

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTIFICATION

TUESDAY 3RD SEPTEMBER 2019

We are pleased to invite you, as an Albyn tenant, to this year's Annual General Meeting which is taking place on **Tuesday 3rd September 2019 at 7.00 pm** at the **Kingsmills Hotel, Culcabock Road, Inverness.**

If you intend to come along on the 3rd, please let our Corporate Office know by email at: corporate@albynhousing.org.uk or by telephone on: **01349 855774**. This will help us to ensure that we have arranged sufficient catering.

The event will begin with our guest speaker Susan Aktemel, Homes for Good. There will also be an update on our new developments, plus the chance to chat with staff and Board members, and meet our new Group Chief Executive Lisa Buchanan, and Co-Chairs Maxine Smith and Ian Fosbrooke. A finger buffet will be provided.

If you would like to attend, but would have transport difficulties, we may be able to help. Please contact our Corporate Office if you would like further information.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ON 3RD SEPTEMBER.

*"As a tenant it's worth going to the Annual General Meeting.
You are made to feel very welcome."*

Joan from Muir of Ord

*"The guest speakers at the Annual General Meeting are
always very interesting."*

Liam from Inverness



NEW LEADERSHIP TAKES THE HELM AT ALBYN GROUP



Albyn Group, which comprises Albyn Housing Society, Albyn Enterprises Ltd and Highland Residential Ltd, has appointed established Highland businesswoman and third sector specialist, Lisa Buchanan, as chief executive officer (CEO).

The move follows the departure of long-serving chief executive, Calum Macaulay, who announced his decision to leave the organisation in March after more than 20 years in post. It also comes at a time of change for the board, which has just named Highland Councillor and businesswoman, Maxine Smith, and Albyn tenant and retired businessman, Ian Fosbrooke, as joint-chair.

Speaking of her appointment, Lisa said:

"This is a fresh and exciting opportunity to build on the success and high standing of Albyn Group, which Calum and the team have built over the past three decades. I am always ambitious for the organisations I work with, and I am eager to make Albyn's vision to see everyone housed in affordable quality homes within sustainable communities a reality. I also relish a challenge, so I'm looking forward to working with my colleagues to strike new partnerships that drive innovation and deliver bold solutions that meet the housing needs of the area."

Edinburgh-born and raised in the Highlands, Lisa joins the society from Buchanan Shaw Consulting where she is a partner specialising in advising third sector organisations and SMEs on organisational development.

Previously, she spent several years with Northern Constabulary as Strategic Diversity Adviser before joining Cantraybridge College, where she held the position of CEO for five years. She also spent a short period as Manager of People and Culture at Parklands Care Homes prior to taking maternity leave following the birth of her son.

Lisa's excellent calibre as a leader in Scotland's third sector landscape has been acknowledged on several occasions. These include a shortlisting for the Institute of Directors' Third Sector Director of the Year award, and a nomination as Scottish Social Enterprise Champion of the Year.

Lisa also gained non-executive experience in governance as a board member at North Highland College UHI.

A life-long learner, Lisa recently completed an MBA with distinction from Strathclyde Business School.

Please scan QR codes for video links



Joint-chairs Ian Fosbrooke and Maxine Smith welcomed the appointment.

A long-standing voluntary Board Member of 14 years, Maxine said:

"Lisa has relevant third sector experience, enthusiasm and strategic vision, making her the ideal individual to take us into this new chapter for Albyn Housing Society and its subsidiaries. It is an exciting time for the organisation. Not only are we ambitious to build on our heritage as a leading registered social landlord for over 40 years – we must focus on the sustainability of our older housing stock as well as future builds, in an ever challenging environment."

Ian, a new Member of the Board who will bring fresh ideas from a tenant's perspective, added:

"By developing new revenue streams that enable us to invest in the communities we serve, Albyn can ensure the people of the Highlands have access to quality affordable housing for decades to come."

"Lisa will play a central role in shaping this future with us – with her extensive third sector experience and business acumen, I'm really excited to see what this holds."

Maxine is a well-known figure in Highland civil society, bringing with her significant experience as a Highland Councillor for the Cromarty Firth ward and as established Leader of the Opposition in Highland Council.

An Albyn Housing Society tenant, Ian brings experience from various industries, having worked all over the world during his career. Now retired, his role with the society started with tenant participation activities, which included the Customer Involvement Strategy Management Group.

AFFORDABLE HOMES GIVE HOTEL SITE A NEW LEASE OF LIFE



Providing quality, affordable homes across an area as large as the Highlands will always be a challenge, but it is one that Albyn continues to face head on. Drovers Square, Ardgay has transformed a space that was once dominated by the former Lady Ross Hotel. The new investment in the village completes the overall redevelopment of the site, which now also hosts an enterprise hub for offices and shops in a barn renovation completed by the Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust.

The Society worked with Compass Building and Construction Services Ltd, and Colin Armstrong Architects to build two modern bungalows for social rent through the Highland Housing Register, and two two-storey homes for mid-market rent from Highland Residential Ltd.

The much-needed new homes represent a total investment of £671,000 from Albyn, which has been supported by £336,000 from the Scottish Government, £20,000 from the Highland Council, and £12,000 from the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal.

Lisa Buchanan, Chief Executive, Albyn Group said:

"Our smaller developments, such as Drovers Square in Ardgay, are of equal importance to us as some of our larger projects. We understand the significance for local communities and local residents of having quality homes available nearby and, on this occasion, redeveloping land into a usable space once again. "We remain committed to building 750 quality homes in the north of Scotland by 2020 and our latest addition to the village of Ardgay brings us closer to delivering on this promise."

David Cameron, Director at Colin Armstrong Architects said:

"Given the site's spatial constraints, we knew that a terrace would be the most efficient layout for the development. The mix of housing styles outlined by Albyn gave us the opportunity to have central two-storey block of two bedroom semi-detached homes book-ended with two bedroom bungalows. Externally a muted palette of low to zero maintenance materials has been used; crisp white render, timber effect wall cladding and grey tiled roofs, all of which complements the stone walls and slate roof of the Barn. Internally, corner windows provide attractive features to living room areas together with bright painted finishes and contemporary ironmongery fittings."

Albyn Housing Society's purpose is to make a positive difference to people's lives through housing and to provide great homes to enable great lives. By investing in this community, Albyn has contributed to the sustainability of Ardgay by increasing local housing stock in a way that complements the needs and aspirations of the local community.

PROJECT PHOENIX

Over the past year we have reviewed how to improve the service we deliver to you, our customer. We have therefore decided to replace our current Housing Management System with a totally new cloud based platform. We have signed the contract and we are currently in the process of setting up the team to implement this major change for the organisation. We have called the project “PROJECT PHOENIX” We need your help!

One of the major changes is the customer portal. This portal will allow you to see the personal details that we hold about you. It will allow you to update these details, pay your rent electronically, report a repair and monitor its progress, arrange an appointment, and much more using a digital device.

To make the portal as user friendly and useful to you as possible it would be great to have a number of customers to advise and test the portal as it is being developed. If you would like to be involved, please contact Anne Mackay on **07894 568 185**.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We also want to know how you would like to receive information from us. There are numerous ways that we communicate with you, from phoning, letters, to text, to email, and newsletters like this one etc..

The new system will allow us to give you the option to choose how you receive specific information e.g. your rent statement by email, newsletter by text link, surveys by post. We will be asking for your preferences during the next year as part of this, so please complete this information as it will help us to engage with you more effectively.

The improvements and opportunities that we believe will be delivered by this project are >

Business Rational	Impact	Key Performance Measure	System Solution
Customer Satisfaction Job Satisfaction	Housing Officers More Customer Facing	Up to 50% of time out of office	Mobile Solution
Job Satisfaction Performance	Housing Assistants to spend less time on basic admin so that they can support the Housing Officer & Customer	Reduction of time on administrative tasks by 20%	Efficient workflow and automation of processes
Customer Satisfaction Performance	Customers interacting with Albyn via self service	50% of customers regularly using electronic means to undertake rent, repairs, and administrative tasks within 18 months	Interactive Customer Portal
Performance Customer Satisfaction Job satisfaction	Data quality and Reporting	Complete and accurate data, reports generated first time without checking and manipulation 50% of reports automated. All staff able to report of their performance.	Verification and audit processes in built to the system. Efficient reporting design and report generation operation.
Performance Customer Satisfaction Job satisfaction	Continuously improve by undertaking change in processes ourselves	Innovative and creative solutions implemented by all staff operating the system with successful rollout	Workflow easy to operate, change and test

ALBYN HOUSING SOCIETY LTD

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2019

In February, 'Target Applications Limited' in Glasgow, were commissioned by Albyn Housing Society to carry out the 2019 Customer Satisfaction Survey. The group of tenants and staff who form the 'Customer Involvement Strategy Monitoring Group' *, had agreed that only 7 questions would be asked in this survey - it was hoped that the shorter survey would make it more likely that customers would respond, and it would provide most of the information which is required by the Scottish Housing Regulator in our annual return on the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

6 out of the 7 questions asked in the survey indicated how well we are performing - according to our customers - and the last question gave customers the opportunity to make comments.

Target Dashboard contacted all customers, who we have mobile phone numbers and email addresses for, on the 1st February, and they received 826 responses in approx. 2 weeks. We realise that some customers may be disappointed that they were not given the opportunity to participate in this survey, but we intend to carry out another survey in February 2020, when we will contact every household by text, by email or post.

Thanks to all of you who took part in the survey. We received a large number of comments which we need to respond to, and will be in touch with all in due course where appropriate. Many of these related to estate management issues and problems with heating systems due to lack of information, and we will be including articles in future newsletters and communications. We do understand the frustration this is causing, and promise to do our best to sort this out.

All customers who responded were entered into a prize draw, and we have sent £50 vouchers to the 5 winners who live in Albyn homes in Inverness, Inverarnie, Strathpeffer, and Nairn

*If you would like to be more involved with Albyn Housing Society e.g. in how we involve customers, report to customers, manage the services we deliver to customers, then please get in touch – you really can make a difference – we have many different ways to engage, e.g. in person, online, in surveys, in resident groups etc.

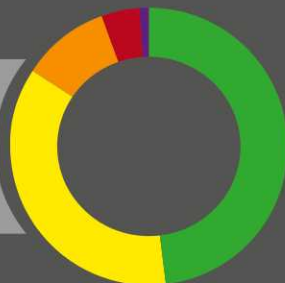


Viewhill Meadows, Inverness

OVERALL SERVICE

Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall service provided by Albyn Housing.

84%



395
VERY
SATISFIED



298
SATISFIED



88
NEITHER
SATISFIED
OR DISSATIS-



37
DISSATIS-
FIED

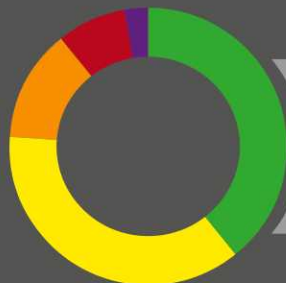


8
VERY
DISSATIS-
FIED

QUALITY OF HOME

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the quality of your home?

76%



324
VERY
SATISFIED



306
SATISFIED



109
NEITHER
SATISFIED
OR DISSATIS-



65
DISSATIS-
FIED

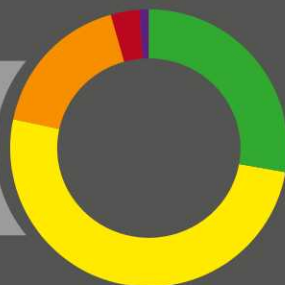


22
VERY
DISSATIS-
FIED

KEEPING YOU INFORMED

How good or poor do you feel Albyn Housing is at keeping you informed about their services and decision?

78%



230
OUTSTANDING



418
GOOD



142
OK



28
POOR

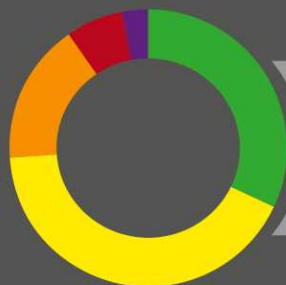


8
VERY POOR

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with Albyn Housing's management of the neighbourhood you live in?

74%



265
VERY
SATISFIED



347
SATISFIED



135
NEITHER
SATISFIED
OR DISSATIS-



56
DISSATIS-
FIED

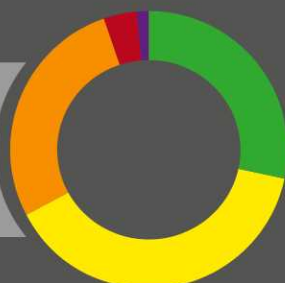


23
VERY
DISSATIS-
FIED

PARTICIPATE IN DECISION MAKING

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with opportunities given to you to participate in Albyn Housing's decision making processes?

67%



233
VERY
SATISFIED



318
SATISFIED



232
NEITHER
SATISFIED
OR DISSATIS-



32
DISSATIS-
FIED

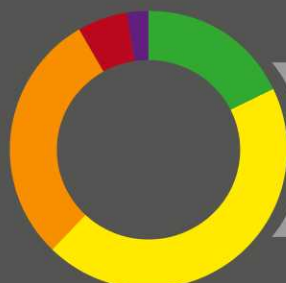


11
VERY
DISSATIS-
FIED

VALUE FOR MONEY

Taking into account the accommodation and the services Albyn Housing provides, do you think that the rent for this property represents good / poor value

62%



148
OUTSTANDING



366
GOOD



244
OK



48
POOR



20
VERY
POOR

HOW WE COLLECT RENT ARREARS



We are always striving to improve the services we provide and make the way we work more efficient and effective.

Rental income is essential to keep the Society financially viable and able to provide the range and standards of service our residents currently enjoy. It is therefore essential that we ensure that we maximise our levels of rent collection and arrears recovery.

To help staff do this our procedures concentrate on some key principles:

- Early identification of an arrear
- Immediate action to prevent the arrear increasing
- Early contact
- Personal contact as the preferred method of contact
- Keeping clear records of all contact
- Keeping tenants informed
- Providing appropriate advice and support
- Court action and evictions only to be used as an absolute last resort

PLEASE REMEMBER – THE CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM IS HERE TO HELP YOU. SO IF YOU FIND YOURSELF STRUGGLING TO PAY YOUR RENT, CONTACT US IMMEDIATELY.

A number of members of our Customer Services Team are involved in the recovery of rent arrears so it may not be your Housing Officer who contacts you when your account first shows an arrear. Just like your Housing Officer, all of our staff are there to offer support and advice to help you prevent the arrear increasing and to clear the debt.

FIRE ALARM BATTERY INFORMATION

Please help protect your home from fire by regularly testing your smoke alarm – we recommend doing it monthly.

Test by:

- Pressing and holding the red “test” button until you hear it bleeping
- Let go of the button. The system will bleep for a little longer
- If the system continues to bleep without stopping, you need to replace the battery

Always have a spare battery ready to replace the back up battery in your alarm. The replacement battery is a 9 volt PP3 6LR61 square battery. Never leave yourself or your home unprotected by removing the battery to stop the alarm bleeping. If you have difficulty changing the battery, ask a friend or let us know. If you’re unsure what to do, get in touch with us.

GET INVOLVED AND HAVE YOUR SAY

Do you think that Albyn Housing Society is doing a good job, but could do better? Do you wonder how we spend our money? Or how we decide if the service we are giving you is adequate? Do you want to get involved and work alongside the Albyn management and tell us your experience as a customer and where we can make improvements? Are you looking for voluntary work to help gain skills, experience and confidence to help you get a new job?

We are looking for tenants with an enquiring mind and confidence to ask questions to join our Performance Committee. We need our customers to help us to look at how well we are delivering the services we provide, and to make improvements where possible. The Performance Committee is responsible for reporting to and advising the Board on all aspects of the Society's business performance against agreed targets, for promoting and driving continuous improvement, and for promoting efficiency and effectiveness. We need to ensure that we are delivering the outcomes expected of us. There are four meetings each year. Each meeting lasts for approximately three hours, and the same amount of time is required to prepare for the meetings. Current tenant reps will be on hand to buddy you, and training will be available. In the past some of the customers who have worked with us on the Performance Committee have then become Board members.

We know that it is a lot to ask anyone to give up their free time and unfortunately can't offer any financial payment other than expenses, but we can offer training, a reference for future job applications, and the opportunity for you to gain new skills, meet new people, and improve your confidence.

If this is something that you might be interested in doing, then please contact Anne on 07894568185 for an informal conversation.

If the Performance Committee isn't your cup of tea, but you would still like to get involved, then please get in touch. We have many other ways that your views can be heard, or that you can help us to improve – some are online so you don't need to leave your home.

What you can do:

- Become a share member of the Society for £1.00
- Form a tenant or resident organisation in your area
- Read our leaflets and newsletter articles, and get in touch if you have any queries
- Complete and return our questionnaires or surveys
- Let our Communities Assistant, Anne, know that you would like to be involved and what subjects interest you
- Join our Customer Involvement Strategy Monitoring group
- Let us have your comments, suggestions and complaints

COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION – ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

Do you know someone who might be entitled to money off their Council Tax Bill?

You can claim if you, or your partner:

- Are on a low income. This can be DWP benefits or low paid work
- Are responsible for paying the Council Tax bill
- Do not have combined savings or capital of £16,000.
This is unless you're receiving Pension Credit (Guaranteed Credit)

You can check eligibility for a reduction in Council Tax by completing the Council's 'Apply Once' online application form:
www.highland.gov.uk/applyonce

You can also contact the Welfare Support Team for help to apply:
telephone **0800 090 1004** or email
welfare.support@highland.gov.uk

REDUCING THE RISK OF LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE



Legionnaires' disease is a serious lung infection caused by the Legionella bacteria. Initial symptoms usually include flu-like symptoms. The disease is caused by Legionella bacteria infecting your lungs. It is usually caught by breathing in small droplets of contaminated water. The infection isn't contagious and can't be spread directly from person to person. Legionnaires' disease can be particularly serious in people with pre-existing health conditions, as well as young children and older folk.

Most of us will have heard of the disease and associate it with large water systems in factories, hotels, hospitals and the like. Legionella is bacteria that can exist in natural and artificial water systems.

However, it is possible for Legionella bacteria to live in smaller water supply systems like those used in domestic premises.

You can do your bit to help minimise the risk and we recommend that you all undertake the following actions:

- Flush through hot and cold water taps throughout the property on at least a weekly basis to prevent water stagnation.
- Run showers at least once per week to ensure there is regular water flow.
- Clean and disinfect shower heads every three months.
- If toilets have not been used for more than a week these should be flushed twice before use to circulate fresh water through the system.
- Where hot water storage cylinders are provided, ensure the hot water is switched on and the water is brought up to 60°C for a minimum of one hour once per week.
- Don't adjust the hot water temperature controls on the boiler or hot water cylinder or on any thermostatic mixing valves on taps. (The central heating temperature is controlled separately and you can adjust this using the room thermostat and radiator valves to suit your preferences.)

FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

An annual tradition amongst staff at Albyn is the Santa Hat Collection, this is a Christmas Charity collection that takes place across the Albyn group, and is traditionally matched with a donation from Albyn.

A member of our staff received exceptional care from the Neurosurgery Unit in Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and as such staff agreed that the total of £1400 should be given direct to Ward 205 Neurosurgery.

A huge well done to our wonderful staff for this achievement.

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2018/19

The following gives an overview of complaints received during the financial year 2018-19.

How many complaints have we had?

- 15 complaints were received between 1 April and 30 June 2018. (10 in the previous year)
- 11 complaints were received between 1 July and 30 September 2018. (18 in the previous year)
- 12 complaints were received between 1 October and 31 December 2018. (17 in the previous year)
- 6 complaints were received between 1 January and 31 March 2019. (24 in the previous year)

This is a total of **44** complaints, compared to **69** last year.

How many were stage 1 complaints

- 29 of those were dealt with at stage 1 of the complaints system. (51 in the previous financial year)

How many were stage 2 complaints

- 15 of the complaints were escalated to Stage 2 of the complaints process because they required detailed investigation. (18 in the previous financial year)

Complaints referred to the Ombudsman

During the year, no complaints were referred to the Ombudsman.

Further information on complaints can be found on our website under our "Get Involved and Feedback" section.

44 complaints this year

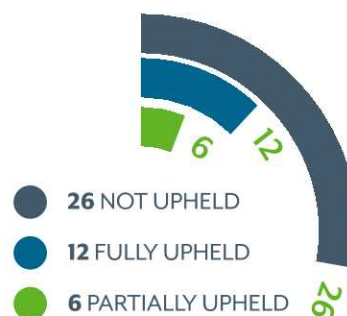
29 dealt with at stage 1

15 dealt with at stage 2

RESPONSIBILITY OF COMPLAINTS



OUTCOME OF COMPLAINTS



LOCATIONS OF COMPLAINTS



ELECTRICAL TESTING

Albyn is required to carry out inspections of the electrical installations in your home every 5 years to make sure they are safe and well maintained. Over time, the condition of the installation can deteriorate due to many factors such as wear and tear, corrosion and age. The priority is to keep you safe in your home therefore if your property is due to be checked, you will receive a letter from us between 4-6 weeks before a proposed visit from Sangsters Electrical Ltd.

It is important that access is given to the electrician - if the proposed visit is not suitable, please contact Sangsters on 01862 832683 to re-arrange.

Sangsters will check your fuse board which is usually located in a cupboard. As clear access is required, please arrange to remove any items stored around this on the day of testing. The electrician will also test some of your sockets and switches, light fittings and smoke alarms throughout your home. An inspection and test of your smoke and heat alarms to ensure they meet with the current standard will be part of the electrical check. This means that we may have to replace any units which are faulty, missing, or out of date, and fit extra units to your main daytime living areas and kitchen.

If any repairs are identified which require urgent attention, they will be completed at the time of the test. If parts are required to be ordered, the electrician will make you aware and Sangster's will be in contact to organise a return visit.

Sangsters Electricians will be in a sign written vans, branded uniform, and will carry identification, if you have any concerns about any contractors please contact Albyn's offices.

STAIR WELLS AND FIRE RISK

As tenants you can help us greatly by ensuring our stairwells are kept clutter free and that fire doors are kept shut when not in use.

It is also important that repairs are reported to us – as lights can fail, flooring can become loose or door entry systems can break between inspections!

COMPETITION WINNER

The lucky winner of the Annual Christmas Quiz from our Winter Newsletter 2018 was Mr Green from Wick. Mr Green won a £25 gift voucher.

OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Albyn has started the process to review our operational policies and procedures and want to thank each tenant that has been involved to date. Your input has been invaluable to shaping our organisation.

We will also be introducing new ones to ensure our services meet our customers' requirements, that we are continually improving and that we are complying in all areas we work in as a housing provider.

So far this year we have reviewed or introduced the following operational policies:

- Service Charge Policy
- Voids Management Policy
- Keeping Vulnerable People Safe
- Gas Safety Policy (currently out for Tenant Consultation)

You are very important to us and we want to make certain that you continue to have a say in how these services are developed and delivered.

Therefore, we will be launching several Customer Consultations soon, where there will be various opportunities to get involved, and we would very much appreciate you taking the time to be part of these conversations.

We don't want to leave anybody behind so we will be using social media, our website, postal surveys, text, email and face to face at our offices in Inverness and Invergordon.

Please watch out for further details coming soon!

Invergordon Office

(Invergordon area and the north):
98-104 High Street, Invergordon, Ross-shire IV18 0DL
Tel: 0300 323 0990

Inverness Office

(Inverness area and the south):
68 MacLennan Crescent, Inverness IV3 8DN
Tel: 0300 323 0991

Email: office@albynhousing.org.uk

www.albynhousing.org.uk

Contact the Invergordon office on 0300 323 0990 - 24 hours a day | www.albynhousing.org.uk