

Tenants Voice

Issue 120 - March 2024



EDINBURGH TENANTS
FEDERATION

Convenor's Report

It has been a busy few months at Edinburgh Tenants Federation, with new tenants' and residents' groups starting to form across the city, and work being carried out between ETF and the council in tenant scrutiny. I attended the recent council budget meeting to provide a deputation on the rent consultation and give feedback on tenants' response to proposed increases. ETF is happy to see that a supported bus service has been agreed for Dumbiedykes and we are looking forward to working with the Dumbiedykes community going forward to address other issues in the area.

Betty Stone, Convenor



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Student Placement Update

ETF was delighted to welcome a 3rd year Learning in Communities student from the University of Edinburgh, Maja Munivrana, on placement, in January 2024. Maja will be with ETF until mid-May and will be working with several groups and on some specific projects during that time. Maja has shown great passion and commitment to tenants' rights and to supporting residents to improve their communities, so we are very pleased to have her with us at ETF.



Recruitment News

ETF are happy to share that a post for a Development Officer has been advertised and recruitment is currently taking place. The new Development Officer will work across Edinburgh supporting Tenants' and Residents' Groups (TRAs), work with the City of Edinburgh Council alongside tenants and residents to develop tenant scrutiny, and tenant participation and promote the work of ETF among other tasks.

Watch this space for updates.

The Newsletter of Edinburgh's Federation of Tenants' and Residents' Associations

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



Deputation at the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee

Betty Stone, Convenor of ETF, gave a deputation to the Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee on Tuesday 5th December 2023 to update the elected members on the work of ETF and plans in tenant scrutiny and participation. The elected members agreed to continue funding ETF for the next two years, and further work will be undertaken to ensure that communication between ETF and the Council is further developed.

Stall at the Health Agency Christmas Fair - The Healthy Living Centre

ETF were invited to hold a stall at The Health Agency Christmas Fair, based at the Healthy Living Centre in Wester Hailes on Thursday 14th December 2023. This was a great event and allowed ETF staff to interact with locals about housing issues. Thank you to The Health Agency for inviting us along.



Rent Consultation Update

The Executive Committee (EC) for ETF met with Council Officers on Thursday 11th January to get an update on the results of the Rent Consultation Survey. The survey had a much higher engagement of tenants than in previous years. ETF shared the results from their rent consultation work completed with tenants and restated that ETF would not agree with any rent rise over 2% for tenants due to the current cost of living crisis and uncertainty about the future economy.



Edinburgh Food Project - Housing Event

Edinburgh Food Project held a Housing Event on Tuesday 13th February at the Thistle Foundation in Craigmillar, and invited partner organisations including Advocard, Fire and Rescue Service, Police Scotland and the Housing Associations Places for People and Manor Estates. This was a fantastic event and allowed us to talk to residents about housing issues and network with the partners also in attendance

Thank you to the Edinburgh Food Project for the invitation to this event.



Jigsaw Group

ETF has joined the Jigsaw Group in Edinburgh which is a partnership between youth housing services in and around Edinburgh.



The group is hosted by the Rock Trust and includes partners from organisations such as Cyrenians, Link Living, Right There and more.

ETF is hoping that partnership working will allow the organisation to reach a wider audience of tenants and residents and provide support and advice to youth organisations around tenant participation and scrutiny. ETF looks forward to continued networking and partnership working with the Jigsaw group.

If your organisation works with young people in Edinburgh and you wish to find out more about becoming a partner member of the group, you can contact Tommy Begbie at Rock Trust for advice about how to get involved - tommy.begbie@rocktrust.org.

High Flats Group Meeting

The ETF High Flats Group had their first meeting of the year on Monday 19th February, which Andrew Smith from the City of Edinburgh Council attended as the guest speaker and updated the group on lift repairs and replacements. The group have chosen four key priorities to focus on in 2024 and will be working through these in their future meetings.

The key priorities agreed upon were:

- #1 Gaining information about the programme of improvements and receiving updates about the next 10 years.
- #2 An update regarding the lifts programme.
- #3 Environments – around the high flat's gardens, bins, litter etc.
- #4 What the council is doing with the rent money e.g., what improvements are being made.
Financial information breakdown in plain English about what the rent money is being spent on.

If you would like to attend a High Flats meeting or want more information, please contact Shona Agnew at 07399584282 or email shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk.

Deputation at the Full Council Committee - Proposed Rents



City of Edinburgh Council conducted a rent consultation at the end of 2023 and one of the results was that 66% of respondents voted for the lowest proposed rent increase of 4.1% for the next 5 years. ETF Convenor Betty Stone attended the full council committee meeting on Thursday 22nd February to take part in a deputation regarding proposed rent increases. The purpose of the ETF deputation was to challenge the proposed rent increase of 7% and appeal to the council to reduce this, due to the cost-of-living crisis and current economy. The City of Edinburgh Council proposed and subsequently agreed, at the Full Council meeting, on a rent increase for council tenants of 7% over each of the next 5 years.

Your stair cleaning service (City of Edinburgh Council)

The City of Edinburgh Council Stair Cleaning Service is provided to almost 3000 tenements in the city with more than 97,000 cleans carried out every year.

A basic clean helps maintain cleaning standards in shared areas. The cleaners also help with emergency and one off cleaning such as graffiti in stairs.

All residents are responsible for keeping communal areas clean and tidy.

Each time the cleaners visit they should

- sweep and remove dust and litter from hard floor surfaces (including the front and back steps)
- use a spray to clean and disinfect
- wipe down the handrails and window ledges

And (when required) wet scrub stairs, landings and deck access areas.

Please note that walls, windows and spindles on stairs are not included in the standard clean.

In low temperatures spraying or wet mopping stairs can be unsafe for everyone. Sometimes it can be colder inside the stair than out and some areas can be affected more often because they are in higher parts of the city.

The contractor lets us know if their teams are unable to clean due to colder weather. If the weather allows the cleaners to travel, stairs will be swept and rubbish will be removed when the weather is too cold for a full clean. The stair cleaners will also carry out additional tasks for residents, e.g., removing leaves or snow from footpaths and gritting. Where a scheduled clean is missed, a reclean will be arranged for when the weather is warm enough. If this is not practical, stairs will be washed on the next scheduled clean day. If cleans are missed several times, further cleaning may be arranged to bring the stair back up to standard at no extra charge for residents.



If you have any queries, or want to report an emergency stair clean, please email stair.cleaning2@edinburgh.gov.uk or call 0131 529 7827.

For an emergency clean on a public holiday, weekend or out with office hours, call 0131 200 2000 / 0800 0325968.

You can complete an online feedback form at www.edinburgh.gov.uk/xfp/form/306

If you have any queries, please contact the stair cleaning team using the contact details above.

Consultations

TIS Response - Social Housing Net Zero Standard Scotland (SHNZSS) (Scottish Government)

Tenant Information Service (TIS) hosted both a tenant forum and a landlord forum on Wednesday 21st February to formulate a response to the Scottish Government Consultation on Social Housing Net Zero Standard Scotland (SHNZSS). ETF representatives attended the session and shared their views on the proposed standards.

This consultation closes on Friday 8th March and more information can be found here:

<https://consult.gov.scot/energy-and-climate-change-directorate/new-standard-for-net-zero-in-social-housing/>

If you wish to find out more about Tenant Information Service (TIS) or their response to the consultation you can contact them here: <https://tis.org.uk/get-in-touch/>

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) (City of Edinburgh Council)

ETF hosted an online session for tenants and residents to develop a response to the LHEES consultation which the City of Edinburgh Council is running until Sunday 3rd March 2024.

The strategy aims to:

- Improve energy efficiency.
- Reduce carbon emissions.
- Reduce fuel poverty.

The strategy includes information about areas in Edinburgh which will be targeted to improve energy efficiency, and to pilot heat pumps and heat networks.

More information can be found at:

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/sfc/local-heat-and-energy-efficiency-delivery-plan/>



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THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL

Partner Updates



Help us to help you

WelcoMe specialises in making your customer experience as informed, anxiety-free and friendly as possible.

You can share information, your needs and reasons for visiting our locality offices, then the web tool delivers unique, in-the-moment training to our teams who will be welcoming you, bespoke to your needs.

This means our team can discreetly identify what you need to deliver your best possible customer experience.

WelcoMe is the most person-centred tool to share access needs, helping us deliver more for you with enhanced communication and instant training for our teams, **bespoke to your needs**.

- Share anything that you would like us to know about your accessibility needs and preferences
- Staff receive **personalised** hints and tips to meet your needs
- Discretion and **dignity** - just great service all about you

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 @welcome_cs
 @welco-me
 @WelcoMe_CS



Scan this code to know more



CHANGEWORKS.

With rising costs, every energy saving counts. Whether it's simple improvements to how you use energy or ways to make your home more efficient long term, we can help.

Here are some support services you might be eligible for:

- **£150 Warm Homes Discount** – This is a one-off payment to your energy account from your energy supplier. You need to make an application and it usually open to those on low incomes.
- **The Priority Services Register** – This is a free service offered by your energy supplier to give you extra support with your energy or in the event of an emergency.
- **Charitable Grants** – There are many charities and funds available to manage things such as energy debt. This includes government grants and schemes, as well as supplier funds such as British Gas Energy Trust and Scottish Power Hardship Fund.
- **Draught Proofing and Insulation** – The more heat we keep in, the less we need our heating on. Speak to your landlord about draught proofing or getting additional insulation in your home.

Our Affordable Warmth advisors are by your side with expert advice, information and support. We can help you to save energy, access financial support and be affordably warm in your home. Get help at online at <https://changeworksinfo.org/energy-support> or over the phone at 0800 870 8800. Be sure to mention if you are an Edinburgh Council tenant.

MUIRHOUSE NEIGHBOURHOOD GARDEN

ADOPT A GROWING BED

Do you want to grow your own fruit, vegetables, and flowers in 2024? Muirhouse locals can adopt a raised bed in the new Muirhouse Neighbourhood Garden! New to growing? Help will be on hand from Community Gardener, Sylva:

Wednesdays 9:30am-12:30pm
Sundays 1-4pm

You'll find the garden next to Fidra Court

Everyone is welcome, all children must be accompanied by an adult.

To adopt a bed:
pippa@edibleestates.scot
07549431528



Free digital support helpline provided by



The Connecting Scotland Helpline provides digital support to anyone in Scotland. It is free to call and is open from Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.

Anyone can call this freephone number and receive support and advice on topics including:

- Using devices like smartphones, tablets, laptops or desktop computers
- Connecting to the internet
- Navigating the web and social media
- Completing everyday tasks online
- Connecting with the community, family and friends
- Managing finances, paying bills and saving money online
- Reducing costs (energy, data plans, shopping, etc.)
- Finding opportunities for education and employment
- Feeling less isolated and having someone to talk to.

The helpline is run by charity People Know How, in partnership with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO). It forms part of the charity's Reconnect service, which aims to improve digital inclusion across Scotland.

Part of the wider Connecting Scotland scheme set up during the pandemic, the helpline was set up to support those who received devices as part of that programme. It has since been expanded to help anyone in Scotland who needs digital support, regardless of whether they interacted with the original scheme.

“Thank goodness for Connecting Scotland... We felt we were living in the 19th century; now we've joined the 21st century, and we're enjoying every moment of it!”

– Greta & Heidi, helpline callers

The charity has supported thousands of people through the helpline.

Sisters Greta and Heidi received iPads that made their life in a rural part of Scotland much easier, with continual support from the helpline that allowed them do things like order food and essentials to their home instead of making the 60-mile round trip to the nearest shop.

David was able to solve connectivity issues after recently moving to Scotland, allowing him to apply for local college courses and build his skills as he supports his family.

Mary still calls in regularly for advice after the team supported her to regain access to her iPad, which is vital in her life to access medicine and food and to communicate with friends and family.

Rachel eased her worries online and improved her knowledge of online safety, learning about spotting spam emails and identifying trustworthy websites.

The helpline is available to anyone who needs it, whether you're an individual in need of advice, or a support worker or community organisation looking for a helpful resource to refer those you support to.

Call the helpline today for free digital support and advice.

0800 0 590 690

Find out more at: <https://peopleknowhow.org/reconnect/#connecting-scotland>

ONECITY TRUST MAIN GRANT FUNDING PROGRAMME OPEN FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS BETWEEN £5,000 AND £10,000

The **OneCity Trust** (The Trust) is pleased to announce that its main grant funding programme for 2024 is now open for applications seeking funding.

On 2 November 2023, the City of Edinburgh Council officially declared a housing emergency within the city. As a result, 2024 will see the Trust concentrate on funding projects across the city under the theme, “**Enriching the Lives of people impacted by the housing crisis**”.

The list is endless, but examples might be as follows:

- **Prevention or reduction of poverty**
- **Support marginalised groups and tackling inequality**
- **Promote social inclusion by enabling participation in community projects, physical education, etc.**

Contact the OneCity Trust for a briefing pack and application form by emailing admin@onecitytrust.com. The deadline for applications is **5pm, Friday 3 May 2024**, and projects should commence on **1 August 2024** and run for up to one year. Please note a shorter length project will also be considered.

Funding Criteria

- you must be a registered, Scottish charity or constituted organisation.
- you must have been operational for at least one year.
- you must be based in Edinburgh and focusing your work within the city.
- you must supply a copy of your latest, signed annual accounts.
- you must supply evidence of a bank account in the organisation's name.
- your charity's annual income, ideally should be less than £500,000 per year (but exceeding this amount may be considered), and
- you must also acknowledge the source of your OneCity Trust funding at every opportunity.

Further details are listed in the briefing pack.

Overall, the Trust intends to process 10 – 17 grants of between £5,000 and £10,000 each.



Edinburgh





Cyrenians Food Pantry at The Crannie

The Cyrenians and The Crannie run a Community Pop-up Pantry every Friday from 10am – 11am at The Crannie on Cranston Street. The pantries provide access to a range of fresh, chilled and cupboard items in a friendly and accessible environment.

The Pantry is membership based and costs £1 to join, then £2 each time you shop. For the next few months we will also be working with Citizens Advice who are providing a drop in service for anyone looking for help and advice. If you are interested in coming along, or finding out more, please contact michelleredpath@cyrenians.scot



QUALITY AT HOME CARE

Your home is a foundation of love, warmth, and relationships. Why would you want to move away from the place you love and know best?

Whether you are looking for:

Dementia Care

Companionship Care

Light housework

Meal prep

Pet care

Companionship Care

Light housework

Escort to appointments/Social activities

Contact us on 0131 202 2256

or Email : edinburgheast@visiting-angels.co.uk

Resident Input Dumbiedykes Community Growers

A bit of background on myself. My name is Sean, I'm 56, I've stayed in Dumbiedykes for about 16 years with my partner of 28 years and our 4 grown up children.

I have type 1 diabetes. If you know anyone with diabetes, you'll know diet and exercise is important. I adjusted my diet accordingly but the exercise was a problem. I wasn't fit enough for cycling, I wasn't rich enough for golf and I couldn't walk any long distances due to my condition.

I never really got to know my neighbours either, other than the fellow dog walkers you met out with your dog. One day in the summer of 2023, a flyer appeared on our community Facebook page and around the scheme asking if anyone would like to volunteer in a huge gardening project around Dumbiedykes.

Since my children are all grown up now and don't need babysitting anymore, I needed an activity to fill up my free time in the evenings and of course, this fitted the bill regarding the exercise I needed to help my diabetes. So I went....

I knew nothing about gardening which wasn't a problem and neither did the 20 odd people who turned up on the first night.

Many of the original volunteers are still regulars like myself. One or two turned up for one night and decided it wasn't for them. That's OK, at least they gave it a try. Before, I would've walked past them, but now we stop and chat if we meet each other outside.

I'd like to think we've transformed certain areas of the scheme for the better and it seems it was worth the effort, when people stop and thank us for making their area a nicer place to stay.

We've got big plans for 2024 but we can't do it without help. You don't need to turn up every week and there's always something to do regardless of your age or mobility.

I've learnt so much, met some incredible people from all backgrounds and heard some fantastic stories.

The moral of the story is- If you want to meet your neighbours, forget a dog, join a community group.

New Residents Groups

Several new residents' groups are in motion with support from ETF. The localities that have groups looking into setting up are Dumbiedykes, Parkgrove & St Kentigerns, Oxbgangs and North Cairntow. If you live in any of these areas and wish to find out more about the residents' group, or would like to start a new residents' group in your area, then please contact Shona Agnew at 07399584282 or by email shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk.



North East Locality Office

101 Niddrie Mains Road,
Edinburgh, EH16 4DS
Telephone number: 0131 529 3111
Email: northeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

South West Locality Office

10 Westside Plaza,
Edinburgh, EH14 2ST
Telephone number: 0131 527 3800
Email: southwest.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

North West Locality Office

8 West Pilton Gardens,
Edinburgh, EH4 4DP
Telephone number: 0131 529 5050
Email: northwest.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

South East Locality Office

40 Captain's Road,
Edinburgh, EH17 8QF
Telephone number: 0131 529 5151
Email: southeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk

Dates for your Diary

- Public Holiday (office closed) – Monday 1st April 2024
- Public Holiday (office closed) – Monday 15th April 2024
- Federation Meeting – Tuesday 30th April 2024
- Public Holiday (office closed) – Monday 6th May 2024
- High Flats Meeting – Monday 13th May 2024
- Public Holiday (office closed) – Monday 20th May 2024



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.

Tenants Voice is usually published three times a year and is distributed to nearly 3,000 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 ETF.

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



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