

# Tenants Voice

Issue 119 - December 2023



EDINBURGH TENANTS  
FEDERATION

## Convenor's Report

I would like to thank everybody who came to the AGM, especially as the weather was atrocious. Our thanks to Councillor Margaret Graham for being our Guest Speaker, and to the other Councillors and Council staff for attending. It was a very successful evening, and everybody enjoyed the fun part after the formalities.

Once again this has been another extremely busy year so I would like to thank the staff and the EC for all their hard work.

I was very sorry to hear of the passing of George McKie as George worked so hard in setting up ETF. I and ETF would like to extend our deepest sympathy to Nicol Johnstone on the passing of his beloved wife, Frances.

I know this is going to be a very busy year once again with us working with the Council on so many issues i.e. Repairs, Rent, Stair Cleaning, Poverty and Homelessness, which are only a few of the issues that we will be addressing.

The EC and I look forward to working with everyone in the coming year.

Betty Stone, Convenor



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## Thank You

Edinburgh Tenants Federation would like to thank Mark Henry for all his hard work over the years. Mark moved on in June 2023 to pursue his new career as a driving instructor. Mark worked for Edinburgh Tenants Federation for over 13 years and will be sorely missed by tenants, Executive Committee members and staff. Good luck Mark and thank you so much for all you have done for Edinburgh Tenants Federation.



Mark Henry

## Remembering George McKie

ETF was deeply saddened to hear about the passing of George McKie. George's influence in leading the Federation as Convener for over 10 years in many ways led to the Federation being recognised as one of the leading housing organisations in the country, not just as a tenant led and tenant membership organisation, but as an organisation on the 'front bench' of the housing debate. ETF would like to offer condolences to all of those who knew George and especially to George's family.



George McKie

## Partner Updates



### Rock Trust - Youth Membership Programme

The Rock Trust Youth Housing Hub have recently introduced a new Youth Membership Programme. This is a supported flexible volunteering programme for Young people (16-25) who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Young people will have the opportunity to engage in a broad range of volunteering tasks across the Rock Trust and with partner organisations. Young people will be able to develop new skills, gain experience for their CV as well as build confidence and wellbeing.



### Community Pop-up Pantry

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](mailto:michelleredpath@cyrenians.scot)

[www.tickettailor.com/events/onecitytrust/913067](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/onecitytrust/913067)



**Lord Provost  
of the City of Edinburgh's  
Fundraising Burns Supper**

**In aid of the  
Onecity Trust**

**26 JANUARY 2024  
Prestonfield House,  
Priestfield Road,  
Edinburgh**

For more Information, or to  
buy your tickets, go to:

[www.tickettailor.com/events/onecitytrust/913067](http://www.tickettailor.com/events/onecitytrust/913067)



## Creative Community Chest Grants Available

Are you a registered Scottish charity or constituted group located in Drylaw, Granton, Muirhouse or Pilton areas of the City of Edinburgh, as highlighted in the pink area in the illustration below?



Do you have a creative micro-project in mind such as children's creative packs, book giveaways, Community Christmas craft workshops, that you want to progress but need funds?

Our friends at Urban Union have kindly provided a total Community Investment Fund of £3,000 as part of their Arts Strategy undertakings, along with the City of Edinburgh Council's ongoing multi, million-pound regeneration programme in North Edinburgh.

In partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council and North Edinburgh Arts, the Urban Union Ltd fund is managed by the OneCity Trust and disbursed for the residents of the NEA membership area. In total there are 10 individual grants of £300 each available until the fund is exhausted. Completed application forms can be emailed to [elaine@onecitytrust.com](mailto:elaine@onecitytrust.com)

Further information and an application form can be found on our website:  
<https://onecitytrust.com/creative-community-chest-grants/>





## 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](mailto: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](http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/xfp/form/306)

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

## Repairs Direct (City of Edinburgh Council)

The Repairs Direct Team are getting ready for winter by taking a different approach to managing contact from Tenants.

During the winter the team can deal with between 600 and 900 calls a day and over 10,000 calls a month, therefore we have introduced other contact methods to help reduce call volumes and how long you wait to speak to an agent, especially on days with bad weather.



- If you have a non-urgent repair and have access to online facilities, you can raise the job direct on our website Request a housing repair ([edinburgh.gov.uk](https://edinburgh.gov.uk))
- If you have a general enquiry you can chat to us through our webchat facility which can be accessed on the Council's Housing Repairs page Council house repairs – The City of Edinburgh Council
- If you have an emergency repair or do not have access to online facilities, you can contact us on 0131 200 2345

When calling Repairs Direct you may experience long wait times, particularly over peak call times such as 0800 – 0900 and over the lunch period. For those who can, using online channels will help to free up agents to answer emergency calls, calls from our vulnerable tenants and those who cannot access online.

We are continuing to meet with representatives from ETF to allow us to work together to gather your feedback and look at how we can improve the overall tenant experience.

# CHANGEW<sup>🏠</sup>WORKS.

## Are you getting all the support you can get with your energy bills?

For many of us energy bills can be a bit of a worry, especially coming into winter. But did you know you might be eligible for extra support to help feel warmer at home and make energy bills less of a worry?

Here are some support services you might be eligible for this winter:

- **£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 eligibility is different between suppliers so check with your supplier to see if you might be able to apply.
- **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. There are many ways to be eligible such as having an illness or disability, being pregnant or having young children, and even need temporary support such as after being in hospital, as well as much more.
- **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. Plugging draughts or adding some extra insulation can go a long way to keeping you warm and reducing your bills. 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.

## The Edinburgh Growing Together Project

It has been a busy time for the Edinburgh Growing Together project, delivered by Edible Estates on behalf of CEC. The project enables residents to take part in community growing on council housing land.



The construction of two new community gardens has started this year. Muirhouse Neighbourhood Garden is next to Fidra Court. Residents alongside community gardener, Johanna, have been building raised beds in open sessions on Wednesdays 9:30 - 12:30 & Sundays 1 - 4pm. Every one is welcome to come along and take part in a variety of activities or just for a chat! The raised beds will be available for local people to take on to grow their own fruit and vegetables.

Along side creating the garden, volunteers will be supported to renovate the attached garages into tool storage and a micro community hub. 'Growing Youth' sessions happen on Fridays 9:30 - 11:30am which support 16 - 25 years olds gain skills in construction, joinery and horticulture. 'Lend a Hand' offers similar sessions to people who are aged over 50 and out of employment, on Tuesdays & Fridays 1 - 3:30pm.

The other new community garden is in Hutchison. It is located in the centre of a block of tenements and can be accessed between 16 & 18 Hutchison Medway. The Growing Youth volunteers have been busy at this site building the community shed, which will provide tool storage and a place for participants to gather. The participants have made fast work of building the raised beds alongside community gardener Gaby. Local people are welcome to come and help out on Thursdays & Saturdays 9:30 - 12:30.

Edible Estates have also been working closely with residents in Dumbiedykes and Oxfangs. In Dumbiedykes the group have been meeting weekly (Sundays 9:30 - 11:30) to develop food and flower plots across the area. They have also built and planted up wooden planters. In Oxfangs residents have started to create a biodiversity border and build some raised beds for food growing. In both areas the groups are coming up with a plan for their greenspace ready for next growing season and beyond.

If you'd like to get involved in your local project go to [www.growingtogether.scot](http://www.growingtogether.scot)

For more information contact [pippa@edibleestates.scot](mailto:pippa@edibleestates.scot) or 07549431528





# Recent Events

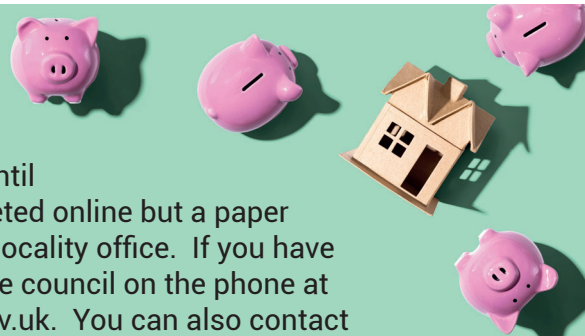
## AGM 2023

ETF held its 2023 AGM on Friday 20th October 2023, and it was a very successful event, despite the poor weather on the night. The event included Guest Speaker Councillor Margaret Graham who stepped in at short notice, and her input was much appreciated. We also wish to thank the other Councillors who attended on the night. The tenants and residents had the opportunity to ask the Councillors questions about various Edinburgh issues. Following a presentation on the highlights of the year for ETF the attendees were also treated to a quiz, which was very competitive, and a disco. Thank you to everyone who attended the AGM.



## Rent Consultation

The City of Edinburgh Council is holding a Rent Consultation until Sunday 17th December 2023. The consultation can be completed online but a paper version was sent out to all tenants, or you can get one at your locality office. If you have any questions about the Rent Consultation, you can contact the council on the phone at 0131 529 7805 or by email at [housing.research@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:housing.research@edinburgh.gov.uk). You can also contact ETF for support by phone at 0131 475 2509 or by email [shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk).



## Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour Consultation



The City of Edinburgh Council has carried out a consultation on Community Safety and Antisocial Behaviour which closed on Wednesday 6th December 2023.

ETF held an event in November for tenants and residents to attend and share their experiences, and this information was fed back to the Council.

If you wish to get further information on this consultation, you can contact the council by email -

[comsafetystrategy@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:comsafetystrategy@edinburgh.gov.uk) or visit the website:  
<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/bi/community-safety-strategy/>

## Council Damp and Mould

City of Edinburgh Council hosted an event on Damp and Mould on Tuesday 14th November at the City Chambers and invited any interested council tenants. ETF and TIS supported this event, which was well attended and had good feedback from tenants. Staff from the council provided a session on the basics around damp and mould, including causes, as well as what the council is doing now to tackle these issues including the development of a team of staff who are solely focused on damp and mould. If you would like further information on this you can contact Shona Agnew at ETF to find out more by phone on 0131 475 2509 or email at [shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk)



## The Gathering

The Gathering is run by SCVO and is the largest free voluntary sector event in the UK. This year ETF staff attended and held a posterboard sharing information and resources. The event ran over two days, Tuesday 7th and Wednesday 8th of November. This was a very busy and successful event which offered learning opportunities through workshops and networking opportunities and ETF staff have spoken to several organisations through this event that they wish to develop partnerships with.



## TIS Conference and Awards

TIS held its Annual Conference on Thursday 9th and Friday 10th November at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow. ETF staff and EC members attended and were able to learn from a variety of workshops and visits.

On Thursday 9th November the TIS National Excellence Awards took place, and ETF was delighted that two of their EC members were finalists for awards. Robyn Kane was the well-deserved winner of the Young Achiever of the Year Award, and Betty Stone was a finalist for Outstanding Contribution to Tenant Participation Frances Nelson MBE (Individual Tenant). Thank you to TIS for such a great event.



## Trustees Week

ETF celebrated Trustees Week between 6th and 10th November 2023, to recognise and thank the volunteer Executive Committee (EC) that supports the running of ETF. For the first four days, different EC members were highlighted and on the last day, the whole EC was thanked for their contributions to the charity.





SafeDeposits  
Scotland

# Tenancy Rights and Support Services



## WE OFFER:

- FREE GUIDANCE AND EDUCATION TO LOW-INCOME BAME AND MIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS LIVING IN PRIVATE RENTED HOUSING REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES!
- FREE TRANSLATION SERVICES!
- FREE REFERRAL TO ORGANISATIONS!

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NOT  
ALONE**



**CONTACT US**

✉ [gurbire@elrec.org.uk](mailto:gurbire@elrec.org.uk)

☎ 0131 556 0441

📍 14 Forth Street, Edinburgh, EH1 3LH

**DISCRIMINATION AND  
HARASSMENT WITHIN YOUR  
AREA? CONTACT US FOR HELP!**



# Locality Teams and Local Group Updates

Here's a flavour of what ETF's Executive Committee (EC) members and local groups have been up to over the past few months.

## Willowbrae and Duddingston

On the 18th October 2023 Willowbrae and Duddingston Residents Association took members out for lunch with Handicabs picking us up both ways. They all really enjoyed themselves and now some are keeping in touch with each other, so it did what I had hoped for communication between neighbours. This was made possible by a small grant from Age Scotland. The meal was at the Ravelston House Hotel in Musselburgh.



## New Groups

ETF is working in several areas with tenants and residents throughout Edinburgh. ETF is actively looking at the potential to set up new residents' associations in areas including Oxfgangs, Dumbiedykes, Abbeyhill/Montgomery Park, Hutchison and Clovenstone. If you live in one of these areas and would like to find out more, please get in touch with ETF's Development Officer Shona Agnew by phone on 07399 584282 or by e-mail [shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:shona@edinburghtenants.org.uk). If you live in an area not mentioned that also does not have a residents' association, and you are interested in setting one up, please also get in touch.

### North East Locality Office

101 Niddrie Mains Road,  
Edinburgh, EH16 4DS  
Telephone number: 0131 529 3111  
Email: [northeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:southeast.locality@edinburgh.gov.uk)



## ETF Membership and Individual Surveys

Thank you to everyone who completed our bi-yearly survey of our member groups and individuals who attended one of our events.

Your views are very important to ETF and are used to formulate the next Work Plan and plan training events.

This year the £50 shopping vouchers were won by Birnies Court Residents and Tenants Association and Robyn Kane with the prizes awarded at our Annual General Meeting on 20th October 2023.



# ETF Events of 2023



## Dates for your diary 2024

Office Closes – Friday 22nd December 2023

Office Reopens – Monday 8th January 2024

(Provisional) Federation Meeting Date - Tuesday 13th February 2024 – 6pm – 8pm

(Provisional) High Flats Meeting Date - Monday 19th February 2024 6pm – 8pm

## 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](mailto: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.





Produced by Edinburgh Tenants Federation,  
Norton Park, 57 Albion Road, Edinburgh, EH7 5QY  
Tel: 0131 475 2509 Email: [info@edinburghtenants.org.uk](mailto:info@edinburghtenants.org.uk)  
[www.edinburghtenants.org.uk](http://www.edinburghtenants.org.uk)

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



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