



## WELCOME

### What's been happening since our last AGM?

Chairs and secretaries still meet regularly and the nine regions are still working well.

The Regions' Chairs have continued to meet with Alex Neil, Minister for Housing and Communities. Meetings stopped because of May Elections. They should start again with whoever is Minister after Elections.

Any concerns Tenants have will be brought up at future meetings with the Minister for Housing and Communities.

The Charter Sounding Board still meets and will be looking at any comments Government received in May about Draft Charter,

Further consultation on Charter contents will take place in the Autumn. Final Charter will then be ready for launch in April 2012.

Proposed changes to Benefits and effect on the people who receive Benefits will be discussed at the New Benefits Advisory Group which has recently been set up by the Government.

## NEW SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER

**T**he Scottish Housing Bill was given Royal Assent in November 2010. Within this bill there was to be a Social Housing Charter introduced which would then become an act in April 2012.

At the beginning of last year there were consultation meetings across all the 9 Regional Networks in Scotland, gathering the views of all RTOs on what should be included in this Social Housing Charter.

Now that information from these, and other meetings, have been collated the Scottish Government has produced a Draft Charter for further discussion. This has now gone out to all RTOs for comment. Tenants still have a chance to give their views on the level of detail that we need to include within the Social Housing Charter which will be out for formal consultation later this year.

If you need to look at the Draft Charter discussion paper you can give your views on [www.housingcharter.scotland.gov.uk](http://www.housingcharter.scotland.gov.uk)

You can also follow this on [www.twitter.com/housingcharter](http://www.twitter.com/housingcharter)

Please give them your views as once the Social Housing Charter is in place your Landlord, will have to adhere to this. The new Scottish Regulator will be monitoring all Landlords to make sure that they carry out what ever is written within the Charter, for the benefit of their tenants and all other service users.

There will be further consultation about the Social Housing Charter probably in the Autumn. Meetings will be taking place in various venues throughout Scotland as everyone has to be able to get their views heard. We have to make sure that everyone in Scotland has the opportunity to get involved. We must also make sure that rural communities, the homeless and gypsy travellers all find a way to get their voices heard.

A Member of Tayforth's Executive Committee attended the Charter Sounding Board recently set up by the Government.



## CONTENTS

**Page 1** Welcome from Chair / Social Housing Charter

**Page 2** Concerns about Benefit Changes / Web

**Page 3** CIH training/ Meetings and Contacts  
Sad tribute to Vince Heneghan from Fife.

**Page 4** Wordsearch / Tear-off slip for details when sending comments / Charter Time Scale

# THE NEW WELFARE BENEFIT REFORM

**The new welfare benefit came into being in April 2011. There has been a stakeholder advisory group set up to look at this. This group is made up from members of COSLA, Shelter, SFHA, Scottish Landlords, CIH, various members from areas of Scotland and some members that work at the Government's Analysis Department and Advisory Departments. Tenants are represented by a member of the Regional Networks.**

The group have been looking at parts that will effect the age group 25/35 as they are one of the main areas. This will mainly affect tenants of private landlords. With the cuts that are to be made this will see many of these tenants

facing eviction which will have a big impact on the homeless policy, for many Local Authorities or RSLs. This group may lose between £3.50 and £38.00 per week. It will also have an effect on tenants who have a non-dependant of working age staying in the house. This can see them losing anything between £15.00 and £60.00 per week. This may also see them losing between £2.50 and £3.50 per week from their Council Tax Benefit.

We will be looking at tenants who claim Disability Living Allowance payment. At this moment. we are unsure how the changes will affect them. Part of this reform is looking at the size of house they live in and if it is too large for their requirements. This may see them having to move to a smaller house in the future.

There are not enough smaller adapted houses at the moment.

In 2013 the Government are to introduce a Universal Credit, which will cover all aspects of benefits. These will be paid by Department of Works and Pensions and this will change the current way Housing and Council Tax Benefits are paid at present. These will no longer be dealt with by Local Authorities.

If the Government get their way in paying the benefit straight to the tenant this will have a knock-on effect. There may be an increase in rent arrears. This may lead to rise in rent or reduced services in the future. More tenants may have to apply for benefits or move to smaller or substandard houses in the private sector. □

## WEB – THE REGIONAL NETWORKS

**The Regional website has been up and running for two years now. It is important to know that the Regional Network Website is the only regular means of communication the Networks have with the RTO wide membership.**

It is where the minutes and agendas of meetings are kept and updated every 4/6 weeks. Any news or updates on consultations are listed here.

Anyone can access these and find out what the committee is up to and what they are taking forward to the Housing Minister.

It is also where information about the committee is found. There are profiles on each of Tayforth Regional Network Committee members. So go and check out who we are...

[www.regionalnetworks.org.uk](http://www.regionalnetworks.org.uk)

# CIH TRAINING FOR THE NETWORKS

**When the Regional Networks were first set up, a training needs analysis was carried out. This was to find out what they needed to carry out their role in bringing tenants, residents and Scottish Government together.**

Some of Tayforth Committee did training last year and Rena Smith, Rita Smart and Tom Allan attended training in Glasgow in March. This was time-consuming as it entailed two days on two consecutive weeks but they found it very interesting. Other members of the Regional Network, some we had met before and some we met for first time, also attended and it was good to catch up with them.

## **The training covered:**

- An introduction to Scottish Housing Policy
- The Policy and Political Processes – influencing and interpreting
- Developing Leadership Skills
- Be the Best – Good Chairing and Meeting Skills

The trainers from CIH were very good and made the topics interesting.

## **MEETINGS AND CONTACTS**

**MEETINGS: Monthly at the present time**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: Yearly**

**CHAIRPERSON: Rena Smith,**

38 Balunie Crescent, Dundee, DD4 8PU  
 E-mail: [rena@renasmith.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:rena@renasmith.wanadoo.co.uk)

**SECRETARY: Janice Manzur,**

FFOTRA, 9a Hunter Street, Kirkcaldy. KY1 1ED  
 Email: [j.manzur@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:j.manzur@blueyonder.co.uk)

**REGIONAL NETWORK WEB SITE: [www.regionalnetworks.org.uk](http://www.regionalnetworks.org.uk)**

**SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT WEB SITE: [www.scotland.gov.uk/Home](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Home)**



*Vince Heneghan who sadly passed away on 28 April*

Vince was involved with the Kennoway Area Tenants Residents Association since 1989. He was also a member of Kennoway Community Council and Sandybrae Management Committee. He was part of Fife Federation of Tenants Residents Associations and Fife Housing Association for many years. He became involved with Digital Fife Project learnt to use the computer and develop the Association Website. In May 2008 he received a Community Award. He was a very busy and committed gentleman and will be sorely missed by Tayforth and his friends and colleagues in Fife.

## THE NINE REGIONAL NETWORKS

1. Highland and Argyll & Bute
2. Northern Lights
3. Tayforth
4. Central
5. BEEM
6. South West Scotland
7. West Strathclyde
8. Dunbartonshire & Lanarkshire
9. Glasgow & Eilean Star



The Chairs with Alex Neil Minister

## WORD SEARCH

T	E	N	A	N	T	A	S	D	F	G	H	J
K	C	L	S	Q	E	R	T	S	Y	D	E	L
H	O	U	S	I	N	G	U	I	E	O	P	L
O	N	R	E	Z	Q	E	R	B	T	L	Y	K
U	S	O	S	X	E	R	T	T	Y	S	F	S
S	U	T	S	C	Z	E	R	T	N	Z	U	S
I	L	A	M	V	X	Z	D	O	F	X	I	E
N	T	L	E	B	C	X	I	Z	B	C	M	L
G	A	U	N	N	V	T	E	X	E	V	R	E
A	T	G	T	A	C	T	R	C	N	B	O	M
S	I	E	P	E	B	N	T	L	E	N	F	O
D	O	R	P	S	N	E	Y	A	F	A	E	H
F	N	S	O	D	A	S	S	Y	I	S	R	J
G	N	E	R	F	T	S	Y	O	T	U	O	H
I	Z	X	E	L	B	A	D	R	O	F	F	A

- |             |          |              |
|-------------|----------|--------------|
| TENANT      | HOMELESS | DEBT         |
| LED         | ROYAL    | SELF         |
| INSPECTIONS | ASSENT   | ASSESSMENT   |
| AFFORDABLE  | BENEFIT  | REGULATOR    |
| HOUSING     | REFORM   | CONSULTATION |

## SEND US COMMENTS ON NEWSLETTER AND CONTENTS

**WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEWSLETTER?  
WHAT NATIONAL PROBLEMS TAYFORTH SHOULD TAKE UP ON BEHALF OF RTOs?  
SEND US YOUR IDEAS AND CONCERNS...**

RTO \_\_\_\_\_  
 CONTACT NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE \_\_\_\_\_  
 TEL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

## PROCESS FOR PREPARING THE CHARTER

- Stage 1** – Initial stakeholder discussions across the country, identified possible outcomes Scottish Government produced discussion paper ..... **Autumn 2010**
- Stage 2** – Discussion paper published ..... **Early 2011**
- Stage 3** – Discussion groups reconvened to consider ideas in discussion paper, in light of these, Scottish Government prepared draft Charter. .... **Spring 2011**
- Stage 4** – Formal consultation on draft Charter. Following consultation Scottish Government submits revised Charter to the Scottish Parliament for approval. Parliament may invite final comments from stakeholders before deciding whether to approve the Charter. .... **Autumn 2011**