

### Welcome to Shona

ETF is delighted to welcome our new Development Officer Shona Agnew to the Federation. Shona has joined us from Citadel Youth Centre and has settled in very well to the staff team here at ETF. Delighted to be working with ETF, Shona says 'I'm very excited to start my role at ETF, supporting tenants' and residents' groups in the community. My background has primarily been youth and community work so this will be an interesting and rewarding new challenge. I'm particularly interested in using technology to complement face-to-face work so hopefully can use some of those skills in this role. I look forward to getting out and meeting everyone and getting to know all the local groups. See you all soon!' Why not introduce yourself to Shona by email at [shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk) or phone 07399 584282.

### Thank you!

ETF would like to thank everyone who took part in our Federation Meeting 'Roundtable discussions' on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> January in the City Chambers. It was great to see so many interesting and lively discussions between ETF representatives and Councillors. ETF's Convenor Betty Stone commented, 'It was a very successful meeting and we're looking forward to having a follow up meeting later in the year. It's important that there is continued partnership working between tenants and Councillors to see change for the better.' Councillor Jane Meagher, Convenor of the City of Edinburgh Council's (CEC's) Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee, who hosted the meeting on behalf of ETF commented, 'It has been a very interesting meeting this evening and it's been great to meet and hear from some of our tenants in person. Councillors want to see services improved for CEC tenants and we will work together to ensure that this happens.' ETF will be compiling a report from the Roundtables discussion in due course.

### ETF High Flats Meeting, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023, 7.00pm, Birnies Court Community Room, Muirhouse View

The next meeting of the ETF High Flats Group will take place on **Monday 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023 at 7.00pm in Birnies Court Community Room, Muirhouse View**. The guest speaker is George Norval, CEC Income, Rent and Tenancy Manager, who will give an update on CEC's Neighbourhood Environment Projects. These meetings are open to any CEC tenant living in a high rise flat and you will be able to give an update on what is happening in your local area. Please use public transport where possible but assistance with transport and childcare may be available on request. To book a place at the meeting, please email ETF's Development Officer Mark Henry at [mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk) or phone 07918 742468.

### ETF Membership Surveys – Advance Notice

All ETF Member Groups and Individual Members will shortly be receiving a survey, asking for you or your group's views on how ETF has performed in the last year. Your feedback is very important to ETF as it helps us to plan our future work. The Federation is funded by CEC through a Service Level Agreement and ETF is obliged to seek the views of our service users as part of our monitoring and evaluation. You will have the opportunity to complete the survey either by paper or via Survey Monkey online. Watch this space for further details.

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

## Inspiring Volunteer Awards 2023

The Inspiring Volunteer Awards is part of Celebrating Volunteers' Week which will take place from **Thursday 1st June 2023 – Wednesday 7th June 2023**. The Rt. Hon Lord Provost, Robert Aldridge, will honour some of the dedicated volunteers who give their time, energy and commitment to the people of Edinburgh at a Special Awards Ceremony on **Wednesday 7th June 2023, time and venue to be confirmed**. If you know an individual or team within your organisation that has exceeded expectations and deserves recognition, nominate them for an Inspiring Volunteer Award. You can nominate someone by going to <https://www.volunteeredinburgh.org.uk/training-and-events/awards-nominations/nomination-form/>. For more information please contact Jason McCann at Volunteer Edinburgh by emailing [events@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk](mailto:events@volunteeredinburgh.org.uk) or phone 07587 034535. Nominations will close on **Friday 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**.

## Tenants Voice

Everyone should have received copies of December's edition of *Tenants Voice*. If anyone would like to request extra copies, or provide feedback on this edition, please contact the Federation Office by email at [info@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:info@edinburghtenants.org.uk) or phone 0131 475 2509. You can download a copy of Tenants Voice at <https://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Tenants-Voice-December-2022.pdf> [info@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:info@edinburghtenants.org.uk). Is your tenants' group involved in an exciting piece of work, are you proud of an initiative that is taking place in your area or would you simply like to share an example of good practice? If any of the above apply then we would love to hear from you. The deadline for material for the next issue is **Monday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023**. Articles and letters for publication should be sent into the Federation office at Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh EH7 5QY, or emailed to [mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk). Alternatively, give us a call on 07918 742468 if you'd like help to pull an article together.

## ETF Membership Renewals

ETF is still accepting both Member Group and Non-Voting Individual applications. If you would like an application form, please contact ETF's Office Manager Mary Callaghan by emailing [mary@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:mary@edinburghtenants.org.uk) or phone 07918 660726.

## Warm and Welcoming spaces

CEC currently has a network of over 60 Warm and Welcoming Spaces across Edinburgh. Venues such as libraries, community centres, museums and galleries, alongside partner and community spaces, put on free activities for a variety of age groups and provide a space where people feel safe, warm, and at ease. In certain spaces residents will be able to access information to help alleviate food/fuel poverty and other support available to them. CEC is also working with a network of partners to provide and promote further spaces. You can find out more about the initiative and find your nearest 'Warm and Welcoming Spaces' via an interactive map on CEC's dedicated webpage at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/warm-welcoming-spaces>. You can also visit CEC's dedicated home energy page for advice on how to keep your home warmer, save money, and find help if you're worried about your bills. You can find out more at <https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/energyadvice>.

## Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) Scotland Bill Update

In January 2023, Ministers reached an agreement with social landlords on below-inflation rent increases for the next financial year.

Organisations representing social landlords have announced their members' plans for average rent increases for 2023-24, which will keep rents significantly below private market levels.

Under the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) Act 2022, rents are effectively frozen in the social rented sectors until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. Decisions on future plans for the private sector rent freeze, as well as other measures contained in the Act, will be announced in the coming weeks.

Tenants' Rights Minister Patrick Harvie said, "Our emergency legislation has given people – whether they rent in the private or social rented sector – reassurance within their current tenancies through the worst of the winter, even as their other costs have been rising. We recognise the enormous pressures households are facing, and by making this announcement now we aim to give social tenants advance notice, and confidence that any rent increase will be well below inflation. The statements of intent from the social rented sector, based on consultations with tenants, will keep rents affordable while allowing social landlords to continue investing in essential services such as home improvements and maintenance."

Councillor Maureen Chalmers, COSLA's Community Wellbeing Spokesperson, said, "This is good news for Local Authority tenants from Scotland's Council Leaders today. In balancing the wide range of competing factors, leaders with housing stock will seek to reach agreement with tenants over any increase in rents for the year 2023-24. Councils' consultative arrangements would normally allow them, subject to approval of local governance structures, to raise rents annually to meet rising costs. During these difficult times, as providers of social housing and Gypsy/Traveller pitch or site provision, we intend to keep the rental and fee increases to an average of less than £5 a week across the country."

Sally Thomas, Chief Executive at the Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA), said, "We welcome the fact that Scottish Government has worked closely with the sector, to understand the evidence and avoid unintended consequences of this legislation, and to find a collaborative way forward. Investing in good quality, warm homes for social rent is crucial to tackling poverty in Scotland and protecting new and existing tenants from the increasing cost of living."

You can find out more about the Cost of Living (Tenant Protection) Scotland Bill at

<https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/cost-of-living-tenant-protection-scotland-bill>.

## Diary Dates

### **February 2023**

20<sup>th</sup> February      ETF High Flats Meeting, 7.00pm, Birnies Court Community Room, Muirhouse View

### **March 2023**

13<sup>th</sup> March      Deadline for articles for *Tenants Voice*

31<sup>st</sup> March      Deadline for nominations for Inspiring Volunteer Awards 2023

### **April 2023**

7<sup>th</sup> April      Public Holiday - Office closed

10<sup>th</sup> April      Public Holiday - Office closed

17<sup>th</sup> April      Public Holiday – Office closed

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.edinburghntenants.org.uk](http://www.edinburghntenants.org.uk). Do get in touch if you need any more information from us about anything mentioned here.