



*Our summer holiday  
affordable and **FREE**  
fun days out guide.*



# *&House &Home*

**FREE oral health products  
for children up to 12  
years of age!**



Important  
changes to  
benefits!



Could you  
qualify for  
£140 off your  
electricity?



## **Kerb Appeal**

Could you win a £25 voucher  
this July?



Welcome to the Summer edition of House & Home

As I'm writing this, we are in the middle of a fabulous heatwave - lets hope we see plenty more of the sunshine and sun in the months ahead!

Since our last newsletter, we've been busy looking at how we deliver our services to you and are committed to improving our services based on feedback from our customers (see page 10).

Our scrutiny group have also been helping us to improve performance and efficiency by looking at our services from a customers perspective and suggesting ways we can improve.

We also got a lot of valuable feedback from customers during this year's rent consultation which has been followed up and acted upon (see page 9).

Don't forget our affordable warmth, employability and money advice services. The team do a fantastic job and have saved our customers hundreds of thousands of pounds. The sun may be out, but now is the time to prepare for winter - maybe you're entitled to a warm homes discount, or need help saving for Christmas - our team can help (see pages 3-4).

Stuck for things to do with the kids during the holidays? Check out our guide on page 12 with many free and affordable options.

I do hope you enjoy the summer, but please be aware of neighbours if you are spending time enjoying your garden. BBQs are a fabulous way to enjoy the sunshine but excessive, or late night noise is often a cause of complaints made to us.

As ever, if you wish to speak to me directly, or any of the team, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Best wishes

*Nicola*

Nicola Thom  
Interim Managing Director

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## Two lucky IHA customers win iPad minis

Every month Riverside's Tenants and Residents Federation enters all customers into a prize draw to win an iPad mini.

It's only June and already we've had two local winners from 90,000+ entrants!

All tenants are automatically members of the Federation. Each division has two representatives (Reps) - ours are Janice Murray and Ann Robertson Mbe.

The Federation campaigns on issues that affect our tenants e.g. bedroom tax, and get the opportunity to consult and communicate with other tenants and residents.

### Our Reps



Ann  
Robertson Mbe



Janice  
Murray

# How our services could help you...



**Kathryn Morrison,**  
Affordable Warmth  
Officer

**GOOD NEWS!**  
The Warm Homes  
Discount Scheme  
has been extended  
for a further  
5 years!

## Do you qualify for £140 off your electricity for winter 2016?

Many of our customers have benefited from £140 off their electricity bill through the Government's Warm Homes Discount Scheme.

### **What is the Warm Homes Discount?**

It's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, usually between September and March.

### **How do I know if I am eligible?**

If you receive Pension Credit you will automatically be considered for it. Different energy suppliers have different qualifying conditions. You may be able to apply for help if you're on a low income, you have a disability or illness, or you get certain means-tested benefits.

### **How do I apply for Warm Homes Discount?**

You will need to contact your energy supplier to apply. Many offer online forms or you can give them a call. Our Affordable Warmth Officer, Kathryn, can check if you are eligible and help you apply.

**Contact our Affordable Warmth Officer Kathryn Morrison, on 01294 316756.**

Our Employability Officer, Gillian Scott has been working with many of our customers to support them in the right direction towards employment. In 2015/16 Gillian was successful in getting 28 customers into employment, 10 into training or education, helping 8 customers gain qualifications and supporting 2 people into volunteering roles.

As well as supporting IHA customers, Gillian works with the wider community. Working in Partnership with Kilwinning Sports Club Gillian has supported the employability/ skills element of the Ground Maintenance Employability Project. She has delivered CV skills workshops, ensuring everyone gets a quality CV and interview skills workshops to prepare the applicants for upcoming interviews.

The purpose of the project is to provide a Grounds Maintenance Skills training placement to unemployed people throughout North Ayrshire aged 16 - 24 years. The course provides 3 training elements; Certified, Practical, CV and Interview skills.

Gillian has also been making monthly visits to our customers on the Isle of Arran. The visits allow our customers to gain access to our employability service, affordable warmth and money advice.

Get in touch with Gillian and find out how she can help you.



### **Contact details:**

**Gillian Scott, Employability Officer**

**Tel:** 01294 316752

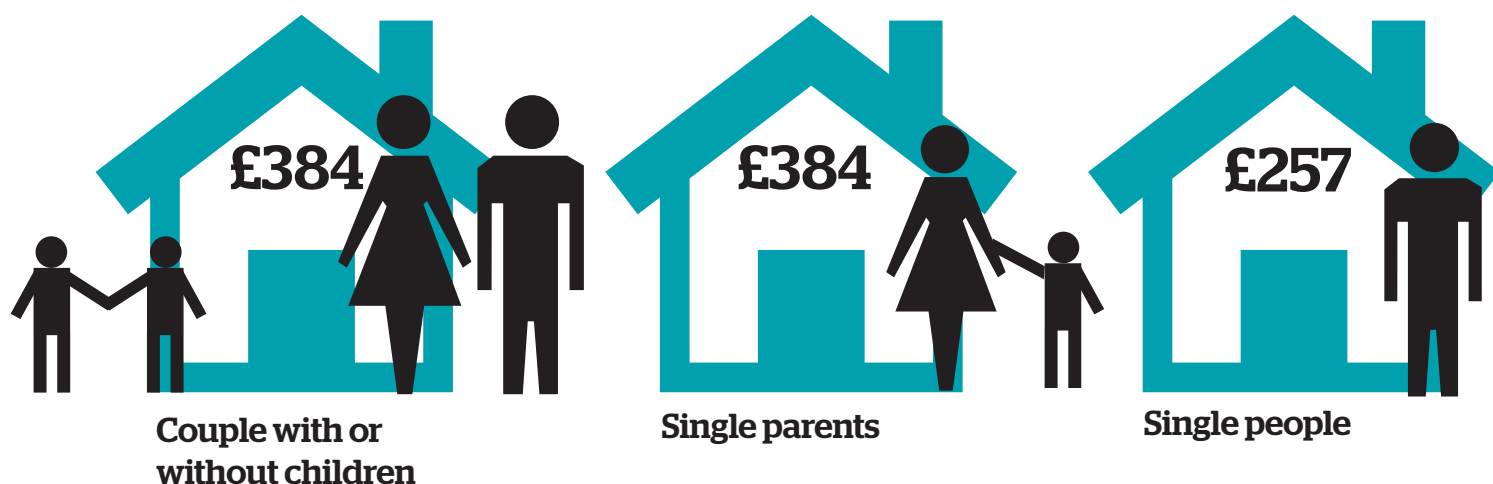
**Email:** [gillian.scott2@irvineha.co.uk](mailto:gillian.scott2@irvineha.co.uk)

**Text:** 07980 761 449

# Benefit Changes

From April 2016 Housing Benefit can only be backdated for 4 weeks for working age claimants (HB will continue to be backdated for 3 months for claimants of Pension Credit age or whose partner is Pension Credit age). It is really important that our customers let us know as soon as possible when they have a change of circumstances.

## New Weekly Benefit Cap 2016



You will **NOT BE AFFECTED** if you receive certain benefits including:



and you will **NOT BE AFFECTED** if:

- You work enough hours to get Working Tax Credit, or
- If you are on Universal Credit - you are earning £430+ a month.

Call our money advisors on 01294 316784 or 01294 316775

## Could we save you money?

In the last year we've got our customers almost £800k in cash gains and benefit backdates!

Our target:

**£590,000**

What we achieved:

**£747,278.87**

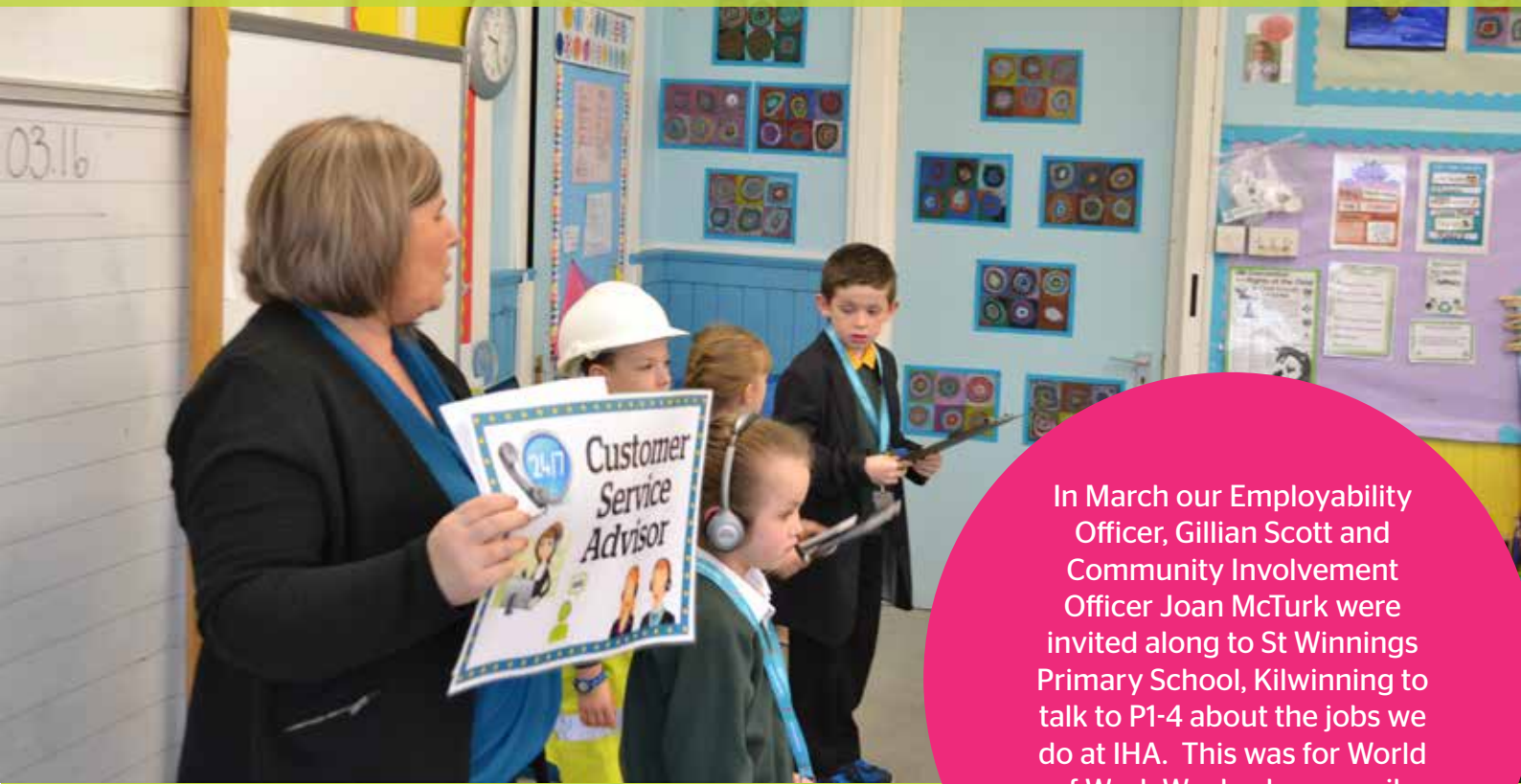
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Our Community Involvement Team had a target of £590K in cash gains to achieve for our customers during the period 01/04/2015 - 31/03/2016.

Cash gains are amounts money that our customers benefit from, such as obtaining benefits they were entitled to but didn't receive. We also assist our customers to claim backdated payments they are entitled to, helping many pay off rent arrears and outstanding debt.



# World of Work Week



In March our Employability Officer, Gillian Scott and Community Involvement Officer Joan McTurk were invited along to St Winnings Primary School, Kilwinning to talk to P1-4 about the jobs we do at IHA. This was for World of Work Week where pupils learn about the skills and qualifications needed to do various jobs.



Joan and Gillian were presented with a 'Key to Success' as a thank you.

# Listening to your feedback

## Our Office Reception Area

You might have noticed our revamped reception area. This work was done last year as a direct result of our scrutiny panel telling us that the reception area was bland and unwelcoming.

They helped us to redesign the whole area which includes the creation of a play area to keep the little ones amused and a new meeting/training room accessed from the reception area.



## Empty Houses

Our scrutiny panel told us that sometimes, when our houses are handed over to new tenants, there is an unacceptable number of repairs. Whilst these repairs may not be noticed until the tenant moves in, it is not ideal for a new tenant to keep making themselves available for different contractors to call. Once this was pointed out to us by the scrutiny panel, we worked with our main contractors to come up with a solution.

We are now piloting a new “safe, clean & clear” standard at handover. We will then visit two weeks later to log any non-urgent repairs the tenant notes and organise for our contractors to attend at time that is suitable. This should allow multiple repairs to be carried out on the same day and therefore minimising the level of disruption for our tenant.

## Join our Scrutiny Panel

We have a couple of vacancies for new panel members. If you have a few hours to spare every month and would like to get involved, we would love to hear from you. Any training you might need will be provided and reasonable expenses reimbursed. If you would like more information, please telephone Phyllis Rodgers on 01294 316760 or Joan McTurk on 01294 316785.



## Sharing ideas with our Cumbrian counterparts!

Our Scrutiny group met with Riverside's Cumbrian scrutiny panel in March to share ideas and best practice.

Both divisions gave an overview of their areas of operation and scrutiny work undertaken to date.

Paul McGregor, Chair of Scrutiny and Michael Fullerton also went down to Carlisle to observe a scrutiny meeting.



We are one of three organisations to be selected to complete ***The Tenant Information Service and SHBVN's Scrutiny Approved Accreditation Pilot Project.***

The Accreditation covers a three year period and provides an assessment of how well tenant scrutiny is embedded in a landlord's strategic planning and performance management. This will allow us to further develop and improve on our scrutiny performance.





David Thompson,  
Executive Director of  
Operations at Irvine  
Housing Association,  
Andy Slater of Irvine  
and Troon Cancer  
Care, and Provost  
Sturgeon

# Supporting The North Ayrshire Provost's Civic Pride Awards

Once again we sponsored the Community Group category at The North Ayrshire Provost's Civic Pride Awards in March. The annual event raises vital funds for Cash for Kids and The Ayrshire Hospice.

The community group award is presented to a voluntary organisation which has made a positive contribution to the community and promoted or demonstrated civic pride in the community. This year's winner was Irvine and Troon Cancer Care.

This volunteer-run group is run by people who have all in some way been affected by cancer. They offer a free much-needed service by providing transport for cancer patients

attending hospitals in Glasgow and throughout Ayrshire.

Last year alone, drivers completed more than 1500 journeys, covering more than 100,000 miles, taking about 200 people to approximately 3000 appointments.


In addition, Irvine and Troon Cancer Care were also presented with the Provost's Award, which recognises one of the nominees who go above and beyond to show civic pride in North Ayrshire.

Andy Slater, Chairman of the group, said: "Everybody who is a volunteer has been affected by cancer, whether it's family friend or close relative, and that's the driving force behind us."

# Wedding Celebrations at West Doura!


It was double celebrations at West Doura Court, Kilwinning when two couples celebrated special anniversaries in March.

Ronnie and Zina McDonald were married on 2 March 1956 at The Fairbairn Church in Glasgow and honeymooned in Edinburgh. They started their married life off in East Kilbride, later moving to Troon where they brought up their two daughters. They continued their Diamond Wedding celebrations with a family dinner and are off to Portugal in July for a family holiday.



Ronnie and Zina McDonald with wardens Anne Black and Mary McCulloch

Jimmy and Cathie Frew were married on 19 March 1966 by Rev McCara at The Old Parish Church in Irvine and had a reception at the newly opened Dunlop Memorial Hall in Dreghorn. Like the McDonald's they also honeymooned in Edinburgh at a guest house with a view of the castle. Their celebrations were brought to an end when Jimmy went to the bar to get another round and the barmaid said they were closing...the clocks had gone forward! They've lived in Kilwinning all their married life and have a son and daughter. The couple are celebrating their Golden Wedding by jetting off to Dubai, Singapore and cruising around Thailand!



Jimmy and Cathie Frew with wardens Anne Black and Mary McCulloch





# Allocation Policy Review

East Ayrshire Council, alongside the Common Housing Register partners, (Atrium Homes, Cunninghame Housing Association, Irvine Housing Association and Shire Housing) will be reviewing the Common Allocation Policy in the coming months.

To register your interest and be part of the review, please email your details to [housing@east-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:housing@east-ayrshire.gov.uk) or call the Customer Liaison Team on 01563 554878.

## Rent Consultation

We had a fantastic response to our rent consultation questionnaire this year, with over 150 questionnaires returned. All comments and feedback have been passed to the relevant department. The lucky winner of the £50 supermarket voucher was Mrs Roberts, of Irvine. She was presented with her Tesco voucher on Wednesday 17 February by housing officer, Meg Mackay.

***Mrs Roberts said, "I always fill out surveys whether it be for the NHS, the housing association or after using a service. It's your chance to have your say and get your views across. Winning the £50 voucher is a bonus! I'll enjoy using it the next time I go shopping!"***

***Meg said, "We had a great response to the questionnaire and really value our customers' feedback - good or bad. Any feedback allows us to review and improve the way we deliver our services. Congratulations to Mrs Roberts!"***

The Association asked for the views of its customers on rent increases and has taken account of their comments. The Board of the Association decided that the rent increase for this year is an average of 1.80%. This will let us continue to deliver a high quality service to our customers.

**All comments were followed up by the appropriate team and will be reviewed by our scrutiny group in the coming months.**

One resident at Caley House, Kilwinning highlighted that the chairs in the sun lounge were no longer fit for purpose. We sent an asset officer out straight away and got the chairs removed. We have since replaced them with new chairs and we also replaced some chairs at our sheltered housing at the same time.



# We're changing the way we work to benefit you

We've been reviewing our services and are committed to improving your experiences.

We will be looking at every team and exploring new and more efficient ways of working. We started earlier this year by reviewing our asset management team. We now have three staff heading up the team, dedicated to specific areas of the business.

**Robert Clegg is responsible for Asset and Investment**, he looks at things such as who needs a new kitchen / bathroom etc.

**John Watson is responsible for Repairs and Maintenance**, making sure your repairs are completed on time and to your satisfaction.

**John Brennan is responsible for Health & Safety and Compliance**, ensuring your home is safe and meets health and safety requirements.

We also want to establish a new team devoted to improvement and introduction of new projects and policies, which will allow our front-line staff to be 100% dedicated to our customers whilst improvements, modernisation and growth can be managed 'back office'.

This smarter way of working will allow us to react quicker to your needs and provide you with more positive outcomes from our services.

The full review will be complete in the Autumn.

We continue to expand our customer service team based in our Irvine office. A further three new staff will be joining the team over the Summer.

The aim of the review is to achieve service improvements, increase value for money and to ensure we have the right people with the right skills in the right posts to meet the needs of our customers.



## Mobile Working



We are introducing mobile working for some staff. Mobile working is the ability to work anywhere and at any time as well as access and update information without needing to return to a desk.

We will be providing our staff with right technology so that when they visit you in your home they can do all the things they would normally do from the office such as log repairs, update your records and complete online forms.

This will enable our staff to spend more time with customers, and be active in your community tending to your needs.

We will be rolling out mobile working in Dumfries by Autumn 2016.



# Fraser's Journey

Fraser Pirrie has recently joined our new asset management team as Assistant Asset Officer. Fraser started at IHA as a trainee in 2011. After completing the North Ayrshire Housing Careers programme. Fraser went on to secure a permanent job within customer services, dealing with customer enquiries.

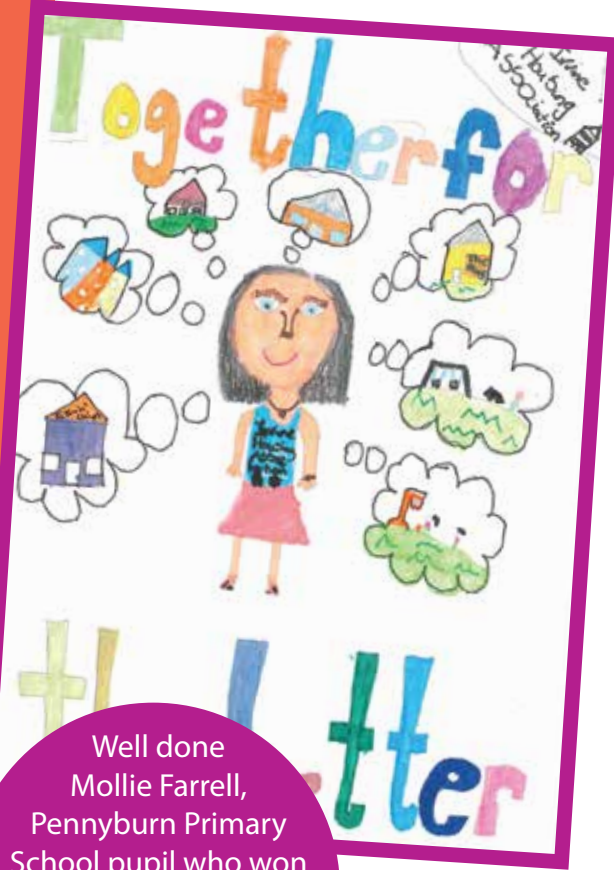
In his new role Fraser will be carrying out pre and post - inspections of works, dealing with repairs works to empty properties, liaising with contractors and following up repairs calls.

Fraser said, "In the last five years I've had so many opportunities at IHA. I'm really looking forward to the challenges the role of Assistant Asset Officer will bring. I can bring my experience from working within our customer service centre to the job. I will be taking more of the administrative tasks from the Asset Officers freeing them up to be more active and visible within our communities.

2016

2011

2015



Well done Mollie Farrell, Pennyburn Primary School pupil who won the competition to design Riverside's Tenant Federation Annual Report



## Brownie Points

Betty Reilly and Alice Duffy from West Doura Court, Kilwinning are pictured presenting £40 to the Brownies.

The money is a result of coppers collected by residents and will be used towards a ten pin bowling trip for the Brownies.

# FREE AND AFFORDABLE FUN DAYS OUT GUIDE



## Kilwinning Sports Club

To kick-off the summer holidays KSC are holding a fun week of sports and activities Monday 4 July - Thursday 7 July 11 am - 2pm. This is for primary aged children and is FREE of charge thanks to funding from BBC Children in Need and Riverside Foundation. They will have a range of sports and activities on offer throughout the week including Football, Tennis, Club Golf, Netball and Fitness. A healthy lunch will also be provided for all participants. On Friday 8 July there will be a community fun day with bouncy castles, face painting, sports, stalls, raffles and more! For more information please contact KSC on 01294 556444.

## Eglinton Park, Kilwinning

Eglinton Park has a variety of events on over the summer including Friends of Eglinton - an opportunity to help the rangers at no cost.

Wild Toddlers -  
£1.50 per child, adults free  
Under 6's only, max 3 children  
per parent or guardian

Call Eglinton Park on 01294  
551776 for booking.

Wild Wednesdays -  
Eglinton Country Park  
1.30pm - 3.30pm  
£1.50 per child (age 7 - 11)  
Let the kids run wild for two  
hours with the Countryside  
Rangers.



## Maritime Museum Art Workshops

Saturday 11th June  
10am-11.30am and  
1pm-2.30pm  
'You've got to work hard for  
your Selfie' photography  
workshop for 8-12 year olds  
£5 per child

Saturday 19th June  
10am-11.15am and  
1pm-2.15pm  
'Little Makers' Mini-Me's  
sculpture-based workshop  
for 3-7 year olds  
£5 per child

Please book  
by emailing  
visitorservices@  
scotmaritime.org.uk

## KA Leisure

KA Leisure have a summer programme packed with activities to make sure the school holidays are full of action and fun! They have something for everyone with sport specific camps, pool activities and their ever popular kids clubs! Along with our KA activities they are running a variety of camps and classes which will be delivered by clubs and partners from across the area.

Plus back for 2016 is the KA Leisure Summer Roadshows. Delivered in partnership with various clubs and organisations the six Roadshows deliver the fun on your doorstep. Bringing a variety of sports, games, inflatables and competitions there really is something for all the family.

Friday 8th July - Auchenharvie, Stevenston  
Friday 22nd July - Magnum, Irvine  
Friday 5th August - Kilwinning Sports Club

Friday 15th July - Arran High School  
Friday 29th July - Largs Prom  
Friday 12th August - Garnock Pool

If that's not enough they also have FREE summer swimming across all their pools. The scheme is supported by North Ayrshire Council and is available for anyone under 18.



# Drongan Gala



Health and wellbeing was the theme at the busy Drongan, Rankinston and Stair Gala on Saturday 28 May.

Phyllis Rodgers, Senior Community Involvement Officer and Clair Christie, Money Advisor, were on hand with lots of health and wellbeing inspired freebies and to offer advice to customers.

## Other Community Events

We are awaiting dates for a possible BIG Lunch event at Harbourside, Irvine and the opening of the community garden in Dumfries. We will keep you informed via our website, Twitter and Facebook.

If you know of any events coming up in your community that you would like us to publicise please email [gillian.craig@irvineha.co.uk](mailto:gillian.craig@irvineha.co.uk)

# FREE Oral Health products in Ayrshire & Arran!

Did you know your community pharmacy can help with your child's oral health up to 12 years old?

### Ask about:

- sugar free medicines
- free flow drinking cups
- free toothbrush, toothpaste and toothbrushing timers
- local dental services
- advice on baby drinks and healthy teeth



teach your  
child to brush  
their teeth

register your  
child with a  
dentist and get  
a check up  
every 6  
months

## Irvine area

Boots Pharmacy 9a Frew Terrace, Irvine KA12 9DZ  
Boots Pharmacy 9 Lower Vennel, Bourtreehill South, Irvine, KA11 1PQ  
Lesley Wilson 20 Main Street, Dreghorn KA11 4AH

## Arran

Brodict Pharmacy Arran, KA27 8AJ

## Kilwinning

Townhead Pharmacy Station Plaza, Pennyburn Road, Kilwinning KA13 6NT

## Drongan

Drongan Pharmacy 15 GlenCraig Street, Drongan KA6 7AS  
Boots Pharmacy 168-170 High Street, Ayr KA7 1PZ



encourage your  
child to choose  
healthy food  
and drinks

# GET YOUR GARDEN IN SHAPE THIS SUMMER!

Some tips from Michael Fullerton, keen gardener and member of our scrutiny group.

On hot summer days water hanging baskets early in the morning then place ice cubes in your basket. They will slowly melt away, providing much needed moisture for the rest of the day.

Keep dead-heading flowers that have faded. This will help produce more flowers throughout the growing season.

Crushed eggshells around newly planted seedlings will deter slugs.

To keep weight to a minimum, use lightweight plastic plant pots and pieces of broken up plant trays rather than rocks and stones. If you are planting shallow rooted plants you can fill up to a third of the pot with polystyrene, saving money on compost.

## Kerb Appeal

It is important to keep your garden tidy. Untidy gardens bring the street and the area down. Keep your garden tidy to be in with the chance of winning **Garden of the Week** and a **£25 voucher**.

Throughout July our estate staff will be looking out for:

- Front gardens that are consistently tidy.
- Neglected front gardens that have been tidied up and are continuing to be kept tidy.

**If you live at the Harbourside why not enter our Harbourside in Bloom competition? Taking part is easy Simply give us your name and address and we'll do the rest. Please enter by Friday 15 July.**

**Email:** [info@irvineha.co.uk](mailto:info@irvineha.co.uk)

**Tel:** 01294 316780

**Or:** pass your details on to any member of staff at IHA.

Entries close  
15 July!

### Availability in other formats

If your circumstances require a copy of this publication in another language or another form (such as Braille or audio tape) please tell us and we will seek to provide you with a copy as soon as we are able.

### Equal opportunities

The Association will endeavour to ensure that no person or organisation receives any less favourable treatment than another unless it can be reasonably shown to be The Association is opposed to any improper discrimination and will take appropriate steps within its powers as an employer, service provider and receiver of services to counteract any such improper discrimination.

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Registered Scottish Charity No. SC042251**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

