

*Dear Buy with Confidence Member,*

*In this final Buy with Confidence Newsletter for 2008,*

- 1      **Trading Standards**    -Personnel Changes.  
   -New membership section for BWC.  
   -Homeowner Surveys.
- 2      **Environmental Health**-Charging for contaminated land services.
- 3      **Building Standards**    -Personnel Changes.
- 4      **Planning news**            -Personnel Changes.

Please contact the Trading Standards section if there are any issues you would like to see featured in future newsletters.

May I take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

*Kind Regards*

*Marina*

Marina MacSween

Consumer Protection Officer, Trading Standards.



## 1      **Trading Standards News**

### **Change of Personnel**

Carol Macleod who worked in our administration section has recently taken up a position with the Housing Benefits Section at the Comhairle. Carol has been replaced by Keilidh MacKay, and she will be working with Jan providing administrative support to our Health and Consumer Services Section in the new Social and Community Services Department. Keilidh has returned to Stornoway after successfully completing a course in Business Studies in Glasgow. She is currently learning to drive and has a keen interest in the work of the Trading Standards Section.



## **Other Comhairle Appointments**

Two directors have just been appointed at the Comhairle .

Calum Iain Maciver has become the Director of Development . He will take up his appointment early in the New Year.

The post oversees a department of over 100 employees and includes the key functions of Planning and Economic development.

Calum Iain originally comes from Tolsta, he is married to Dorothy and has three children, Ciorstaidh, Angus and James, has been Head of Economic Development with Comhairle nan Eilean Siar since November 2003. Before entering the public sector he was employed in the tourism field. He worked as manager accountant at the Clan Donald Centre, one of Skye's leading visitor attractions and prior to that as an assistant accountant with a retail chain serving the tourism market.

Calum Iain studied Business and Highland History at Sabhal Mor Ostaig, the Gaelic Business College in Skye and spent six years in the military serving in the UK, Belize, Hong Kong and the Falkland Islands.

In addition to the above he has been a member of the Western Isles Children's Panel since 2004, is a former Trustee of Sabhal Mor Ostaig and a member of Tolsta Community Council.

The New Director of the Social and Community Services Department is Iain Macaulay.

This department covers key areas of service including Community Care, Criminal Justice, Environmental Services and Leisure and Learning. The department has a staffing level of over 600 and is directly responsible for a range of front line services.

Mr Macaulay has worked for the Social Work Department of Comhairle nan Eilean Siar since 1985. He is married to Anne and has two children, Marion and Andrew.

Iain was brought up in North Uist and educated at Dunskeellar and Paible Schools, North Uist, and then at Inverness Royal Academy before graduating in Social Work from Robert Gordon's in Aberdeen in 1981. Iain now lives in Back, where he helps to support youth activities.

He has been Acting Chief Social Worker since July this year. Previously he worked for the Church of Scotland Board of Social Responsibility and Strathclyde Regional Council.

## **New Buy with Confidence Members.**

The Buy with Confidence Scheme is about to open up membership to surveyors, project managers and clerk of works. We hope to have a new business section for these professions on the website early in the new year. Please encourage anyone you can recommend who works in these fields to apply for membership. Application forms are available on our website.

## Home Reports Legislation.

As from the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2008 house buyers in Scotland will be able to see an up front report on a property's condition before they even view it. The home report is commissioned and paid for by the seller. This should stop multiple surveys being carried out on the same property. It should also mean considerable for buyers who at present have to commission surveys on several properties, before they are successful in buying one. A similar home information pack was introduced in England and Wales last year.

Scottish Home reports contain 3 elements:

1. **Single survey.** This gives the buyer information about the condition and value of the property before they make an offer to purchase. It also includes an accessibility audit giving information which will be of interest to parents with young children, older people and disabled people.
2. **Energy report.** Gives the homes energy efficiency rating this helps home buyers to make green choices comparing energy costs allowing saving on energy bills.
3. **Property Questionnaire.** Contains information for home buyers, solicitors and surveyors such as council tax band and alterations which have been made to the property.

Currently (December 2008) the cost for a Home Information Report in the Western Isles varies from £322 plus VAT to £900 plus VAT depending on the property value and location.

The regulations allow for a number of exemptions on types of property that don't need a home report, these include new builds and properties which were on the market before 1.12.08 The new legislation was made under part 3 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006.

I attach a link to the Scottish Governments website which gives more detail on the legislation.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Built-Environment/Housing/BuyingSelling/Home-Report/>

## 2 Environmental Health

['Charging for Contaminated Land Services' leaflet \(PDF, 170K\)](#)

## 3 Building Standards

*The latest recruit to the Building Standards team at the Comhairle is Alasdair Maclean who is the new area officer for the West side and Uig. Alasdair, who is originally from Stornoway, had previously worked with Aberdeenshire as a Building Standards Surveyor.*



*Alasdair Maclean (Building standards Officer)*

### **Building Standards Has A New Name**

In recent months, the Scottish Building Standards Agency (SBSA) as it was formerly known has undergone a change. It has now been renamed the Scottish Building Standards (SBS) Division and is now operating under the Scottish Executive as a government run agency. However you should not notice any changes at a local level in the near future, as your local Building Standards department will still be delivering its service through your local council, Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar.

### **Customer Satisfaction Survey**

Building Standards has for the past few months been sending out and receiving back customer satisfaction surveys from the service users. The purpose of these surveys are so that public can be provided with

the best possible service and gives you the chance to give feedback on the strong and weak points of the service along with any suggestions on where the service can be improved should you wish to add any.

The information received is used to continually improve the service and also relay the findings back to you. The surveys are confidential and can be completed anonymously should you so wish. So once you have received your completion certificate, if you have the time, please complete one and return with the included freepost envelope. It would be very much appreciated and you can help improve the service provided.

### **Energy Performance Certification With Sale or Rent**

Since 1<sup>st</sup> May 2007, it has been a requirement that any new build dwellings submit SAP calculations and an energy performance certificate, and that any non-domestic dwellings submit SBEM calculations and an energy performance certificate. However there has been a recent change to the energy performance regulations which means that in circumstances involving change of ownership or tenancy, existing buildings must also submit energy performance calculations and certificates.

Due to changes to the Energy Performance of Buildings (Scotland) Regulations 2008, as of 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 for domestic properties and the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2009 for non-domestic properties, it will be necessary for the current owner or landlord to provide a purchaser or tenant with a valid energy performance certificate relating to any property which is being sold or rented out, at the time of the property changing hands. The Scottish Building Standards has been charged with the duty of enforcing this new regulation and failure to comply can result in penalty charges, it is very important that this is considered with any properties changing hands after these dates.

The requirement is such that it is now the duty of the current owner to have the energy performance ratings calculated and have the certificate displayed where it is visible to visiting members of the public. The changes to the regulations also require that any public building of a size of 1000m<sup>2</sup> should also be displaying a valid energy performance certificate where it is visible to members of the public.

These calculations and certificates, for all types of properties, have a 10 year life, at which point they should be updated. Should you have any queries about these changes or wish for further information, please feel free to contact the Building Standards Section for assistance.

In February 2008 Iain Macleod joined the Development Services Team as Planning Enforcement Officer. As a result of Joanne Gauci's departure to Canada and Hannah Morrison's maternity leave, Helen Maclennan and Eric Wojchik were recruited to the posts of Planning Officer within the Development Services team in July.



**Eric Wojchik(Planning Officer)**



**Iain MacLeod (Planning Enforcement Officer)**



**Helen Maclennan (Planning Officer)**



