

Nomination Form

Tenant Group of the Year



TIS National Excellence Awards 2024

The **TIS National Excellence awards** recognise and celebrate housing organisations, staff, volunteers, tenants, residents, and community groups **who are leading the way and making positive change in the Scottish social housing sector.**

Categories honour excellence in everything **from partnership working, tenant participation and scrutiny practice, to digital creativity and innovation.** Hotly anticipated, the awards offer a seal of approval for the most outstanding work.

Finalists are selected by an expert and independent judging panel, and **winners announced at an awards ceremony on Thursday 7th November 2024 at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.**

The closing date for applications is 5:00pm on Thursday 11th July 2024. TIS accepts submissions in more than one award category.

Category Overview

The **Tenant Group of the Year** award recognises a tenants, residents, or community group who has made an outstanding contribution and achieved great practice that others can learn from in the future.

Submissions must **evidence how the group has added value to their local area and improved community spirit,** strengthened relationships and communication, championed tenant participation, found innovative new ways to get people involved, **influenced decisions and housing policies, services and standards,** or driven community regeneration projects forward.

Who you can nominate

This award is open to tenant, resident, and community groups.

About you

Please note information about the individual, organisation, or group submitting the application:

Name	Kevin Hamilton
Position	Customer Liaison Officer
Organisation	East Ayrshire Council
Email address	Kevin.hamilton2@east-Ayrshire.gov.uk
Telephone number	07745836602

About the nominee

Please note information about the group you are nominating:

Group name	Gilfoot TARAG
Email address	gilfootTARAAG@gmail.com
Telephone number	07931520770

Background

Maximum 250 words

Please outline background information about the group that you are nominating.

For example, detail:

- The background of the group, including: when the group was established, the number of individuals involved in the group, and the aims of the group, etc.
- The specific role the group undertakes.

Established in 2021, originally as a Facebook group to highlight and address local issues and concerns to the Council, the group then progressed to becoming a community and Neighbourhood Watch group, and now an East Ayrshire Registered Tenants Organisation (RTO). Their aims are to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants and residents in the area on matters concerning housing, the environment, safety, and the social and community life in the area and have 8 active committee members with 5 office bearers.

The Gilfoot TARA provides a voice for residents on issues they may have, and advocate on their behalf with agencies including East Ayrshire Council. They have also championed equal opportunities for all in developing strong relationships with landlords to ensure participation in decision-making.

The group is extremely active in providing free events and activities within their community, attracting local residents and visitors from further afield and is successful in securing donations and funding, with their events list expanding each year.

The group is the driving force in their neighbourhood. Their hard work and desire is to ensure that where they live strives to be the very best it can be to enhance peoples' quality of life and experiences.

Establishing an RTO during Covid-19 restrictions by being proactive and facilitating a meeting in the local park is a commendable achievement and the group's activities and commitment to improve the quality of homes and the environment to enhance wellbeing, is recognised by local residents, council officers and elected members.

Actions

Maximum 500 words

Please outline specific actions the group has taken to make an outstanding contribution.

For example, outline:

- How the group has added value to their local area and improved community spirit.
- How the group has made a real difference to the lives of tenants.
- How the group has influenced decisions and housing policies, services, and standards.
- How the group has explored innovative new ways to get people involved.
- How the group has driven community regeneration projects forward.
- The work involved and their overall aim.

The group is an established part of their community, Newmilns and Irvine Valley areas. Members have a collective voice and have built strong relationships with tenant volunteers, council officers and elected members. Regular estate walkabouts enrich the connections, and the group is active in promoting tenant group activities along with providing support and advice to help tenants in their homes. Recent areas of involvement and influence includes:

- Allocation Policy Consultation
- Tenant Participation Strategy Review
- Development and piloting of the new online housing application form
- Annual rent setting review

The group has developed skills in fund raising and grant applications, which are all used to further enhance the lives the community, making Gilfoot a friendly and supportive neighbourhood.

To prevent social isolation, the group created an intergenerational community garden in the heart of the community. Some of the more vulnerable tenants have welcomed this initiative with open arms and have expressed their gratitude to the change it had made to their day-to-day lives. The renewed sense of community is evident through the activities the group organises, including:

- G in the Park – A free event, in its 4th year which attracts over 300 people and aims to give a festival vibe experience, without significant cost. Activities include, a funfair, stalls, classic car display, air show, fun races, dancing, DJ, tombola et al. G in the Park gives people, especially children and young people, the experience of community events and for the older generation, a nostalgic feel of childhood at local gala days.
- Sparktacular – this firework display is now an annual attraction for people in East Ayrshire, attracting over 500 people. Donations from the event are distributed amongst local charities.
- Ghoulish Gilfoot - gets residents involved in decorating their houses and gardens at Halloween and has proven successful in connecting the community and engaging families and young people. It is part of the annual events calendar around Halloween, which include a disco for children and young people and psychic night for adults.
- Community Garden – as part of the growing relationship with the Council, the garden was created, used for meetings and provides a space for the whole community to unwind, relax, socialise, and spend time together on a daily basis. The group encourages local young people to learn horticultural skills inherited through parents and grandparents to keep their

memories alive. An example of this is growing an array of their own vegetables enjoyed at the free community barbeques.

- Free Outings – knowing that days out can be a significant expense for families, and can be a treat many will not have, the group now organises an annual one to fun and / or historic places where families can relax, away from the grind of daily life and children and young people can broaden their horizon's and visit somewhere new.
- Easter Extravaganza – these days see children and young people, as well as committee members dress up, enjoy egg painting, east egg hunts and party, and receive a free Easter egg.
- Adult Activities – the group organises events for adults such as psychic nights, which supports the groups fund raising activities which enables the array of free community activities above.
- Christmas Community Benefit – the group provide free food hampers for elderly residents and a toy for young people through sourcing external funding and donations from local businesses.

Additionally, the group has introduced a Community Benefit Support Initiative, where money raised from the groups is used to support individuals and households in need and at time of crisis. This excellent work has seen hampers provided to older people at Christmas, food parcels provided to families at risk of hunger, and basic household items to support families in crisis and to maintain tenancies.

The group provide encouragement to tenants and residents to get involved in local housing initiatives, participate in council consultations as well as having a voice at RTO meetings.

The group is embedded in the community with a strong identity in the town and beyond.

Outcomes

Maximum 700 words

Please outline positive outcomes achieved as a result of the group's work.

For example, detail the impact on:

- The delivery of housing services.
- The improvement of satisfaction levels.
- Adding value to their local area and improving community spirit.
- Communication, strengthening relationships, and partnership working.
- The inclusion and lasting benefits of tenants, residents, and communities.
- The skills and knowledge of tenants, residents, and communities.
- How others can learn from the group's good practice now and in the future.
- A specific community regeneration project.

As part of their journey, the group of volunteers enhance a sense of community and bring people together through shared experiences for the betterment of not just the small community, but also the wider town.

They have fostered effective relationships with local businesses, the council and local stakeholders. They are now often in receipt of various donations and sponsorships, as their reputation has such a great standing and impact in the town, to deliver positive change for tenants and residents.

The group has liaised with other local community groups with larger local events and initiatives to influence and engage with the council, especially in relation to environmental projects, to raise the profile of communities. For example, the installation of speed bumps and initiating the process for community asset transfer for their community garden.

They have very quickly, with the help of the East Ayrshire Federation of Tenants and Residents and the Tenants Information Service increased their knowledge of housing issues and policies and procedures, along with wider council service provision. They have facilitated meetings with senior officers to discuss how the Council can provide support, along with discussing issues raised from local tenants and residents.

Members of the group have had input in several housing initiatives, ranging from the new innovative online application forms, to policy reviews. They have developed a strong working relationship with the local neighbourhood coach who has commented positively on the experience of working with and supporting the group volunteers.

The range of events the group undertakes is extensive and keeps the community at its heart. The group has negotiated funding applications, completed event applications, arranged the appropriate insurance and liaised with third sector companies and organisations. As a result, they are very knowledgeable in the event planning process. They frequently discuss new ways in which they and the wider community groups can come together to raise the profile of the town and have been approached by other RTOs for advice and support to facilitate their own community events.

It is hoped that through future conversations with local stakeholders, a space will be identified to become the new community hub and provide a meeting space for all residents for social activities and a place to seek advice and information on local issues.

What makes this nominee stand out from the rest?

Maximum 100 words

Please provide a short testimonial on why this group deserves to win.

Gifoot TARAG have been proactive in their community for a number of years. They are a determined and hard-working group of volunteers who are committed to making their community the best it can be.

The group's relationships with the council, local schools, businesses and other community groups has been developed and are now an intrinsic part in what they do.

Their success in the projects they have undertaken is well recognised and applauded in their local community. They are a credit to their community.

Declaration

As the proposer I have completed this nomination form to the best of my knowledge, and the information provided is a true representation of the nominee's achievements.

Name	Kevin Hamilton
Signature	<i>Kevin Hamilton</i>
Date	21/07/24

Thank you for taking the time to complete this nomination form.

Please submit your nomination by **5:00pm on Thursday 11th July 2024** to TIS by email at: **info@tis.org.uk** or by post to: **TIS – Clockwise Offices, 77 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, G2 3BZ.**

Next steps

- **All applications will be acknowledged on receipt by TIS.** If you do not receive acknowledgement within 3 working days, please contact us to ensure your application has been received.
- An **independent judging panel** will rate your application against the award criteria. The panel will consist of representatives from organisations across the Scottish social rented sector.
- Your award submission will provide the basis for both the shortlist and final decision of the winning entry.
- **TIS welcomes applications in more than one award category.**
- Please ensure you answer all questions as fully as possible and keep the content of your nomination focused – avoid exceeding the suggested word count.
- **TIS will inform all proposers of the outcome of their application Thursday 29th August 2024.**
- Finalists will be invited to the **TIS National Excellence Awards Ceremony**, as part of the TIS National Housing Conference and Exhibition, on **Thursday 7th November 2024** at the Grand Central Hotel in Glasgow.