

## KINGCASE CHURCH PROJECT LAUNCH

Last month Alastair Cameron, Chief Executive of Scottish Churches Housing Action, launched a joint project by Ayrshire Housing and Kingcase Parish Church, Prestwick.

This sees the construction of 10 new houses alongside the redevelopment of the Kingcase Parish's hall. The church sold surplus ground to Ayrshire Housing which has helped to fund the work to the hall. The design and build for both organisations has been co-ordinated through a single design and contractor team to maximise efficiencies for both parties. The architect is ARP Lorimer and Associates of Ayr and the builder is Moulds of Kilmarnock.

Mr Cameron said at the launch:

“Scottish Churches Housing Action is delighted to see this sort of partnership between congregation and housing association, and it's the sort of thing we'd like to see a lot more of across Scotland.”

“We see huge potential in solving one problem - too many ageing church properties - by putting them to use to solve another of Scotland's problems: not enough affordable housing for young people and those excluded from the housing market.”

The ten houses are designed to meet a range of housing needs and the £1m project cost has been supported by a substantial Scottish Government grant.



The photograph show from left to right, Rev David Watson, Minister of Kingcase Parish Church; Sandy Martin, the Scottish Government; Emma Cassidy, South Ayrshire Council; Architect Gordon Fleming; Ayrshire Housing's Jim Whiston and Alastair Cameron, Chief Executive Scottish Churches Housing Action.

The image to the right shows what the completed developments will look like by next Spring.



## GAS SAFETY

If you have Gas Central Heating in your home, it is essential that we have a Gas Safety Check carried out on your home once every year. This test allows Ayrshire Housing to ensure that your Gas Central Heating is safe and will not cause any harm to your health. In addition, we have a legal obligation as your landlord to ensure that this check happens, and we would be grateful for your co-operation in this matter.

If our contractor contacts you with a date that is not suitable for you, please contact them or us immediately to make an alternative arrangement. Please remember that these measures have your health and safety in mind, and are there to protect you from unsafe systems.

**We can supply this document in a print size to suit. It is also available in Braille, audio and other formats, and in other languages. Our website also has several accessibility features which you may find useful including being able to listen to it being read by "Heather".**

# LOCHSIDE REGENERATION

The regeneration works being carried out at this site in North Ayr are now well under way. As you may be aware, we are building 100 new homes in this area, 75 of which will be for affordable rent. This exciting development is due for completion in 2009, and we would like to take this opportunity to invite tenants looking for a transfer to express an interest in this area.

## Houses for affordable rent

<b>One bedroom flats</b> (upper floors)	5
<b>One bedroom flats</b> (ground floor)	5
<b>Two bedroom houses</b> (general needs)	31
<b>Two bedroom houses</b> (with ground floor bedroom)	3
<b>Two bedroom houses</b> (wheelchair standard)	2
<b>Three bedroom houses</b> (general needs)	13
<b>Three bedroom houses</b> (with ground floor bedroom)	5
<b>Three bedroom houses</b> (wheelchair standard)	1
<b>Four bedroom houses</b> (general needs)	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>75</b>



A typical Lochside house

If you are currently on the Ayrshire Housing transfer list, simply call our office on (01292) 880120 and ask for Lochside to be added as an area you would consider.

If you are not currently on our transfer list, you can apply for these homes by completing an application form, and selecting Lochside as one of your area choices. You can also apply online at [www.ayrshirehousing.org.uk](http://www.ayrshirehousing.org.uk) or by requesting a paper copy from the office.

Please note that the demand for this development will be very high, and that priority will be given to those in housing need.

The remaining 25 properties are to be sold as part of the Scottish Government's New Supply Shared Equity Scheme. The breakdown of these is as follows;

## Houses for purchase through the New Supply Shared Equity Scheme

<b>Two bedroom houses</b> (General needs)	15
<b>Three bedroom houses</b> (General needs)	10

New Supply Shared Equity is a scheme which helps people with modest incomes who want to own a suitable home but who cannot afford to buy on the open market because of high local house prices.

A New Supply Shared Equity owner generally pays between 60-80% of the price of a property through a home loan or savings. The remainder is funded by an interest free loan arranged through Ayrshire Housing. This is only repayable when the house is sold again. For example, if you can afford a 75 per cent share of a property Ayrshire Housing will arrange a loan for the remaining 25 per cent. You will own the property outright and will have a 75 per cent stake in its value, whatever changes there are to the property's value over time.

Applicants' financial and personal circumstances will be checked and verified and an assessment will be made of your ability to contribute towards the cost of purchasing an equity stake in the property based on your gross household income and any savings or equity available above a £5000 threshold.

**If you would like more information about the New Supply Shared Equity scheme, please do not hesitate to contact Rose Estelles on (01292) 880 120.**

## TENANT PARTICIPATION

At Ayrshire Housing, we are keen to ensure that our services are of the highest possible standard, and that these services consistently meet your needs and expectations. One way that we try to achieve this is through tenant participation in our services. This includes;

**Tenants' meetings:** Ayrshire Housing has helped to arrange a number of successful tenants' meetings over the last 12 months. Tenants involved in these meetings get together informally to discuss any common issues they have in their neighbourhood, positive ideas for improving the area or anything else that they want to raise for our attention. One of these meetings has since resulted in a Tenants' Association being formed for the area, which is proving to be a very popular resource.

**Tenant involvement in policy:** When a new policy is being implemented, Ayrshire Housing invites tenants to be involved in this process through the Tenants' Newsletter. Tenants were also involved in the testing of our Online Application Form.

**Repairs satisfaction surveys:** Surveys are conducted for each repair issued, and the responses provided are reported to the Board on a regular basis along with actual repairs completion times.

**New tenant surveys:** A survey is sent out to every new tenant moving into one of our mainstream lets, and a follow-up interview is also conducted. The responses given are then collated into a report and reported to the Board.

**Estate Management:** Each Housing Officer conducts an annual estate management visit in each of their areas with a tenant from the area. Any issues raised are dealt with by the Housing Officer directly, or by the relevant section, i.e. repairs and maintenance.

**Lochside Regeneration:** Ayrshire Housing, along with our partners Ayrshire Initiatives and South Ayrshire Council, has tried to ensure that tenants are involved during each stage of this project. This has included support for tenants' groups, selection of house-types by future residents and support for a recording project.

Whether you're completing a survey, attending a tenants' meeting or getting involved with an estate management visit, your involvement can have a real effect on the way we provide our services. For this reason, we want as many of our tenants to get involved as possible.



**New tenant association launched in Lochside**

**If you would be interested in having a Tenants' Meeting organised for your area, or would like more information about any other aspect of Tenant Participation, please contact your Housing Officer at  
Ayrshire Housing, 119 Main Street, AYR, KA8 8BX  
(01292) 880 120**

## PERFORMANCE MONITORING

At Ayrshire Housing we are keen to ensure that our tenants are given information about the organisation's performance. Here are some key facts and figures for the quarter 1 April 2008 – 30 June 2008

- Average relet time for void properties is currently at 10 days, below our target of 20 days. Current tenant arrears (non-technical) as at 30/6/08 was 1.1% of all rent due, slightly above our target of 1.0% of rent due.
- Percentage of tenants owing more than £250 or 13 weeks rent was at 3.19% as at 30/6/08, below our target of 4.5%
- Application form processing time for this period was on average 8 days, below our target of 15 days.
- 91% of Urgent and Routine repairs were completed on time, (within 3 working days and 15 working days respectively) less than our 96% target.
- 100% of Emergency Repairs were attended within our given timescale of 4 hours.

## GARDEN REMINDER

With Winter just around the corner, it's a good idea to give your grass one final cut. This will help to ensure that your garden remains neat and tidy during the Winter months in time for your Christmas and New Year guests.

## GARDEN COMPETITION

This year's Garden Competition once again showcased some of Ayrshire's most budding gardeners, with a large number of excellent entries received again this year. After much deliberation, the winners, announced at our AGM on 24 September, were;



**James McPherson**  
of **Crown Square,**  
**Ayr**  
(Best Kept Close)

**Ann Tyson** of  
**Orchard Place, Ayr**  
(Best Garden)

Commendations were given to a number of other exceptional entrants, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank all who took the time to enter this competition.



## PET COMPETITION

The Pet Competition was also fiercely contested by our non-human residents, with Orbit the cat (owned by Mrs Moira Auld of Maybole) and Ben the dog (owned by Samantha Stirling of Dundonald) sharing the top spot.



**BEN**



**ORBIT**

All entrants receive a rosette and a photo opportunity for the winners!

## PAYING YOUR RENT BY DIRECT DEBIT

Ayrshire Housing can now offer tenants the opportunity to pay their rent by Direct Debit. If you are interested in using this payment method please contact your Housing Officer on 01292 880120 to receive a Direct Debit form.

**WOOLWORTHS**

## PAY YOUR RENT AT

Tenants are reminded that you can now pay your rent at any branch of Woolworths in the UK. All you have to do is hand over your allpay rent card, together with your payment in cash or with a debit card, at any till in any of their 800+ UK stores. This is a major addition to allpay's existing outlets.