



# Region One Review

Highland, Argyll and Bute Regional Network

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## Tenants at the Heart of Plans for Social Housing

The Scottish Government believes that the four key areas in its plans for Social Housing in Scotland involve 'putting tenants, current and future, at the heart of its decisions about social housing and engaging with tenants as key stakeholders in the development of social housing policy in Scotland.'

To this end, the 9 Regional Networks of Tenant Representatives were set up. The regions mostly cover more than one local authority area

and the committees are formed from representatives of registered tenant groups from Housing Associations and Council Housing.

Region One covers The Highland Council and Argyll and Bute Council local authority areas. Tenants in both areas have much in common, with large rural spaces of great natural beauty as well as the problems that come from living in the countryside. Both have small towns and

villages and although in recent years Inverness has gained City status, the tenant groups all work together for the common good.

Regular consultation takes place and at the instigation of the Minister for Housing, Alex Neil representatives of all Regional Networks meet with him four times a year.



Inverness Castle

## The Four Key Areas

- **A new positive role for Local Authorities and Landlords**
- **Ending the Right To Buy on new housing and a further review of its future application**
- **Improving the supply of new housing by changing Housing Association rules**
- **Modernising the role of The Scottish Housing Regulator**

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Kirkside, Alness group with their latest environmental work



A life on the ocean wave in Argyll

Photos Courtesy of Steve Byrne & Cath Chambers.

Linda McCartney memorial garden at Campbeltown



## Argyll and Bute Members

**STEVE BYRNE** from Campbeltown is the Chairman of our Region. He is a folk singer and photography enthusiast. He ensures that we share ALL the paperwork sent to him.

(Unfortunately.)

**CAMERON GRANT** is a recent member of the committee. His first meeting must have been quite a shock for him, meeting us all together. He has stuck it out, though, so is obviously a brave man. He is a computer whizz and a member of ACHA tenant panel.

**SONJA AITKEN** is our scatterbrain who would be lost without her diary which is always full. She works hard for her community and is also a member of ACHA.

**KIRSTIE REID** is our correspondence secretary. She and her husband have a photography business. Kirstie is very busy in her own community as well as looking after a family.

**MICHAEL CROWE** is the argumentative one. We think he argues for the sake of it. He is a community councillor and a panel member as well as the chair of his tenants group and we love to tease him.

## The Highland Council Area Members

Strathrusdale , Easter Ross



**ARTHUR HARRIS** is our vice chairman from Smithton in Inverness. He represents us on TRAG and is now on the TPAS sub group that replaces TIGHRA. He is another brave man among all these women.

**MAUREEN CAIRNEY** lives in Invergordon and is the sensible one, a Committee of Management member of Albyn and has been part of the partnership dealing with major repairs in the Highlands. She also tries to keep us in some sort of order.

**JENNIFER MACLEOD** from Alness has a wicked sense of humour and has represented her community at various levels over the years. She is a Council tenant.

**CATH CHAMBERS** is the newest member of the committee and chairs Kirkside Area Residents in Alness. I always feel I should salute when I see her. She has been prominent in the Scouting movement and I'm sure she'll be an asset to our committee,

### **ISABELL MCLAUGHLAN**

(Yes, that's me) is also a Committee member of Albyn Housing Society and is Minute Secretary for Region One. She admits to being the mischievous one who relies on her fellow Albyn member as navigator when travelling.

## Have Your Say On The Tenants Charter

There will be a number of opportunities for you to have your say on the content of the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

Details have not yet been finalised for the large consultation and information events which are planned for both our areas but there will be a chance for you to suggest items for inclusion the Charter.

If you are not able to attend in person, you should still be able to send your opinions and concerns by email, letter or telephone. Keep an eye on the relevant websites and do not miss your opportunity. This is a moment in history for tenants and landlords.

It is up to us to make our feelings known before the current Housing Bill becomes law. It is an almost unique opportunity in Housing.

All of us need good quality affordable homes. We should have the right to rent these homes if we so choose. We need to feel safe and secure in our own communities. More and more we need to look at the issues of environment, the changing climate and where our energy is to come from. We need value for money and as a period of austerity seems to be before us, this is more important than ever.

Do Have Your Say!



**Alex Neil**, Housing Minister

*When we gave our views on the document Firm Foundations, it was fairly rushed and we did not have a great deal of time to think through all the aspects under consideration but we have some time in hand for discussion before the Bill becomes an Act and it is up to us to say what we think.*

## Our Priority Over The Summer of 2010

Our priority in Region One in the next few weeks will be the Scottish Social Housing Charter. Otherwise known as the Tenants' Charter it will be the subject of consultation among all who have a stake in the delivery of Housing Services and obviously we will voice our views on what is best for Scotland's tenants.

There will be an event in both The Highlands and

Argyll and Bute. Look out for these informative and consultative events in your sector of Region One.

Prominent among topics for discussion will be Housing quality and conditions, terms of tenancies and the principles of rent setting; housing allocation, maintenance and repairs, how to prevent and alleviate Anti Social Behaviour and how to meet the needs of tenants and would-be

tenants in the future. Homelessness—alleviation and prevention is a major issue, as is the need to provide and manage sites for gypsies and travelers, along with the part tenants and their representative groups play in formulating proposals concerning the provision of Housing Services. A flexible approach is needed allowing for both national and more local standards.



**Anne Cook** leads the Scottish Government's Tenant Priorities Team so we are all very nice to her. However, **Michael Boal**, lovely boy, (no photo), is our personal guide and comforter from the team. He is tall and slim and was a quiet man till he met us.

**Region One**

STEVE BYRNE  
Chair

stevecampbeltown@hotmail.co,  
Argyll and Bute

ISABELL MCLAUGHLAN  
Minutes Secretary  
Isabell@bellmc21.plus.com

Mrs Isabell McLaughlan  
7 Ross Crescent  
Milton, Kildary  
IV18 0PS

[www.regional  
networks.org.uk](http://www.regionalnetworks.org.uk)

*If you would like to contact us about any Scottish Social Housing Charter issues, please contact us on any of the e-mail addresses shown on this page or use the tear off slip below to write to Isabell.*

*Don't forget to look out for the two events in our Region—23rd August in Inverness and 24th September in Lochgilphead.*



**Steve's Loch Fyne Mist Monster**

**Tear Off Slip for Responses**

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