

VOICE

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Issue 56 - Autumn 2023



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Melville's
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your drains
this winter



Gardening
helped change
my life



Inside Your Autumn Voice

Work begins on new Mayfield homes

Newsletter for tenants of Melville Housing Association

The Corn Exchange • 200 High Street • Dalkeith • Midlothian • EH22 1AZ

T: 0131 654 2733 • info@melville.org.uk • www.melville.org.uk • Scottish Charity SCO32755



Reviewing the 4-day week

In order to keep this year's rent increase as low as possible (held at 2%) Melville introduced a year-long 4-day week trial for all staff on 1 January. This trial will end on 31 December but it could be made permanent depending on performance and feedback. Over the summer we've been speaking to customers and staff to find out what they think of the 4-day week so far. Feedback has been very positive but if you haven't yet given us your views, it's not too late. You can find a link to the short survey on our website, or if you're not online then just give us a call on 0131 654 2733 (selecting option 6). Here's what you've told us so far.

358 of you replied to our survey, shared by email, text, Facebook and on our website.

81%

Happy with overall service since start of 4-day week

79%

Say 4-day week should be made permanent

77%

Find rents affordable



We needed to move forward on the 4-day week. This has been financially beneficial and kept rent levels low. I would strongly recommend it would continue.

If it keeps rents down and staff are happy with a 4-day week it's a win win situation for everyone.

If I need someone on a Friday there's no one there. Should be someone there for you.

The 4-day week is a good idea. You are still getting the same good service.

And here's a taste of what our staff told us:

It's had a huge impact on my work/family life. I'm better able to manage my home life which makes me a happier and healthier person.

My wife works the majority of weekends and the Friday off has allowed us to spend the day together and has added to our quality of life.

The 4-day week helps me with childcare. Everyone just seems to appreciate having it.

Changes to allocating homes



Over the summer we've been looking at how we allocate homes and our new policy, approved by tenants, staff and other partners, is now available. You can find a link to the new policy on the homepage of our website. If you're not online give us a call and we can send a copy out to you.

As we share a Common Housing Register with Midlothian Council, and because the Scottish Government has strict rules on the allocation of homes by social landlords, the changes we can make are limited but, after listening to tenants, we have made a few key improvements.

Where we have homes that are harder to fill we will now consider under occupancy which may include taking people with children on access. We may also look at other options.

60% for
3% against

Freeing up valuable family homes is an important priority. To encourage more people to move, we will reintroduce downsizing payments for under occupied properties.

94% for
2% against

In the interests of fairness to everyone on the list, we will suspend applicants who have refused two suitable offers. The suspension will be for a limited time after which they will be reinstated.

69% for
10% against

Work begins on new Mayfield homes



39 new affordable homes will be coming to Mayfield next year thanks to funding from the Scottish Government and a partnership between Melville and house builder Lovell.

Work is underway at the new development, known as Oakwood Edge, with the first Melville homes expected to be handed over next spring.

Numbers	39 new homes made up of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 x 1bed cottage flats• 15 x 2bed terraced houses• 14 x 3bed terraced houses• 1 x 2bed wheelchair bungalow• 1 x 3bed wheelchair bungalow
Cost	Total Melville project cost is £7.098m with £3.943m coming from Scottish Government funding
Completion	First homes expected spring 2024
Partners	Lovell as part of larger 156 home development
Other features	All properties will have Solar PV Electric car charging points will be located throughout the overall development 4 units will receive additional features such as air source heating to help achieve Net Zero

39
new homes

total project cost
£7.098m

government
funding
£3.943m

Melville teams up with community to plant trees for coronation



Earlier this year Melville teamed up with primary school pupils from Mayfield and a local development trust to celebrate the coronation, and to honour the incredible life and service of her late Majesty the Queen.

As part of coronation celebrations, Melville donated two plum trees and a memorial plaque to the community garden at the Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust (MAEDT) Pavilion in Mayfield Park, and were joined by children from Mayfield Primary School to help plant them.

“We have regular visits from local school kids, and we really enjoy showing them round the garden and teaching them a wee

bit about what we do here,” said Pavilion Development Worker Phil Morris. “It’s always lovely to see their enthusiasm but even more so in marking this special occasion and we’re very grateful to Melville for this kind donation.”

All produce grown in the community garden, including future fruit from the new plum trees, is used in the Pavilion café (open Tuesday to Friday between 10am and 2pm) or distributed to the community through the Mayfield Pantry at Bogwood Court.

“We were delighted to come along to the Pavilion and see for ourselves some of the fantastic work Sharon, Phil and the team

do,” said Melville’s John McMorrow. “Given the new King’s love of wildlife and the tree planting that went on as part of last year’s jubilee celebrations, a donation of these plum trees seemed very fitting. It was even more special to be joined by local school children who I hope will be enjoying the fruits of these trees for years to come.”

This latest collaboration between Melville and MAEDT follows the building last year of an innovative Polycrub, making locally grown fruit and veg available all-year-round. Installation of the sustainable polytunnel/greenhouse hybrid at the Pavilion garden was paid for with funding from Melville.

Spotlight on corporate team

If you phone up Melville, or if you pop into the office, chances are you'll speak to one of our two corporate services assistants, Maxine Mason and Megan Barclay. Maxine and Megan joined us at the start of the year and as well as reception duties, also provide support services for all of us at Melville, quickly becoming an invaluable part of the team. We had a wee chat about what attracted them to their new roles, what they do for tenants, and what they like to do outside work.

What attracted you to your current job at Melville?

Megs: I came from a job in financial services and was looking for a change in direction. I live in Dalkeith, went to school here and wanted a job working more with my own community. But I can't lie, the 4-day week was also a definite bonus!

Maxine: Before I joined Melville I had a job with the council in Dalkeith but each day was quite similar and I couldn't see much of a chance for career progression. The job at Melville looked more interesting with better opportunities to challenge myself and achieve more. My previous job wasn't in housing so this role is completely new to me and I love a new challenge. Not gonna lie, working a 4-day week also helped sell it!



What does your average office day look like?

Maxine: No two days are the same at Melville. As I am first point of contact in the office I assist with Melville visitors, phone calls and emails, organising meetings and events, providing admin support to our housing and property teams as well as the Chief Executive, Senior Management Team and Melville's Board.

Megs: Like Maxine said, every day working with Melville is different. We've got some regular core tasks but outside those there are always new jobs to be done supporting the other teams. When we're in the office it can be pretty full on, even though we don't get as many visitors as Melville used to before covid. There are still loads of admin jobs to be done, plenty of calls to answer, payments to take and a surprising amount of mail to get out the door!

What do you feel is your biggest contribution to Melville and its tenants?

Megs: My biggest contribution to Melville *according to my boss* is my sunny disposition! I'm also pretty decent at helping tenants with inquiries.

Maxine: That's a tricky one. I'm not sure there's one thing I could put my finger on, but I hope that customers who phone up and speak to me find me friendly and helpful. I try my best and even when I can't answer a question I'll make sure I put the call through to someone else who can.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

Megs: When I'm not working I like to spend time with friends and family and enjoy going for walks on the beach. I've also recently bought my first flat so that takes up a lot of my time (and money!)

Maxine: Outside work I love socialising with my friends and family, going on weekend breaks to cities that I've not visited before, reading (psychological thrillers are my favourite) and walking my dog.

Any pets?

Megs: I love dogs and cats but unfortunately don't have the space for one just now. At some point in the future I'd love to have a big dog like a Doberman.

Maxine: I've got a cocker spaniel called Indy. He's a bundle of energy and really keeps us on our toes!

Where's your dream holiday destination?

Megs: I went to Barbados a couple of years ago and absolutely loved it. It was paradise! I will definitely go back one day.

Maxine: My dream holiday would be the Maldives. Not been yet but hopefully one day!



Looking after your home and saving you money this winter



Draw your curtains in the evenings to minimise heat loss through windows.



Tuck long curtains behind radiators so that heat isn't trapped.



Keep radiators and heaters clear so heat can circulate – don't put furniture in front of them or dry washing on them.



If there are rooms you don't use, turn off the radiators in them and close the doors (but check regularly for any issues like condensation). Keep your home at a stable, comfortable temperature.



Use your heating controls, such as thermostats and timers, to heat your home without wasting energy.



Run the washing machine at a lower temperature – you can often do everyday washes at 30°C. Washing clothes at 30°C uses around 40% less electricity over a year than washing at higher temperatures.



Replacing traditional light bulbs with LED bulbs will save you money and you'll save even more if you turn lights off when you leave a room.

With the nights drawing in and winter around the corner, now is a good time to start thinking about little things you can do around the house that will keep you warm while also saving you money.



Even low-tech money saving ideas like putting up thicker curtains, introducing a 'sausage dog' draft excluder, or deflecting heat back into your room will help keep the heat in your house – and the cash in your pocket. Read our top tips (over the page) to help you reduce your energy use and cut your bills while also helping the environment and at the foot of this page you'll find our best advice on looking after your pipes and drains this winter, helping you avoid burst pipes and possible damage to your home and possessions.

Drain care – Help us to help you!



Have you noticed that the water is taking longer to drain than it used to when you use your sink, bath or shower?

If it is then it may be that the trap is clogged (usually with hair), and needs to be cleared. This is a simple fix that will solve the problem most of the time. However, if you have noticed that more than one of the drains in your property is running slowly, this might be a problem deeper in the drainage system.

Last year before Christmas we experienced very low temperatures over quite a long period, and this caused serious issues with some drainage systems, including in a few cases external pipes freezing. Slow running drains are more likely to freeze and blocked sewer and drain lines can badly damage your home.

If you notice any of the drains in your property are running slowly, please contact Novus and report the issue. They will come out and investigate. This will mean that you are far less likely to suffer from blocked drains this winter.

Drain care advice – six simple tips to avoid a drainage disaster

1. Think carefully about what you put down toilets and sinks. Don't flush things like sanitary products, wipes, nappies, grease, or food scraps.
2. Use filters to catch hair, food waste, and other things that might block drains.
3. Dispose of cooking fat properly by letting it cool down and solidify before putting it in the bin. Let used oil cool down before collecting in a disposable container and then putting in the bin. Never pour grease or oil down the sink, as over time it can solidify and clog the drains.
4. Regularly running hot water down the drains will help dissolve any grease and prevent residue building up. This can help keep the pipes clear and reduce the risk of blockages.
5. Avoid using harsh chemicals to clear drains, as they can damage the pipes and be harmful to the environment. Instead, try using natural remedies like baking soda and vinegar. These are not only better for the planet but usually cheaper as well.
6. Finally, please remember, if you do notice slow drainage or any signs of a potential blockage, please report this as soon as possible. Early action can prevent minor issues from becoming major plumbing problems.

Help and advice

Make sure you don't miss out on the latest benefits news. To get up-to-date information, including breaking news on benefit changes, visit our website or 'like' our Facebook page.



Benefit changes for parents

Over the past few months there have been a number of changes to the benefits system that affect parents of pre-school and school-age children. Here's information on three of them and how they could affect you.

1. New UC rule for parents of young children

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has introduced a change that sees parents of children aged one and two on UC attend more face-to-face meetings with work coaches to help them prepare for employment. The appointments include exploring steps to improve skills, identifying support needs, learning about childcare provision, and boosting confidence.

Parents with a one-year-old will have a work-focused meeting with their work coach every three months instead of the current six months and parents with a two-year-old will meet their work coach every month, instead of the current three months.

2. More help with high childcare costs

If you're a parent on UC and you have high childcare costs (more than £760 a month) you can now claim more in support each month.

This change will benefit anyone whose costs are greater than £760 a month for one child, and £1,304 a month for two or more children – that's because the old cap meant you couldn't claim the full 85% of your total costs. Although you can still only claim up to 85% of your costs, the caps have now increased to:

	UC rates	
	2022/23	2023/24
Maximum for 1 child	£646.35	£950.92
Maximum for 2 or more children	£1108.04	£1630.15

For example, if you have one child and your childcare costs are £1,000 a month, previously you could only claim up to £646 a month (just under 65%). However you can now claim the full 85% and get £850 a month, because that's under the new monthly cap of £951.

You can also now get some of your childcare costs paid upfront if you are entering work or 'significantly' increasing your hours. Speak to your UC work coach to find out more.

3. Deadline to apply for school age payments

If you're a parent or carer and you get housing benefit but you don't receive Scottish child payment then you will need to apply for the Scottish Government's school age payment as you won't receive it automatically and you must do so before 29 February 2024 (2024 is a leap year).

The school age payment of £294.70 is designed to help with the costs of preparing for school. If you're a parent or carer for a child born between 1 March 2018 and 28 February 2019 (even if deferring their school place for a year) then you need to apply now by going to www.socialsecurity.gov.scot.

To find out more, or if you think you may be due this money but you're not sure, call 0800 182 2222.

Save money on your broadband

Did you know that you could save up to £240 a year on your broadband by switching to a 'social' tariff? Not everyone is eligible. Only people who receive certain benefits, such as Universal Credit, can apply.

Social tariffs are offered by a number of providers including BT, Sky and Virgin Media. Find out more at www.ofcom.org.uk or by googling 'social broadband tariffs'.

Melville withdraws money advice service

In the interests of value for money (the service cost us around £50,000 a year) Melville has taken the decision to stop providing a money and debt advice service. There are, however, a number of organisations that can help if you're looking for advice on how to manage your money, bills and finances. These include:

Money Advice Scotland	0800 1387777	www.moneyhelper.org.uk
Citizens Advice Scotland	0800 0327077	www.cas.org.uk
Advice Direct Scotland	0808 8009060	www.advisedirect.scot

Tenancy support saves the day



I'm a new Melville tenant and a mother of four. My youngest is still just a baby and one of my other kids is in the middle of being tested for autism. I've been finding things really tough recently and was delighted when I was given my Melville property but I had hardly any furniture to take with me to my new home and couldn't afford to buy stuff on the Universal Credit I get. I was told I could be due a Community Care Grant but my application was turned down (by the Scottish Welfare Fund).

I didn't know what to do as my house was bare and I didn't have the stuff I needed to make my kids comfortable. I spoke to my support worker (provided by Melville) to see if they could help. They told me they would appeal on my behalf, as they thought the decision was wrong.

I had to wait a wee bit but after a while I heard back that the appeal was successful and I was going to get almost £1,400. I was over the moon. What a difference that money will make.

I can't thank my support worker enough for the help they gave me. I'm not sure what me and my family would have done without it. Thank you so much.

Get in touch



If you need help and advice managing your money please get in touch. Our dedicated Welfare Benefits Advice team are available to help all Melville tenants and members of their households. Help is also available from independent organisations such as Citizens Advice.

John Scott (ljscott@melville.org.uk) 0131 561 6481

More to be done to help downsizing say tenant reps



Hi my name's Liz Coyle and I've been one of Melville's reps for Bonnyrigg and Poltonhall for a few years now. I try to get along to Melville meetings as often as I can as I really enjoy the company and find the things we talk about pretty interesting. No two meetings are ever the same.

Our last meeting was at the end of June and we had loads to discuss. We heard from the housing team about proposed changes to the allocations policy, all of which made sense. The bit about downsizing was particularly interesting. We all agreed that you'd need to pay us a lot more than £500 to move house, as this wouldn't even cover the removal costs! We also felt that more decent quality small properties are needed if Melville is really serious about freeing up larger homes.

We also talked about overall performance and the 4-day week. Nobody in our group had noticed a fall in service levels and we were all happy to support it being made permanent. I've also noticed that staff seem happier and that can only be a good thing. If you haven't yet had your say then make sure you let Melville know your views.

Finally a wee reminder that if you have any issues in your local area that you're not comfortable reporting directly to Melville then you can approach any of the tenant reps. It's one of the things we're here for. Just send an email or call us using the details below.

That's all from me for this issue. Take care and stay safe.

Liz Coyle

Area

Tenant rep

Gorebridge, Newtongrange	Ellie Cairns
Penicuik, Bilston, Loanhead	Steven Jamieson
Bonnyrigg, Poltonhall, Rosewell	Andrew Hiddleston, Gill Pennie, Liz Coyle and Janet Harvey
Mayfield	Belinda Maciver and Barbara Shearer
Westhouses (Mayfield), Pathhead	Position vacant
Easthouses	Position vacant
Dalkeith	Sandra Weston
Woodburn, Danderhall	Eileen McLaren
Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, East Lothian	Position vacant

Fancy becoming a rep and getting £20 for every meeting you come to?
Email mytenantrep@melville.org.uk or call 0131 561 6466

Melville sad to hear of death of first ever member



Staff and Board members of Melville were extremely saddened to hear of the death of its first ever share-holding member and pillar of the Midlothian community Mabel Ferguson.

Mabel, who lived in the town of Gorebridge, had been a Melville tenant throughout the organisation's entire 28 year history, moving with her home as part of the transfer from Scottish Homes in 1995. She then became the first ever share holder and a regular at Melville annual general meetings.

Beyond her interest in local issues, Mabel was also known for her love of family. As well as raising four children of her own, and adopting another three, she believed passionately in the fostering programme and took on an incredible 200 foster children during her 90 years. She was well-known in the local community as she could always be found out and about with a pram!

"All of us at Melville were extremely sad to hear of Mabel's passing," said Melville Chief Executive John McMorro. "People like Mabel, with her keen community spirit and a selfless commitment to others, are few and far between. She will be sadly missed."

Quick and easy microwave meals on a budget



Microwave chilli

One of our most popular microwave recipes, this hearty kidney bean chilli from Jack Monroe makes a satisfying veggie dinner. What's more, it's ready in just 15 minutes.

Prep: 10 mins | Cook: 5 minutes | Serves: 2

Ingredients

- small onion, finely chopped
- 1 fat garlic clove, crushed
- knob of butter
- tsp ground cumin
- tsp paprika
- pinch of chilli flakes or chilli powder
- 400g can chopped tomatoes, drained and juice reserved
- 400g can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- vegetable stock cube
- 2 squares dark chocolate
- soured cream, to serve (optional)
- coriander, to serve (optional)

STEP 1

Put the onion, garlic, butter and spices in a microwaveable container, give it a quick stir, then heat in the microwave on High for 30-40 secs. Leave to stand for 1 min, then add the chopped tomatoes, beans, stock cube and chocolate.

STEP 2

Cover with cling film and pierce 3 times. Place some kitchen paper on your microwave turntable, put the container on top and cook for 2 mins on High. Stir well and leave to stand for 1 min. If your chilli starts to dry out, add some of the reserved tomato juice, but remember that it won't reduce as much in the microwave as it would on the hob.

STEP 3

Cover and cook on Medium for a further 2 mins. Give it a good stir and allow to stand for 1 min before serving topped with soured cream and coriander, if you like.

Microwave mac 'n' cheese

Pasta, pronto! Easiest ever macaroni and cheese makes a delicious solo supper or packed lunch - just pop it in the microwave at work.

Prep: 10 mins | Cook: 3 mins plus standing | Serves: 1

Ingredients

- 75g macaroni or other pasta
- 250ml cold chicken stock, milk or water
- 2 tsp butter
- 50g cheddar, grated
- handful of spinach or 1/2 tsp
- Marmite (optional)

STEP 1

Find a mug that holds twice the volume of your dry pasta - the bigger, the better. Add the macaroni and your liquid of choice. Cover with cling film and pierce 3 times. Stand the mug in a microwave-proof bowl to catch any spillages, and cook in the microwave on High for 2 mins. The liquid will bubble up and over the sides, so tip any liquid from the bowl back into the mug (be careful as it will be very hot) and give it a good stir. Leave to stand for 1 min.

STEP 2

Repeat twice more or until the pasta is cooked (it may take longer depending on the pasta), then remove from the microwave. Stir through the butter, cheese and spinach or Marmite, if using. The heat from the pasta should melt the cheese and wilt the spinach, but if not, pop back in the microwave for 30 secs.

Gardening helped change my life says Ellie



A keen amateur gardener from Gorebridge in Midlothian who suffers from a rare neurological condition, has urged tenants of Melville to get their hands dirty in the garden. Ellie Cairns (48) volunteers at the community garden at the Gorebridge Beacon and is keen for others to see for themselves the difference gardening can make to the body and mind.

"I was diagnosed with cerebellar ataxia around 20 years ago," explained Ellie. "It's a progressive disease that affects the way the brain processes things like movement and balance, and for a few years it really took over my life. For the first four years I was more or less bed-bound and after that it took two years of physio to get me walking again. Those were tough times."

Ellie, a Melville tenant since 1999, had little experience of gardening until just a few years ago. It was only when lockdown struck, and outdoor activity took on such importance, that she discovered opportunities at the Beacon's community garden, the inspiration of local volunteer Ann Dunn, who helped set up Gorebridge Community Gardeners to help people get back in touch with nature and to add some joy and beauty to the village.

"I'm naturally quite a shy person but volunteering at the garden has really helped with my confidence as well as my mental and physical health," continued Ellie. "I'm on my own for much of the day so getting down to the garden and helping out is really good for me. I'll never overcome my problems, this is a condition that I have to live with, but I'm learning to live my best life with the cards I've been dealt and I couldn't have done it without gardening."

The garden at the Beacon is a great success story of the pandemic, with the most recent addition being a growing shed, paid for entirely by funds raised by Ann and her team of volunteers through a series of fundraising events and completed following a small contribution of £300 from Melville Housing. Melville previously funded a thinking bench for the garden's quiet corner, accessible thanks to an all-access disability path, laid by Melville's main repairs contractor Novus Property Solutions.

"I'm no expert gardener," said Ellie. "But what I would say to anyone is don't be afraid to learn as you go. You'll make mistakes but that's part of the journey. Mistakes lead to other opportunities. I would encourage everyone to get their hands dirty and give it a try. Whether in your own garden or by helping out at somewhere like the Beacon. Don't let your health stop you."

Hard work of guerrilla gardeners pays off



Recent work done by a fantastic group of local amateur gardening enthusiasts has paid dividends this summer with beautiful wildflower displays appearing outside Melville's office at the Dalkeith Corn Exchange. Similar groups are springing up all over the country. If you fancy getting involved just google 'gardening groups near me'.

Sign up to alerts from Neighbourhood Watch Scotland



Neighbourhood Watch SCOTLAND

Neighbourhood Watch Scotland has launched a free alert service, now available across Scotland, to keep people informed about issues, such as crime, safety and resilience affecting your local area.

More than 28,000 people have already signed up for the service which includes information from organisations like Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, local authorities and Get Safe Online.

Anyone who has signed up will receive alerts containing advice and information as well as a course of action and a point of contact for reporting.

You can also choose to receive general advice and reassurance, messages about current scams, crimes and community issues as well as repairs utility companies will be carrying out in your area.

Registered users can choose interest groups, what types of message they wish to receive and from whom. Users can also rate, reply and share messages, contribute information and answer surveys.

Sign up online at www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk
Or by calling 01786 463732

Mentoring for young people in Midlothian



If you're a young person based in Midlothian who has experienced care or other life challenges and could benefit from some help and support then the award winning Grandmentors initiative could be for you.

Grandmentors is an informal one-to-one support service for young people that can help access services relating to housing and finances, education, employment and/or training, and/or health and emotional wellbeing.

Mentoring provides you with the opportunity to form a positive relationship with an adult who is there just for you - someone who isn't paid to be there and wants to spend time with you because they enjoy it and want to help.

A Grandmentor can help by:

- Providing flexible support to meet your needs
- Meeting you regularly (usually weekly/fortnightly)
- Working with you to improve your communication skills
- Supporting you to plan and work towards goals, for things like employment, education or training
- Putting you in touch with services who can help you write your CV, apply for jobs, find paid or voluntary work experience and/or training opportunities
- Acting as a positive role model helping you to boost your confidence

Find out more by emailing adam.petrie@volunteermatters.org.uk

Over to you...

Over the past few months we've seen a welcome fall in the number of complaints received, with numbers down on the previous period and also compared to the same time last year. However we can still do better so if you experience good or poor service, please let us know. We don't have room to give a response to your comments and complaints here but as long as you provide contact details we always reply directly when issues are raised.

March to June complaints



What you told us

On cost-of-living

“ I have always received help from staff when required. Not much can be done regarding cost of living crisis but it's causing great hardship to many people. ”

“ Service are OK you could do better like I said make the houses greener with solar panels it would help the poor a lot. ”

“ Rents are still too high for single people, there needs to be more help for people who are working ie entitlement to housing benefit. ”

“ Cost of living has shot through the roof but it's good that Melville is helping people. ”

On the 4-day week

“The 4 day week hasn't affected me at all. Enjoy your time off!”

“Seems a very positive experiment”

“The cost of living increase is crushing everyone so the four day week and min rent increase is a no brainer.”

“I emailed my housing officer on a Friday and got his out of office but he got straight back to me on Monday morning which was fine.”

“The 4 day week is great for work/home balance The more time a person can spend at home the better in my opinion. It's better all around for stress relief and keeping work vibes exciting.”

“I haven't noticed any difference from the 5 day week.”

“As long as services and repairs are being kept going I have no issues with the 4 day week.”

“I think its a very good move for your staff and doesn't affect the customer either.”

“Made zero difference to me, not sure why it would? Repairs are done by Novus, and my rent is direct debit. I'm all for keeping the rent down though, so very satisfied!”

“No change in performance still very attentive even with a 4 day week.”

Other feedback

“Not always easy to get repairs done when working full time.... It would benefit working people if say one night a week after 5.30 repairs could be carried out or introduce something more suitable... Not everyone can get time off or paid when off when allocated day repairs to take place.”

“I've been struggling a lot this last year and Melville have been super helpful and very understanding. I couldn't have asked for better support after my break down last year.”

“Takes forever to get repairs now.”

“I'm very happy with my new home I can't thank Melville staff enough for their help and guidance.”

“I'm really happy I've lived here a long time had my children in this house and you have been very good with me at times thank you.”

“Melville have always been wonderful with anything needing done in the house and are so helpful and polite when I have had to call the office even offered support if I needed so no complaints at all.”

“Very quick service, so helpful and caring of tenants. Previously was with council and the help and resources were nothing like Melville.”

“Melville are a fantastic association. There has been a tenancy in my family for fifty years.”

News in brief

Looking for housing help in Forth?



If you're a **Melville tenant in Forth** or the nearby area, we'll be dropping in at the Forth Community Resource Centre, Hawkwood Terrace, on **Monday 9 October** between **2 and 4pm**. If you've got housing issues you'd like our help with, like problems with neighbours, unresolved repairs or trouble paying the rent, come along and **housing officer Caroline Langton** will see what she can do to help



New community pantry in Gorebridge

A new community pantry has opened at the Beacon in Gorebridge. Well done to everyone involved for their hard work. It's open every Tuesday between 5 and 7pm and for £3.50 you get 10 shopping credits plus a free bag of veg. It's not means tested, anyone is welcome so if you live locally (EH23 postcode) and need to do a small, affordable shop, get yourself along.

Reporting criminal behaviour

You should report to the police any criminal behaviour, or anything that you think might be criminal, by calling 101. You can also report non-emergencies to Police Scotland by going to www.scotland.police.uk and using the online reporting form.

Make sure you take a note of the police incident number so that you can share it with us and we can then add it to your case.

Remember - ALWAYS call 999 if you or anyone else is in danger.



Competition winners

Well done to Lisa Kidd of Old School, Mayfield who won our satisfaction and performance prize draw. Lisa picked up a £50 voucher for letting us know her thoughts. Thanks to everyone who took part.

Congratulations also to Lynn Sharp who lives in Woodburn winner of our quarterly satisfaction survey draw. Lynn picked up a £50 voucher just for replying to our satisfaction survey text and completing a short online form. Remember, almost all Melville feedback is now done digitally so to be in with a chance of winning make sure you let us know how we're doing after you've used any of our services.

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Join our growing Facebook community. We currently have more than 1,900 people following us on Facebook but we're always keen to find more. By joining us on Facebook you get to hear the latest Melville and community news first, tell us what you think of us, and even enter prize competitions. Visit us at www.facebook.com/melvillehousing.

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