



hebridean housing
partnership newsletter

homeward



Alasdair Allan MSP; Kevin Stewart MSP; The Fraser family; Mark Macdonald, O'Mac Construction; Cllr Norman Macleod, HHP development spokesperson and Cllr Norman Macdonald, convenor CNES

Pairc Niseaboist, Horgabost

The new build project in Pairc Niseaboist, Horgabost, Isle of Harris was completed in October 2016. The six houses over-look the beautiful white sandy beaches that make it one of the most popular tourist attractions in the world.

The 2 and 3 bedroom houses, which look over to Taransay, have been designed by Rural Design and constructed by O'Mac Construction Ltd. They have been distinctively designed to blend in with their environment with timber clad walls and dark roofs.

The houses have been designed to high insulation standards and include renewable heating systems which take their electricity from the adjacent turbine. This is part of the development by West Harris Trust which includes a community hub with office space, events venue and restaurant.

Iain Macmillan, HHP's Chairman, said "HHP is delighted to welcome Kevin Stewart, The Minister for Local Government and Housing for the official opening. The

homes have been provided as a result of our successful partnerships with Scottish Government, Comhairle and West Harris Trust. This development could not have happened without this partnership and is a demonstration of the ambition of the local community and is very encouraging as we seek to reinvigorate our communities."

Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart said "I'm delighted to visit this new housing development in Horgabost. This is a tremendous example of partnership working delivering quality affordable homes that people need, along with a new community facility. The Scottish Government is committed to delivering 50,000 affordable homes across Scotland backed by over £3 billion investment during the lifetime of this Parliament. We've also launched the £25 million Rural Housing Fund and the £5 million Islands Housing Fund. These are intended to increase the supply of good quality affordable housing in rural and island communities."

Rent First at Xmas

The best present at Christmas is peace of mind.

Christmas can be a particularly difficult time, particularly if you are already dealing with debt, but it is important that paying your rent is a priority.

Many people feel under pressure to spend too much money at Christmas, often money they can't afford. They feel that in order to make everything special they must buy the latest toys, impressive gifts and too much food and drink.

Providing the perfect Christmas for family can be a time of great stress and worry and can cause significant financial strain, pushing some into even more debt.

HHP want their tenants to have an enjoyable Christmas and understand that in the lead up to Christmas, finances can be tighter than ever, but paying rent must remain a priority. If any tenant has rent arrears or is in need of financial help, then contact HHP now. Please don't ignore the problem, it won't just go away. We are here to help.

REMEMBER, even though HHP offices are closed over the festive period, there are still several ways to pay your rent:

- Pay at a Post Office or PayPoint outlet with your rent card
- Pay over the phone by calling 01851 600502
- Pay online at www.hebrideanhousing.co.uk/paying-your-rent

If you don't deal with your rent arrears, you are putting your home at risk.

WIN £100!

CLEAR RENT ACCOUNT

The first tenant selected at random who has a clear rent account on 1st January 2017 will receive a £100 voucher for a local shop of their choice.

There will also be 2 runner-up prizes of £50!





By The Chartered Institute of Housing

To celebrate CIH's centenary, we're launching The Big Picture - a photography competition designed to illustrate the real value of housing.

It's no exaggeration to say that we are in one of the most crucial times for housing in recent history. As we look to make the case for the value of housing, it's more important than ever that we showcase the contribution of our work. The Big Picture invites housing professionals, organisations and tenants across the UK to submit a photograph they think sums up the real value of housing.

How do I enter?

It's easy to get involved - all you need to do is email your photograph to marketing.communications@cih.org before the deadline of Friday 6 January along with a brief description of no more than 150 words which sums up in your own words what it shows about the value of housing.

Or post your entry to:

**Marketing team
The Big Picture competition
Chartered Institute of Housing
Octavia House, Westwood Way
COVENTRY CB4 8JP**

Are there any rules about what my photo looks like?

Not at all! Whether you're handy with a Nikon, you snap on your phone or you view the world through polaroids, we're keen to hear from you. The more variety, the better!

Your photograph could be new, it could be a year old or it could be 50 years old. We don't mind, as long as it tells a story about housing.

We can only accept one entry per person but multiple staff members from the same organisation can enter.

Do I have to have taken the photo?

No. You may for example be a housing organisation who employed a professional photographer to take a picture at an event. You are fine to submit this but you **MUST** have the rights to use it.

By submitting the picture you also give us the right to use it to promote the competition and feature in any subsequent publications or for any other purpose related to the competition.

How will the photos be judged?

A panel of judges will choose the winners - there will be three selected from all of the entries.

What happens if I win?

If the judges select your image as one of the three winners, you'll receive a prize and your photograph will be revealed at our annual presidential dinner in February and profiled thereafter.

So what are you waiting for? Join us and help showcase housing's big picture. Good luck!

Hebridean Housing Partnership AGM 2016

HHP's tenth Annual General Meeting took place on 7 September 2016 in An Lanntair, Stornoway and was also streamed live by video link to Kildonan Museum, South Uist.

The Chair, Iain MacMillan, welcomed those present in Stornoway and Uist and went on to review HHP's operation over the past year in addition to looking back at some of HHP's achievements over the ten years since transfer.

Mr MacMillan paid tribute to Angus Lamont, HHP's former Chief Executive, who retired in July, and also to George Lonie, HHP's former Chairperson, who stood down in May. Their individual and joint contributions to HHP's success was considerable.

The Chief Executive, Dena MacLeod, gave a presentation on the financial statements for the year and advised that Auditors, Wylie & Bissett, had given the Partnership a clean audit report for the tenth year running.

The Membership then agreed to donate £5,000 to five local charita-

ble organisations.

Following the close of formal business, a short film was played in which tenants and staff alike spoke of their experiences over the past ten years.

An excellent talk on the History of Housing in the Western Isles was given by Sandy Matheson, who outlined how the town of Stornoway and the Islands were transformed by social housing.

The Convener of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar, Norman MacDonald, then spoke of the vital role social housing can play in strengthening rural communities. Mr MacDonald commented that "HHP have delivered for their tenants everything that was promised at transfer."

The Chief Executive then drew the event to a close by thanking tenants, staff and business partners for their contribution to HHP's success and for joining the Partnership in their celebration that evening. Ms MacLeod commented that "HHP want to step forward with you" and work together for further success in the future.

Investment Programme



'As we approach Christmas the majority of our major investment works are nearing completion' writes Peter O'Donnell our Investment Manager. This includes gas central heating, roofing, roughcasting, kitchen and bathroom replacements.

Window replacement works are currently underway including Murray Place where our elderly tenants are delighted with their new windows. Tenants across the road in Keith Street will see works start in the New Year. Meanwhile in Uist works have started in Church Hill whilst Rubha Clachan, Horough Cottages and Caol Oraghsaidh will follow on in the New Year.

Air source heat pump and Infra Red heating replacements are well underway throughout the islands with works expected to be complete before March

2017. Information on all of next years proposed works can be found in the HHP Green Book

HHP have been successful in a bid for grant funds from the Scottish Government which should see 68 homes receive room-in-roof insulation. A further 41 homes were already planned to receive this insulation this year as part of our investment programme.

Finally our fencing programme will get underway in January and we will shortly be contacting all tenants concerned to advise them of start dates within their scheme.

The 2017/18 Investment programme has been agreed by the Board. Tenders will be issued during December so that works can start in April.

UIST TENANTS CONFERENCE 2016



The Annual Uist Tenants Conference was held at our usual venue in Balivanich Community Hall on 28 September 2016.

Travel can be an issue for our tenants so this year HHP organised buses to help tenants to attend. It was wonderful to have tenants from Berneray in the north, to Eriskay in the south.

The theme for this year was Tenant Participation and there were a wide range of stalls set up to browse around. Displays included Restore (Cothrom) on the furniture restoration project and Sewing Wildflowers, a community project run to bring people together to transform local spaces with native, pollinator-friendly wild flowers and plants. Also represented were the Fire Department and the Alcohol and Drug Partnership.

A buffet lunch was supplied by the stepping stones restaurant, Balivanich. As usual the food was excellent with a good selection to choose from.

There was a craft table set up where a number of tenants made a decoupage Christmas card and had a crochet lesson. Background music was provided by our talented tenant Mr David Smilie who played his accordion.

Katie Walker, Area Manager said 'HHP would like to thank all who contributed to the success of the day and thank all of those who completed feed back

forms. We received some feedback that this large space in the hall was a bit impersonal so this will be reviewed for

future events. Next Year the plan is to have the conference earlier in the year over the summer months.'

FES INTRODUCTION

Since April 2011 FES FM has undertaken the contract for repairs and maintenance on HHP's 2200 properties. The partnership has been strong between the two organisations from the outset, with a one team approach achieving a partnership award in 2015.

FES FM is part of the FES Group, a family owned business with over 50 years' experience in the construction and support service sectors. FES operates with 9 offices across the UK and employs over 2000 staff, 109 employees are based in the Western Isles with 45 of these directly employed on the HHP Contract.

Over the next few newsletters we will be exploring different parts of the service and meeting FES engineers, and teams.



My name is Douglas Mackay; I was born and brought up in Stornoway. I attended Lews Castle School. Whilst there we were given a choice of technical classes, I chose Joinery & Blockwork, which I thoroughly enjoyed and as they say the "rest is history". I have now been a joiner for 24 years.

How long have you been working for FES?

I have worked for FES for over 5 years which I enjoy; there is a great team spirit throughout the company.

What I most enjoy about my work is the variety the job offers, rarely are two days the same. Meeting tenants and using my skills in hopefully making a difference.

What 3 words would your friends use to describe you?

I would like to think that I am dependable. I feel it's important to be pleasant throughout my working day as we meet tenants on a daily basis and I would also class myself as being

a good team worker.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not working?

The island offers plenty of scenery to enjoy; it's a great place for family life. I enjoy walking the dogs around the Castle grounds and down at the Braighe. My other hobby is fishing, when the weather permits. I also like to relax by watching movies.

Describe a typical day in the life of FES?

I carry out the works at Change of Tenancy properties. This entails various tasks assigned to us in preparing the property for new tenants to move in. I am responsible for arranging engineers to attend. My main priority is to ensure the tasks are completed within the target date that is set.

What technical skill or ability is your best asset?

Organising work tasks is part of my daily/weekly routine and my other quality is problem solving.



Jane Ballantyne presents voucher to raffle prize winner Sara Macdonald, left

Watch Out For Winter

Although your home has central heating, there is still the risk of frozen or burst pipes during periods of heavy frost. Following a few simple steps below should help you to avoid any damage to your home:

Keep cosy in your home

- If possible set your heating to 21°C (70°F) whilst you are up and about and 15-18°C (64°F) at night when you go to bed.
- Eat at least one hot meal a day and take plenty hot drinks.
- Wear warm layers of clothing especially when you go out.
- Keep active and wrap up warm if you go outside
- If it's really cold, set your heating to come on earlier and turn off later rather than turning up the thermostat. This saves you money and is better for the environment.
- Remember to keep your home well ventilated when possible. Opening your windows for just 5 minutes will allow enough fresh air into your home for the rest of the day.
- If you are going to be away from home and you have air source heating press the suitcase button on your controller or turn down the temperature if you have a different controller. Those with infra red heating should turn down the temperature on their controller. If possible, leave your heating to come on at least once a day for a couple of hours.
- Draw your curtains in the evening and keep doors closed to block out draughts
- Find out where your main stopcock or tap is. If you have a Surestop switch fitted then make sure you know where it is.
- Report any dripping taps or running overflows to HHP so that they can be fixed
- Always try to keep your home heated to at least 15°C and allow the heat to circulate all rooms
- If you are going away from home for any length of time during winter ask HHP to drain down your water supply. We will do this at no charge.

If your Pipes Freeze

- Turn off the water at the stop cock or tap or Surestop switch if you have one
- Switch off your immersion heater or boiler
- Turn on taps at sink, bath, etc.

- If you have a gas combi boiler, storage heating or air source heating then keep your heating on if possible
- Call HHP on 0300 123 0773 to report the problem

If you have a Burst Pipe

- Turn off the water at the stop cock or tap
- Switch off your immersion heater or boiler
- Turn on all taps to empty your tanks
- If water could come into contact with electrical fittings then switch off the electricity at the mains
- Call HHP on 0300 123 0773 to report the problem

Remember burst pipes can cause a lot of damage. HHP will repair your house but we are not responsible for damage to decoration or to your furniture, carpets or other belongings.

Stay healthy

- If you are over 65, or have a long term health condition, you can get a free flu jab from your GP to protect against seasonal flu strains

SSE PAYMENTS

The Winter Fuel Payment

We all think about our energy bills a bit more as the nights draw in and you may need a little help to cover your heating costs. There's a lot of support out there, including the Winter Fuel Payment (also called the Winter Fuel Allowance) which is made by the UK government. You'll need to meet the criteria set by them to qualify for it.

The payment is usually between £100 and £300. The amount depends on your age (born on or before 5 May 1953), who you live with and the benefits you get.

To get the payment, you need to be over a certain age or you, or someone you live with, need to get certain benefits. You might find you get the payment automatically. But if you don't, then you'll need to apply for it over the phone or in writing.

Eligibility and details of how to apply for the Winter Fuel Payment are all on the Gov.uk website.

Warm Home Discount scheme

The Warm Home Discount is a Government scheme that offers financial assistance to people most in need of help paying their energy bills. It

isn't a cash payment. Instead, you'll get a one-off discount on your electricity bill or extra credit on your Pay as You Go meter. You'll get this between October 2016 and May 2017.

The scheme is open to two types of households – the 'Core' group and the 'Broader' group.

If you're in the Core group you'll get the Warm Home Discount automatically. If you're in the Broader group, you can apply for it if you meet the qualifying criteria. If SSE (Hydro) supply your electricity, you can request that they send you a copy by calling on 0800 622 838.

Priority Assistance Fund

SSE (Hydro) run the Priority Assistance Fund which can clear the full balances outstanding for qualifying customers and offers a range of support to ensure you can manage your energy costs in the future, including:

Debt relief

Income Maximisation Checks

Referrals for the Warm Home Discount, where appropriate

Registration on our Priority Register and access to our Careline Services

We may be able to help you through Priority Assistance Fund if you meet at least two of the three criteria below:

Your total household income is below £16,200 a year. There are some benefits we don't count as part of your income. These are Housing and Council Tax Benefits, Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment, Carer's Allowance, Disability Living Allowance for children, Attendance Allowance and Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

You're spending at least 10% of your household income on energy. To work this out, divide the total amount you've spent on energy over the last 12 months by your total household income. Then, multiply that number by 100.

Someone in your household is classed as 'vulnerable'. That means either someone old enough to qualify for a pension, a child under 17, or someone with a chronic sickness or disability.

How to apply

If two or more of the criteria above apply to you, contact SSE to find out more and request an application form. Contact them on 0345 026 2658 or priorityassistanceteam@sse.com.

Please complete your application form as soon as possible as the scheme may close at short notice.



The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's top winter safety tips for staying warm in winter.

FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Mark Maciver,
Community Safety Advisor, writes

HOME HEATING

Make sure you keep safe when keeping warm.

Power cuts

Whenever there are power cuts, fire and rescue services get called to house fires started by careless use of candles, oil lamps and tea-lights. Please take care in power-cuts.

To help you stay safe:

- Take extra care during power cuts
- Keep torches and batteries where you can find them easily in an emergency
- Think about getting wind-up torches – they're safe, cheap and never run out of power

Portable equipment safety advice

Every year people die and are injured in their homes as a result of fires caused by heating appliances. Many of these fires involve portable heaters. Any type of portable heater can start a fire if it is misused.

Make sure you read and understand the manufacturer's instructions before using one.

Remember -

- Turn off portable heaters before going to bed
- Always follow the manufacturer's operating and maintenance instructions
- Keep the heater clean and well maintained
- Ventilate the room in which the heater is being used
- Make sure that a permanent safety guard is fitted
- If a heater is to be used in one place for a long time fix it securely to a floor or wall
- Whatever type of heater you use, DO NOT:
 - > move a heater while it is alight or switched on

- > stand or sit too close, your clothing may ignite
- > place a heater too close to furniture, bedding or curtains
- > air or dry clothes over a heater
- > place heaters where they are likely to be knocked over
- > leave a portable heater on if young children or animals are left unattended
- > use flammable adhesives, cleaning fluids or aerosol sprays near a heater

ADDITIONAL WINTER SAFETY

- Fit a Carbon Monoxide detector in all rooms containing gas or paraffin heaters.
- Never leave an electric blanket switched on when you're in bed unless it's marked 'suitable for all night use'.
- Check your electric blanket, plug and flex regularly for damage. If you're in any doubt, don't use the blanket.
- Extinguish all candles before you go to bed. Never leave a burning candle in a bedroom.
- Be especially careful with night lights and tea lights, which can get hot enough to melt plastic. Always put candles on a heat resistant surface/ holders.
- Leaving cookers unattended or being distracted while cooking is the most frequent cause of fire in the home. Never cook hot food while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Most fatal fires are caused by smoker's materials. Don't smoke in your chair if you've been drinking or you're feeling tired. If you do feel tired smoke outside or stand up and smoke at a window or outside door.
- Check your smoke and heat alarms are working. Replace batteries if necessary.

TREES AND DECORATIONS

Christmas is a special time for celebration and should not end in tragedy because of the extra hazards that are present at this time of year. So when you're decking the halls make sure you follow our simple advice and stay safe.

Fairy Lights

- Unplug fairy lights or other electrical Christmas decorations when you leave the house or go to bed.
- Check fairy lights are in good working

order and replace any bulbs that have blown.

- Bulbs can get very hot, don't let them touch materials that can scorch or burn easily, such as paper or fabrics.
- Make sure the fuse in the plug is the correct rating.
- If you need to plug more than one appliance into an electrical socket use a multi-socket adaptor which is fitted with a fuse and has surge protection.

Decorations

- Decorations made of light tissue paper or cardboard burn easily.
- Don't attach them to lights or heaters.
- Don't put them immediately above or around the fireplace.
- Keep them away from candles.

Christmas Trees

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

Selecting a Tree for Christmas

Always buy your tree from a reputable retailer to ensure the freshness and quality. Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a potential fire hazard.

Caring for Your Tree

Don't place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace, heat vent or candles. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

Disposing of Your Tree

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or wood burning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling Centre or having it taken away by a community pickup service.

New Energy Advice Project Officer in Balivanich

Lynda MacLean has taken up the role as Energy Advice Project Officer based at the Uist Citizens Advice Bureau in Balivanich.

Her main aim is to help tackle fuel poverty which is a key issue in the Western Isles, with over 70% of households in fuel poverty (one of the highest in Scotland). Many households may not realise they are in fuel poverty – if you are spending more than 10% of your household income on energy you are classed as being in fuel poverty.

Lynda will provide free impartial advice on energy efficiency and fuel debt. Lynda can help you compare energy suppliers and tariffs in addition to assisting you with switching supplier to ensure you are not paying more than you need to for your energy. If

you have any queries relating to your energy bills Lynda will be happy to assist you in resolving these issues.

This is a vital service for households as Lynda will assist and give advice to those who have difficulty in meeting fuel costs and ensure they get any help available to them.

To arrange an appointment or speak to Lynda please contact her (Monday to Wednesday) on 01870 602421 or email: Lynda.maclea@uistcab.casonline.org.uk

The Citizens Advice Bureau offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice to the public, their advice helps people resolve their problems with debt, benefits, employment, housing, discrimination, and many more issues. It is available to everyone - if you require

advice on any issue please do not hesitate to get in touch with your local Citizens Advice Bureau.



Heating systems explained

Each year HHP replace a number of heating systems in tenant's homes throughout the islands. Over the last few years we have installed three different types of heating; **air source, infra red and gas combi boilers**. You may have seen a relative or friend having a new heating system installed and wondered how do these systems work?

If you live in the Stornoway town area you will most likely have gas central heating which will be replaced with a **gas combi boiler**. A combi boiler is both a high-efficiency water heater and a central heating boiler, combined (hence the name 'combi') within one compact unit. No separate hot water cylinder is required which saves space within the home. The boiler delivers heat or hot water whenever you need it and is far more efficient than the heating systems they are replacing so tenants will see significant savings in their fuel bills.

Air Source heating has been used to replace coal fired boilers outside of Stornoway town centre. The heat pumps

are extremely efficient and when used correctly can bring significant savings to tenant's fuel bills.

Air source heating is tricky to explain. The air source unit is installed outside the property as it takes heat from the air and boosts it to a higher temperature using the heat pump. It works like a fridge. The fridge has a pump which draws heat out of the air in the fridge. The heat pump does the same by drawing heat out of the outside air and uses this heat to warm

the water in your radiators and pipework.

The temperature of the radiators is low which is why this type of heating needs to be left on all the time. Switching it on and off will only increase your fuel bill.

Infrared heating has been used in smaller houses and is a fairly new type of heating. Again it is tricky to explain. Infrared heaters work in a similar way to the sun heating the earth. Invisible heat rays travel through the air in your

home bouncing off the walls, which absorb the heat. The walls then give off this heat back into the room. Infrared rays are used in hospital incubators to heat newly born babies and is also used to heal sprains in sport.

The heating is controlled by a remote unit which allows tenants to turn the heating up or down. Again the heating system needs to be always on as switching off will cool down the walls within your home.

All heating systems cost more during the winter months so be sure to take account of this by spreading your fuel payments across the year. HHP also urge all tenants to make sure they are on the lowest tariff possible as this can reduce your bills. Our partners **Citrus Energy** can help you through the whole process of switching and we have included a leaflet in the Newsletter.

IMPORTANT - Homes need to vent too!

Do you have gas or solid fuel appliances?

Did you know?

- ◆ All open flued gas and solid fuel appliances require ventilation for them to burn safely, effectively and efficiently.
- ◆ The vent must be clear and unobstructed at all times. The vent may be located on an outside wall or on the floor.
- ◆ The vent allows fresh air to enter your property to allow your appliance to work safely.

The vent is there for a reason

- ◆ Do not block the vent
- ◆ Do not cover or obstruct the vent



Your appliance may become unsafe and could cost your life.

We will fulfil our duty as your landlord, and will ensure the ventilation fitted to your home is correctly fitted, of the correct size and is clear and unobstructed. This is our legal obligation.



Tenant Participation News

For more information about tenant participation contact:

Email jane.ballantyne@tpasscotland.org.uk

Telephone 01851 700811 Mobile 07487 891 242

Jane works Monday – Thursday 8am – 12.30pm.

Western Isles Residents Forum AGM



Maree Hoy writes about her first AGM

What to expect? What will it be like? Will I fit in? These were just a few of the questions I had before attending the Western Isles Residents Forum AGM in September. I had never attended an AGM before in any capacity so it was a new experience for me, in which I wasn't the most confident but was willing to take the plunge ...at long last.

I've been a tenant with HHP since March 2016. I'm not an islander by birth and only moved to the islands at the beginning of February 2015, however when I speak to people I do describe myself as an adopted islander due

to the fact that since I moved here I finally felt a sense of belonging, and somewhere that truly felt home. People are surprised when I tell them I'm not from the islands as they hear and feel the passion and love I have for the islands and the people.

Jane from TPAS invited me to join the forum one evening for a meal followed by an informal get together. There weren't very many of us, but the ones who were there were so lovely, and most of all very welcoming and down to earth.

The following day I attended the HHP open day, which I felt was good as it allowed people from HHP communities to meet staff from HHP and from other organisations which they work closely with and allowed you to speak with them informally. Jane asked if I would attend the forum AGM as she could see I had skills and experience that could really be useful in helping us to move forward.

I felt really nervous when I walked into the AGM but Jane, Barney (Callum) and Alasdair welcomed me with open arms as they have always done at previous meetings.

We welcomed the people who came along, including

Dena, John and other staff members from HHP, along with Terry from FES and some representatives/village voices from a few of the communities. Unfortunately the current Chair, Allan was unable to attend the meeting. The meeting was very informative with an update of the past year from Jane and what we hope to work on in the coming year. Within the AGM it was decided to rebrand the forum and change the name. We are now **Western Isles Housing Association Communities Forum**.

Then it came to the point of the AGM where people are nominated positions. I was nominated and seconded to become the new Chair, which I accepted. A mixture of emotions were suddenly evoked within me ...excitement that people had faith in me; positivity on me being able to converse and build rapport across the islands; confidence in knowing I'll be working with HHP management and staff then fear, yes I said it ...fear, of the unknown which suddenly crept upon me. Nervously I started giving a speech thanking them for nominating me and how I saw my role developing and what I hoped to achieve within my capacity as chair ...I then realised they were awaiting me to take over leading the AGM. Luckily, all who were there were forgiving and they carried on before

passing it over to myself for the rest of the meeting thereafter, which again I bungled I as went straight to any other business instead of the last two points within the agenda. We got back on track and all went well. Positive feedback was given. Initially it felt a bit like I'd been fed to the lions due to my lack of knowledge of these types of events, but most of all I felt proud, confident and happy that I was progressing into a new role.

Dena invited me to attend HHP Board meetings and in which I did so the following evening. Then, the night after that, I attended the HHP AGM and their 10 year birthday bash at An Lanntair.

This was an informative evening with a lovely video shown of what HHP has managed successfully in their first ten years. It was followed by a very tasty buffet and it allowed us to mingle and network with others. Dena then asked me if I would like to cut the birthday cake. I was deeply honoured that I was asked. It truly was a privilege to be part of the evening.

So now my fear of AGMs has been somewhat quashed! I as the year goes on, that you will take that step with me, standing in unity and look to brighter futures together.

Maree Hoy

Chair of Western Isles Housing Association Communities Forum

Rent Consultation

Over the next couple of months the Board will be preparing the budget for 2017/18 and this will include deciding on whether they need to increase the weekly rent.

Your rent pays for all the services you receive from HHP, including the 24 hour emergency repair Service, repairs appointments, tenancy support and advice and the investment programme.

We will be consulting with you on the proposed budget and rent increase during January 2017. A consultation document will be available on your web page after 12 January 2017 and you will be given the opportunity to let us know your views so the Board can take them into consideration before setting the rent on 1 February 2017.

If you would like to meet to discuss the budget and rent increase you can contact Jane Ballantyne and she will make the arrangements.



The Salvation Army

59 Bayhead, Stornoway HS1 2DZ 703 875

**Tues/Thurs 12-1pm
2-course lunch £2.50**

Fri 8-11am Full Scottish Breakfast

**Food Parcels
Available on
request ★**

**Hot Water
★ Bottles**

Groceries Available Thurs Bread - Cake - Fruit - Veg

**Coffee & Sale Afternoon
Last Saturday in the month ★**

Home baking - Bric-a-brac - Crafts - Tea - Coffee - Sandwiches - Cake

**Don't be cold, hungry or own your own.
Come and join us for food and company.**

Registered Charity No. 214779 and in Scotland SC009356; Social Trust Registered Charity No. 215174 and in Scotland SC037691



hebridean housing
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homeward

Supporting our Charities



During the year, HHP staff have again been raising money in a variety of different ways in order to raise money and support for our local and national charities.

The Staff Social Committee organised Dress Down days and raffles all of which have been generously supported by our staff. Staff are given the opportunity to nominate a charity to benefit from the money raised. The top 2 nominated Charities are chosen and invited to attend a cheque presentation in December. This year the nominated charities are Seimh (Baby Loss Support Group Western Isles) and Neuro Hebrides who support people living with neurological conditions.

In addition to this, staff have also raised money for Western Isles Autism, Sports Relief, Marie Curie, MacMillan Nurses and Breast Cancer Awareness. One day each month, staff continue to support The Salvation Army by purchasing Bacon rolls.



FESTIVE OPENING HOURS

OFFICES CLOSE

Thursday 22nd December 2016
@ 5pm

OFFICES RE-OPEN

Wednesday 4th January 2017 @ 9am

Emergency Contact Number:

0300 123 0773

WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT



DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN NOW PAY YOUR RENT ONLINE?

To access this method of rent payment go to:-

<http://tinyurl.com/hhppayments>

This takes you to the Comhairle's 24 hour secure Internet payments service. Select HHP Housing Rents and you can make your rent payment using this secure site with most major credit or debit cards. You can also pay your rent by the following options:

- By rent payment card at any Post Office or Paypoint/Payzone
- At your local HHP office;
- By Direct Debit mandate on a weekly or monthly basis;
- By Bank Standing Order;
- By telephone using your debit or credit card – phone 01851 600502;
- At your local Comhairle office.

