

Help and support available

Are you insured?

Do you need help with food?

Autumn 2022
Issue 6

Tenants' Open Voice

for tenants of Lewes District and Eastbourne



Fraudster Sentenced



Tenant Conference

A Huge Success!

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lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Tenants Open Voice Issue 6



Gary Hall

Welcome to 'Tenants' Open Voice', the joint newsletter for the tenants of Eastbourne and the Lewes District. I hope you enjoy this Autumn edition.

We would love to hear your thoughts (good or bad) to make sure it's an interesting read, so please feel free to share your views or ideas for future content by emailing:

tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Clearly the issues around the cost of living are going to prove challenging over the next few months, and to help, we've put together information on the support available as a tear out centrefold of this edition.

It's great that we are now back out on the estates after so long, and we look forward to seeing you out and about. Please don't hesitate to speak to officers about anything you'd like us to be aware of, as we are here to help. As always, we want to hear your views and for you to get involved in developing our services.

Until next time, stay safe and take care.
Kind Regards

Gary Hall BA(Hons), FCIH, MinstLM
Head of Homes First, Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council

Tenants Open Voice is compiled and edited by Harry Hillery (Tenant Involvement) and is designed in-house by Printing Services for Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Councils.



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Chat with ELLIS Eastbourne Lewes Live Intelligent Source

Our intelligent chatbot ELLIS is available 24hrs a day, seven days-a-week.

ELLIS can assist and answer many of the questions you might have, whether that's information on your area, who your local Councillor is, or even how to make payments online for services such as garden waste or Council Tax.

ELLIS was launched in late March, and to date 28,000 queries (30% out of hours) have been answered. ELLIS has delivered a 93% accuracy rate in answers when compared to a customer advisor, and when a query is too specific for ELLIS, customer service staff are still free to chat with online as before between 8.30am and 5pm on weekdays.

If you're not able to find what you're looking for on the website or can't use our chat services, you can use the Contact Us form on the website or call us.

Tenant Conference

After being postponed due to Covid-19 for two years running, the Tenant Conference finally took place on 14 June at Plumpton Racecourse. The event was attended by equal numbers of Eastbourne and Lewes tenants and overall was thought to be a great success. Tenants who attended enjoyed the diverse mix of workshops and presentations, and gave the day an average feedback score of 9 out of 10.

The Tenant Involvement team would like to thank the officers, Plumpton staff, stall holders and of course the tenants who helped make the day so memorable and special.



“Great venue, beautiful day, very relaxed ambiance, friendly helpful staff.”

“What a fantastic day at Plumpton. Thanks for all your hard work. It was great catching up with everyone and meeting new people.”

Community Living Well

A community cost-of-living-crisis resource for tenants and leaseholders

The Eastbourne Area Panel and the Tenants' of Lewes District (TOLD) are helping to fund a guide aimed at supporting residents to survive the cost-of-living crisis. The guide will be packed full of recommendations and tips contributed by tenants and will also have a budget planner and signposting to all the grants and help available.

This valuable resource will be distributed in the winter edition of Tenants' Open Voice, and there's still time to add tips or advice and win £50 of shopping vouchers by entering the competition on page 12. We've already had ideas on:

- community resources
- phone Apps
- household tips
- travel advice
- budget recipes
- cost saving shopping
- where to find free stuff
- how to save items from being wasted
- budgeting advice



And remember, by consuming less, reusing more, and preventing waste we are helping to do our bit for the planet by reducing greenhouse gases.

Thanks to everyone who attended the Budgeting Workshop and made recommendations at the Tenant Conference.

If you have any ideas, contact: jo.wunsch@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk or leave a message on 01323 415120.

Not Costing the Earth



HOMES FIRST

Working together to reduce our carbon footprint

The Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Panel

works across Eastbourne and Lewes to hold senior Homes First staff to account, monitor services and make sure that residents are at the heart of any service improvement plan.

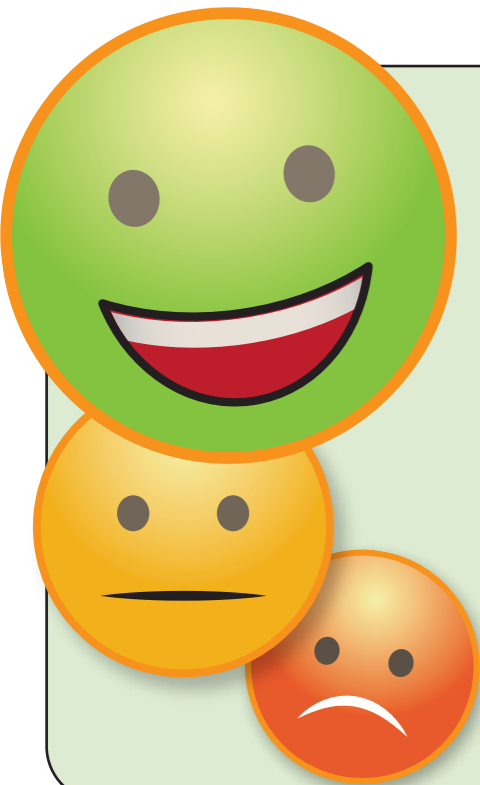
In their last session the group looked at the annual business plan and identified key service improvements. The next step is to work with service leads to develop a consultation plan involving tenants and leaseholders in:

- The retendering of the Homes First repairs contract
- Building safety and compliance checks
- Developing the Asset management strategy
- Implementing Wi-Fi, digital and other technology across retirement schemes.
- A new Estates Offer
- The Tenant Involvement strategy

We are also undertaking a review of TIE's role with members to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. If you'd like to get involved in service reviews or with the TIE panel, please get in touch.

Call: 07816 177992

Email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



Complaints Success

HOMES FIRST

Homes First are committed to providing high quality services and we do our best to make sure your contact with us is professional, courteous and goes beyond expectations. However, sometimes things do go wrong and when they do, we recognise the need to listen to your views and put things back on the right track.

The Customer Experience Team work hard to make sure that Homes First complaints are dealt with professionally and closed at Stage 1 within 10 working days, and at Stage 2 within 20 working days.

Thanks to Tenant Scrutiny team recommendations, improvements in ways of working and an enhanced team, the completion of complaints closed on time improved to 71% in July 2022 – the best on record! In the coming year, the team hope to see this improve further.

Find out more about how we manage complaints at www.lewes-eastbourne.co.uk by using the keywords 'make a complaint' in the search box.

Fraudster sentenced...

...over Right to Buy false claims

A man was given a suspended jail sentence after fraudulently attempting to purchase a council house twice under the Right to Buy scheme which allows tenants to purchase their council home at a reduced cost. Gary Waller claimed he lived in a three-bedroom house in Elphick Road, Newhaven, when he applied for Right to Buy discounts of £78,600 in April 2017 and £80,900 in October 2018. Waller claimed he was a tenant, living in the council property as his only or principal home, when he'd actually been living at various other addresses in Sussex for some time. The false declarations and abandonment of the property were discovered by Lewes District Council's counter fraud team, which undertook a thorough investigation of the case including covert surveillance of Waller which proved he was not living at Elphick Road.

On the 25 April at Lewes Crown Court, Waller was convicted on two counts of fraud by false

representation relating to Right to Buy applications. He was sentenced to two 24-month jail terms to run concurrently – suspended for 24 months. He was also required to complete 40 hours of unpaid work within 12 months, pay a victim surcharge order and full prosecution costs of £15,887 paid within two years at a rate of £662 per month.

Tenancy fraud deprives people in need from having a home and takes many forms including:

- Subletting without permission
- Giving the wrong information when you apply
- Not telling the council you have left your property
- 'Fraudulent succession' – not telling the council when someone else has left the property or died
- Fraudulent right to buy applications
- 'Key selling'

To report housing fraud anonymously, please call 0800 731 7039 or visit www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk and use the keywords 'report fraud' in the search box

Food Partnerships in Eastbourne and Lewes District

Food Partnerships in Eastbourne and the Lewes District welcome decisive action to tackle the cost-of-living crisis

Eastbourne became the first council in the UK to declare a cost-of-living emergency, which made national news. The action was prompted by the high levels of need highlighted by support organisations in the town, which includes the busiest Foodbank in the country. The Council has committed £250,000 of emergency funding support, with the first phase of payments going to help Foodbanks and other local organisations support people struggling with the soaring cost of living. Later payments will support local people to manage their energy bills in the autumn.

Caroline Tradewell who coordinates the Eastbourne Food Partnership said, "Many dedicated Eastbourne organisations have worked tirelessly to support residents in very challenging times, and it is wonderful to see such clear and practical support from the Council through this emergency grant. We were very pleased to attend the recent Cost of Living Emergency Summit convened by Cllr Josh Babarinde, which brought together many of those organisations to discuss current activity and challenges, and to brainstorm ideas for action. We continue to advocate for a strategic approach to tackling the underlying drivers of food insecurity and welcome this opportunity to work collaboratively with the Council to this end, particularly towards the creation of a food poverty action plan for the town."

Lewes District Council has also pledged to provide an extra £250,000 for people on low incomes who are struggling to make ends meet, and earlier this year they set aside £500,000 to help local people and families as costs began to rise, with £150,000 ring fenced for Council tenants. Councillor Zoe Nicholson said: "As living costs spiral, our local foodbanks are running very short of food at a time when people desperately need their assistance, so it's crucial we give this financial support right away. We are

keenly aware of the real challenges people are facing – especially those with the lowest incomes - and although the council cannot resolve all the problems being experienced, for some time we have been working to help alleviate hardship for those who are worst off."

A newly appointed officer will work with the local food partnership to develop a long-term action plan to ensure that residents across the district have access to healthy and affordable food. Stef Lake, Chair of the Lewes District Emergency Food Network said: "It's important to see action being taken locally to address this crisis, including a commitment to improving accessibility for residents who are digitally excluded. None of us want to see more or better foodbanks, we want to see long term solutions that tackle the root causes of poverty and we look forward to working with the new Council officer to develop a strategic action plan with a view to ending food poverty."

Find out more about Lewes District Food Partnership here: www.linktr.ee/lewedistrictfoodpartnership

Find out more about Eastbourne Food Partnership here: www.eastbournefoodpartnership.org.uk



Caroline Treadwell – CEO of the Eastbourne Food Partnership



Stef Lake (far right) with Andy from Eastbourne Food Partnership and Beth Parry from Arun & Chichester Food Partnership



Help and Support *available*

For information on the support the Councils currently have available, go to:

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk and use the keywords 'help with the rising costs of living' in the search box.

There's also a Benefits Calculator you can use at: www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

To find it, use the keywords 'how much am I entitled to' in the search box

If you don't have access to the internet, you can also call or write to us:

Eastbourne residents

Telephone: 01323 410000 (for Eastbourne residents)

Address:
Eastbourne Borough Council,
Town Hall, Grove Road,
Eastbourne, BN21 4UG

Lewes residents

Telephone: 01273 471600

Address:
Income Maximization and Welfare,
Lewes District Council,
Southover House, Southover Road,
Lewes, BN7 1AB

The Household Support Fund

Anyone of working age in receipt of certain benefits can get £50 towards their energy costs plus £50 per adult and £30 per child in food vouchers

Anyone of pension age in receipt of certain benefits can get £150 towards their energy costs plus £100 per adult and £30 per child.

You can claim the Housing Support Fund at: www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk – simply use the keywords 'Household Support Grants' in the search box – or call us on 01323 415359 if claiming online is not possible.

The deadline for applications is 30 September 2022.

Disabled Facilities Grants



For information on how to apply for a Disabled Facilities Grant, you can call Adult Social Care Direct on 0345 6080 191 or call the East Sussex County Council switchboard on 0345 608 0190 to request an Assessment.

Discretionary Housing Payment

A Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) is there to help people who receive the housing element of universal credit and are struggling to pay rent. You can apply for DHP on the website. Simply use the keywords 'discretionary housing payments' in the search box.



Warm Home Check Service

You can apply for a Warm Home Check

- if you are on low income, or living with a long-term condition or disability
- if you are in receipt of Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit, Universal Credit, Pension Guarantee Credit or Pension Savings Credit, Income Support, Income based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) or Income Related Support Allowance (ESA)

Text **WARM** to 80011 or call 0800 464 7307 or apply online at: www.warmeastsussex.org.uk

Energy Saving Advice Service

The Energy Saving Trust is an independent organisation working to address the climate

emergency and to empower millions of householders every year to make better energy choices. They can help make your home more energy efficient, reduce your carbon emissions and lower your energy bills.

You can find out more on their website www.energysavingtrust.org.uk or by calling Freephone 0800 444 202.

energy saving trust

Citizens Advice

If you don't have enough to live on, Citizens Advice might be able to signpost you to help that's available to afford essentials like bills and food. This includes the Household Support Fund and Cost of Living Payments.

Eastbourne residents can call 0800 1448848 and Lewes residents 0808 2787892

citizens advice

Brighton Housing Trust (BHT)

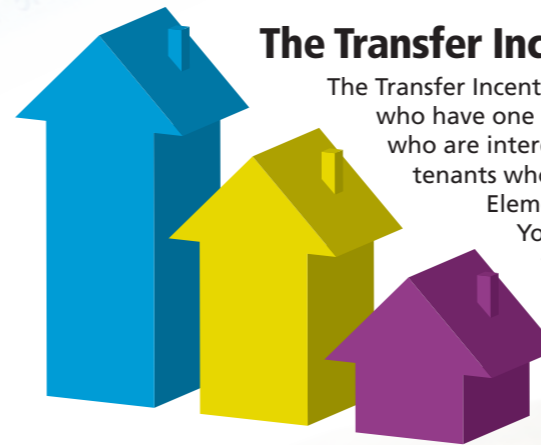
BHT Sussex are offering a free debt advice service for anyone living in East Sussex. They can help you understand your debts, look at your income and expenditure, liaise with creditors and look at the best way to deal with and manage your debts.

To access the service, email EastbourneAdvice@bht.org.uk, or call M: 07385 491271 T: 01323 642615

Home Works

BHT Sussex also delivers the East Sussex Floating Support Service for vulnerable people, aged 16+ who need help to live independently.

You can call Home Works on 01273 929394 or find out more about what support they offer here: www.bht.org.uk



The Transfer Incentive Scheme

The Transfer Incentive Scheme (TIS) is for Council tenants who have one or more bedrooms they don't need and who are interested in downsizing. It can also help tenants who have a reduction in the Housing Costs Element included in a Universal Credit award.

You need to have held a secure tenancy with us for at least one year to access this scheme.

More information and an application form can be found on www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk. Simply use the keywords 'cash incentives for downsizing' in the search box.

Energy Saving Tips

- **Switch off standby**
You can save many £'s just by remembering to turn your appliances off standby mode.
- **Careful with your washing**
You can save just by using your washing machine on a 30-degree cycle instead of higher temperatures.
- **Draught-proof windows and doors**
Unless your home is very new, you will lose some heat through draughts around doors and windows, gaps around the floor, or through the chimney.
- **Spent less time in the shower**
Keeping your shower time to just 4 minutes could save a lot on energy bills.
- **Turn off lights**
Turn your lights off when you're not using them or when you leave a room. This will save you a lot a year on your annual energy bills.
- **Be savvy in the kitchen**
Avoid overfilling the kettle and save on your electricity bill.
- **Top up the insulation**
Insulating your water tank, pipes, and radiators is a quick and easy way to save money on your bills.

Breaking news...

Energy Bill Support Scheme



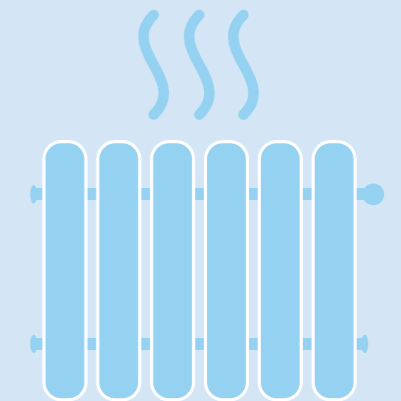
The government has just announced that all households will receive £400 to help with rising fuel bills this autumn paid in six instalments.

Households will see a discount of £66 applied to their energy bills in October and November, and £67 a month from December to March 2023.

How do I get the money?

All customers with a domestic electricity meter who pay by direct debit, either monthly or quarterly, or by card will see an automatic deduction off their bills.

Those with 'smart' prepayment devices will see an automatic monthly top-up added to their account, meaning they will have to add less credit to their meter for the total energy they use.



BENEFITS



Are you insured?

Homes First have teamed up with Aviva, the UK's largest insurer, to provide an affordable home contents insurance scheme for our tenants and leaseholders. The package offers exclusive rates and a range of optional extras, including cover for accidental damage. There is also no excess to pay if you need to make a claim, and you can spread the cost with a monthly Direct Debit from as little as £5 per month.

Home contents insurance is important because tenants are responsible for their personal property and the decoration of their homes. If something bad happens, the Council is not responsible for the loss or damage of any personal property (whether they belong to you or someone else) no matter how they become damaged.

You can find out more about this affordable home contents insurance package at:

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Simply use the keyword 'insurance' in the search box.

You can't always stop a determined intruder.

But you can cushion the blow by having Tenants' Contents Insurance.

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/tenant-insurance
customerfirst@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



Do you need help with food?

Food banks are community organisations that can help if you can't afford the food you need. You'll need to get a referral to a food bank before you can use one, and your Senior Caseworker (Housing) can tell you which ones exist nearby and complete the referral for you. You can find out who your Senior Caseworker is in the tenancy management piece below.

The food bank will provide you with the essentials you need and sometimes they can also signpost you to support on your income and spending. If you live in a rural area and can't afford to travel, your nearest food bank might be able to deliver. For more information on foodbanks in the Lewes District and Eastbourne areas, email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



Your Tenancy Management team

Our housing Senior Caseworkers offer support to residents on a wide range of tenancy related matters. They also signpost to partner agencies when more specialist advice is needed and make referrals to local foodbanks. The Senior Caseworkers have geographical 'patches' and manage all tenancy aspects in their given area.

• Your Lewes District Senior Caseworkers are:

- Rachel Dungay – (Newhaven) working Wednesday to Friday
- Louisa Tucker – (Seaford) working Monday to Wednesday
- Gina Hadfield – (Peacehaven and rural areas) working Tuesday to Thursday
- Billie Webster – (Lewes) working Full time

Team leader – **Adrian Walshe**

• Your Eastbourne Homes Senior Caseworkers are:

- Johann Dodds – (Central Eastbourne) working Tuesday to Friday
- Lisa Cole – (Langney Area) working Full time
- Ade Akerejola – (Hampden Park East) working Full time
- Nikkee Houghton – (Old Town) working Full time

Team leader – **Joanne Smith**

We have recently recruited two new Tenancy Sustainment Senior Caseworkers who will be working across Eastbourne and Lewes on the more complex cases to ensure residents maintain and sustain their tenancies as well as possible.

The best way to contact any member of the team is through the Customer Contact Centre who will make sure your enquiry reaches the right person.

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Access for Gas Safe checks



As a landlord renting properties with gas appliances, we have a legal duty to have a gas safety inspection carried out each year by a Gas Safe registered engineer, and then to provide a gas safety certificate to the tenant. Surprisingly, some tenants make it difficult for us to gain access to their homes for these inspections, which can be time consuming and cause delays. If a gas safety check is not completed, it isn't just a few people in one property at risk, but potentially neighbours as well so it's important that every tenant does the right thing and allows access to their home for our gas servicing contractor. It's also important to remember that if a tenant refuses access for a gas safety check without a valid reason, they are in breach of their tenancy agreement and legal action can be taken to gain access.

Please help Property Services keep your homes safe by acting responsibly and allowing access for important gas safety checks.

STAR (Survey of Tenants and Residents)

Our annual tenant satisfaction survey went out at the end of October last year, and we received responses from 505 Eastbourne households and 486 Lewes households – around 25% of our tenants.

The results showed a decline in all aspects on the 2020 results other than 'neighbourhood as a place to live' which mirrors a national trend.

The biggest drops for Eastbourne Homes (5%+) were in relation to responses on 'listens to views and acts upon them', 'easy to deal with', and 'overall satisfaction.'

The biggest drops for the Lewes District (5%+) concerned 'satisfaction with most recent repair', 'listens to views and acts upon them', 'easy to deal with', and 'overall satisfaction.' Generally, satisfaction was slightly lower amongst Lewes tenants than Eastbourne tenants. Analysis of the responses showed

that over 66% of negative comments in Eastbourne and over 68% of comments in Lewes related to repairs and communications, and these two themes were predominantly responsible for the majority of complaints. In response, the Customer Experience Team delivered a series of focus groups (one online and two face to face) to look deeper into the customer experience in relation to repairs and communication. The focus groups were facilitated by Richard Tomkinson (Customer Experience & Performance Improvement Lead) with discussion topics developed and agreed with Service Leads for each area. The next step is to collate the findings of the focus groups and produce a detailed improvement plan with recommended service actions which will then be communicated back to residents – watch this space!

Solar PV and Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) User Guides

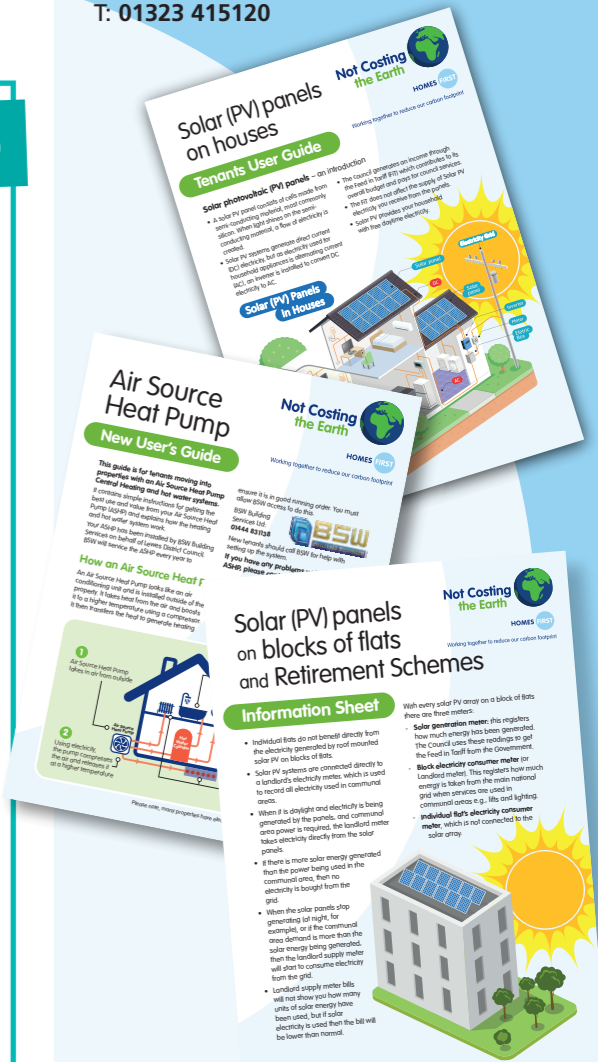
Some easy-to-understand user guides have been produced to explain how Solar PV on houses, Solar PV on flats and retirement schemes, and ASHPs work and most importantly, how to get the best value from them.

If you have Solar PV and aren't sure of the benefit or if you have an ASHP and don't know how it works, then these guides are sure to help. They are now available on our new Homes First Zero Carbon and Renewables page on www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk – use the keywords 'zero carbon and renewables' in the search box - or you can request a paper copy by calling 01323 415120.

We are exploring new ways to install more Solar PV panels on our homes, so if you have any comments or want to be involved in any new plans, please get in touch:

E: jo.wunsch@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

T: 01323 415120



TOLD Tenants of Lewes District A word from the Chair...

I hope you've been enjoying the summer despite the cost-of-living crisis continuing to bite. In the centrefold of this edition of Tenants' Open Voice, you'll find a tear-out guide to all the help which is currently available to tenants.

I was very happy to attend the Lewes District Council cost of living cabinet and see £250,000 set aside to help address this issue and look forward to the appointment of a dedicated officer to coordinate this money and support the digitally excluded as soon as possible – there's no time to waste! I believe that TOLD need to remain vigilant and keep a close eye on any decision-making that affects tenants across the district and continue to make our views known.

TOLD will be holding its AGM on October 27 when a new committee will be elected. All tenants are welcome at 2a Horsfield Road, Lewes, BN7 2TA from 7pm. Applications for committee membership are very welcome! Collectively the committee encourages everyone to get involved in the various ways available because your voice is important.

To find out more about TOLD's work, you can email me directly: debbietwitchen@gmail.com, check out our new website – www.told.org.uk – our Facebook page or email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



Community events

A number of community events have taken place in the last few months. On the 4 May there was a community pop-up on the Walmer Road recreation ground in Seaford attended by East Sussex Fire & Rescue Services, The Sussex Police Community Engagement team, The Sussex Community Development Association, Ovesco, local Councillors, TOLD, Neighbourhood First and Homes First. The event was so well received by local residents that it was replicated at the Eastside recreation ground in Newhaven on 3 August. Watch this space for more community pop-ups taking place near you! On the 01 June, Jo Wunsch (Community Development and Sustainability Advisor)

and the Tenant Involvement team joined local residents and children to re-plant two raised gardening beds on the De Montfort estate. Dodging rain showers, the group worked hard for over three hours clearing weeds, adding new compost, and planting flowers, herbs, and other plants in the beds. It's hoped that now they've been cleared and re-planted the beds will flourish, add colour, attract bees and other insects, and be well looked after by local residents.



Wave Community Bank opens in Lewes

Wave Community Bank have opened a drop-in service at the Tenants Resource Centre (2A Horsfield Road, Landport, BN7 2TA) on Wednesdays – no appointment necessary. Formerly known as the East Sussex Credit Union, Wave offers a range of great savings accounts protected by the FSCS such as PrizeSaver where you can win £5000 from a monthly draw simply by saving, and Wave Save which helps you save for holidays or anything else. Wave also offer flexible affordable loans which have a savings element to repayments, so borrowers build a savings pot too. Applying for a loan is quick and easy through the website or via the mobile app. Membership offers a range of great benefits including 20% off annual Brighton & Hove Buses tickets, 15% off annual Freedom Leisure membership in Brighton & East Sussex, free use of the Quo Money app and webinars on money management and advice. Membership costs just £5 and £1 to open a savings account. You can find out more here: www.wavecb.org.uk
Tel: 0300 303 3188 (weekdays 9.30am – 1pm) or email info@wavecb.org.uk.



Community Garden Update

Landport Community Garden volunteer workdays have been taking place, and regular drop-ins on the first Saturday of every month between 10am and 1pm began on 3 September.

Everyone is welcome, from experienced gardeners to those with no growing experience looking to learn and meet like-minded people. Individual activities will also be organised, and local groups can apply to use the garden to run their own nature based, health and wellbeing, or other suitable sessions in this quiet space. To find out more, call Debbie on 07793 953446 or check out the Landport Community Hub Facebook page.



Eastbourne Homes

The Board event held at the Tennis Centre in Devonshire Park in April was well received with over 60 residents attending. It proved to be a great opportunity for residents to meet members of staff and the Eastbourne Homes Ltd. Board. We'd like to thank Roger Eastwood (Chair), Tom Hastings, Gina Morgan, Sheilagh Roberts and Candy Vaughan for giving up their time for the event and to all those that attended for their questions and feedback. Leah, who lives at Cumbria

Court, commented 'It's amazing how hard people work, and how things are created and managed. This event made me see the whole thing differently. I can see how much you care.'

At the last Residents Voice meeting in July, tenants received an update on changes to the repairs service and an update on budgeting and support available. Residents Voice will continue to work with Homes First and other Council teams to identify and improve the services tenants receive.



The Hampden Park & Willingdon Trees Area Panel (HPWT) meet on the first Friday of every month at the Hampden Park Community Centre, Broderick Road between 10 and 12pm.

Supported by the Hampden Park Community Centre, the panel held a bingo event in June, which raised £224 for the Eastbourne Foodbank. The panel have also funded improvements to the Manor Road allotment site by creating six new raised beds for the use of allotment

tenants who can no longer tend traditional plots due to a physical or mental impairment.

The HPWT area panel also funded a communal shed for the storage of tools. Local resident Adam Bengé painted the shed, and he and his mum have both loved their allotment beds and grown successful harvests of beans, carrots, lettuce, and broccoli in their first year.

Lastly, Annette and John Spence have taken over tending the Princess Diana Garden in Hampden Park with funding support from the HPWT Panel, and it's hoped that the garden will be open to the public soon.

A big thank you goes to Bertie Wilmshurst who has tended the garden until recently.



The Eastbourne Area Panel



Carol Carpenter and the new shed

Eastbourne Area Panel (EAP)

In May, the newly formed Eastbourne Area Panel (EAP) held their first meeting which was attended by 15 residents. The panel will work to promote and consider community improvement funding opportunities in the Old Town, Central and Archery and Langney areas, respond to tenant feedback and provide the opportunity to 'get involved' in the community by running or promoting community events. The panel will also try to help residents with particular issues by visiting the areas of concern, and work with staff to resolve problems with fly tipping, parking or communal cleaning and gardening.

Since forming, EAP have committed money to help produce a Community Living Well guide which will be distributed in December, helped improve a Langney Primary school play area, purchased equipment for the Friends of Shinewater Park, purchased bags to help residents store their recycling, and arranged a well-attended community picnic on 23 August.

If you'd like to know about EAP, you can email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk or call: 07816 177992 or check out the EAP Facebook Page, which has nearly 100 members.

Langney Community Garden

Grow Eastbourne have been busy harvesting at the Gorrington Road site providing fresh produce to the Seaside and Langney community fridges, and new compost bins made by Langney Shed have been installed at Etchingham Road. Volunteer days are on Tuesday in Langney, and on Wednesday in Goring Road - all are welcome! For more information call Sally on 07912 671665, email: groweastbourne@volunteersnetwork.co.uk or look for 'Grow Eastbourne' on Facebook.



Domestic CCTV systems



The popularity of camera doorbells and the use of CCTV has grown in recent years. Most residents who install CCTV at home do so for completely legitimate reasons, but the use of CCTV or a smart (video capture) doorbell comes with strict guidelines that residents have to follow to act within the law. For



example, if the home installation captures images outside of the resident's boundary such as a neighbour's garden or communal and public areas, then General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and Data Protection 2018 apply. Capturing such images doesn't automatically mean someone is breaking the law, but any failure to comply with the prescribed obligations of data protection laws, means that enforcement action by the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) might be taken.

If you are thinking about installing a system, it's important that you gain permission from the Property Services team in Eastbourne or Lewes and complete the appropriate permission forms before purchasing the equipment. Consideration should also be given to how the equipment is fixed to your property to avoid any damage, but please note we are not responsible for checking the suitability of any equipment or its installation or the use of any system installed. In some circumstances, permission will not be given, for example where there are any changes to a fire door or a flat entrance leading onto a common way, as any changes would compromise the fire rating and certification of the door.

It is very important that you understand the guidelines and your legal responsibilities. More information can be found at:

www.ico.org.uk/your-data-matters/domestic-cctv-systems-guidance-for-people-using-cctv/



Community Litter Pick

Homes First, Neighbourhood First and Environment First were joined by members of the Eastbourne Area Panel and local residents in Oulton Close, Shinewater for a community litter pick. The event was a great success and around 200kg of litter and other items were removed – Thanks to Jason and Steve of Environment First team for removing all the waste collected! If you want to join a litter pick, or set up your own group you can find out more on the website by using the keywords 'litter picking' in the search box, or email: tenant-involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

The Virtual 300

The Virtual 300 now numbers 143 tenants and the group continues to grow. In recent months participants have given their views on a range of topics, fed back on policies and judged competitions. It's a great way to get involved from home with the added bonus of incentives for taking part. If you'd like to find out more, simply email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk.

Anyone joining the group by 30 September, quoting 'September' in their email, will receive a £20 shopping voucher of their choice to spend.

Office opening times

Reception services are open at Southover House in Lewes and in the Town Hall in Eastbourne between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, but in a reduced capacity.

A limited service is available for dropping off documents, answering basic enquires, and signposting to relevant organisations and services. There is also a phone inside and outside the reception areas you can use to contact the council if you don't have a mobile device available.

Please note our reception at Saxon House in Newhaven is now closed.



£50 of shopping vouchers to be WON!

The cost of living is on everyone's mind, so we're asking for money saving ideas that we can share. If you have a top tip, please email it to: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk. Ideas will be judged by the Virtual 300 and the winner will receive **£50 in shopping vouchers**.

The winner of the 'Love where you live' competition was Max from Newhaven. His photo of his hometown (shown right) was chosen by the Virtual 300 and featured on the Visit Lewes social media pages.

Well done Max!

