



East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation

Working Together For Better Communities



NEWSLETTER 2016

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Welcome by Bruce Cuthbertson, Chairperson

Hello and welcome to our latest annual newsletter, the last year has once again, simply flown in, I know I say that every year but it's true just the same.

Where do I start? Maybe with last year's conference, which was an excellent event. Once again, it was packed with workshops, presentations and of course the market place, all providing excellent information to delegates but of course it is the people that come along that make a good conference. **See back page for your invitation to this year's conference**, held for the first time in Auchinleck. Book your place as soon as possible, and yes transport can be arranged.

This year, we have teamed up with Home Energy Scotland and you can meet members of their staff at the 2016 conference and book yourself a **free** energy survey for your home. Anyone willing to become a member of a group, help start a group, become an interested member on our contact list or simply answer a few Federation survey questions can enter a free draw for a colour flat screen television, generously supplied by Home Energy Scotland. There is still time to enter, simply introduce yourself at any event we attend or come to the conference and enter and we will draw the winner at the end of conference on 29th October 2016.

Every year our workload increases, and we have worked with East Ayrshire Council on several different tenant led scrutiny projects all designed to produce a better service for tenants and other service users. Our most recent project has resulted in the Council's Housing Service working on the introduction of changes to the system for dealing with empty properties that will hopefully streamline the system and reduce rent loss due to properties being vacant.

In August this year, the last few Council houses were sold under the 'Right to Buy' scheme and this will no longer be available in Scotland in terms of Council and Housing Association houses. Hopefully this will allow more new houses to be built, retain our housing stock and house the very high amount of people in Scotland looking for a home to rent. As a point of interest Shelter Scotland's most recent report highlights that there are around **150,000** applicants on Local Authority waiting lists in Scotland, so with around **21,495** Council allocations made across the country, you can see there is a real shortage of housing available to meet needs and demand.

Well I did say it was a busy year, but it was also a year where other people in Scotland recognised what we are doing. At the recent TIS Conference held in June, the Federation, Groups, individuals and staff from East Ayrshire were short listed in five of the six categories. I am delighted to report that we brought home two awards, with the Federation winning the Community Development Excellence Award and myself winning the Frances Nelson MBE Excellence Award. Of course all of our work is a team effort and I would like to thank everyone who worked their socks off to help us achieve our success.

Finally I would like to give a vote of thanks to all our Councillors past and present, to the Council Officers that we have worked with over the years, to James and Caroline from our Customer Liaison Team, Sharon from the Tenant's Information Service, to all the Federation Executive Committee and to all of you that have made the effort to help others in making the system better.

Bruce Cuthbertson,
Chairperson



FEDERATION NEWS



Tenant Scrutiny Update!



You will hopefully recall from previous publications, that tenant scrutiny of Housing Services in East Ayrshire continues to grow from strength to strength. Our most recent work looking at the procedures, timescales and work carried out to homes that have become vacant, known as Voids, has been well received by the Council's Housing Service with improvements based on our recommendations now underway.

Our Voids Scrutiny Report has influenced the establishment of a "Voids and Allocations Service Improvement Group" of which Federation representatives are members. We consider this a very positive outcome, where Housing Management and Housing Asset Services staff, as well as Federation members are working together to improve services, housing standards when properties are let and quicker timescales for re-letting houses.

We have also been pleased to see that the Council has already implemented one of our recommendations in relation to grass cutting in the gardens of empty homes, which will now be done more often to make them look

more attractive to potential new tenants as well as the community as a whole.

The Federation would once again like to thank all the officers from Housing Management and Housing Asset Services as well as all of our scrutiny group members for all their hard work in making tenant scrutiny a reality in East Ayrshire.

We will continue to keep you updated in our next Annual Report and through our open meetings and Annual Conferences.

Over the coming months scrutiny work will be carried out on Housing Options and Homeless Services, the Housing Finances and Estate Management. If you would like to get involved please give us a call on 01563 524073.

We are trying to make a difference AND WE ARE making a difference so come along and jump on the band wagon, the louder the voice the stronger our position - new members are always welcome.

John McKenzie, EATRF Committee Member

Tenant Scrutiny – A view from the Council

As part of East Ayrshire Tenant and Resident Federation's ongoing programme of Council service scrutiny; EATRF representatives have reviewed Void property working practises and relet processes.

Housing Asset Services' (HAS) Void Service ensures houses are repaired and refurbished as quickly as possible, ready for the new tenant moving in.

Members of the Federation spent time shadowing HAS' Void Team as they carry out their duties examining all aspects of the Service. The members then submitted their report and made recommendations for process improvements as well as acknowledging the good practice

that is already in place.

This has provided HAS with a better understanding of the standard of services tenants want and can expect to receive.

We are now working with EATRF alongside our colleagues in Safer Communities to implement changes to processes and improve joint working across services.

This will ensure that we meet the objectives of the Council's Community Plan by providing good quality affordable housing, located in attractive vibrant communities where people want to live.

Join Scotland's Fight Against Fire



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
Working together for a safer Scotland

The Scottish Fire and Rescue Service would like to make you aware of a potentially life threatening practice which is happening throughout Ayrshire.

Worryingly, in an effort to avoid paying utility bills, some people within our community are tampering with their electricity meter and in some cases bypassing the meter completely.

This practice is illegal and potentially poses a threat to the lives of the occupier, family members, neighbours and firefighters.



The potential consequences include:

- **Fire**, as a result of electrical 'arcing' and overheating;
- **Electrocution**, from direct contact with exposed electric wiring or from other metal within the house which has been made 'Live' during the illegal process

Energy theft is not a victimless crime and can lead to a fine or prison sentence. If you have information about meter tampering it can be given anonymously by calling Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

Free Home Fire Safety Visit to your home

As part of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's commitment to building a safer Scotland we offer everyone in Scotland a free home fire safety visit. We can also fit smoke alarms free of charge if your home requires them.

You can book your **free Home Fire Safety Visit** by:

- Calling **0800 0731 999**
- Texting **"FIRE"** to **80800** from your mobile phone
- Visiting **www.firescotland.gov.uk** and completing our online form.

SUMMER OUTREACH PROGRAMME

Once again this summer Federation members have been out and about meeting tenants and residents across East Ayrshire and beyond. This has seen us set up our information stall and chat to folk at Gala Days and Fun Days in Cumnock, Hillhead, Hurlford, Kay Park, Newmilns, Stewarton, as well as Celebrate Kilmarnock & Celebrate Cumnock, the Community Council Seminars in Kilmarnock and Auchinleck and at the Tenants Information Service Annual National Tenants Conference held in Cumbernauld.

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 or event, 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.....

Russell Murdoch, EATRF Committee Member

Tenants Information Service Annual Conference & National Excellence Awards 2016

EATRF Winners Once Again!



Members of the Federation's Executive Committee and Local Tenants & Residents Groups met with tenants and residents from all over Scotland at this excellent conference at the Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld in June this year.

The fantastic, warm welcome from TIS Staff and Board Members, along with the Westerwood Hotel Staff upon our arrival set the scene for an excellent conference, with the theme of ***Investing in Our Future.***

The workshops were varied and had something to please everyone. The study visits allowed delegates to meet the tenants and see the new build houses as part of the Regeneration of Fernhill, Sanctuary Scotland developments in Cumbernauld and North Lanarkshire Council's unit dealing with Antisocial Behaviour were excellent.

Mike Dailly from the Scottish Housing Regulator gave a lively and informative talk on the Regulators role in monitoring

landlord performance and answered various questions from the delegates.

On Saturday night the TIS National Excellence Awards for 2016 hosted by radio personality Cat Harvey, was as usual the highlight of the Conference. Bruce Cuthbertson, our chairperson deservedly winning the Frances Nelson MBE Excellence Award and our Federation winning the Community Development Excellence Award and of course we just had to win the quiz at night as well

The Sunday morning Panel session was very informative and East Ayrshire Council's Karen Walker provided some very good input into the session.

After saying goodbye to old friends and new we made our way home – happy and looking forward to next year and our own conference too.

Sadie McSherry, EATRF Committee Member

"Keep Safe this Winter!"

A Note from East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation



East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation

Welcome to our winter information note. We hope this will help keep you and your family safe and sound at home and when you're out and about.....

At Home –make sure you take some frost precautions. As you know burst pipes can cause serious damage to your home. Burst pipes usually follow on from the water in the pipe freezing. When water freezes it expands, and that is what causes fractures to the pipes. By following a few simple precautions you can hopefully avoid getting frozen pipes.

Frozen Pipes - To avoid frozen pipes you should

- Check the severe weather reports
 - Keep your home reasonably warm day and night
 - Never leave a tap dripping
 - Reduce draughts wherever possible
 - Leave your loft hatch open a little in really cold weather
- If you leave your home empty for a few days during the winter it is important that you
- Leave your central heating on at the frost setting
 - If possible, leave a key with someone who can keep an eye on the house, maybe a neighbour

Tenants are required to inform their local housing office if they intend to be away from home for an extended period of time.

If you get frozen pipes

- If possible, thaw the pipes by applying gentle heat, e.g. a hairdryer or hot water bottle **DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES USE A BLOW TORCH OR NAKED FLAME ON ANY FITTING OR PIPES WITHIN YOUR HOME**
- Raise the temperature in your house but DO NOT switch on the immersion or central heating
- When the water begins to run at all taps and the WC cistern it is safe to use the immersion or central heating

Burst Pipes - If you do get burst pipes

- Turn off the water at the main stopcock immediately - this can save a lot of time, damage and expense.

The main stopcock is usually found under the sink. If the Council has recently fitted a new kitchen you will have a 'Sure Stop' valve that once activated will shut off the water supply.

Check now where your stopcock is located

- Turn on all taps and flush the WC
 - Switch off the electricity supply if water comes into contact with fittings or wiring
 - Attempt to contain the leak in a bowl or other container
 - Contact the Council's Repair Service on 01563 555555.
- Warn any neighbours who may be affected
- Further advice on burst and frozen pipes can be found at: www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk and at www.scottishwater.co.uk

Winter Travel - plan ahead, think about how the weather may impact on you. Some tips and hints ...

Driving your own car?

- Check the weather forecast and road conditions
- Think about using public transport or other modes of transport instead
- Think about alternative routes
- Allow extra time for your journey
- Let someone know where you're going and what time you expect to get there or back
- Make sure your car is ready for a journey in bad weather
- Fully charge your mobile phone
- Think about fitting winter tyres

Pack some essentials . . .

- An ice scraper ● A shovel for snow
- A torch & spare batteries
- Warm clothes, boots and a blanket
- Some food and a warm drink in a flask ● A first aid kit
- Battery jump leads ● A map – in case of diversions

Travelling by public transport?

- Dress for outdoor conditions – wrap up warm, wear sensible shoes / boots & a hat
- Check travel line on 0871 200 2233 for delays / disruption to services
- Take your mobile phone with you to keep in touch with family & friends
- For long journeys take a snack and some water if you can

Winter in your Community – we all know winter weather can leave us vulnerable. We can all make life easier for ourselves and others by taking a few easy steps....

- Find out if any of your family, friends or neighbours may need a helping hand when the weather is bad – have their phone numbers to hand
- Offer to help with shopping or other essential tasks
- Clear ice and snow from your paths
- Remember, ice can make things just as difficult as deep snow for people to get out and about
- We can all prepare for bad weather by agreeing with our neighbours and colleagues what we can do to minimise the effects of severe conditions

What else can you do?

- You can sign up to receive weather warnings and alerts from the Met Office at www.metoffice.gov.uk
- You can also check weather forecasts on the go by downloading the Met Office's FREE mobile phone app for Android and iPhone
- You can find out more about how East Ayrshire is dealing with severe weather at www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk or contact roads and transportation at 01563 503160 or e-mail roads@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Wishing you a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy, Safe and Warm New Year, From All of us at East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation

Tel 01563 524073 www.etrp.org.uk

EATRF Networking Across Scotland!



Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire Study visit

We are delighted to say that East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation is now recognised as leading the way on Tenant Participation and Tenant Scrutiny within Scotland. We are keen to share our work and learn from tenants and residents organisations from many areas and last year hosted a visit by Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire tenants from various landlords. While the main purpose was for them to find out what we have been working on, we also found that their projects were themselves very good, so we are delighted that they have agreed to host a study visit to the Granite City and beyond in September this year.

The representatives from Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire have organised a full learning programme in which we will participate in a Conversation Café, with numerous landlords, Shire Options Team and members of Aberdeen Communities team, visiting New Build Projects, the Safety Hub, Repairs Depot and the new Homeless Hostel. Day two will see us meet with tenants' representatives and staff to discuss Allocations, Sheltered Housing, Participatory Budgeting and how they use the web and Facebook.

Scrutiny Developments in Bield Housing Association

Earlier this year we were delighted to hear that tenants from Bield Housing Association had started out on their scrutiny journey and as an organisation familiar with scrutiny we were invited to meet them to offer some words of advice and support.

The Bield tenants who came from housing developments all over Scotland and the staff made us feel very welcome. We spent the day telling everyone about our different approaches we used to tackle the various subjects we scrutinised, work shadowing, desktop exercises, and mystery shopping to name just a few.

We discussed which subjects would be suitable for a first time scrutiny project and the group settled on one a somewhat delicate subject – How to terminate a tenancy after bereavement – this subject started a worthwhile discussion between the staff and tenants about the pitfalls of emptying a home when the nearest relative stayed overseas and was not able to travel. This subject is certainly a bit different from the norm but was actually very common within Bield Housing and we will be very interested in their recommendations and look forward to our next visit.

Thank you to Federation members Fran, Sadie, Mac and Marion for their input on the day.

Regional Networks of Tenants & Residents Organisations in Scotland

Through the Regional Networks, of which there are 9 across Scotland, the Federation takes the opportunity to meet the **Scottish Government and Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)** to discuss housing policy, housing issues and landlord performance and ensure that tenants' views are listened to.

The Scottish Government use the Regional Networks to sound out new legislation that affects tenants and tenants use this method to put tenants questions and views to the Government, we are looking forward to meeting the new Housing Minister, Kevin Stewart for the first time in a few months and we usually meet the Minister face to face 2 or 3 times a year.

This year has seen the Scottish Government end the Right to Buy Council and Housing Association homes. Members of the Networks welcome this as we all know we need many more houses for rent now and in the future.

The latest piece of work is around the UK Government's Welfare Reform agenda and a discussion is taking place with the Department of Works and Pensions. As this in one way or another effects most families, being part of a Tenants and Residents group CAN make a difference, so join your group now and become part of Region 6 and help shape the future.

The SHR regulates to protect the interests of tenants, homeless people and others who use the services provided by social landlords. To do this they focus on securing good outcomes for tenants and other service users, help tenants to hold their landlords to account and drive improvement in the provision of social housing. The SHR's regulation of social landlords is tenant-focused, intelligent and proportionate. To find out more about the SHR or read their landlord performance reports see: www.scottishhousingregulator.gov.uk.

Scottish Social Housing Charter Review: A Consultation

In July this year the Council hosted a consultation event on behalf of the Scottish Government on the review of the Scottish Social Housing Charter. The Charter sets the standards and outcomes that tenants and other customers, including homeless people, owners, gypsies and travellers can expect from social landlords, in terms of the quality and value for money of the services they receive, the standard of their homes, and opportunities for communication and participation in the decisions that affect them.

This excellent event saw tenants from East Ayrshire and beyond come together with housing staff, local Councillors and the Provost to give their views on the Charter and what they would like to see in the new Charter due in 2017. The Federation followed this up with a joint staff and tenant event to collate and submit our views to the Scottish Government.



LOCAL GROUP NEWS

Our very own local tenants and residents groups continue to work tirelessly to improve housing, the environment and community spirit of their neighbourhoods. In recent months we have seen:

- **Campbell Area Tenants and Residents Association** in Newmilns start work on the Kathy Brown, MBE Memorial Garden – which will become a beautiful rose garden dedicated to the memory of a well loved member of the community who dedicated her life to volunteering and making a difference in Newmilns and beyond.
- **Gauchalland East Tenants and Residents Association**, Galston continues to grow fruit, veg and flowers in their fantastic bio domes, ensuring opportunities for local people to eat their “five a day” with locally grown produce and keep the flower beds in the area alive with colour and aroma
- **Auchinleck Tenants and Residents Association** is working on a community memorial garden, with plaques, plants, flowers and marble benches that will provide a haven for local people to rest and think about their loved ones who have gone before them
- **Castlecroft Tenants and Residents Association**, Dalmellington’s new summer seat that provides an opportunity to rest and take in the dramatic views of the countryside is well loved by local people and visitors alike. New planters coming soon will further enhance this well loved, open vista.

- **The Longpark & Gladstone Tenants and Residents Group** have been working to help further improve their local community for many years, supporting individual tenants or residents and work with local partners including the Community Police, Vibrant Communities, Cunninghame Housing Association Ltd (CHA) and the Federation.



The Group recently conducted an extensive community research involving of all 323 households within the Longpark area supported by ‘Link Up’ and Cunninghame Housing Association. The aim of this research was to identify the positive aspects of living in the area as well as the issues facing tenants and residents.

Overall the feedback from respondents was much more positive than people from out with the area might have expected with most people very happy to be living within the area.

Planned community events include an event/trip for older people, a fund raising Psychic Night and a Children’s Christmas Party with entertainment, bouncy castle, games, prizes and snacks at the Hunter Suite, Northwest Centre on 17th December 2pm to 4pm.

The group are always looking for additional committee members or volunteers to assist at their community events. If you are interested in getting involved please contact Ian Macpherson on 01294 606012 for further information and help make a difference.

Ayrshire Council on Alcohol (ACA)

Is funded by East & South Ayrshire Councils and NHS Ayrshire & Arran to provide free confidential counselling, advice and support to individuals whether they wish to stop or cut down the amount they are drinking. Help is also available to people concerned about someone else's drinking with accessible services provided day and evening across East Ayrshire. To find out more call 01292 281238 or see the web site www.acaayr.org.

View from a Service User: *"As a service user I was lucky to find Ayrshire Council on Alcohol (ACA). The counselling helped me on the right path to fight and control my addiction. The trust I was able to establish with my counsellor and all staff members was amazing and really helped me. ACA = SOS!"*

Alcohol and Drugs Support Services in East Ayrshire

The East Ayrshire Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) is a multi agency partnership of key partners including East Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership, Housing, Vibrant Communities, Police and Fire & Rescue Services, working together in regard to drug and alcohol use and seeking to deliver opportunities for individuals, their families and carers as well as the communities in which they live.

We know drug and alcohol use can have devastating effects on everyone involved and that these issues can be complex in nature. The fairly recent arrival of so called "legal highs" is a prime example of the shifting nature and complexity of action and activity on drugs.

The substantial rise of these so called legal highs demonstrates the stark reality that drug and alcohol problems can affect anyone living our communities. However with proper help and support, people can and do recover and become healthy contributing citizens once again.

The ADP is also concerned with preventing these problems in the first place and works with our young people in schools and communities to prevent problems arising in the first place.

To find out more contact 01563 574000 or e-mail info@cvoea.co.uk





East Ayrshire Councils' Housing Service

▶ HAS Summer Programme

Housing Asset Services' commenced a summer programme of works on 6 June

While Housing Asset Services provides an all year Repair Service, during the summer month's additional focus is given to those jobs which are particularly suited to being completed during better weather conditions, and although the summer weather hasn't been great, to date;

- 34 Chimneys have been removed;
- 32 Fascia/soffits renewed;
- 80 Gutters cleaned ;
- 52 Render jobs completed;
- 44 Small Roughcast jobs completed
- 53 Builder jobs

The programme scheduled to run until September.



▶ Common Repairs

To assist in the management of repairs to common parts of blocks that contain both Council and privately owned properties; East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation is working in partnership with Housing Asset Services to produce an updated Common Repairs Guide on the Council's website.

The guidance aims to provide clear, user friendly advice on shared responsibility for maintaining and repairing elements which are common to all owners, including Frequently Asked Questions and Answers.

It is anticipated the website will be updated in the near future and be beneficial to anyone living in a mixed tenure block in East Ayrshire.

▶ Repairs Service Update

Repairs and maintenance to your home is organised and carried out by Housing Asset Services. All repair requests received are put into categories with each repair assigned a timescale depending on the nature of the work required. When you report a repair we will tell you what priority your repair is and when it will be dealt with. For all non-emergency repairs we will agree either a morning, afternoon or all day appointment, for emergency repairs you will not be given an appointment but you will be given a timescale. You will need to guarantee access.



Sometimes we need to inspect repairs before we can decide what work we need to do and we will arrange an appointment with you for inspection.

All priorities of repairs are carried out during the working day. Only emergency repairs will be undertaken at night and at the weekend.

The Council's repair categories are;

Emergency - within 2 hours

Emergency repairs are classed as "turn up and make safe" where we will remove the cause of the emergency immediately.

Urgent (priority) - within 24 hours

Urgent priority repairs are where the welfare of the resident or the fabric of the property could be compromised if left unattended.

Urgent (non-priority) - within 3 working days

Urgent repairs with lower priority where immediate fixes are not applicable but when failure to attend to the defect could result in a fairly rapid deterioration of the fabric of the building or where the convenience of the tenant is significantly compromised.

Routine - within agreed timescale

Routine maintenance addresses the more routine repair and maintenance work and is appointed to be carried out within one of three timescales:

- 30 working days
- 60 working days
- 90 working days

Any other tasks, for example, those with weather dependency or requiring to be grouped to form a programme of work, are likely to be treated over longer periods. Tenants will be notified when the repair has been programmed and with a date that the work will be carried out.

To report a repair contact the Repairs Helpline on 01563 555555.

► Property Factoring - 2016

Since 2013 East Ayrshire Council has operated a factoring service to most flatted properties with a common entry containing both Council and privately owned properties.

The Council's main function as factor is to manage the repair and maintenance of the common parts of factored blocks and services that are common to residents.

It is in every property owner's interest to ensure their property is repaired and well maintained and, in return for payment of a management fee, the factoring service aims to deliver a prompt repair and maintenance service for common areas; making it less problematic for those living in shared ownership buildings.

This year 64% of homeowners in factored blocks confirmed their satisfaction with the service provided by the dedicated Factoring team within Housing Asset Services, which represents an overall 32% increase in satisfaction since the service was first introduced.

As part of the factoring service a periodic inspection is carried out, usually on an annual basis and involves a comprehensive review of the common elements of the full building and surrounding grounds. In response to customer feedback, we now welcome all parties who have a vested interest in the building to attend these block inspections and contribute to the building maintenance decisions.

Homeowners living within a factored block will receive notification of scheduled block inspections and an invite to attend.

For any further information on the service, the Property Factoring Team can be contacted on (01563) 555503 or e-mail factoring@east-ayrshire.gov.uk



► East Ayrshire Council Helping Tenants to Swap and Move Homes

East Ayrshire Council have partnered with **swapandmove.co.uk** to offer our tenants an easy-to-use online service to help them swap and move homes.

This new service matches our tenants with other tenants who may wish to swap homes with them. Swaps are available both locally and nationally. Tenants of East Ayrshire Council can use **www.swapandmove.co.uk** free of charge.

Rather than waiting on a transfer list, tenants can now actively search for the right home for them. Mutual exchange can be a much faster way of finding a new home, and is becoming increasingly popular for both tenants and landlords. It enables landlords to increase the housing options that they offer, while giving tenants access to a larger number of properties.

Blair Millar, Housing Services Manager stated "Partnering with swapandmove.co.uk will ensure that we offer our tenants a highly effective mutual exchange service, where they can swap and move homes anywhere in the UK."

swapandmove.co.uk is run by Abritas Ltd, the largest supplier of web-based housing software solutions in the UK and a founder member of the government's Home Swap Direct scheme.

Looking to swap
and move home?

swapandmove.co.uk
Click to register or download the App



➤ New Homes for East Ayrshire Tenants – how are we performing?

The East Ayrshire Strategic Local Programme 2012-2015 has delivered an additional 197 new, high quality Council homes to suit the needs of residents in town centre locations across East Ayrshire. This has resulted in a mix of general needs housing, bungalows for older and ambulant disabled residents, along with an award-winning assisted living development in Kilmarnock.

In June of this year, the Council added 2 further bungalows to the new housing development at Ayr Road, Cumnock, on the site of the former Cumnock Chronicle, as part of the approved Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2015-2020. More work is currently underway to provide 7 new homes in Kilmarnock town centre at Old Irvine Road, which will add 4 general needs and 3 wheelchair accessible houses to the list of completions. This development is due to come off site later this year.

In addition, one of our partner Registered Social Landlords (RSL), Cunninghame Housing Association, recently demolished the flats at Montgomery Street/ Hill Street in Kilmarnock, in preparation for the development of 45 new affordable homes on the cleared site, across both general and community care needs. The Contractor, Ashleigh, invited local school pupils to come along and showcase their artwork by painting the hoarding that wraps around the site. The hoarding will remain in place during the currency of the works. Everyone passing by the site can admire the pupils' artistic talent! The Association is also due to commence works to deliver 23 new homes at Dalsalloch, Auchinleck. Another partner RSL, Atrium Homes, will be developing 43 new homes at Blackslyke Avenue in Shortlees. Both developments will provide a mix of house types to suit identified need and all sites are due to commence later this financial year.

Complementing this work, further new build Council homes are due to start on site this financial year at: Brown Street/ Nelson Street, Newmilns, to provide a mix of family homes, bungalows for older and ambulant disabled residents as well as 1 wheelchair accessible bungalow to total 22 new Council houses; Mason Avenue, New Cumnock, to add 6 more bungalows to the Council's housing stock for older and ambulant disabled residents as well as 1 wheelchair accessible bungalow, and a total of 8 homes across a range of needs at Barbieston Road, Dalrymple.

The new SHIP, to cover the period 2017-2022, is due to be presented to Cabinet in October of this year. It will set out the Council's affordable housing aspirations for East Ayrshire over the next five years, taking account of the outcome of the Housing Asset Management Framework assessment which was presented to Cabinet In February of this year.



More Opportunities for You to Get Involved!

Tenant Participation Strategy Review:

A chance to give your views on the current strategy and help shape the next one....



What is Tenant Participation?

Tenant Participation is about involving tenants and service users in the shaping of Housing and related services and the Tenant Participation Strategy outlines how the Council will assist this, along with the range of opportunities available to encourage tenants to get involved and have their say.

The current strategy is operational from 1st April 2014 – 31st March 2017 and the Council and the Federation is looking for tenants and tenants' representatives to get involved in a short term Focus Group to review the current and develop the new Tenant Participation Strategy.

The first Focus Group meeting will be held on **Thursday 10th November 2016, 10.30am**, East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation Office, 19 Portland Road, Kilmarnock. So if you would like to get involved in the **Focus Group**, please call **01563 524073** to register by 27th October 2016.

East Ayrshire Council's Rent Increase Consultation for 2017 – 2018 Rent Levels: Get Involved & Have Your Say...

Annually Councils and Housing Associations across Scotland are required to consult tenants on the proposed annual rent increase, so the run up to 2017 is no different. The Council is currently working on the rent increase proposals to take account of:

- The income required to deliver and manage the housing service; ● Tenant priorities;
- Savings & efficiencies that can be made; ● Funds required to repair, maintain and improve tenants homes;
- New build council housing proposals and developments; ● Affordability; ● Statutory Requirements

Working in partnership with East Ayrshire Tenants and Residents Federation and the Tenants Information Service, the Council will be consulting tenants on the proposed rent increase for 2017 – 2018 in the coming months. Look out for the consultation information coming your way...

If you would like to get more involved and have the opportunity to meet other tenants and Council officers to discuss the rent increase proposals in more detail, call the Federation on 01563 524073

Comparing East Ayrshire

Comparing East Ayrshire Council Rents to other Social Landlords: based on average weekly rent levels for a 2 bedroom property during 2015 – 2016

Falkirk Council	£59.64	Irvine Housing Association	£77.70
North Ayrshire Council	£65.61	Shire Housing	£80.97
East Ayrshire Council	£66.24	Atrium Homes	£81.29
Dundee City Council	£69.42	Cunninghame Housing Association	£83.51
South Ayrshire Council	£70.85		

Get involved at a local or East Ayrshire Wide Level

- Do you want to make a difference in your local area?
- Do you want to meet your neighbours and have say on how services are delivered in your area?
- Do you want to review housing service performance and find out more about how services should work?
- Would you like to have a say on how services could be improved?

If the answer is yes to any of the above, then please get in touch with the Federation on **01563 524073**

Opportunities to get involved are many and working together we are making a difference to our communities and improve service delivery. You could:

- Join your local tenants and residents group;
- Become an individual member of the Federation;
- Join a short term focus group;
- Come along to a conference or open meeting;
- Set up a group for your own area;
- Get involved in tenant scrutiny groups;
- Complete a survey or questionnaire;
- And much more

Go on give us a call, you never know you might enjoy it!



Invitation

*East Ayrshire Tenants & Residents Federation
and East Ayrshire Council invites you to our
Joint Annual Tenants and Residents Conference.*

On: Saturday 29th October 2016

At: 9.30am – 3.00pm

In: The Railway Inn Hotel, Auchinleck

Come along to:

**Hear from key note speaker *Blair Millar, Housing Services Manager, East Ayrshire Council*
Find out more about the work of the Federation and local tenants and residents associations**

Hear from: *The Police and Home Energy Scotland*

Meet our members and other tenants from all over East Ayrshire

**Attend discussion groups on topics such as *Housing Allocations: an update on possible
Scottish Government changes, Integrating Health & Social Care, Digital Inclusion:
Communicating in the 21st Century, Housing Investment: Improvement Programmes,
Energy Efficiency, New Build Council Housing***

Hear from and pick up lots of useful information from the many stalls in our Market Place

To book your place please call *01563 524073*

or e-mail *charte@tis.org.uk* before 2pm on Tuesday 18th October 2016

Lunch and refreshments will be provided and travel expenses will be paid

There will also be a RAFFLE...