



EDINBURGH TENANTS FEDERATION

Annual Report 2020-2021

Inside this issue...



ONLINE MEETINGS



WILLOWBRAE AND DUDDINGSTON
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



WEST CROMWELL, PERSEVERE AND
CITADEL COURT RESIDENTS ASSOC.



Welcome

Edinburgh Tenants Federation (ETF), the umbrella organisation of tenants' and residents' groups throughout Edinburgh is delighted to welcome you to our 2020 / 2021 Annual Report. ETF's overall aim is to represent tenants throughout Edinburgh, ensuring tenant influence in housing policy and service decisions with the City of Edinburgh Council (CEC) and Scottish Government.



Our primary objective is to improve housing conditions and standards, along with the quality of life of all CEC tenants.

We work hard to do this by providing:

- Information, independent advice and learning opportunities for tenants;
- Advice, support and information to tenants' and residents' organisations to help them develop and accomplish their aims and objectives;
- Networking opportunities bringing local organisations together to work on matters of mutual interest;
- Events and seminars to help people to take part individually and through their groups in decision making about their homes, community and environment.

We hope our Annual Report gives an idea of the wide ranging and innovative work of the Federation and our members during 2020-2021.

Executive Committee

John Aitken	North Sighthill Residents Association
Christine Hudson	Laichfield Community Association
Irina Lazarenko	Minorities Initiatives Residents Association
Damien May	West Cromwell, Persevere and Citadel Courts Residents Association
Barbara Stark	Ratho Station Residents Association
Betty Stone	Birnies Court Tenants Association
Sue Taylor	Willowbrae and Duddingston Residents Association
Davie Thomson	Redbraes Residents Association
Paul Vaughan	Gateside Tenants and Residents Association
Maud Wylie	Hailesland Park Neighbourhood Council

Staff Team

This year the staff team, **Mary Callaghan** – Office Manager, **Mark Henry** – Development Worker and **Aadam Hussain** – Admin Assistant funded through Community Job Scotland from January 2020 to 31st March 2021 continued to work in partnership with **Ilene Campbell** and **Sharon Donohoe** from the Tenants Information Service (TIS) who are providing the Co-ordinator and Outreach Support Services, to support ETF and member groups achieve our goals.

A Message from our Executive Committee

On behalf of ETF, our Executive Committee (EC) is delighted to present our Annual Report to you. It's been another busy and productive year for the Federation. Here's an insight into what ETF has been up to.

As a result of the continued COVID-19 restrictions the Federation Office has remained closed, with all ETF work remaining online and staff working from home. Despite these circumstances, ETF has continued to work on the successful implementation of the Federation's Business Plan, Work Plan and our Service Level Agreement (SLA) with City of Edinburgh Council (CEC).



We have also been very busy carrying out a governance review, to ensure our constitution, policies and procedures are up to date and fit for purpose.

TIS has facilitated joint ETF and CEC workshop sessions to develop a Tenant Participation and Scrutiny Framework for Edinburgh. This extensive work included reviewing the current arrangements for tenant participation and tenant scrutiny across Edinburgh.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, ETF submitted a written deputation to the Council Committee requesting a rent freeze. ETF representatives were pleased that CEC agreed a city-wide freeze on council tax payments and a rent freeze for tenants in 2021-2022.

The Housing Service Improvement Plan (HSIP) Group has worked diligently with CEC Officers over recent months to develop the Rent Consultation documents for the coming year, ensuring tenant input was at the very centre of discussions, along with content and design decisions.

We also held specific meetings and events to support our members and the Federation find out about and respond to national housing consultations with the Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator.

ETF representatives have held regular meetings with CEC Officers on a range of topics, including stair cleaning and repairs.

Despite lockdown our member groups have kept themselves very busy and we are very proud of the work they have carried out.

The EC has continued to meet with senior housing staff in their respective localities, ensuring EC members can find out what is happening in their areas and for CEC staff to find out more about the work of ETF.

We hope you will enjoy reading our Annual Report and would welcome your feedback on the work we do. Thank you to everyone for your hard work and commitment and a big thank you to CEC for funding us.

ETF Executive Committee

Local

Locality Meetings

EC members have continued to hold locality meetings with senior housing staff in their respective areas. This has included Estate Walkabouts and online Microsoft Teams Meetings, allowing EC members to find out what has been happening in their respective localities and for senior housing staff to learn more about the work of the Federation. These meetings enable EC members to continue to influence local services and raise local tenant issues and concerns, including:

- Refurbishment of High Rise Flats and lift programmes;
- Neighbourhood Environmental Projects;
- Repairs;
- Addressing void and abandoned homes.



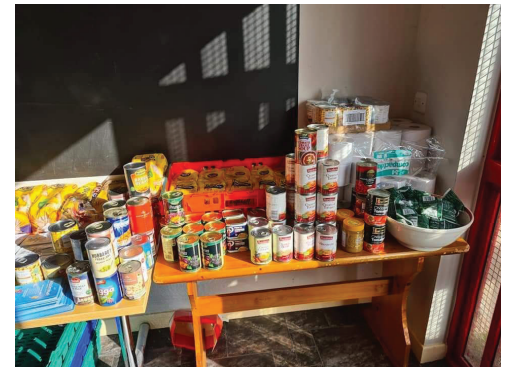
Local Group News...



Willowbrae and Duddingston Residents Association It's been a very exciting and busy time over the last few months for Willowbrae and Duddingston Residents Association. Our Summer house was opened by ETF's Convenor Betty Stone at a very well attended event. The summer house was funded by donations from OneCity Trust and Travis Perkins Community Benefits Fund.

We held our AGM in the summer house, where eight new members were elected to serve on the committee. We have been lucky to hold a number of events in the summer house and it's great to have this facility up and running after being in the planning stages for quite some time.

Calders Residents Association continues to work hard on behalf of all local people, with our overall aim of ensuring our homes and community are safe, well maintained and happy places to live. We work in partnership with other organisations; making sure people are well fed through our work with the Food Co-op and Fareshare, our children and young people have things to do in our community flat with the Youth Project and our older residents are safe and secure. We have also been working on our big project to take over the local janitor's house for development into a new community space.



Our Residents Association was crowned runner up in the Tenants Group of the Year category at the TIS National Excellence Awards Ceremony. It was a tremendous honour to be recognised for our work and we would like to thank all our volunteers for all their hard work throughout the year.

Moredun Multis and Maisonettes Residents Association is delighted to be working in partnership with the CEC, Elected Members, TIS and others to secure funding and develop plans to improve the open green space beside our homes. Funding of around £200,000 has been agreed by CEC and over the coming months we will be carrying out an extensive community consultation to seek ideas from everyone in the community on what we would all really like to see in the area. We hope this will lead to the development of a sustainable community area that can be used by everyone and improve our connections with nature, along with our activity levels and sense of wellbeing.

We are also working with CEC to secure improvements to our homes and common facilities and were really pleased to give a deputation to CEC on its plans to address dampness and condensation.

West Cromwell, Persevere and Citadel Court Residents Association has been working hard to develop our community garden and were really pleased to receive grant funding from the Council along with donations from local businesses and individuals to see the garden start to come together. It is fast becoming a welcome place for many local people to enjoy the fresh air, improve their gardening skills or simply sit in quiet contemplation. We are always looking for more folk to join us in the garden or maybe donate some plants or gardening equipment...so if you have some tools gathering dust in your shed or you want to get outside and pick up some new skills or have skills to share, please get in touch with us via ETF.



Edinburgh Wide Influence



Online success and training

As all of ETF's work remains online a major part of our work has been to ensure all EC members and ETF representatives are able and confident to contribute to online meetings. Equipment from CEC courtesy of City Fibre and Openreach ensured the Federation has continued to operate effectively and a grant from Port of Leith Housing Association allowed us to buy digital equipment to support member groups in the North Edinburgh and Leith areas.



ETF staff worked very hard to ensure that all EC members and ETF representatives developed and increased their skills and confidence in using their equipment. We are delighted that ETF members continue to influence housing issues on behalf of tenants living in Edinburgh and that more tenants are taking part in ETF activities online. This will be a continuing priority in the coming year.

A Review of Tenant Participation and Tenant Scrutiny

ETF was delighted to be a member of a Working Group during 2020-21 to review the current arrangements for tenant participation and tenant scrutiny across Edinburgh. The review had three key aims:

- To identify what is working well;
- To identify key challenges and opportunities;
- To identify what needs to be in place to drive forward tenant participation across the city to maximise tenant engagement.

The Working Group independently supported by TIS had representation from the CEC's Housing service, ETF and from local tenant and resident groups.

The Working Group have completed the review and are in the process of developing a framework for tenant participation and scrutiny that will drive participation forward. ETF will keep you updated on this exciting project.



Governance

Becoming a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation in 2019, SCIO for short, we recognised that we needed to review and improve our policies and procedures, constitution, and governance. We have been working extensively with TIS who conducted an independent review of ETF's governance arrangements.

The review highlighted the positive work of ETF including:

- ETF has been working successfully in partnership with CEC to ensure tenants' views shape the delivery of housing policies and services;
- ETF are contributing towards national housing policy with its input to Scottish Government consultations;
- Tenants are aware of ETF, have wide ranging opportunities for tenant participation and are familiar with good practice;
- ETF have worked through an exceptionally challenging period during lockdown to continue to deliver its services to tenants.

The governance review also identified areas for development. We are delighted to have recently:

- Reviewed and agreed a new constitution with our members;
- Produced a staff handbook with updated policies and procedures;
- Delivered an EC training programme to keep up to date with, understand and implement legislative, regulatory, financial and equality requirements;
- Developed a communications strategy embracing digital platforms;
- Improved the agenda setting and decision-making processes at EC meetings.



Housing Service Improvement Plan Group Meetings

Over the last year, members of ETF have been working with CEC Officers to develop a new tenant working group focussing on Housing Service Improvement. The new Housing Service Improvement Plan (HSIP) Group joins together; the Rent Matters Working Group and the Housing Revenue Account Scrutiny Group. The group has played an important role in helping to monitor progress of CEC's Housing Service Improvement Plan, set up to improve performance, increase tenant satisfaction and reduce costs.

Having agreed that CEC's rent consultation should be the top priority for the group, members worked closely with CEC Officers to shape the information, questions and design of the survey. The HSIP Group will shortly be meeting with CEC Officers to look at the consultation results and any particular trends. The group will then finalise their work plan for the coming year with a focus on service improvement, communication, involvement of other tenants and value for money.

Rents

Rents and rent affordability remain one of the most important issues that ETF discusses throughout the year and this year was no exception.

ETF's Convenor met representatives from each of the political groups within CEC to express ETF's views and concerns in advance of the final decision on CEC's annual rent consultation.

ETF's written deputation highlighted:

- Rents should be more affordable as CEC tenants already pay the highest rents in Scotland;
- Tenants need to be able to afford to live in their homes;
- Many tenants are on low wages and often have to decide on whether to heat their homes or feed their families as they can't afford to do both.

ETF representatives were pleased that CEC agreed a rent freeze for tenants and a council tax freeze for all residents for 2021-2022. In light of the challenging year everyone had faced, this feels like a fair and positive decision. ETF will continue to work with CEC Officers and Councillors from all political parties to ensure rents remain affordable.



Stair Cleaning

ETF representatives on the Stair Cleaning Project Board are fully aware that stair cleaning continues to be a major issue for tenants and therefore continue to monitor the quality of service tenants receive from the stair cleaning contractors. ETF has carried out 'spot checks' in stairs and taken photographs to highlight issues and to check if the service being offered to tenants is satisfactory.

CEC is currently developing a new Stair Cleaning contract and ETF's representatives have provided valuable advice on what could be included in the new contract along with how the stair cleaning specification can help deliver improved services to CEC tenants.

Repairs

ETF's Repairs Group brings CEC tenants together to influence repairs issues. This year the group's priorities include:

- Better communication between CEC and tenants in terms of when appointments will be carried out;
- More explanation about the role of internal and external contractors;
- Repairs not being carried out properly first time and checking the standard of completed repairs;
- Identifying the appropriate CEC member of staff to attend future ETF Repairs Group meetings.

ETF representatives also met with Housing Property staff throughout the year to discuss what repairs could be carried out during lockdown, new ways for tenants to report repairs including online, tenant satisfaction levels, the performance targets for Housing Property and CEC's Responsive Repairs Budget.





Members' Meetings

ETF's Members' Meetings have ensured that tenants are at the forefront of all the work we do. This year we hosted online meetings and discussion events to find out members' views to enable ETF to evaluate, progress and respond to proposals and consultations including:

- Review of Scottish Social Housing Charter;
- CEC's new Housebuilding Programme;
- CEC's rent consultation.

EC Review Day

The EC held their review day online which aimed to:

- Identify what ETF has performed well over the year;
- What could be improved;
- Aspects of ETF's work that has not been implemented and why;
- Opportunities and challenges for the Federation;
- Workload and actions for the year ahead.

The findings from the review day contributed towards ETF's Work Plan for 2021/2022.



ETF Membership Survey

ETF carried out a survey of all Group and Individual Members seeking their views on how ETF performed in the last year. The survey and feedback received helps us to plan the future work of the Federation and ensure we meet the requirements of our SLA with CEC.

Future ETF work

ETF's hard work doesn't stop there as we will continue to be involved in a number of initiatives and events over the coming months ahead including:

- Ensure that the Federation has a plan in place to hold face to face meetings again, when it's safe to do so;
- Provide IT support and training to the EC, tenants and member groups;
- Finalise the TP and Scrutiny Framework;
- Agree a work plan for the HSIP Group;
- Ensure ETF's Policies, Procedures and Constitution are fit for purpose;
- Support and revitalise ETF's Member Groups to identify their priorities and set up new groups;
- Respond to national housing consultations where possible;
- Work in partnership with CEC to deliver a Service Level Agreement for the Federation.

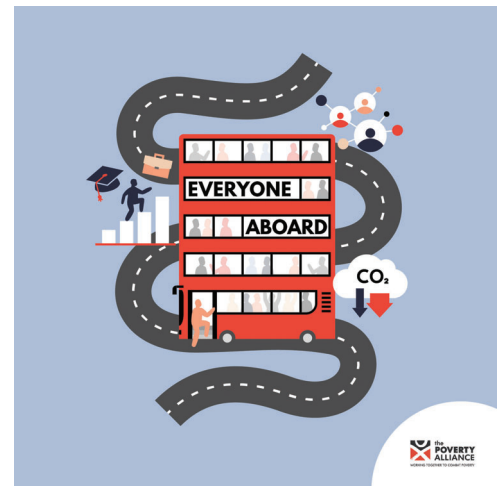
There's so much more to come and ETF will continue to deliver on all the objectives in the Federation's Work Plan, hold CEC to account and be a voice for all tenants throughout Edinburgh.



Partnerships

Poverty Alliance

ETF is a keen supporter of the work of the Poverty Alliance and Federation representatives have attended the organisation's various online events throughout the year. ETF also supported Shelter's efforts to have the Scottish Child payments doubled when the Poverty Alliance sent a letter to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, MSP. Poverty Alliance staff contributed an article on one of their campaigns entitled 'Everyone Aboard' to our most recent edition of *Tenants Voice*, highlighting the campaign calling for free bus travel to be extended to everyone receiving Universal Credit and young people under 25.



Shelter

Homelessness is a critical issue, especially in Edinburgh. Therefore, ETF has been a strong supporter of the ongoing work of Shelter. ETF signed Shelter's petition 'Build Scotland's Future' which aimed to get all the major political parties standing at May's Scottish Parliament elections to commit to building 37,100 homes. ETF also supported Shelter's current campaign 'Fight for Home' which is demanding that more social homes are built, private renters are empowered and those fighting housing injustice have the necessary help and support. Shelter staff contributed housing blogs to ETF which were featured in our publications and website.



National Work

One of ETF's key priorities is to help influence housing and related policy with the Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator. This is not just beneficial to tenants in Edinburgh, but throughout Scotland.

Review of Scottish Social Housing Charter

ETF submitted a response to the Scottish Government's Consultation on the review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter contains the outcomes and standards that all Council and Housing Association Landlords are required to meet on behalf of tenants and other customers, such as applicants, homeless people, factored owners and Gypsy/Traveller Communities.



Scottish Housing Regulator

ETF submitted a response to the Scottish Housing Regulator's Framework to enable it to continue to respond during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Income and Expenditure for the year to 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Income		
City of Edinburgh Council service agreement	241,083	241,083
From old Edinburgh Tenants Federation	-	18,913
Port of Leith Supporting Communities Funding	547	-
Other income	11,653	5,068
	253,283	265,064
Less: Expenditure		
Staff Costs	94,593	123,960
Tenants Information Service Fees	48,000	46,000
Support Costs	46,211	67,947
Gorgie RTO Start up grant	-	20
Port of Leith Supporting Communities Funding	580	-
Governance	4,339	4,028
	193,723	241,955
Net Income	59,560	23,109
Actuarial loss on pension scheme	(3,127)	2,738
Net movement in funds	56,433	25,847

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2021

	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed assets		
Tangible assets	3,390	5,071
Current assets		
Debtors	917	754
Cash at bank and in hand	161,381	105,688
	162,298	106,442
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(26,027)	(21,130)
Net current assets	136,271	85,312
Creditors: amounts falling due greater than one year	(57,381)	(64,536)
Net liabilities	82,280	25,847
Represented by:		
Edinburgh Tenants Federation funds – unrestricted general	151,231	99,299
Edinburgh Tenants Federation funds – pension	(69,460)	(76,263)
Edinburgh Tenants Federation funds - designated	-	2,302
Edinburgh Tenants Federation funds - restricted	509	509
Net funds	82,280	25,847

Ready, Steady, Cook

If you read last year's Annual Report, you'll note that we included a new section with different recipes and information. Feedback was very positive, so we've included this again! We hope you enjoy it.

Recipe for Spaghetti Bolognese

Preparation time: 25 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour & 50 minutes

Total: 2 hours and 15 minutes

Serves: 6

Ingredients

For the spaghetti

1 tbsp olive oil
4 rashers smoked streaky bacon, finely chopped
2 medium onions, finely chopped
2 carrots, trimmed and finely chopped
2 celery sticks, finely chopped
2 garlic cloves finely chopped
2-3 sprigs rosemary leaves picked and finely chopped
500g beef mince

For the Bolognese Sauce

2 x 400g tins plum tomatoes
Small pack basil leaves, $\frac{3}{4}$ finely chopped and the rest left whole for garnish
1 tsp dried oregano, 2 fresh bay leaves
2 tbsp tomato purée
1 beef stock cube
1 red chilli deseeded and finely chopped (optional)
125ml red wine
6 cherry tomatoes cut in half

To season and serve

75g parmesan grated, plus extra to serve
400g spaghetti, crusty bread to serve (optional)

Method

Step 1: Put a large saucepan on a medium heat and add 1 tbsp olive oil.

Step 2: Add the finely chopped bacon rashers and fry for 10 mins until golden and crisp.

Step 3: Reduce the heat and add the onions, carrots, celery sticks, garlic cloves and the leaves from 2-3 sprigs rosemary, all finely chopped, then fry for 10 mins. Stir the veg often until it softens.

Step 4: Increase the heat to medium-high, add 500g beef mince and cook stirring for 3-4 mins until the meat is browned all over.

Step 5: Add the tins of plum tomatoes, the finely chopped leaves from $\frac{3}{4}$ small pack basil, 1 tsp dried oregano, 2 bay leaves, 2 tbsp tomato purée, the beef stock cube, 1 deseeded and finely chopped red chilli (if using), 125ml red wine and the halved cherry tomatoes. Stir with a wooden spoon, breaking up the plum tomatoes.

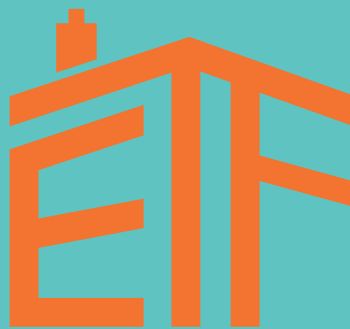
Step 6: Bring to the boil, reduce to a gentle simmer and cover with a lid. Cook for 1 hr 15 mins stirring occasionally, until you have a rich, thick sauce.

Step 7: Add the 75g grated parmesan, check the seasoning and stir.

Step 8: When the bolognese is nearly finished, cook 400g spaghetti following the pack instructions.

Step 9: Drain the spaghetti and either stir into the bolognese sauce, or serve the sauce on top. Serve with more grated parmesan, the remaining basil leaves and crusty bread, if you like.





EDINBURGH TENANTS FEDERATION

Edinburgh Tenants Federation
Norton Park
57 Albion Road
Edinburgh
EH7 5QY

Tel: 0131 475 2509

Email: info@edinburghtenants.org.uk

Web: www.edinburghtenants.org.uk

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

