



**Edinburgh Tenants Federation  
2009/2010 Annual Report**



## Who We Are

This is the annual report of Edinburgh Tenants Federation, Edinburgh's Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations.

ETF is the umbrella organisation of local groups and our purpose is to represent tenants at a citywide policy level. During 2009/2010 we had 45 tenants' and residents' groups in membership. We also had 23 organisations and individuals as associate members.

ETF aims to promote the improvement of the quality of life of residents and the housing conditions of all tenants of rented accommodation (local authority, co-operative, housing association and private sector) and in particular those at risk of exclusion for whatever reason.

### We provide:

- Advice, information and training
- Development support for local tenants and residents groups
- Opportunities for people to participate individually and through their groups in decision-making about their homes and environment
- A mechanism for bringing local organisations together to work on issues of common concern.

As a Registered Tenants Organisation, we are recognised by the City of Edinburgh Council as the vehicle for consultation and participation work on citywide policies.

## Convenor's Report

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this annual report on behalf of Edinburgh Tenants Federation which outlines our activities over the past year.

It's definitely been a busy year for ETF, with work on mental health initiatives hotting up, the Council's 21st Century homes programme getting underway, not to mention the Housing Bill, Scottish Housing Regulator Inspection of housing services in the Council, and a number of staff changes in the office! And these are just a few of our many highlights! I hope you will enjoy reading the *Annual Report* and we would welcome *your feedback* on the *Annual Report* and the work we do.

## Some highlights

We continue to represent tenants in Edinburgh on working groups covering a wide range of issues, from repairs, antisocial behaviour and rent collection to stair cleaning and investment and regeneration. All our working groups have been very active, with volunteers working hard to influence issues close to tenants' hearts. There have been a number of improvements in services because of our involvement which you can read more about in the *Annual Report*.

This year saw significant movement in the Council's plans to build new affordable homes, with £4.6M funding being awarded to the Council by the Scottish Government. This is great news for tenants in Edinburgh, and a welcome step forward after a long campaign by ETF nationally to invest in social housing. Work has already begun in planning the new developments and the Federation is working closely with the Investment and Regeneration Team, and supporting tenants in the regeneration areas to get the best deal for tenants.

Our work in developing better support services for tenants with mental health issues has been described as 'groundbreaking', and the partnership approach we took to influencing this issue now features in the Westminster Cabinet Office website as an area of good practice. We met with the Housing Minister to update him on our progress, and through a project linking with Breathing Space, all Council tenants in high rise blocks have been issued with key fobs highlighting mental health support services. Whilst we have been thrilled with progress over the last year, we still have a long way to go to ensure that services for tenants with mental health difficulties are fully joined up, and we will continue to work hard to make sure this happens.

I am delighted that a new batch of tenant inspectors successfully completed training and took on an ambitious project of inspecting empty homes processes of both City of Edinburgh Council and Dunedin Canmore Housing Association. The Tenant Led Inspection (TLI) team prepared detailed reports and fed back their findings to both landlords. Tenants also held landlords to account over their findings from the first inspection last year, and service improvements have been made because of their interventions. The TLI work has been a tremendous achievement and as a way of involving tenants is proving very effective. Other landlords have approached ETF regarding our approach to Tenant Led Inspections, and we'll continue to develop another inspection next year.

The Housing Association Tenants sub group of ETF has continued to progress in finding out about how tenant participation works in different landlords. The group has been comparing service charges, and we have now begun working with tenants in Dunedin Canmore Housing Association. This is a significant achievement for ETF and we will continue to explore links with other landlords in a bid to widen our involvement of all tenants in ETF.

We have been involved in national housing issues by finding out members' views, responding to the Housing (Scotland) Bill and tracking its progress through Parliament, as well as responding to the consultation about evictions. We are also represented on the Borders, Edinburgh, East and Midlothian (BEEM) network of tenants' representatives.

We embarked on a new working relationship with Edinburgh Napier University that has us engaging a student placement for six months, and sees the University hosting our conference later on this year; and we continue to work with other agencies to promote ETF and tenant participation.

Of course this year has seen a number of staff changes, as we said farewell to

Raymond Pringle, our Development Coordinator who was with the Federation for 13 years. We were sad to see Raymond retire after all his hard work for ETF and gave him a wee send off at the AGM in June 2009. We welcomed a new Development Coordinator Clare MacGillivray in September 2009, and Nikki Thomson who was our Development Worker for 8 years also left to take up an exciting secondment with the Council, only to be replaced by Mark Henry. So, it's been a year of change in the office, that's for sure.

We negotiated a new Service Level Agreement with the City of Edinburgh Council that takes our funding up to March 2011. We see this as an achievement in these challenging financial times. I strongly believe that ETF presents tremendous value for money, as shown in the work that we do and the support we provide to members. ETF plays a crucial role in supporting tenants to influence and in holding landlords to account; therefore it will come as no surprise that securing long term funding for the Federation and protecting the tenant participation budget will be a major issue for us to focus on in 2010/2011.

I am extremely proud of the commitment our volunteers continue to show to improving services. And we have attracted new people and groups to ETF this year. However, we need to build on getting our members involved and encourage more people to join with us so we can make tenants' influence even stronger.

I would like to thank every one of our members, supporters, tenant representatives, Executive Committee members and staff for their hard work and dedication throughout the year - we couldn't do it without you!

As we enter our 20th Anniversary year, we have a golden opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the work of ETF and our member associations. I am extremely proud of what Edinburgh Tenants Federation has achieved, and look forward to another successful year. I invite you to take part in the many opportunities there are to get involved, and support us to continue in getting the best deal we can for tenants.

Betty Stevenson  
Convenor  
Edinburgh Tenants Federation

## July

The new Executive Committee gets settled in to their role and planning for the 20th Anniversary celebrations gets underway. ETF responds to the Draft Housing Bill and starts recruitment for a new Development Coordinator. The Mental Health Working Group convenes an emergency meeting following two tragic suicides.



## August

The Federation said farewell to Raymond Pringle our Development Coordinator who retired in August after 13 years. The Tenant Led Inspection group geared up for their second inspection.



We have continued to organise a social event after the AGM, a quiz night in November and a Burns Supper after the Federation meeting in January. We have evaluated our Federation meetings and feedback has been very positive with some areas we can improve, and a number of our members are interested in giving suggestions to make meetings even better.

Executive Committee members have accepted a number of invitations to attend groups' annual general meetings and continue to be happy to visit groups at any time.

Throughout the year we have continued to offer help and support to member groups. This has included providing advice on how to deal with local problems, photocopying newsletters and auditing accounts for a variety of groups. Ongoing support has been provided to recently established groups. Requests for information about how to establish tenants groups have come from four areas, and one new tenants and residents group has been set up. Committee skills training has been delivered to a number of groups.

We have begun planning for our 20th Anniversary year and are delighted that tenants new to ETF have stepped into the planning group, brimming with imaginative ideas to make next year's celebrations ones to remember.

## Repairs

The Federation's Repairs Group has been very active in monitoring the repairs budget, pressing for information about the kitchen and bathroom programme, gas servicing and performance standards, including tenant satisfaction.

Federation members worked on the questions that will be asked in the satisfaction surveys to ensure they reflected tenants' priorities in monitoring performance.

Separate meetings have been held with Edinburgh Building Services, and Housing Property Services and work will continue to review the number of repairs meetings to make our work more effective.

The Repairs Group surveyed the Federation's membership about priorities and how to increase involvement in meetings, and it was decided to suspend the Repairs Group meetings until the Scottish Housing Regulator Inspection feedback is received.

## Involving and engaging more fully with our members

Our Information and Publicity sub-committee has worked hard this year. Part of our vision for increasing the awareness of ETF took ETF volunteers to various community events, including holding a stall at the Leith Neighbourhood Partnership.

The group continued to oversee the development of our website, including a Facebook site and the production of *Tenants Voice* and *Federation Matters*.

## September

*Campaign to support tenants with mental health difficulties steps up with ETF pursuing the issue of a reduction in bed spaces at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. ETF welcomes its new Development Coordinator, Clare MacGillivray and the Tenant Led Inspection gets underway.*

## October



*Blowdown of the Gracemount flats marks a historic moment in the regeneration of the area and the Council's ambitions for 21st Century Homes. Members at the Federation meeting generate ideas for celebrating the Federation's 20th Anniversary.*

## Stair Cleaning

ETF has been working hard on influencing improvements in the stair cleaning service provided by the Council, since this was highlighted as a priority for tenants by members. This year, despite concerns about the quality of service received, a one year extension to the stair cleaning contract has been agreed. Federation representatives will be fully involved with awarding the new stair cleaning contract due in April 2011.

We held an away day in December 2009 to look at the process of involvement to get ready for the new tendering process, and have continued to bring service failures to the attention of the Council, with a view to improving performance.

ETF will continue to monitor and press for a consistent stair cleaning service throughout the city. We will encourage dialogue and explore different approaches to try to resolve issues between owners and tenants in stairs that receive the service.

## Liaison Group

The joint ETF/Council Liaison Group, on behalf of the Council's Tenant Participation Working Group, has responsibility for the detailed monitoring and planning of tenant participation with the Council. This year, City of Edinburgh Council completed a 'mini review' of ETF, as part of ongoing discussions around negotiating our Service Level Agreement. The review highlighted a lot of positives for ETF, and recommended the Service Level Agreement be awarded for another year.

One of the areas where ETF has been working hard to influence strategic direction is in consideration for local tenant participation in Neighborhood Partnership structures. ETF has met with senior elected members and in the Tenant Participation Working Group continues to press to ensure that tenants groups have access to local decision making structures.

ETF was involved in a seminar about tenant participation in community planning in November 2009 with the Tenants Information Service, highlighting that tenants' groups often feel disenfranchised locally because of the way Neighbourhood Partnerships have been established.

We will continue to press for a consistent approach to local tenant participation across the city.

The Scottish Housing Regulator has been inspecting the City of Edinburgh Council's housing service, and ETF members attended a session with the Regulator to feed back tenants views on the performance of our landlord.

## Antisocial Behaviour

Work on antisocial behaviour this year has focussed on monitoring the Council's performance and in developing the Antisocial Behaviour Strategy. Federation members had the opportunity to input their views to the Strategy at an interactive meeting in January 2010, after which all tenants' comments were forwarded to the Council for consideration.

## Tenants and Mental Health

The work of the Mental Health Awareness Group has taken off this year, with a number of significant achievements. The Federation's work was highlighted in a report that went to the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee of the Council in October 2009. This reported that the work was 'groundbreaking'. Following this, the Cabinet Office at Westminster highlighted the work in a Customer Service Excellence Good Practice paper.

ETF also met with Alex Neil MSP, Minister for Housing and Communities and Sarah Boyack MSP, to update them on the work we have been doing and to lobby for more support services for tenants with mental health issues.

We are really proud of the changes that have taken place for tenants with mental health difficulties in the last year. Working with Breathing Space, all high rise tenants were issued key fobs highlighting mental health issues support services. And moves have been made to train more Council staff in recognising the signs of mental health in tenants.

In a recent significant move forward that will expand the work on supporting tenants with mental health difficulties to include low rise housing, ETF has convinced Edinburgh Building Services to train their staff in suicide awareness.

We have gained some local and national press on this issue, and we will continue to campaign for more joined up services, along with sharing our experiences in influencing this issue with other organisations around Scotland.

## Investment and Regeneration

Our relationship with the Regeneration Team has continued to strengthen through Investment and Regeneration meetings. Discussions have taken place throughout the year on topics including masterplanning of the three regeneration areas and mid market rents.

One of our main priorities has been negotiating the priority of tenants to return to their area following regeneration. We think it is important that those who have been planning what the areas will look like, be entitled to return there. There has been no decision on how this will be implemented yet.

As well as the main regeneration areas, we have also been updated on some of the work the Council is progressing including the urban centre programmes where money has been granted to improve the centres of some of the city towns and villages.

## Regeneration Areas

We have continued to support residents' groups in the regeneration areas of North Sighthill, Gracemount and Granton, Royston, Wardieburn in their work representing the interests of residents during the Council's regeneration processes.

In North Sighthill the final masterplan has been drafted and outline planning permission sought.

In Gracemount funding has been successfully received and work on these properties will start late summer 2010.

The rehousing of Fort House tenants has progressed well and a relationship between Port of Leith Housing Association and the Council was established to re-house residents in new properties down by the waterfront.

In Granton, Royston and Wardieburn we supported the groups to influence the refurbishment of homes in that area. We have also attended meetings with residents in Pennywell concerning the regeneration of their area.

### November

*Annual ETF quiz night is a great success with Granton Terrors taking first prize in a closely fought competition. Tenant Led Inspection team complete their inspections and begin drafting reports.*



### December

*Council completes a mini review of ETF and the Tenant Led Inspectors present their reports to the Council and Dunedin Canmore Housing Association.*



### January

*ETF meets with the Housing Minister about mental health work, holds a successful Burns Supper and feeds back comments on the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Strategy.*

## February

ETF sadly lost one of its members when Valerie O'Rourke passed away in February. Valerie was a vibrant and inspiring volunteer who was active in attending Federation events and a key member of the Tenant Led Inspection team.

## March

The Scottish Housing Regulator finds out tenants' views about the Council's services for tenants and ETF hosts the Housing E-academy in a session about engaging tenants using new technology.

## High Flats

The Federation's High Flats Group continues to meet to discuss issues affecting tenants by inviting representatives from a range of agencies and the Council to meetings. This year members have discussed choice based lettings, environmental issues and the temporary accommodation service.

These issues link into the Caretaking Service Improvement Forum and the Multi-Storey Working Group.

A block walkabout training day was held to support tenants who wanted to find out how to carry out a walkabout for their area.

## Estates and Tenancy Management

The Federation's representatives have been involved in developing two estate walkabout training days in the south-west and north areas. Tenants from the east and south area also attended these and it is anticipated further estate walkabouts will be planned.

We have continued to develop citywide policies including pest control and responsible pet ownership. We have also contributed to discussions on a ground maintenance pilot in sheltered housing.

## Working with Registered Social Landlords and their tenants

Membership of the Federation's Housing Association Tenants Sub Committee (HATs) has grown this year and the group has met regularly. It has continued to press the importance of tenant participation to the city's Housing Association landlords. The sub-committee ensures that the Federation addresses the particular concerns and interests of housing association tenants in all its activities. It publicises its work through *Tenants Voice*, *Federation Matters* and the Federation website.

HATs conducted an initial investigation into service charges for housing association tenants, looking at differences within and across landlords. In a drive to compare tenant participation arrangements in the city, discussions took place with Link and Viewpoint Housing Associations with staff and tenants attending HATS meetings.

Significantly, the HATs members met with Dunedin Canmore Tenants Forum and following a ballot of the Tenants Forum, Dunedin Canmore Housing Association entered into a working relationship with ETF whereby ETF will provide some support to DCHA tenants to influence issues and get organised.

In March, HATS held a review session that outlined the successes of the previous year and an action plan for 2010/2011 was developed.

## Tenant Led Inspections

This year has seen the Federation complete its second inspection. New inspectors were recruited and trained in the summer of 2009, and agreed the focus would be on inspecting empty homes processes.

For this inspection the same team of inspectors carried out a parallel inspection of Dunedin Canmore Housing Association and the City of Edinburgh Council. By using a single team carrying out identical tasks across both landlords, the inspectors were able to provide a robust analysis and comparison of where the two landlords' policies and practices differ.

The inspection took place over October and November 2009, using a variety of inspection activities ranging from job shadowing, inspecting empty homes, interviewing staff, and telephone and focus group interviewing of tenants. Reports were prepared in December 2009 with landlords producing their responses and action plans early in 2010. The TLI team then discussed these action plans with the landlords and continues to follow up actions outstanding from the previous inspection.

## Housing Area Boards

We have continued to support tenants in the South West Area Board; the Board undertook a review in 2009 where the roles and remits and membership were discussed. The selection process of the Neighbourhood Improvement Programme (NIPs) was also reviewed. Agreement was reached and the meetings have been taking place on a six weekly basis with one meeting discussing the NIPs and the next meeting discussing housing issues. The Area Board is also a sub group of both the Pentlands and South West Neighbourhood Partnerships.

Area boards in other areas have either become a sub group of the Neighbourhood Partnerships or have been incorporated into another relevant sub group of the Neighbourhood Partnerships.

## Expanding our links and work with other organisations

Edinburgh Tenants Federation has generated links with Edinburgh Napier University which has resulted in us hosting a student on placement from March 2010 for six months. And as part of a programme of outreach for the University, Napier will be hosting our ETF tenants' conference in 2010.

The Federation circulates its *Annual Report* and copies of *Tenants Voice* to a number of voluntary organisations in Edinburgh on a regular basis, as well as to its fellow tenants at Norton Park.

The Federation is also represented on the Region 5 regional network of Registered Tenants Organisations, working alongside representatives from East Lothian, Midlothian and the Borders.

Our workers also maintained links with other organisations through their involvement in the quarterly meetings of the regional Tenant Participation Workers Forum and through this ETF jointly hosted a seminar on e-engagement with the Housing e-academy that looked at ways tenants can be involved using technology.

Tenant Led Inspections have been a popular topic for discussion over the year and our inspectors have given presentations at a number of events including among others a Tenant Participation Forum in East Lothian.

## Members' Views

The views of our members were collected in February 2010 through the annual survey. Two surveys were conducted - one to collect individual tenants' views and the other to collect the views of our member groups. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and we would like to thank those who responded.

Comments expressed by members were positive and constructive and recommendations for future work largely reflect the work that the Federation is already doing.

### April

*ETF starts working in partnership with Edinburgh Napier University welcoming Nicole Orkisz on student placement.*

### May

*ETF responded to the Scottish Government's consultation about evictions. Tenant Led Inspection public meeting attracted new interest and highlighted the great work of the inspection team.*

*ETF Visits Newcastle Federation.*



### June

*ETF discussed the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan with the Council and Members celebrated another year of achievement in the AGM.*



## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2010

	2010 £	2009 £
<b>Income</b>		
Edinburgh Council service agreement	217,791	211,448
Tenant Led Inspections	1,192	-
Start up grants	225	-
Bank interest	309	2,844
	<u>219,517</u>	<u>214,292</u>
<b>Less: Expenditure</b>		
Wages	115,706	114,392
Employer's National Insurance	8,336	8,333
Pension - employer's contributions	17,587	17,387
Staff travel and subsistence	1,511	968
Staff recruitment and training	4,634	136
Payroll processing costs	527	307
Rent	15,363	15,722
Insurance	2,060	1,697
Electricity	-	461
Repairs and equipment	614	106
Stationery	1,253	3,111
Postage	4,201	3,438
Telephone and fax	1,224	1,456
Photocopying	1,019	1,114
Professional Fees	3,529	2,799
External training and conferences	7,674	9,808
Travel and subsistence	12,802	13,322
Room Hire and Catering	1,102	1,536
Printing	2,703	5,012
Computer software	1,566	201
Journals	438	239
Membership	355	581
Childcare	131	266
Depreciation	1,059	1,474
Miscellaneous	1,077	389
YPYS project	-	690
Tenant Led Inspections	4,169	-
	<u>210,640</u>	<u>204,945</u>
Surplus before Taxation	8,877	9,347
Taxation	(65)	(711)
Surplus for the year	<u>8,812</u>	<u>8,636</u>

## BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2010

	2010 £	2009 £
<b>Fixed assets</b>		
Tangible assets	<u>3,203</u>	<u>3,862</u>
<b>Current assets</b>		
Debtors	3,850	4,130
Cash at bank and in hand	92,747	79,903
	<u>96,597</u>	<u>84,033</u>
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	<b>(9,959)</b>	<b>(6,866)</b>
<b>Net current assets</b>	<u>86,638</u>	<u>77,167</u>
<b>Net assets</b>	<u>89,841</u>	<u>81,029</u>
<b>Represented by:</b>		
Edinburgh Tenants Federation funds - unrestricted	67,724	67,949
Edinburgh Tenants Federation funds - designated	21,312	12,500
Edinburgh Tenants Federation funds - restricted	805	580
<b>Net funds</b>	<u>89,841</u>	<u>81,029</u>

### In our opinion

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of the Federation's affairs as at 31 March 2010 and of its surplus for the year then ended; and
- have been properly prepared in accordance with the Federation's Constitution.

PKF (UK) LLP  
Registered Auditors  
Edinburgh, UK

A full copy of the Federation's accounts is available from the Federation office on request.

## Members 2009/10

Belgrave Place Residents Association  
 Birnies Court Tenants Association  
 Blackfriars Residents Association  
 Cables Wynd House Residents Association  
 Calders High Rise Neighbourhood Council  
 Coatfield Lane and Giles Street Residents Association  
 Craigmillar Castle Regeneration Group  
 Craigour Drive & Green Residents & Owners Association  
 Crewe Excluded Residents  
 Dumbryden Neighbourhood Council  
 East Pilton Crewe Tenants Residents Group  
 Easter Drylaw Residents Association  
 Edinburgh Community Representatives Network  
 Fort House Residents Association  
 Gateside Tenants & Residents Association  
 Glenashton Community Association  
 Granton, Royston and Wardieburn Residents Association  
 Hailesland Park Neighbourhood Council  
 Hailesland/Walkers Neighbourhood Council  
 Hamilton & Cannon Wynd Residents Association  
 Hawkhill/Nisbet Court Tenants Association  
 Hyvot & Moredun Park Residents Association

Inch Community Association  
 Laichfield Community Association  
 Maidencraig Court Residents Association  
 Muirhouse Hi-Rise Action Group  
 New Pleasance Residents Association  
 Newbridge Residents Association  
 Nichollfield Tenants and Residents Association  
 North Bughtlin Tenants Association  
 North Sighthill Residents Association  
 Oxfangs Central Residents Association  
 Oxfangs Lochan Tenants & Residents Association  
 Prestonfield Tenants & Residents Association  
 Ratho Station Residents Association  
 Redbraes Residents Association  
 Restalrig House & Lochend House Residents Association  
 Saughton Mains Residents Association  
 Saunders Street Tenants & Residents Association  
 Southhouse and Burdiehouse Residents Organisation  
 Tenants in Pilton  
 The Top Blocks Residents Association  
 Viewpoint Tenants Representative Group  
 Westburn Village Neighbourhood Council  
 Westfield Court Residents Association

## Associate Members 2009/10

Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association  
Changeworks  
Craigmillar Neighbourhood Alliance  
Dunedin/Canmore Housing Association Ltd.  
Edinburgh Shelter Housing Aid Centre  
Gorgie Dalry Community Association  
Health in Mind Supported Accommodation Project  
Link Housing Association Ltd  
Manor Estates Housing Association  
Muirhouse Housing Association  
Muirhouse Millennium Centre  
North Edinburgh Trust  
Saheliya  
Viewpoint Housing Association Ltd  
John Davidson  
Tom Kelly  
Cait Ni Cadlaig  
Evelyn Muir  
Valerie Murray  
Alex Paton  
B & M Poplawski  
Joan Robertson  
Mary Wheeler

## Staff 2009/10

Development Co-ordinator:	Raymond Pringle / Clare MacGillivray
Development Worker:	Nikki Thomson / Mark Henry
Office Manager:	Mary Cockburn
Outreach Worker:	Justine Bradd
Student:	Nicole Orkisz

## Executive Committee 2009/10

**Billy Anderson**  
Muirhouse Hi-Rise Action Group

**Tina Beattie**  
North Bughtlin Tenants Association

**Derek Colvin**  
Hyvots & Moredun Park Residents Association

**Maureen Jarvis**  
Oxgangs Central Residents Association

**George McKie**  
Gracemount Tenants Association

**Sheila Rutherford-McCallum**  
Ratho Station Residents Association

**Betty Stevenson**  
Birnies Court Tenants Association

**Harry Sunderland**  
North Bughtlin Tenants Association

**Lynne Tait**  
Southhouse and Burdiehouse Residents Organisation

**David Thomson**  
Redbraes Residents Association

**Maud Wylie**  
Hailesland Park Neighbourhood Council

**Alex Paton**  
Co-opted June 2009, resigned November 2009

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