

BEEM NEWS

Borders East Lothian Edinburgh Midlothian

BEEM
REGIONAL
NETWORK
bringing tenants,
residents and the
Scottish Government
together

What is the Regional Network all about and what is National Engagement?

Simply it means the ability to effectively give our views and bring national issues, which affect tenants and residents throughout Scotland, directly to the Scottish Government. No intermediaries, no external influences just face to face contact with the people who matter, and who make the policy that affects us all.

The last year has been extremely busy for Housing in Scotland and the network committees. With the Regional Networks consulting with the Scottish Government over the new housing bill.

The Bill was introduced to Parliament in January of this year and proposes;

Reforms to the Right to Buy. (RTB)

A commitment by the Government to make no changes to the RTB entitlements of existing tenants.

The Government has taken on board responses to its proposals by including three RTB reforms in the Bill.

These are:

- Ending the RTB for new supply social housing;
- Ending the RTB for new tenants entering the social rented sector;
- Reforming pressured-area designations.

Establishing the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR)

The aim of this is; To modernise the regulation of social housing which will put tenants, homeless people and other service users at the heart of regulation.

To establish the Scottish Housing Regulator as an independent body on the 1st April 2011

To introduce a Scottish Social Housing Charter that will describe the outcomes that all landlords should be delivering for their tenants; and the Scottish Housing Regulator whose functions will include assessing landlords'

performance against the Charter – It is to promote equal opportunities by placing a duty on the new regulator to encourage equal opportunities and require social landlords to provide housing services in a way that encourages equal opportunities.

3.Private Sector:

The private rented sector provisions will enable local authorities to address the problem of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) operating without planning permission. They will have the power to require landlords to comply with relevant planning requirements before they can obtain an HMO licence.

- To amend the landlord registration system to help local authorities to ensure that all private landlords apply for registration, which checks that they

September 2010

Issue 2

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| National Engagement | 1 |
| BEEM AGM | 2 |
| Regional Roundup | 3-6 * |
| Website | 6 |
| Scottish Housing Social Char- | 7 |
| Diary Dates | 8 |

- Scottish Housing Social Charter.
- Reforms to the right to buy.
- RTO news from around the region.
- The Charter will establish the basis for the SHR's assessment of performance.
- Region 5

are fit and proper, and to give more information to tenants

Current status of Bill: The Bill was introduced on 13 January 2010. The Bill passed Stage 1 on 23 June 2010.

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/36-Housing/index.htm>

BEEM Hold their Third AGM



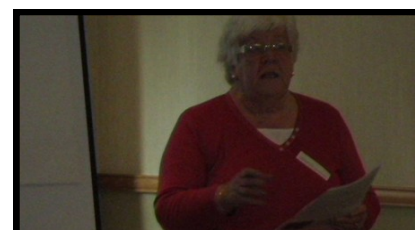
The Regional Network 5 BEEM AGM took place on Saturday 29th of May 2010 with an attendance of 40 delegates. Following debate the BEEM committee promised to improve communication keeping the WEB site as up-to-date as possible. There was one nomination for the Edinburgh vacancy and this came from Edinburgh Tenants Federation. Maureen was elected unopposed at the AGM. Maureen has now taken up her place on the committee and has included a short biography.

"I am one of the founder members and the current secretary of Oxfangs Central Residents Association based in the south-west of Edinburgh. I have been a member of Edinburgh Tenants Federation Executive [ETF] Committee since 2002 and hold the position of vice-convenor. My role with ETF has given me the opportunity to help develop various housing related poli-

cies with my landlord, the City of Edinburgh Council. I am also the convenor of ETF's Repairs Group, a position I have held for 4 years. Representatives from the Repairs Group work with council officers to monitor response repairs budgets, progress towards achieving the Scottish Housing Quality Standards and scrutinising tenant satisfaction and complaints related to the delivery of the repairs service.

I am a passionate believer in tenant participation and benefits that it brings to local communities. That is why I feel honoured to represent Edinburgh Tenants Federation in the Regional Networks and look forward to raising Edinburgh tenant's issues with the Scottish Government."

Maureen Jarvis



Cathie McArthur East Lothian T&R Panel

Kirsty Wells from TIS gave an excellent presentation on the Housing Charter, the charter has been described as a blank sheet of paper with the Scottish Government inviting ideas of what should be included. The BEEM committee look forward to a busy year ahead and are considering having meetings in different locations around the region.

Region 5 Roundup

It is important that the Regional Network not only discuss national issues but share what is going on around the regions, with this in mind the committee members have included information of what projects their RTO is involved in and what achievements they have made over the last year.



east lothian tenants and residents panel

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

The Panel were asked to get involved in Community Planning and our first meeting was held in Queen Margaret University, three of our members are now involved in the discussions of the Regeneration of Musselburgh High Street. A similar Community Planning scheme has been developed in Dunbar.

We were invited by Lothian and Borders Police to a discussion on the illegal growing of Cannabis at the Scottish Mining Museum (Lady Victoria old mine) which was extremely interesting. They told us of the millions of Pounds of Cannabis that can be grown in ordinary houses throughout the country, and the measures the Police are taken to combat this.

The Five Sisters TRA invited us to the launch of their website. West Lothian Council had set up Market Stalls with members of their departments showing the work that goes on.

The Panel carried out consultations with tenants to get opinions on proposed Rents increases.

East Lothian Council and Volunteer Development East Lothian have worked together and four of our members have become the holders of volunteer awards. The Panel as an organisation also received an award this year.

Many of our Executive Committee attended the AGMs of local groups to give support to new and Existing groups and also prompted the development of the group buddy scheme

A successful Burns Supper was held in late January which was well attended, and as always we took the opportunity to gain opinions on the proposed new Tenants Handbook.

Responses to the Housing Bill, was sent in and Jim Maryniak represented East Lothian Tenants and Residents Panel giving oral evidence to the Scottish Government.

Four of our members attended the CIH Conference at the SECC Centre, Glasgow in March

In April we were delighted to have confirmed that East Lothian Council had awarded TIS the contract for three years with an option to extend a further 2 years. TIS will continue to provide help and support to the panel

We have continued to raise awareness of Estate Inspections and Local Initiative

Funding within the groups. East Lothian Council provide a sum of money for the whole of East Lothian that local groups can source to fund a small project within their area. We continue to work closely with Sheltered Housing residents and Gypsy Travellers.

Jeanette Boyd East Lothian



North Bugtlin Tenants Association Edinburgh

North Bugtlin tenants have been active in East Craigs since the Steering Group was set up in 1998. We formed a Constituted Tenants Association the following year and have been registered as a Registered Tenants Organisation since 2002.

We are involved in every group that we can be, to keep our members informed about what's happening, or going to happen, in our area and to Housing Association tenants in general. At present we have representation on over 25 other groups, from the Neighbourhood Partnership to Government Focus Groups. We keep our members as up to date as possible on developments in every aspect of housing provision, policing, neighbourhood management and changes in laws, and on our work to improve service provision by our landlords, Castle Rock Edinvar. *Continue.....*



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By giving this comprehensive service to our members, we can be sure that our members opinions are heard by as wide an audience as possible. We publish our own Newsletter at least 10 times a year, with additional 'specials' as and when an important new issue arises.

There is a lot of work involved in keeping up this level of service, but our Committee are keen to ensure that we give a good service to our members. Our Annual General Meeting in September will see a change in Committee make up, with new members coming on board and some retiring and being replaced. We look forward to continuing to work for the benefit of our members initially, and for the benefit of tenants in general through our work with other agencies.

Tina Beattie Edinburgh.



Midlothian Tenants Forum has had a busy year with one of the main activities concentrating on establishing an estate walkabout programme in partnership with Midlothian Council. The walkabout programme brings together staff from the housing department, the repairs service along with tenants and support staff.

The Estate Walkabout group were able to see that the heavy snow experienced in winter had brought disruption not just to our roads but to the new housing in Gorebridge, where guttering ended up breaking under the weight of the snow. Since this happened Gorebridge tenants have attended our meetings and they have been able to ensure that the Council are aware of the problems these new homes have been experiencing. We hope that any other new builds will be designed to take account of the problems experienced in Gorebridge to ensure this does not happen again.

We sent out our annual newsletter and in addition the Council sent out a tenants survey at the same time which resulted in excellent feedback on the Council Services and we obtained a good number of tenants who were interested in joining our register of interested tenants.

Last year we sent our Vice Chair to the TPAS tenants' conference in Dundee and this year we are managing to send our secretary along to it.

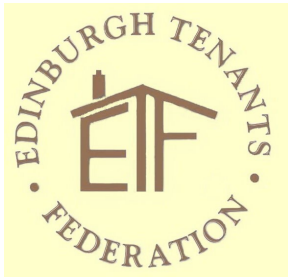
Our annual Tenants conference was held on 15th May in the Arts Centre, Dalkeith and it was well attended. We had two speakers from the Council who discussed the Local Housing Strategy and Commercial Operations who spoke about Midlothians excellent record in recycling and the problems

they had keeping the roads cleared of snow during the winter. Tenants were able to ask questions on both subjects and we finished off having a lovely buffet and cuppa.

We are still a small forum and many of us work but we have a good range of ages there and everyone is keen to go from strength to strength. The Council provide us with independent support and they are hoping to establish a part time worker who will be a tenant participation officer who will develop us further.

Diary Dates: We usually meet on the first Monday of the month in Bonnyrigg Public Halls. Tenants Voice Week is the last week of September 2010 and MTF are having a stall at the council rent offices to hear tenants views and hopefully persuade some to become members. Our AGM is at the end of November and our tenants conference is always in May. Further details can be obtained from our website www.midlothiantenants.co.uk

Lillias Reid Midlothian



Edinburgh Tenants Federation

Details of meeting involving Edinburgh Tenants Federation since 30th August 2010

Edinburgh Tenants Federation Repairs Group [a city wide group of members of Register Tenants Organisations [RTO] and individual tenants interested in improving the City of Edinburgh council repair service] met to discuss the city's progress in attaining the Scottish housing quality standard. The group also elected their representatives to various repairs and improvement working groups for the year ahead. The group discussed local repair issues and set its priorities for the coming year.

Tenant representatives attended the City of Edinburgh Tenants Participation Working Group [TPWG]. This group is made up of Councillors, senior council officers, representatives from other Registered Social Landlords [RSL] and various tenant representatives. The group discussed work that had taken place between April and June in regard to the city's Tenant Participation Strategy 2009-11. Edinburgh Tenants Federation also reported on their work plan for the year and the actions they have undertaken to fulfil their service level agreement with the council. The Partnership Development Officer from the south-west area for the city was also present to outline to the group what steps had been taken to encourage tenant participation in the south-west area in the development of the community planning agenda.

The Repairs Strategy Group [RSG] held its regular bi-monthly meeting to discuss the response repairs budget. Edinburgh Building Services [EBS] the councils in house repair contractor's performance figures were provided for comment. An update on the new housing asset management grouping was also given.

The Federation was invited to attend a meeting with the City's head of Housing and investment section to talk about the Councils proposals to deal with the financial crisis facing the country.

The tenant led inspection group continued their training before they embark on their next inspection. They also visited an RSL to explore the possibility of conducting a mystery shopping exercise of their services.

Maureen Jarvis

Edinburgh Tenants Federation

28th September 2010



Waverley Tenants Organisation based in the Scottish Borders with the majority of Tenants living in the two main Border towns of Galashiels and Hawick The landlord Waverley Housing Association are celebrating their 21st anniversary this year.

The WTO have been working with their community to build a new series of play parks, this has involved Purchasing Land from the landlord.

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Gaining Planning permission from Scottish Borders Council.

Applying to various organisation for grants and funding.

With the help of the committee and hard work from our treasurer / secretary the WTO secured the land and sufficient funding from Scottish Borders Council to built a ball wall and are planning to install further play parks when funding becomes available..



Opening of Ball Wall by WTO April 2010

Following Kath Beaton's resignation there is now a vacancy on the committee for one place from the **Scottish Borders**

The BEEM committee would very much like to encourage RTOs in the Borders to fill this vacancy and ensure the views of

tenants in the Borders are actively promoted on our committee. Nomination forms, will be sent out to all RTO's in the Borders .

Gerry Moss Borders

Regional Network web site.



The Regional Network web site allows tenants to access a host of information including copies of minutes from the BEEM committee meetings and access to a calendar of events.

If you have any information that you would like to share with other RTO's either via future newsletters or the WEB site please contact us at the following address or via the web site.

Michael Boal
Tenant Participation Development Co-ordinator
Social Housing Division
The Scottish Government
Victoria Quay
1-HS
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

Regionalnetworks.org.uk

Log onto the web site and click on the menu contact us

The committee are also looking into the use of social networking sites such as face book to communicate with tenants.

Scottish Social Housing Charter

The purposes of the Charter are to provide clarity for tenants, certainty for landlords, flexibility to set local outcomes, and a basis for consistent assessment and benchmarking. It will set out a high level description of what landlords should achieve, and will provide a framework for assessment of performance and value. The Charter will not prescribe processes, but will set outcomes for social landlords in terms of what they should be doing for their tenants and other service users. Greater flexibility will allow landlords to set different outcomes for direct services to tenants. For example, different outcomes might be required for tenants in a rural location to those in a city centre.

The Charter will establish the basis for the SHR's assessment of performance. Landlords will have to self-assess, which for strength requires tenant involvement. It will enable tenants and landlords to compare performance across Scotland and iden-

tify scope for self improvement.

The proposed timetable for the introduction of the Charter is:

- Autumn 2010 – stakeholder discussions;
- Early 2011 – issue of a discussion paper;
- Spring 2011 – further stakeholder discussions;
- Summer/Autumn 2011 – statutory consultation;
- Late 2011 – submission to the Scottish Parliament.

April 2012 – the Charter comes into force.

In informing the stakeholder discussions the SG will be looking for lots of volunteers among social landlords and tenants to go out and start local discussions to feed into the process.

Key Messages

The key messages in terms of what the Bill aims to achieve are:

- improving the supply and quality of social housing through the RTB proposals;
- better value from social housing, with government defining value;
- landlords achieving better value; and encouragement in driving of self-improvement through the work of the SHR.

It is expected that the

four years before being reviewed and represented to government as priorities change.

William Fleming, Head of Tenant Priorities Team

BEEM discussions on the housing charter.



Dates for your diary

Edinburgh

2nd October 20th Anniversary Conference and Exhibition -Organisation-Edinburgh Tenants Federation Venue Edinburgh Napier University, Craiglockhart Campus Edinburgh.

30th October 20th Anniversary Celebration event

Organisation-Edinburgh-Tenants Federation Venue St. Brides Community Centre, Gorgie Road Edinburgh

6th November Seminar on Social Housing Charter Organisation-City of Edinburgh Council, Registered Social Landlords and Edinburgh Tenants Federation. Venue tbc

13th November Housing Conference [*provisional*] Organisation Dunedin/Canmore Housing Association tbc

15th November BEEM open meeting Scottish Housing Charter Thistle House Edinburgh

29th November Federation Members Meeting Organisation-Edinburgh-Tenants Federation Venue tbc

NBTA Diary Dates

30th Sept - NBTA Members at the 'Meet the Funders' drop-in event at St. Thomas Church, Corstorphine, Edinburgh between 2 and 4.30pm

2nd Oct –NBTA at Edinburgh Tenants Federation 20th Anniversary Conference at Napier University

6th Oct – NBTA at Area Customer Liaison Panel Meeting at 10am and in the evening, NBTA Committee Meeting, East Craigs, 7.30pm

11th Oct – NBTA at East Craigs Wider Action Group meeting and AGM details to follow

11th October – 10am NBTA rep at BEEM sub group meeting followed by BEEM Region 5 panel meeting, Thistle House, Edinburgh

30th Oct – NBTA attending ETF Social to celebrate 20 years Anniversary - 'The Shindig', St Brides Centre, Edinburgh

3 Nov - NBTA Committee Meeting, East Craigs, 7.30pm

6th Nov – NBTA due to attend Joint ETF/Edinburgh City Council meeting on the new Charter at the City Chambers

East Lothian Diary Dates

13 Nov ELC Open Day 10am - 3pm Pennypit Community Centre, Prestonpans

27th October Housing Charter Event for East Lothian, Midlothian & Scottish Borders tenants and landlords, Town House, Haddington.

Borders

28th September Waverley Housing Association AGM 6:30pm Mansfield House Hotel Hawick

29th September WTO training day Tenants Information Service TIS 10am Waverley Office Hawick.

Midlothian

30th September 10:00am Tenants Voices Day Midlothian Council, Buccleuch House, White Hart Street, Dalkeith During Tenants Voices Week we are setting up a stall in Dalkeith and conducting a short survey for tenants to complete. We will be there from 10 - 3pm please come along and meet us and let us know what you think of the housing services you receive.

4th October 6:15pm MTF Committee Meeting Bonnyrigg Public Halls, Lothian Street, Bonnyrigg

12th October 1:30pm Estate walkabout Bonnyrigg and Lasswade Meet at Buccleuch House, White Hart Street, Dalkeith for initial meeting with estate walkabout commencing at 2pm Description: Estate walkabout of Bonnyrigg and Lasswade with Housing Officer Rosie Steele

1st November 6:15pm MTF Committee Meeting Bonnyrigg Public Halls, Lothian Street, Bonnyrigg

27th November 10:30am MTF Annual General Meeting Annual Conference Venue: Arts Centre, White Hart Street, Dalkeith Annual General Meeting, all welcome, guest speaker and refreshments available.