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| S:\ALL OFFICE FILES\New ETF Logo\ETF logo 2014\ETF logo.jpg | ***Federation Matters*****December 2021** |

Season’s greetings from everyone at ETF

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**Reflecting and celebrating at Edinburgh Tenants Federation’s (ETF) Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

ETF’s second online AGM held on Friday 29th October 2021 was a great success and allowed the Federation to reflect on what has been a very busy and productive year. Some of the highlights included:

* An inspiring and heart-warming presentation from special guest, Josh Quigley, who recently broke the Guinness World Record for cycling a distance of 2179.66 miles in seven days. An awesome achievement following a battle with his mental health as well as physical injuries received during his many cycling challenges;
* *‘A Year in the life of ETF’* presentation;
* Election of the 2021 / 22, Executive Committee including the welcome addition of a new member;
* A fun quiz to provide the final flourish to the proceedings.

Thank you to everyone who attended and took part, we hope you all enjoyed the event.

**Update from ETF**

Although restrictions are continuing to ease and the Norton Park Centre is now open, the Federation's Office remains closed to ensure the continued protection of both staff and service users. ETF continues to operate on a daily basis and staff can be contacted at info@edinburghtenants.org.uk or phone 0131 475 2509. A further update will be provided on ETF's plans to return to the office in the New Year.

Continued restrictions mean it is likely that we will continue to work online for the foreseeable future. Digital working, training and participation are therefore priorities for the Federation and ETF staff can offer you support. If you have a computer, smartphone or tablet and would like to take part in any of our events please contact ETF's Development Worker Mark Henry by calling 07918 742468 or email mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk.

**ETF Annual Report**

All groups should have received a copy of the Federation's Annual Report for 2020/2021. If you would like to request an extra copy, or provide feedback on the Annual Report, please email info@edinburghtenants.org.uk or phone 0131 475 2509. A copy of the Annual Report is available on our website at <https://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk/etf-annual-report-2020-2021/>.

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Edinburgh Tenants Federation is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) SC048236, regulated by the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR)

***Tenants Voice***

Everyone will shortly be receiving copies of December’s edition of Tenants Voice. It's a full edition, with plenty of interesting stories and information, so be sure to read it. If anyone would like to request extra copies, or provide feedback on this edition, please contact the Federation Office on 0131 475 2509 or email info@edinburghtenants.org.uk.

**ETF responds to City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) Short Term Lets Consultation**

ETF recently held a Focus Group discussion to find out tenants’ views on CEC’s Short Term Lets Consultation. A copy of ETF’s response can be downloaded at <https://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk/etf-response-to-city-of-edinburgh-council-short-term-lets-consultation-november-2021/>. If you would like a paper copy, please contact ETF’s Development Worker Mark Henry by calling 07918 742468 or email mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk.

**CEC Rent Consultation**

CEC is currently carrying out their Rent Consultation which runs until **Wednesday 8th December 2021**. This year's rent consultation gives CEC tenants a chance to provide feedback on the housing service, rent levels and future plans for the housing service in Edinburgh.

This is an ideal opportunity for tenants to help shape the future of housing in Edinburgh and ETF would encourage as many CEC tenants as possible to have their say. This can be done in a number of ways:

* Online at <https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/2022-23-rent-consultation/consult_view/>;
* Email housing.research@edinburgh.gov.uk;
* Complete the paper copy of the survey contained in the Tenants’ Courier which tenants will be receiving shortly.

ETF has already responded to the consultation and you can download a copy of ETF’s response at <https://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk/etfs-response-to-city-of-edinburgh-councils-rent-consultation-november-2021/>. If you would like a paper copy, please contact ETF’s Development Worker Mark Henry by calling 07918 742468 or email mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk.

**CEC Advice Shop**

Are you a CEC or Housing Association tenant who is experiencing money or debt problems? The Advice Shop is the place to go to for information, advice and assistance with any benefit or debt matter. Advisors can help check benefit entitlement, apply for every type of benefit, identify how to maximise income and assist with problems you may have with the Department of Works and Pensions, Council or Social Security Scotland benefits. Debt Advisors can help deal with problematic debts including rent arrears, loans, credit cards, catalogue debt and Council Tax. They can reduce repayments to make them manageable, help write off some debts and can assist with bankruptcy applications. All this is free and independent so you will get assistance that is non-judgemental and focused on individual situations.

You can contact the Advice Shop on 0131 200 2360 or email advice.shop@edinburgh.gov.uk. You can also go to a locality office and call the Advice Shop from the free phone there. The Advice Shop’s webpages contain helpful information including links to benefit calculators so you can work out for yourself what you may be entitled to at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/adviceshop](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/adviceshop).

**Providing support to the elderly and vulnerable this Christmas**

Do you know an older or vulnerable person whose home feels cold when you visit? Winter is drawing in and fuel prices are rising. Many people may be worried about the cost of heating their homes. They may feel unable to ask for help or not realise that support is available. You can support them to get in touch with Home Energy Scotland at <https://www.homeenergyscotland.org/warmer-winter> or phone 0800 808 2282 for advice on ways to reduce fuel bills.

Cold houses can be very harmful to people and cause them to become physically ill, including with respiratory problems. Cold homes affect mobility and can increase falls and accidents. In cold homes, symptoms of arthritis become worse and strength and dexterity decreases, increasing the risk of falls in older people. Mental health can also be affected which can have a long term impact on wellbeing. Cold homes can cause death through illness or hypothermia. Signs of hypothermia include shivering, pale and dry skin, slurred speech, confusion and slower breathing.

If you have concerns that someone may be at risk of harm because their home is too cold, contact [Social Care Direct on 0131 200 2324.](https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/socialcaredirect) If you have concerns that someone is showing signs of hypothermia call 999.

**Tenant Grant Fund**

The Scottish Government has provided funding to Scottish Local Authorities to supplement the work they are doing to prevent homelessness by creating a grants fund. This fund is being administered in line with the Scottish Government guidelines. The overall aim of this fund is to support homelessness prevention.

The award of any grant and the amount is discretionary but, to ensure the funds are used in line with the Scottish Government guidelines and are used fairly across tenancies in Edinburgh’s social and private rented sector, key criteria has been set and will be applied consistently across what is expected to be a large volume of requests. As the funds are limited and will only be available for payment up until **31st March 2022**. All landlords and tenants should ensure the criteria is met before making a request.

Please check the City of Edinburgh Council website at [www.edinburgh.gov.uk/tenantgrantfund](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/tenantgrantfund) or information on criteria and for any future updates relating to the Tenant Grant Fund. You can also email Edinburgh (underscore)\_TGF@edinburgh.gov.uk or phone 0131 200 2360.

**Lothians' Improving the Cancer Journey Service**

If you are living in Edinburgh and the Lothians and have been affected by cancer, *Improving the Cancer Journey Service* is here to help you live as well as possible. The service can meet with you to discuss what matters to you and help you get the right support.

Being diagnosed with cancer can be overwhelming and many people don’t know where to go for support. Here are some of the aspects the service can help with:

* Money or housing worries;
* Work;
* Caring responsibilities;
* Physical concerns;
* Emotional Concerns;
* Other types of support.

To find out more about how the service can help, please contact 07977 307 286/07929 784 315 or email loth.icj@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk.

**Diary Dates**

**December 2021**

8th December Deadline for responses to CEC’s Rent Consultation

17th December The Federation Office closes at 4pm for the Festive Period

**January 2022**

5th January Federation Office re-opens

Contact the Federation office on 0131 475 2509 for more information. Don’t forget that *Federation Matters* and other Federation publications can be downloaded from our website at www.edinburghtenants.org.uk. Do get in touch if you need any more information from us about anything mentioned here.

On behalf of everyone at ETF, Have a Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and very best wishes for 2022. Stay safe and take care.

