



issue one

federation news&views

the newsletter of the north lanarkshire federation

We go online!

We are proud to announce that the North Lanarkshire Federation now has a website! The site is a fantastic resource for tenant groups in North Lanarkshire. With a resource library, training assistance, useful contacts, events calendar and a discussion area the site is a regularly updated indulgent feast of information to help you get the support you require to improve your area.

We also have included a section for all tenant groups to advertise their activities, successes, and achievements so the more you promote the site the more your group can build up its membership! The address is as simple as our name, www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk



For more information or to advertise your group on the web please contact us on 01236 435844.

Council welcomes strong new Partner

In America “the Fed”, or Federal Reserve Bank, is their equivalent of the Bank of England. North Lanarkshire’s own “Fed” is not (yet) as powerful but shortly after its first birthday it shows every sign of growing maturity and effectiveness.

North Lanarkshire Council has, over the years, put a great deal of effort into encouraging tenants and residents to participate in the management of their houses. The Council recognises that it has not always been easy for tenants to respond and is happy to pay tribute to the considerable efforts made by tenants’ representatives to make their views count in policy development and service delivery.

Both the Council and the tenants recognised that while individual tenant organisations could operate very effectively in their own

localities there was a need for them to be able to come together to speak as one when dealing with issues which affected the whole of the Council area.

After a lot of hard work and a bit of give and take by everyone involved that goal was achieved in Motherwell in September 2006 when the North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations formally came into being. Any new organisation takes time to settle but the Federation has managed to hit the ground running and has played a full part in a number of developments during the past year. The Federation made a significant contribution to the complete revamp of the Tenant Information Pack, which comes with all new Council tenancies. The pack



Council welcomes strong new Partner cont.

has been well-received for its comprehensiveness and user friendliness and much of the credit for that must go to the Federation who were able to articulate the tenants' needs.

The Council's tenant participation activities will now be governed by a Code of Practice which was recently finalised and agreed with the Federation. Work on the development of the Code had been going on for some time and the Federation was able to build on the previous efforts to bring the work to a successful conclusion.

Councillor Barry McCulloch, Convener of North Lanarkshire Council's Housing and Social Work Services Committee, said: "I congratulate the Federation on their achievements during their first year in existence. Despite being such a young organisation they have made valuable contributions to important advances such as the recently finalised Tenant Participation Code of Practice and the overhaul of the Tenant Information Pack. Their input to the Council's work at all levels has been much appreciated. North Lanarkshire Council takes tenant participation very seriously and local tenant organisations need a strong collective voice to engage with us at the centre. The Federation provides such a voice and I look forward to an even more productive and constructive relationship in the years ahead."

We wish the Federation a happy first birthday and we're sure such a precocious infant will continue to grow and develop.

Who we are

In September 2006, why was the North Lanarkshire Federation of Tenant's and Resident's Associations (NLF) created?

If you are a member of a local tenants group why did you become involved in your group? Did you want to improve your community or have a stronger voice together with like minded people? Or was it because you realised you can get more rights by forming a tenants group than you would as an individual?

People join tenant's organisations for a whole range of reasons. Often standing up for a better community and working as a team to have a stronger voice. This is the same principle underlying the Federation. By bringing tenants groups together under one body the people of North Lanarkshire can have a much stronger voice than alone. Local groups are set up to represent one part of North Lanarkshire. This is written in their constitution. The North Lanarkshire Fed is established to represent people on North Lanarkshire wide issues and support groups develop their own area.

The Federation is managed by an Executive Committee (EC). There is a maximum of 12 people on the EC who are elected annually by members. The committee is made up of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and 7 general committee members. The EC hold regular meetings and have powers laid out in the constitution to take forward the workload.

The Federation's authority comes from its members. In addition to committee meetings the Federation will listen to key issues and comments of its members. Every year the Federation will hold General Meetings and an Annual General Meeting. These meetings are open to any member and are important in deciding the work to be done, guide and support the committee.

The Federation may also seek the opinions of its members out with general meetings. It will do this as and when required by the committee and can be done through a range of ways that might include structured consultation, public events, attending member group meetings, or other methods decided to be effective.

So who is on the Committee?

Robert Arthur Chairperson

Maureen Duggan Treasurer

Mohammed Salih Vice Chairperson

Gwen McMullen Secretary

John Colquhoun Committee Member

Peter Winnie Committee Member

Harry Crossan Committee Member,

Tom Hunter Committee Member

Jim Milligan Committee Member

[For more information about the structure of the Federation or for details on our aims you can download a copy of the constitution on our website at www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk](http://www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk)

Getting established

It has not been any easy task getting the largest Federation in Scotland up and running. A lot of time has been spent behind the scenes getting the basics of the group organised. Over the year we have:

- Visited Federations in Dundee and East Lothian to see the best way of organising ourselves
- Developed a resource plan to focus our priorities and obtain funding
- Publicised and advertised ourselves with posters, leaflets and flyers
- Established an office base
- Made sure volunteers don't go out of pocket by developing an expense policy
- Developed through consultation a business plan for three years from April 2008-March 2011
- Developed our membership database
- Established a North Lanarkshire website to give independent information in North Lanarkshire regarding housing and related matters.
- Undergone an induction period of meeting key council staff
- Attended the TIS annual conference and other training
- Held four open meetings throughout North Lanarkshire



Getting established *cont.*

Despite all this, we have been getting involved in some key issues effecting us all and taking up issues that our members raise with us. During the first year we have been involved in the following work:

- Signing off the Code of Practice. After the hard work of the Coatbridge Federation, we have become involved to get this document passed by the Housing Committee. The Code gives lots of rights to tenant groups such as giving enough time for consultation and ensuring our members have the information they need to participate meaningfully. We have since trained up NLC staff throughout North Lanarkshire to ensure they know what the Code of Practice means. A copy of the Code is available on our website.
- Surveying our members to review tenant led inspections and developing services through the Continuous Improvement Group meetings and with Head of Housing
- Delivering a community conference on the repairs service in partnership with MPC, Saltire, NLC and the project
- Reviewing and improving the tenant participation strategy. This work includes reviewing the information that comes from the capital programme, the newsletters that go to tenant groups, the tenant information pack and many other sources of information.
- Reviewing and monitoring the North Lanarkshire Tenants & Residents Development Support Project and agreed an eighteen month extension for the project
- Established regular meetings with the Convener of Housing & Social Work Department and Head of Housing Services
- Supporting local groups including enquiries about antisocial behaviour and caretakers
- Participating on the Allocation Policy Review Group
- Participating on the resources sub-group meeting which is reviewing the administration grant from the Housing Department
- Reviewing information sent out to tenants groups including the council's start up pack, the Tenant handbook, the customer charter, the capital programme and the tenant participation leaflet.
- We made inroads into participating with the North Lanarkshire Partnership



Want to get involved?

If you are interested in finding out more about the Federation or want to become a member then please call 01236 435 844 for more information or check out the website www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk

Change to the repairs services, article by NLC

The Council, through its partner MPC, have introduced a new method of issuing emergency or routine repairs to tenants' homes.

The revised process, which will involve the introduction of hand held technology for the MPC operatives and NLC audit staff, is geared to give tenants the opportunity to report repairs through a dedicated free phone number use an IT based diagnostic tool to ensure the correct task and priority are attached to the repair request allow for a mutually convenient appointment to be made with the tenant at the time of reporting the repair through a revision to the work items currently in operation, create more comprehensive tasks that will allow for the work to be carried out RIGHT FIRST TIME using the new technology being introduced, notify the NLC audit team when the job is completed to allow for speedier inspection

In due course, it is expected that confirmation of appointment and prior texting to mobile phones of arrival times will be introduced. In addition completion of customer satisfaction survey forms at the time of inspection by NLC audit staff, which could be the same day as the job is completed, should produce more meaningful customer response information.

The new process is expected to begin in November of this year and will be under constant review to ensure the improvements expected are evident both to the tenant and in value for money terms to the Council.

The new repairs hotline number is 0800 678 1166



Housing Allocation Policy Review, article by Karen Hagerty, NLC

The Housing Services section of Housing and Social Work Services are continuing to work on a review of their Housing Allocation Policy. In September 2006 the department commissioned the external consultancy firm, ODS Consulting, to carry out a detailed feasibility study and test modelling exercise of different policy types which could be operated in North Lanarkshire and following this to recommend a policy type which they thought would best meet the needs of our tenants and applicants whilst also making best use of our stock. In carrying out these exercises ODS worked alongside the Member Officer Working Group which had been established to review the current policy. This group has representation from elected members, the Tenant's Federation and staff from Housing and Social Work services.

As part of the review process there has been widespread consultation carried out in the form of surveys and focus group events with a wide range of interested stakeholders including, current tenants and

applicants, staff, elected members, tenants groups, other social housing providers in North Lanarkshire and independent advocacy and advice agencies operating in North Lanarkshire.

ODS have now completed their study and have provided their findings and recommendations for the new policy to the Member Officer Working Group. This group continues to meet regularly to develop the recommendations for the new policy and to consider how this could be implemented in the future.

It is anticipated that the Member Officer Working Group will finalise the review process and the new policy will have been agreed by the end of the year to allow the new Allocation Policy to be implemented in tandem with the Common Housing Register in 2008.

If you require any further details regarding this ongoing review please contact Karen Hagerty, Project Officer on 01236 638874.

Got your grant?

Tenants and resident groups are entitled to apply for £400 a year from the Housing Department, however it appears that not all groups are applying for the funding they are entitled to.

Between April 2007 and March 2008 eighteen out of the sixty five tenant groups applied and received funding that they were entitled to from North Lanarkshire Council. In other words about 70% of tenant groups in North Lanarkshire did not receive the grant from the Housing Department. There may be a whole range of reasons for either not receiving the grant or having the application process delayed.

These may include:

- Groups being unaware of the grant
- Groups being aware of the grant but choosing not to apply
- Groups experiencing difficulty in completing the forms
- Other exceptional complications such as problems with post
- Groups not sending in all the information the council require or not being able to gather all the information required

In this article we try to shed some light on the application procedure as it stands.

For the first two years a tenant group needs to apply every six months for £200 and thereafter you can apply once a year for £400. North Lanarkshire Council ask groups to initially apply every six months for several reasons. Firstly to identify early on if a group has any issues regarding managing its accounts and budgeting properly, in order to provide support to the group should they require. And secondly to ensure the group is actually still operating.

A group phones to request an application form from the Development Section on 01698 274 139. The group will then receive an application form and some guidance notes. When sending back the form, North Lanarkshire Council ask you to send in the following information:

- Completed application form
- Copy of most recent constitution
- Copy of accounts independently examined
- Bank statement
- Details of the bank account where the money will be transferred
- Copy of last set of minutes

If you do not send in all the information required this can delay the process. After sending in the paperwork the Housing Department will process the application. This could take approximately a month, although there is currently no standard for this. At the end of this month you will have either received a cheque or a BACS transfer. If you do not send in all the necessary information the Housing Service will contact you as soon as possible and discuss how to complete your application successfully .

If you require any more information about the Council grant you can speak directly to the council on 01698 274 139.

If you would like any assistance in making an application then the project can assist. Please call 01236 435844.

The Federation are currently involved in reviewing the funding system to make it as easy as possible for tenant groups to get funds.

Phone the office on 01236 435844 for more information.

Your News.

This section is an opportunity for you to get some free publicity for your tenant and resident group. If you are interested in getting the publicity then please send your article to the project.

Good news from Townhead Tenant and Resident Group, Coatbridge.

It has been a very busy time for the Townhead group but also an exceptional fruitful period without many successes. Here's a list of what the group has achieved by working together with the council, the local councillor, Police and antisocial Task force:

- Metal fencing installed
- Grass verge and extra car parking
- Speeding signs on Townhead road
- CCTV cameras to monitor local shops
- Objected to having a mobile phone mast erected in the area
- More police patrols in the area and more activity from the Anti-Social Task Force

These achievements are in addition to many individual issues taken up by the group. A huge amount of work has gone into achieving so much. The project would like to thank the whole committee for all this work but a request has been made to especially thank the chairperson Angela McClusky for helping to achieve so much for her local area.

The group are also interested in getting more members. So if you live in the Townhead area and want to become part of a successful tenants organisation then please phone Phil who will get you in touch with the group.

Another success with the Kirkshaws Tenants and Residents Group, Coatbridge

The group has had a great success with getting NHS registered dentist to operate from a local community centre in Coatbridge. Now proper dental treatment will be accessible to everyone who live in this deprived area of North Lanarkshire. The building and upkeep is partly funded for by Link Housing Association. A logo for the group has been designed by kids in the local area and the group, and their newsletter will be issued shortly.

If you need more details then please contact John Colquhoun.

Allershaw Tower Neighbours Association

Allershaw Tower Neighbours Association was formed 4 years ago following NLC decision to incorporate an Assisted Living Project within the building. With the invaluable help of our Project Co-ordinator Sheila Russell our group has gone from strength to strength.

We have a get-together every Monday for tea and a chat; keep fit class on Tuesdays and bingo every Wednesday evening. We have already enjoyed two day trips this summer and our autumn programme consists of a theatre trip, a race night, Halloween party and fish support night when our social fund members and others will get together to enjoy a fish tea, good company and a sing song.

This will take us on to Christmas when we had our festival lunch at Wishaw golf Club. We fund raise throughout the year ending in a raffle and coffee afternoon at Christmas with a gathering of residents, friends, family and invited guests.

We now have approximately 45 members including some from the surrounding area. Social events, activities and day trips are extremely important to our members many of whom live alone or have mobility or sensory impairment. Regular newsletters, meetings and posters keep our members, and residents who choose not to join the association, well informed of all our activities, to which everyone is invited along.

As far as the tenants of Allershaw Tower Assisted Living Project are concerned Allershaw Tower Neighbours Association is a success story we are all happy to be part of.

Are you officially registered?

Out of the 65 groups in North Lanarkshire only 38 have become a Registered Tenants Organisation. Tenant groups need to complete an application form to become registered. It's different from apply for council funds or letting the council know that the group exists.

Under law all Registered Social Landlords including North Lanarkshire Council has to maintain a database of all the RTOs, so it is easy to check if your group is registered. In January 2008, the groups that were registered are as follows:

Name of Group	Members of the Fed as well?
1. Airbles Tenants Association, Motherwell	X
2. Alcarth Tenants & Residents Association, Newmains	✓
3. Allanton tenants and residents association, wishaw	✓
4. Braedale Tenants & Residents Association, Newmains	✓
5. Branchelmuir Tenants & Residents Association, Newmains	✓
6. Brandon Court Tenants Association, Motherwell	✓
7. Burnside Tower Tenants Association, Motherwell	X
8. Calderbank Tenants & Residents Association, Airdrie	✓
9. Central Park Residents Association, Motherwell	X
10. Chapelhall Tenants & Residents Association	✓
11. Cliftonville & Coatdyke Tenants & Residents Association, Coatbridge	✓
12. Coatbridge Central tenants and residents group, Coatbridge	✓
13. Coatbridge Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations	X
14. Coltswood Court Tenants & Residents Association, Coatbridge	✓
15. Condorrat Tenants & Residents Association, Cumbernauld	✓
16. Craigneuk & Old Petersburn Tenants & Residents Association, Airdrie	✓
17. Cumbernauld Citizens, Cumbernauld	X
18. Dual Tenants & Residents Association, Bellshill	X
19. Glassford Tower Tenants Association, Motherwell	✓
20. Grange Tower Residents Association, Motherwell	✓
21. Greenend & Sikeside Tenants Association, Coatbridge	✓
22. Holehills Residents Association, Airdrie	✓
23. Holm Gardens/Burnside Avenue Tenants & Residents Association, Mossend	X
24. Jerviston Neighbourhood Group, Motherwell	✓
25. Kirkshaws Tenants and Residents Association, Coatbridge	✓
26. Langloan Tenants & Residents Association, Coatbridge	✓
27. Lodge Tower Tenants Association, Motherwell	✓
28. Milbrae & Glen Court Tenants Association, Coatbridge	X

29. Milton Court Tenants Association, Airdrie	✓
30. Newmains Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations	X
31. North Lanarkshire Federation	X
32. Rawyards Tenants & Residents Association, Airdrie	✓
33. Salsburgh Tenants & Residents Association, Wishaw	✓
34. The 3 Towers Tenants & Residents Association, Motherwell	✓
35. Tollpark Tenants & Residents Association, Newmains	✓
36. Townhead Tenants & Residents Association, Coatbridge	✓
37. TROUP, Airdrie	✓
38. West Crindledyke Tenants & Residents Association, Newmains	✓
39. Westwood Tenants & Residents Association, Newmains	✓
40. Woodside Tower Tenants Association, Motherwell	✓

It might be that if your tenant's group has applied recently the Council are still processing your application so might not appear on the above list. You can check the updated list by clicking on the Federation website (www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk). If your tenants group is not on the above list and you haven't applied recently then please phone Lynn Mackay and ask for an application form to become a Registered Tenants Organisation.

North Lanarkshire Tenants & Residents Development Support Project

The Federation and the project work closely together to develop tenant participation in North Lanarkshire. The project has four staff. A full time Development Officer (Phil Arnold) a part time Outreach Officer (James Ballantyne), a part time Administration Officer (Janet Stevenson) and a part time Development Manager (Sharon Donohoe).

You may have heard about the project. It has held many events including training sessions, open days, discussion days, and a series of roadshows to set up new groups. Phil and James attend local group meetings to provide support, attend chairpersons meetings from time to time and participate at the NLC conference.

The project started in November 2004 and had a contract up to the 31st March 2008. Following a very positive review the project got a new contract for a further 18 months (October 2009) with the same staff capacity, so we are proud to say that tenant groups in North Lanarkshire will continue to receive the project's excellent support.

Between January and March, the project organised a training programme for tenant groups. Six days were organised, offering tenant groups the chance to learn from a whole range of subjects including understanding and influencing policy, negotiating skills, the allocation policy, common housing registers, housing Scotland act 2001, tackling antisocial behaviour, consultation techniques and chairing skills. The programme was very successful with delegates rating the quality and usefulness of the training very highly.



If your group requires any training or support you can call the project on 01236 435844 for a discussion about your groups needs.

Federation comment on the Proposed New Allocations Policy

Various members of the North Lanarkshire Federation committee have been involved in the working group that has looked at the policy for over a year.

This was no easy task trying to make the allocations policy as transparent as possible; throughout this process the tenants' representatives have been involved at the top level to give the views of the people.

The tenants have never had such an important input in the allocations policy in the past so with the availability to do so is a step forward for the tenants' movement. This also shows the willingness of local authorities to move forward and work with tenants associations from the ground level up.

The picture right shows Robert Arthur, Mary Castles, Executive Director of Housing and Social Work Services along with Barry McCulloch, Convener of Housing and Social Work Services holding the summary document that will be going out to all tenants in North Lanarkshire.



Within this document is a question and answer sheet that explains things in some detail along with comment sheets for tenants to be involved in the consultation process. Robert Arthur, chairperson for the Federation stated he hopes that all tenants receiving the comment sheet will take the time to comment and have their say on this important issue.

Need assistance or info?

At the office in Coatbridge there is a Resource Room for the use of tenants and residents across North Lanarkshire. Tenants can access up to date information on all aspects of Housing, developing tenants groups and matters affecting their community. There are also free computers with Internet access, a DVD and video library, and free printing and photocopying available (within reason).

If you have a spare hour, why not come to the office and relax with a hot drink, and get up to date on all the crucial information you will need to improve your community?

If you would like to access the room, please phone the office to make a booking on 01236 435844. You can also get assistance by looking at our website! Just click on www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk



Free Home Study Workbooks

Would you like the opportunity to improve your skills and knowledge from the comfort of your own home and with support from TIS staff when required?

If yes, then TIS have a range of free home study packs for you to choose from. You can work through the packs at your leisure at home on your own, or with other members of your tenants'/residents' group.

Please note, you can request a maximum of three Workbooks at a time.

Topics available are:

- Building Membership
- Chairing Skills Part 1
- Chairing Skills Part 2
- Constitutions
- Effective Organisation Part 1
- Effective Organisation Part 2
- Housing Standards and Rents
- Introducing Housing Finance
- Negotiation Skills
- Preparing a Speech
- Secretary Skills
- Stock Transfer
- Tenant Participation Part 1
- Tenant Participation Part 2
- Tenant Participation Part 3
- Tenant Participation Part 4
- Treasurers Skills
- Writing Newsletters

What's involved?

If you have time, this is an ideal way to study at your own pace and learn about various subjects. There are no tests involved and when you finish the Workbook you will receive a completion certificate.

With your pack you will also receive an evaluation form to let us know what you thought of the workbook and whether or not you would recommend any changes for the future.

If you are interested in the Home Study Packs please contact TIS on 0141 2481242 for more information.

TENANTS INFORMATION SERVICE

HOME STUDY PACKS
Choose from the following **FREE** packs:
Maximum of 3 packs per person, per request

Building Membership Housing Standards & Rents *new*

Constitutions(associations) Housing Finance, An Introduction

Chairing Skills

Part 1 Part 2 Negotiating Skills

Part 1 Part 2 Preparing a Speech

Effective Organisation

Part 1 Part 2 Stock Transfer

Tenant Participation

Part 1 Part 2 Secretary Skills *new*

Part 3 Part 4 Treasurer Skills *new*

Writing Newsletters

To order packs please complete your details below and return to TIS

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

POSTCODE _____ tenant group: _____

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

You can also download and print the Workbooks via our website
Or contact us on 0141 248 1242

Changes for North Lanarkshire Council Staff

It's all move for the Development section of the Council's Housing Department. While previously the section was based in Coatbridge it has since moved to the new Dalziel House in Motherwell.

If have an enquiry regarding tenant participation including the Housing Department grant, becoming an RTO, the TIS conference etc you will now need to phone Motherwell on 01698 274 139.

There has also been a change to personnel. The Federation would like to warmly welcome the council's new employees, including:

Lynn Mackay, who is now covering Claire Taylor's maternity leave and

Laura Lindsay, who has replaced Ian McGhee as Communications Coordinator.

Any comments or articles?

If you would like an article to be published in this newsletter or would to make a comment about any article written you can do so by writing to Newsletter Editing team, North Lanarkshire Federation, Unit 66, Fountain Business Centre, Coatbridge, ML5 3AA. Thanks.



For more information please contact

**North Lanarkshire Federation
of Tenants & Residents Association**

**Unit 66, Fountain Business Park
Ellis Street, Coatbridge, ML5 3AA**

Tel: 01236 435 844

Email: info@northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk

www.northlanarkshirefederation.org.uk