



TENANT PARTICIPATION STRATEGY



Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership Tenants' Panel met on 12th March 2007, to discuss the strategy for taking tenant participation forward. Good progress was made.

Another meeting, set for 23rd April 2007, should enable the initial consultation to be completed. The draft strategy will then be made available to all tenants for their comments.

The Panel members also took the opportunity to examine and make recommendations on how the repairs service is monitored.

If you would like to join the Tenants' Panel, you can contact your Housing Officer for further details about the meetings.



OFFICE CLOSURES



Offices will be closed on the following dates:

Friday, 6th April 2007 (Good Friday)
Monday, 7th May 2007 (May Day)
Friday, 18th May 2007 (closed for training)

In case of **Emergency out of hours Repairs, please dial 01343 545005.**



Please remember to dial the **Repairs Line on 01467 641560** if you wish to report a repair.

Please visit our website at www.a-h-p.org.uk for up-to-date information.

If you require this Newsletter in an alternate format, or a community language, please let us know.

This is your newsletter. Let us know what you think of it, and let us know if you have any ideas for future editions.

Aberdeenshire Housing Partnership

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Aberdeenshire *housing partnership*



Spring 2007

TENANTS' NEWSLETTER

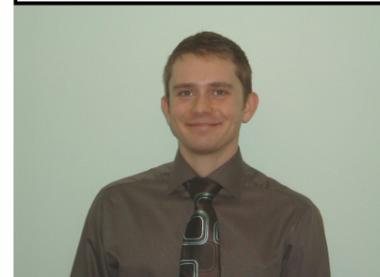
Another jam packed Newsletter.

There is feedback on the rent consultation exercise, together with a short reminder about what to do if you have problems with rent payments and payment options.

There is also a lot about repairs this time, including the repair and improvement plans for the coming year, from April 2007. Tenant Participation and the work the Tenants Panel are involved in, with a reminder that your input is always welcome.

Over the next few months 70 new houses for rent will be completed in Peterhead and Kingseat (Newmachar). There is an item on Devanha Ltd, which would enable AHP to build new houses more effectively over the next few years.

Colin Hawkins
Chief Executive



HELLO - GOODBYE



HELLO

We welcome Niall Beattie to the Repairs Team - Niall worked for Aberdeenshire Council for some years before joining us in January 2007. Many tenants will already have met Niall as he visits to carry out repair inspections and helps with the preparation for the coming improvement programme.

We also welcome David Beattie to the Board of AHP. David also joined in January 2007, and his financial expertise will assist the organisation a great deal over the years ahead.

GOODBYE

Alison Hawkins, our Finance & Business Support Manager, is moving on in April 2007. Alison has been a mainstay of the staff team since 2002 and has made sure our finances are properly managed as well as being responsible for our IT systems and human resources. We are currently appointing a new Manager.

RENT CONSULTATION RESULTS

We wrote to you about the proposed rent increases as we are required to do under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001. The response was as follows:

Tenant Consultation 2007/08 Rent

	No of responses and % of total of tenants		% of responses returned
Option 1 (5.2%)	34	5.6%	38%
Option 2 (5.5%)	29	4.7%	32%
Option 3 (5.7%)	16	2.6%	18%
Blank	11	1.8%	12%
Responses	90	14.7%	100%

The Board at their meeting on 16th February responded to your findings and approved a 5.5% increase. Letters were issued to you all by the end of February 2007.

If you experience difficulty in paying your rent you should contact the Council's local benefit office to see if you are eligible for any help. It is also important that you seek independent financial advice regarding your situation as you may be eligible for other support, for example the working families tax credit. Organisations that give free advice include the Citizens Advice Bureau, Gordon Rural Action and Scottish Debt line.

FALLING BEHIND WITH YOUR RENT ...

One of our key performance measures is the level of our rent arrears which currently stand at £62,521.

If you do not pay your rent, you build up rent arrears. If you have rent arrears we will contact you to make an arrangement with you to pay off your arrears. Failure to stick to the arrangement will result in us going to court to evict you.

If you are having problems paying your rent, get advice straight away. Please do not bury your head in the sand as there might be things you can do to stop arrears building up, such as claiming housing benefit or other allowances.

Speak to your Housing Officer if you cannot pay your rent.

RENT PAYMENT OPTIONS

There are a number of ways for you to pay your rent, for example:

-  Direct Debit - please contact the Office so that this can be set up.
-  Phone - using a debit or credit card - just phone 0870 2436040, quoting the number on your rent swipecard.
-  Pay Zone - wherever this sign is displayed, you can use your rent swipecard.
-  PayPoint - wherever this sign is displayed, you can use your rent swipecard.
-  Post Office - using your rent swipecard.
-  Standing Order - please contact the Office so that this can be set up.
-  Cash or Cheque - at our Offices - we are open Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm.
-  Internet - www.allpayments.net - please enter your rent swipecard number..

It's up to you. Choose the way to pay your rent that best suits you.

JARVIS COURT

Jarvis Court is a very sheltered housing development consisting of 22 flats - 19 self-contained 1 bedroom properties and 1 two-bedroom property for rent. The unit also has a respite and a guest room for short stay visitors. All the properties have a lounge, kitchen and bathroom with gas central heating, double-glazing and a controlled entry system.



Anyone interested in applying for a home in Jarvis Court should complete the relevant application form which is available from the Manager at Jarvis Court, by contacting this office, or by downloading the form from our website.

A leaflet providing further information is also available for downloading on our website.