

Co-op Committee Members, Co-op Staff, and Co-op Residents  
along with Castle Rock Edinvar HA staff  
studied and passed the CIH Certificate in Housing Level 2.

Kenny MacAskill MSP presents the certificates to some of the successful students



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## Hunters Hall Housing Co-op Annual Report 2012 - 2013

### GOOD NEWS

Area of flooding:  
new drains to be  
constructed.

New Street  
Lights

Path at bus  
stop to be  
asphalted.

Behind the shop: slabs to  
be uplifted and path  
asphalted.

Foot path to be cleaned  
& weeded.

*Well done to Bobby who organised the petition and all Co-op Members who signed the petition, to the SEAL writer's group for their letter to the Council, to Councillor Maureen Child for her support and to the Neighbourhood Partnership and the Council for agreeing to do the work. No start date has been agreed but we have been assured it will be soon.*

On the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at the Portobello + Craigmillar Neighbourhood Partnership Environmental Forum meeting a budget of £85,000 was agreed for local improvement projects. AND £28,000 of this money will be spent on the upgrading of the street lighting and the Niddrie House path. The Co-op and Dunedin Canmore Housing Association will contribute to the improvement costs. Once the work is complete the Council will adopt the path and will look after it.



**1988**



**2013**

## Our Aims

-  To provide encouragement, support and training for Committee Members so that they can manage the Co-op's objectives in ways which are effective and take into account legal requirements, best practice and equality and diversity issues.
-  To make sure there is a staff structure in place which can effectively deliver the Co-op's objectives and which operates in partnership with the Co-op's Management Committee and with Co-op Members.
-  To keep the Co-op's houses in very good condition and provide an efficient repair service and adequately funded long term maintenance plan.
-  To provide affordable rented houses.
-  To make sure the Co-op is financially viable in the short, medium and long term.
-  To work with Tenants and local organisations to provide a safe environment and welcoming community.
-  To provide community services for younger and older residents, to promote equal opportunities and to encourage Co-op Members to participate in the Co-op's business and affairs.
-  To promote and support Tenant Participation, by regularly consulting with Co-op Members and by providing straightforward information.

## The Management Committee

| Name               | Position         |
|--------------------|------------------|
| James Cameron      | Chairperson      |
| Hannah Williamson  | Vice Chairperson |
| Clare Macfadyen    | Secretary        |
| Diane Steele       | Treasurer        |
| Michael Abban      | Committee Member |
| Elizabeth Clark    | Committee Member |
| Tolulope George    | Committee Member |
| Mercy Kachande     | Committee Member |
| Marlena Lubniewska | Committee Member |
| James Old          | Committee Member |

### Staff

(Most staff work part time hours)

| Name            | Position                   |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Sylvia Clyde    | Housing Officer            |
| Susan Finlayson | Director                   |
| Sandra George   | Youth Services Officer     |
| Lesley Hamilton | Housing Services Assistant |
| Alison Morton   | Senior Administrator       |

### Agents

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Manor Estates Housing Association       | Management Agreement for Finance services:<br>Kathryn Millar     |
| Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association | Management Agreement for Welfare Rights services:<br>Fiona Bonar |
| Jim Campbell                            | Book-keeping services  |
| Dorothy Robertson Associates Ltd.       | Management Agreement for Technical services:<br>Jamie Robertson  |

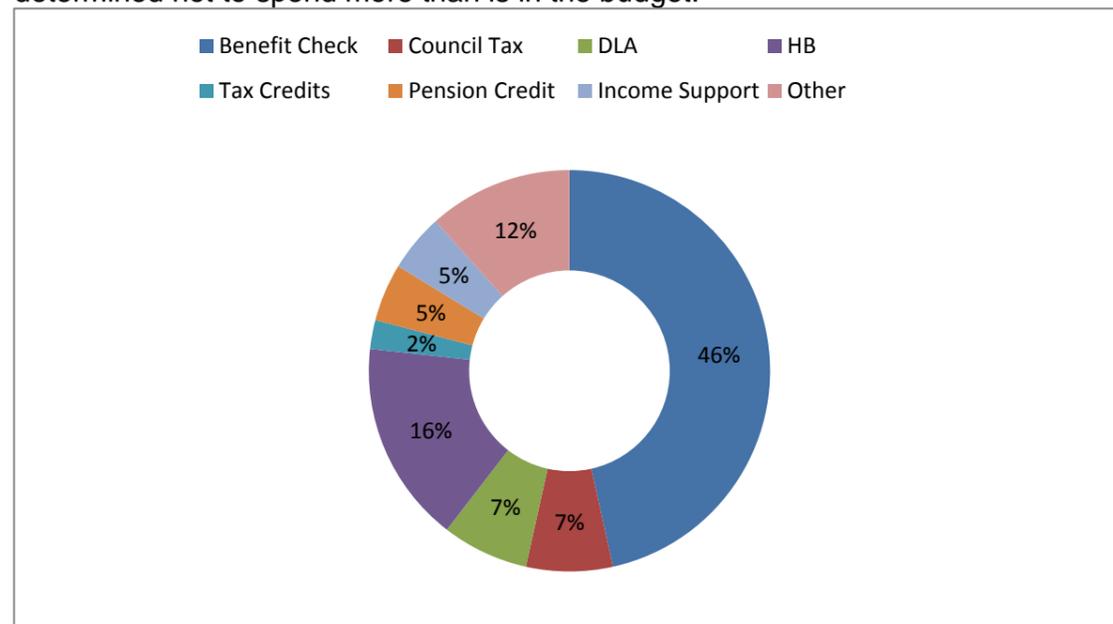
### Contractors

All our Contractors have public liability insurance and have signed the Co-op's Code of Conduct.

|                       |                                  |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Abbey Cleaning        | Stair cleaning contract          |
| K & D Decorators      | Decorators                       |
| Eden                  | Door Entry                       |
| Electracom            | Door Entry                       |
| Newtown Electrics     | Electrician                      |
| SCS Cleaning Services | Environmental Services           |
| James Gray            | Landscape Gardening Services     |
| Capital Trees         | Tree Surgeon                     |
| Barry Inch            | Joiner - All Trades              |
| Eric Scally           | Plumber                          |
| Lothian Gas           | Gas safety inspections & repairs |
| City Glass            | Glazier + Joiner                 |

Bank: Bank of Scotland, Edinburgh  
 Lawyers: Housing: T C Young Solicitors, 69a George Street, Edinburgh  
 Auditor: Baker Tilly UK Audit LLP, First Floor, Quay 2, 139 Fountainbridge, Edinburgh.  
 IT Support: TSG  
 Loans: Nationwide Building Society (

determined not to spend more than is in the budget.



### New windows and doors

The long awaited window and door replacement contract has started



Mrs McKay said the difference was noticeable immediately.

The house is definitely quieter and warmer. The white frames inside are a definite improvement.

### Chairperson, James Cameron's Report

I would like to thank Committee Members, staff and volunteers for all their hard work during the year. I also want to thank the two Committee Members who resigned during the year, Lorna MacFadyen and Kate McNeill. Thanks also to Colin Millar the coordinator of the SEAL project who resigned in June when the project funding came to an end. Colin organised the Chartered Institute of Housing's certificate in housing (level 2) course which six Co-op Tenants, including myself attended. Co-op and Castle Rock Housing Association staff also joined the course. This was the first time that Tenants have attended such a course, as it is usually for housing professionals. Thankfully with some help from Colin and the Tutor we all passed and at the back of this report you can see pictures of some of us receiving our certificates from Kenny MacAskill MSP. Colin also helped the allotment group and he obtained an "Awards for All" grant from the Scottish Government for purchasing a polytunnel.

At last year's AGM I was hopeful the window replacement work in phase 2, 3 and 56 Niddrie House Avenue was about to start. Unfortunately when we received the quotes they were a lot higher than anticipated. After checking our finances and after a lot of discussion the Management Committee agreed to postpone the work until the new financial year, by which time the Co-op would have more money in the bank. I am pleased to report that the work has now started and about two thirds of the windows and doors have been replaced. This contract will cost about £300,000 and Jamie Robertson, our Technical Advisor, has been supervising the contract and is in regular

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contact with the contractors to make sure the work goes as smoothly as possible. So far most Tenants have reported they are pleased with the improvements.

During the year you may have seen a few of us walking about the area with our clipboards. This was the RHEM Sub group and our task was to inspect the communal landscaped areas, the back greens and gardens. Despite discussions with the landscape contractor we do not think they are meeting the standards we expect. Our plan is therefore to seek a new contractor. We also noted quite a few back greens and some gardens which looked a bit neglected. Our notes have been passed to the staff and I know with the help of James Gray, a new landscape contractor, improvements to some of the back greens has started. I am also pleased to report that the Co-op has now introduced a garden aid scheme for our older Tenants. I hope to report a substantial improvement to the local environment at next year's AGM.

Looking to the future:

For many Co-op Tenants who receive government benefits particularly housing benefit the next year will be a difficult one. The British Government's Welfare Reform Act 2012 will introduce the nicknamed "bedroom tax" from April 2013 and the universal credit system from October 2013. If a Tenant has any extra bedrooms their housing benefit will be reduced and from October all welfare benefits will be paid directly to the claimant's bank account. The Co-op must and will introduce new rent payment arrangements. Advice will be offered to Tenants who find their housing benefit reduced and support given to Tenants who wish to seek a smaller house rather than pay the "bedroom tax". An article in the Inside Housing magazine (on 17<sup>th</sup> August) suggests that the universal credit system could result in a 50% increase in rent arrears. If this happens it will create a lot of stress and hardship for Tenants and it could cause financial difficulties for Registered Social Landlords like the Co-op that depend on their rental income to provide services and maintain their houses. These are the sort of issues the Management Committee will be dealing with over the next year.

The Scottish Public Sector Ombudsman has introduced new Complaints Handling procedures which all Scottish Registered Social Landlords must introduce by October 2012. The Co-op Management Committee has adopted a new Complaints Handling policy and information about this will be sent out to all Co-op Tenants by the end of September. Within the next few weeks I will be meeting with an architect to discuss the extension to the Co-op office. If this work goes ahead it will allow the Co-op to provide social activities and events particularly for our older Co-op Members. It will be both an interesting and busy year!

Finally I urge any Co-op Tenant/Member who wants to improve the local environment or introduce new services to join the Management Committee. You are welcome to try it out and come along to a couple of meetings before you commit yourself.

*James Cameron*

If you are having difficulty reading this text please telephone the Co-op office on 0131 657 3379 and we can arrange for a translator to explain this document in your own language.

### Portuguese

Se tiver dificuldade em ler este texto, contacte o escritório da Co-op pelo telefone 0131 657 3379 e poderemos providenciar um intérprete para explicar este documento na sua própria língua.

### Spanish

Si le resulta difícil leer este texto, no dude en ponerse en contacto con la oficina de Co-op llamando al 0131 657 3379; le buscaremos un traductor para que le explique el contenido de este documento en su propio idioma.

### Polish

Jeżeli ma Pan/i problem z przeczytaniem niniejszego tekstu, proszę zadzwonić do biura Co-op pod numer 0131 657 3379, a umówimy tłumacza Pana/Pani języka ojczystego, aby wyjaśnił treść tego dokumentu.

### Turkish

Bu yazıyı okumakta güçlük çekiyorsanız lütfen 0131 657 3379 telefon numarasından Co-op bürosunu arayınız ve bu belgenin içeriğini bir tercüman aracılığı ile size kendi dilinizde açıklarız.

### Mandarin

阅读这些文字时遇到困难，请致电**0131 657 3379 Co-op**办公室，我们会安排一位可以说你语言的翻译员为你解释该文件内容。

### Urdu

اگر اس مضمون کو پڑھنے میں آپ کو مشکل پیش آرہی ہے تو براہ مہربانی Co-op (کوآپ) کے دفتر کو 0131 657 3379 پر ٹیلی فون کریں اور ہم آپ کی اپنی زبان میں اس دستاویز کی تشریح کرنے کیلئے ترجمان کا انتظام کر سکتے ہیں۔

### Annual Tenant Satisfaction survey

Thank you to all the Co-op Members/Tenants who completed and returned the annual Tenant satisfaction forms. The information received really does help the Co-op Management Committee take into account your views and priorities when making decisions about how the money will be spent and what services need to be introduced or improved. It is good to report that all those who replied said they are satisfied with the Co-op as a landlord. Some improvements were requested with street lighting, Tenants who dump rubbish, how we deal with neighbour complaints, dog fouling and the condition of the play park. These requests HAVE been noted.

[Mr Fenwick is very pleased with the garden service and also](#)

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[with his new windows and doors.](#)



[Mrs Westland is very happy with both her new windows and doors and the new garden service.](#)  
**Services**

### Welfare Rights Services and Advice

The Co-op continues to pay for welfare rights and benefits advice from Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association. Fiona Bonar, the Welfare Rights Advisor, provided advice and support to thirty four Co-op Tenants. The total financial gain for these Tenants was **£95,572**. That's an average of **£2,810** per Tenant! Fiona provided assistance with benefit checks, council tax claims, pension credit claim, tax credit claims and DLA claims.

Co-op Tenants are encouraged to use this service. Just phone the Co-op office for an appointment and Fiona can usually see you the next Wednesday she is in the office.

### HEAT

We are hoping to introduce another service from Castle Rock Edinvar Housing Association. This time it is for heat and energy advice. As soon as the arrangements are made we will let you know.



Mr Hawkes enjoying the sunshine in his garden

### Garden Services

For a number of years we have wanted to help our older Tenants with their gardens. At last we have arranged this and fourteen Tenants now receive help with their garden. Mr Hawkes, Mr Fenwick, Mrs Westland and Mrs Dignan all said they appreciated the help they have been given to allow them to look after and enjoy their gardens.

### New rent payment service

From October the Co-op hopes to offer a card payment service. Tenants who have bank debit cards will be able to pay their rent or repair bills at the Co-op office. We have purchased the machinery we just need to plug it in and make sure we know how it works! As soon as it is operational we will let you know. High on our list for things to do is to negotiate an agreement with Pay pal which would allow Tenants to pay their rent at the local shop.

### Managing the Co-op business



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The Co-op's Management Committee is responsible for managing the Co-op's business. To do this effectively they receive a report called "Key Performance Indicators" at every Management Committee Meeting. This report contains important information about how the business is being managed and allows Committee Members to scrutinise both the financial results and the satisfaction survey results.

### Key Performance Indicators Report (KPI report)

When considering the financial results the Committee want to know how much has been collected and how much has been spent! Therefore included in this KPI report is information about rent collection, rent arrears, void times and void rent loss and repair costs. Below is a snapshot of the type of information the Management Committee receive.

### Income: Rents

Rent collection service: At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 the total arrear (which includes rent outstanding by both current and former Tenants) was £19,584 and this represents 2.9% of the Co-op's rental income. Last year the amount due was £24,667.

The arrears owed by current Tenants reduced by £8,057 and the amount owed by current Tenants at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 was £9,821.

During the year the number of Tenants owing over £500 decreased by 50%.

Much credit for this improvement in the rent collection service is due to the team leadership skills of our Housing Officer, Sylvia Clyde.

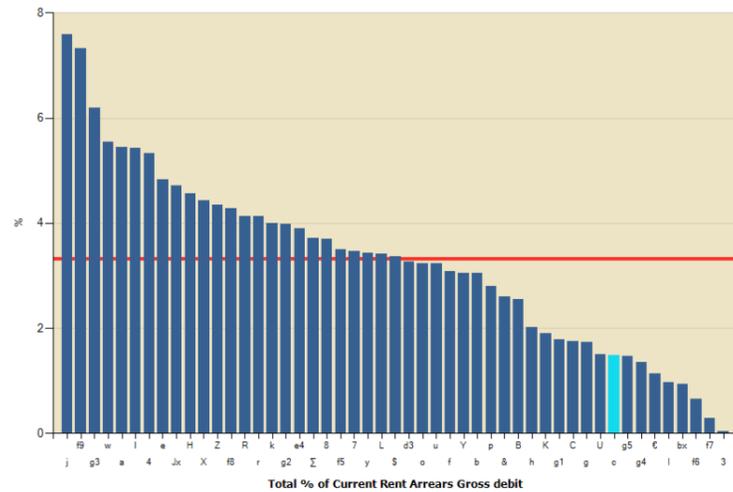
### Making sure we don't lose money: Voids

During the year 12 houses became vacant and while they remain empty we don't receive rent. It is important therefore to find new Tenants as soon as possible. On average, new Tenants moved in within 10 days and £1,005 or 0.15% of the rent income was lost.

### How do we compare with other Registered Social Landlords?

It is clear improvements have been made but until we compare the Co-op's results with other Housing Associations and Co-ops we cannot say with confidence that we are performing well. The Co-op has therefore, for the last three years, been a member of the Scottish Best Value Network (SBVN) which has a membership of fifty Registered Social Landlords. The SBVN collects both performance and finance figures so members can compare their performance with each other.

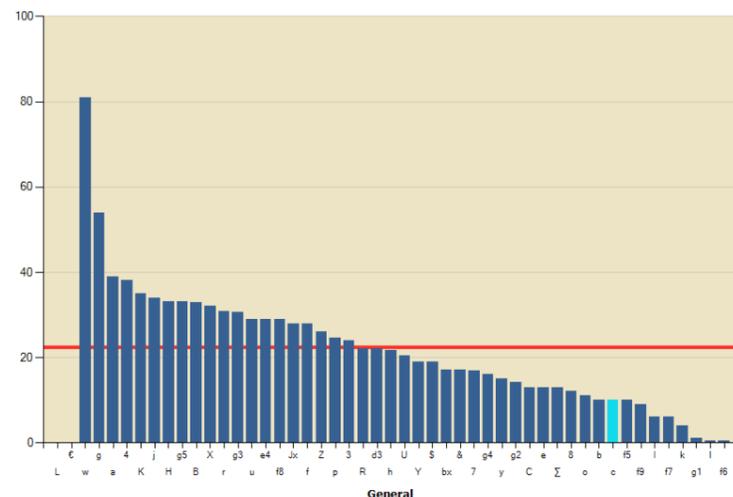
### Rent arrears



The Co-op is the light blue column which shows our rent arrears are the 9<sup>th</sup> lowest of the fifty RSLs. This is better than the average which is shown by the red line.

**The average number of days void**

The Co-op is the light blue column which shows that 41 RSLs take longer to allocate vacant houses than we do. Our performance of 10 days is better than the average which is shown by the red line.



**Income and expenditure**

**Cash in the Bank**

| 31/3/2012       | 31/03/2011 | 31/3/2010 | 31/03/2009 | 31/03/2008 | 31/03/2007 |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| <b>£321,195</b> | £175,838   | £393,420  | £537,979   | £719,956   | £926,108   |

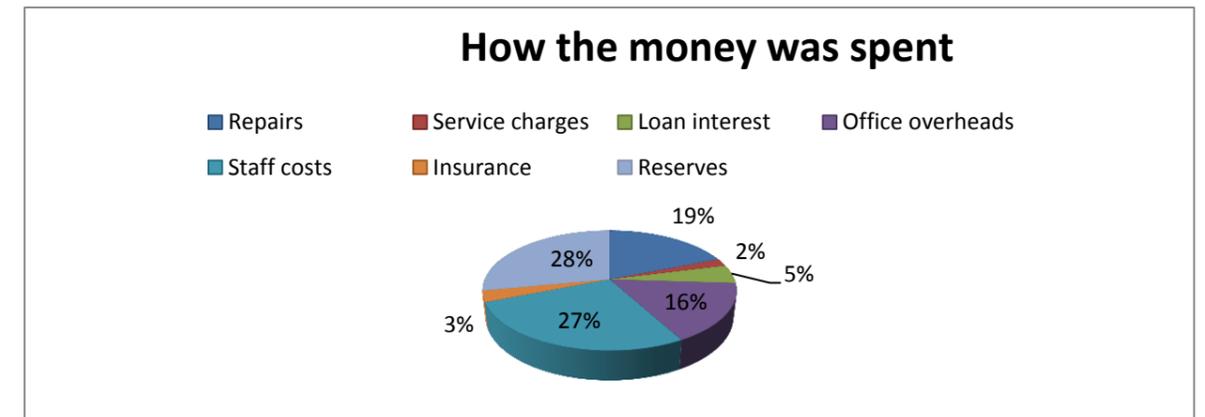
**Income:** During the year the Co-op received £662,092 in rent and service charges.

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A further £52,303 was received from grants; these included £47,855 from the Scottish Housing Regulator for the SEAL project (£34,893) and the Niddrie Community Youth Group (£12,962) plus a grant of £4,440 from the Scottish Government for two medical adaptations.

**Expenditure:** The chart below shows how the money was spent. During the year the Co-op continued to fund the part time post of Youth Service Officer for the Niddrie Community Youth Group.

**Surplus:** At the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 there was surplus of £122,268 which was transferred to the Co-op's bank to cover future major repairs such as the replacement of windows and doors.



Mrs Dignan enjoying her garden