

# Tenants Voice



EDINBURGH TENANTS  
FEDERATION

Issue 95 - September 2015

## Two In A Row for ETF

We, at Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF), are particularly proud of all the work that our volunteers carry out and it is a great feeling when that good work is recognised. The Inspiring Volunteer Awards Ceremony was held on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June 2015 in the City Chambers before an audience of over 150. We are very pleased that for the second year in a row one of our Executive Committee members won the Tenant Participation Champion Award. Maud Wylie, Secretary of ETF and Chair of the Hailesland Park Neighbourhood Council was the recipient of this year's award with Davie Thomson winning the award last year.



*Maud receiving her award from Councillor Work at the Volunteer Awards Ceremony*

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Congratulations are also due to the Calder's Sheltered Housing Complex as they received a Team Award for the outstanding work they carry out in their area.



*Calder's Sheltered Housing tenants receiving their award at the Volunteer Awards Ceremony*

Last but by no means least, Niel Hansen and Harry Guntley received certificates for their outstanding volunteer work. Both volunteers were presented with their certificates at ETF's AGM on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015.



*Niel Hansen receiving his certificate*



*Harry Guntley receiving his certificate*

There was more good news for ETF as our Convenor Betty Stevenson was installed on the Roll of Honour on display in the City Chambers as Inspiring Volunteer of the Year for 2014. Congratulations Betty!



*Betty's name is now installed on the Roll of Honour in the City Chambers*

Well done to everyone who received an award and thank you to all our volunteers who help out on a daily basis.

# Another Successful AGM for ETF

ETF's Annual General Meeting (AGM) promised to be one of the highlights of the year and it certainly did not disappoint. With a mixture of new and familiar faces in attendance the feedback from the event has been extremely positive. Our membership attending the AGM approved the Federation's workplan for 2015/16.



*A great turnout at our AGM, including old and new faces*

We are delighted that we have new members on the Federation's Executive Committee (EC) and congratulations to Niel Hansen, Nicol Johnstone, Ken McKay, Heather Ford and Irina Lazarenko. They will no doubt bring their own particular strengths and skills to the EC. We wish them the very best of luck in their roles. We would also like to pay tribute to Maureen Jarvis who stepped down from the Federation's Executive Committee. Maureen was the Federation's Vice Convenor and she will be a huge loss to the Executive Committee and the Federation. We wish Maureen all the best in her future endeavours. We are pleased to report that Elizabeth Page was elected onto the EC at their first meeting held in August. Elizabeth is now ETF's Treasurer and will bring a wealth of knowledge to this role due to her background in finance.



*Our EC members (missing Sheila Rutherford-McCallum, David Thomson and Elizabeth Page)*

After the AGM, the City of Edinburgh Council's Tenant Participation Strategy was launched by ETF's Convenor Betty Stevenson and Councillor Day, Vice Convenor of the Health, Social Care and Housing Committee, City of Edinburgh Council. This is a great example of the Council and ETF working in partnership to improve the lives and opportunities for tenants living in Edinburgh. Well done to everyone who was involved!



*The launch of the new Tenant Participation Strategy*

Finally there was a small social event which allowed the fun to really begin and gave tenant activists the opportunity to catch up with each other and do some networking. Some of our tenant activists even indulged in a bit of dancing courtesy of our resident DJ Scott Tait. Thank you to everyone who played their part in making this event so successful and we look forward to another busy and productive year with ETF.



*Having fun at the AGM!*

**Mark Henry, ETF Development Worker**

## Service Level Agreement Signing

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) between ETF and the Council was signed by our Convenor Betty Stevenson and the Council's then Head of Housing Cathy King. This secures the Federation's funding up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.

We will continue to work in partnership with the Council to influence services for tenants.

# Human Rights and Tenant Participation

In issue 94 of *Tenants Voice*, we reported that representatives of ETF had met with Kavita Chetty from the Scottish Human Rights Commission (SHRC) to explore some joint work on human rights with tenants in an area of Edinburgh. We are very pleased that ETF is now developing a partnership with the SHRC and the Belfast based Participation and the Practice of Rights Project (PPRP) on a ground breaking project supporting tenants to make practical use of human rights to address housing problems in Edinburgh.



*PPRP and SHRC representatives and Heather Ford at Citadel Court*

Representatives of PPRP arrived in Edinburgh on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2015 and were taken on a whistle-stop tour of the city to find out more about the work that our tenants' groups do. First stop was West Cromwell Street, Persevere and Citadel Court, where local tenant and newly elected EC member Heather Ford gave the group a tour of one of the multi-storey flats in the area and described the pigeon issues in multi-storey flats. The group saw the problem of part of a building on West Cromwell Street being held up by an unsecure scaffold post, issues with the roof and other defects.

Next stop was the Muirhouse Community Shop, where the PPRP representatives met some volunteers from Tenants and Residents in Muirhouse (TRIM), the group who run the shop. They gave an overview of the work of TRIM in the community shop, which includes providing useful information and running a foodbank.

Final stop was the Calders where the PPRP representatives met with Mae Rae of Calders Residents Association who talked about the work the group does, the origins of the group and how they run the Community Flat.



*The Muirhouse Community Shop*



*The Calders Community Flat*

The day didn't stop there as ETF held an information session later that night in the Melting Pot, Rose Street. Professor Alan Miller, Commissioner for Human Rights in Scotland opened the event. Alan highlighted that the time is right in Scotland for a project of this kind, and that he was delighted that ETF, the Commission and PPRP will be exploring a human rights based approach to tenant participation. Our delegates were able to find out first hand some of the human right issues that are affecting tenants living in multi-storey flats in Belfast.



*The Human Rights Information Session at the Melting Pot*

This included:

- Pigeon waste;
- Dampness;
- Sewage coming into baths and sinks;
- Families with young children in the flats.

Tenants and staff from ETF visited Belfast in August to find out more about the rights based approach. You can read more about this in our next edition of *Tenants Voice*.

There was also an opportunity to discuss how a human rights based approach could be used in Edinburgh. If you would like to find out more, please contact Clare on 0131 475 2509 or email [clare@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:clare@edinburghtenants.org.uk).

# Calders Buzzing with Activity and Excitement



*Calders' Committee Members with the First Minister*

Congratulations to Calders Residents Association for reaching the finals of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) Awards where they were nominated in the Celebrating Communities category. The award was eventually won by Beith Community Development Trust, however Calders Residents Association were thrilled to be chosen as one of the five finalists from the whole of Scotland. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon attended the award ceremony and commended and recognised all the work done by the groups.

On behalf of Calders Residents Association, Mae Rae said “It was amazing to meet so many people who do so much for Scotland. We plan to continue doing the work we do in the community flat, bringing the people of the Calders together and removing social barriers.”

Calders Residents Association also celebrated committee member Mae's Rae's 60<sup>th</sup> Birthday by holding *Tea In the Park*. Residents were invited to bring their tea to the park and enjoy some local music and have a good time, which allowed the residents' association to promote the work it does. Mae gave thanks to everyone who attended and helped her celebrate her 60<sup>th</sup> birthday in style.



*Celebrating Mae's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday at Tea In The Park*



*Residents at the energy advice session*

An energy advice session was also hosted at the community flat where residents were invited to find out more about how they can reduce their energy costs.

**Calders Residents Association**

# Edinburgh Registered Social Landlords Network

The Inaugural Meeting of Edinburgh Registered Social Landlords (RSL) Residents Network took place in April 2015 at Norton Park. A Committee of eight residents was elected and four Office Bearers were appointed.



*Representatives at the inaugural Edinburgh RSL Network Residents meeting*

At present we are funded by Blackwood Group, Hillcrest Housing Association, Link Housing Association and Dunedin Canmore Housing Association.

Our Business and Development Plan 2015 – 2018 is in place and our purpose is to inform and empower tenants and residents of Housing Associations (RSL's), Co-Operatives and Sharing Owners and to encourage RSL's to engage more effectively with them across Edinburgh.

Our vision is one where tenants and residents of RSL's in Edinburgh are able to have a say in decisions affecting their housing tenure, and are able to contribute to and participate in matters affecting their wider community. They should be able to do this on an equal basis and with all barriers to their participation removed.

The Edinburgh RSL Residents Network has the following key Strategic Goals for 2015 – 2018:

- To increase our membership (and active membership);
- To become sustainable as an independent group;
- To continuously develop the network in response to the aspirations of tenants and residents of RSL's;
- To retain the trust of tenants and residents of RSL's;
- To enable tenants and residents of RSL's to improve their quality of life and housing conditions through increased knowledge and participation and
- To work positively and constructively with Registered Social Landlords across Edinburgh to address the needs and aspirations of tenants and residents in the long term.

It is intended that the activities set out in the Business Development Plan will form the basis for us to achieve these goals and help us to progress well into the future.

If you would like to be a part of this exciting new network either as an individual of an RSL, Co-Operative or sharing owner or as a Registered Tenants' and Residents' Organisation, then please contact Terry Kirby, Chairperson, Edinburgh RSL Residents Network at [t\\_kirby2005@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:t_kirby2005@yahoo.co.uk) or phone 07806 818 857.

**Terry Kirby, Edinburgh RSL Network**





EDINBURGH TENANTS  
FEDERATION

Please join us in celebrating ETF's 25th Anniversary



## *25th Anniversary Celebration Event*

**Friday 11th September 2015**  
**in the Minto Hotel, Minto Street, 7.00pm -12.00pm**



## *Civic Reception*

Hosted by the Lord Provost

**Tuesday 6th October 2015**  
**in the City Chambers, 6.00pm - 7.15pm**



## *Parliamentary Reception*

Sponsored by Sarah Boyack, MSP

**Wednesday 4th November 2015**  
**in the Scottish Parliament, 6.00pm - 8.00pm**

Each of the events promises to be very exciting and will allow ETF activists to reflect on the outstanding work they have done over the last 25 years.

Places for each of the events must be booked in advance.

Bookings can be made on ETF's website [www.edinburghtenants.org.uk](http://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk) or by contacting the Federation office on 0131 475 2509 or email [info@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:info@edinburghtenants.org.uk).

# Here is a snapshot of some ETF activities over the last 25 years



*Former ETF Convenor George McKie and members of staff in 1994*



*Housing conditions demonstration in the 1990s*



*Former ETF Convenor George McKie making a speech during the 1990s*



*Former ETF Convenor George McKie at a celebration event to mark ETF's 10<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2000*



*ETF representatives hosting a Norton Park Coffee Morning in 2009*



*ETF Convenor Betty Stevenson and former Vice Convenor Maureen Jarvis with the TIS Frances Nelson Award in 2010*



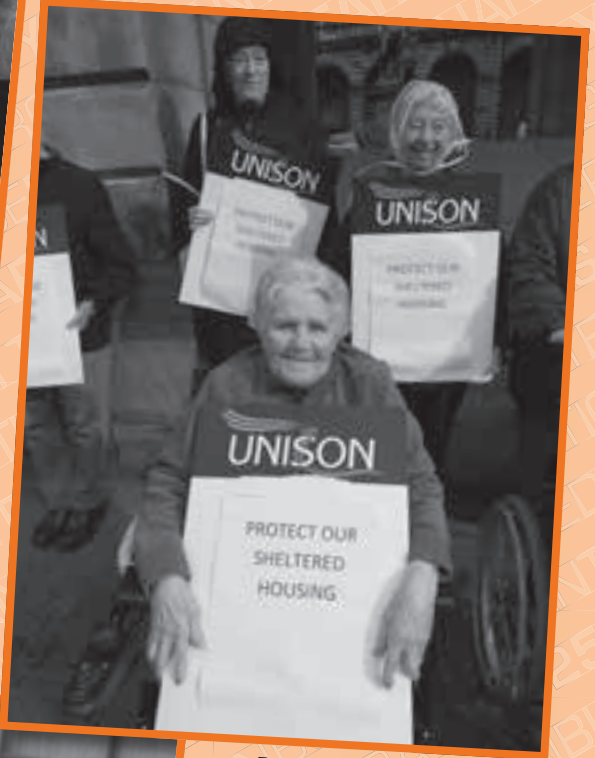
*ETF representatives visiting the Newcastle Tenants Federation in 2010*



*ETF's Convenor at a Council Civic Reception to celebrate ETF's 20th Anniversary in 2010*



*Members enjoying ETF's AGM in 2012*



*Protestors at the Protect Our Sheltered Housing Campaign in 2013*



*ETF representatives on a study visit in Dundee in 2014*



*ETF's Convenor Betty Stevenson and Development Co-ordinator Clare MacGillivray with Magnus Hammer of the International Union of Tenants in 2015*

# ETF Rents Group

In January 2015, the Federation held a meeting with Council tenants to look into rent issues and invited them to join a new Rents Group. The group is open to any Council tenant or member of a Registered Tenants' Organisation (RTO) and is answerable to the Executive Committee and to the Federation as a whole.

At the first meeting of the Rents Group in May 2015, there was a fairly lively debate on how it should proceed. It was noted that the 2% rent increase was still above the rate of inflation and it was agreed that tenants should not be expected to enter into a seven year tie-in when the economic climate remains so changeable. There was considerable mistrust of the Councils' diagram explaining what rent money was being spent on. It was decided to ask someone from the Council to attend the next meeting of the group to discuss this in more detail. Above all, the group wanted value for money and all information to be in plain English.

After the election of myself as Convenor, the Group decided that for its next meeting, it wanted to have:

- An Information session on 'What rents pay for'; explaining the Council rents diagram;
- Information and feedback from the new Council Rent Matters Working Group and the National Value for Money Working Group; and,
- Feedback on methods used successfully in rent consultations elsewhere in Scotland, including Dundee, Stirling and East Lothian.

At the second meeting of the Rents Group, held at the end of June, Clare McGillivray gave a presentation on ideas for future rent consultations, which included:

- Legislation;
- Good practice ideas from other councils; and
- Improving practice in Edinburgh, which last year had a return of 100 out of 2,000 tenants contacted during the consultation.

These ideas were discussed at length. It was agreed that communications from the Council should be in plain English with no use of jargon. The communications should also be short and to the point, with further information being available, if required by a tenant. It must be a high profile consultation, making tenants want to take part.

On behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council, Gillian Campbell gave a presentation on rents; making rather more sense of the dreaded diagram. In the discussion that followed several points were made, among them:

- Could housing management costs be reduced;
- Could the repairs service be made more efficient;
- Use a range of methods to explain rents, such as graphs, charts and lists;
- Tenants feel that they are living in sub-standard accommodation, at high rents; and
- There are different areas of the rent process, in which tenants can become involved; including Repairs, Ground Maintenance, Community Safety, Overheads, Staff Costs and Rent Consultation.

The group had reports back from the *Value for Money Group* and the *Rent Matters Working Group*.

A further update will be provided in the next edition of *Tenants Voice*.

**John Fayerer, Convenor ETF Rents Group**

# ETF and Council Pilot Roadshows

ETF and the Council recently held two pilot Roadshows in the south west area of Edinburgh. The first Roadshow was held in the Westside Plaza in Wester Hailes and the second in Tesco, Colinton. The purpose of the Roadshows were to:

- Provide housing information to tenants;
- Promote the support available to tenants;
- Raise awareness of ETF; and
- Promote the Council's Tenants' Panel.



ETF and Council representatives at the Roadshow at Westside Plaza

ETF and the Council held a Roadshow in TESCO Duke Street, Leith on Monday 7th September 2015 and an update will be given in the next edition of *Tenants Voice*.

**Mark Henry, ETF Development Worker**

## Update on North Sighthill Housing

Progress is continuing with the North Sighthill Regeneration Project. A detailed planning application was submitted on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015 for the Council works, comprising 184 affordable homes and associated infrastructure. A planning application will be submitted for the private homes by the developer, after their appointment. The key principles of the approved masterplan are retained in the Council's detailed planning application and are:



- A clear and legible grid of roadways;
- No through vehicular traffic;
- Higher buildings to the west, south and east with lower buildings to the centre of the estate; and
- Retail floorspace to the south west of the site.

There have been some design developments to the 2010 masterplan which include:

- Identification of specific areas for affordable and private housing within a tenure blind development;
- A higher proportion of houses and fewer flats;
- Parking changed from mostly on street to driveway and courtyard provision; and
- Community Centre and library to remain at Gate 55.



*Some of the proposed plans for the North Sighthill Development*

Market testing showed there was a higher demand for houses than flats; therefore more houses are now proposed. As a result of this, and to ensure there is no major reduction in the number of homes on the site, the height of some of the blocks of flats around the edge of the site have been increased from three storeys to four storeys. Although the Council and private homes will be in different parts of the site, the Council is seeking a tenure blind approach similar to that successfully used at the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Homes Gracemount development; where private and affordable housing look the same.

Napier University has grown in size resulting in a higher demand for local parking. The current proposals reduce on street bays within the development with more driveway and courtyard provision to help reduce the potential for conflict between residents and others over parking.

The North Sighthill Community facilities were successfully based at Gate 55 Hub, 55 Sighthill Road, in 2010. These facilities are approximately a 10 minute walk from their original location and are well used with around 900 people a week taking part in over 40 different activities. Although Community Learning & Development and the Library Service recognise that the local community would like the facilities returned to North Sighthill, Gate 55 is working well and, more particularly, there is no budget to develop or operate community facilities at North Sighthill as well as, or instead of Gate 55.

Once planning consent is in place tenders will be invited from developers to design and build affordable housing and develop housing for sale. It is anticipated that it will take the preferred bidder around nine months to complete the detailed design work, obtain building warrants and other statutory consents. A site start is therefore anticipated for early 2017.

**Heather Kirkland, Project Manager, City of Edinburgh Council**

# Fresh Start

Fresh Start helps people who have been homeless make a home for themselves by providing goods, practical and emotional support and training opportunities.

In 2013/14 almost 30,000 households in Scotland were accepted by their local authority as being homeless or potentially homeless.

Helping Hands is a new project being delivered in the South East of Edinburgh by Fresh Start and we are looking for you to get involved.



*Our cookery classes*

We also have a fantastic community garden where you can work with our friendly volunteers to grow a wide range of fruit and vegetables. It doesn't matter if you're an expert or a total beginner; you'll be part of a group with a range of gardening abilities who support each other.

We would love to see some new faces at our gardening and cooking sessions. They are held on Mondays and Wednesdays, 2.00-4.00pm. If you'd like to get involved, or find out more, please email us at [helpinghands@freshstartweb.org.uk](mailto:helpinghands@freshstartweb.org.uk) or phone on 0131 476 7741.

Fresh Start can make a real difference to someone's life, helping them settle in their home, gain skills and confidence to move on with their lives.

**Emily Arthur, Project Worker, Fresh Start**

We offer cookery classes delivered by volunteers to help you learn new cooking skills. Our cooking classes are based in Craigmillar in a relaxed and friendly environment. Come along and learn to cook some delicious, nutritional and budget friendly meals from scratch; no experience necessary.

Through the classes you will also have the opportunity to access advice to help you better manage your money.



*One of our volunteers in the Community Garden*

# Home Energy Scotland



We all want to find ways to save money on energy bills, but it can be difficult to know where to start.

Home Energy Scotland from the Scottish Government is a free and impartial energy advice service to help people save money and stay warm in their homes. Our friendly energy advisors can provide lots of useful information on how to make your home warmer.

Home Energy Scotland offers a wide range of support and advice to householders, regardless of tenancy. We can pass on simple energy saving tips or make referrals to income maximisation options such as the warm homes discount or benefits and tax credit checks.



The Home Energy Scotland Advice Centre, South East also has dedicated Community Liaison Officers to offer home visits to householders who might require some extra support to understand and implement the information they are given.

A home visit includes:

- Advice on saving energy and reducing fuel bills;
- Advice on low and no cost measures suitable for the home;
- Setting up heating and hot water controls; and
- Information on government schemes currently available in Scotland.

Anyone worried about their bills or struggling to heat their home can benefit from this service, particularly if they are unable to use or have difficulties using the telephone advice service, or have some additional needs that would be best addressed in the home. This is a free service and we are happy to match communication needs by providing services such as language and BSL interpreters.

Our Community Liaison Officers can also provide training for frontline staff, deliver workshops and support advice days as part of tenants' events.

This is what one of our customers had to say....

"I spoke to several advisors because our job was not straightforward and without exception they were polite and helpful. If they said they would 'phone back they did and very quickly. It's a pity all advisors couldn't be so helpful; they made you feel you were their only customer. Well done."

For more information about our services, please call our free, friendly helpline on 0808 808 2282, text 'warm' to 81025 for a call back or email [advice@se.homeenergyscotland.org](mailto:advice@se.homeenergyscotland.org).

**Roisin Hurst, Home Energy Scotland South East Local Authority Engagement Officer**

## International Links



When ETF asked me back in June if I'd like to attend the AGM of the International Association for Community Development (IACD), I have to admit that I had never heard of them. Having just completed a fascinating course on Community Development and Health, I thought it could be interesting, so I agreed. I did not expect to be attending one of the most inspiring events I've experienced in more than 30 years of campaigning and activism.

Community Development is a grassroots process which aims to empower individuals and groups of people with the skills they need to effect positive change within their communities. Whether that community is a geographical one, or a community defined by a common cultural heritage, language or belief system, Community Development helps people to recognise and develop their abilities and potential. Through collective action, they can then begin to develop equitable solutions to the needs and problems of their community.

IACD is a United Nations accredited, volunteer led, international organisation for those working in or supporting Community Development. They encourage Community Development practitioners across the world to learn and take inspiration from each other's experiences and, as such, their Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held at a two-day Conference organised by the Community

Development Journal (CDJ) – the leading journal in the field of Community Development, which happened to be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

What made the conference so special for me is the number of delegates who had travelled from across the globe to meet and share their stories. It's one thing reading about, for example, how refugees in India from Bangladesh were empowered to tackle the HIV epidemic in their community, how people are starting to assert their human rights after years of tyranny in Cambodia, or about projects to improve animal welfare in Africa. It's quite another to meet the people involved, hear firsthand about their often extraordinary experiences and to take part in interactive workshops. By the end of the conference, the sense of solidarity and optimism amongst the hugely diverse range of individuals and organisations in attendance was palpable.

It will, of course, be no surprise to readers of *Tenants Voice* that one of the best received and most talked about of the 30 or so workshops was the ETF event, run by our Convenor, Betty Stevenson and Development Coordinator, Clare MacGillivray.

IACD is currently embarking on a major recruitment drive and I would urge anyone interested to peruse their website and consider joining – after all strength lies in numbers.

### Niel Hansen, ETF Executive Committee

*\* The Community Development & Health course Niel attended is offered locally twice a year (Spring & Autumn) by NHS Lothian Health Promotion Service as part of the NHS Lothian & Queen Margaret University Collaborative Framework. The course offers participants the opportunity to explore and critically analyse the principles of community development, how these relate to the health of the communities and their application to practice. The course is an accredited module worth 10 points at SCQF Level 9. It costs £180 (or £75 for NHS employees).*

*If you are interested, contact [Liz.Simpson@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk](mailto:Liz.Simpson@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk) or phone 0131 537 9259 for an informal chat.*

# ChooseLife

## Suicide prevention in Scotland

“When it comes to suicide prevention, everyone can be a life saver.” That’s the message that Edinburgh’s suicide prevention coordinator Alan Laughland wants everyone to take home.

Every time services interact with the public, we could potentially be talking to someone who is feeling suicidal. But we need to know what to look out for, what to do if we have concerns... and have the confidence to act.

Choose Life coordinator Alan Laughland says: “People can sometimes be concerned that if they say something, it will make matters worse. This is a myth. Research shows that people who survive a suicide attempt are often crying out for help. Asking someone whether they have suicidal feelings is the first step to saving someone’s life. The more we talk about suicide, the more we de-stigmatise it and support people to come forward to ask for help.”

In addition to an extensive suicide awareness and prevention skills training programme we have provided support to the Samaritans to help them expand their activity in schools and elsewhere.

During suicide prevention week, which starts on **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2015** and ends on **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015**, please be aware of the following:

CHOOSE LIFE CHALLENGE CUP: Five a Side Football

To Kick Off Suicide Prevention Week 2015 - **Saturday 5th September, 9.15am – 12.15pm, Hibernian FC Training Centre, Ormiston, East Lothian, EH35 5NG**

Come along and support the tournament, find out about the issues and local services. Trophies will be presented by a local celebrity. To register a team to play in the event - Call John Murphy: 0131 663 1616.

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015, 6.00pm with refreshments.** Free Film (Football's Suicide Secret) at the **Grassmarket Community Project, 86 Candlemaker Row, Edinburgh EH1 2QA, 0131 225 3626.**

**Sunday 13th September 2015, 3.00pm, George the IV Bridge Non-denominational service, St. Augustine's Church,** for those touched by suicide

*Helplines:*

*Samaritans: 08457 909090 (24 hours a day)*

*Breathing Space: 0800 83 85 87 (weekdays: Mon-Thurs, 6.00pm-2.00am. Weekend: Fri 6.00pm-Mon 6.00am).*

**To find out more information, please contact the Edinburgh Choose Life Coordinator (0131) 553 8311.**

## ETF Convenors' Report

Can I first of all start by thanking everyone who attended our AGM and the launch of the Council's Tenant Participation Strategy which was held in the City Chambers in June. I was particularly pleased to see so many new members in attendance and I enjoyed the chance to speak to so many of you. I would also like to welcome Niel Hansen, Nicol Johnstone, Ken McKay, Heather Ford, Irina Lazarenko, and Elizabeth Page as new Executive Committee (EC) members. I'm sure they will all be great additions to the EC. I would also like to pay tribute to Maureen Jarvis who stood down as the Federation's Vice Convenor after 10 years in the role. Maureen made a fantastic contribution in her role as Vice Convenor and Convenor of the ETF Repairs Group and I wish Maureen all the very best for the future.



I am very proud of the role that ETF has played in the development of the Council's new Tenant Participation Strategy, as ETF representatives worked tirelessly with the Council over many months to finalise the Strategy. We will continue to work with the Council to represent tenants' views.

I am very excited about the ground-breaking work that ETF is developing with the Scottish Human Rights Commission. This has the potential to be hugely innovative and I am looking forward to seeing how this progresses.

As you will read elsewhere in *Tenants Voice*, the week beginning Monday 7<sup>th</sup> September is Suicide Prevention Week. I am part of a group that includes Council Officials and other stakeholders that meet on a regular basis to raise awareness of suicide and ensure that people receive help if needed.

This year is going to be very busy but also a very rewarding year for ETF. We are very proud of the commitment our volunteers have shown in improving housing services. However we need to build on getting our members more involved and encourage other people to join with us so we can make tenants' influence even stronger. If you would like to be more involved please don't hesitate to contact us. The more voices, the louder we are and the more we are heard.

**Betty Stevenson, Convenor, Edinburgh Tenants Federation**

# Dates for your diary

## ETF 25th Anniversary Celebration

Friday 11th September 2015, Minto Hotel, Minto Street, 7.00pm-12.00am. Places must be booked in advance by Friday 4th September

## ETF Repairs Group Meeting

Wednesday 16th September 2015, Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, 7.00pm-9.00pm

## The Federation office will be closed for the public holiday on

Monday 21st September 2015

## ETF 25th Anniversary Civic Reception

Tuesday 6th October 2015, City Chambers, Royal Mile, 6.00pm-7.15pm. Places must be booked by Tuesday 29th September 2015

## ETF 25th Anniversary Parliamentary Reception

Wednesday 4th November 2015, Scottish Parliament, 6.00pm-8.00pm. Places must be booked by Wednesday 28th October

## Federation Meeting

Wednesday 11th November 2015, venue to be confirmed, 7.00pm-9.00pm

## Comments, compliments, complaints

Please give us feedback on this publication. If you have any comments, compliments or complaints we would like to know. Just contact us at the ETF office.

## About Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Edinburgh Tenants Federation is the umbrella organisation for tenants' and residents' groups in Edinburgh and a Registered Tenant Organisation. Tenants' and residents' groups can become members of ETF and individuals and like-minded organisations can become Associate Members. Just contact the ETF office on 0131 475 2509 or email [info@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:info@edinburghtenants.org.uk) for more information.

## Thoughtful Quote

*'Courage doesn't always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I'll try again tomorrow.'*

*Mary Anne Radmache*

## Copy Deadline



*Tenants Voice* is usually published four times a year and is distributed to nearly 4,000 tenants, residents, decision makers and other interested individuals throughout Edinburgh. We always welcome contributions from our readers, though we stress that material included in *Tenants Voice* does not always represent the opinions of Edinburgh Tenants Federation. If you would like to contribute an article, please do so by the following deadline:

**November 2015 edition:**  
Monday 19<sup>th</sup> October 2015



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