please return nominations by 29th February 2008. The winner of the Good Neighbour Award will be announced by 14th March 2008.

KEY SAFES

Tenants who are elderly (60 years +) or disabled can have a Key Safe fitted to a wall outside their home free of charge by the Association's Handyperson Service.

A Key Safe is a small strongbox which can hold a set of keys for the property. The box can only be opened by operating a 4-digit combination code which the tenant makes known to a trusted carer or relative. In the event of an emergency, the carer or relative can access the property using the keys left in the Key Safe.

If you would like to have a Key Safe installed, please contact **Ruairidh MacKinnon**, Handyperson Co-ordinator, email: ruairidh@LSHA.co.uk.



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