

Help, advice  
and support

Food banks




Community  
Growing  
Spaces

Spring 2022  
Issue 5

# Tenants' Open Voice

for tenants of Lewes District and Eastbourne



STAR Survey  
news & winners



Booking Information  
Tenant  
Conference

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Love where you live  
Photo competition

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# Tenants Open Voice Issue 5



Gary Hall

**W**elcome to 'Tenants' Open Voice', the joint newsletter for the tenants of Eastbourne and the Lewes District.

I hope you enjoy this Spring 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](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

Despite the COVID-19 restrictions ending, it's clear we all need to remain diligent and ensure we're doing all we can to minimise the impact of a pandemic that has not completely disappeared. Homes First staff are still working with that in mind and remain in your service to ensure your homes and environments are safe and risk free.

Clearly, we remain in challenging times and the Council are well aware of the cost-of-living issues that we all face. If you are struggling and need our assistance, particularly in terms of managing your finances, do not hesitate to speak with us or seek independent advice. 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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Lewes District Housing  
Eastbourne Homes Ltd



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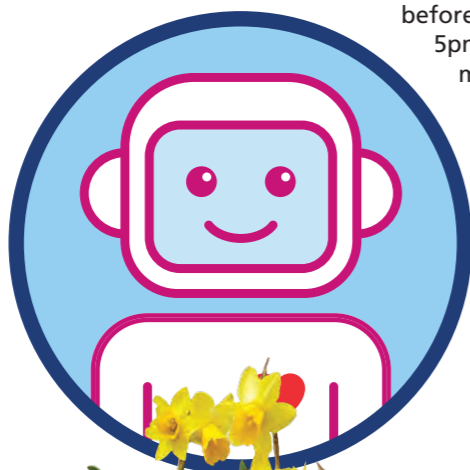
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## Chat with ELLIS Eastbourne Lewes Live Intelligent Source

**O**ur intelligent chatbot **ELLIS** is available 24hrs a day, 7 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 on the website on the 8 March and has already proved to be a success. **ELLIS** answered 2055 queries, including 215 which were out of hours, and received a 61% overall satisfaction rating in the first week!

If your query is more specific and **ELLIS** is unable to help, our customer service staff are still free to chat with you online as before between 8.30am and 5pm on weekdays. This means you can speak to us directly online without needing to telephone our offices. If you're not able to find what you're looking for on our website or cannot use our chat services, please use the **Contact Us** form to get in touch.



**Ask ELLIS**  
Your intelligent Chatbot

## If you have no money for food...

**...you might be able to get help from a food bank.**

**F**ood banks are community organisations that can help if you can't afford the food you need. You will usually need to get a referral to a food bank before you can use one, and your Housing Services Senior Caseworker is a good place to start. If you don't know who your Senior Caseworker is, you can contact the Customer Contact Centre online to find out, or email: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk).

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. You can find more information on foodbanks in the Lewes District and Eastbourne on the website:

[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community/covid-19/volunteering-and-food-banks/](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community/covid-19/volunteering-and-food-banks/)

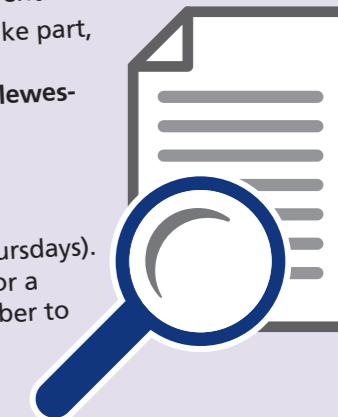


## Tenant Scrutiny We need your views!

**F**ollowing their very successful review of the Complaints handling service, which contributed to a whole raft of improvements to the way that Homes First deals with complaints, the tenant scrutiny team have started a new review of the rent arrears service.

The team would like to talk to any tenants who have experienced difficulties paying the rent so they can get a sense of how you were treated by officers, how you felt about the experience, and how you were supported to manage the debt. Because we understand that this is a very sensitive subject, all the interviews will be conducted anonymously, and any information provided will remain confidential and only used to drive improvements to the rents service.

If you would like to take part, please contact:  
[tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)  
or call Ruth (tenant involvement team) on 07800 689302 (Wednesdays and Thursdays). Then we'll arrange for a tenant scrutiny member to interview you anonymously by telephone



BUSINESS RATES FRAUD	SOCIAL HOUSING FRAUD	RIGHT TO BUY FRAUD
COUNCIL TAX FRAUD	PROCUREMENT FRAUD	GRANT FRAUD

LETTING US KNOW ABOUT LOCAL AUTHORITY FRAUD **SAVES YOU MONEY**

Call **0800 731 7039** to report a fraud against your local authority or visit

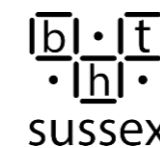
[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-councils/report-fraud](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-councils/report-fraud)

## Brighton Housing Trust (BHT) Sussex Free Debt Advice Service

BHT Sussex are offering free debt and money advice to anyone living in East Sussex.

For more information, please contact:

Dominika Olszewska on weekdays between 9.30am and 3.30pm.  
E: [Dominika.olszewska@bht.org.uk](mailto:Dominika.olszewska@bht.org.uk) M: 07385 491271



# Congratulations!

## STAR Survey news and winners

Between November 2021 and January 2022, we carried out our annual tenant satisfaction survey. A sample of roughly 25% of all households were invited to participate and around a thousand across Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough responded. The Tenant Involvement Team set about a detailed analysis of the results to understand the key messages that you wanted Homes First to hear. Although we were pleased to see that 10/10 was the most frequently awarded score across all measures, the detailed analysis shows a reduction in satisfaction of 5% or more for things like:

- Listening to your views and acting on them
- Being easy to deal with
- Satisfaction with your most recent repair

Overall, there was a drop in satisfaction across all measures except 'neighbourhood as a place to live'. We want to assure you that we take this feedback seriously and are working hard to improve in all areas. Any specific issues raised by tenants in their survey responses will be passed to the appropriate team to follow-up. We are also keen to delve more deeply

into the two key areas which were responsible for the greatest volume of negative scores and comments. To do this, we will be holding online and face-to-face focus groups to give you an opportunity to tell us about your experience of:

- The repairs service
- Communicating with Homes First and getting things done

All residents who responded to the survey offering specific views about these two areas of service will be invited to attend and will be joined by the most senior Homes First staff, who will listen to your views and use them to develop a detailed improvement plan. The plan will be shared with all tenants who attend the focus groups, and The Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Panel will work with staff to ensure that the improvement actions are carried out, and services improve.

If you weren't invited to participate in the survey, you can still attend one of the focus groups (dates to be arranged) by emailing the Tenant Involvement Team on: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) to express interest. As a result of the feedback received, we



Three lucky people were randomly selected from the 1,000 tenants who responded, winning 'Love2Shop' vouchers. K.P. from Lewes won the first prize of £100, Derek Power from Seaford (pictured) won the second prize of £50, and the third prize of £25 went to L.H. from Eastbourne.

have already made changes to the way we will carry out surveys in the future. For 2022-23, we have commissioned Acuity Research & Practise to handle quarterly telephone surveys. This will enable us to respond to any concerns you raise quickly and demonstrates that we want to improve the way that we listen to your views and act on them.

## Tenant Conference booking

# OPEN!



## Welcoming everyone back together again

Now that the Covid-19 restrictions have been relaxed, it's time to bring back the annual Tenant conference. This year we'll be running the event in the beautiful surroundings of the Plumpton Racecourse, BN7 3AL between 10.30am and 3.30pm on 14 June 2022.

The day will include a delicious free lunch, a range of fabulous prizes, and the chance to meet other residents, Homes First staff and our contractors. It's been a tough couple of years for many of us, so there'll also be some 'welcome back' themed workshops on

community initiatives, dealing with anti-social behaviour and help with budgeting, health and relaxation.

To secure your place at the conference, you'll need to book by sending us your full name, address and telephone number by email to: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) or text us with your details to 07595 460334 or 07816 177992.

We'll be taking bookings on a first come, first served basis so please act quickly to avoid disappointment. Transport can also be arranged on request.

## The Virtual 300

133 tenants have now joined the Virtual 300 group and the numbers continue to grow slowly, but surely. This online way to get involved really suits tenants with busy lives because you can get involved as much or as little as you like. It's been designed to provide you with an opportunity to be heard and have a say through short surveys and discussion groups, and when you do there's the added bonus of prizes for taking part. As if that's not enough, every time you do participate, points are awarded, and a £50 prize is given to the most active member every year. Our last competition winner won a £30 Amazon voucher so it's really worth joining up.

If you'd like to find out more, simply email us: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk).

Anyone who does email to ask to join the Virtual 300 before 1st May quoting 'May Day' in their email will receive a £20 shopping voucher of their choice to spend.

## Property Services Maintenance Surveyors

Our team of Property Services Maintenance Surveyors are very experienced and have regular training on various technical issues to stay up to date with current guidance and technologies. They all have excellent technical knowledge and proven experience alongside the ability to analyse problems and identify solutions on the spot.

A typical day for a building surveyor can range through dealing with day-to-day repair issues, compiling structural reports, dealing with planning applications, advising on property law, and, most importantly, keeping your home safe and secure.



## 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.

### HOMES FIRST



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 here:

[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/housing/tenants-contents-insurance/](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/housing/tenants-contents-insurance/)

## Our Repairs Service

Most of our repairs are carried out by Mears and they have supported us well through the pandemic. With their contracts coming up for review next year, we've decided it's time to look at how we deliver the repairs service. Homes First have talked to tenant groups in Eastbourne and Lewes to consult on what aspects can be improved, and we've been provided with a long list of ideas which we'll use to help us formulate our plans for the next year. As a first step, call-handling is being transferred from Mears to Homes First over the next few weeks. This will enable Homes First to take the lead and make sure your repair is completed by the right local tradesperson, on time, and in one visit wherever possible. To help our staff taking repair calls or responding to emails, we'll have a duty surveyor on hand to help with any complex issues, agree alterations to any works needed, and where necessary visit to see a tenant in an emergency. The out of hours emergency calls (see below) will continue to be handled by Mears and backed-up by one of the Homes First team, just as they are at present. The day-time telephone numbers to report repairs will also stay the same.

## Emergency Repairs

If you have an emergency repair out of hours you can still get help, but you'll need to call us rather than use the online form. To be treated as an emergency, the repair must carry the risk of immediate injury to people or major damage to property.

Examples include:

- Escape of gas or fumes
- Electrical fittings in contact with water
- Live or bare electrical wiring
- Sewage overflowing into the home
- Outside doors that need securing
- Burst storage tanks, cylinders, or pipes
- Failure of all lights or all power
- Failure of heating systems in severe weather and where no alternative is available
- Failure of all communal lighting

For emergency repairs, please use the main contact numbers – 01323 410000 for Eastbourne and 01273 471600 for Lewes – and listen for the out-of-hours message.

For any heating and hot water breakdowns, you need to call BSW Building Services on 01444 836036, and gas leaks need to be reported to the National Gas Emergency Service on 0800 111 999

# Help and advice

All our pockets have been hit by the rising cost of living and energy bills, so we've put together some guidance to signpost people who need it to the right support...



**ENERGY BILLS REBATE**  
#EnergyBillsRebate

## Energy Bills Discount Scheme

The Government has recently announced the Energy Bills Discount Scheme.

Domestic energy customers in Great Britain will receive a £200 cash discount on their bills this Autumn. The government will provide funding to all suppliers for them to pass on to their domestic energy customers from October. Customers will pay back the discount automatically in equal instalments over five years, starting from financial year 2023-24, when it's expected that wholesale gas prices will come down. This is expected to be reflected as an increase to standing charges on bills. It is hoped this approach will help spread the increased costs of global prices over time in a way that is more manageable for households. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will set out more detail on this policy in a consultation later this year.

Households in England in Council Tax Bands A-D, who are not exempt from Council Tax, will be eligible for a £150 Council Tax Rebate payment from April this year. The rebate will be made by local authorities as a payment to households and won't have to be repaid. 80% of households in England are in Council Tax Bands A-D, so they will benefit from this rebate, but it will not be paid for second homes or empty properties. Households in England in Bands A-D that pay less than £150 or do not pay Council Tax as a result of Local Council Tax Support will also be eligible for a payment of £150. People in receipt of the Single Person Discount in Bands A-D will also be eligible for a payment of £150.

[www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-to-receive-350-boost-to-help-with-rising-energy-costs](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/millions-to-receive-350-boost-to-help-with-rising-energy-costs)



## Fuel vouchers

If you are struggling to make ends meet, have a pre-payment meter with less than £4 on it, and are not due a payment for a while; you can phone your utility company and ask for a fuel voucher worth £49. You can apply for the voucher twice a year and it does not have to be repaid. A PIN number will be sent to your mobile phone which you show at your top-up shop, along with your gas card or electricity key. Referrals for fuel vouchers are also available from Citizens Advice in the Lewes District and Eastbourne. Call Citizens Advice on **03444 111 444**.

[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community/covid-19/request-support-for-vulnerable-residents/fuel-voucher-scheme](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community/covid-19/request-support-for-vulnerable-residents/fuel-voucher-scheme)

## citizens advice

### Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice have information about other grants and benefits to help pay your energy bill.

The list includes Winter fuel payments, Warm Home Discounts, Grants to help pay off your energy debts and Cold Weather Payments. You can call Citizens Advice on **03444 111 444**.

[www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/grants-and-benefits-to-help-you-pay-your-energy-bills)

## Make heating your home more efficient

Warmer Sussex can offer help to improve your home to make it more energy efficient and make better use of sustainable energy. You can call Warmer Sussex on **0330 223 5755**.

[www.warmersussex.co.uk](http://www.warmersussex.co.uk)



## Advice on reducing energy use at home

The Energy Saving Trust offer help to save money on bills at the same time as reducing your carbon footprint. You can call Simple Energy Advice on **0800 444 202**.

[energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home](http://energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home)

## energy saving trust



The British Gas Energy Trust is an independent charity set up to support families and individuals facing financial hardship and energy debt. You do not need to be a British Gas customer to access help. You can call the British Gas Energy Trust on **0121 348 7797**.

[britishgasenergytrust.org.uk](http://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk)



## Help with water bills

Southern Water has set up a Customer Hardship Fund to help their customers in financial difficulty reduce their water bills or write-off debt. There are three different types of support available:

- Up to 50% one-year bill reduction for customers hit temporarily by hard times
- Debt write-off of up to £2,000 for customers who have managed to get back on track with payments but will never be able to repay their debt
- A grant of up to £1,000 to make improvements to a customer's home

To find out more including who's eligible, you can call Southern Water on **0330 303 0368** or visit their website

[www.southernwater.co.uk/customer-and-community-grants/customer-hardship-fund](http://www.southernwater.co.uk/customer-and-community-grants/customer-hardship-fund)



## citizens advice

### The Extra Help Unit can assist if you're at risk of having your power cut off

Citizens Advice have set up the Extra Help Unit for people who are vulnerable or at risk of being disconnected so that they can help raise complaints with your energy provider. You can call the Citizens Advice Extra Help Unit on **0808 223 1133**.

[www.ehu.org.uk](http://www.ehu.org.uk)

## Help if you are struggling to afford food

If you are finding it hard to afford food, there's a range of support available through local authority and community services:

[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community/help-if-you-are-struggling-to-afford-food](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/community/help-if-you-are-struggling-to-afford-food)



## Help if you are struggling to pay your Council Tax or need to claim Housing Benefit

Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible to claim Housing Benefit or a reduction on your Council Tax. You can find out more on the website:

[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/how-to-claim-housing-benefit-or-council-tax-reduction](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/how-to-claim-housing-benefit-or-council-tax-reduction)

## Exceptional hardship payments

The exceptional hardship payment fund has been set up to support our most vulnerable customers who are suffering financial hardship due to unforeseen circumstances.

You can find out more on the website: [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-exceptional-hardship-payments](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/council-tax/council-tax-exceptional-hardship-payments)

## Help if you might get evicted

Discretionary housing payments (DHPs) help those who are in receipt of housing benefits or the Housing Element of Universal Credit (UC) to meet the cost of their rent. This is normally awarded where there is a shortfall between the eligible rent and housing benefit or UC. Find out more at: [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/discretionary-housing-payments](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/discretionary-housing-payments)



## Help with money and debt

If you are struggling with managing your money, debt or the causes of debt, there are several organisations that can help guide you.

[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/help-with-money-and-debt](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/benefits-and-grants/help-with-money-and-debt)

## Debt Respite Scheme

The Debt Respite Scheme (Breathing Space) gives someone with debt the right to legal protections from creditor action. There are two kinds of breathing space: a standard breathing space and a mental health crisis breathing space. A standard breathing space is available to any client with problem debt and gives them legal protections from creditor action for up to 60 days. The protections include pausing most enforcement action and contact from creditors and freezing most interest and charges on their debts. The mental health crisis breathing space is only available to a client who is receiving mental health crisis treatment. The mental health crisis breathing space has some stronger protections than the standard breathing space and lasts as long as the client's mental health crisis treatment, plus 30 days (no matter how long the crisis treatment lasts). You can find out more at:

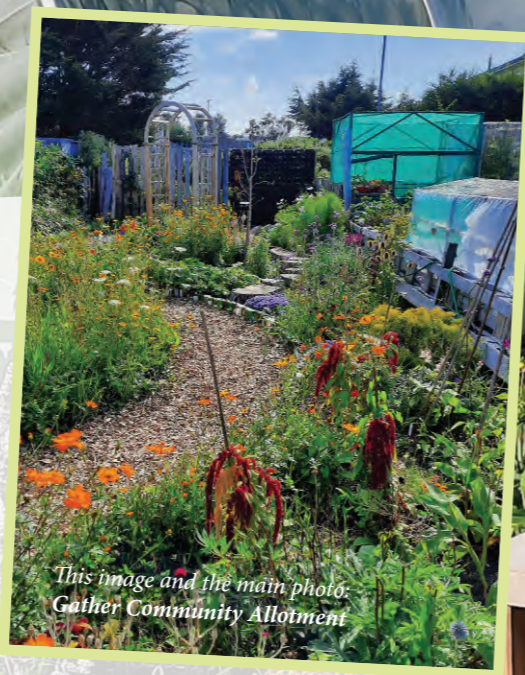
[www.gov.uk/government/publications/debt-respite-scheme-breathing-space-guidance/debt-respite-scheme-breathing-space-guidance-for-money-advisers](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/debt-respite-scheme-breathing-space-guidance/debt-respite-scheme-breathing-space-guidance-for-money-advisers)

## Loans and grants to maintain your home

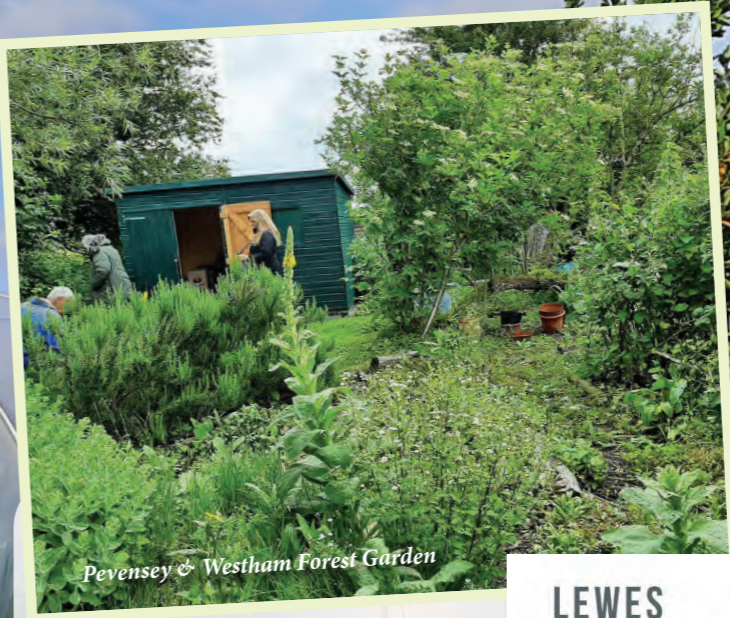
There are a number of loan and grant schemes available to help homeowners maintain their homes. This includes the Disabled Facilities Grant, home improvement loans and grants to repair your heating.

[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/apply-for-a-grant-or-loan](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/housing/private-housing/apply-for-a-grant-or-loan)

# Community Growing Spaces on Housing Revenue Account land



This image and the main photo: Gather Community Allotment



Pevensey & Westham Forest Garden



The Landport Community Garden is currently being cleared and tidied up before it opens its doors to the public.

Community gardens are collaborative, welcoming spaces where the community can come together and enjoy growing plants and food. Many projects offer volunteer sessions, and some provide support and training, with experienced growers on hand to offer advice. There is usually a welcoming brew, a friendly ear and even food from the garden if you're lucky. When it comes to generating social, economic, and environmental benefits from one activity, community gardening really packs a punch, and has many benefits which include:

- promoting a sense of community, breaking down social barriers and reducing social isolation and loneliness
- positive impacts on carbon emissions, climate change and biodiversity by increasing locally grown organic food and reducing food miles

With food security an issue for so many people, the value of growing your own fruit and vegetables at home or within our neighbourhoods has become more important than ever. There is a limited amount of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land that can be considered for this purpose, but not all sites are suitable for growing. In cases where they are, **TOLD** (Tenants of Lewes District) and **Residents Voice** in Eastbourne need to support the idea and some local tenant consultation needs to take place.

They're also recruiting volunteers to get involved in the project, so if you would like to help or find out more look for Grow Eastbourne on Facebook and Twitter or email [groweastbourne@volunteersnetwork.co.uk](mailto:groweastbourne@volunteersnetwork.co.uk)

Also, in Eastbourne, the **Making It Happen** community project are asking residents and tenants if they would like a community garden created in Wadhurst Close, Hampden Park. If this is of interest or if have any comments please contact: **Sarah Latimer**  
Email: [sara.latimer@3va.org.uk](mailto:sara.latimer@3va.org.uk)  
Mobile: 07763 463431

In the Langney area of Eastbourne, **Grow Eastbourne** has been set up by the **Volunteers Network** to encourage and support local food growing. The project has two sites, one at the community allotment in Gorringer Road, and the other at a community garden near Langney Community Centre on Etchingham Road. **Grow Eastbourne** have plans for wildflower areas, herb gardens, fruit trees, raised vegetable beds, flower beds and communal grassed



In Lewes, the Landport Community Hub recently secured the lease of a site to develop a welcoming community garden. Through its small grant scheme, the Lewes District Food Partnership will help the Landport Community Garden purchase a new polytunnel for growing, as well as sustainable hazel hurdle fencing, essential tools and new seeds and plants to get the garden up and running. Ruth O'Keeffe, a trustee of the Landport Community Hub said 'This is an exciting opportunity to bring the community garden back to life after the pandemic and to involve all sections of the community in a project which combines growing and eating healthy food in a way that will sustainably promote these activities. This will mean that lots of people learn about the options available to them without ever having to enrol on a formal course.' Watch this space for details on how to get involved when the community garden is open.

In Seaford, Roots Rising Community Interest Company and the Gardening in Action Community Interest Company have made a successful application to create a community garden at The Peverells, Raymond Close. Funding has been awarded from the National Lottery Community Fund, Seaford Round Table and the Lewes District Food Partnership. If you'd like to get involved or find out more: email [pevcommunity.garden@gmail.com](mailto:pevcommunity.garden@gmail.com)

or find Peverells Community Garden on Facebook.

In addition to HRA land growing projects, there are many more community gardens across the region. The Lewes District and Eastbourne Food Partnerships work hard to bring together people to improve the local food system, growing networks and community garden projects. As well as collaborating, they have been able to create spaces for the public and highlight all the ways people can get involved with the growing list of community gardens in the region.

For opportunities in the Eastbourne area, look for 'Community Gardens' at the Eastbourne Food Partnership website: [www.eastbournefoodpartnership.org.uk](http://www.eastbournefoodpartnership.org.uk) or check out Good to Grow Eastbourne Network [www.goodtogrowuk.org/map/eastbourne/](http://www.goodtogrowuk.org/map/eastbourne/), and for the Lewes area, take a look at the Lewes District Food Partnership website [www.sussexcommunity.org.uk/our-services/community-food/lewes-district-food-partnership/](http://www.sussexcommunity.org.uk/our-services/community-food/lewes-district-food-partnership/)

Lastly, for more information about upcoming volunteer sessions at community gardens in the Lewes area, contact **Stef** at the Lewes District Food Partnership on:

Email: [food@sussexcommunity.org.uk](mailto:food@sussexcommunity.org.uk)  
Website: [www.sussexcommunity.org.uk](http://www.sussexcommunity.org.uk)

And for the Eastbourne area opportunities contact **Caroline** and the Eastbourne Food Partnership:  
Email: [eastbournefoodpartnership@gmail.com](mailto:eastbournefoodpartnership@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.eastbournefoodpartnership.org.uk](http://www.eastbournefoodpartnership.org.uk)  
Facebook: [@eastbournefoodpartnership](https://www.facebook.com/eastbournefoodpartnership)  
Twitter: [@ebgoodfood](https://twitter.com/ebgoodfood)



Working together to reduce our carbon footprint

## Residents Voice Invite - April 2022



Book a place and join your Residents Voice for lunch, and informal chat with the Eastbourne Homes Ltd Board, Homes First staff and much more...

**Tuesday 26th April 2022, 11am to 2pm**

in The Hardwick Room, Tennis Centre, Devonshire Park, College Road, Eastbourne, BN21 4JJ.

- Mingle with the Directors of Eastbourne Homes Limited Board to share your experiences and ideas for service improvements
- Learn about Eastbourne's approach to recycling and sustainability – discover how you can help
- Learn about the support available for those needing help with household bills
- **Have the chance to win prizes!**
- **Enjoy a delicious buffet lunch.**



Roger Eastwood, Chair of the Board of Directors

To book a place and any transport needs, please RSVP by email to:

[tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) or call /leave a message on: **07816 177992**



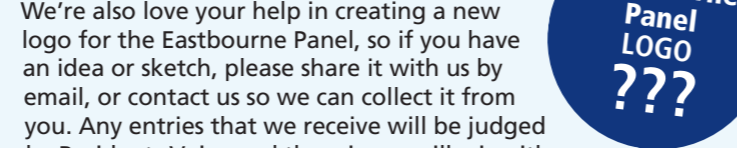
The Hampden Park & Willingdon Trees Area Panel will continue to work on behalf of residents in the area, and new members are always welcome. Please contact the tenant involvement team for more details.

Earlier this year, 70 residents enjoyed an afternoon tea organised by the Hampden Park Willingdon Trees panel.



### Competition...

We're also love your help in creating a new logo for the Eastbourne Panel, so if you have an idea or sketch, please share it with us by email, or contact us so we can collect it from you. Any entries that we receive will be judged by Residents Voice and the winner will win either a £30 gift voucher or a family membership to a local tennis club. The closing date for competition entries is Sunday 08 May. Email us at [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) or call on **07816 177992**



## TOLD Tenants of Lewes District

### A word from the Chair...



I am sure that like me, you're welcoming the signs of spring, but the spiralling cost of living means we all remain in worrying times. In this edition of Tenants' Open Voice on pages 6 and 7, you'll find details of all the help and support currently available to tenants.

I believe that it continues to be vital that TOLD keep a close eye on any decision-making that affects tenants across the district and that we continue to make our views known. You can find out more about TOLD's work through our Facebook page or by emailing me directly - [debbietwitchen@gmail.com](mailto:debbietwitchen@gmail.com) - contributions to this page are always welcome! Collectively the committee encourages everyone to get involved in the various ways available because your voice is important. To facilitate this, the TOLD committee are currently working on a new website which will showcase the work of tenant groups and share important information with everyone.

It just remains for me to wish you all the very best in these challenging times

## Community Improvement budget

The impact of Covid-19 made delivering community improvement projects more important than ever to boost tenant morale across the district. Despite many supply and logistical issues brought about by the pandemic, in the last financial year (2021/22) the TOLD committee successfully delivered 20 projects to general needs and retirement housing schemes across the district with the help of the tenant involvement team. Much of the £20,000 investment was spent on improving gardens and communal areas which helped bring people together and had a demonstrable effect on the wellbeing of our tenants. Bob Brown (TOLD Committee) who lives in Peacehaven said: "The recent arrival of new garden furniture for Meridian Court has given a great boost to residents' morale, and we all look forward to using it in our garden this summer."

**Don't forget** - applications for the 2022/23 Community Improvement Budget are now being considered so if you have an idea for any project, large or small, simply contact the Tenant Involvement team who can talk you through the next steps and help you to complete an application form. You can either email [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) or call Harry on **07595 460334** (Wednesday to Friday).



Tenants at Reed Court in Lewes were overjoyed to receive funding for a new shed and greenhouse.

## Day of Action

On the 24 January, officers from Homes First, Neighbourhood First and Environment First worked alongside tenants on the De Montfort estate in Lewes to clean and reconfigure bin areas and remove rubbish. In addition, four new closed top compass litter bins, funded by the TOLD thanks to a successful Community Improvement budget application, were also installed across the estate. This clearly shows that making your views known, working together and then sharing ideas can really make a difference.



Top: The bulk recycling bins on the De Montfort estate.

Centre: Cleaning the bin stores.

Bottom: The new waste bins.



## Energy Advice

Energy Advice Qualified energy champions are offering friendly advice about energy bills at drops in Lewes (Tenant Resource Centre 29/4 & 20/5) and Seaford (Walmer Recreation Ground - 04/05). You can get help with your tariff or supplier and find out about discounts available over a cuppa. Call or text **07909 816664**, Freephone **0800 4589045** or Email: [energyadvice@ovesco.co.uk](mailto:energyadvice@ovesco.co.uk)

## Community improvements

Jo Wunsch (pictured right) and Nikki Wickham attended the Seedy Saturday event at the Langney Village Hall to support the Grow Eastbourne initiative and help with a consultation on the new Langney Community Garden.

With the help of Neighbourhood First, we have used community funding to improve access to local areas for residents by repairing steps at Manor Road Gardens and improving pathways at the Archery Rec. We also carried out some planting in Shinewater, which was requested by residents at our walkabout last year, to help deter football games taking place in the common areas.



Manor Road Garden steps - before (above) and after.



New pathways in the Archery recreation ground.



New planting in Shinewater.



New bench in Sutherland Court.

# Say Hello! Wave Goodbye.



We recently completed Retirement Representative elections so it's time to say our farewells to several members who've worked so hard for residents throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Please join us to give a big thank you to the following members who have stepped down over the year:

- **David Bell** – Upwyke House, Eastbourne
- **Richard Brown** – Upwyke House, Eastbourne
- **Robert Brown** – Meridian Court, Peacehaven
- **Sylvia Gibbs** – Churchill House, Seaford
- **Pauline Harrop** – New Derby House, Eastbourne
- **Ken Healey** – St David's Court, Peacehaven
- **Leslie Martin** – Tyrone Court, Eastbourne
- **Angelo Mascarenhas** – Riverbourne House, Eastbourne
- **Noel Nicholls** – Rathan Court, Newhaven
- **Chris Phillips** – Reed Court, Lewes
- **David Pocock** – Gwent Court, Eastbourne
- **Terry Smart** – New Derby House, Eastbourne
- **Paul Wilkinson** – Archery Court, Eastbourne

We want to thank them for their time and hard work over the last few years improving services for our older residents across the Lewes District and Eastbourne. Terry Smart will step down as Chair of the Eastbourne Retirement Housing Forum this spring and will hand over to the new chair following our Annual General Meeting later this month, but he will continue to be involved in Residents Voice.



Many members of the Retirement Housing Forum are staying with us and we're very grateful for their continued time and work on projects which benefit retirement housing residents. Newly joining the Retirement Housing Forum this April are:

- **Kay Coleman** – New Derby House, Eastbourne
- **Bob Fisher** – St Davids Court, Peacehaven
- **Dennis Forsdike** – Neills Close, Newhaven
- **Veronica Graham** – Tyrone Court, Eastbourne
- **Susan Grimes** – New Derby House, Eastbourne
- **Allen Hogbin** – Riverbourne House, Eastbourne
- **Maureen Novis** – Newton Road, Lewes
- **Ian Sargent** – St Marys Court, Eastbourne
- **Teddy Walmesley** – Rathan Court, Newhaven
- **Helen Wood** – Riverbourne House, Eastbourne
- **Janet Swann** – Gwent Court, Eastbourne

There are still a few schemes that don't have representation following the elections, and we'd love more residents to come and join us as we've achieved a great deal over recent years, so if you live in any of the schemes listed below, please speak to your Retirement Housing Advisor.

- **Archery Court, Roxburgh Court** Eastbourne
- **Coldstream House, Seaford**
- **Mill Road, Ringmer**
- **Allington Road, Brook Gardens, Millfield Close, Newick**
- **Southdown Avenue/Arundel Road, Peacehaven**

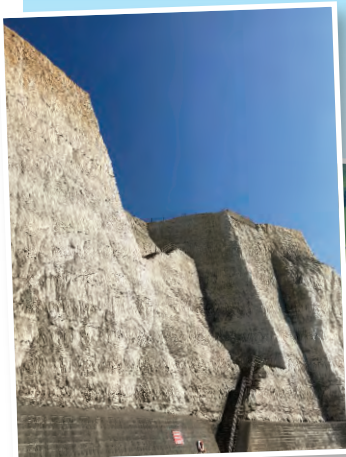
The Retirement Housing Forum talks to Homes First about resident priorities, monitors services such as cleaning and landscaping, and works with staff to review policies. Most recently the forum has been involved in improving service charge information and a consultation on Covid-19 communications and working practices to keep residents safe. We have many exciting digital inclusion and intergenerational projects planned, so if you can spare a few hours every three months we'd love to hear from you!

## Love where you live Photo Competition

Budding snappers are invited to enter our photo competition, which hopes to celebrate where you live. To get involved, all you have to do is take a photo of your area and send it to: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) with a few lines explaining why you love where you live by 31 May.

The photos and captions will be judged by our involved tenant groups, and the winning entry will receive **£50 worth of shopping vouchers**.

There's also a chance the photos will feature on our official Visit Lewes & Visit Eastbourne Instagram pages, so...



### Get snapping!

