



issue four

# federation news&views

the newsletter of the north lanarkshire federation

## Federation Annual Conference & AGM 2011

**Saturday 21st May 2011, 9.00am – 2.30pm, Motherwell College**

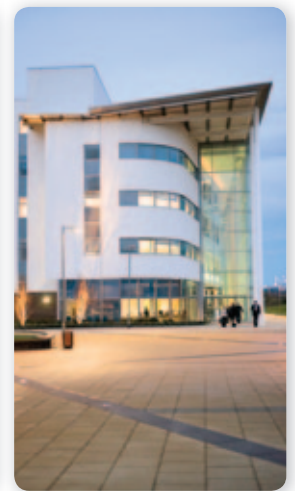
The Federation is pleased to announce that our 3rd Conference will take place on Saturday 21st May 2011. Like previous years this will be an excellent opportunity to meet and chat with groups throughout North Lanarkshire. The conference is always a great way of finding out what other local groups have been doing.

We're delighted to announce that for the first time we're holding the Conference & AGM over in Motherwell, and we're really pleased to have secured the new Motherwell College as the venue for this year's event.

For the last two years the venue was Airdrie Academy in Airdrie, which has always proved to be an ideal venue, we just felt this year it would be good to take the conference to another part of North Lanarkshire.

As usual there will be a market place full of organisations that we think will help local people and local groups. We are currently working away at organising a series of workshop on a whole range of new topics that we think you'll find interesting and helpful. We'll be presenting our Awards again this year for 'Outstanding Contribution' and 'Commendable Contribution'.

Following from the success of last year the event will be a 'joint' event with our AGM taking place directly after the conference. The AGM will take the usual format, with reports, elections and other AGM business. Last year around 100 people attended the conference and we received really positive feedback and comments with many people saying that a joint event was a great idea.



### A date for your diary!

Like all federation events, the conference is free and travel expenses will be offered. If you need assistance with any mobility issues, hearing impairments, childcare assistance or anything else then please contact us.

### Book your place now!

Pass on the date and the information at your tenants group and ask them to send people too. The more the merrier!

More information about the conference will be coming out soon so look out for it.

**To book your place call 01236 435 844 or e-mail us on [NLenquiries@tis.org.uk](mailto:NLenquiries@tis.org.uk)**

Keep up to date with information on the conference by visiting our website  
[www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk](http://www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk)

# Scottish Social Housing Charter

The first Scottish Social Housing Charter will come into force in 2012. The Charter will set out outcomes and standards that Council, Housing Associations and other Registered Social Landlords should be delivering for their tenants and other service users.

The Federation knows that it's important that tenants and tenant's representatives have a say on landlord services and know more about the Charter. We've include here some information from an Open Meeting we held back in November to discuss the development of the Charter; some information from the Scottish Government.

## Open Meeting – Saturday 20th November 2010

Around 30 local people attended this event which was held in St Ignatius Primary School in Wishaw. Facilitated by Sharon Donohoe from the Tenant Information Service (TIS); the meeting was delivered in an informal and relaxed way which has now become the Federations trademark style!



Sharon gave everyone a bit of background and information about the Charter, there was a chance to discuss various issues in small groups and then a feedback session to gather the views of the delegates.

Everyone seemed to particularly enjoy the opportunity to take part in 'game show' style session which gave delegates the chance to consider the various elements of the charter.

**Some of the main topics discussed on the day included:**

- Clear and Fair Allocations Policy
- More affordable quality homes for rent
- Effective Tenancy & Estate Management
- Quality & timely Repairs and Maintenance Service
- Agreement that trying to prevent homelessness should be a priority
- Dealing with Anti Social Behaviour
- Clear communications and information
- Tenant Participation is crucial



There was also an overall consideration that the development of the Scottish Social Housing Charter should improve the housing service delivery of all landlords; but that local standards and outcomes should be developed in partnership with tenants and tenants' organisations.

Working closely with TIS, the Federation has produced a feedback document, which will be distributed to various people including Scottish Government, local landlords, as well as delegates who attended the event; a copy will also be made available to Federation members.



# Scottish Social Housing Charter

## Some information from the Tenant Priorities Team at Scottish Government

The Scottish Government is developing a Scottish Social Housing Charter (the Charter) and we need your help to get it right. We have been holding a series of consultation events with tenants and landlords across Scotland to give you an opportunity to tell us what you think makes a good housing service and what you think should be included in the first Charter.

The charter won't replace any legal obligations that landlords have just now under previous legislation. The charter will be used by the Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) to assess landlord performance and SHR will publish its findings each year. This should help landlords and tenants to identify and share areas of good practice, so that services keep on improving.

Housing and Communities Minister Alex Neil was keen that the charter should begin with a blank sheet of paper. The Scottish Government genuinely wanted to hear your views before putting anything in writing.

Over the past few months, we've been asking stakeholders what they think makes a good landlord and what should be included in the charter. We wanted to tell people about the charter and to encourage landlords, tenants and others to talk to each other about what should be in it.

We've reached even more people with our website, <http://housingcharter.scotland.gov.uk>. Nearly 3,000 people from all parts of the globe have visited the site, although not everyone has left ideas or comments. Please take a moment to register and join the conversation.

We've tried to reflect all the information and good ideas that we've gathered in the past few months in a short discussion paper, which we published in February. The discussion paper was sent to every Registered Tenant Organisation in the country and is available to download from our website. We're keen to hear your thoughts on what's in the paper to help us get the charter right.

If you'd like a copy of the discussion paper, please write to us or email us.

We'd like to have your comments by 16 May 2011. You can write to us at:

The Tenant Priorities Team, Social Housing Division, The Scottish Government, Edinburgh, EH6 6QQ  
Email us: [housingcharter@scotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:housingcharter@scotland.gsi.gov.uk)

**We'll read all your comments before we go on to publish a draft charter in the summer, and hold a formal consultation. This will give you another chance to have your say.**

**The final version will be submitted to Parliament for approval towards the end of 2011. All being well, the Charter will come into effect from April 2012.**



# So many local groups....So much support

## Top Up Grant Introduced

One of the key announcements made at North Lanarkshire Councils conference this year was the introduction of a new *Top Up Grant* for Tenants and Residents Groups.

The Federation worked hard to secure this new fund to help groups develop and enhance tenant participation in their area. The idea of the fund was developed after consulting with groups and working in partnership with the Tenant Participation Project and NLC.

All of the applications to the fund had to show how the fund would develop tenant participation in local areas, or in North Lanarkshire. Completed bids were considered recently and a 'fund panel' made up of housing officials and Federation members met to allocate the funds. Projects funded included newsletters, and other publicity materials and training courses.

## A Resource Room – packed with Resources!

Practical resources are crucial to groups to help them operate effectively. In our offices in Coatbridge we have a Resource Room which is packed with loads and loads of.....'resources'.



The room is available for use by tenants and residents groups across North Lanarkshire. You can access up to date information on Housing Matters. There is a host of training guides and information about developing tenants groups as well as lots of other information that we're sure you'd find useful.

There are computers and printers which can be used to type up minutes, agendas or reports and the computers all have internet access.

There's even tea and coffee making facilities,



not to mention the chance to meet with other Federation members and the staff from Tenants' and Residents' Participation Project.

**Why not pop in – and have a look. To get access to the room please just contact the office on 01236 435 844 or e-mail us on [NLenquiries@tis.org.uk](mailto:NLenquiries@tis.org.uk)**





# Tenants & Residents Participation Project

Are you a member of a local tenant and resident group or interested in setting one up? Then the Tenants' and Residents' Participation Project could be the project for you!

The project is partnership between the Federation, North Lanarkshire Council (NLC) and the Tenants Information Service (TIS).

The project is managed by TIS, and there are three members of locally based staff; Nancy Robertson, Development Officer; James Ballantyne, Outreach Development Officer; and Janet Stevenson, part time Administration Officer. The project works closely with the Federation and shares the Federations offices in Coatbridge.

The project can provide information, advice, support and training, which is all free of charge. Project staff can meet with your group in your area to assist and support you with your group issues. If you don't have a group in your area then the project could help you to set one up.

The project can also provide training on various topics; such as committee skills, running meetings, constitutions, newsletters and many more. Assistance with information on housing policy and services, and help to access funding is also available. The project also offers practical support such as photocopying, and printing.

**If your group requires any training or support you can call the project on 01236 435 844 for a chat about your needs or e-mail us at [NLenquiries@tis.org.uk](mailto:NLenquiries@tis.org.uk)**



## Computer Programme

Last year we were extremely proud to announce a fantastic new programme – providing free computers for member organisations. The programme is a partnership project with LAMH Recycle Ltd, Morrison's, Saltire and North Lanarkshire Council. Another great example of partnership working and how this can deliver real results for tenants in North Lanarkshire



**We can provide all our member organisations with**

- a free computer
- free software (including virus software)
- free computer training
- free computer maintenance & repairs for a year

Many groups have taken up on this fantastic offer.....and there's still computers available!!! If you are interested in getting a computer for your tenants group and you're a member of the Federation then please contact us; alternatively if you're not a member organisation then all you have to do is become a member – it really is that simple.

**Please phone the Federation offices on 01236 435 844 for more info.**

# NLC Repairs: Local People Set the Priorities for the Next 10 Years

For the first time ever North Lanarkshire Council requested tenant involvement in the development of the new repairs contract which has a value of £25million. This meant that local tenants were being asked how to prioritise how work is issued and responded to.

This led to an Open Meeting being organised by the Federation and on 2nd October 2010 nearly 40 local people attended the event held in Airdrie Academy.

Robert Arthur, Chairperson of the Federation opened the event and welcomed Arthur Crossley, Client Service Manager with NLC's Housing Property Service. Arthur facilitated the sessions and working with members of his team; Arthur gave delegates a presentation which included background information as well as information on the Council's legal obligations in relation to repairs. Delegates were then given the opportunity to get their views across on how repairs should be prioritised.

Using an electronic voting system delegates were 'given' over 60 repairs scenarios and asked to 'vote' on which priority category the repair should be given.

**The result was that there are now three categories in which repairs can be dealt with**

- Emergency 3hour response
- Urgent 3 working days response
- Routine 20 working days response

It's worth noting that the 'urgent' category was a new category created through this consultation process!!

After the event Arthur Crossley said "this open day was an excellent example of joint working with tenants through the Federation. All parties will benefit from this type of process where open and frank discussions are encouraged leading to real outcomes", Robert Arthur agreed saying 'this type of event is a fantastic vehicle for local people to have a voice and have real input into how the repairs service is set up'.

This event was a great example of how local people can be involved in a really important decision making process, and it was a real opportunity for local people to influence a crucial service.

**The Open Meetings provides the Federation with a fantastic way to seek your views and are a really effective way for you to get involved and have your say so..... look out for more Open Meetings in 2011.**



## 2011 & Beyond: A New Business Plan

At the late end of last year the Executive Committee were busy working on the new Business Plan to take the Federation into the next three years.

The plan is split into 4 categories

- Influencing North Lanarkshire Council, other Registered Social Landlords and Private Landlords
- Supporting our members and helping to establish more groups
- Communication with our members and all tenants and residents
- Developing our Organisation



The Federation has been around for many years now and during that time we have built a really strong foundation from which to grow and flourish. We think the new business plan will allow the Federation to continue to support tenants and residents across North Lanarkshire.

## TIS Annual Conference & AGM

### June 18th & 19th 2011, Dunblane Hydro Hotel

**Come along to the biggest tenants' conference of the year. - price freeze for the second year running – come to the 2011 conference at 2009 prices!**

With the planned cuts to Scotland's housing budget the year ahead will be a challenging one for tenants and landlords. Over the weekend delegates can look forward to:

- Hearing from the Scottish Government about its plans for social rented housing
- Discuss the impact of Housing Benefit reforms
- Take part in a question time debate about the impact of the spending cuts
- Look at role tenants can play in the self assessment of landlord performance against the new Social Housing Charter
- A series of topical and skill based workshops
- Meet delegates from all over Scotland, and much much more.....

To book a place contact Toni Muirhead on 0141 248 1242.



## Your News from Dmm2 (Coltness) Tenants & Residents Association

The computer classes are well underway now, and everyone is enjoying it; the atmosphere is friendly and fun everyone from both groups (Monday and Wednesday) are a great bunch of people. Joe is the tutor, an easy going friendly man, who lets everyone carry on at their own pace no pressure. He is willing to help with even the simplest query.

The first reaction of most people was 'I won't be any good and will make too many mistakes, and everyone will laugh at me. Well yes we all have a laugh, but with each other not at each other, and we also laugh at ourselves when we make mistakes. When asked how they felt about the classes some of the responses were: - "I thought everyone would know more than me." "I can't even turn a computer on, so how will I learn anything." "Will we be expected to all keep up with each other?" "How will I be able to remember all I'm told about using a computer?" That's just a few questions asked but after a few weeks, they have found the answer to these and many more.

## **Your News from Braedale Tenants & Residents Association**

We have managed to get some car parking facilities in our area; two in Hawthorn Avenue and one in Mavisbank Street. This has made a big difference in the area providing local people with dedicated parking areas including spaces for disabled parking.

## **Your News from Cala Sona**

### **Cala Sona drop in meeting with new tenants**

Cala Sona Tenants Association held a drop in meeting on Saturday 23 October 2010 in Netherton Community Centre for the new tenants who have recently moved into Cala Sona Court. The new tenants moved into flats that completes phase two of the Cala Sona redevelopment.

Phase two comprises of 28 two bedroom high- quality flats in two multi storey buildings suitable for wheelchair users and people with limited mobility and general housing needs. The site of the buildings is well situated with spectacular views of the Clyde Valley. Phase one comprising of 24 flats for people with disabilities and special needs was completed and opened in September 1998.

The meeting was a great success and well attended by Cala Sona tenants old and new. A cold buffet was provided together with tea, coffee and soft drinks. A display and DVD was shown about the history of Cala Sona and MBHA. A few representatives of MBHA, namely, Sandra Murray the Housing Services Team Leader , Tracey Rogowski the Housing Officer and Ainan Groat the Tenants Participation Officer were also at the meeting to advise and answer any questions. Also there was James Ballantyne the Outreach Officer with Tenants Information services (TIS) to advise and answer questions about the benefits of tenants groups.

It was great meeting the new tenants and I hope they get settled into their new homes and contribute to the enhancement of the Cala Sona community

[John More, Secretary - Cala Sona Tenants Association](#)

## **Your News from Chapelhall Tenants & Residents Association**

We have attended all or most Chairpersons Meetings with NLC Housing Management

We have had walkabouts in our area with NLC

We have attended most of the Federations meetings; and Food for Thought

We attended the tenants conference in 2010

We have run some computer classes run through Motherwell College - from beginners to advanced

We ran a First Aid Course, a Reflexology Course, and a sign language course

We have managed to get a car parking area in one of Chapelhall's busiest areas

We held a Christmas Party for local children and Mums with some very special helpers from Craigneuk Tenants & Residents Association

Our big project for 2010 – 2011 is our Allotments Programme – this is something that will benefit everyone in the village of Chapelhall and so far we've had great support. We hope to involve local schools, Boy Scout and Boys Brigade Groups and the Girl Guides as well as a Mother & toddler Group and the residents of Chapelhall .

# Food for Thought: An innovative training and information programme

Back in 2009 North Lanarkshire Federation together with the 'Tenants' and Residents' Participation Project launched a new training and information programme called 'Food for Thought'.

Now in its third year the programme continues to succeed; gaining widespread recognition. The programme was a finalist for a national award last year; the Chartered Institute of Housing's Awards in the 'Outstanding Achievement in Housing Scotland' category.



This is a great testament to the success of the programme which seems to be a really innovative way of providing training and information for tenants across North Lanarkshire.

Evaluation of the programme so far shows that participants rate the sessions as 'excellent' or 'very good'.

The programme is a series of short, informal training and information sessions, and lunch is provided. We try to keep the number of places on each of the sessions low, as we think this helps to add to the informality and we think is one of the reasons for the popularity of the programme.

Having said that if there's a high demand for a particular topic, then we can run a session more than once or we'll try to get a bigger venue as proved to be the case with the 'MOT for Groups' session back in September last year.

Over the years, the programme has proved to be an excellent way of consulting with tenants and to

provide training and information. Since it began there has been 14 sessions with topics such as *Roads and Street Lighting*, *Tenant Participation*, *Funding Opportunities*, *the Councils Restructuring Programme*, and *Allocations*. Last year sessions included *Homelessness*, *Tenant Led Inspections*, *the Local Housing Strategy* and this year has already seen a session on NLC's *Arrears Policy*.

The programme brings many benefits' to the tenant's movement in North Lanarkshire; it helps us to listen to the thoughts and opinions of members. It offers North Lanarkshire Council opportunities to meet directly with active tenant's representatives to discuss key issues and it creates a great environment for learning and training, helping local groups to meet with other agencies and organisations who can also provide help and assistance.

A whole new programme will be developed for 2011 so if you would like to know more or if you'd like to take part in any of the sessions then please give the Federation a call on 01236 435844.

**Food for Thought:  
'You provide the thoughts we'll  
provide the food'**



## Committee Skills Training

### Helping groups to become effective, efficient, and confident

Together with the Federation, the Tenants' and Residents Participation Project (TP Project) organised and delivered Committee Skills Training for local groups. The training was an introduction to Committee Skills and was open to members of Tenants & Residents Groups across North Lanarkshire.

The need for the training was identified by several groups recently due to an increase in new members to some committees and to a number of new groups just starting out.

Four sessions were proposed initially with the training being held at the Federation Offices, where the TP Project is based and at Salsburgh Community Centre. The training sessions were offered in the evening and on a Saturday to try to reach as many participants as possible. The sessions were held back in November, and unfortunately the 'bad' weather that affected so many things at the end of last year meant that some of the sessions were postponed until February this year.

The training covered many aspects of being in a committee and was delivered with the belief that this type of training can help groups and group members to become confident, efficient and effective contributors to the work in their communities.

### Learning from each other

Using various methods such as PowerPoint presentations, group discussions and group tasks; the programme included

- Why do people join groups
- Why people don't join group – looking at barriers
- Ways in which to encourage good teamwork
- The committee toolbox – looking at developing action plans
- Roles and Responsibilities of the committee, the chairperson, the treasurer, and the secretary

The feedback and evaluations from the course has been really positive and the training also provided another opportunity for local groups to come together and meet each other and to share their knowledge, skills and experience.

## East meets North

Back in March a number of members of the East Ayrshire Federation came to visit us at our offices in Coatbridge.

The EA Fed was established in 2007 and are based in Kilmarnock and they were keen to hear about our experiences here in North Lanarkshire and to hear a bit more about what we do. They were also keen to find out a bit more about our Resource Room as they're looking to establish a similar type of room at their place in Kilmarnock.

It was a great opportunity to share good practise; and we're always happy to help other groups. We found out loads too and it was great to find out how things are done in other areas.

We'll definitely keep in touch with the folks over at East Ayrshire; they've kindly said they'll invite us to their place sometime soon - we can't wait to see their place in Kilmarnock and to hear all about what's going on over in East Ayrshire.



# Building For The Future Strides Ahead

The Council's £80m 'Building for the future' programme to deliver 500 new homes across the area continues to take major steps forward. Projects have commenced throughout the council area since the opening of North Lanarkshire's first ever new-build housing in June 2010, at Holytown which saw ten homes for the elderly on Main Street and ten three-bedroom family homes at Spruce Way.

Work is nearing completion on a further twenty amenity homes at the former Cambusnethan Primary Site at Kirk Road, Wishaw. It is anticipated that these homes will be ready for tenants to move in to during the Spring of 2011.

Site works have also recently commenced at both North Road, Westfield, Cumbernauld to build 29 new family homes, and at the former Clarkston Primary School Site at Forrest Street in Airdrie where 19 properties will be built. Both of these locations will include purpose built wheelchair accommodation.

In addition to these, the council has purchased 18 newly built homes from David Wilson Homes at Ravenscraig, near Carfin.

This brings the number of completions and site starts to 106 new homes, with further sites already being progressed toward Planning Approval for another 101 properties following the outcome of the latest tenders for sites at **Gartferry Road, Moodiesburn; Coshneuk Road, Millerston and Laburnum Road, Viewpark** which were approved at a recent Housing and Social Work Services Committee.

Ogilvie has been appointed as the preferred design and build contractor to build 50 homes at **Gartferry Road** and to construct 11 homes at **Coshneuk Road**, with Lovell Partnerships Ltd appointed as the contractor to build 40 houses at **Laburnum Road**.

Tenders are also being progressed for other sites, including **Lanrig Road, Chryston** (25 amenity units for the elderly); **Westfield Drive, Cumbernauld** (approximately 30 units); **West Canal Street, Coatbridge** (14 units) and **Fisher Avenue, Kilsyth** (approximately 20 units), which is leading to a total development of approximately 296 new homes.

(Ref: Alex Miller, Partnership Manager, NLC)

## Back Courts / Environmental Programme

Housing & Social Work Services continues its improvement of the living environment around people's homes with the completion of work at Greenlaw Avenue and Coldstream Crescent and at Stewarton Terrace in Wishaw.

The aim of these projects is to not only improve the appearance of the area around people's homes, but also to improve the amenity and use of the areas. Greenlaw Avenue & Coldstream Crescent has seen the introduction of better defined 'garden' space around each of the blocks of flats, with improved drying greens and the introduction of a communal garden space in the central area of the estate.

Stewarton Terrace has also seen a modernisation of the Drying Greens and street lighting as well as remodelling of open spaces and road access.

Work is currently underway at Clunie Place Coatbridge and within Holytown to similarly improve access and amenity to these areas.

(Ref: Alex Miller, Partnership Manager, NLC)

# Every picture tells a story

Here's some more pictures from the work we've been doing such as organising and attending events, speaking at conferences.



**For more information please contact**  
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