



TENANTS *and* RESIDENTS EAST AYRSHIRE

Federation News! Bumper Edition!

Your Newsletter from East Ayrshire Federation of Tenants and Residents

October 2023



INSIDE: New Committee, Federation News, Groups & Members, East Ayrshire Council Updates

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Chairperson's Introduction and Welcome...

Hello, on behalf of the Federation, I am really pleased to set the scene of what the Federation and our members have been up to. We hope this gives you an idea of all the work, projects, and consultations our members have been involved in. We also wanted to introduce you to some of the Federation Executive Committee Members and members of our local groups who will let you know why they are involved in their tenants and residents' associations, the Federation and other community activities. We hope that some of our achievements will inspire you to get more involved in tenant participation, engagement, and scrutiny activities, come along to some of our information sessions and events and work with us in whatever ways suit you to continue to improve our housing and communities across East Ayrshire and Beyond.



This year, has at last seen us get out and about a bit more, attend meetings with Council Officers, Elected Members, MSP's, the Scottish Government, and tenants and residents' organisations across Scotland, read on for a flavour of what we have been up to.

Davey Leggat, Chairperson

Introducing Our New Committee...

Our new Executive Committee (EC) took up their posts at our Annual General Meeting on 15th May this year. We are really looking forward to increasing our tenant and resident influence across East Ayrshire and building on the excellent work of the Federation to date.

- Davey Leggat, Chairperson
- Lisa Fulton, Vice Chairperson
- Lynn Graham, Secretary
- Jackie Duncan, Treasurer
- Committee Members; William Tindle, John Moffat, Margaret Pattison, Jim McLelland, Dolores Leggat



Great Big Vote of Thanks

The EC and all our members gave a great big vote of thanks to our outgoing Chairperson, Bruce Cuthbertson. Bruce has worked tirelessly for a great many years on behalf of tenants, residents, and the Federation, from his local area in Hurlford, to East Ayrshire and across Scotland. His dedication and work with the EC, the Council and others has seen housing conditions and services improve both locally and nationally. We wish Bruce all the best in his future endeavours, in housing and beyond.



Tenant Participation: Your right to get involved and influence the housing services you receive. Contact EAF on 01563 524073 or email secretary@eafederation.com to find out more!

In Memory of John "Mac" McKenzie

In September this year, members of the EC, local groups, TIS and EAC, attended a beautiful ceremony to celebrate the life of John "Mac" McKenzie, our vice chair and founding member of Campbell Area Tenants and Residents Association, who sadly passed away. Mac gave 100% commitment in his work to improve housing and communities across Newmilns, East Ayrshire and Scotland. His infectious enthusiasm, commitment and positivity was a joy to behold and encouraged others to get involved in tenant participation and scrutiny activities here in East Ayrshire and with tenants and residents from across Scotland through work with the Regional Networks, TIS, Scottish Housing Regulator and Scottish Government. He is greatly missed by all of us and of course by his wonderful family and friends.



Introduction of the new online housing application form

Federation members worked in partnership with Council Officers to develop and introduce a new online housing application form. We are really pleased to see this is now fully operational and allows people applying for their 1st tenancy as well as those looking to move to a bigger or smaller home or different area to easily update their forms online as things may change whilst waiting for an offer of housing. Of course, for those of us who don't have internet access or just don't really like doing things online, you can get support with this from Housing Service staff.

East Ayrshire Council Says...

The key aim of the project was to ensure that not only a more efficient allocations service was achieved, but that technology was embraced to deliver an unmatched online customer experience. Ensuring that applicants can create and update their housing application in an accessible, user-friendly way was central to the project, which would allow applicants to be guided through the process with all relevant information at hand, to assist them make informed decisions about their application choices. It was clear that digitising the system would bring benefits for staff too, with automated workflow enabling more efficient back-office processes.

Our system is fully interactive, and its intuitive nature empowers applicants to manage their application, allowing them to upload documents, receive progress updates and request appointments through a contact method of their preference. SEARCH online can be accessed through our website and by clicking on this link: <https://housingregister.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/>

Some of the other benefits for applicants that have been developed as part of our housing register include:

- Applicants no longer need to complete a multitude of applications, as the 4 previous paper applications have been merged to one which covers all information required to complete an application for housing ensuring all of our customers current housing circumstances have been taken into consideration.
- Information is provided to the applicant at all stage of the process with a navigation bar showing the applicant what has been completed and what they are still required to do.
- Applicants can view their position on housing register at a time that suits them and no longer need to wait for this to be posted to them.
- If an applicant advises that they have no-fixed-abode the system recognises this and automatically sends an email to our Homelessness Services for contact to be made to discuss their housing options.
- The system identifies where an applicant has selected housing preferences that are not held with stock within areas of choice and advises applicant to re-think their housing preferences.
- The system also provides information on the number of properties owned by each of the Common Housing Register partners within their areas of choices.
- Applicants can self-manage their application at a time that is suitable for them and are no longer constrained by office opening times.



Allocation Policy Review 2023

Federation members were joined by tenants from Atrium Homes, Cunninghame Housing Association, Riverside, Scotland, and Shire Housing Association as part of the review of SEARCH – the Single East Ayrshire Register for Community Housing. We met with officers who manage the Common Housing Register to give our views on the proposed changes to the Single Allocation Policy as well as content and layout of the questionnaire. The six proposed changes are:

- extenuating circumstances points awards will be reviewed every six months.
- strategic needs grouping for Armed Forces personnel awards will be extended from three to six months.
- priority two health and disability points will be increased from 20 to 21 points.
- applicants with a life limiting terminal diagnosis will be awarded the highest health and disability priority, where their current home is unsuitable for their current or future needs.
- applicants assessed as eligible for care and support points will be moved into the strategic needs group.
- preserved waiting list points will be removed.

Wider consultation with tenants', applicants on the housing list, registered tenants' organisations, stakeholders, and several national charities was carried out during April / May 2023. The new policy was then approved by the Council Cabinet on 28th June this year.

To find out more see: <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Resources/PDF/C/CommonAllocationPolicy.pdf>

What is SEARCH?



Launched in 2012, SEARCH is a partnership with [Atrium Homes](#), [Cunninghame Housing Association](#), [East Ayrshire Council](#), [Riverside Scotland](#) and [Shire Housing Association](#) within a Common Housing Register (CHR) for East Ayrshire that uses a single [application form](#) to make it easier for applicants to apply for social rented housing within East Ayrshire and to extend greater choice for people seeking housing.

East Ayrshire Garden Competition

Once again, Federation members were delighted to take part in judging the Council's Garden Competition. It was amazing to see so many beautiful gardens in full bloom across East Ayrshire. We are amazed at the amount of work our green fingered neighbours put in to make their gardens such delights to behold. Winners will be announced at a special ceremony on Tuesday 24th October 2023 at the Burns Monument. Watch this space for details of the fabulous, shortlisted gardens and find out all about the winning entries!



Celebrating Scottish Housing Day

SAVE THE DATE



We were delighted to host a "Meet and Greet" session for tenants, residents, staff, and Elected Members to celebrate Scottish National Housing Day in September this year. It was a great opportunity for folk to come together to find out more about the Federation and local tenants and residents' groups, Council Housing Service achievements and plans, and think about ways to get more people involved in tenant

participation, consultation, and scrutiny opportunities. Throughout the day, social media posts from Housing Service staff and the Federation shared our stories from the great work of our local groups and the Federation to personal stories from staff on their experiences working in such a valued service and profession.



Reviewing the Standard of Homes when Allocated to New Tenants

We have recently started a scrutiny project that will see us review the standard of Council homes when allocated to new tenants and how the process from a tenant leaving their home to a new tenant moving in works. We are really excited about this work as it will allow us to find out "if it does what it says on the tin". It will include reviewing the lettable standard and making comparisons with other landlords, meeting with staff, seeking new tenant views and visits to empty homes. We will keep you up to date on our progress early next year. Please get in touch if you would like to join us in this work.



TENANTS *and* RESIDENTS
EAST AYRSHIRE

Call us on 01563 63100 or email
secretary@eafederation.com

Follow us on Twitter: @ayrshire_east

Find us on Facebook: East Ayrshire Federation

Check out our website: <https://eafederation.com/>

Damp and Mould in Our Homes

You may have read with some distress as we did, about the tragic death of toddler Awaab Ishak, in Rochdale, England due to the presence of damp and mould in his family home. at a TIS information session for tenants across Scotland we found out, that although reported to the Borough Council, several times, no work was carried out to address the issue. Following Awaab's death, the Coroner's Report identified that his death '*the medical cause of Awaab's death was due to **chronic exposure to fungus.***' This triggered an investigation by England's Housing Ombudsman. The following report states that landlords should have a "**Zero Tolerance Approach to Damp and Mould**" and includes 26 Recommendations.

EAF is keen to find out from tenants whether damp and mould is an issue within our homes. If you would like to get involved, please complete, and return our brief survey included in this newsletter or respond online via <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/EAFDAMP/>

For information on East Ayrshire Council's approach to dealing with damp and mould please see <https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/Housing/CouncilHousing/Support-for-tenants/Protecting-your-home/Mould-and-condensation.aspx>

Housing Services new myHousing tenancy portal

Federation members worked with the Council's Housing Services to develop and pilot the recently introduced their new web portal, it's called myHousing. It lets you, as an East Ayrshire Council tenant, access your tenancy details and services online anytime in our user friendly online portal. myHousing has several helpful features and an interface that is easy to navigate. You can access it on both desktop and mobile devices. You can

- Access your rent account, pay, and print statements.
- Communicate using an online messaging system.
- View and update your personal information.
- Report anti-social behaviour.
- Apply to take in a lodger.
- Ask to run a business.
- Apply for pet permission.
- Ask to add, remove a joint tenant, or apply to transfer the tenancy.
- Terminate your tenancy.

You can find myHousing and other useful information about your tenancy services on our housing web page. To register just go to myHousing, is easy to use and it lets you access information and services when it suits you. Whether you're thinking about running business from home, you've found that perfect pet or you want to tell us who's in the household, there's so much more to it than just checking your rent account. Register for myHousing today and get started with your online access <https://orcharddigital.east-ayrshire.gov.uk/housing/www/dashboard>

Meet Some of Our Groups and Members >>

Campbell Area Tenants and Residents Association (CATRA)

We are a small voluntary group founded 15 years ago by tenants and residents because of serious antisocial behaviour issues in our area. In this time, we have successfully addressed antisocial behaviour and continue to work closely with EAC's antisocial behaviour team to keep our area safe.

We work closely with EAC's Housing Department, leaner Greener Communities and Neighbourhood Coaches having regular estate walkabouts with these departments to highlight issues that are needing attention within our area. Recently we expanded our remit to include Mill Crescent and Ladeside so we can now make improvements to the wider Townhead area of Newmilns.

Over the years we have improved our area by providing planters and hanging baskets, installed a memorial garden and maintained it on Isle Street Newmilns for Kathy Brown OBE.



We have influenced legislation through consultation with the Scottish Government and have representatives from our group on the Executive Committee of East Ayrshire Federation where we work to influence local and national housing policy and scrutinise housing services, achieving improvements for all tenants.

We recently sent the Easter Bunny round our area with eggs, which the children loved. Soon we will be starting our yearly planting of flowers in conjunction with Greener Cleaner Communities and Newmilns and Greenholm Community Council.

We are currently working on an exciting and challenging project to add state of the art Interactive play equipment to the existing playpark at Greenside Park and are in consultation with the wider community, and are being assisted by The Tenants Service, East Ayrshire Federation, Greener Cleaner Communities and Vibrant Communities.

We have more exciting projects on our agenda and a diverse and strong core committee who are dedicated to seeing these through.

Lisa Fulton,
CATRA Chairperson

Gauchalland East Tenants and Residents Association (GETRA)

It's been another busy year, here at GETRA up in Galston, the Spring saw our team, busy planting bulbs and seeds, which we then lovingly tended and sold in our little shop along with our large assortment of fresh vegetables. Our little shop is kept busy throughout the year and supports our local community as well as providing a welcome cup of coffee and tea at our drop-ins. We are delighted to be such an integral part of our neighbourhood, providing a hub for folk to come together to chat, plant, eat and drink as well as address issues affecting our homes and community.

We are in the process of establishing a small garden in the Early Years Centre, to help the children cultivate their own vegetable and flowering plants.

Now that Autumn is here, we have begun making our wonderful Christmas Holly Wreaths for sale. Each year, from the profit made, we choose 4 local charities to receive a donation of £250 each.



Gilfoot Tenants and Residents Association Action Group

Gilfoot Tenants and Residents Association Action Group would like to thank the whole of Newmilns and further afield for their support throughout another successful year for our wee community. Throughout this year we have hosted several low-cost events for families within the community such as G in the Park 2023, a Halloween disco for everyone, fireworks night, our Christmas walk around with Santa Claus and our easter egg hunt. A very successful psychic night was held in June 2023 to raise more funds for our wee community, after all everything we do is for them. Plans are ongoing right now for our G in the Park 2024 which we hope everyone will get behind us for what is sure to be another amazing day for everyone. We also were able to distribute electric blankets to our elderly residents as we know how tough times are for everyone. Receiving funding from the Corra Foundation allowed us to distribute financial support to many residents within the community.

With thanks to East Ayrshire Council cost of living grant we were able to donate £5000 to Newmilns Primary School to run a breakfast club for all the children.

We have managed to obtain funding from the National Lottery to get a youth club up and running for the children of Newmilns, something we hope will be warmly welcomed by all. Keep your eyes peeled for more information for this.

On a final note, once again from all of us, thank you for all the support we receive we could not do this without the support of you guys.



Newton Tenants and Residents Association

Here at Newton TARA, Kilmarnock, we have been busy working with the Council and others to improve our housing and community. We are delighted that our Defibrillator, stationed at the local church is saving lives and that our efforts to make our community cleaner and greener are coming together nicely, due to our estate walkabouts with our wonderful Neighbourhood Coach, David Murray, and our own litter picks in partnership with Council Services.

We are also working hard to boost community spirit, combat social isolation and do a bit of fundraising at the same time. Our pensioners Christmas Parties and Psychic Nights are now a fantastic part of our annual calendar of activities.

Lynn Graham, EAF Secretary

I first heard about EAF about 11 years ago when leaflets were posted around my area (Hill Street at that time) asking if people were interested in forming a Tenants and Residents group in the area.

Unfortunately, not enough people were interested so I became an Individual Member of the FED. This allowed me to participate in scrutiny exercises and find out more about what the FED did.

Since joining I have become secretary and I have met many interesting people who all want to see their areas improved and the Council held to account for the services they provide. I hope that in some small and some bigger ways I am helping to make things better for myself and other Council tenants.



Lisa Fulton, EAF Vice Chairperson

I had worked in partnership with the East Ayrshire Federation for 15 years through Campbell Area Tenants and Residents Association, so was aware of the important and influential work the FED executive committee was involved in for a number of years. When a valued member of CATRA and our Federation representative John McKenzie (wee Mac) sadly fell ill, a space on the committee opened and it seemed the natural progression for me. I am really pleased to be working at this East Ayrshire wide level on behalf of all tenants and residents across the Council area and with a great team of Committee Members.



William Tindle, Newton TARA & Federation EC Member

As a member of my local tenants and residents' association, I was asked by another group member to join the Federation as their representative. I didn't know what was involved but it was good decision. I've learned all about how the Council manages our rent money, as sometimes folk say money can be spent on things, but they don't know that there's agreed budgets that can only be spent on specific things, that benefit tenants and our homes, so it's also good to know how things work.

I enjoy the meetings, the training and just getting to know way housing works. The scrutiny groups and consultations are also very good as EAC do listen and take on our ideas. Recently I got involved in developing the new online application form. I went to try it out as part of the Federation and the Council staff took on our views, ironed out all the teething issues and I think it's very good as can update your housing application immediately whereas before you had to go to office put in writing and it took much longer.

Emily Fulton, CATRA member

Hi, my name is Emily Fulton. I grew up in the Campbell Area, Newmilns and then got my first tenancy with East Ayrshire Council on Campbell Street where I live now with my two young children.

I became a member of The Campbell Area TARA 3 years ago because I had seen over the years the difference the group had made to the area with things like anti-social behaviour and making the environment a nicer place with planters and other projects. I love the way our community all look out for each other and have great community spirit.

The Campbell Area Tara has good contacts within housing and other departments at East Ayrshire Council and the group has assisted me and other tenants in the area with getting repairs and other issues resolved. I enjoy going to meetings to find out what is being done to improve our wee community and get involved with some of the good projects for the children in the area.

I want our area to keep being a nice friendly safe place for my children to grow up and know being part of the TARA and Federation community can help do this.



Award Shortlisting...

We were really pleased to find out the Campbell Area TARA, Gauchalland East TARA and Gilfoot TARA and Neighbourhood Coach, David Murray have all been shortlisted for the 2023 TIS National Excellence Awards. Winners will be announced at the TIS Annual Housing Conference in November this year. Fingers crossed we have some more good news to share with you soon, although of course, they are all winners in our minds!



Margaret Pattison, Garven Court

My hubby and I took occupancy of our one bed flat back in 2014. In a sheltered Housing Complex for the elderly, it was all we could have hoped for.

It was this move that brought me to discover EAF was and all about this service for Social Landlord Tenants. A new home in a new environment with time to read Council and Tenants Federation Newsletters and Reports became the catalyst to joining The Federation. I completed surveys and attended EAF meetings and one thing led to another and I have been involved with Federation ever since.

I soon learned all about The Tenants Information Service (TIS) and the support and guidance they provide to everyone be they individual member, tenants and residents group member or Council Officer is phenomenal.

I love being part of the scrutiny groups and the many Open Days and Conferences I have been to as a member have been enlightening as to how all manner of things impact on our homes and the whole community, from the grass cutting by the Outdoor Services, the road maintenance by Ayrshire Road Alliance, the housing allocations, repairs, maintenance and investment programmes provided by the Housing Service Repairs which are all part of the one 'big house'.

The longer I am involved with our Federation the more I realise the need to participate along with others to ensure we as tenants can influence how the 'big house' looks after us as people as well as our homes.

I'm really pleased that we now have a Garven Court Consultation Group, where residents can meet with staff, elected members, and others, do estate walkabouts and work together to improve our homes and area, all in an easy and informal way. I encourage you and your neighbours to think about setting up a consultation group or TARA in your area. To find out more contact the Federation on 01563 631000 or email secretary@eafederation.com



Holly Zaisluik, CATRA member

Hi, my name is Holly Zaisluik, I have lived in Newmilns my full life. I joined the TARA at the beginning of the year and was co-opted on fully when I turned 16 in April.

I became interested in the CATARA because my grandparents are members and I have seen them helping to make making a difference to our area and I wanted to help out and see where I could contribute. I loved seeing how the group brightened up the town and the difference they made when dealing with reports on anti-social behaviour.

I enjoy the meetings because we can see as a group what we need to do to help the community and the project for the children's play park is really fab and will be good for the whole community.

I want our area to be safe and friendly for everyone who lives here or is just passing through, and for my younger siblings to grow up in and I know this can be made possible by being a part of the Campbell Area Tenants and Residents Association committee.



Get Involved, Have Your Say, Review Services, Influence Decisions and Make a Difference!

If you are a tenant or resident of any age who has an hour or two a month to spare or simply want to try something different and rewarding, or maybe you just want a break from your daily life or just want to meet new people, become someone special to the Federation and contact us, join as an individual member or just come by and have a cuppa and a chat.

Call us on 01563 63100 or email secretary@eafederation.com

Follow us on Twitter: [@ayrshire_east](https://twitter.com/ayrshire_east)

Find us on Facebook: [East Ayrshire Federation](https://www.facebook.com/EastAyrshireFederation)

Check out our website: <https://eafederation.com/>

Energy Saving Tips

The cost-of-living crisis has made us all more aware of how much energy we use and more importantly, how much it costs to heat our homes. Here are some tips to save energy and more importantly money....

- Switch off Standy By – you could save around £55 a year. Almost all electrical appliances can be turned off at the plug without upsetting their programming.
- Turn off lights – you could save around £20 a year by switching off lights when you are not using them or leave a room.
- Replace bulbs with LED bulbs – this could save you even more.
- Wash clothes at 30 degrees – you could save around £27 a year and reducing your washings by one per week, could see you save even more.
- Avoiding use of a tumble drier – could save you around £55 a year BUT remember to ventilate your home when drying clothes inside on racks.
- Spend less time in the shower – you could save around £65 per year but cutting your time in the shower to just four minutes.
- Swap your bath for a shower – some of us may enjoy a long soak in the bath but swapping one bath a week to a four-minute shower, could save you £14 a year.
- Be savvy in the kitchen – when using your kettle, just boiling the amount of water you need, could save you £11 a year.
- Fill your dishwasher – only run your dishwasher when it is full to reduce the amount of water you use. Reducing your dishwasher use by one run per week for a year could save you £13.



For more information and tips see www.theenergysavingtrust.org.uk

Befriending in East Ayrshire

Are you caring, reliable and flexible? Can you spare a few hours each week?

In return you will gain:

- comprehensive training
- ongoing support
- out of pocket expenses
- the satisfaction of making a difference to a young life

Young people: We offer a befriending for children and young people age 5-18 years old. Befrienders are volunteers who support befriendees to take part in positive social and recreational activities. The outings include aspects of building trust, working towards intended outcomes and building confidence in the children and young people.

Older people: Here in East Ayrshire there's no excuse for our older people to be left alone or lonely and we all have a role to play in preventing this. There's lots that you can do to help:

- If you have an elderly relative, friend or neighbour – maybe someone who recently lost a spouse or partner – check in on them now and then and spend some time chatting, you'll enjoy it
- If you're worried about an older person, you know needing a bit of help because they are lonely – why not refer them for a befriender!
- If you have an hour or two to spare every week or every month, why not become a befriender for an older person – you can be any age our youngest befriender is 33 and our oldest is 73

If you are interested or would like more information please contact;

Caroline.brown@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Gillian.cree@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

Wilma.love@east-ayrshire.gov.uk

New Build Homes....

Since April 2022, 104 new build council properties have been completed, as set out in the approved Strategic Housing Investment Plan 2023-28 and working with the Council's Developer CCG (Scotland) Ltd.

Completions were achieved at the following developments:

- Mill Of Shield Road/Hannahston Avenue, Drongan (14 homes)
- Quarryknowe Court, Auchinleck (8 homes)
- Bellevue Gardens, Kilmarnock (18 homes)
- Witch Road, Kilmarnock (43 homes).
- A further 21 homes were completed at Holehouse Road, Kilmarnock, working with Barratt Developments.



Completions were also achieved by Registered Social Landlord (RSL) partners at:

- Irvine Road, Kilmaurs (21 homes)
- Campbeltown Drive, Kilmarnock (1 home)

Site starts for the delivery of new Council homes have been achieved at Kennedy Drive, Kilmarnock (48 homes) and Kilmarnock Road, Mauchline (17 assisted living properties). Works remain ongoing for the delivery of homes by an RSL partner at Bridgehousehill Road, Kilmarnock (101 homes).



Some Helpful Winter Guidance

Severe weather can disrupt our daily lives in all sorts of ways, like the loss of power and property damage. See below links to the information provided on the council's website covering what you can do if you have an emergency and what you can do to help with frost precautions, about not only looking after yourself but also your neighbours and our repairs service information.

Home emergencies and frost precautions · East Ayrshire Council (east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Housing maintenance and repairs · East Ayrshire Council (east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

Look after yourself and others · East Ayrshire Council (east-ayrshire.gov.uk)



Spring Cleans

Towns and villages across East Ayrshire are cleaner, greener, and more vibrant after being given a good spring clean! Each year Greener Communities support local communities and groups who may wish to get involved in clean up campaigns. These include community councils, tenants and residents' groups, schools and other locally organised groups or individuals.

Blair Millar, Head of Housing and Communities said: "Working in partnership with our communities is key to the success of Spring Clean week and to tackling littering and environmental crime. It is heartening to see people taking time out of their busy lives to work with our employees and keep their communities clean, green, and vibrant.

"I would like to thank everyone involved in Spring Clean week for their hard work and for ensuring that East Ayrshire is looking great for the local community and for visitors. I hope that even more people will come out on Saturday 16 April for the litter picks at Kay Park and Woodroad Park, even just half an hour out of your day would make a big difference."

If your group would like to clean up a local litter hotspot, we will be happy to offer our support, including the loan of litter pickers, litter bags, gloves, high-viz vests and practical advice by trained officers. We can also arrange for any items to be uplifted and disposed of after such events or provide a skip if appropriate.



To arrange a litter pick or additional support for your local event please contact Greener Communities.

Our Wildflower Project

Letting wildflowers bloom is creating a feast for hungry pollinators like flies and beetles to butterflies and bumblebees while helping biodiversity in the area.

WILDFLOWER MEADOWS - Wildflowers are our native flowers, that are unaltered by people. All the flowers found in your garden have been bred specifically for certain features, but they all actually originated from wildflowers.

THEY ARE GREAT FOR BIODIVERSITY - A single healthy meadow can be home to over 100 species of wildflowers, which in turn supports other meadow wildlife. For example, the common bird's-foot trefoil is a food plant for 160 species of insects, which in turn support mammals and birds such as shrews and lapwings.

THEY PROVIDE FOOD - Wildflowers provide bees, butterflies, and other pollinators with food throughout the year. On a single day in summer, one acre of wildflower meadow can contain 3 million flowers, producing 1 kg of nectar sugar. That's enough to support nearly 96,000 honeybees per day. Over a third of the world's food relies on insects to pollinate them. Without insects, we'd need to artificially pollinate most of our favourite fruit and veg, which would be time-consuming and very costly.

THEY CAN HELP WITH FLOODING - Established wildflower meadows have complex root systems, which makes the

soil very stable. This helps to mitigate flooding by holding on to rainwater and stops nutrients from washing away.

THEY CAN HELP US FIGHT DISEASE - Native wildflowers can contain compounds which have made a significant contribution to modern medicine. Flowers such as self-heal have antibiotic properties - there's a clue in its common name, as folklore has recognised its healing properties for centuries. And foxgloves contain a compound called digitalin that can be used to treat heart disease. These are just two of many examples and scientists are discovering more all the time.

THEY CAN HELP FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE - Grassland soils can sequester as much carbon as woodland and reduces greenhouse gases, which can help us in the fight against climate change.

THEY'RE AT RISK - Since the 1930s, we've lost 97% of our wildflower meadows in the UK, which is a staggering amount, and we need to act now to make sure they don't completely disappear.

Within East Ayrshire, we identified 12 plots to plant and let wildflowers grow. Seeds have been sowed within the plots and we enjoyed seeing them bloom since June 2023.

Greener Communities

Our Greener Communities team is responsible for a wide range of services and can help you with the following:

Bereavement services

Garden maintenance

Clean up campaigns.

Public parks and play

Allotments

Fly-tipping

parks.

Dog fouling

Graffiti and fly posting

Open space maintenance

Littering

Gum removal



October marks Black History Month, rooted in the solidarity of the anti-racist movement, Black History Month encompasses the histories of African, Caribbean and Asian people in Scotland, people who often have a direct link with Scotland through slavery, colonialism and migration. Black History Month is a time to focus on the sacrifices, contributions, and achievements of these communities, bringing people together to offer a space for reflection and learning. This month is also used to acknowledge the structural racism and white supremacy of the past, and the ways in which Black people continue to be subject to this violence today.

There are several events taking place across Scotland and more information can be accessed [here](#).

Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 Consultation

East Ayrshire Council has put customer involvement at the forefront when developing or implementing policies and services and the Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 continues this engagement. It sets out our commitments to working with our tenants and residents to help influence the way that housing services operate and deliver in the future.

We have been undertaking a programme of tenant and resident involvement that has seen a draft Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 draft document being agreed. This draft Strategy considers previous strategies, reviews of strategies produced by our peers and takes into consideration the strengths and approaches and ensures that how we engage, empower and involve our tenants and residents meets their needs and requirements.

We are seeking your views, suggestions and feedback on our Tenant Participation Strategy 2024-2029 draft. Our questions have come together as part of the initial discussions with tenants and Housing staff, and we look forward to hearing your responses.

The consultation will be in November 2023 till December 2023, and you can provide your views and suggestions at the following link: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/TSS2024-29/>

East Ayrshire Council Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2023

East Ayrshire Council's Housing Service have engaged Research Resource to conduct a Tenant Satisfaction Survey, interviewing 1,200 East Ayrshire Council tenants, October to December 2023.

The purpose of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey is to understand tenants' views of the services provided by the Housing Service and priorities for potential future improvements and provide a comparison with a similar survey carried out in 2020.

Councillor Jim McMahon, (Council Spokesperson for Housing), said: "It is vitally important for me to have a clear understanding of how we as a council deliver services and meet the demands of our tenants in East Ayrshire. The provision of high-quality housing and services for tenants is of paramount importance to us. To achieve this, I would encourage all our tenants to participate in the survey".

The survey will commence across all communities from week commencing: 9th October 2023 for a period of 8-10 weeks.

The survey will take around 15 minutes to complete and all feedback will remain completely confidential. This survey is voluntary, and you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to. Interviews will be in person face to face. Research Resource interviewers will contact tenants selected, by issuing an introductory letter detailing the nature of the work that they are undertaking on behalf of the East Ayrshire Council's Housing Service. People being interviewed can call either East Ayrshire Council on 07786661223 or Research Resource on 0141 641 6410 to confirm that the interviewer and call is legitimate.

Participants will be entered into a draw to win one of 3 £50 EA gift cards.

Cost of Living

We realise that many people may be struggling with the increased cost of living at the moment and the impact this may be having on different aspects of everyday life. Find out more on how we can help.

Cost of living



Rent Consultation 2024-25: One to look out for!

East Ayrshire Council will very shortly be issuing our rent consultation booklet to all tenants, we encourage you all to take part and submit your views.

This year, the Rent Setting consultation period will run from 11th Dec 2023 to 19th January 2024 inclusive. ALL tenants who submit a response will be entered into a draw to win a £50 EA Giftcard.

We will use the feedback to prepare a report for a meeting of the Council's Cabinet Committee in February 2024 at which Elected Members will decide the level of rent increase for Council tenants in the year 2024/25. We will then write to inform you what your new rent charge will be for 2024/25 at least four weeks in advance of any changes that may occur. You will be able to take part by completing an online survey below when live or details will be included in booklet if you prefer to respond by post. <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/RENT24-25/>

Universal Credit Support Team, help when you need it

Looking for advice on Universal Credit? The visit our new Universal Credit webpage at East Ayrshire Council, it has lots useful information and help about Universal Credit. If you need a help applying, you aren't sure if what benefits you should apply for or are just struggling with getting online to apply then we can help.

Just call our Universal Credit Support Team on 01563 503280 or email us at universalcredit@east-ayrshire.gov.uk. If you can go online you can complete our [online referral form](#) just telling us what we can do to help.

We can help you with claim advice, claim assistance, maximise your income, assist with digital support, help set up email address or a bank account and help with budgeting. We can help over the phone or help you at home. We have maximised our clients income by £193k this year.

If you in receipt of tax credits, then you will soon receive a **Migration Notice asking you to move to Universal Credit from the DWP**. This is part of the DWP 'Move to UC' whereby legacy benefits such as:

- Housing Benefit
- income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Child Tax Credits (CTC)
- Working Tax Credits (WTC)
- Income Support

Once you receive your Migration Notice you will need to make an application for Universal Credit. There are transitional protections (you won't be worse off) but if you don't apply for Universal Credit then your legacy will stop. Go to our [Universal Credit webpage](#) for more information or call us on 01563 503280.

Fire Safety

Every Hour of Every Day there is a house fire in Scotland – so, please make sure you are protected!

Fire safety top tips

- Plan your escape route and make sure everyone knows how to get out in a fire.
- Make sure you have smoke alarms on every level of your home.
- Test smoke and heat alarms weekly & never remove the batteries.
- Take extra care in the kitchen and NEVER leave cooking unattended.
- DON'T cook if you have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs.
- Try to avoid using a traditional chip pan with oil, use an electrical deep fat fryer instead.
- Keep appliances and cables away from your cooker.
- Switch off and unplug all electrical appliances.
- Do not overload electrical sockets.
- Never repair or re-join electrical cables with insulation tape.
- Make sure you use the correct wattage of bulbs in lamps and light fittings.
- Never cover lamps or light bulbs as they can quickly catch fire.
- Stub out all cigarettes and always empty ashtrays.
- Make sure candles and tea lights are in holders, away from curtains, and cushions.
- Close all doors – this can keep your escape route free from smoke and may stop a fire spreading.

Wellbeing in East Ayrshire!

It's never been more important to look after your physical and mental health.

So, to help those in our communities, the East Ayrshire Council's website has helpful hints and tips on a variety of subjects such as wellbeing, mental health, financial advice, how to support children and young people as well as a host of fun activities for all ages!

If you need some extra help, we have details of all the amazing supports that are available within East Ayrshire together with a variety of additional support organisations.

Find out more at Wellbeing · [East Ayrshire Council \(east-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.east-ayrshire.gov.uk)

If online is not your thing, then please get touch by phone. Telephone: 01563 554400
Council Helpline: 0345 724 0000
Textphone: 01563 576167



Housing Service's New Tenant Support Fund

Housing Service also recently approved a new [Tenant Support Fund](#) to support Council tenants. The fund aims to mitigate the challenges being experienced by tenants as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

Using the fund will help [Housing Services](#) to prevent homelessness and sustain tenancies by directly alleviating rent arrears, providing fuel support and, in exceptional circumstances, direct financial assistance to tenants.

The fund will be used alongside other existing tools and financial supports such as [Discretionary Housing Payments \(DHPs\)](#), and it can cover a proportion, or all, of a tenant's rent arrears, however it should not be considered a replacement for financial supports already available.

It can be used where other solutions are not available with Housing Services best placed to identify priority cases, to make sure we target the fund at those who need it most who are at threat of homelessness.

Our Tenant Support Fund is open to all Council tenants, and it's aimed particularly people with rent arrears who are at risk, either now or in the near future, of losing their home where Notice of Intent, Court Action or Decree has been served.

We can also help tenants claiming Universal Credit if you're unable to repay the five-week arrears associated with your initial assessment period - subject to an income and expenditure assessment.

For those most at risk of fuel poverty, the fund will help if:

- You're disconnected from your energy supply.
- You're using pre-payment meters and at risk of disconnection.
- You're living in areas not supplied by the gas network (off grid) and are at risk of disconnection.

This support will be administered by our partner [Lemon-Aid](#). **Please contact your local Neighbourhood Coach for more details.**

East Ayrshire Council's Local Housing Strategy: An opportunity to find out more and give your views...

East Ayrshire Council will prepare a new Local Housing Strategy in 2024/25, which will set out how the Council and partners will deliver housing and housing services over the next 5 year period.

To ensure the Local Housing Strategy is based on up-to-date information on the operation of housing sector in East Ayrshire, the Council is carrying out a Housing Need and Demand Assessment study. The study will help the Council to estimate the number of new homes needed across East Ayrshire over the next 5-10 years. It will also assess how to connect homes to jobs and local amenities; and inform plans to create great places and neighbourhoods. The results will help the Council plan for new housing and housing services, making sure the needs of all residents and communities are met.

As part of this study, a widespread survey of local households is scheduled to be held in late 2023/early 2024 to gather information on the housing circumstances and needs of local households so that a good range of housing options can be delivered in the future. The survey will gather information on the type, condition, and costs of accommodation, as well as the suitability of homes to meet housing need and the future aspirations of local households.

The survey will be carried out by an independent research organisation called Research Resource. The survey will include 400 telephone interviews and will be available online for all local residents to complete.

All East Ayrshire Council tenants are urged to participate in this important research survey. All survey responses will be for research purposes only and it will not be possible to identify individual tenants from the responses. Research Resource are registered under the Data Protection Act and all responses will be completely confidential.

Thinking of leaving your home?

Please help us by returning your tenancy in good condition to ensure that we achieve our Vision that *“East Ayrshire will be a place with strong vibrant communities where everyone has a good quality of life and access to opportunities, choices and high-quality services which are sustainable and meet people’s needs.”*

In accordance with East Ayrshire Council’s tenancy agreement, tenants must give 28 days’ notice of their intention to terminate their tenancy.

What should I do before leaving my tenancy?

Please ensure that you clear the property of all of your belongings including all floor coverings and furnishings making sure not to forget the loft and garden area.

Waste Management Services can provide advice on how to dispose of belongings that you are not taking with you to your new home.

You should also carry out any repairs or works that are your responsibility in accordance with your tenancy agreement and strive to leave the property in good decorative order.

If you have carried out any alterations or improvements without our permission, you must restore the house to its previous condition. This may include:

- Painting or wrapping the kitchen cabinets and worktops.
- Replacement of unsafe light fittings/sockets/switches
- Huts, Garages or other garden structures

Remember that failure to do so will result in you being charged for any costs incurred by the Council to carry out this work after you have vacated the property.

Podback Scheme & Kerbside Recycling

We are working with Podback to provide a new free recycling service to help you recycle your pods at home.

Leaflets will be delivered to all households from **Monday 2 October 2023** and collections will start from **Monday 16 October 2023**.



Podback is a nationwide, not-for-profit, coffee pod recycling service created by the biggest names in coffee pod systems, Nespresso, NESCAFÉ Dolce Gusto and Tassimo, to give people who enjoy the quality and taste of coffee pods simple and easy ways to recycle them.

How to recycle your pods

It’s easy to start recycling your pods, simply follow the steps below:

1. Sign up and order your free recycling bags on the Podback website.
2. Podback will send you two rolls of bags for recycling your aluminium or plastic coffee pods, along with an instruction leaflet. Each roll contains 13 bags and are delivered by Royal Mail, arriving within 7 to 10 working days.
3. If you use NESCAFÉ Dolce Gusto pods, you will also receive a storage caddy as these pods tend to hold more liquid. The caddy enables excess liquid to drain more easily and help users to store pods between collections.
4. Once you have your bags, simply follow the instructions and place the sealed bag on the lid of your recycling trolley by 6:30am on your normal collection day.
5. When you need to top up your supply of bags log into your account and reorder.
6. If you live in a block of flats with a communal bin collection, you can use the Podback Drop Off service, provided by Yodel. Simply follow the online instructions when you sign up.

Sign up on the Podback Website: <https://www.podback.org/>

Remember you can use your trolley to recycle clothes and textiles, and small electrical items. Just bag them up and place them on top of your trolley.

Take A Break, Relax and Enjoy...

Make Your Own Sweet Treat – Christmas Gingerbread People

This recipe for gingerbread can be used to make a whole range of decorations, gifts and, of course, gingerbread people.

- Vegetarian
- Preparation time: 20 minutes
- Cooking time: 10 minutes
- Total time: 30 minutes
- Makes: 25 gingerbread people

Ingredients

- 125g unsalted butter
- 100g dark muscovado sugar
- 4 tbsp golden syrup

- 325g plain flour
- 1 tsp bicarbonate of soda
- 2 tsp ground ginger
- Icing (optional)



Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C, gas mark 3. Line baking trays with baking parchment. Melt the butter, sugar, and syrup in a medium saucepan, stirring occasionally, then remove from the heat.
2. Sieve the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ginger into a bowl and stir the melted ingredients into the dry ingredients to make a stiff dough.
3. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and roll to a thickness of about 5mm. Dip biscuit cutters into flour before cutting the dough, or cut around templates, which you can find in lots of shops. Place the shapes onto the lined baking trays and bake, in batches, for 9-10 minutes until light golden brown.
4. Remove from the oven. While still warm, and using a skewer or chopstick, make any holes that you will need to hang up the biscuits with ribbon or to make a yuletide garland. If you are decorating your Christmas cake with gingerbread people, make the holes in their arms so that ribbon can be threaded through at a later stage.
5. When completely cool, decorate with the icing. The gingerbread biscuits can be stored in an airtight container for up to two weeks.

Wordsearch

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

REMAINDER	PRODUCT	QUOTIENT	SETTLEMENT	COLONIES
SNEEZE	COMPLAIN	BOWLING	APEAL	WILLOW
BREEZE	GROAN	CREASE	MAINTAIN	FAINT
PRAISE	CHARCOAL	NEEDLE	ARROW	PAINT
SPAIN	WHEAT	SPEECH	FEAST	COAST



East Ayrshire Federation Delighted to Meet Garden Competition Finalist and Winners!



It was a real pleasure to be invited to attend the awards ceremony for this year's garden competition which took place on 24/10/23 at The Burns Memorial building at Kay Park in Kilmarnock.

Dolores and I represented the Federation and were very pleasantly surprised to accept a lovely bouquet of flowers on behalf of the Federation Committee, gifted to us in thanks for our support and assistance with this year's event.

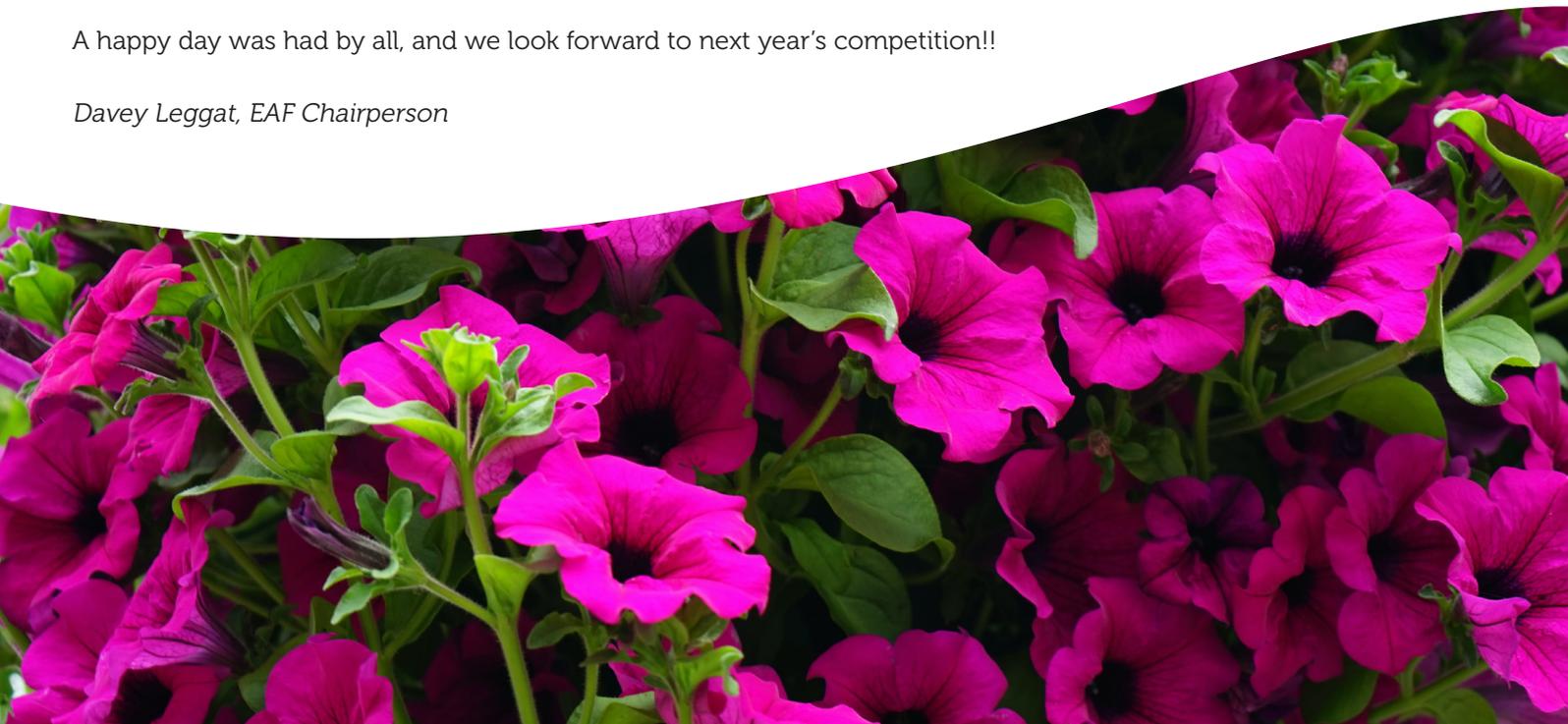
In this world of often heartbreaking, gloomy news, it was great to be part of an event which celebrates the effort and achievements of those with very green fingers, all of whom can bring enjoyment to lots of people by keeping their gardens and community spaces in such excellent condition.

As judges, it was very difficult to pick the winners, as they are all to be commended for their efforts in looking after their gardens.

Kevin, our Customer Liaison Officer had fun compering the day's celebrations, after having spent the two days before polishing all the cups before presenting them!

A happy day was had by all, and we look forward to next year's competition!!

Davey Leggat, EAF Chairperson





Festive Greetings!

The Federation wishes you, your family, and friends a wonderful Festive Season!

Perhaps you will have a go at making our Christmas Gingerbread People using the recipe on Page 18. If you do, please take a photo and email to us at secretary@eafederation.com along with your name, town for a chance to share your achievements on our social media channels.

Remember also that shopping locally in East Ayrshire supports our local businesses and local economy, so please do so if you can!

The East Ayrshire Gift Card also makes an excellent present and allows your friends and family to choose something they would really love!

