



Welcome to GWSF's Annual Report for 2018/19

In common with many organisations we've pared down our Annual Report, but it goes without saying that this in no way signifies anything other than the usual very busy year for the Forum.

With our small staff team we've again tried to focus on some specific areas which are highly relevant to members but which don't duplicate what other representative bodies are doing. Two examples highlighted on the following page, our Minding the Gap report, and our booklet Pressure on Rents, focused on what we know have been real pressure points for members as they try to respond to gaps left by declining public services.

We'll always aim to focus on what matters for community controlled housing associations, and on top of all the national issues we cover, at any one time we'll also be active on a number of operational

and strategic issues specifically affecting members in Glasgow, including health and social care and homelessness.

And bringing members together at a range of conferences and other events has remained a key priority. We know members are keen and willing to learn from others, and in 2018/19 we significantly increased the number of membership queries allowing members to get feedback about how others have dealt with particular challenges.

We were delighted to welcome West of Scotland HA, Craigdale HA and West Whitlawburn Housing Co-op into membership, which stood at 66 associations at the end of the year.

I write this as the 2019 AGM approaches, and the high level of interest we've had from people keen to stand for the GWSF Board is, I



think, a real reflection that we're on the right track, and I look forward to another busy and exciting year ahead for GWSF and its members.

Policy Highlights

Tenements

Another busy year on the policy front saw us renew our focus on tenements, and in particular the barriers members face in investing in mixed tenure and private blocks. The membership survey we carried out informed our lobbying of the Housing Minister, which has continued into 2019/20.

Regulation

In close consultation with members we played a very proactive role in seeking to influence the Scottish Housing Regulator's revised regulatory framework. We also kept in close contact with those members experiencing intervention from SHR and this gave us invaluable insight into how things are working on the ground.

Governance and succession planning

Following on from our 2017 Succession Planning report, we produced a number of 'bite-size' leaflets, including one on ways of providing induction for new committee members. And in conjunction with EVH we launched what has now become a very successful mentoring service for HA staff and committee members.

'Minding the Gap'

In summer 2018 our report *Minding the Gap* highlighted the environmental and other 'housing plus' work being done by our members as local public services decline.

Pressure on rents

This was the title of a booklet aimed at explaining to elected members and others the many challenges members face in deciding on rent levels and rent increases. We also produced a model leaflet for tenants, for members to adapt in their own newsletters and websites.



Charter performance

Our annual Charter Report again showed members to have the most responsive and efficient services for tenants, compared with other associations and councils.

Glasgow

We continued to support members on various practical and strategic issues, including our ongoing efforts to improve the homelessness referral system and to ensure that housing's contribution to health has a strong profile within the City's Health and Social Care Partnership.



- **In June 2018** we were delighted to return to Cadder Community Centre for our **Annual Summer Regeneration Conference** which was attended by over 100 delegates. The conference theme embraced the **'Year of Young People in Scotland'** and plenary and café sessions celebrated the work that our members do with young people in their communities.
- **In November 2018** around 200 delegates attended our **Annual Conference** at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow. The theme of the day was **'Keeping Our Communities Resilient'** and plenary speakers included: Professor Guy Standing on basic income; Professor Neil Hamlet on the links between housing and health; and Craig Sanderson retiring Chief Executive of Link Group on the evolution of the housing association movement.
- As usual our evening **Open Meetings** featured several interesting speakers including the Scottish Information Commissioner and Bob Doris MSP, Convener of the Scottish Parliament's Local Government and Communities Committee. Most importantly, our open meetings continued to provide a real opportunity for both staff and committee members to air their views.
- **Our members' network groups** for housing management, maintenance, finance, and regeneration staff continued to thrive this year. And we were delighted to see the establishment of a new group for community development staff.

Working with Members

We always aim to keep our members well-informed about important issues; and to give them their say. This means keeping them connected to what's happening in the wider world, and to one another. Throughout the year we've done this in a number of ways –

- Via our bi-monthly updates for members which allow us to keep staff and committee members informed about the current topics we are working on, on their behalf.
- With bespoke senior staff briefing sessions on key subjects covering – EESSH 2 proposals, smoke alarms standards, Housing First and regulation.
- Through consultation exercises on a range of topics, including: CCHAs' role in mitigating social isolation and loneliness in their communities; and on regulation.
- Our publications, including our '**Minding the Gap**', '**Pressure on Rents**' and '**Charter reports**'.
- Our new mentoring service in conjunction with EVH which is open to both staff and committee members and delivered **by** GWSF members **for** GWSF members.



GWSF Finances 2018/19



The financial statements for the period ending 31 March 2019 have been provided to all GWSF members. The statements have been certified by Alexander Sloan, Chartered Accountants.

The Forum turned over £223,955 in the year to March 2019, resulting in a deficit of £5,249. This deficit was largely due to a research project funded by our Glasgow members: GWSF paid the consultants near to the end of the financial year, and so many of the contributions from members will not have come in until April/May.

We continue to have a healthy balance sheet which gives the Forum overall net assets of £135,054, and we would expect to put something back into reserves in 2019/20 as a result of the above payments coming in during the first part of the new financial year.

GWSF, Unit 3D, Firhill House, 55-65 Firhill Road, Glasgow
Telephone: 0141 946 0645 Website: www.gwsf.org.uk

Thanks to Govanhill HA (p.1) and Linthouse HA (p.2) for providing photos