



Glasgow and West of Scotland  
Forum of Housing Associations

## **What does the 'new normal' look like for community based housing associations?**

### **GWSF Autumn Membership Gathering - Friday 19 November, via Zoom**

9.15 Registration online

9.45 Welcome and introduction from the Chair – Helen Moore

#### **10.00 Does Covid make a 'wellbeing economy' more or less likely?**

**Katherine Trebeck, Writer and Researcher**

*Given Katherine's long held view that the economy in the UK and Scotland is based on the wrong factors, does the experience of dealing with the pandemic mean there's now a greater understanding of how our economy should be working? Can something good come out of all this, in terms of real change?*

10.50 Break

11.10 **Choice of workshops** (see below)

12.10 Break

#### **12.50 Are we fighting fit for the future?**

**David Bookbinder and Colleen Rowan, GWSF**

*GWSF has been interviewing a substantial number of staff and committee/board members about recent challenges in attracting and retaining committee/board members. What did we find? Can community based housing associations face the future with confidence?*

*A plenary presentation 12.50 to 13.15 followed by discussion groups 13.15 to 14.00*

#### **14.00 What is 'community'? - A view from the south**

**Tony Stacey, Chief Executive, South Yorkshire HA**

*How do GWSF members' experiences of working with their communities compare with the position in England? We're often tempted to assume that associations there are just too big to think about being truly community-focused, and the recent bad publicity about very large English associations probably hasn't helped change that view. So what's really happening in the sector in England?*

**14.30 Chair's closing comments**

**Workshop choices** [Note: presenters will be added as we confirm them.]

### **1 Housing associations tackling child poverty**

*HAs don't control the welfare benefits system or the cost of fuel, but can and do have an impact in reducing poverty levels among their tenants. Setting the rent, maximising income through welfare rights, and a range of other services and activities: hear about how local associations are making their contribution to this critical Scottish Government objective*

### **2 Retrofit and new heating systems – what will the cost be to tenants?**

*Our sector cares about climate change and so we all understand why gas is on the way out and new-style heating systems are just round the corner. There's a lot of talk about a 'just transition' to new systems, but can it be guaranteed that our tenants won't be the guinea pigs in what feels like a big experiment? Can we be innovative without stinging those who can least afford to pay?*

### **3 Avoiding evictions for arrears – what more can we do?**

*Social landlords, and housing associations in particular, have made great efforts to reduce evictions even further in recent years – no-one wants to see people lose their homes, but equally the message that rent must be paid is important. This session looks at how one association has used particular ways of engaging with tenants to avoid any evictions for arrears in the last few years.*

### **4 Rent increase challenges**

*During the height of Covid housing associations tried hard to minimise rent increases, and a few even chose to freeze the rent in April 2021. Now, though, inflation is relatively high, the cost of maintenance programmes is going up because of supply chain shortages, and there's a massive retrofit programme just round the corner. Oh and did we mention uplifting the bulk that the council no longer does? How should we be looking at the rent increase options this time round, and what are GWSF members' plans so far?*

### **5 Innovation in going digital – giving tenants real choices**

*On the back of some good progress in tackling digital inclusion in recent years, Covid has brought some particular challenges in how we communicate and engage with tenants. How are associations continuing to support people to be part of the digital age, and are ways of working still ensuring that traditional ways of engaging are still fully catered for?*

**Cost:** £65 for GWSF members (non-members £90)

#### **Link for bookings:**

<https://www.share.org.uk/upcoming-courses/events-networks/gwsfs-autumn-membership-gathering-online>