



December 2010

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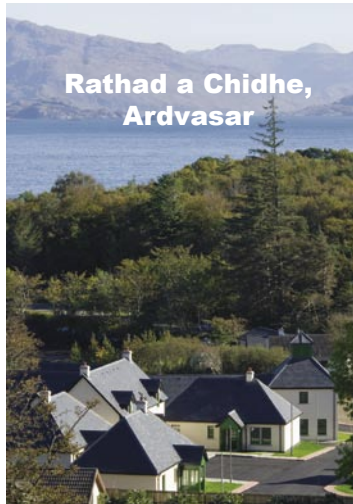
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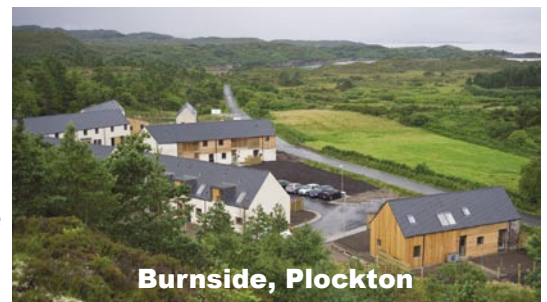
Recently Completed and Future Developments

In July 2010, the development at **Burnside, Plockton**, was completed. Burnside consists of **9 Shared Equity properties** and **15 rented properties**.



Rathad a Chidhe,
Ardvasar

The Association completed their development at **Rathad a Chidhe, Ardvasar**, in October 2010. There are **6 Shared Equity properties** and **5 rented properties**.



Burnside, Plockton

The estimated completion date of the **8 special rented properties** and **Day Centre** at **Carr Brae, Dornie**, being built on behalf of The Highland Council, is **mid-December 2010**, and the properties should be fully occupied in **early January 2011**.

Our development of **12 rented properties** at **Kyleakin Youth Hostel** is still on programme and the properties are scheduled to be completed in **April 2011**.

A site start for **4 flats** on the site of the former **GP Surgery** in **Kyle of Lochalsh** is scheduled for the **spring/early summer 2011**.

Planning Permission for the construction of **3 houses** at the **Heritage Site, School Park** on the **Isle of Raasay** was granted in October 2010 and it is hoped that construction work will commence before the **end of March 2011**.

12 Shared Equity flats at the **Home Farm, Portree** development are available for sale and will be ready for occupation from **Summer 2011**. For further information and a sales brochure, please contact our **Development Officer, John Lamont, on 01478 612035**.



Free Home Security Check

The Police will carry out a **Free Home Security Check** which is available to all. This check highlights ways that can make your home a safer place to live in. Contact **PC Gary Dick 01463 228440**; mobile **07595 005418**; email **gary.dick@northern.pnn.police.uk**.

Rent Setting Policy Consultation 2011/2012

The Association is required to regularly 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 2011.

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 the other main housing providers in the Highlands and Islands area is shown below.

	2 Apt	3 Apt	4 Apt	5+ Apt	All Units
Pentland Housing Association	40.76	47.25	60.54	68.99	57.10
Orkney Housing Association	54.17	59.04	63.47	68.98	58.21
Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association	53.33	57.96	63.95	67.88	58.73
Albyn Housing Society	52.27	59.86	66.73	75.86	59.78
Lochaber Housing Association	67.33	59.11	63.97	73.87	62.26
The Moray Housing Partnership	51.29	59.75	68.48	75.62	62.76
Hjaltland Housing Association	57.58	66.39	69.93	79.78	63.76
West Highland Housing Association	55.11	67.51	77.37	91.42	65.40
Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership	53.81	63.14	74.62	83.52	65.94

What is the proposed rent increase in 2011/2012?

The Association is proposing to increase rents from 1st April 2011 by the Retail Price Index figure in December 2010 plus 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 **31st January, 2011**. All comments and submissions will be considered by our Management Committee who will take the final decision on rent levels for 2011/2012. We will then advise tenants of their new rent figure no later than the **end of February 2011**.

**PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR VIEWS
NO LATER THAN 31st JANUARY 2011**





Tips to Keep Warm this Winter

The Scottish Government has published information about preparing for winter at www.ReadyScotland.org.

Dress in several layers to keep in your body heat. Your **first layer** should be a lightweight material that doesn't trap perspiration from your skin. Look for items made from silk, wool, or even man-made materials designed specifically as a first layer.

Your **second layer** is the **insulation layer**. A soft wool sweater or a polar fleece top will help to keep you warm.

If it is very cold, drape a shawl around your shoulders to add another layer of warmth. **Warm socks** or **leggings** will help to keep your legs and feet warm.

Eat Warm

All those winter comfort foods like **soups**, **stews**, and **casseroles** do much more than just fill you up. They help to fuel up your inner thermostat and warm you from the inside out.

Eating **spicy foods** can heat you up as well. **Chilli**, foods with **hot peppers** in them, **salsa**; all of these things cause your body to run hotter than normal. Having a **cup of coffee or tea** will also serve to warm you up.

Cayenne, Ginger, & Cinnamon

Cayenne pepper has the unique ability to heat you up whether taken internally or externally. Take it in capsule form to increase circulation to

all of the parts of the body. The powdered herb can be dusted in shoes or gloves (don't rub your eyes!) to warm up the extremities.

Cinnamon and **ginger** also increase circulation. A cup of ginger tea, or adding cinnamon to your toast in the morning, can help you stay warm all day.

Bed warmers

There is nothing worse than getting into a cold bed. Get the heat going before you get there with a hot water bottle or a **rice bag** that has been heated in the **microwave**. Just place the warmed item where your feet will go, under the blankets. Warm the bed up for about ten minutes before getting in.

Make your own rice bag by folding an oblong of flannel in half and stitching up the sides. Leave the top open. Now fill the bag with rice about ½ to 1 inch thick when lying flat. Add some lavender, eucalyptus, orange peel, rosemary, or essential oil of choice if you like. Sew up the last side. When you want to warm your bed or soothe aching muscles, **microwave** the rice bag for a **few minutes**. It will hold heat for a very long time. Make a small one to keep your hands warm.

Use the principle of the layering in your bed, too. Use blankets that hold in your body heat, and use more than one layer.

Housing Benefit

All tenants in receipt of **Housing Benefit** have the option to have this benefit **paid direct to the Association**, and tenants should make this clear on their benefit application form by completing the declaration on **page 17**.

Tenants who receive Housing Benefit are reminded that this payment is for their rent and that they are responsible for making their rent payment in accordance with the terms of their rental agreement. Failure to do so could result in eviction action being taken due to non-payment of rent. If an eviction does take place, **The Highland Council** will not require to re-house these tenants as they will be deemed to have made themselves **intentionally homeless**.

Christmas and New Year Holiday Dates

The Association will be closed for Christmas and New Year on Thursday 23rd and Friday 24th December 2010. Reduced staff numbers will be in the office from Monday 27th December to Wednesday 29th December.

The Association will also be closed on Thursday 30th December and Friday 31st December 2010, with reduced staff numbers in the office on Monday 3rd January 2011.

The Emergency Contact phone number for Out of Hours Repairs is
08457 002005

We would like to wish all our tenants
A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year



Incentive for Tenants to Downsize

Tenants who occupy properties with more bedrooms than they need can be offered an incentive to move to a smaller home that better meets their needs.

The scheme will be available in early 2011 to tenants of all 6 Highland Housing Register Landlords, namely:-

Lochalsh & Skye Housing Association
The Highland Council
Lochaber Housing Association

Albyn Housing Society
Cairn Housing Association
Pentland Housing Association

The scheme can provide a mix of financial and practical help to eligible tenants who want to move and up to a total of **£1,500 can be paid** if a tenant moves to a property which is **two bedrooms smaller**. Applicants will be assessed according to the demand and need for the property type, size and location of their current home.

The scheme will run for an initial six-month period, funded to a maximum of **£75,000**.

If you would like further information regarding the scheme, please contact our **Housing Services staff**.



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If you would like to receive this document in another format or language, please contact us on 01478 612035 or e-mail: info@LSHA.co.uk and we will forward a copy to you.

**Lochalsh
& Skye
Housing
Association**

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