

Date:	24 April at 11am
Location	The Inkwell, Elgin/ online via Teams
Chair	Alison Angus (AA), tenant
Attending	 Jane Bartecki (JB), tenant James Buchan (JBuc), tenant Bert Duffus (BD), tenant David Elliott (DE), tenant Dagmar Gross (DGr), tenant Alex Jappy (AJ), tenant Howard Knowles (HK), tenant Liz McKnockiter (LM), tenant Violet Milne (VM), tenant
In attendance	 Cllr Neil Cameron (NC), observing Cllr Theresa Coull (TC), observing Cllr John Divers (JD), Cllr and tenant Cllr Amber Dunbar, (AD) Chair of Housing and Community Safety Committee Cllr Donald Gatt (DG), Deputy Chair of Housing and Community Safety Committee Thomas Hampson (TH), Housing Projects Officer Rebecca Irons (RI), Customer Engagement Officer (minutes) Edward Thomas (ET), Head of Housing and Property Services Grant Thomson (GT) Housing Projects Officer Cllr Draeyk van der Horn (DV), observing
Apologies	 Bev Davenport (BD), tenant Eileen Di Sotto (ED), tenant Isobel McNeil (IM), tenant Rachael McPhail, (RM), tenant Lee Nicholls (LN), tenant David Nicholls (DN), tenant John Wilson (JW), tenant
1. Welcome, Apologies	AA welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Approval of minutes of previous meeting	The minutes were approved with a minor amendment regarding gullies maintenance highlighted by DGr.
previous meeting	Proposer AJ Seconder LM
	RI will add the approved minutes to the website at: www.moray.gov.uk/moraytenantsforum
3. Matters arising	No outstanding actions.
	Discussion around the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2024 and validity of the results. DE suggested survey reports/ presentations be shared in advance so Forum members can better prepare.
	The consultant's full report is available online at www.moray.gov.uk/housingperformance
	If Forum members have further questions about the data, please share with RI.
4. Finance report	Annual grant of £3k confirmed for Forum activities (1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026).
	The grant continues to be administered by the Council.
	Current year's spend will include venue hire and catering for today's meeting (£205.50).
5. Guest Speaker	ET gave apologies for late arrival. Key areas of discussion included:
	Rent increases and affordability • Concerns were raised about the recent 6 and 7% rent increase options, with members feeling the options were too high.
	 ET explained the rent rise was necessary to fund investment in our homes and meet legal duties and standards in relation to safety and energy efficiency standards.
	 Moray Council's rents remain among the lowest in Scotland and rent affordability is analysed as part of the rent setting process. This demonstrates that in real terms rents haven't increased after taking account of inflation, benefit uplifts and increases in the national living wage.
	 A Tenancy Sustainment Fund set up over the past two years to help those struggling most. HK highlighted that embarrassment or mental health challenges could prevent some tenants from seeking financial help and feels the Council is unapproachable.

- ET explained that housing officers work closely with tenants to understand their situations, and support is available. He emphasised the importance of open communication and said exceptional cases can be handled with flexibility and compassion.
- ET noted that rent arrears have decreased, suggesting that proactive engagement is having a positive effect.

Housing investment and condition

- Members expressed frustration over long-standing issues like delayed window replacements.
- ET acknowledged underinvestment in past years but confirmed funding and programmes are now being put in place to address this. Including replacing windows in around 15% of properties over the next 3 years.
- Data held about homes can be inaccurate. Members were encouraged to feedback if they felt the data didn't reflect the condition of their home.
- Tenants were encouraged to report urgent issues/poor conditions so priorities can be altered as needed.

Future surveys

- LM asked that tenants be involved in future survey design to make sure they are relevant.
- ET agreed in principle and highlighted the value of community-specific feedback.

New build developments

- ET addressed concerns about the perceived poor quality of building materials in new developments.
- He explained the funding mechanisms and standards applied to social housing projects, ET noted social housing often exceeds minimum standards, and costs are driven by both materials and site infrastructure.
- BT shared positive feedback for his accessible new build bungalow describing it as life changing for his wife's quality of life.

Repairs and communication

• New online repairs portal being developed to make it easier to report repairs. This does not replace the existing non-digital methods of reporting a repair.

Grass cutting and brown bin charges

- ET explained that charges aim to recover costs and make services sustainable.
- Uptake of the grass cutting scheme had reduced due to changes in the eligibility criteria. Some tenants have opted out or made their own arrangements due to the increased charge. There is a means tested option for eligible tenants. ET has some flexibility within the scheme to add people into it during the year.

 Housing waiting lists Approximately 3,000 applicants on the general waiting list. 600 tenants on the transfer list. 120 on the homelessness list. ET encouraged feedback from members direct or via RI to understand the reality of tenants' experiences. Confirming his willingness to review individual cases and visit communities to better understand concerns on the ground.
Asset Team
HK asked that his appreciation for TH's attendance at the meeting be noted.
 Greenwards Play Park, Elgin Participatory budgeting project underway to replace play equipment based on tenant and resident feedback. Upcoming tenant participation events and activities NETRALT (North East Tenants Residents and Landlords Together) Drop-in Event: 22 May 2025, drop-in any time between 11am and 1pm at Forres House Community Centre. NETRALT Annual General Meeting (AGM): 15 May 2025 (online). Email info@netralt.org.uk to attend. Tenants Together Scotland AGM: 7 June 2025 (online). More information is available at tenantstogether.scot/agm-2025 Scotland's Housing Network (SHN) Annual Performance Presentation: 1
October 2025 (in-person). Contact RI to book a place.
Office bearer training held in March with tenant participation expert Lesley Baird. Attended by LM, AA, DE and JW. LM proposed the Forum opt for the annual grant to continue to be administered
in-house. Members unanimously agreed.
Two funded places available for the TPAS Annual Conference in Glasgow (20-22
June 2025). The theme is 45 years of tenant participation in social housing.
AA, LM, AJ and BDav have expressed an interest in attending.
Summer issue is in preparation.
Tenant Editorial Panel are due to meet on 2 May to review article submissions and finalise content.
Call for contributions and volunteers for the editorial panel.

10. Scrutiny project	Volunteers and ideas sought for a new scrutiny project separate to the Forum to review an area of our housing services. RI gave a brief overview of scrutiny and suggested reviewing an area where satisfaction had fallen. DE, LM and HK are interested in taking part.
9. Any other business	Future guest speakers June meeting: Moray Council, Digital Buddies Network project HK suggested getting a speaker from the roads department.
10. Next Forum date	Thursday 19 June 2025 at 11am at The Inkwell, Francis Place, Elgin. IV30 1LQ