

Tenants Voice



EDINBURGH TENANTS
FEDERATION

Issue 106 - September 2018

REFLECTION, RECOGNITION AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



The Capital Hotel, Clermiston was the setting for another hugely successful AGM for ETF. The event allowed ETF to reflect on what has been a very busy but rewarding year and plan for the future. Here are some of the highlights:

- The Annual Report, Finances and Work Plan were all unanimously approved;
- Irina Lazarenko, Edinburgh Registered Social Landlord Residents Network; Niel Hansen, Moredun Multis and Maisonettes Residents Association; Barbara Stark, Ratho Station Residents Association; Sue Taylor, Willowbrae and Duddingston Residents Association and Nicol Johnstone, Magdalene Residents Association were elected onto the Executive Committee.
- The AGM paid tribute to a number of volunteers for the work they do for ETF and their local area. ETF's Vice Convenor

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Maud Wylie invited Councillor Lezley Cameron, Vice Convenor, Housing and Economy Committee, City of Edinburgh Council to present awards to the participants who attended each of ETF's Learning Sessions. At ETF we believe that learning is important to supporting active citizens.



ETF volunteers were presented with awards as part of UK Volunteer Week and were honoured at a reception held in the City Chambers. These included:



Christine Hudson – Christine is the first Digital Champion in ETF. Working with ETF and People Know How she set up weekly digital drop-ins in her sheltered housing complex for older people to learn how to get connected and to use digital devices. She has been involved in her local group at Laichfield Community Association for almost ten years and is a valued member of the Sheltered Housing Liaison Group and the Tenant Led Inspection (TLI) Team.

Sharon Robertson - Sharon has been a volunteer with ETF for five years. She has made enormous contributions to the work of the Rent Matters Working Group, Housing Revenue Account Scrutiny Group and the TLI Team. She challenged herself brilliantly by researching, organising and presenting a deputation to the Full Council for the first time – telling her own story about how the rent increase would impact on her and her family. She wrote a blog all about it which we've published on our website.





Nicol Johnstone - Nicol's passion and drive for tenant participation shines through at all meetings held with the Council and Nicol has influenced service improvements, not stopping until answers to questions raised are found and issues resolved. After a fantastic review session, the Sheltered Housing Liaison Group is now using a human rights based approach to consider sheltered housing tenants issues. Nicol's passion for this work is inspiring and he remains determined to make positive changes to the services sheltered housing tenants receive from the Council.

Jimmy Galloway - Special Recognition – Tenant Participation Champion. Jimmy has a tremendous passion for his area of Drylaw, going out of his way to help people who are experiencing problems with issues like repairs, antisocial behaviour, and rents. His input into our session with the Equality and Human Rights Commission about the experiences of tenants with disabilities helped to shape their recommendations on how housing providers should meet the human rights of disabled tenants. What makes Jimmy stand out is that he has a big heart and really cares about people and this absolutely shines through in everything he does.



ETF then paid tribute to our Vice Convenor Maud Wylie. Maud is very much loved by the staff at ETF – she listens to us, supports us and defends us. She's always there to help answer questions and over many years at ETF has built up strong bonds with each of us. Since becoming Vice Convenor Maud has become even more involved in the work of ETF.



The evening was rounded off by a buffet and disco, which gave everyone the opportunity to network and catch up with one another.

It was a truly memorable night for ETF and thank you to everyone who made it so special.

You are invited to the Sheltered Housing
Liaison Group Conference on
**Tuesday 9th October 2018, 11.30am-3.30pm, City
Chambers, High Street, Edinburgh, EH1 1YJ**

This conference is an exciting opportunity for
City of Edinburgh Council tenants in sheltered
housing to hear feedback from the recent
housing rights survey carried out.



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Lunch will be provided and there will be an opportunity to socialise
with other sheltered housing tenants and visit information stalls.

Help with transport to the conference may be available.

Places are limited.

For bookings and more information please book via

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sheltered-housing-liaison-group-tickets-49330221019?ref=ecal>

Or contact the Federation office on 0131 475 2509, email
info@edinburghtenants.org.uk.

VOLUNTEER AWARDS CEREMONY

Nicol Johnstone, Sharon Robertson and Jimmy Galloway were invited to the Volunteer Edinburgh Awards Ceremony on Wednesday 6th June 2018, which was hosted by the Lord Provost, Frank Ross. The event was a hugely successful night for Edinburgh's tenants and well done to everyone who received an award.



Jimmy receiving his award from the Lord Provost Frank Ross



Nicol receiving his award from the Lord Provost Frank Ross



Sharon receiving her award from the Lord Provost Frank Ross

UPDATE FROM ETF HOUSING STUDENT PLACEMENT



My name is Cath O'Shea and I was a Housing Studies student from Stirling University who recently finished a placement with ETF. I would like to share with you some of my experiences and issues that I have encountered during my time at Stirling University and whilst on placement with ETF.

In June, along with other ETF staff and tenants, I attended the Silent Vigil for Grenfell victims. This was a really powerful event which moved me to tears. We stood at the side of Princes Street in the rush hour holding up 72 placards showing individual images

of the children and adults who died in the fire at Grenfell. This silent vigil spoke volumes about the importance of ETF's work.



The Grenfell Silent Vigil



The Sheltered Housing Liaison Group

It was great to meet lots of tenants by carrying out ETF surveys alongside tenant volunteers. Sheltered Housing Tenants from around the city were being asked about their experiences of living in sheltered housing including their thoughts on the service provided by wardens.

The second survey in Citadel and Persevere high rises in Leith involved asking tenants about their experience of the recent improvement works. The results of both these surveys will be analysed in September.

I learnt about what tenant customer scrutiny panels can achieve at Dunedin Canmore Housing Association. The tenants' group there looked into and are influencing how Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) cases are dealt with. It's really important for ETF to maintain links with Housing Associations to share good ideas.



Dunedin Canmore Tenant Scrutiny Panel and Anti-Social Behaviour Panel meeting

I reviewed Manor Estate's website. They can definitely make it more welcoming to tenants and encourage increased tenant participation by making a few changes.

At Manor Estates I was involved in analysing their tenant satisfaction survey. My main learning point is about just how misleading data can be. Manor Estates are working really hard to try to improve tenant satisfaction and to deliver a quality service. However, their tenant satisfaction level looks like it has dropped this year from last by about 20%. The cause of this drop is actually because data

was collected very differently this year. Data was collected by text message rather than face-to-face and more importantly the results are based on 150 responses rather than approx. 600 responses collected last year. Watch out if you're ever comparing survey responses from year to year or between organisations as the figures you see may not be comparable unless you have the full picture of how they were collected!

I contributed to ETF's consultation response work writing draft responses for the Social Housing Charter review, the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing post 2020 consultation and an update for tenants on Scotland's new Social Security Bill. This is all fairly dry stuff but the devil is in the detail and responding to consultations is a key way to get tenants' views to shape future services.

When I reflect on my time with ETF and Manor Estates, it's obvious that dynamics are at the heart of issues between landlords and tenants. There is a need to hold landlords like Councils and Housing Associations to account. Without this, standards will slip. The Human Rights Based Approach that ETF are leading on provides a fresh route to try to balance the power levels between tenants and landlords.

Finally a big highlight for me has been meeting so many nice people, as well as learning a lot about housing and particularly how tenants can get involved to influence and lead on improvements. ETF staff and tenant volunteers are doing amazing work with very limited resources. I want to say thank you and good luck to all and I hope ETF take on another Housing Studies student next year!

SEND OFF FROM OUR COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT

My name is Craig Burns and I have been working as ETF's Communications Assistant since October 2017, so I thought I would share a final piece on my experiences and achievements within the organisation since I started last year. I have been acting as essentially ETF's Publicity Officer, creating all the publicity and assisting with the organising of upcoming ETF meetings and events and updating the team's social media activity.

I have greatly enjoyed the chance of being involved in a more creative role and being able to display an aspect of my artistic capabilities through creating ETF's publicity. It has been a rewarding experience helping to create publicity that can help promote the work ETF does, entice people to come along to our upcoming meetings and events and strengthen our community in promoting basic human rights in tenant housing.

Some previous events that were especially memorable for me, were the Burns Night supper; firstly as it was fun but was an important event for ETF as it involved the voting on whether ETF should become a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). I had a chance to become more involved too by creating the publicity and help in the creating, booking and organising of the event and especially of course the Scottish themed quiz. It was a great opportunity for me to mingle and share with the local tenants and their associated groups and get an understanding of whom my work is aiming to help and promote the work they do for the organisation too. It was also an exciting and monumental event as from that point onwards it was the beginning of the preparation and eventual full realisation of ETF becoming a fully-fledged SCIO. The second memorable event was definitely the AGM in which I again assisted in the preparation and creating of the event including the publicity, although it was a highly stressful period due to me being unaware of how much preparation would be involved for it. Overall though, it was still a fulfilling experience when everything came together on the night and people were having a great time. I acted as the minute taker for the event and had the 'high honour' of being at the front table feeling like being at the King's table at a medieval buffet. Although there was some drama as an attending tenant had an unexpected tumble, they made a quick recovery and the event's night of fun continued and was an overall success.

All in all it has been a rewarding experience being a part of a charity organisation and knowing the work I am doing is aiming to help a lot of people in different ways. As I have learned even the smallest piece of work; especially in this field; can make some difference. I will take my experiences and what I have learned here forward into future career prospects and hope they will help me to develop into a more capable and confident human being.

HOUSING ROADSHOW

ETF and the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) recently held a Housing Roadshow in the North East Locality Office, Niddrie Mains Road. The purpose of the Roadshow was to:

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

ETF will be holding more Housing Roadshows in the near future. If you can think of possible areas for these Roadshows or would like to be involved in organising a future Housing Roadshow, please contact Mark Henry on 0131 475 2509 or email mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk. The Housing Roadshows are an ideal opportunity to promote the work of your group and possibly gain new members.



ETF and CEC representatives at the Housing Roadshow

GETTING RID OF TECHNOLOGY'S FEAR FACTOR AND CONNECTIVITY FOR ALL

ETF has been collaborating with People Know How (PKH) on their Re:Connect project that sees the charity supporting people's digital literacy by helping them to get the most out of their digital devices. Volunteers from PKH offer digital drop-in sessions for anyone interested, and so far the charity has set up eleven regular drop-ins all over the city. One of the drop-ins, set up this spring, has seen the tenants of Laichfield Community Association getting to grips with their digital devices. The sessions have been a hit amongst the residents of the local area.

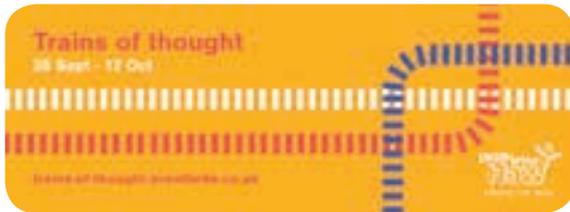
ETF caught up with Christine, the Chair of the Laichfield group, for an update on the impact of the sessions. She says the drop-ins have been enjoyed by the tenants and that it has made a difference to have volunteers there to sit down and work things out with. "It has helped to remove 'the fear factor' from digital technology. It has definitely made



Laichfield residents exploring their digital devices

people less apprehensive, knowing that pressing an unknown button on your tablet's screen won't make anything explode", Christine laughs. Further describing the sessions, Christine said that the volunteers were praised for their patience and helpfulness, and tenants have enjoyed working their way through different devices they own. Tablets, laptops and smart phones have all been brought along, and tenants have learnt both how to operate the devices better as well as how to navigate the internet with more ease. "As well as getting rid of the fear factor, the entire learning process has been great!" Christine concludes. The drop-in sessions at Laichfield are currently on a summer break but will resume in September.

TRAINS OF THOUGHT



Edinburgh based charity People Know How (PKH) are organising a series of events entitled Trains of thought! PKH works with people and communities to provide innovative solutions to address social issues. This informative and interactive exhibition will show all there is to know about our methods, research and projects, and how you can take part.

Alongside the exhibition we will be running a series of Innovation Stations. These will be smaller discussions, bringing together stakeholders connected to our projects with topics ranging from work with children and young people, digital inclusion and working with volunteers. Together, we will share our learning and plan our next steps.

One of these Innovation Stations will be focused on Re: Connect, our project providing free Digital Drop-ins across Edinburgh. We provide support to improve people's digital literacy and help them make positive use of the internet. Our volunteers can offer a helping hand, whether you want to surf the web, watch videos or apply for a job online!

In April we launched our first Digital Drop-in with tenants at Laichfield Community Association, open to both tenants and the public every Tuesday from 10.00am – 12.00pm. Tenants have greatly enjoyed the sessions!

Our Re:Connect Innovation Station will take place on **Tuesday 4th October 2018, 10.00am - 1.00pm, Galleries, St Margaret's House, 151 London Road, EH7 6AE**. We're running it in association with the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations Digital Charter Team, Streetwork and ETF. You are invited to come hear about the project so far, and explore how to take it even further – whether you want to share what you think could be improved in our service, suggest new ideas or even suggest a completely new Digital Drop-in!

Come along to this, any or all of our events, or simply come take a look at the exhibition! All our events are free and open to everyone! Whether you work in charities, community groups, the public sector, health or education! Whether you're a student, an Edinburgh local or retired! Or whether you just want to help people! Everyone is welcome!

The exhibition will have its opening night on Friday 28th September 2018, with events running through to the closing night on Friday 12th October. All of this will be taking place in the gallery spaces in St Margaret's House, 151 London Road. For the full list of events and to register, visit our Eventbrite page: trains-of-thought.eventbrite.co.uk.



Find out more about Digital Drop-ins:
peopleknowhow.org/drop-ins-sessions.

RE:CONNECT

Claudia Baldacchino,
Graphic Designer & Conference Co-ordinator PKH

IMPROVING RENT COLLECTION WITH TENANTS

A group of tenants recently inspected the City of Edinburgh Council's communications on rent and gave a number of recommendations to the Council. The tenant inspectors think that some of the rent letters the Council sends to tenants could be clearer. If you would like to talk about how rent letters could be improved, please email mark@edinburghtenants.org.uk or call 0131 475 2509.

IT'S REDBRAES OPPORTUNITY FOR THE TENANTS



Tuesday August 21st was an opportunity for Redbraes to take advantage of the 'Walkabout' initiative. City of Edinburgh Council Housing staff Stuart Avinou and Paddy O'Shea, ETF's Convenor Betty Stevenson and ETF's student Cath O'Shea were accompanied by Davie Thomson of Redbraes Residents Association and spent time looking round the Broughton area of Edinburgh.

The visitors were impressed by the amount of work done by residents in Redbraes. Neat gardens, floral displays and in some cases that bit extra to accommodate an area where the neighbours could

meet, chat and enjoy the good weather. They were also impressed by the work achieved by the residents in the creation of Redbraes Community Garden. The overall impression of the garden was one of admiration in achieving a space where everyone could meet, become involved, and in general, enjoy that wee bit of greenspace lacking in most communities. There was even a garden of remembrance to the Polish soldiers and the bear who gave up their lives to help the British during World War II.

From there they walked round and looked into another street in which they found a communal area which had been transformed from what was a grassed area into a garden where the residents met, had a cuppa and a chat and in general felt relaxed in their own environment.



The garden of remembrance in Redbraes



Paddy, Davie and Stuart on the walkabout

Whilst doing the Walkabout, Stuart and Paddy looked around to see if there were any issues that required attention and arrange for these to be attended to. Overall the visit was a good experience and we would encourage other areas to take advantage of these Walkabouts. If you are interested in doing a similar walkabout you should contact your locality team.

Davie Thomson, Redbraes Residents Association

UPDATE FROM GREENDYKES AND WAUCHOPE HOUSE

We are like minded folk that live in the High Rise Flats on Greendykes Road known as Wauchope and Greendykes House and have come together for a variety of reasons to form a Tenants' Association which took place in February of 2018. After various suggestions we decided on the name WAGTA which is an abbreviation of Wauchope and Greendykes Tenants Association. WAGTA offers its members the chance to give something back to the community or make a difference to the people around them. For others it provides an opportunity to develop new skills or build on existing experience and knowledge.



Being a member of WAGTA and what we do when interacting with tenants will have an impact on a person's life either directly or indirectly.

We can make a difference to their lives by:

- Helping others that feel they are without a voice feel valued and part of something; this could help them gain confidence and self-esteem;
- Giving people the chance to meet others and make new friends. By providing a way to socialise with a cuppa in a community space while getting to know the local community.

Our main aims are to improve the standard of living for tenants within the blocks by:

1. Building improvements & conditions for living within blocks;
2. Liaising with services provided on behalf of the community;
3. Promoting helpful activities, mutual support and joint aid among our members;
4. Promoting community spirit.

We hope in time to host community events.

We are currently, with the help of Mark McHale of The City of Edinburgh Council, developing a disused community space with the view of it becoming an advice & support drop-in centre with the further hope of having it run on Saturdays as a little refreshment bar serving basic food such as bacon butties with a cup of coffee. The development is due to be completed for August 1st.

As the Chairperson I am hoping to develop a good relationship with Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service as well as other organisations. This is to make the most of the community space as an advice and support drop-in centre for the local community to benefit from.

Ways of communicating with us include:

- Facebook: WAGTA (Wauchope and Greendykes Tenants Association)
- Twitter: @WagtaTenants
- Mobile: 07704991655 (text messages only)
- Email: enquiries@wagta.co.uk
- Website: www.wagta.co.uk

Michael Wray, WAGTA



NEWS FROM THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

North Sighthill Development



The redevelopment of the North Sighthill area is being delivered, on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council, by Engie Regeneration and Keepmoat Homes. The development will provide:

- A total of 184 new, high quality, affordable homes. Of these affordable homes, 96 will be for social rent, and 88 for mid-market rent;
- A further 132 homes are being built for private sale. For more information on these homes, please visit www.keepmoat.com/development/broomview-edinburgh;
- New landscaping and public realm within the development for the local community to enjoy;
- New ground floor commercial/retail space at Sighthill Green;
- Jobs and opportunities for the local community throughout the construction of the scheme.

Project Progress

Work on the site commenced in November 2017, and the first residents moved in to the private homes in June 2018. The first Council tenants are expected to move in to their new homes in January 2019. Further new homes will then be released on a phased basis, with the whole development expected to be completed by summer 2019.

A wide range of construction activities are currently being carried out on site, including works to the new Council homes such as erection of timber kits, external brickwork, roof tiling and installation of solar PV panels.

Community Benefits

Local Employment

Alicia McLeod, a local resident in the EH14 postcode area, has secured employment as Trainee Site Administrator with Engie for this development. Her employment was secured through the Capital City Partnership's 'Joined Up For Jobs' network.

Alicia (pictured below with Site Manager Colin Watson) started working with the contractor in March 2018 and will shortly begin her SVQ Level 3 in Business and Administration.

A number of other residents of local postcode areas have also been employed by Engie in a

range of site roles to help deliver the North Sighthill project.

All Cleaned Up

Engie have employed local social enterprise All Cleaned Up to service the site compound and other areas during the project. Based locally in Dumbryden, All Cleaned Up are a social enterprise offering an industrial cleaning service while providing opportunities to individuals with barriers to employment, allowing them to contribute positively to their communities. All Cleaned Up have been employed at the site since February 2018, and Engie are delighted with the services provided to date.

Sighthill, Broomhouse and Parkhead Community Council Council officers provided an update to Sighthill, Broomhouse and Parkhead Community Council at their meeting in June 2018. A site tour is being arranged to give members of the Community Council the chance to meet the Engie site project team, and visit some of the new homes which are currently under construction.

Sighthill Fire Station

Engie have developed good links with Sighthill Fire Station since construction commenced, and have welcomed staff onto the site for a visit. Surplus materials from the site have also been provided, such as manholes, to help fire service staff based at the station with confined spaces training, and materials for abrasive wheels training.

The Council will continue to encourage the contractor to engage positively with site neighbours throughout the remainder of the project.

For further information on the North Sighthill development, please contact the CEC, Housing Regeneration team on 0131 529 7418 or HousingRegeneration@edinburgh.gov.uk.



City of Edinburgh Council Budget Consultation

Would you like to have your say on the best ways the City of Edinburgh Council can invest rent to help tenants save money and invest in your home, your services and your neighbourhoods? The City of Edinburgh Council is currently carrying out a budget consultation which runs until Wednesday 31st October 2018. This is an ideal opportunity for tenants to help shape the future of housing in Edinburgh and ETF would encourage tenants to have their say. This can be done in a number of ways:

- By visiting the Consultation Hub. The web address is <https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/2019-20-council-housing-budget-consultation/>
- By emailing housing.research@edinburgh.gov.uk;
- By phone on 0131 529 6710;
- By picking up a FREEPOST card from your local Housing Officer, office or library.



CONVENOR'S REPORT



I would like to start my Convenor's Report by thanking everyone for the support and comfort you have given me after the death of my husband Joe. I would also like to thank everyone who gave so generously to MacMillan Nurses who looked after Joe. We raised £396.29 and I was deeply touched by the contributions made.

I was unable to attend ETF's Annual General Meeting back in June but by all accounts it was a very successful and well attended event. I would like to congratulate Barbara Stark and Susan Taylor on their election to the Federation's Executive Committee and I look forward to working with them throughout the year.

I enjoyed the World Community Development Conference in Maynooth University. It was great to be able to present the work that ETF is carrying out to a worldwide audience and hearing what other community organisations from around the world are doing. It's fantastic that Dundee will be hosting next year's Conference.

I would like to congratulate Gateside Tenants and Residents Association on getting their community hub up and running. I'm well aware of all the work that Paul and the tenants in the area have done in order to get this far and I'm delighted for them. I'm looking forward to receiving my invitation to see the Hub.

Due to the circumstances with my husband, I was unable to attend many meetings, however I'm pleased to say that I'm back. I recently met with various Council staff including Sam Reeves, Jennifer Hunter and Michael Thain and I look forward to working closely with them and their colleagues over the year.

I am sure it will be a very busy but also a very interesting year ahead for ETF and we are very proud of the work that all our volunteers do to try and improve housing services for all tenants in Edinburgh. Here's to the year ahead and we look forward to both the opportunities and challenges that come our way.

ETF HOUSING WORD SEARCH

Why not try out this fun housing wordsearch? Just cut out your completed word search and send it to the Federation office by Monday 22nd October for the chance to win a 'mystery prize'.

I	N	P	A	R	L	I	A	M	E	N	T	T	E
A	E	R	S	U	F	C	H	A	R	T	E	R	H
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EDINBURGH

HOUSING

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FEDERATION

CHARTER

TENANT

REGENERATION

COMMITTEE

HEAT

COUNCIL

ENERGY

Your name

Your contact details



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Sheltered Housing Liaison Group Conference

Tuesday 9th October 2018, 11.30am-3.30pm, City Chambers, Royal Mile, EH1 1YJ

Federation Meeting

Monday 22nd October, 7.00pm-9.00pm, Norton Park Conference Centre, 57 Albion Road, EH7 5QY

ETF High Flats Group

Monday 26th November, 7.00pm-9.00pm, Birnies Court Community Room, Muirhouse View EH4 45J

Federation Meeting

Wednesday 28th November, 7.00pm-9.00pm, venue to be confirmed

ETF Repairs Group Meeting

Wednesday 5th December, 7.00pm-9.00pm, venue to be confirmed

Office closure for Christmas and New Year

The Federation Office closes on Friday 21st December 2018 at 2.00pm for the Christmas and New Year holidays. We re-open on Monday 7th January 2019 at 9.00am.

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.

Copy Deadline



Tenants Voice is usually published three 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:

February 2019 edition:
Monday 28th January 2019

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 can become Associate Members. Just contact the ETF office on 0131 475 2509 or email info@edinburghtenants.org.uk for more information.

Thoughtful Quote

"I am not in competition with anyone. I have no desire to play the game of being better than anyone. I am simply trying to be better than the person I was yesterday"

Unknown



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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of ETF.

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