

## Investment in Affordable Housing

The Scottish Government launched their latest consultation on investment in affordable housing on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2008. The consultation paper was unveiled at a Chartered Institute of Housing event in Edinburgh. Communities Minister, Stewart Maxwell introduced the paper. Mr Maxwell explained to delegates that Government had listened to the feedback from Firm Foundations, which had shaped the detail of this consultation document.

Alan Ferguson, Director of the CIH Scotland welcomed the Government's consultation paper, stating:

*"We are facing an increasing need for affordable housing, yet at the same time the Scottish Government has to act within finite resources. This consultation begins a welcome conversation with the housing sector and other interested parties on how best we can move forward."*

## TPAS View

Lesley Baird, Chief Executive of TPAS Scotland emphasised the need for tenants and their representatives to have their say on the consultation paper. Mrs Baird said;

*"We hope tenants representatives throughout the country will respond to this consultation document. TPAS will be holding a series of briefing sessions for tenants' representatives and their support staff throughout Scotland."*

You can download a copy of this Government consultation paper at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk>

## Tenants Vote In Favour of Housing Transfers

Five Glasgow housing associations are celebrating after winning ballots to take over more than 2000 homes in Glasgow.

Tenants in Parkhead, Castlemilk, Glasgow West and Shettleston have voted in favour of their local housing associations becoming their landlords. Their homes are currently owned by Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) but are managed by the local associations which will now buy them. Five postal ballots were held across the city and voting closed on Monday the 8th of December. Parkhead, Cassiltoun, Ardenglen, Glasgow West and Shettleston Housing Associations all won majority votes and now intend to buy The GHA properties.

All the associations involved made comment in the housing press. Director of Parkhead Housing Association, Jim Strang, sums up the feeling of enthusiasm felt by those involved: "We are delighted with both the turnout and the result. We feel this is a vote of confidence in Parkhead Housing Association and we look forward to delivering high quality, decentralised services to these tenants. We hope these positive ballots are the beginnings of an ongoing Second Stage Transfer movement across the city." TPAS understand that more Second Stage Transfer ballots are planned for the new year.



## TPAS Scotland Annual Conference & AGM 2008

Our annual conference held on 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> October in the Apex Hotel Dundee, was attended by nearly 300 delegates from all over Scotland. As well as from our sister organisations, TPAS England and TPAS Cymru also made the journey to Dundee. We had over 30 workshops and plenary sessions over the weekend and the feedback from the delegates has been very positive all round.

Branch Head of Social Housing from the Scottish Government William Fleming gave an update on how tenants' feedback on Firm Foundations was helping to shape the content of the new housing bill. Delegates welcomed the opportunity to question Mr Fleming about the development of new housing policy.

Family Fortunes - with a 'housing twist' was the theme for the opening session. Jimmy Black was our 'Vernon Kay' and he proved to be an excellent host. Quizmaster Jimmy measured up in all but height to TV celebrity Vernon Kay. The Bash Street Kids (Board Members) and The Broons (TPAS staff) battled it out, to see which 'family' had the superior housing and general knowledge. Everyone agreed that it was a fun way to start off the weekend and it certainly put a smile on all the delegates' faces.



Vince Heneghan receiving cheque for the McMillan Care Nurses from Lesley Baird

The winning family, The Broons eagerly agreed to make a donation of £100 to the McMillan Care Nurses and a cheque was presented to Vince Heneghan to deliver to the organisation, in recognition of the care and support that they had recently provided to Vince's late wife and too many other patients.



Dundee City Council sponsored a Civic reception and the Provost gave us a warm welcome on Friday evening. Before dinner, Lesley Baird presented TPAS Accreditation

awards to North Ayrshire Council, which was collected by Tracey Wilson and Kerry Condron for the Connaught Partnership. After dinner, there was a fun casino and disco for everyone to enjoy the rest of the night.

This year's workshops and plenary sessions proved to be highly informative and stimulating. One of the plenary sessions, a hard hitting play by Naomi Breeze about the reality of homelessness left many with a tear in their eye. Former Barrister Nick Davies gave an excellent talk on persuasion and influence for tenant representatives. Nick gave us all food for thought when negotiating with both individuals and organisations.

On Saturday evening our dinner theme was D C Thomson with the TPAS staff making an excellent Broons family and a big thank you needs to go to all who made the effort to dress up on the night. The hall was suitably decked out for the event and everyone danced into the wee small hours.

Gavin opened the session by welcoming people from different areas of Scotland. He

attempted accents from each area with varying degrees of success. He wanted to welcome everyone and from all different places.

Gavin then led everyone in an interactive voting session. On each table there were voting pads which allowed participants in the session to respond to a series of questions. The voting showed that the majority of people who attended the TPAS conference were in the over 50 age group and that most have travelled to the conference by bus.

A majority of the participants thought that Right to Buy should be abolished completely and that the government's priorities for housing should be to build more housing for rent. When asked how they would rate this year's TPAS conference the majority of people said that it was excellent.

As usual there were tearful departures and friendships forged, some were at their first conference with others regular attendees but it all made for a first class event enjoyed by all, with nearly £1000 being raised in our raffles. A big thank you goes to all who helped, gave presentations, bought raffles, donated raffle prizes and lastly everyone who attended to make it such a memorable event and for those who do not already know the dates for next year are 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009 so put it in your diary now and join us in Dundee next year! We also welcome any suggestions for workshops to ensure you receive a conference that is tailored to your needs.

### **TPAS Conference, presentation of raffle donation for Marie Curie**

Delegates dug deep into their pockets to raise £800 for Marie Curie Cancer at our annual conference in October. The donation was made in honour and memory of Jean

Mitchell, Chair of Hillhead 2000 in Kirkintilloch. Jean sadly passed away in September of this year. Jean served on the Association's Management Committee for almost 9 years, and was extremely active, selflessly devoting her time to help the Association improve living conditions for the tenants of Hillhead. Jean was also a great supporter of TPAS, and was a speaker at the closing session of last year's conference. TPAS would like to thank everyone who bought raffle tickets in support of Marie Curie Cancer Care.



Jamie Ballantine of TPAS, Stephen and Claire of Hillhead Housing handing over cheque to Marie Curie representatives

### **New Tenant Participation Strategy for West Lothian 2008 - 2012**

TPAS Development Officer Lavinia Kilbride was on secondment to West Lothian Council for one year to help develop their new Tenant Participation Strategy and encourage tenant participation. During this period the new 4 year strategy was produced and Lavinia also managed to set up three new tenants groups and encouraged the development of tenant's voices in West Lothian. TPAS will continue to work with WLC on smaller TP projects in the future now that they have had this initial support to encourage participation.

## New Website for TPAS Scotland

TPAS recently launched its new look website. The website reflects the way the organisation has developed and grown in recent years, introducing new services such as TPAS Accreditation.

We now have improved web functionality for displaying photographs and graphics and creating new pages and sub pages. This means we can provide you with more of the information you ask us for. Our new look website is easier to navigate your way around and complies with accessibility legislation such as the disability discrimination act. It is also compatible for web browsers used by people with visual impairments.

The new site contains a members' area which we will soon be distributing login details for. The members' area includes new briefing notes, good practice briefings, newsletters, presentations, press release templates and much more. If you have a spare five minutes, have a look online and find out more about TPAS Scotland. [www.tpasscotland.org.uk](http://www.tpasscotland.org.uk)



## Diary Dates, Forthcoming Events

**TPAS Scotland Workers Conference**  
**McDonald Marine Hotel, North Berwick**  
**7<sup>th</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> May 2009**

This two-day conference is an excellent opportunity for staff working in the field of Housing Management and Tenant Participation to find out about good practice

and new developments in tenant participation. This conference is for anyone who works in communities such as housing staff, community workers, voluntary organisations and tenant participation staff working with contractors

**TPAS Scotland Annual Conference & AGM**  
**Apex Hotel, Dundee**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> October 2009**

This conference is open to anyone who is involved in housing, an exciting variety of workshops and plenary sessions relevant for delegates from tenant's organisations, local authorities, housing associations and other interested agencies. If you are interested in attending any of these events please contact Elaine at TPAS on 0141 552 3633 or email [elaine.scoular@tpasscotland.org.uk](mailto:elaine.scoular@tpasscotland.org.uk)

## New Website for Midlothian Tenants Forum

Tenants in Midlothian are taking the lead in promoting tenant participation throughout the region. The Midlothian Tenants Forum, founded 2 years ago, is using a range of methods to promote their work and opportunities to get involved. Grant funding from the Scottish Government (previously Communities Scotland) was secured to develop a tenants' website and pay for a range of marketing and promotional materials. TPAS Scotland assisted the group to secure the funding and it is anticipated that the new web site will go live early in the New Year.

Peter Moonie, Chair of the group explains:

*"The Forum hopes the new site will provide tenants with useful information. It's also an attempt to reach out to many more tenants and hopefully the membership of the Forum may also increase because of this."*



The group commissioned 'Kiswebs' to develop the site and provide comprehensive training on updating and running the site. The website will be used to advertise group meetings, local services and will be used to consult with tenants on a range of issues.

Part of the funding application was for marketing materials and 1,000 MTF diaries are to be given out in the next few months. The diaries list details of meeting dates and useful local information with regard to housing. The Forum meet monthly in the Bonnyrigg Public Halls and they have purchased new exhibition stands to publicise their activities throughout Midlothian.

Midlothian Council supports the Forum. Head of Housing John Burgoyne is particularly impressed;

*"The tenant's forum has done well to secure National funding for their work. The forum is clearly committed to ensuring that tenants have a range of opportunities to get involved and have their say."*

If you would like to view the website in the new year log on to [www.midlothiantenants.co.uk](http://www.midlothiantenants.co.uk) For any further information on the Midlothian Forum please call Lavinia Kilbride at TPAS Scotland on 0141 552 3633 or email [lavinia.kilbride@tpasscotland.org.uk](mailto:lavinia.kilbride@tpasscotland.org.uk)

## Stirling Tenants Assembly

The Stirling Tenants Assembly have been awarded £10000 RTO grant from the Scottish Government in order to carry out an ambitious 'roadshow' project. The project will see them visit every settlement in the Stirling council area over the next two years. The grant money will allow them to better publicise their meetings to all of the tenants in the area that they are visiting as well as carrying out a door-to-door questionnaire

activity in some of the areas and also a coffee morning.

## TPAS Cymru



Brian Connelly, Jim Buchanan and Lesley headed on a plane to Bristol in November to attend the TPAS Cymru annual conference. The conference is held in the middle of Wales in Llandrindod Wells, never an easy place to get to. Our flight was delayed by a Lufthansa plane going down the wrong runway, Brian relayed the story claiming it was the Luftwaffe!

The conference was a great opportunity to catch up with good practice in Wales and meet up with old friends. Unlike Scotland there is no statutory right to participation but recently there was introduced a national participation strategy for Wales. Local participation strategies are being developed, it will be interesting to have a look to see if a statutory right does make a difference, I think it does but some of our Welsh colleagues are not convinced.

We had a good time at the conference and always like to keep the Celtic connections strong.



## Special Discounts

As Members you qualify for discounted rates on TPAS consultancy and training. Is your strategy due to be reviewed or do you need some additional training? We have years of experience and we can tailor training to suit your needs, from one off events to full time secondments, we aim to cater for everyone. If you would like to discuss this further please contact Elaine on 0141 552 3633 or [elaine.scoular@tpasscotland.org.uk](mailto:elaine.scoular@tpasscotland.org.uk)

## TPAS Scotland AGM 2008

Our AGM this year was held on 24<sup>th</sup> October at the Apex Hotel in Dundee and was attended by many of our members from tenants groups and landlords. In accordance with our Articles, a third of the existing members of our Board of Management were required to stand down, but they would be immediately eligible for re-election. There were no other nominations and therefore our Board of Management for the year is:

### Landlord Representatives

Gordon Mason - Forth Housing Association,  
Tracey Wilson - North Ayrshire Council,  
Lorna Paterson - Fife Housing Association,  
Nanette Reid - Linstone Housing Association,  
Ian McLean - Bridgewater Housing Association

### Tenants Representatives

Calum MacKay - Cearn Community Association,  
Eileen Kerr - Pennyburn Tenants & Residents,  
Jim Buchanan - Fife Federation of Housing Association,  
Vince Heneghan - Kennoway Areas Tenants & Residents Association,  
Hugh McLung - Stirling Tenants Assembly,  
Brian Connelly MBE - Auchenback Tenants & Residents Association

### Co-optees

Len Thomson, Murray Cochrane and Gordon Mitchell

At the first meeting of the Board of Management, which took place immediately after the AGM, Calum MacKay (Barney) was re-elected as Chairperson and Gordon Mason was re-elected as Vice Chairperson. As both Barney and Gordon will have been in these respective roles for 5 years, they must stand down at our AGM in 2009 and we will be required to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair.

## All changed

Our Board may not have changed but there have been a few changes in our team.....

Lavinia Kilbride who worked with us in West Lothian has moved into our head office in Glasgow and Sharleen Brown our Senior Admin Assistant is back from maternity leave, welcome back Sharleen we missed you!

Paul Murphy has moved to the Second Stage Transfer team in the GHA. Paul was our first trainee and we are delighted he has now secured a full time job. Colin Cassie has joined Partick Housing Association as a Housing Officer. Colin has worked with us for many years, he and his collection of ties will be hugely missed!

And also.....

Phil Morgan Chief Executive of TPAS England has left to join the new regulatory body in England the Tenants Services Agency (TSA) we look forward to working with the new head honcho in England. And good luck to Phil in his new job.

# TPAS Scotland Board of Management 2008 - 2009



Top left - right Eileen Kerr, Jim Buchanan, Brian Connelly, Lorna Paterson, Hugh McClung, Tracey Wilson, Sadie Greer, Vince Heneghan and Nanette Reid

Bottom left - right Lesley Baird, Barney (chairperson), Gordon Mason (vice chairperson) and Elaine Scoular



# Office Closure

The TPAS office will be closed over the festive season.

The office will close on Friday the 19<sup>th</sup> of December and re-open on Tuesday the 6<sup>th</sup> of January 2009.

The Board of Management and the staff at TPAS would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

