

# VOICE

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Issue 64  
Spring 2026



Rents increase  
by  
4.5%



Unclaimed  
money  
alert



Garden contest  
needs  
YOU!



## Inside Your Spring Voice

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### £1.4m to improve homes!

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Newsletter for tenants of Melville Housing Association

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## Rents increase by 4.5%



At the start of April Melville rents increased by 4.5% (about £4.40 a week on average). We know that any rise in household costs can be worrying, particularly given another spike in costs thanks to global events, but we want to be open about why this change is happening and how we're working to support you.

## Increase of roughly £4.40 a week

Like many organisations, we're facing higher costs for repairs, maintenance, and essential services. This increase, which was made following another very positive rent consultation, and after careful discussion by our Board, will help us keep homes safe, warm, and well maintained, while allowing us to continue investing in improvements that matter to you.

Like other social landlords in Scotland, Melville has to raise rents each year to cover rising costs and stay financially stable. We've worked hard to keep the increase, which was set by the Board - not management - as low as possible.

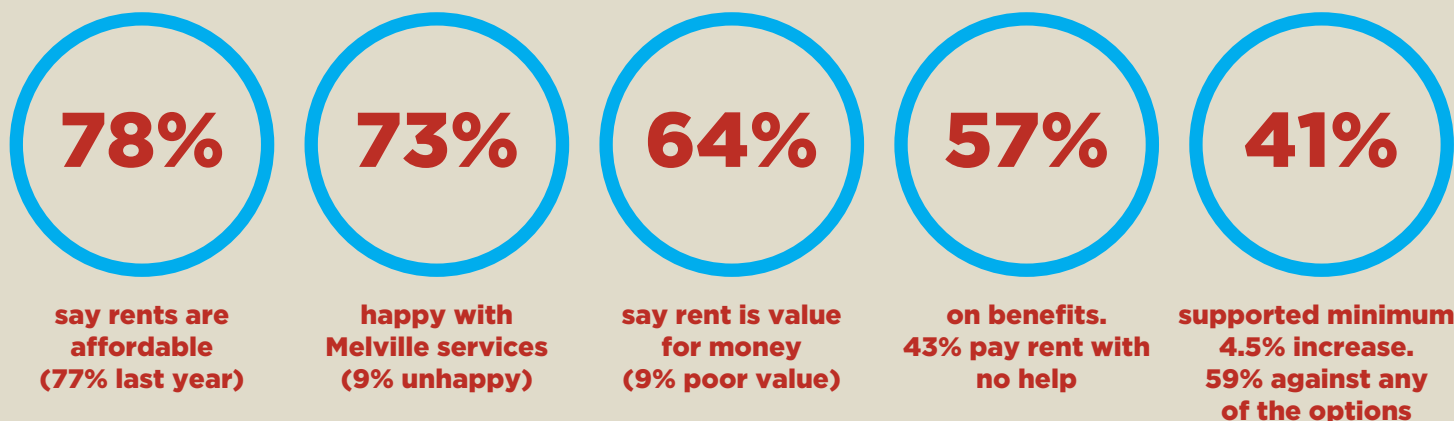
If you're concerned about how this may affect you, please don't struggle in silence. Support is available, whether that's advice on benefits, help with budgeting, or setting up a manageable payment plan. Our team is here to listen and help you find the right support.

We appreciate your understanding and look forward to supporting you through the year ahead.

## What you told us

This year's survey saw another excellent response with 296 replies returned, representing a sample of around 14% of our eligible tenancies.

Of the 296 replies that came back:



We also received dozens of individual comments on a range of topics, not just rents. We replied to individual comments to investigate problems raised and to offer help and support. Some of the issues raised were:

- A feeling that the views of tenants, particularly those who work, aren't listened to.
- The difficulty single and older people have meeting increasing rent demands.
- Complaints about the overall quality of homes and questioning how/where rent money is spent, including ongoing issues with energy efficiency.
- The prioritising of building new homes over maintaining existing ones.
- Issues with the repairs provided by R3.
- Complaints about estate management and the attitude that some tenants have towards looking after their homes and gardens.

## Here are some of your comments (in red) and our responses (in blue)

**These surveys are pointless as you increase the rent regardless of people's opinions. It's ok for people receiving benefits. What about the rest that need to pay full rent with no help!**

**We value the views of everyone who replied and carefully considered all the feedback we received. We also understand that some tenants may feel frustrated by the decision. After looking at the challenges ahead, our Board decided that an above inflation increase was needed this year to help us manage the financial pressures we face.**

**I have had no improvements to my property in 15 years. I have paid for anything major myself and because of this I grudge any rent increase. If we were to get cladding or improvements to the insulation or heating of the property I would not mind an increase.**

**We do cladding work when funding is available, but unfortunately not all homes are suitable. However we are committed to making all Melville properties more sustainable and will always explore opportunities when they arise.**

**Looking at the bigger picture, we don't have the funds to improve every home at the same time. Our budgets mean that improvements happen in cycles and all homes will receive the same upgrades over time, and this year's rent increase will help fund improvements in the future. On rare occasions, our records for a property might be incomplete, so if you believe work is due and hasn't been carried out, please get in touch.**

**My Daughter and my daughter in law both have solar panels fitted and their electricity bills are much lower. I think this would be great for tenants to save a bit. The way for Melville to afford this would be a price increase on rent but the tenant would still be better off through reduced fuel bills, it could be something to look into.**

**Solar panels can make a real difference to energy costs. At the moment, our maintenance budget is fully committed to essential home improvements, and we still have a number of tenants who feel their homes have been neglected. While we're not in a position to pursue this just now, we'll certainly be keen to explore the idea further if grant funding becomes available in the future.**

**Rent was increased to pay for a better repairs and maintenance company. We have seen no improvement since R3 took over.**

**No repairs company is perfect and we'll always investigate any complaints that we receive, however overall satisfaction with R3 is very high and the level of complaints we're seeing are much lower than with Novus (who we used before). Their costs are, however, also much higher.**

**The rents are higher than the Council. They shouldn't be.**

**Our rents will always be higher than those charged by councils because we were set up differently and don't operate in the same way. For instance, Councils have money coming in from several sources, while rent is our only real source of income (save for the occasional government grant) and it needs to go up every year to pay for improvements to homes.**

**Stop buying more houses and focus on the ones you have especially the older properties.**

**We face competing demands all the time, including from current tenants who want us to prioritise existing homes and from the several thousand people on our waiting list desperate for a quality affordable home. We try to balance the two as best we can and in an average year spend far more money improving existing properties than building new ones. Details of this year's investment programme can be found over the page.**

**I live on my own with only one wage coming in, so please tell this to the Board when setting rents as I get no help at all and this needs to be recognised.**

**We know that times are tough for a lot of people, especially if you live on your own and get no help or support. No one should suffer in silence and there is help out there, not just from Melville but from loads of other organisations as well. If you're really struggling we might be able to help and even if we can't then we should be able to signpost you to someone that can.**

## Making the most of brighter days ahead

With the days getting longer and the weather brighter (hopefully), spring is the perfect time for a fresh start. In this issue, we're celebrating the season with ideas to help you make the most of it - from scenic spring walks and simple ways to refresh your home, to gentle tips for boosting your emotional and physical wellbeing. It's all about small steps to help you feel lighter and brighter as we emerge from the cold and gloomy winter months.

## Spring cleaning made simple

Spring cleaning doesn't have to mean a full weekend of scrubbing! A few small steps here and there can make your home feel fresh and tidy without the stress.

Try tackling one area at a time - like a kitchen drawer or a cupboard shelf. Even 10 minutes can make a difference. Put on your favourite music, set a timer, and see what you can get done.

It's also a great chance to have a clear-out. If you come across items you no longer need, consider donating them or checking local recycling options.

The key is to keep it manageable- little and often works best. Before you know it, your space will feel lighter, brighter, and ready for the new season.

And don't forget to give yourself credit - you've earned that sit-down and cuppa afterwards!

### Tips for quick and easy spring cleaning

- Start small - pick one room or even one drawer at a time
- Set a timer (20-30 mins) to keep it manageable
- Declutter first, clean second
- Make a simple checklist and tick things off as you go
- Don't aim for perfect - 'good enough' is still progress
- Put on music or a podcast to make it more enjoyable

## Quick wellbeing boosts



Spring is a great time for a fresh start - not just for your home, but for your wellbeing too. And the good news is, small changes can make a big difference.

Getting outside for even 10 to 15 minutes a day can boost your mood and energy levels. Whether it's a quick walk, sitting in the garden, or enjoying a cuppa by an open window, it all counts.

It's also a lovely time to reconnect with neighbours or try something new, like a hobby you've been putting off. You don't have to do anything big- just something that brings a little bit of joy to your day.

Remember, looking after yourself doesn't need to be complicated. A bit of fresh air, a chat, or a quiet moment can go a long way.

### Tips for boosting your wellbeing

- Get outside at least once a day - fresh air and daylight can really lift your mood
- Open windows to let in light and a sense of freshness
- Get moving, even with a short walk or gentle stretch
- Reconnect - reach out to friends, family, or neighbours
- Set small, positive goals to build motivation
- Take time to pause - breathe, reflect, and reset

## Hidden outdoor gems



As the temperature warms up and the evenings get longer, spring is the perfect time to explore what's right on the doorstep. Midlothian is full of hidden gems just waiting to be discovered!

Why not take a stroll through a local woodland or try a new walking route you've never explored before? Spots like Dalkeith Country Park or the peaceful paths around Roslin Glen are great for a relaxed stroll, whether you're heading out solo, with family, or meeting a friend. You could also try Vogrie Country Park or enjoy a stress-relieving wander at Crichton Castle. The woodland trails around Dalhousie Castle Estate Walks are also well worth a visit. If you're one of our tenants in Forth then why not try a gentle walk through Forth Wood or take on Tinto Hill for fantastic views.

**Lord Ancrum's Wood** - Tucked away near Dalkeith, this ancient woodland is full of winding paths, wild garlic, and birdsong in spring. Peaceful and often overlooked.



**Borthwick Castle Woodland Walks** - Most people notice the castle, but the surrounding walks are the real hidden gem—quiet countryside, lambs in the fields, and great views.

**Polton Burn Walk** - A lovely riverside path that feels surprisingly secluded. Expect waterfalls, stone bridges, and plenty of greenery.



**Roslin Gunpowder Mills** - A fascinating mix of nature and history, with old industrial ruins tucked into a lush gorge. Bluebells here in spring are a highlight.

**Dewartown Paths** - A bit more remote, but perfect if you want wide skies and peaceful walking routes. Great for spotting wildlife and enjoying real countryside calm.



**Temple Village Walks** - A tiny village with access to quiet country paths and open farmland—ideal for a gentle, no-rush stroll.

Even a short walk can lift your mood and help you feel more connected to your local area. Keep an eye out for wildlife, blooming flowers, the scent of wild garlic and those first signs of spring - it's amazing what you can notice when you slow down!

Got a favourite local spot? We'd love to hear about it.

# Focus on repairs and maintenance

## Looking after homes together



Keeping your home safe, comfortable and in good condition is something we all play a part in. From annual gas servicing to making sure smoke and heat detectors are working properly, these small but important checks help protect you, your household and your neighbours. We really appreciate your support in giving access when needed and reporting any issues promptly.

Looking ahead, we're pleased to be investing in a strong programme of planned maintenance over the coming year. This means improvements to homes across our communities, helping keep properties warm, efficient and well maintained for the future.

Whenever we carry out work in your home, we'd love to hear about your experience. Tell us what went well and what didn't - your feedback on our contractors helps us raise standards and get things right.

By working together, we can keep homes safe and continue making improvements that benefit everyone.

*Rich Murdoch, Head of Asset Management*

## House 'burping' - not as daft as it sounds!

You may not have heard the term 'house burping' - a modern twist on the traditional habit of giving your home an airing. It's a simple, effective way to improve indoor air quality, especially in Scotland where damp and condensation can build up and particularly at this time of year as the weather warms up but the breezes remain brisk!

The idea is straightforward: open your windows wide for a short burst of between five and ten minutes, ideally on opposite sides of your home to create a cross-breeze. This quickly flushes out stale air, moisture, and odours without letting too much heat escape.

Top tips:

- **Do it two to three times a day - especially in the morning to clear overnight moisture**
- **Air out after cooking or showering to prevent condensation**
- **Use internal doors to help fresh air circulate through your home**
- **Keep it short in cold weather - even three to five minutes works well**

What to avoid:

- **Leaving windows slightly open all day in winter as this wastes heat and doesn't remove moisture effectively**
- **Skipping ventilation altogether, which can lead to damp and mould**

Quick check: If your windows are foggy or damp in the morning, it's time for a quick 'burp'!

A few minutes a day can make a big difference to your comfort and the condition of your home.

## Don't paint over detectors!

**When decorating your home, please take care not to paint over detectors. The most important reason is that the renewal or expiry date is usually printed on the side - painting over it can hide vital safety information. Paint can also affect how well the detector works. Always use masking tape to protect the detector before painting, then remove it afterwards to keep everything safe and clearly visible.**

## £1.4m to be spent improving homes this year



**Over the next year, Melville Housing will be investing almost £1.4 million to make homes warmer, safer, and more comfortable.**

Over the next year, Melville Housing will be investing almost £1.4 million to make homes warmer, safer, and more comfortable. This is part of our ongoing programme to modernise properties and improve the quality of life for everyone living in them.

We know that older kitchens, bathrooms, heating systems, windows, and doors can make homes harder to run and more likely to need repairs. That's why we're replacing them with modern, efficient alternatives - helping homes stay warmer, easier to heat, and less costly to run.

We'll also carry out essential structural repairs to keep homes safe and sound. Looking ahead, we're starting to review properties to make sure they meet modern energy and safety standards. In cases where upgrades aren't practical, we may sell certain homes (and we've already done this on a couple of occasions) - but any money raised will only be spent improving other Melville Housing homes and services.

If you're due an upgrade, watch out for an email or text from us - we're keeping letters to a minimum to save paper. If you think you should be getting work done but haven't heard anything, please get in touch.

### £480k on roofs



### £221k on 44 heating systems

 Mostly in Poltonhall, Mayfield and Gorebridge

### £212k on 41 bathrooms

 Mostly in Mayfield

### £269k on 59 kitchens

 Mostly in Poltonhall, Mayfield and Gorebridge

### £184k on 57 doors and windows



#### Need help?

If you need help with any of the issues raised here or with anything to do with your home, please get in touch. The contact details for our Property team are:

**0131 654 2733** (selecting option 2) [propertyservicesgroup@melville.org.uk](mailto:propertyservicesgroup@melville.org.uk)

You can also report repairs by visiting [www.melville.org.uk](http://www.melville.org.uk).

# 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.**

## **YOU must tell Universal Credit about your 4.5% rent increase**



**That time of year again when, if you're on Universal Credit (UC) and you haven't already done so, you MUST tell them about the increase in your rent. This applies even if your rent is paid directly to Melville.**

**You can tell them about the increase using your online UC account. They'll need to know that your rent increased by 4.5% from 1 April 2026 and how much you're now paying. You should then receive the new amount in your next payment.**

**If you do not tell them about the increase in your rent, you will not be paid the full amount leaving you with rent arrears.**

**If you need to find out what your new rent amount is, get in touch in the usual ways.**

## **Struggling with benefit deductions? Melville can help**



**If deductions from your benefits are making it hard to cover rent or council bills, you're not alone - and we're here to help.**

**Recent research shows that many low-income Scottish households lose up to £1,000 a year through deductions for things like council tax arrears. These automatic deductions can push families deeper into poverty and make it harder to keep up with essential bills.**

**We can offer help and advice with things like Universal Credit, council tax, and rent arrears. Our team can set up flexible repayment plans so debts don't spiral, and we work with local charities like Citizens Advice Scotland to provide extra support.**

**In urgent cases, we may be able to provide short-term hardship funds to cover essentials while you get back on track.**

**Don't wait until a problem becomes a crisis - contact your housing officer today. We can help you stay in control of your money and your home.**

## Unclaimed money alert one! Owed thousands on state pension?

If you took time off work between 1978 and 2010 to care for a child or someone with a long-term illness, your State Pension could be lower than it should be. This is due to errors with Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP), a system meant to reduce National Insurance gaps for carers.

Many people – especially women who first claimed Child Benefit before May 2000 – may be missing years on their record. This could mean you're already being underpaid or will be in the future.

You might be affected if:

- You're currently aged between 42 and 90, though this issue mainly affects women in their 60s and 70s.
- You took time away from paid work to look after a child at any point between 1978 and 2010.
- You claimed Child Benefit for the first time before May 2000 or your partner claimed Child Benefit, but you stayed at home to look after a child or person with a long-term health condition at any point between 1978 and 2010.
- You didn't include your National Insurance number on your claim.

Foster carers and kinship carers could also be eligible.

It's worth checking your National Insurance record now – claiming missing HRP could add tens of thousands to your pension.

## Unclaimed money alert two! Child Trust Funds

If you were born in the UK between 2000 and 2011, you may have a Child Trust Fund (CTF) waiting for you. These accounts were set up by the government, and the money belongs to you – often worth hundreds or even thousands of pounds.

In Scotland, you can check if a CTF was opened in your name by contacting the provider listed on your welcome pack or using the government's online tool. Once you find it, you can claim the money when you turn 18, or earlier in some circumstances.

Don't let it sit unclaimed – checking your Child Trust Fund is quick and could give you a nice financial boost.

### How to find a lost fund

If you do not know who holds your Child Trust Fund, you can trace it for free using the official GOV.UK locator tool.

- You will need your National Insurance number and a Government Gateway ID.
- Parents searching for a child under 18 will need the child's full name, address, and date of birth.
- Once you submit a request to HMRC, you should receive a response with the provider's details within three weeks

## Get in touch



If you need advice on benefits, have energy debts, or are struggling financially, please get in touch. John Scott and Barry Smith, Melville's Welfare Benefits Advisers, support all tenants and their households. Independent organisations like Citizens Advice can also help.

John Scott | [jscott@melville.org.uk](mailto:jscott@melville.org.uk) | 0131 561 6481

Barry Smith | [bsmith@melville.org.uk](mailto:bsmith@melville.org.uk) | 0131 561 6482

# Focus on gardens

## Looking after your garden



As the weather starts to warm up, it's the perfect time to get gardens ready for the months ahead.

Our housing assistants carry out regular garden checks, but if you notice a garden in your area that isn't being looked after, please let us know at [info@melville.org.uk](mailto:info@melville.org.uk) so we can take a closer look.

We're not expecting perfection, but gardens should be kept to a reasonable standard. This means removing any rubbish or unwanted items and keeping grass, hedges, and general overgrowth under control.

If a tenant is struggling to maintain their garden, please encourage them to reach out. Support may be available to help before things become more difficult. We also offer a strimmer and lawnmower to borrow free of charge (a small refundable deposit applies), which can really help.

Taking action early makes a big difference - and by working together, we can keep our neighbourhoods looking their best this summer.

## Small space, big impact: gardening ideas for every home



You don't need a large garden to enjoy the benefits of creating your own fantastic green space. Even the smallest balcony, doorstep, or windowsill can be transformed into a vibrant spring display.

Start simple with pots or containers - herbs like mint, basil, and chives are easy to grow and perfect for cooking. Bright flowers such as pansies or primroses can add an instant splash of colour and lift your mood. If space is tight, think about growing up the way: hanging baskets, wall planters, or even a small shelf can help you make the most of every inch.

No pots? No problem. Recycled items like tins, buckets, or old crates can work just as well - just make sure they have drainage holes.

Gardening isn't about perfection; it's about enjoying the process. Whether you grow a few herbs for your kitchen or create a mini flower display, every small effort can make a big difference to your home and wellbeing this spring.

If you're particularly proud of your small outdoor space then you can enter it in our Great Gardens contest. There's a £50 prize for best use of a small space so what are you waiting for, enter today!

## Welcome wildlife into your garden this spring



Spring is the perfect time to make your outdoor space a haven for local wildlife. Whether you have a garden, balcony, or a shared space, a few simple changes can help support birds, bees, and butterflies.

Start by choosing plants that attract pollinators. Flowers like lavender, primroses, and pansies provide important food for bees and other insects. Even a small pot or window box can make a difference.

Water is just as important. A shallow dish filled with fresh water can help birds and insects stay hydrated - just remember to top it up regularly. If you have space, consider leaving a small area a little wild to provide shelter for insects and hedgehogs.

You can also create a simple bug hotel using natural materials like twigs, leaves, or hollow stems. It's an easy and fun way to encourage helpful insects into your outdoor world.

By making a few wildlife-friendly choices, you're not only brightening your home but also helping nature thrive in your community.

## Show off your garden - and help keep the competition alive!



Last year, our Great Gardens competition received just one entry! While that garden was fantastic, we need more participation to keep this event going. Without a stronger response this year, we may have to stop running the competition altogether.

We know many of you take real pride in the flowers and vegetables you grow - whether it's a full garden, a patio, or a few pots by your front door. This is your chance to share that



effort, inspire others, and be rewarded for it.

Entering is simple: just send a short email to [dhughes@melville.org.uk](mailto:dhughes@melville.org.uk) or call 0131 561 6466 by 5pm on Thursday 14 August. Judging will take place throughout August, with winners announced at our AGM in September.

If you've ever thought about entering, this is the year to do it. Your participation is what keeps this competition going.

**£100  
first prize**

**£50  
runner up prize**

**£50 prize for best  
use of small space**

## 30th anniversary donations near completion



Melville has made its 27th contribution as part of the '30 donations for 30 years' initiative, celebrating the organisation's 30th anniversary.

A £500 donation has been awarded to Newtongrange Star Football Club to support its grassroots sport and wide-ranging community work.

Alongside its first team, the club runs player development and community programmes, including an Under-20s team, boys' and girls' teams, and Walking Football sessions. It also supports local schools, hosts sessions for Newtongrange Primary pupils, works with Midlothian Active Schools, and helps organise the village Gala tournament.

Beyond football, the club takes part in community activities such as the 'Pit to Pitch' exhibition, litter-picking at Welfare Park, and maintaining its war memorial tradition - much of it led by volunteers.

Melville's donation will support this ongoing work and with 27 contributions now complete, the final three will be announced soon so watch this space!

## Community diners to the rescue



If you're struggling, mentally, financially or in any other way, why not get yourself along to one of 10 fantastic new community meal projects bringing people together across Midlothian.

Ten community diners have opened, offering weekly affordable, nutritious hot meals for residents on low incomes - while also helping people access cost of living support.

These welcoming spaces are about more than just food. They're a chance to meet others, build connections, and get helpful advice in a friendly setting. Cathy Hanlan

Locations include Food Fact Friends Penicuik, Gorebridge Community Cares, Hawthorn Learning Centre, Mayfield & Easthouses Development Trust Café, Midlothian Muslim Community Centre, Newtongrange Development Trust, OneDalkeith, Penicuik Storehouse and Woodburn Community Hub.

Backed by Scottish Government funding, the project is set to continue until 2028 and OneDalkeith is already seeing great success, serving high-quality, low-cost meals (free for children) to around 30 people every Wednesday - no booking needed.

## Work starts on 28 new mid-market homes



Work has officially begin on 28 new mid-market rent homes at the former Newbattle High School site near Dalkeith. Delivered through Melville's Ironmills subsidiary, this marks the first mid-market development by Ironmills in almost 15 years!

The homes will include a mix of terraced houses, cottage flats and apartments, designed to create a welcoming, sustainable community. Built to high standards of energy efficiency and accessibility, the development aims to meet strong local demand for affordable, quality housing.

There's also good news for local people as the development will create local training and employment opportunities, supporting skills development and job prospects within the community. House builder McTaggart Construction will also work with Easthouses Primary School to provide educational visits and career activities.

## What are mid-market rent homes and how do I apply?

These 28 homes will be offered at rents that sit between traditional social housing and the private market. Expected to be handed over towards the end of this year, eligibility is based on income and the properties will be let differently to Melville's social homes. You will need to produce both proof of income and bank statements and pass a credit check. You'll also need to pay a deposit. If you, or anyone you know, is interested please get in touch and we can provide more information.

## Tenants take the lead

Melville's Tenant Rep Group has been busy over the past couple of months, continuing to play an active role in shaping services. A recent meeting was particularly well attended and sparked lively discussion around home repairs and maintenance. Members put a range of questions to our main repairs contractor, R3, now two years into their role, focusing on opportunities to improve digital services, strengthen their presence on the tenant portal, and address inconsistent use of satisfaction surveys.

The group also quizzed long-standing gas maintenance provider Saltire, learning more about their recent takeover, future sustainability plans, and the growing emphasis on heat pumps as part of greener heating solutions.

In addition, members reviewed Melville's new arrears policy, offering constructive feedback on this important area of the business.

The next meeting will take place in June. If you're interested in getting involved, we'd love to hear from you.

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	Cathy Hanlan
Pathhead	Position vacant
Dalkeith	Iain Lawson
Woodburn	Eileen McLaren
Danderhall	Christina Bain
Lanarkshire, Edinburgh, East Lothian	Position vacant

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

# Over to you...

Here's a round up of the feedback, good and bad, you've given us over the past few months. We don't have room to give a response to your comments and complaints here but as long as contact details have been provided we always reply directly when issues are raised.

## November to February complaints



Frontline (stage 1) complaints

**30**

Upheld

**22**

Average Response Time

**4 days**



Investigation (stage 2) complaints

**5**

Upheld

**3**

Average Response Time

**9.4 days**

**Repairs (10 complaints)**

**Heating/hot water (7)**

**Property Condition (4)**

**Unresolved issue (3)**

**Policy/procedure (3)**

**Poor service/comms (2)**

**ASB handling (2)**

**Charges/rent (1)**

**Other contractor (1)**

**Estate management (1)**

**Staff behaviour (1)**

## What you told us

“

Just keep doing as you are doing that's all we can ask. This is the first survey I've done. Had to think about clicking on link but now I will do more.

”

“

Always excellent service from staff, through to the completion of the work.

”

“

No further comments you're doing a great job maintaining your properties. Well done keep up the good work.

”

“

Polite kind and caring.

”

“ With all the houses getting built they need to make more 4 bedrooms. At this rate am going to be waiting years for one. ”

“ As I am self employed and require to take time off to wait for the contractors in the 5 hour window they give me (8-1 or 12-5) I lose the money on that day and then subsequent days, when the contractors have to return to fix the original job. ”

“ I've only recently moved into a Melville property, coming from Midlothian Council, I feel the condition of the property isn't great, hasn't been well maintained. ”

“ Spend money revamping your older stock along with building new. People in older stock should be offered the new properties first with the older revamped stock then allocated to new tenants. ”

“ More could be done about neighbours leaving bins out for days or sometimes weeks at a time, dogs barking constantly. Sick of picking other people's rubbish up from my garden, can't open windows in summer because of weed smoking neighbours. ”

“ If you looked after property and instead of going for the cheapest option and look at things and make decisions that are going to last so you are not constantly having to repair the substandard! ”

“ Rents are fair, I've never had any problems with the services you provide. Any issues have been resolved quickly. My only issue is the amount of homes (specifically 3 beds) that are under occupied when so many people are needing larger properties. ”

“ The benefits officer helped us navigate what can be a complicated procedure. ”

“ Any contact I have with Melville is positive and they are very polite and helpful. ”

“ Very professional and really great help would highly recommend this service (Welfare benefits). ”

“ Despite complaints numerous gardens remain unkept. ”

“ I'm so happy to be a Melville Housing customer. ”

“ I fear Melville may be haemorrhaging good money on the new contractors. R3 are just as bad as Novus, 6 attempts to fix a handle on a door! ”

“ Put tenants first instead of all the self promoting of Melville. You're a housing association you seem to forget that! ”

# News in Brief

## Coming very soon – Melville’s new website



We're currently hard at work building a new Melville website that will be easier to use, more mobile-friendly, look better and be more secure. If you were a fan of the old site then don't worry, all of the features you've come to rely on, such as property swaps, repairs reporting and complaints forms, will still be there, just improved. We hope to have the new site ready to go in the next month or so. Watch this space.

## Citizens' Panel wants you!



If you're a Melville tenant in Midlothian then you could make your voice count by helping shape the future of local services. The Midlothian Citizens' Panel wants to hear from you and all you need to do is share your views through one or two short surveys each year - a quick and easy way to have a real say on decisions that affect the community. You can find out more, including how to sign up, at [www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk).

## Need support? Try VERA



New touchscreen information points are now available in libraries and community hubs across Midlothian, making it easier for residents to get quick, confidential support with the cost of living.

The service, called VERA (Virtual, Expert, Remote Advice), offers a simple and private way to connect with trusted local advice on things like benefits, debt, and essential services.

There's no need to book an appointment, and no pressure—just straightforward help when it's needed. Anyone who could use a bit of extra support is encouraged to drop in to their nearest location and give VERA a try.

## Competition winner

Well done to Lara Heatherill of Arthur View Crescent, Danderhall, who won our rent consultation prize draw. Lara picked up a £50 shopping voucher for letting us know her thoughts. Thanks to everyone who took part.

Congratulations also to Susan Watson of Maryburn Road, Easthouses, winner of our quarterly satisfaction survey draw. Susan 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.

## Join us on Facebook



Join our growing Facebook community. We currently have more than 2,000 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](http://www.facebook.com/melvillehousing).

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