



Lewes District Council

Tenants' Annual Report 2019-2020

Includes 2021 calendar

January 2021

1	Friday	New Year's Day – Bank Holiday
2	Saturday	
3	Sunday	
4	Monday	
5	Tuesday	Guru Gobind Singh's birthday (Nanakshahi)
6	Wednesday	Epiphany (Christian)
7	Thursday	
8	Friday	
9	Saturday	
10	Sunday	
11	Monday	
12	Tuesday	

How to get involved...

- Armchair advisors
- Communications Panel
- Focus Groups
- Mystery Shoppers
- Quality Checkers
- Retirement Housing Forum
- Tenant Involvement & Empowerment panel (TIE)
- Tenants and Residents Associations
- Tenants' Conference
- Tenant Scrutiny Team
- Virtual 300

For more information on how to get involved, please see page 22



Introduction

by Gary Hall

Head of Homes First



Welcome to this year's Tenants' Annual Report. We have had another busy and challenging year in Homes First. Clearly our main concern this year has been the pandemic and how we continue to offer services in the safest way possible. The first lockdown took hold at the end of the 2019/20 period and clearly had a huge impact on all of us. I would like to thank tenants for their patience and cooperation throughout the last very difficult months.

Throughout this report, we've highlighted some key achievements, along with some future plans to continually improve. Much of our concentration now and going forward is to ensure your homes are as sustainable and as 'green' as possible. Not only will this help our Councils move towards a significant carbon reduction, after both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council declared climate emergencies, but it will also lower fuel bills for tenants and ensure your homes and environment are part of a 'cleaner' future.

This will be an on-going programme over the next decade and future communications will

update you as to what this will mean to you all in the future.

We are also now, as part of our Tenant Involvement Strategy, looking at new ways to get as many of you participating in shaping future services. Obviously, one of the ways we have traditionally carried this out has been by speaking to people face-to-face, but at present this is being compromised by the pandemic. With that in mind we have recently launched something we have called the 'Virtual 300' which takes this into account by enabling tenants to engage with the Council online. This does not mean that we have ceased all other types of involvement, but clearly we have had to recognise the different circumstance we are now in. There is more information on the Virtual 300 and how to join in the new "Tenants' Open Voice" newsletter.

I hope you enjoy this second calendar-style report. As always, we welcome your feedback on this and any other issues you wish to discuss around your home and Council Services.

Stay Safe

Inside...

- The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- The Homes Standard
- The Tenancy Standard
- The Neighbourhood Community Standard
- The Value for Money Standard
- How to get involved
- Tenants and Residents Associations
- Useful contacts



HOMES FIRST



Holocaust Memorial Day
27th January



Did you know...?

The Tenant Involvement team provide free training to help residents get involved and engage with the service. During 2019 – 2020 we ran workshops on social media and wildlife gardening, and as the pandemic took hold, we also held one-to-one sessions on the use of Microsoft Teams and engaging virtually. One tenant said: "One-to-one certainly makes a difference – the trainer was very patient, polite and caring. A bit of a treasure I would say."

For information on training opportunities, please email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



January 2021

1	Friday	New Year's Day – Bank Holiday
2	Saturday	
3	Sunday	
4	Monday	
5	Tuesday	Guru Gobind Singh's birthday (Nanakshahi calendar) (Sikh)
6	Wednesday	Epiphany (Christian)
7	Thursday	
8	Friday	
9	Saturday	
10	Sunday	
11	Monday	
12	Tuesday	
13	Wednesday	
14	Thursday	
15	Friday	
16	Saturday	
17	Sunday	
18	Monday	
19	Tuesday	
20	Wednesday	
21	Thursday	
22	Friday	
23	Saturday	
24	Sunday	
25	Monday	Burns Night
26	Tuesday	

The **Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard** looks at how we involve you and respond to your needs.

86% of you were satisfied with the overall service we provided in 2019-2020.

Our main tenant group Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD) worked with us over the period to:

- Approve community improvement projects across the district.
- Involve more tenants in local decision making.
- Work with the local MP so tenant concerns are heard at the highest level.
- Agree our approach to the scrutiny process.
- Programme and deliver estate walkabouts in the district.
- Ask questions of the Senior Management team.
- Help to review publications and policies.

78% of you said you were satisfied with the opportunities we offer to enable you to get involved.

Did you know...?

The Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD) committee have access to a budget of £20,000 to spend on communal and community improvements and initiatives. Between April 2019 and March 2020 TOLD helped with 34 projects across the district, which included tree planting, communal garden improvements, inconsiderate parking deterrents, wild flower meadows, sheds, raised vegetable beds and a defibrillator.

If you want to find out how you can apply to the community improvement budget, please email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

27	Wednesday	Holocaust Memorial Day
28	Thursday	Tu B'Shevat (Arbor Day) Jewish Holiday
29	Friday	
30	Saturday	
31	Sunday	

How do we know?

We use the HouseMark Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) system to analyse satisfaction. The system is also used to gather feedback and comment on all our service areas.

During the period April 2019 to March 2020 we investigated and resolved **99** issues that were we were made aware of in this way. **63** of the reports were about repairs and maintenance issues and **36** concerned anti-social behaviour and other problems.



Future plans

We know that tenants have busy lives and we want to make use of modern technology to make it as easy as possible for tenants to contribute.

To do this, we will:

- Develop the use of modern technology to give as many tenants as possible the chance to share and express their views, contributing to shaping and improving services.
- Develop the Virtual 300 database of involved tenants to support consultation and involvement activities.
- Improve our approach to promoting, measuring and reporting the impact of involvement through the use of specialist software.

Shrove Tuesday
16th February

February 2021

1	Monday	
2	Tuesday	
3	Wednesday	
4	Thursday	
5	Friday	
6	Saturday	
7	Sunday	
8	Monday	
9	Tuesday	
10	Wednesday	
11	Thursday	
12	Friday	Chinese New Year
13	Saturday	
14	Sunday	Valentine's Day
15	Monday	
16	Tuesday	Shrove Tuesday (Carnival) - Christian
17	Wednesday	Random Acts of Kindness Day
18	Thursday	
19	Friday	
20	Saturday	
21	Sunday	
22	Monday	World Encephalitis Day
23	Tuesday	
24	Wednesday	
25	Thursday	
26	Friday	Purim - Jewish holiday

March 2021

1	Monday	St David's Day
2	Tuesday	
3	Wednesday	
4	Thursday	World Book Day
5	Friday	
6	Saturday	
7	Sunday	
8	Monday	International Womens Day

9	Tuesday	
10	Wednesday	
11	Thursday	Maha Shivaratri (Hindu Holiday) / Isra and Mi'raj (Muslim)
12	Friday	
13	Saturday	
14	Sunday	Mothering Sunday
15	Monday	

27	Saturday	
28	Sunday	

16	Tuesday	
17	Wednesday	St Patrick's Day
18	Thursday	
19	Friday	
20	Saturday	March Equinox
21	Sunday	
22	Monday	
23	Tuesday	
24	Wednesday	
25	Thursday	
26	Friday	
27	Saturday	
28	Sunday	Palm Sunday (Christian) / First Day of Passover (Jewish) / Daylight Saving Time begins
29	Monday	Holi (Hindu Holiday)
30	Tuesday	
31	Wednesday	

Did you know...?

The scrutiny team's first project looked at the communal repairs service, and following their recommendation repairs procedures have been aligned so that anyone now reporting a communal or home repair will get a job reference number and an appointment date and time. The next exercise will look at how complaints are managed, so if you have an eye for detail and want to make a difference, we'd love to hear from you. For a copy of the last scrutiny report or more information, please email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Did you know...?

The Tenants' Conference in March 2020 was postponed and later cancelled as the Covid-19 pandemic took hold. For 2021 we are looking at new ways to get tenants together in large groups, so keep an eye open for announcements over the coming months.



Easter Sunday
4th April



Did you know...?

Neighbourhood First advisors have taken over completing block inspections in the Lewes District and carry out a range of inspections on our streets and open spaces to make sure the environment is well maintained. They have been working hard to build relationships with customers and attending Tenants and Residents meetings to find out what matters most in our communities.



April 2021

1	Thursday	
2	Friday	Good Friday (Christian)
3	Saturday	
4	Sunday	Easter Sunday (Christian) / Last Day of Passover (Jewish)
5	Monday	East Monday (Christian)
6	Tuesday	
7	Wednesday	
8	Thursday	Yom HaShoah (Jewish Commemoration) / Wesak (Buddha Day)
9	Friday	
10	Saturday	
11	Sunday	
12	Monday	
13	Tuesday	Ramadan begins
14	Wednesday	Vaisakhi/Baisakhi (Sikh)
15	Thursday	Yom HaAtzmaut (Jewish Holiday)
16	Friday	
17	Saturday	
18	Sunday	
19	Monday	
20	Tuesday	
21	Wednesday	The Queen's Birthday
22	Thursday	Stephen Lawrence Day / Earth Day
23	Friday	St Georges Day / Shakespeare's Day
24	Saturday	
25	Sunday	
26	Monday	

The **Homes Standard** looks at how we provide homes that are safe, good quality and well maintained.

84% of you were satisfied with the standard of repairs that we carried out.

88% of tenants were satisfied with the overall quality of their home.

95.66% of homes meet the Decent Homes Standard

Did you know...?

We completed **11027** responsive repairs of which **1812** were emergency, **2172** urgent and **6098** routine.

We also completed **36** replacement kitchens, **23** bathrooms and **2** wet rooms.

The average amount spent on responsive repairs per property was **£558.86**. The average amount spent on planned improvements per property was **£1247.77**

Did you know...?

Last year, the scrutiny team decided to examine the communal repairs service as a result of feedback from the STAR survey. The process started with a desk top review, which looked at data and procedures, and this was followed by reality checks and interviews with tenants and officers. The evidence gathered was examined closely by the team who produced a report with a series of recommendations, many of which were adopted to help improve the repairs service and help in the development of our new portal for tenants.



27 Tuesday

28 Wednesday

29 Thursday

30 Friday Lag B'Omer (Jewish Holiday)

Future plans

We are developing an in-house project management team headed by an Asset and Capital Works manager who will lead a team of three qualified surveyors and two clerks of works. The team will manage our investment programme to achieve savings for the Councils and leaseholders.

We have commissioned a stock condition survey of all homes managed by Homes First. The information we have is incomplete and we need to know the existing condition of kitchens, bathrooms and other building fabric components so we can sensibly plan for the future and get our priorities right.

FFT (Faithorn Farrell Timms) are contacting all tenants in the Lewes District to assess the condition of our housing stock. Everyone will receive a letter letting them know when the surveyor plans to call. All surveyors carry photo ID and will observe a social distancing and sanitising protocol that we have agreed with them.

VE Day
8th May



How can we help...

Customer First provides tenants with a tailored service that tries to resolve issues at the first point of contact. The majority of requests are resolved in this way, but any complex cases that can't be dealt with are routed to the specialist teams within Homes First and Neighbourhood First to deal with. Customers can access services through a range of channels which include the telephone and online chats.

Did you know?

Customer First answered **104,292** calls and dealt with **3,499** face-to-face enquiries last year.

Since Webchat opened in October 2019, Customer First have also conducted **2626** online chats.

May 2021

1	Saturday	
2	Sunday	
3	Monday	Bank Holiday / Start of Children's Book Week
4	Tuesday	
5	Wednesday	
6	Thursday	
7	Friday	
8	Saturday	VE Day / Laylatul Qadr (Night of Power)
9	Sunday	
10	Monday	
11	Tuesday	
12	Wednesday	
13	Thursday	Ascension Day (Christian)/ Eid ul Fitr begins (Muslim)
14	Friday	
15	Saturday	Dementia Awareness Week begins
16	Sunday	
17	Monday	Shavuot (Jewish Holiday)
18	Tuesday	
19	Wednesday	World IBD Day
20	Thursday	
21	Friday	
22	Saturday	
23	Sunday	Pentacost (Christian)
24	Monday	
25	Tuesday	
26	Wednesday	

The **Tenancy Standard** looks at how we end tenancies, manage empty properties and allocate homes.

During 2019 – 2020 we let **120** general needs homes. These consisted of **4** studio apartments, **44** one-bedroom flats, **52** two-bedroom flats, **17** three-bedroom flats and **3** three-bedroom houses.

We also let **47** retirement housing properties made up of **14** studios, **32** one-bed flats and **1** two-bedroom flat.

We helped **19** tenants to mutually exchange property through HomeSwapper (the UK's leading exchange service for tenants) and completed one Right-to-Buy application. The average number of days taken to re-let our empty properties was **37.79** days.

How did we do?

We actively assisted 313 households homeless or at risk of homelessness in 2019/20 by providing advice and assistance, producing personal housing plans, sign-posting to services and, in some instances, offering loans.

The outcome of every application is different depending on what the need is, but we successfully enabled 61 households to remain in existing accommodation or find a new property, and another 141 households were relieved from homelessness by the local authority taking reasonable steps to help the applicant secure suitable accommodation for at least six months.

The remaining 111 households had a Main Housing Duty decision (i.e. they were provided temporary accommodation until this duty ended) or if owed Full Housing Duty they were offered temporary accommodation until settled accommodation could be identified. The others were found to have No Local Connection, Not in Priority Need, Not Eligible or Intentionally Homeless.

27	Thursday	TOLD Committee (provisional date)
28	Friday	World Blood Cancer Day
29	Saturday	
30	Sunday	Trinity Sunday (Christian)
31	Monday	Spring Bank Holiday

Future improvement plans

HomeSwapper is a popular way for our customers to find a suitable exchange. We will be adding SwapTracker to the website to help our tenants during the mutual exchange process.

SwapTracker 

SwapTracker has an easy to use, mobile friendly form that can be submitted to Homes First online. The system gives updates and notifications throughout the process which helps to improve transparency. It also allows for document sharing reducing the need to post or deliver paperwork.

We believe SwapTracker will help Homes First provide an improved service and reduce the need for face-to-face contact.

You can find out more about SwapTracker at:
www.homeswapper.co.uk

Did you know...?

To help with the transition to Universal Credit, Lewes District employed a specialist advisor to support applicants claiming the benefit. Between April 2019 and March 2020 the advisor helped 236 clients claim £738,615 in Universal Credit and £164,505 in other benefits – quite a result! If you need support with a Universal Credit claim, speak with your Senior Caseworker (Housing) who can make a referral for specialist support.





Learning Disability Week Begins 21st June

June 2021

- 1 Tuesday
- 2 Wednesday
- 3 Thursday
- 4 Friday
- 5 Saturday
- 6 Sunday
- 7 Monday
- 8 Tuesday
- 9 Wednesday
- 10 Thursday
- 11 Friday
- 12 Saturday
- 13 Sunday
- 14 Monday
- 15 Tuesday
- 16 Wednesday Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev (Sikh)
- 17 Thursday
- 18 Friday
- 19 Saturday
- 20 Sunday Father's Day
- 21 Monday June Solstice / Learning Disability Week begins
- 22 Tuesday Windrush Day
- 23 Wednesday
- 24 Thursday
- 25 Friday
- 26 Saturday Armed Forces Day

July 2021

- 1 Thursday
- 2 Friday Moving on Parade – Lewes / Love Supreme Jazz Festival Begins
- 3 Saturday
- 4 Sunday Independence Day (US)
- 5 Monday
- 6 Tuesday
- 7 Wednesday
- 8 Thursday

9	Friday	
10	Saturday	
11	Sunday	
12	Monday	
13	Tuesday	
14	Wednesday	
15	Thursday	
16	Friday	
17	Saturday	
18	Sunday	Tisha B'Av (Jewish)
19	Monday	
20	Tuesday	Eid ul Adha (Muslim)
21	Wednesday	
22	Thursday	
23	Friday	
24	Saturday	
25	Sunday	
26	Monday	
27	Tuesday	
28	Wednesday	
29	Thursday	
30	Friday	
31	Saturday	

27	Sunday
28	Monday
29	Tuesday
30	Wednesday

Did you know...?

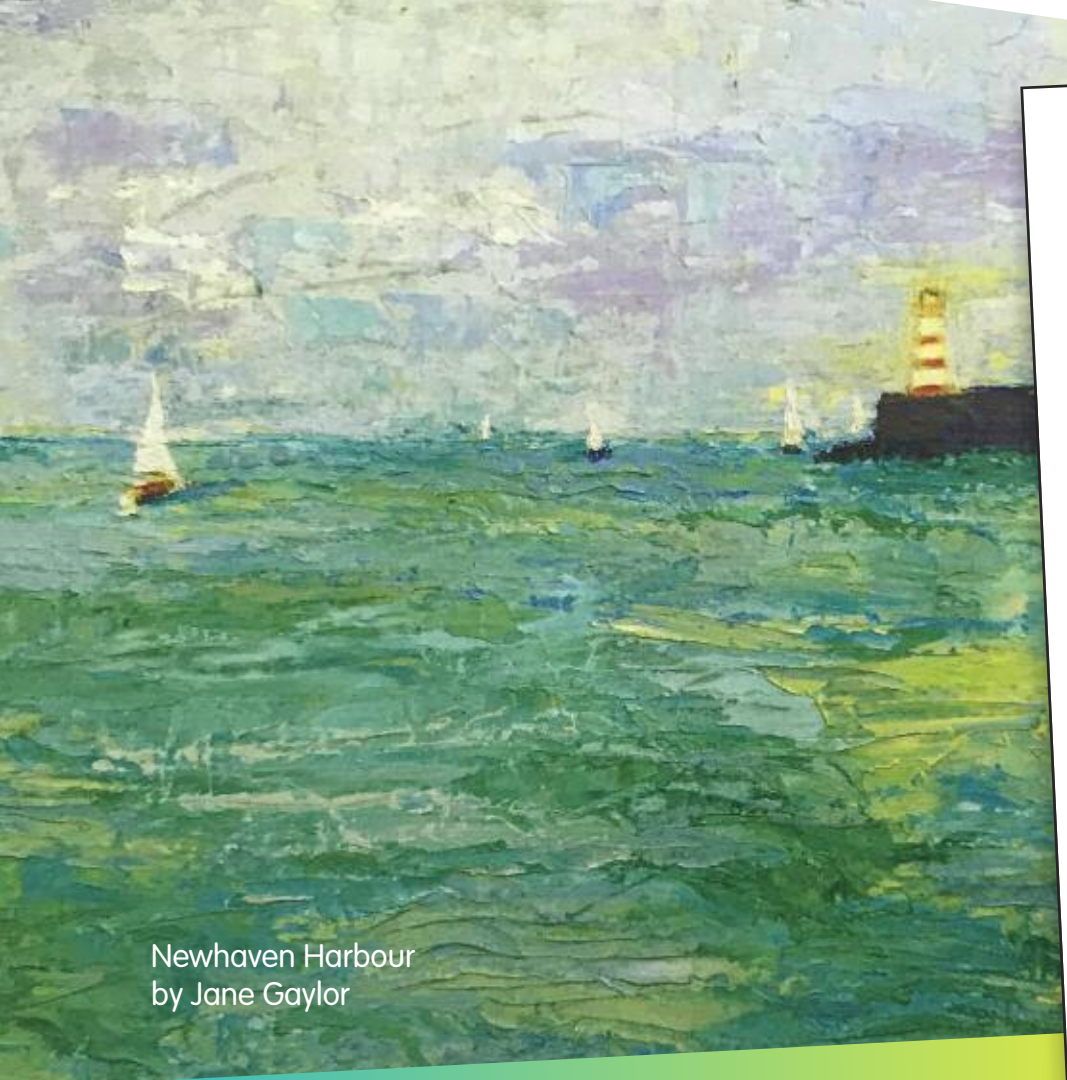
In East Sussex POhWER provides a range of services including Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy, Advocacy under the Care Act, Community Mental Health Advocacy and Children's Advocacy. For more information call **0300 456 2370** or check the website: www.pohwer.net/southern-england



Love Supreme
Jazz Festival
2nd-4th July

Did you know...?

The tenancy management team helped to resolve 136 cases of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the Lewes District last year. The team completed 12 Hate and ASB Risk assessments (HARA), made 28 safeguarding referrals and were involved in 36 Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences.



Newhaven Harbour
by Jane Gaylor

Did you know...

Lewes District Council has its own Open Spaces Team who help with community improvement applications, look after several parks and gardens and manage six nature reserves – www.lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/leisure-and-events/green-spaces-and-nature-reserves

The Greenhavens network supports 100 community groups who volunteer to bring green spaces to life. They help look after the parks and open spaces and do everything they can to help everyone enjoy time out and about, whether that's walking your dog or playing football. Their 1000 members are made up of professionals and residents all working together to make a difference.

August 2021

1 Sunday	
2 Monday	
3 Tuesday	
4 Wednesday	
5 Thursday	
6 Friday	
7 Saturday	Brighton Pride
8 Sunday	
9 Monday	
10 Tuesday	Muharram - Islamic New Year
11 Wednesday	
12 Thursday	International Youth Day
13 Friday	
14 Saturday	
15 Sunday	VJ Day
16 Monday	
17 Tuesday	
18 Wednesday	Asura (Muslim)
19 Thursday	
20 Friday	
21 Saturday	
22 Sunday	Raksha Bandhan (Hindu holiday)
23 Monday	
24 Tuesday	
25 Wednesday	
26 Thursday	

The **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** looks at how we manage and improve your neighbourhood and deal with anti-social behaviour.

90% of tenants are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

We now have a new asset management team who will be reviewing the results of our stock condition surveys and then making improvements across the district.

We welcome complaints, because these provide us with the feedback we need to help us to improve our customer service.

Between April 2019 and March 2020 we received 145 complaints, but had just one of these outstanding by the year end.

48% of complainants contacted us by email and 37% completed an online form on the website. The remaining 15% wrote us a letter.

Did you know...?

Lewes District has **249** blocks across the district containing **1160** flats. There are also **1322** houses, **454** bungalows and **707** garages that are managed by the Homes First team.

You said, we did...

We are designing a new online self-service tenant portal which will make it easier for tenants to check their rent accounts and report repairs in the future. If you would like to help with testing the portal before it goes live, please email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

27 Friday

28 Saturday

29 Sunday

30 Monday **Summer Bank Holiday** / Janmashtami (Hindu holiday)

31 Tuesday

Future plans

We are committed to providing excellent customer service with our customers at the heart of everything we do. However sometimes things can go wrong and we acknowledge when this happens we need to listen and put things back on the right track. No matter what your experience, we welcome the opportunity of receiving your views so we can learn and continually improve.

Our complaints handling performance will be reviewed this year with the help of our tenant scrutiny team with the aim of improving our response to complainants. The review will also help ensure that we continue to shape our services from lessons learned and the valuable insight we gain from customer complaints.



World Car Free Day
22nd September

September 2021

1	Wednesday	
2	Thursday	
3	Friday	
4	Saturday	
5	Sunday	
6	Monday	
7	Tuesday	Rosh Hashana (Jewish)
8	Wednesday	
9	Thursday	
10	Friday	Ganesh Chaturthi (Hindu Holiday)
11	Saturday	
12	Sunday	
13	Monday	
14	Tuesday	
15	Wednesday	
16	Thursday	Yom Kippur (Jewish Holiday)
17	Friday	
18	Saturday	
19	Sunday	
20	Monday	
21	Tuesday	Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) begins (Jewish)
22	Wednesday	September Equinox / World car free day
23	Thursday	
24	Friday	
25	Saturday	
26	Sunday	

Did you know...

The Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD) have continued to meet regularly during the pandemic using Microsoft Teams. The sessions have been a great success despite the challenges and we have supported a number of tenants by offering one-to-one training and, in some cases, IT equipment.

If you would like to get involved virtually or find out more, please email: tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk



The **Value for Money Standard** looks at how we collect rent and other charges and how we provide value for money.

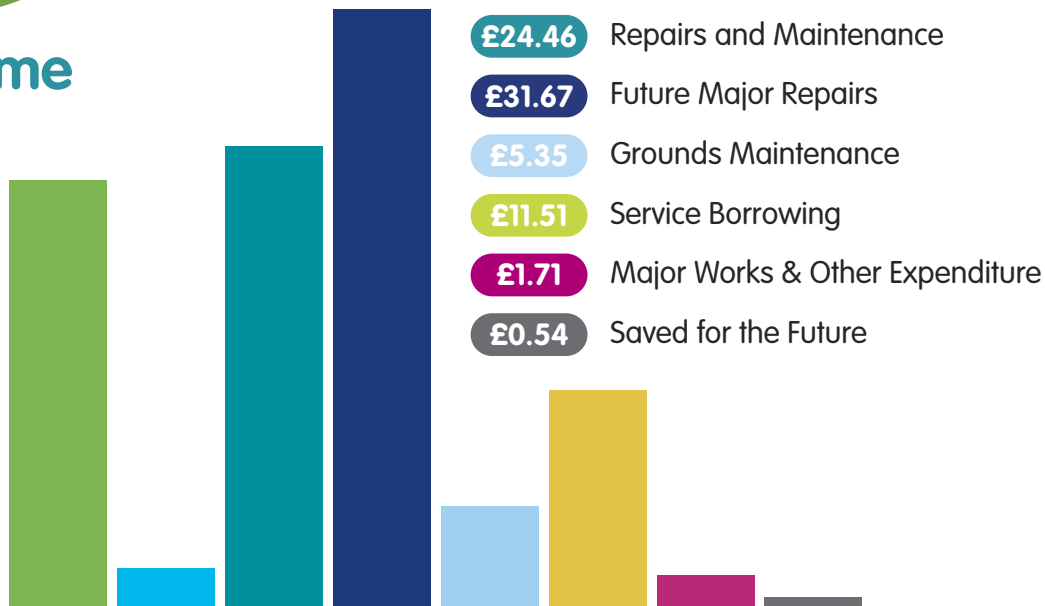
This is how we raised our income...



15,731,397	Rents and Service Charges
46,204	Lewes District Council
153,075	Other Income
15,930,676	TOTAL

How income is spent...

How much from each £100 raised is spent on repairs, management costs, etc.



27	Monday	Shemini Atzeret (Jewish holiday)
28	Tuesday	
29	Wednesday	
30	Thursday	

Future plans

Re-imagining Lewes District – the 2020-2024 Corporate Plan has a 4-year goal to deliver **200** additional council homes and **300** new affordable homes. These new homes will be more sustainable and energy efficient and increase access to quality housing options. They will also provide accessible housing for specific support needs and help us achieve our goal of being a net zero carbon council and district by 2030.

How are we doing?

We collected **94.59%** of rent.

94% of tenants think that their rent represents good value for money.

The average weekly rent for a Lewes District Council property is **£88.34** (this is the average for all properties from bedsits to five bed houses).

The average weekly rent for properties rented in the private rented sector in the Lewes District is £234 per week (Office for National Statistics).



International Day for
Older Persons 2021
1st October

November 2021

1	Monday	November begins - Men's Health Awareness / All Saints Day (Christian)
2	Tuesday	Day of the Dead
3	Wednesday	
4	Thursday	Diwali/Deepavali (Hindu)
5	Friday	Bonfire Night
6	Saturday	
7	Sunday	
8	Monday	
9	Tuesday	
10	Wednesday	
11	Thursday	

October 2021 Black History Month

1	Friday	International Day for Older Persons
2	Saturday	Bookshop Day
3	Sunday	
4	Monday	Grandparents Day
5	Tuesday	
6	Wednesday	
7	Thursday	Navaratri (Hindu) / National Poetry Day
8	Friday	
9	Saturday	
10	Sunday	
11	Monday	
12	Tuesday	
13	Wednesday	
14	Thursday	Dussehra (Hindu)
15	Friday	
16	Saturday	
17	Sunday	
18	Monday	
19	Tuesday	Milad un Nabi (Mawlid) (Muslim)
20	Wednesday	
21	Thursday	
22	Friday	
23	Saturday	
24	Sunday	
25	Monday	
26	Tuesday	

12	Friday	
13	Saturday	
14	Sunday	Remembrance Sunday
15	Monday	
16	Tuesday	
17	Wednesday	
18	Thursday	
19	Friday	
20	Saturday	
21	Sunday	
22	Monday	
23	Tuesday	
24	Wednesday	
25	Thursday	USA Thanksgiving
26	Friday	Black Friday
27	Saturday	
28	Sunday	Hanukkah begins (Jewish)
29	Monday	Cyber Monday
30	Tuesday	

27	Wednesday	
28	Thursday	
29	Friday	
30	Saturday	
31	Sunday	Daylight saving ends / Halloween

Did you know...?

We have an active retirement housing forum in the Lewes District with representatives from each retirement housing scheme who meet to discuss matters such as cleaning, gardening and new policies for retirement housing.

The Chairs of both the Lewes District and Eastbourne Homes retirement forum are also in regular contact with each other so that common issues are resolved.

The Tenant Involvement team are working with retirement housing representatives who want to develop their computer skills and participate virtually by providing training and computers.



Did you know...?

There is a Priority Services Register which lists vulnerable customers who can be provided with extra support during a power cut. You are eligible if you are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick, have a long-term medical condition, have a hearing or visual impairment or additional communication need or are vulnerable in other ways.

You can add your name to the Priority Services Register by contacting UK Power networks.

Call: **0800 169 9970** or email: psr@ukpowernetworks.co.uk

www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/priority



Lewes Bonfire
5th November



December 2021

1	Wednesday	World AIDS Day
2	Thursday	
3	Friday	
4	Saturday	
5	Sunday	
6	Monday	
7	Tuesday	
8	Wednesday	
9	Thursday	
10	Friday	
11	Saturday	
12	Sunday	
13	Monday	
14	Tuesday	
15	Wednesday	
16	Thursday	
17	Friday	
18	Saturday	
19	Sunday	
20	Monday	
21	Tuesday	December Solstice
22	Wednesday	
23	Thursday	
24	Friday	Christmas Eve - offices close at 3PM
25	Saturday	Christmas Day
26	Sunday	Boxing Day

Did you know...

Some tenants prioritise Christmas shopping over rent in December. We want everyone to have a lovely holiday season, but please make sure that your rent is paid. If you're having difficulties paying your rent, contact the Rents Team on **(01273) 471600** (Option 6) or get money advice – see below. tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

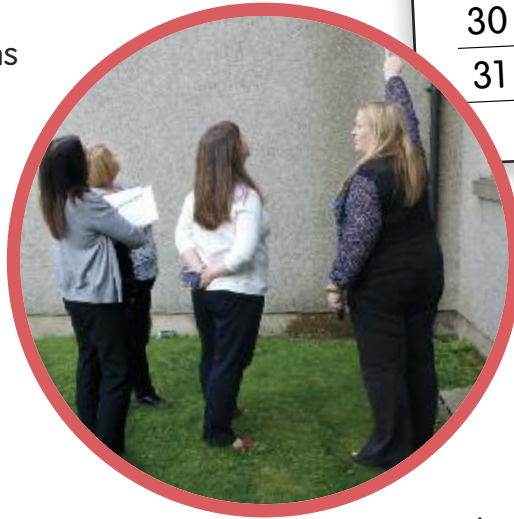
Emergency Contact Information

Some Council services will be limited over the Christmas and New Year period. However, essential services will be maintained.

Emergency contact can be made by calling:
(01273) 471600

Estate Walkabouts

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions we have not been able to plan estate walkabouts for 2021, but we hope to restart them as soon as we can. Next year we propose to target areas where there are local issues, such as planned maintenance or antisocial behaviour. Tenants living in the areas identified will be notified and invited to join our staff to give us their views.



Money advice list

- Money Advice Service – www.moneyadvice.org.uk
Tel: 0800 1387777
An independent service, set up by Government, to provide free, unbiased money advice on credit cards, loans, mortgages, insurance, pensions, savings & investments, tax & benefits – online or by telephone.
- Citizens Advice Bureau – www.cab.org.uk
Tel: 03444 111 444
Gives advice on managing debt, bankruptcy, mortgage problems, credit problems, enforcement agents (bailiffs), debt management companies, court action for debt, budgeting and more.
- National Debtline – www.nationaldebtline.org
Tel: 0808 8084000
Gives free, confidential and independent advice to people with debt problems.
- Step Change – www.stepchange.org
Tel: 0800 1381111
Offering free advice to help people who are in financial difficulty.

27	Monday	Bank Holiday
28	Tuesday	Bank Holiday
29	Wednesday	Offices re-open
30	Thursday	
31	Friday	New Year's Eve

- The Debt Support Trust – www.debtsupporttrust.org.uk
Tel: 0800 085 0226
Charity giving expert debt advice and support if you are struggling to manage your debts.
- Age UK – Money Matters – www.ageuk.org.uk
Tel: 0800 0556112
Independent money management and benefits advice for older people.
- Debt Advice Foundation - www.debtadvicefoundation.org
Tel: 0800 043 40 50
Offers free, confidential advice on any aspect of debt.
- East Sussex Credit Union – www.eastsussexcu.org.uk
Tel: 0300 303 3188
A not-for-profit savings and loans co-operative helping you to save money and offer cost effective and flexible loans, which meet your individual needs.



How to get involved...

there are many ways you can get involved in helping us to improve our service to you

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment (TIE) Panel – TIE members work with senior managers to discuss issues affecting tenants across Lewes District and Eastbourne, to make sure that tenant interests are fully considered in all aspects of strategic decision making. They also oversee the work of our tenant scrutiny team.

Tenant Scrutiny Team – Tenant Scrutiny members are trained to carry out in-depth reviews of a service area, such as repairs and complaints monitoring. The scrutiny team makes evidence-based recommendations that the Homes First Senior Leadership Team use to agree on improvements.

Tenants and Residents Associations – TRAs cover a local area and meet between four and twelve times a year. As well as discussing housing issues, TRAs look at other local issues such as improving road safety, tackling anti-social behaviour and running community activities. To help TRAs in their day-to-day running, we provide a TRA handbook with information on committee roles, access to services etc. We can also help with running costs.

Retirement Housing Forum – If you live in a retirement housing scheme, you can act as a representative to discuss the views and specific needs of tenants living at the scheme.

Tenants' Conference - Homes First run annual events such as the Tenants' Conference where you can be updated on our services, meet staff and network with other tenants.

Mystery Shoppers – We train tenants to test our services to make sure we are delivering them in line with agreed standards.

Surveys/Questionnaires – We send surveys by post, text, email or telephone so we can find out what you think of our services.

Quality Checkers – Are tenant volunteers who complete specific quality checks on services such as cleaning and grounds maintenance, this approach is currently being piloted in retirement housing.



Virtual 300 - Share your views and ideas on specific topics by engaging in a virtual community online – all from the comfort of home.

Communications Panel – The communications panel is made up of tenants whose job is to make sure that published information like this report is jargon free and easy to read and understand.

Estate walkabouts – We propose to target areas where there are local issues, such as planned maintenance or anti-social behaviour, and tenants living in the area are then notified and invited to join our staff to give us their views.

Focus Groups – Tenants can join an informal but structured chat with others to share views on a specific area.

To find out more, simply email:

tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

and we'll be happy to help.

Tenant Groups & meetings

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, our recent tenant meetings have been delivered virtually using Microsoft Teams. These have been a great success, but due to the changing situation we haven't been able to programme sessions too far in advance. However, like everyone, we hope that things return back to normal in 2021.

If are interested in joining sessions, we can offer training and support to help you engage online – just ask!

Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Panel (TIE)

Meets three times a year, usually on the 29th of each month.

Tenants of Lewes District (TOLD)

The committee meets quarterly – in March, June, September and December.

Open Meetings are held three times a year – in April, September and December.

Landport Residents Association

Meets six times a year on a Wednesday evening – 2021 dates to be confirmed.

Retirement Housing Forum

Meets regularly – 2021 dates to be confirmed.



If you have any questions about getting involved please email:

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

For updates and news follow us on



Lewes District Housing



Lewes District Council

Tel. **01273 471600** – We're here to help

Useful Contacts...

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic there are a reduced number of Customer Advisors available to answer telephone calls. To enable us to assist customers who cannot access online services, we would ask all tenants who can do so, to report issues via our website: lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk and follow the links to the online service you need, or use the online chat option.

Lewes District Council main number: 01273 471600 then press:

- **Option 2** – For repairs, including communal repairs
 - Please note for emergency repairs after 5pm or at weekends (including heating) you will then need to also select Option 1.
- **Option 3** – Council tax queries and paying council tax – except council tax reduction.
- **Option 4** – Benefit enquiries and council tax reduction.
- **Option 5** – Planning.
- **Option 6** – for anything else then:
 - Option one – to make any payments, such as rent.
 - Option two – waste and recycling (including missed bins, unemptied public bins and fly tipping).
 - Option three – rent enquiries.
 - Or... just wait to be connected for... anything else, including grass cutting, issues with play areas, cleaning, antisocial behaviour, problems with animals, homelessness advice. Foodbank referrals (ask to speak to your Homes First Senior Caseworker).



Lewes District Council

Emergency numbers:

- Gas leak: **0800 111 999**
- Electricity power cut: **105**
- Mains water leaks : **0333 000 0365**
- Homelessness – After 5pm or at weekends: **01323 644422**

Other useful numbers:

- Non-emergency police: **101**
- NHS Non-emergency **111**
- East Sussex County Council: **0345 608 0190** for:
 - highways issues such as road maintenance, pavements and street lighting,
 - adult social care,
 - mental health services,
 - schools and education services,
 - grass verge cutting.
- Citizens Advice: **03444 111444**
- StepChange – free debt management advice **0800 138 1111**
- East Sussex Welfare reform – Benefits advice **0333 344 0681**
- Age UK – **01273 4767047**
- Shelter – Housing advice **0808 800 4444**
- Samaritans – **116 123**