



We've got mail



Right to repair



Reducing Food Waste

Summer 2021
Issue 3

Tenants' Open Voice

for tenants of Lewes District and Eastbourne



Jacqui Astridge

Virtual 300

Prizewinner

See page 9



Community Recycling



Wilder Gardens!

Highlights inside...

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| Welcome – Gary Hall | page 2 |
| Neil Peters – Environment First | page 4 |
| Bogus callers | page 7 |
| Reduce food waste | page 8 |
| Lewes News and Eastbourne News | pages 10/11 |



lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Tenants Open Voice Issue 3



Gary Hall

Welcome to Issue 3 of 'Tenants Open Voice', the joint newsletter for the tenants of Eastbourne and Lewes District. I hope you enjoy this edition. We would love to hear your thoughts (good or bad) to make sure it's an interesting read. Please feel free to share your views or ideas for future content by emailing tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

We may finally be starting to see some return to a semblance of normality, but it has clearly been a difficult time for so many people. Your continued co-operation and patience in assisting Homes First teams to deliver services is much appreciated by all staff.

As we continue to open up further and move towards new ways of working, we continue to seek the involvement of our tenants and

residents in looking to improve what we provide and ensure value for money for the services you pay us to deliver. We have ambitious plans to improve the housing stock and particularly to improve the sustainability of your homes and surrounding environment. Alongside this the delivery of new homes is driving our ambition to house as many local people in housing need as possible. Although demand will perhaps always outstrip supply, the provision of good quality affordable homes is the cornerstone of what we are looking to achieve, over the next few years.

This Newsletter again offers a wide variety of articles and content that I hope you will find interesting and useful and remember your feedback is invaluable.

Please stay safe and look after each other.

Kind Regards

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



Find us on Facebook:
Lewes District Housing Eastbourne Homes Ltd



Follow us on Twitter:
@LewesDC @ebnhomes

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.

in this issue

| | page |
|--------------------------------------|------|
| Welcome | 2 |
| Webchat | 2 |
| Making it Happen | 3 |
| Can I claim Attendance Allowance? | 3 |
| We've got mail... | 3 |
| Rent Arrears collection success | 4 |
| My name is Neil Peters | 4 |
| Charter for Social Housing Residents | 4 |
| New homes | 5 |
| Right to repair scheme | 5 |
| Vaccinations in Sussex | 5 |
| How to make a complaint | 6 |
| What is TIE | 6 |
| Leaseholder update | 6 |
| Tenant Scrutiny | 6 |
| Fraud case on the BBC | 7 |
| Are you insured? | 7 |
| Bogus callers... | 7 |
| Did you know? | 8 |
| Not costing the Earth | 9 |
| The Virtual 300 | 9 |
| Peggy Soan's 100th Birthday | 9 |
| Lewes News | 10 |
| Eastbourne News | 11 |
| Free Training | 12 |
| Direct Debit | 12 |
| Photo competition | 12 |

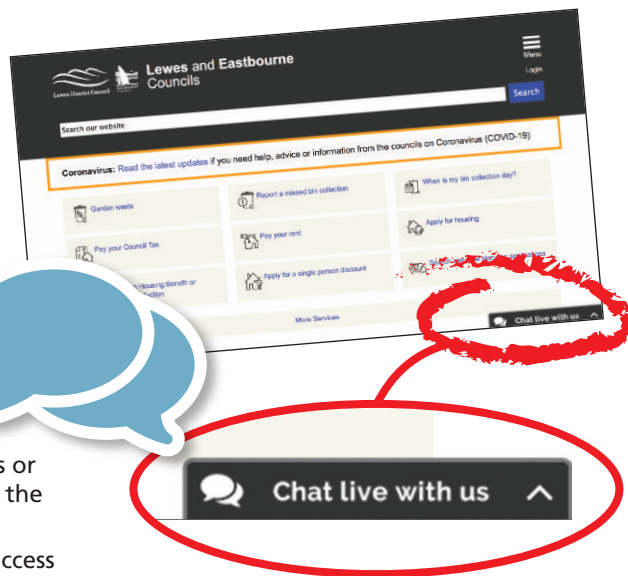
Webchat

With our webchat service, you can avoid the call queues in our busiest periods!

Webchat is a fast and easy way to contact the Councils for assistance and to get the information you need.

Operators are available between 08.30 and 17.00, Monday – Friday and will be able to assist with quick-queries or signpost you to webpages with the information you need.

Between these times, you can access our webchat service from any page on the website; just click on the 'Chat live with us' tab at the bottom right of the page to start a chat with an Advisor. You will need an email address, but you don't need to sign up for an account.



You can even request a copy of the chat transcript be sent to you, so that you can easily refer to any instructions or information you are given.

To give it a go, just head over to: www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



MAKING IT HAPPEN

If you live in Newhaven, Peacehaven or Eastbourne and have a great idea for a community project, or just want to tell us more about your neighbourhood, we are here to listen and support you to Make it Happen.

For example, Community Development Workers (Vicki and Lucy) have been working with residents and Councillors in the Brickly and Cinque Foil area of Peacehaven to brighten up their neighbourhood. Following a bulb planting event in early December,



residents have organised two community litter picks with staff from Neighbourhood First and collected about 40 bags of rubbish. They are now planning a garden competition for the area to take place later in the month.

Can I claim Attendance Allowance?

Attendance Allowance is available to people over state pension age who would benefit from help with washing, dressing, or eating, due to a serious illness or disability. If you get giddy when you have a shower, take a long-time dressing, or perhaps need lightweight saucepans because you find it difficult to lift anything heavy, then this allowance might be worth a look.

The benefit is not means tested and it's not necessary for you to be receiving assistance already. There's also no need for anyone to visit you at home - if you would benefit from support, then you meet the criteria.

You need to complete a form to claim attendance allowance which can be downloaded via the gov.uk website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/attendance-allowance-claim-form

Nobody likes filling in forms, but it's important they are done correctly to give you the best chance of success. Both Age UK and the Citizen's Advice Bureau offer great advice and tips on how to complete the forms on their websites, and you can also call a helpline for free on **0800 731 0122** or textphone using **0800 731 0317**.

Rent Arrears Collection Success!

Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Homes Limited have been one of the few landlords nationally to see a decreasing rent arrears trend during the challenging times of the Covid-19 pandemic. The rent arrears for Lewes have reduced by 1.14% (£163,992.46) between April 2020 and March 2021, and for Eastbourne they have dropped by 1.11% (£161,968.30). Furthermore, the number of rent arrears cases for both authorities reduced by 126 in total, and since the pandemic began, the number of £900 + arrears cases reduced by 153 accounts.

We've got mail...

We've got Mail was set up by two mums who wanted to help battle the isolation and loneliness caused by Covid-19 and lockdown. The project aims to re-connect people in the community through writing letters, drawings and pictures and sharing stories. Jo and Louise applied for a Small Sparks grant from the Making it Happen Team to pay for a Welcome Pack for all those taking part, which includes stationery and a stamped-addressed envelope, making it totally free for participants.

If you would like to take part in the project or know someone who would like to be matched to a family to share letters and drawings, please sign up at www.wevegotmail.co.uk or write to Jo and Louise c/o We've got mail, PO Box 197, Peacehaven BN10 9DZ



My name is Neil Peters

ENVIRONMENT FIRST



work for Environment First, and I'm your Community Recycling Engagement Officer here to tell you about all things recycling. Everyone should have access to a household recycling bin, but if you don't have one please contact the Council and we'll get one to you ASAP.

Many things can be recycled including -

- Plastic bottles, pots, tubs, trays and even carrier bags as they are not a prohibited item - we just ask that you do not put anything into black sacks that could be mistaken for refuse.
- Cardboard boxes and packets, but please break or fold these, so they take up less space. No wax cartons, please.
- Aluminium foil and metal food trays if they are clean.
- Metal cans – washed and squashed.
- Aerosols and food tubes like tomato puree.

- Glass bottles and jars including their tops - washed out because it improves the quality of the recycling.

- Paper – any paper please, unless it is wet, because wet paper is very difficult to separate at the processing plant.

Once your recycling has been sorted and separated, it's bundled up and sent for processing. The plastic is sent to Kent where it's broken down into small chips and sold as a raw material to be used again. The aluminium goes to Warrington to be processed and re-used, and the paper is sent to a local mill where it is pulped and turned back into paper or cardboard for packaging.

Recycling helps reduce the need for raw materials and reduces our carbon footprint which is good for the planet.



| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| | |
| plastic bottles & packaging | paper & card |
| | |
| foil, tins, cans & aerosols | glass bottles & jars |

Please put items in clean, dry and loose

No food, garden waste or any other rubbish

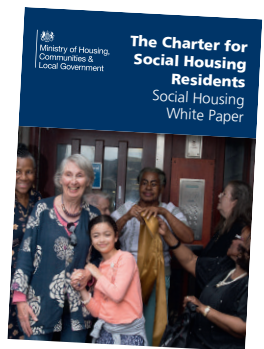


The Charter for Social Housing Residents

In the last edition of Tenants' Open Voice, we told you about the Government's new White Paper - The Charter for Social Housing Residents – and outlined some of the things Homes First are doing to be able to respond to the challenge. These include a new focus on resident safety, landlord performance and ensuring the voice of

residents is heard. Homes First staff have engaged at a national level in 'technical discussions' with the Regulator for Social Housing as part of a consultation process before implementing the requirements of the White Paper. It's likely that guidance on a new national approach to measuring tenant satisfaction will be issued by The Regulator towards the end of this year, with tenant satisfaction surveys becoming an annual requirement for landlords with more than 1,000 properties. Homes First already carries out an annual satisfaction survey but the introduction of specific measures will mean that some of the questions we ask will change.

We will continue to keep you updated with developments and explain what they mean for you and the services you receive as the White Paper progresses into law. In the meantime, if you are interested in working with us on the development of our own Charter please get in touch. You can do this by emailing: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0

“New homes, rapid and efficient construction Great news all-round!”

– quote by Councillor Alan Shuttleworth



Another development in Eastbourne town centre marks the first council homes ever to be constructed using this modular technology there. A complex of 12 affordable flats is being built off-site by Boutique Modern at their factory in Newhaven before being craned into place in Langney Road. Councillor Alan Shuttleworth, Cabinet Member for Housing in Eastbourne, said it was ‘exciting to see a new development of affordable

Boutique Modern are a modular buildings manufacturer specialising in housing products for local authorities who use sustainable products to maximise value for money. The company has worked with Lewes District Council in the past to deliver 13 one and two-bedroom apartments in Newhaven which Councillor William Meyer, Cabinet Member for Housing at Lewes District Council, described as ‘a complete and hugely exciting departure in 21st century housing construction.’

homes underway using highly sophisticated modular technology.’ Boutique Modern’s design utilises a standard fabric first approach, which maximises energy performance in each apartment through airtight construction and super insulation. The housing scheme will also benefit from solar energy generation. Councillor Shuttleworth added, ‘this site in Langney Road is a good example of identifying a pocket of land in part of the town centre that will benefit greatly from these innovative and high-quality affordable new homes.’

Right to Repair Scheme

Secure and introductory local authority tenants who need repairs to their homes can seek compensation through the right to repair scheme when certain repairs are not completed within a prescribed period.

Twenty kinds of repair qualify for the scheme, including insecure doors, broken door entry-phone systems, some issues with water and electricity supplies, blocked sinks, and leaking roofs. A repair will not qualify for the scheme when it exceeds an estimated cost of £250, if the local authority is not responsible for the repair or, if after inspection, the landlord decides that the repair is not a qualifying repair and notifies the tenant of this in writing.

If repair work isn't done within the specified time limit, you need to tell the Council, and ask for another contractor to do the work. If the



second contractor doesn't complete the repair work within their time limit, you can ask for £10 in compensation, and for every extra day you wait, you can get another £2. The most compensation you can get for any one job is £50. However, if you have any rent arrears, the Council can use the compensation to reduce the arrears rather than paying you the money.

For more information – search for the Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994 on: www.legislation.gov.uk

Strong progress on vaccinations in Sussex



The NHS in Sussex is making strong progress with the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Official figures released on 27 May 2021, showed that over one million people in Sussex had received their Covid-19 vaccination. This incredible milestone was reached just 24 weeks into the vaccination programme. In addition, 90% of the most vulnerable residents have had their first vaccination, and 55% have now had both.

Everyone in eligible groups 1-9 have been offered the vaccine, and the NHS is on track to have made the offer of a vaccination to all adults by the end of July – this is in line with the national target.

The NHS in Sussex is urging anyone eligible who has not yet had their vaccination to come forward and book their appointment.

- Email the NHS Sussex at sxccg.vaccineenquiries@nhs.net
- Or call the vaccine enquiry phone line: 0800 433 4545 (open 9am – 4pm, Monday to Friday).



How to make a complaint

At Homes First, we work hard to provide high quality services, and make sure any contact with us is professional, courteous and goes beyond your expectations. However, occasionally things can go wrong and sometimes the best way to address service failings is through making a complaint.

There are many ways to make a complaint, such as by telephone, but the best way is to complete an online form, because then you can be sure that it reaches us in your own words so we can handle your complaint as effectively and efficiently as possible. Complaining on social media channels can sometimes be missed or cause delays especially if they're posted on pages that are not monitored by staff.

You can find the online complaints form on the website: www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-councils/make-a-complaint/

As well as making sure complaints are dealt with efficiently, there's also lots of information on dealing with a range of enquiries, which are not necessarily complaints.



Once a complaint is received, it's logged by Customer First and then sent to the Customer Experience Team to investigate. If we are unable to resolve the complaint straight away, we acknowledge it within five days with the aim of sending you a decision within 10 days. It helps us to respond to your complaint more quickly if you allow us this time to investigate before making any follow up enquiries.



What is TIE?

TIE is the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment panel which brings together tenant representatives from Lewes District Council & Eastbourne Homes Limited on a quarterly basis. The job of the panel is to hold the Senior Leadership team and Homes First to account on performance, oversee the scrutiny action plan, and make sure that everyone is involved in and consulted on key decision making that affects the everyday lives of tenants. TIE also oversees the tenant involvement strategy, the development of housing policies and service procurement to ensure value for money.

We're always looking for new members, so if you...

- have an interest in council housing,
- have experience of working in partnership with groups in or outside of a workplace environment,
- enjoy teamwork,
- would like to learn new skills,
- can use a computer or laptop.

...then this might be something you'd like to get involved in. We offer training to help you take part, and the opportunity to make a difference. If the need arises, we also offer out of pocket and travel expenses.

For more information, please contact:
tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Tenant Scrutiny

The tenant scrutiny team have continued to meet since the last newsletter and have now completed their report on the complaints handling service. The report and its recommendations are now with the Senior Leadership Team for comment and action, and the results will be published in the next newsletter.

If you fancy getting involved in future scrutiny reviews, you'll receive full training and support.

To make a difference, simply contact the Tenant Involvement team: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk or call us on 07800 689302.

Leaseholder UPDATE

In places where we completed maintenance between 2019 and 2020, we appreciate leaseholders are still waiting for the final accounts for those works. Regrettably the Covid-19 pandemic has caused significant delays, but we now hope to publish the figures in early July 2021. Please get in touch if you have any queries.

We are also consulting about a new reserve fund scheme. If you have not yet received communication from us about this, please do get in touch by emailing: Leasehold@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Fraud case on the BBC



FRAUD DETECTION

One of the fraud team's investigations was selected for the BBC 'Fraud Squad' series shown in May. The programme which highlights Local Authority efforts to prevent, pursue and prosecute fraud offences, looked at a case involving a woman who was charged with fraud by false representation when she

pretended to live in a 3-bedroom council property and claimed an £80,000 Right to Buy discount. The case was of particular interest to the BBC due to the level of detail obtained in the investigation and the use of covert surveillance. The property was returned to the Council, and the woman received a 20-month prison sentence (suspended for 18 months).

Social Housing Fraud, which also includes fraudulent applications for housing, and abandonment and subletting of council properties is a significant issue that prevents families in genuine need from obtaining a home. With increased demand for assistance, public awareness of housing fraud is now more important than ever with an estimated cost to the public purse of nearly £1 billion every year.

If you would like to report a fraud to us, all the information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality. You can report a suspicion of fraud online at www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-councils/report-fraud/ or by free telephone call to our hotline on 0800 731 7039.

HOMES FIRST Insurance

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 here:

www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/housing/tenants-contents-insurance/

Bogus callers...

We've heard a few reports of cold callers and scams targeting vulnerable and older people recently. Cold calling or door-to-door trading is not an offence and there are legitimate individuals who conduct business in this way, but they must hold a pedlar's licence.

To reduce the risk of becoming a victim of bogus callers, try to follow this advice -

- Use your door viewer to see who's there.
- If you open the door, put the chain on first.
- Always ask for ID and check it with the company before letting somebody into your home.
- Use the phone number advertised in the phone book or online, just in case the number on their identity card is fake. For utility companies, call the customer service department. Close the door while you do this.

- Remember - Mears operatives, or any of their subcontractors, will show you their ID badges. If they do not have ID, refuse entry, or ask for their name before contacting repairs on 01273 471600 or 01323 410000.
- Lastly, remember that genuine callers won't mind checks. If you feel at all unsure, schedule a time for the caller to come back when a friend or relative is there. For pre-planned appointments with utility companies, a password scheme can be set up.



Did you know...?

A family of four can save up to £60 a month by reducing food waste!



Throwing out food is one of the biggest contributors to climate change, because when we waste food it's not just the food we're wasting, but also the resources it takes to produce it.

Top tips to stop Food Waste:

- Plan your weekly meals. If you have kids, try to make meal planning a fun family activity. Ask your children what they'd like to help you make during the week - if they're fussy eaters this will save food because they're more likely to eat something they've helped to make.
- Plan some one-pot meals. Simple stews and soups are a good way to use up what you have left in your fridge. Adding a tin of kidney or butter beans or lentils is a good cheap source of protein.
- Only buy what you need. Plan your shop and make a shopping list before you go. Try writing your list so it matches the layout of the shop or keep an ongoing list on your phone.



- Check the fridge and cupboard before you go shopping, so you don't buy things you already have.
- Don't shop when you're hungry - it can lead to impulse and overbuying.

- Keep a store cupboard. Tinned food is just as nutritious as fresh, and dry food like pasta, lentils and rice can last for over a year. Opened packets can be resealed with tape or stored in recycled clean jars.
- Don't forget about frozen food. Remember, frozen vegetables are as nutritious as fresh ones.
- Use a portion size calculator to help you to prepare the right amount of food.
- Mix up the types of food you buy and use for meals so there's less chance of having too much fresh food that might go off before you use it.
- Make today's leftovers into tomorrow's lunch or dinner. Left over potatoes and vegetables can be made into bubble and squeak, pasta can become pasta salad, and left over bolognese can become a chilli just by adding a few ingredients.
- Use recipes that use up the foods you have left. Soft apples and pears when peeled and cored can be stewed for a desert or sauce for example.

Food Storage

- Keep the fridge temperature at 5°C or lower - this will keep food fresher for longer. Fruit and vegetables can last two weeks longer in the fridge, but store bread, potatoes, onions, garlic and fruit like bananas and pineapples in a cool, dark cupboard as they keep better.
- Organise your fridge - bring the oldest food to the front, or create a shelf for food that needs eating first and check dates of food regularly.
- Freeze leftovers - if you cook too much, just pop leftovers in a container or

sealed bag and freeze, but don't forget to add a label and date with a permanent marker. Bread can also be frozen - you can make toast with bread straight from the freezer

- Revive soft root vegetables like carrots and beetroot by putting them in cold water in the fridge for a few hours.

Labelling What does it mean?

Best Before - the quality of the food may be best before this date, but it's still safe to eat after the best before date. Biscuits and cereal for example can be stored for six months after their best before date, tinned goods for one year, and pasta for three years.

Use By - You must not eat food after the use by date.

Display until / Sell by - ignore these dates. They are for retailers not shoppers.



Online Resources:

Portion size calculator & food storage information:

www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/

Cooking on a Budget:

www.cookingonabootstrap.com

and www.bbc.co.uk/food/budget



Not Costing the Earth



HOMES FIRST

Working together to reduce our carbon footprint

Webpage – Coming Soon!

Tackling climate change isn't something we can do in isolation; we need to work together to play a part in reducing our impact on our environment and ultimately our planet.

A new **Not Costing the Earth** webpage will contain information and resources to help us all understand what we can do to help protect future generations from climate change. The webpage will be located on the Lewes and Eastbourne Councils website: www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

This information will also be made available in future editions of the Tenants Handbook for people who do not have access to the internet.

What is a carbon footprint?

It is the amount of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere as a result of the activities of a particular individual, organisation or community.

Net zero carbon is a process where measures that reduce carbon in the atmosphere are used to 'offset' the carbon that is being produced.

We can all do our bit to offset carbon and reduce our carbon footprints. The council will make improvements to buildings wherever possible, and as individuals, we can travel more sustainably, save energy and reduce our waste.



The Virtual 300

Virtual Involvement of Tenants and Leaseholders

Joy, from Eastbourne, was the lucky winner of the Spring Newsletter V300 competition, but you don't have to enter a competition to win a prize, you just need to participate!



When you join the Virtual 300, you can get involved as much or as little as it suits you by completing short online surveys or joining discussion groups, and the good news is that every time you do, you receive points.

In May, the Tenant Involvement team had the great pleasure of presenting Jacqui from Eastbourne with flowers and £40 of Amazon vouchers for being our most involved Virtual 300 tenant to date. Jacqui was delighted with her flowers and plans to use the vouchers for craft hobbies.



To be in with a chance of being next year's winner, have your voice heard and collect points, simply email us at tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk with your full name, address and contact number with the heading 'V300' and we'll sign you up straight away.

Peggy Soan's 100th Birthday



In March, Peggy Soan was presented with flowers and a card from the retirement housing team to celebrate her 100th birthday. She also received a telegram from the Queen which she said had made her day, despite making her feel old.

All centenarians receive a telegram, which is arranged by the Anniversaries office – part of the Queen's private staff. Peggy has lived in the Lewes District all her life, and her motto has always been life is what you make it. Telegrams are also sent by her Majesty when people reach 105 and every year after that, so here's wishing Peggy many more happy returns and telegrams!



TOLD Tenants of Lewes District

A word from the Chair...

Summer is finally here; lockdown is easing and with luck we'll soon be meeting around a table again. Despite all the difficulties presented by lockdown & meeting online, the Committee has managed to allocate £20,000 in the last financial year to a range of exciting projects and communal spaces, visited new housing developments and fed back on Homes First performance. I believe it to be vital that we continue to keep a close eye on any decision making that affects tenants across the district and have our voices heard. You can find out more about TOLD's work on www.told.org.uk – contributions to the page are welcome!



Debbie Twitchen –
Chair of TOLD

I believe it to be vital that we continue to keep a close eye on any decision making that affects tenants across the district and have our voices heard. You can find out more about TOLD's work on www.told.org.uk – contributions to the page are welcome!

Debbie Twitchen (Chair) visits a new development with Councillor Meyer and Leighton Rowe

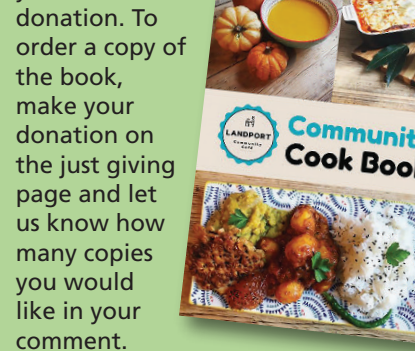


Community Improvement budget

On 27 May, the TOLD committee approved over £11,000 worth of spending on a variety of projects submitted for consideration by tenants and community groups. The money was spent on a community garden start up in Seaford, a living wall on the De Montfort Estate in Lewes, a shed and a greenhouse at Reed Court and paving, garden furniture, picnic tables and much more. If you have a project or idea you'd like TOLD to consider, simply email tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk for more information on how to apply.

Landport Community Café Cook Book

The Landport Community Café has produced a cookbook with ideas for tasty, healthy, low-cost meals that can be made with store cupboard items alongside ideas for 'using up' food, aiming for zero waste. The cookbook has been made available for FREE to everyone receiving food bank/community store cupboard parcels across Lewes District and is available to the wider community for a 'pay as you feel' donation. To order a copy of the book, make your donation on the just giving page and let us know how many copies you would like in your comment. The suggested donation is £5 to support the project.



www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/landportcc?utm_term=RRyqgYVze

Calling for Wilder Gardens Champions! in the Lewes District

Do you want to learn more about wildlife and how your garden can become a haven? Do you want to become a Wilder Garden Champion and inspire your neighbours too?

Whether you're a complete beginner, an expert or have other gifts, there's a place for you in this project – all are welcome. We understand that your garden must work for your family, but even formal gardens and non-native plants can support wildlife. Together with friends, neighbours, and hopefully streets we can create corridors and homes for our struggling wildlife – let's be the

change we all want to see. The time to act is now and together we can step up for wildlife.

For more information, please contact Jessie Rodriguez on: infowildergardens@yahoo.com or via the Greenhaven's Network on Facebook. This Greenhaven's project is funded by the Enjoalata Foundation.



UC Universal Credit Advice Service

- Do you live in the Lewes District Council area and need help with Universal Credit?
- Is your home at risk because of a low income or rent arrears?
- Are you on a low income and struggling to pay the rent?

The Universal Credit Advice Service provides free independent advice for

Lewes District Council residents. We can check whether you should claim Universal Credit, give you an indication of how much you will receive and guide you through the process of claiming. We can also check whether you may be entitled to other benefits.

For more information, please contact: Traci Brooks, Universal Credit Advisor on 01273 085458 or ucas@bht.org.uk

A big thank you to everyone who provided feedback to the Air Source Pump survey – a new guide will be circulated soon.



Residents Voice

A word from the Chair...

We have continued to support good community causes across Eastbourne. The Hampden park & Willingdon Trees Area Panel has



Andy Evans – Chair of Residents' Voice

been meeting regularly, and has already approved £2,500 of their £10,000 annual budget on a range of projects. Last year, we allocated some money to the Hampden Park Shed and as a thank you, Lindy and her shedders invited area panel

A group of involved residents from across Eastbourne recently met to consider how the Area Panels might be re-modelled to better benefit tenants and communities. We started by asking ourselves why we get involved, and decided on three main reasons:

- **Making new friends**
- **Giving something back to Eastbourne Homes and other tenants**
- **Supporting community activities.**

But we also recognised that our membership is getting older and sadly declining in number. We really want to get more people involved so, if you're passionate about making a difference in your area or have an idea that will improve your community, please get in touch because we would love to hear from



members to a clay workshop and gave us a warm welcome and a tour. You can find out more about Eastbourne sheds on the website – www.eastbourneshed.co.uk or contact linda.plumley@ageconcerneastbourne.co.uk

Hampden Park Area Panel meeting members joined in with Active Friends, a new fitness programme for all at the Hampden Park Community Centre on Fridays 1-2pm. You can email: sal_r_tay@yahoo.co.uk if you'd like to find out more or to join in!

you. We're open to any ideas, as different areas have different needs. It could be improving a communal garden, a summer fun day, or a Christmas fair – it's worth a try.

Get in touch and help us make a difference. Email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



New Derby House



Active Friends

The **Central and Archery Area Panel** have paid for plants for the New Derby House communal gardens. The planting turned into a wonderful community effort and the gardens look beautiful as you can see.

Commonplace

We have been working with community groups and voluntary organisations to launch a new digital platform which will give residents a place to celebrate great things happening in the area and share ideas about what they would like to see in future. The platform is interactive and accessible 24 hours a day making it easy for residents to share thoughts and ideas. These will help develop a neighbourhood community action plan with partners working together on things that matter to residents, such as –

- **New or different social or sporting activities**
- **How to make best use of existing land and buildings**
- **New Ways to improve signage, street cleanliness, transport links and job opportunities.**

To keep updated on the progress of this platform and see what others are saying, just take a look!



Scan the bar code below with your phone camera to access the app and comment.

Or log into the website at www.shinewater.commonplace.is

If you don't have a smart phone or computer, contact us at: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk and share your comments.

All contributions are entered into a prize draw.





Free training

The Tenant Involvement team recently conducted a training audit of our involved tenants which signposted us to many free online opportunities which we'd love to share. So, if you're interested in free training on subjects ranging from writing newsletters to internet security, please get in touch by emailing:

tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Direct Debits are an easy, simple and convenient way to pay your rent and Council Tax



- You no longer have to worry about paying on time.
- It costs nothing to set up and can be cancelled by you at any time.
- It costs the Council less to collect, and any money we save means there is more money available to help improve the service you receive.

We offer:

- Monthly Direct Debits, taken on the first of every month.
- Fortnightly Direct Debits, taken on the Monday of every rent paying fortnight.
- Weekly Direct Debits, taken on the Monday of every rent paying week.

To set up a Direct Debit, or to download a form visit:

lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/payments/pay-your-rent/

Pet Photography Competition

Crystal from the Lewes District was the lucky winner of shopping vouchers for the Spring edition Wordsearch competition. For this edition of Tenants' Open Voice, we would like readers to send in a photo of a favourite pet taken using a smartphone.

All entries to the competition will be judged by members of Residents Voice and the Tenants of Lewes District committee. The winner will receive **£30 worth of vouchers** and have their pet picture used as the cover photo of the next edition.

Please send your pet photo by email or text to tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk or 07595 460334, but be sure to include your full name and address so that you are considered for the competition.

