



Working Together for Better Communities

EATRF ANNUAL REPORT

2016/2017



Conference 2016 - P4

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EATRF Supported by the Tenants information Service and Funded & Registered by East Ayrshire Council



Welcome by

Bruce Cuthbertson, Chairperson

Hello, and welcome to our Annual Report. Once again it has been a busy year and the Federation has excelled itself in the quality and quantity of work we have been involved in over the last year. We have carried out our old favourites Tenant Scrutiny, Outreach and supporting our local groups and members, which you will read more about later in the report.

We also successfully applied for and were granted £85,000 from the Scottish Government's Community Choices Fund and distributed this money under a system called Participatory Budgeting at events held in five communities within East Ayrshire. I would also like to give our congratulations to East Ayrshire Council's Vibrant Communities who also received funding from the Scottish Government and their partners organisations to deliver similar events. The success of the Federation and Vibrant Communities in accessing this funding, saw over £200,000 being made available to local community groups and organisations for their projects, events and equipment.

I cannot thank the members of the Federation enough for their hard work and the amount of time they have given up to really make a difference to people's lives over the past year. As I have said in the past, the rest of Scotland is taking note of our work and this is most significantly noted by the numerous awards we are being nominated for in recognition of our joint work with East Ayrshire Council.

On behalf of the Federation I would like to take this opportunity to thank East Ayrshire Council's Housing Service for the support and funding provided to the Federation and local groups; Housing Asset Services and Vibrant Communities for their continued support, our local councillors, especially former Provost Todd, for all their support and encouragement at local group and Federation levels and the Tenants Information Service (TIS) for the independent advice, training and development support provided.

If you want to know more or take part in our work please call 01563 524073.

Tenant Scrutiny

Challenge. Change. Improve.



The Federation continues to lead the way in the further development of tenant scrutiny, with members of the Federation, tenants and residents groups and individual tenants reviewing housing policies, services, standards and performance from a tenants' point of view.

We are currently busy working on a scrutiny project of Housing Options and Homelessness Services. This scrutiny project includes members of the Federation working on a number of activities to find out more and assess the information and services provided by the Council to people who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless.

The work includes:

- Understanding the Scottish Government's Legislation with regard to homelessness
- Reviewing the Council's Homelessness Policies and Procedures
- Meetings and work shadowing with staff from the Housing Options Service
- Talking to Homeless Service Users
- Visits to the Council's Temporary Accommodation and
- Mystery Shopping to find out what information, advice and support is provided to people who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless to get a real understanding of what happens on a day to day basis

As with all scrutiny work, the aim is to find out from a service user or tenant point of view what works well with the Housing Options and Homelessness Services and what could be improved.

If you are homeless or at risk of homelessness, please contact:

Housing Options

Civic Centre North
John Dickie Street
Kilmarnock
KA1 1HY

Telephone: 01563 554554

Email: homelessness@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Citizens Advice Bureau

The Gateway Centre
3 Foregate Square
Kilmarnock
KA1 1LN

Telephone: 01563 544744

Fax: 01563 571106

EATRF & EAC Joint Tenants Conference 2016 Another hit with tenants and residents . . .



Over 80 delegates from across East Ayrshire had a great day at our Annual Conference held on 29th October 2016 in the Railway Inn, Auchinleck. Opened by former Provost Todd, an avid supporter of the work of the Federation and local tenants and residents groups, the Conference treated delegates to Guest Speakers, workshops, study visit and informative market place.

Delegates then heard from and were able to put questions to our fantastic guest speakers: Blair Millar, Housing Services Manager, Housing and Communities, Chris McAleavey, Deputy Chief Executive, Safer Communities who provided a briefing on the Council's Budget Proposals, Craig Marshall from Police Scotland who raised awareness of the dangers of Rogue Traders with a very informative film and Fiona Goodwin of Home Energy Scotland who provided information, tips and hints for saving money on our fuel bills.

Delegates then chose their next activities, either workshops on the proposed changes to Housing Allocations as a result of Housing (Scotland) Act 2014, the Council's Housing Investment Programme, Digital Inclusion and Integrating Health and Social Care or a study visit to see local housing investment projects, new build Council Housing and Tenants and Residents Association community projects.

The day concluded with a Market Place of over 20 stalls from local Council and Voluntary Organisations and Raffle, which raised over £100 for former Provost Todd's chosen charity, the Samaritans.

The Federation was also delighted that all delegates brought along donations of clothes, shoes and toiletries for the Moldova Appeal.

We would like to thank former Provost Todd, local Councillors, Council staff, TIS and guest speakers as well as all the delegates for helping us to make this another very successful event.

TIS National Awards



In 2016 we were delighted to participate in two highly prestigious National Award Ceremonies that recognise good practice in housing and tenant participation & scrutiny across Scotland.

In June, the Federation picked up two awards at the Tenants Information Service (TIS) Annual Conference: Bruce Cuthbertson, Federation Chairperson won the Frances Nelson MBE Excellence Award and the Federation won the Community Development Excellence Award. Then in November members of the Federation were delighted to accompany Councillor Douglas Reid, former Council Leader, Councillor Eoghann MacColl, Safer Communities and Housing Service staff to the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland Awards, where the Council were shortlisted and highly commended for its inspirational scrutiny work in partnership with the Federation.





East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation

Community Participatory Budgeting



“ Just to say a personal thank you for our cheque from the Participatory Budgeting Event in Hurlford on Sunday. Absolutely delighted. ”
Helen Cooke, Hurlford Guides

One of our biggest achievements of 2016 – 2017 was our Community Choices Participatory Budgeting Events. Supported by the Tenants Information Service, the Council’s Customer Liaison Officer and Community Investment Officer, we successfully applied for £85,000 from the Scottish Government’s newly established Community Choices Fund.

With its routes in Brazil in the 1980’s, Participatory Budgeting has grown

throughout the world and in 2016 / 2017 it arrived in East Ayrshire. Its overall aim is allow communities to decide how to spend pockets of funding or public budgets.

The funding we received allowed us to hold 5 Participatory Budgeting Events in Dalrymple; Auchinleck; Hurlford, Crookedholm, Galston; Bellfield, Kirkstyle, Riccarton and Kilmarnock North West.



“ The Northwest Women’s Group would like to thank EATRF for a great day, Saturday 25th March at St. John’s Church Hall and a thank you for our funding for our arts and crafts materials. ”
Northwest Women’s Group



Community Choices Participatory Budgeting



Community and Voluntary Organisations in these areas were invited to apply for funding to deliver a project or idea and present it to their community at the events. Local people who attended the events then voted for their preferred project to receive funding.

During the five events, over 350 people came along to hear the presentations, with 303 votes cast and 73 local groups & organisations receiving funding ranging from £250 to £1,500 for their projects, events and equipment.

The Federation would like to thank everyone who made these events possible; the Federation Committee, Community Champions from each of the local areas, James McKee and Caroline Harte from the Council's Customer Liaison Team and Sharon Donohoe from Tenants Information Service for all their support and assistance in making the events such a success.

If available in future, we will apply for more Community Choices Funding to host more events in other areas of East Ayrshire.



“ I really enjoyed the Participatory Budgeting event at St John's, Kilmarnock. It was very well organised, and it was really good to meet people from so many very hard working groups. I was thrilled and delighted to receive funding for outings for our Home from Home project. It was a very pleasant surprise. I will certainly keep the Federation informed of how we use the money, along with photographs. With thanks and best wishes. ”

Janice Grant, Secretary, East Ayrshire Churches Homelessness Action



Out and About in East Ayrshire & Beyond

The Federation Outreach Programme sees us out and about across East Ayrshire and beyond providing information and chatting to tenants and residents at Gala Days and Community & Voluntary Organisation Events. Over the last year we visited Hillhead, Hurlford, New Farm Loch and Newmilns, as well as the Kay Park Fun Day, Kilmarnock & Cumnock Town Centre Festivals, the East Ayrshire Community Council's Conference, Cunninghame Housing Association's and East Dunbartonshire Council's Tenants Conference and the Tenants Information Service Annual National Tenants Conference held in Glasgow. We also attend the East Ayrshire Equalities Forum to keep up to date with other groups, organisations and developments.

Rain or shine – we are always delighted to attend events, meet friends old and new and hear what's going on in our local communities. If you are holding a gala day, fun day, event or conference, the

Federation would love to come along and meet you and your neighbours, find out about your community and see if there's anything we can do to assist you and let you know more about our work.

So why not give us a call on 01563 524073.....



Community OUTREACH



Networking Across Scotland

We recognise that tenants and tenants & residents groups are working hard across the country to make a difference to local and national housing standards, policies and procedures and are therefore always keen to meet others to share and learn about good practice and influence national housing developments. This year saw us meet with tenants involved in tenant scrutiny from Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire, Ayrshire Housing, Bield Housing Association, Scotland, Cunninghame Housing Association and Thenue Housing Association, Glasgow. We also met tenants and staff from various landlords to learn about and give our views on proposed changes to the Scottish Social Housing Charter and regularly meet with tenants' representatives from across country at the Regional Networks of Tenants and Residents Organisations.

During our visit to Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire we learned about their Drop In Cafe idea, where tenants and residents were invited to come along for a cuppa and a chat with housing staff and other tenants in local venues and cafe's. With this in mind, we have now introduced "**Conversation Cafe's**" to our work with the Council.

The idea of a **Conversation Cafe** is to bring members of the Federation, along with staff from Housing Services, Housing Asset Services, Customer Liaison Team and Vibrant Communities to a local venue to provide an opportunity for local people to talk to staff providing services in the area, whilst enjoying a cup of tea or coffee. Our first Cafe events were held in Stewarton and we are looking forward to organising more across East Ayrshire – look out for dates, times and locations in the coming months.....



Sharing Good Practice in Aberdeen



East Ayrshire Tenants, Staff & Councillors attend National Consultation

Rent Consultation

Along with all Council tenants, Federation and local tenants & resident group members were invited to participate in the Council's Annual Rent Setting Consultation. The Federation also gave our views on the consultation document. The Council sought views on two proposed options:

- **Option 1** – increase rents by 3.12% which would mean an average rent increase of £2.14 per week over 52 weeks or £2.32 over 48 weeks
- **Option 2** – increase rents by 3.82% which would mean an average rent increase of £2.62 over 52 weeks or £2.84 over 48 weeks

79.38% of tenants who responded to the consultation chose option 1, which was to increase rents for 2017/18 by 3.12% and feedback from the rent consultation demonstrated that tenant's priorities were for Housing Improvements and new Affordable Council Houses.

In the coming months EATRF and interested tenants will be looking into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) in more detail. If you would like to take part in this, please contact the Federation on 01563 524073 or email secretary.eatrf@yahoo.co.uk

What is the Housing Revenue Account?

Income and expenditure in relation to a local authority's own direct provision of housing must be recorded separately within a Housing Revenue Account (HRA). In general terms, a HRA in Scotland is a separate account within the General Fund of a local authority. The main items of income and expenditure for an HRA are:

- rental income from houses (and other HRA assets);
- income from the investment of HRA money (whether cash balances or monies received from the sale of HRA property);
- expenditure on managing, maintaining, repairing and improving the council housing stock; and
- expenditure on debt (loan charges) relating to amounts borrowed to fund capital expenditure on HRA properties (existing or new).



East Ayrshire Council's Local Housing Strategy

The Local Housing Strategy 2013 - 2018 is the overarching Strategy for housing in East Ayrshire and incorporates previous strategies in relation to homelessness, housing support and fuel poverty.

The current Strategy covers both rented and owned housing, and identifies the current challenges and priorities for future activity in the following areas:

- affordability and balanced housing markets
- housing quality, energy efficiency and fuel poverty
- access, information & advice and support
- homelessness
- better neighbourhoods

As part of East Ayrshire Council's ongoing consultation in relation to the development of the next Local Housing Strategy, the Council will be running focus groups on areas such as:

- Housing supply,
- Independent living and specialist provision; and
- Homelessness.

If you have an interest in any of these areas and would like to participate in any of the focus groups, please contact Local Housing Strategy Officer Chris Morton on 01563 554571.



Your views matter.....

East Ayrshire Council, in partnership with the East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation, will soon be reviewing the following publications and will be looking for your views on:

- Tenant Participation Strategy;
- Income Maximisation and Arrears Recovery Policy;
- Common Allocation Policy.

Your feedback and views are important to us and will help shape the above publications.

If you would like to register your interest and be part of the consultations, please contact the East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation by emailing secretary.eatrf@yahoo.co.uk or call 01563 524073.



To find out more about the Federation or get involved in our tenant participation or tenant scrutiny activities, please contact us on 01563 524073 or email secretary.eatrf@yahoo.co.uk

East Ayrshire Council



The Respectful Funeral Service is dignified and professional but still affordable, providing an alternative choice to consider for your departed friend, relative or loved one.

Respectful Funeral Service
DIGNIFIED - AFFORDABLE - LOCAL

To support and help our communities during times of bereavement, we have worked closely with local funeral directors to create a Respectful Funeral Service package.

Our partners are offering a tailored funeral package with savings of approximately 28% to 41% on the Scottish average cost for funeral directors services of £2772.00 (2016).

For further information on our Respectful Funeral Package or our Partners contact: East Ayrshire Council, Bereavement Services, Western Road, Kilmarnock, KA3 1LL. Tel: 01563 554775/6
Email: BereavementServices@east-ayrshire.gov.uk
www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk

East Ayrshire Council has entered into a partnership with three highly respected local funeral directors to provide a Respectful Funeral Service package for East Ayrshire residents.

The funeral directors:

Alexander Muir Funeral Directors

185 Main Street, Auchinleck, KA18 2BA – 01290 338248/ 518118
and 9 Mossmark, New Cumnock, KA18 4NF – 01290 338248

Cumnock and Mauchline Funeral Directors

107 Glaisnock Street, Cumnock, KA18 1BU – 01290 424455 and
11 Kilmarnock Road, Mauchline, KA5 5DB – 01290 553377

ML Williams Funeral Directors

1B Falkland Park Road, Ayr, KA18 1DW – 01292 262277

are offering a funeral service that is respectful, affordable and local.

The package includes everything you would expect from a respectful funeral service including collection of the deceased from within East Ayrshire, care and preparation of the deceased, a choice of coffin ranging from light or dark wood effect or environmental, a place of rest, a hearse and one family car plus arrangements on the day of the funeral.

The package isn't about simplicity; it is a real choice for our communities.

Local residents could be entitled to Social Fund Funeral Payments or a funeral grant from the Scottish Government.

Citizens Advice Scotland or the Department of Work and Pensions can provide advice and guidance about payments which could assist with the cost of a funeral.