



Spring 2021  
Issue 2

# Tenants' Open Voice

for tenants of Lewes District and Eastbourne



## Not Costing The Earth...

### Introducing a new project

See page 9



## Are you insured?



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[lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

# Tenants Open Voice Welcome once again!



Gary Hall

Welcome to 'Tenants Open Voice', the second joint newsletter for the tenants of Eastbourne and Lewes and District, which I hope you'll all find an interesting read.

Clearly we are all still facing the considerable challenge of living with Covid-19 and again I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your co-operation and patience in assisting Homes First teams to deliver services at this difficult time – this is much appreciated by all staff.

We have evolved our services over the last year to respond to this unprecedented situation and when I reflect on how well we have adapted and where we are now, I can only say that it has been among the most challenging times any of us has faced. It has though, perhaps accelerated our thinking about how we can use technology to enhance services

and ensure we are efficiently providing value for money for the rent you pay. We do recognise that using technology is not for everyone, so we will continue to be available for our tenants to interact with safely in any way that is suitable to you – this, importantly, includes the ability to get involved in shaping Homes First services.

This Newsletter, again offers a wide variety of articles and content that I hope you will find interesting and useful.

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



## CUSTOMER CONTACT CENTRES

**Lewes** Tel: (01273) 471600

**Eastbourne** Tel: (01323) 410000

## What did you think?

We'd love to hear your thoughts on *Tenants' Open Voice* so we can make sure it has the right mix of articles to make it an interesting and useful read. Please send in your thoughts (good or bad) and any ideas for future content to: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

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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.

## STAR Survey



At the beginning of November a satisfaction survey was sent out to a representative sample of tenants. The questions were chosen

by a panel called TIE (Tenant Involvement and Empowerment) which is made up of Lewes District and Eastbourne tenants. The purpose of the survey was to find out how satisfied our tenants are with a variety of service areas.

At the time of writing the Tenant Involvement team are collating the results, but once this task is complete the findings will be shared with the TIE panel, the Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD) and Eastbourne's Residents Voice. The full results will also be published and shared with all tenants in the next annual reports.

To encourage participation in the survey, we ran a competition with three prizes of £100, £50 and £25 of shopping vouchers. Congratulations to the lucky winners - Janice from Peacehaven and David and Rory from Eastbourne.



# Local Council May Elections



## Polling stations will be safe places to vote in May



### Polling Stations will be a safe place to vote on Thursday 6 May 2021.

#### What to expect if voting at the polling station:

- Polling stations will be thoroughly cleaned before, during and after the election
- Please expect to queue outside, there will be signs for social distancing and a staff member to help you. We will only allow 1-5 voters in the polling station at any one time. (depending on the size of the station)
- You must wear a face covering (unless you have a medical exemption)
- There will hand sanitising stations within the station.
- Please bring your poll card with you to make it easier, as this can be scanned at the desk.
- If you would prefer to bring your own pencil or pen, then this would be very helpful. Pencils that are

provided will sanitised between use, there will be a box to put the pencil in after use.

- Booths and all touch points will be cleaned at regular intervals throughout the day.
- There will be no toilet facilities available to use.

If you find that you cannot get to or would prefer not to vote at the polling station, we advise that you apply to vote by post or by proxy. This is particularly important if you are clinically vulnerable. (Please note that your chosen proxy will need to travel to your allocated polling station to be able to cast your vote.) Postal and proxy votes can be temporary for these elections only, if that is what you would prefer.

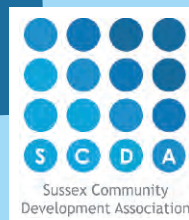
To download a postal or proxy form please visit:  
[www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/how-cast-your-vote](http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/how-cast-your-vote)

For more information, please call our helpline for Eastbourne: **01323 410000** or Lewes: **01273 471600**, or visit our May 2021 Elections FAQs webpage: [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

Deadlines to apply for these elections:

- To register to vote – Monday 19 April 2021
- To apply for a new or cancel a current postal vote – 5pm on Tuesday 20 April 2021
- To apply for a new or cancel a current proxy vote – 5pm on Tuesday 27 April 2021

## Free Counselling



If you have been seriously impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, free counselling may be available to you.

Sussex Community Counselling, part of Sussex Community Development Association, have secured funding to offer free help to people whose lives have been affected by Covid-19 through bereavement, loss of job or income, heightened anxiety or recurrence of personal difficulties.

Anyone seriously affected by the pandemic is eligible for the support. An initial assessment is followed by six, weekly, free, 50-minute counselling sessions from one of our qualified counsellors, delivered by phone or zoom.



If you who would like to access this free counselling please call 01273 519108 and speak to one of our staff (or leave a message, as the phone is not attended 24/7). Alternatively, please email: [counselling@sussexcommunity.org.uk](mailto:counselling@sussexcommunity.org.uk) We will then arrange a telephone assessment.

## STOP PRESS! Job Opportunities

Over the next few months, Property Services will be recruiting to several posts and would like to hear from residents and local people who would be interested in working with us. The roles can only be applied for on the website and will be advertised there too: [www.jobsgopublic.com](http://www.jobsgopublic.com)

- **Trainee Surveyor.** Minimum requirement 2 A-levels or equivalent. Day release will be sponsored for the right candidate following a successful probationary period. You would need access to a vehicle for this role.
- **Compliance Officer.** This role will be at entrance level which makes it a good introduction to the growing world of property health and safety. Minimum entry requirements: GCSE in Maths and English.
- **Leasehold / Repairs Officer.** This is another entry level role requiring the same minimum qualifications, but this time in our Leasehold management team.

If you meet the minimum requirements, and think these roles are a good career opportunity for you, please watch the website: [www.jobsgopublic.com](http://www.jobsgopublic.com)

# Tenant Scrutiny

## UPDATE

Building on the success of the last review of communal repairs, the tenant scrutiny team have been meeting again virtually using MS Teams with a focus on the complaints handling service. Several sessions have already taken place and a desktop review and background research has already been completed.

The next stage of the process will involve a series of 'reality check' interviews with key staff chosen by the scrutiny team from across the organisation. We are also investigating how easy it is for tenants to make a formal complaint when they want to. The council usually asks for formal complaints to be given in writing by email or via an online form. We want to hear from anyone who has tried to make a complaint, but for whatever reason, found it difficult to do so in writing. If you have called the Council and and been offered help to write your complaint, what support was offered to you? We would welcome hearing about your experience – just call 07800 689302 and leave a message and one of us will call you back. Once the scrutiny team's investigations are finished and written up, all the evidence will be analysed and then a report with findings and any recommendations will be produced. All being well the process will be completed by May this year and the results of the review will published in the next newsletter.

If you are interested in getting involved in future scrutiny reviews, please contact the Tenant Involvement team – [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) or call 07800 689302. Full training and support will be provided – why not try to help us make a difference?

## Smart Doorbells

We are frequently asked about the use of smart doorbells that allow you to see who is calling. These devices are a valuable crime reduction tool which can be used lawfully by residents as long as government guidance is properly followed -

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/domestic-cctv-using-cctv-systems-on-your-property).



Smart doorbells are not fitted by the Council or the police, as this would be 'directed surveillance' requiring Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) authority, but some Police forces & Community Safety Partnerships do supply free smart doorbells to residents when they have been victims of

burglary. However, permission will still be needed from the Council before you can make any changes to your home, so please contact the property services team for approval and advice before purchasing or installing a smart doorbell.

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

**HOMES FIRST**  
Insurance

## Complaints...

At Homes First, we aim to provide high quality services which are professional and courteous, but sometimes things can go wrong. When this happens, we need to listen to your views, learn from our mistakes and put things back on the right track so we continually improve.

This current financial year our dedicated Customer Experience team have received 309 complaints - thus far 253 investigations have been completed, and we continue to work on the remaining 56. On average, it takes 46 days to complete each formal complaint, so the team are keen to work with the resident-led scrutiny team to improve performance and implement any recommendations that come forward from the review of complaints handling.

If you have any feedback on our services, good or bad, please complete our contact form at:

[www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/contact-us/contact-us-form/](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/contact-us/contact-us-form/)



# Don't suffer in silence

If you are a Homes First tenant experiencing anti-social behaviour (ASB) in and around your property, we want to hear from you.

No one should experience ASB and we want to make sure you have peaceful enjoyment of your home.

The types of behaviour we define as ASB are:

- Drug dealing
- Alcohol/drug misuse
- Criminal activity
- Physical violence
- Threats and intimidation
- Harassment and hate crime
- Unreasonable noise from parties/visitors
- Domestic violence
- Arson
- Vandalism

Reports of noise nuisance are managed by the case management team, who will contact you and ask you to complete diary logs or use a noise app to record incidents of noise on a smart phone when necessary.

Reports of ASB are dealt with by our Neighbourhood Housing team who will contact you following receipt of your report. They will investigate the matter fully and speak to all parties involved and other agencies where necessary to seek resolutions to the matter.



There are some types of behaviour which the Council encourages tenants to resolve themselves, although we can sometimes help by making referrals to agencies such as mediation services. As a guideline these behaviours include:

- Parking issues outside your home
- Civil disputes between neighbours, concerning boundaries or shared driveways for example
- Day-to-day noise, from washing machines, toilets flushing, vacuum cleaners, neighbours' gardening or lawn-mowing
- DIY or car repairs (unless they are being done late at night or as part



of an illegitimate business)

- Ball games, children playing in public or communal areas, or youths gathering socially (unless they are causing a nuisance)
- Barbecues, cooking smells, babies crying, the hours people keep or other lifestyle differences.

Reporting to us is important, so we can work with residents and other agencies, such as the Police to prevent the behaviour continuing. You can use the 'Reporting anti-social behaviour, noise and nuisance' page on our website by registering your details for a 'my account' and then submitting an easy to complete online form. Or you can report over the telephone by calling our helpful Customer First team on 01323 410000 or 01273 471600.

## Did you know?

A windowsill is the perfect place to get summer salad and herb seeds going.

Keep an eye out for seeds in budget supermarkets, or swap seeds with your family, friends and neighbours. Re-use plastic trays and pots to sow your seeds in and try basil, parsley, coriander, tomatoes, radishes or lettuce.

For more information get in touch with [jo.wunsch@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:jo.wunsch@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.

Contact us on (01323) 410000 or (01273) 471600 to set up a Direct Debit, or to download a form visit: [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/payments/pay-your-rent/](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/payments/pay-your-rent/)

# The Charter for Social Housing Residents

Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**The Charter for  
Social Housing  
Residents**  
Social Housing  
White Paper

In November, the Government unveiled the much anticipated Social Housing White Paper – *The Charter for Social Housing Residents*.

The Charter brings together a range of things aimed at improving the experience of people who live in social housing, and focusses on transparency, accountability, safety and respect, with a clear intention to raise standards and ensure that tenants can influence decisions about their homes and local neighbourhoods.

The Charter has seven chapters which set out what every social housing resident should expect:

- 1 To be safe in your home.
- 2 To know how your landlord is performing
- 3 To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly
- 4 To be treated with respect
- 5 To have your voice heard by your landlord
- 6 To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in
- 7 To be supported to take your first step to ownership

The changes detailed in The Charter won't happen quickly as many of its

requirements need additional legislation before they can happen, but Homes First have already been working hard to improve our approach by:

- Commencing a full stock condition survey
- Implementing a range of safety works such as the Riverbourne House refurbishment below, to proactively address anticipated requirements of the White Paper and Building Safety Bill ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-building-safety-bill](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/draft-building-safety-bill)).
- Developing a Homes First Performance Management Framework with strengthened data gathering and reporting to improve performance and enable us to share information about how we are performing with tenants
- Establishing the Customer Experience Team, whose remit draws together many of the key aspects of The Charter (Performance Management and Reporting, Complaints, Pro-active Consumer Regulation, Tenant Involvement).
- Publishing and implementing a new Tenant Involvement Strategy (2019-2022)

We'll continue to review the changes as they happen and engage with our tenants. Later this year, we hope to develop our own Charter, based on the expectations set out in the White Paper and what tenants have been telling us are the priorities that matter most to them.

If you are interested in getting involved please email: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

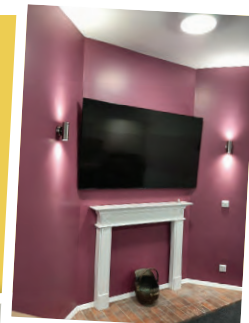


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## Major refurbishment

Riverbourne House in Eastbourne has recently benefited from internal and external refurbishment. This has included an upgrade of the fire alarm and detection system, an update of the call warden system, the installation of a new modern energy-efficient lighting and a full internal redecoration of all communal areas using a fire-retardant paint system. Carpeted areas throughout the block have also been renewed.

These works elevate Riverbourne House to high modern standards and create a better environment for residents to live in and enjoy in the future.



## Communal Cleaning



The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment panel (TIE) would like to hear your views (both good or bad) regarding the communal cleaning service delivered in blocks and schemes in the Lewes District and Eastbourne.

We are asking for your feedback to make sure the service tenants receive is consistent across all areas and meeting the standards prescribed by the contract with Just Ask – the cleaning contractor. Please email any comments to: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

# Fraud UPDATE

Despite the challenges of an ever-changing Covid-19 environment in 2020, it's important to recognise how the information provided by residents has helped make a real difference to the recovery of properties which can now be let to families in housing need.

A member of the public provided information about an empty house in Hampden Park, Eastbourne, which was found with possessions removed and the door left open. The house was secured by the council to prevent damage and take away any risk of antisocial behaviour in the neighbourhood.

An abandonment allegation was also received regarding a house in Langney, Eastbourne where the tenant had not

been seen for some time. Further investigation revealed that the tenant had moved away from the area and not informed the council.

Social housing fraud, which also includes subletting a council property and fraudulent applications for housing and Right to Buy, is a significant problem which prevents households in genuine need from obtaining a home. With an estimated cost to the public purse of £1 billion and an increasing demand for assistance, public awareness of housing fraud is now more important than ever.

If you want to report a fraud to us, all the information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality. You do not have to give us your name and contact details, although this can be useful if more information is needed. You can report suspicion of fraud in the following ways: online: [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-councils/report-fraud/](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/about-the-councils/report-fraud/) or via our Hotline: **0800 731 7039**.

# FRAUD

## Don't miss out!

Last year Faithorn Farrell and Timms (FFT) were appointed to undertake stock condition surveys of all Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Council housing stock. This work helps us prepare a planned maintenance programme to ensure the homes that are most in need of work such as replacement kitchens, bathrooms; electrical rewiring and decoration get them first.

Don't miss out! Only those properties which have had a condition survey undertaken will be included in any future planned maintenance programmes so it is in your interest to ensure that you do make contact with FFT to book an appointment so that a survey can be undertaken. For those residents who are currently shielding, please still call FFT and let them know so they are aware and can offer their service at a later date.

In December and January the Homes First Asset Team sent reminder letters to all of those residents who had not yet had a stock condition survey undertaken in their home by FFT.

With over 6,000 properties to inspect, this is a large project, with the goal of having all surveys completed by the end of March 2021. This will depend on residents allowing access for the surveys to be undertaken and we would appreciate everyone's co-operation in this regard.

**It is a legal requirement of your tenancy agreement that access be provided to you your home for the**

**Council or its contractors to carry out inspections.** If you don't allow access you are breaking the terms of your tenancy agreement, so if you haven't arranged an inspection don't delay and contact FFT as soon as possible to arrange an appointment to avoid the risk of any legal action being taken to gain access your home.

Free phone: **0800 652 7031** E-mail: [survey@effefftee.co.uk](mailto:survey@effefftee.co.uk)

General Office Telephone: **01689 885 096** or **01689 885 098**

## Pets Policy update



We had a great response to Pets Policy survey which closed on 01 February.

We'd like to thank the 350 tenants who contributed to questionnaire and offer our congratulations to the randomly selected winners of the shopping vouchers – Dennis from Eastbourne and Heather from Newhaven. The policy will now be reviewed by TIE (Tenant Involvement and Engagement panel) and resident groups, and then approved by councillors and the Eastbourne Board before being implemented across Eastbourne and the Lewes District.



**Please be sure to check with your Senior Caseworker or Retirement Housing Advisor before committing to a pet.**

# 10,000 trees a year...

Both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council have made Climate Emergency Declarations and set a target to be carbon neutral by 2030.

The Eastbourne ECO Action Network is a voluntary collective of local citizens and environmental groups, which has been set up to work with the Council to achieve this goal. In Eastbourne thousands of ash and elm trees have been lost to disease so there's an ambitious goal to at least double tree cover in the area by 2030.



Within the Eastbourne ECO Action Network, Treebourne.org

are the team focussing their energy on getting 10,000 trees a year planted. They are working with the Council and independently to find sites, large and small, where they can plant trees. Since 30 November 2020, 10,622 trees have



Tree planting on Sevenoaks Rec.

been planted on Sevenoaks Rec providing 13,408 square metres of cover.

Fundraising and support for the project has come from the Trees for Cities charity, the government's Urban Tree Challenge Fund, East Sussex County Council's Building Stronger Communities Fund and via donations to the Treebourne crowdfunder campaign. Local councillors in Langney, Hampden Park and St Anthony's have also made contributions from their devolved budgets.

If you would like to get involved in this wonderful initiative, please email [Adam Rose c/o trees@treebourne.org](mailto:Adam.Rose@treebourne.org)

## Retirement Housing UPDATE

We recognise that the pandemic continues to impact on many of our most vulnerable residents in retirement housing. Staff and tenants continue to face unique challenges in this fast-changing environment, and we want to thank everyone for their continued support. We have implemented several measures to support and safeguard our tenants, keep vital services running, and make sure everyone is kept safe.

To date we have supported tenants by:

- Promoting befriending services and voluntary groups like *Linking Lives* to support those struggling with social isolation.
- Providing regular retirement housing tenant Covid-19 updates and newsletters.
- Encouraging tenants to receive at

least one check call per week.

- Carrying out tenant surveys to gauge tenant needs.
- Continuing annual tenancy sustainment assessments over the telephone.
- Providing training and IT support to our retirement housing forum representatives and holding our first formal virtual meeting using Microsoft Teams.
- Delivering 720 tins of Christmas chocolates funded by the Tenants of Lewes District, the Eastbourne Area Panels and the Landport Residents Association.
- Funding Christmas trees with solar lights to every block scheme alongside a Christmas activity sheet.
- Trialling our first online quiz in February.

To reduce the risk of infection we have:

- Introduced additional sanitation cleaning in our schemes.
- Provided laundry rotas and additional cleaning materials for tenants.
- Undertaken specialist cleaning when necessary.
- Developed online training to support staff using Homes First risk assessments.

- Placed Test and Trace posters in the entrances of our schemes along with posters advising all visitors to wear a mask on entry.
- Completed onsite compliance checks in line with risk assessments.

We welcome any ideas or suggestions you might have to help us improve our service delivery, so please do not hesitate to share these with your Retirement Housing Forum Representative or your Retirement Housing Advisor.



Some of the 720 tins of chocolates delivered.



# Not Costing the Earth...

## Introducing a new project

**M**any residents might feel the climate emergency declared by Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough Council's is something out of their control, but the reality is that individuals and communities can make a real difference to reduce their carbon footprint and save some money in the process.

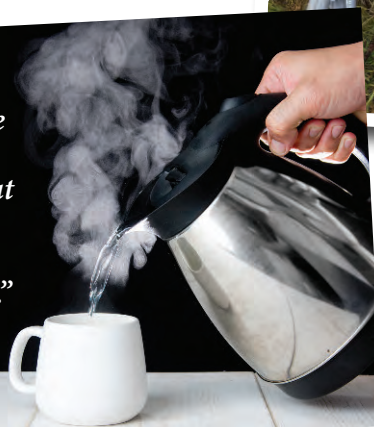
By turning off appliances rather than leaving on standby for example, you can reduce your carbon footprint and save around £35 a year. Only using a kettle to boil the water that's needed could cut an additional £7 off your annual fuel bill.

**Not Costing the Earth** will work with tenants to help households and neighbourhoods reduce their carbon emissions, to grow and cook seasonal foods, reduce household waste, re-use,

repair and recycle, save energy and water, and encourage more biodiversity, cycling and walking.

Homes First have already taken action in Lewes District and Eastbourne properties by installing carbon reducing technology like solar panels.

*"Only using a kettle to boil the water that's needed could cut an additional £7 off your annual fuel bill."*



*Jo Wunsch, coordinator of 'Not Costing The Earth'.*

## How to Get Involved

**Not Costing the Earth** is coordinated by Jo Wunsch who is passionate about community development, the environment and sustainability. This project can only succeed with the help of our tenants, so if saving money and helping the environment appeal and you want to find out more, simply get in touch with Jo by emailing [jo.wunsch@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:jo.wunsch@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) or by texting her on: **07710 066440**.

No experience or knowledge is necessary as all the training, information and support you'll need will be available.



Over the coming months Jo Wunsch (pictured above) will be speaking with households about this project and asking for their experience. Your views are very important and will help us to improve services, and inform our future work and decision making.

## Making it Happen

Community Development Making it Happen Project workers have been working with local residents and Councillors in the Brickly and Cinque Foil area of Peacehaven to improve the look of the area and make it more welcoming and attractive. Homes First staff, Peacehaven Town Councillors and

residents worked together to identify five communal areas for planting with wildflowers.

On a bright, crisp day in early December, residents came to collect

bulbs and compost which had been donated by Lewes District Council contractor Idverde, to spread colour and cheer in the coming months. Jane, a local

resident commented, "It was great going along to get our bulbs and meet other residents doing the same. We really hope they will brighten the place up. It's a great initiative to smarten up where we live and we hope it's a great success".

If you live in Newhaven, Peacehaven or Eastbourne and have a great idea for a community project, or just want to talk more about your neighbourhood, Making it Happen are there to listen and support you. Contact us at:

[makingithappen@sussexcommunity.org.uk](mailto:makingithappen@sussexcommunity.org.uk)  
[www.making-it-happen.org.uk](http://www.making-it-happen.org.uk)  
Tel: 07920 526224



## TOLD Tenants of Lewes District

### A word from the Chair...

Like many, I am looking forward to the Spring and lockdown easing so that we can hopefully return to meeting around a table again or just having a chat over coffee. Despite all the difficulties, the new Committee has continued to meet using Microsoft Teams to agree the funding on a range of exciting projects, feedback on the new Pets Policy and re-launch the TOLD website – [www.told.org.uk](http://www.told.org.uk)

It remains vitally important that we continue to question decision making that affects tenants and with this in mind I recently met with senior management and Councillor William Meyer (cabinet member for housing) to begin an ongoing dialogue around housing issues.



Debbie Twitchen –  
Chair of TOLD



## Meeting virtually

TOLD have continued to meet virtually using Microsoft Teams and despite occasional technology glitches, the meetings have been successful and well attended.

If you would like to know more about the sessions or join one, just email:

[tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk)

for more information and support. The next TOLD Open Meeting, which anyone can attend, takes place on 12 August 2021.

## Community Improvement budget

Despite the ongoing impact of the pandemic, the TOLD committee has continued to approve community improvement applications and spent its £20,000 grant from Lewes District Council for this financial year. The money has been used to fund a range of ideas requested by tenants across the district, which are listed below:

If you would like to make an application to fund a community project or improve your communal area using the 2021/2022 grant, we would love to hear your ideas - simply email [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) for information.



Ashington Gardens	Tree planting, wildflower areas & a bench
Churchill House – Seaford	Outdoor plugs, garden shredder & gardening vouchers
Cinque Foil & The Bricky - Peacehaven	Skips for an estate tidy up
Community use	Folding tables
Luckhurst Close – Seaford	Shed & gardening vouchers
Raymond Close – Seaford	Wheelchair accessible picnic tables
Retirement Housing Schemes across the district	Christmas chocolates & laptops to enable tenants to join virtual meetings
Seaford House, Seaford	Potting shed & gardening vouchers
School Uniform Bank – Lewes	Two donations
Stansfield Road, Lewes	Garden Waste bin for communal space
Tenant Resource Centre – Lewes	Dishwasher & freezer
Valley Court – Newhaven	Wildflower planting
'VRAC Youth Project – Newhaven	Donation

Tenants Of Lewes District  
News and Information from the tenants and for the tenants of Lewes District

## TOLD website

You can find out more about TOLD's work by visiting our website – [www.told.org.uk](http://www.told.org.uk)

The page is regularly updated with useful information about our work, new developments and the local community.

If you any have ideas for content, we would love to hear from you. You can also find us on Facebook.

## Foodbanks

The need for foodbanks in the Lewes District is now greater than ever with the situation unlikely to change anytime soon. The good news is there are currently eight foodbanks operating across the district which thrive due to the generosity of residents and volunteer helpers. So, if you're struggling to make ends meet or simply want to offer your support, please don't hesitate to get in touch - more information on local foodbanks can be found on [www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](http://www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) – just type 'foodbank' in the search box.



## Residents Voice

A word from the Chair...

We continue to run meetings open to all Eastbourne residents virtually so you can have your say and hear about matters that affect your tenancy and services. Most



Andy Evans – Chair of Residents' Voice

recently, we saw presentations on how rental income is spent, heard about new housing developments and discussed the Pets Policy and the Eastbourne Homes Corporate Plan. Our next meeting is on the **25 May at 10am** - there'll be feedback from the resident satisfaction 'STAR' survey, and an update on the 'Not Costing the Earth' project (see page 9). Please get in touch if you would like to be involved.

The **Community Improvement grants** help fund projects in the four areas covered by the panels – see Area Panel projects. We welcome applications from local residents, so if you have an idea that'll benefit your local community, please contact: [tenant.involvement@leweseastbourne](mailto:tenant.involvement@leweseastbourne)

**Compass Community Art** is a project funded by the Area Panels to provide safe art activities for residents vulnerable to social isolation which one participant described as 'good for mental health and helpful on bad days when I wouldn't normally venture out.' 37 people took part in the 10-week programme, 50% of whom had no access to video calls or experienced physical or mental health issues. The project climaxed with an exhibition at Morrisons and an online film festival entry.



If you live in Shinewater or North Langney, you can be part of an exciting new community feedback project called '**Commonplace.**' Homes First are actively involved in the partnership which also includes health services, the YMCA and local schools and churches. Feedback from the project will be used to produce a neighbourhood improvement plan with a focus on health, the environment, provision for younger people and sustainability in the area. Watch this space for more information coming soon.

## Area Panels...

The Area Panels have been unable to meet face-to-face due to the pandemic, but they have remained active and continued to make an impact with the Eastbourne Community Improvement grants. One initiative that was particularly well received was providing local schools with IT equipment during lockdown. Nicki Kaufman (Head Teacher -Shinewater Primary School) who was overjoyed by the gesture, said: "Oh, my goodness! You have no idea how happy this has made me. This will make a significant difference






Nicki Kaufman, Co-Headteacher – Shinewater Primary School

to some very deprived children."



Tollgate Primary School also wrote in to 'convey our enormous thanks to you, the panel, and of course to Pauline (Central and Archery) who has been instrumental in us receiving the funding – we are very grateful.'

Compass community art walks across Eastbourne.

Area panel	Projects
<b>Hampden Park Willingdon Trees</b> 	<b>Projects approved / pending</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defiant Sports – funding tennis sessions</li> <li>WT Community Centre – outdoor furniture</li> <li>HP Community Centre – CCTV repair</li> <li>Soroptomists – tree planting</li> <li>Highfields allotment – fencing</li> <li>HP Shed – heater and lamps</li> <li>You raise me up - lap top for support worker</li> <li>Rainbow wishes - storage boxes</li> <li>East Sussex Wildlife ambulance - replacement vehicle</li> </ul>
<b>Central and Archery</b> 	<b>Projects approved / pending</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gwent Court – gazebo / raised beds</li> <li>Tollgate school - Computer equipment</li> <li>New Derby House – BBQ / projector</li> <li>East Sussex Wildlife ambulance - replacement vehicle</li> </ul>
<b>Langney</b> 	<b>Projects approved / pending</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Seaside rangers – football kit</li> <li>Compass Community – natural dye garden</li> <li>Foodbank</li> <li>St Richards church - security</li> <li>Commonplace community engagement software</li> <li>Blackberry Buzzards - healthy eat / growing books</li> <li>Shinewater park school computer equipment</li> <li>Langney Shed – saw repair</li> </ul>
<b>Old Town</b> 	<b>Projects approved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compass community art walks across Eastbourne</li> <li>Commonplace Community engagement software</li> <li>East Sussex Wildlife ambulance - replacement vehicle</li> </ul>

# Eastbourne to move to **alternate** weekly bin collections



Cabinet councillors at Eastbourne Borough Council have agreed to move to alternate weekly collections of refuse and recycling from April 2021 to boost recycling and reduce carbon emissions. The government recycling target for local authorities in 2020 was 50%. The current rate in Eastbourne is 35%, but evidence shows that where councils collect on an alternate weekly basis, residents recycle more of their household rubbish. There will be no change to existing collection arrangements for residents

living in blocks of flats who share large communal bins or for people living in a number of town centre properties. Assisted collections will also continue for anyone that needs this service

## Virtual 300

300

### VITAL

(Virtual Involvement of Tenants & Leaseholders)

Would you like to join an online community, share your views and be rewarded for your efforts?

The Virtual 300 is an online forum that gives you the chance to have your say on a range of topics from the comfort of your own home. You can get involved as much or as little as you like by completing short online surveys, joining discussion groups or participating in information sharing workshops. Those who get involved are also rewarded for their efforts with regular prize draws and other incentives.

For this edition of Tenants' Open Voice, we're offering readers the chance to win some shopping vouchers.

If you join the Virtual 300 before May 1st, you'll be entered into a prize draw. All you have to do to have a chance of winning is email:

[tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk) with your contact details and the subject heading 'V300.'

## Prize Wordsearch

To enter the prize draw for a **£10 shopping voucher**, please send your completed word searches to:

The Tenant Involvement Team, 2A Horsfield Road, Lewes, East Sussex BN2 4TA

Or why not take a photo with your phone and email your entry with your full name and mobile number to: [tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk](mailto:tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk).

Closing date: Sunday 25 April

- |                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Crysanthemum       | Sweet Pea    |
| Hydrangea          | Pansy        |
| Carnation          | Rudbeckia    |
| Antirrhinum        | Begonia      |
| Monbretia          | Busy Lizzies |
| Chincherinchee     | Lavendar     |
| Nasturtium         | Gladioli     |
| Dahlia             | Snowdrop     |
| Lily of the Valley | Lupin        |
| Hollyhock          | Daisy        |
| Petunia            | Verbena      |
| Freesia            | Fuchsia      |
| Phlox              | Geranium     |
| Delphinium         | Hibiscus     |
| Lobelia            | Narcissi     |
| Gazania            | Ageratum     |
| Rose               | Zinnia       |
| Camella            | Marigold     |
| Cosmos             | Peony        |

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W	L	I	O	N	C	A	R	S	Y	O	N	O	I	T	A	N	R	A	C

Wordsearch created by Pauline, New Derby House, Eastbourne.