



Tenants' Conference



On the 23 January 2019, the first "Homes First" joint Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Homes Tenants' conference was held at The View Hotel in Eastbourne.

The new Head of Homes First, Gary Hall, opened the conference and presented his vision for Homes First.

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The event gave an opportunity for tenants to take part in workshops, visit information stands, meet other tenants and staff, and learn more about Homes First and Neighbourhood First. Workshops included advice on how to avoid being scammed, reducing energy bills, team building, healthy cooking on a budget, and planting and using garden containers. **100%** of tenants providing feedback rated the conference as either Very Good or Good. Comments from those attending workshops included, '**Fabulous Energy tips,**'**I needed to know how to cook simple meals and this has helped towards my goal.'**

Tenant of the Year



At the conference, the LDC Tenant of the Year award was presented to **Kenneth Healy from St David's Court, Peacehaven.**

Cllr Ron Maskell chose the winner from a number of excellent entries. As well as looking after the communal garden at the scheme Ken cooked a 3 course meal for 14 residents at the scheme on Christmas Day. Well done Ken.

A word from our Chair– Debbie Twitchen

Inside this issue you will find details of how to help improve your housing service by getting involved in **scrutiny**. If you have a little time to spare you could make a BIG difference.

Inside: Scrutiny, You Said, We Did, Remembering a friend, Environment Budget, Burleys, IT Workshops and more



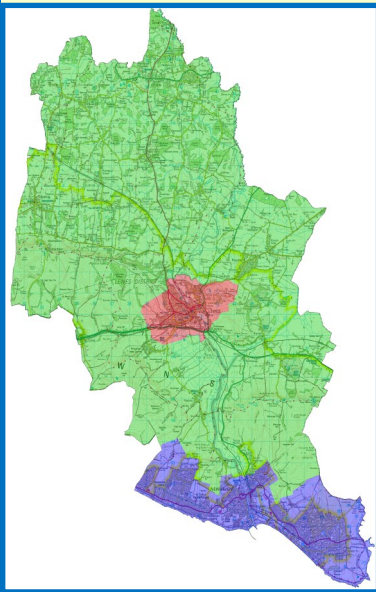
Welcome to Gary Hall, new Head of Homes First

We were pleased to welcome Gary Hall to the conference, where he outlined his vision for Homes First, “I am passionate about working with all tenants and residents to improve services across the Lewes District. My staff will be serving you in a range

of areas of housing work, covered by Homes First and working with you to involve as many of you as possible in shaping our delivery. I have a long record of bringing about true engagement and empowerment for tenants and residents and I am pleased that we are about to launch our new Tenant Participation Strategy which will give you, our customers, a range of opportunities to get involved and hold services to account. I look forward to building a mutually beneficial relationship going forward. We have a number of challenges but our teams are set up to meet these challenges and improve the lives of our tenants and residents across the area.”

TOLD are looking forward to working closely with Gary to help deliver his vision.

Did you know how many homes are located in the Lewes District?



Lewes District Council covers **113 sq. miles**

Homes First manage

2823 general needs homes

379 sheltered homes

8 shared ownership

262 leasehold homes

3472 homes are managed by Homes First

Get involved from home

Are you or a member of your family interested in **photography** or **design**? Perhaps you are undertaking a course or enjoy Desktop Publishing and Media?

The TOLD **Tenants' Voice** team and resident newsletters are on the look out for people who could help existing members put together **eye—catching pages**, including taking **pictures** to help tell a story. You can **volunteer from home** apart from the occasional agreed catch-ups at times that work for you. Contact Tenant Involvement on 01273 487249 or by emailing tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Thank you!

Many thanks to all who helped organise the conference and to everyone who donated raffle prizes, including Mears, BSW, Just Ask and Eastbourne Homes Area Panels.

15 Minute Involvement Prior to the next issue, TOLD and Tenant Involvement would like to hear from tenants to find out what features you would like in your Tenants' Voice. This could include useful information to help you settle within your community or general advice on community services that you may require.

Apply now for the 2019/2020

Environmental Budget

The Environmental budget supports small projects, such as landscaping communal areas providing benches, children's activity areas or communal vegetable gardens; whatever you think everyone might enjoy. Some recent grants awarded include: a communal shed at Reed Court, raised flower bed at Heron Court, bird table and summer house at Coldstream House and a number of water butts. Applications must have the support of the local community. So discuss your idea with your local tenants and residents association, talk to the Neighbourhood First team, your Senior Caseworker (Housing Officer) or if you live in a sheltered scheme your Retirement Housing Advisor (Scheme Manager), or you can visit your neighbours to get support for your idea.

Lewes District Council have an agreement with Tates (Paradise Park) to help process orders quickly once it has been approved by TOLD.

Please provide quotations from Tates, together with a quick plan of where your improvement would be placed.

Please contact the tenant involvement team on 01273 487249 or email tenant.involvement@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk.



Thank you Burleys

Burleys recently worked with Landport residents in Newton Road and the Lewes District Council Neighbourhood First team to plant 300 crocus bulbs in a unique project to help the community.

Burleys were also able to assist a one-off project supporting tenants with their rockery at Churchill House.

Tenants from Newton Road working with Burleys



Update on the new build in Peacehaven

The new council house building scheme at Ashington Gardens and Downland Avenue, in Peacehaven is still progressing very well and is on target to complete all of the units by May 2019. This is an exciting project for the Council providing 6 new build homes for tenants to rent. The Council realise that there has been some disruption in the area caused by the building works and apologise for any inconvenience caused to local residents, and thank them very much their patience and understanding at this time.



love live Community Litter Pickers



We have many volunteers and volunteer groups around Lewes District, who devote their time & energy keeping our communities clean for everyone by picking up litter from our parks, streets, and beaches. This is amazing work, and Lewes District Council are keen to support it as much as possible. See [lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/Litter Pick](http://lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk/LitterPick) to find out more.

The council is now offering support, advice, and equipment, to anybody who would like to join in and help reduce litter in their local area. They can provide litter-pickers, gloves, bag hoops, and bags (regular black sacks, as well as reusable ones for collecting recyclable litter), and advice on health & safety such as risk assessments and safe ways of working.

If you're interested in joining in with a local litter pick, if you would like to get involved in a local group, or if you'd just like to pick a bit of litter when you have time and in your area, please get in touch with Thomas Broad via recycle@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk or you can phone 01273 471600. Equipment will be provided.



Community Spot-light: Landport



TOLD would like to feature a different community in every edition of Tenants' Voice. In this issue, Landport Community Garden comes under the spot-light.

The Garden, which is run by volunteers, can be found behind the Blue Door, Landport Community Farmhouse, Hayward Road, BN7 2EA. They are currently extending the opening hours of its weekly Monday free drop-in sessions.

Marina Pepper, Chair of the Garden Management Committee, writes, "We recognised that we can't serve the community if we're closed at times when it's practical for people to attend. We'll now keep the garden gate open until dusk, meaning parents can drop in with the kids after school or nursery and others can call by after work.

Even if you don't think gardening is for you, we're all gaining awareness that being out in the fresh air is a great way to unwind. It's good for our physical and our mental wellbeing.

If you just want a cuppa and a chat that's fine by us., but you can also have a chance to meet new friends and learn new skills. If you are in the garden when we are there, you can help yourself to fresh raspberries and strawberries and other produce when in season. You can also



In memory of a friend of TOLD: TOLD was very sad to hear the news that Kathy Foster, from Ditchling passed away in January. Kathy and her husband Peter were regular attendees at TOLD meetings and worked very hard for their local Beacon Park Residents Association. One of their proudest achievements was to successfully campaign for a new play area for children living in their area. Ruth Tahsin from the Tenant Involvement Team said "Kathy was such a lovely, upbeat person who believed passionately in getting involved, to make her neighbourhood a nicer place to live. She will be very much missed"



The Council needs your help to keep your home safe!

The Council as a landlord has a legal requirement to ensure that all gas pipes and appliances (even if the gas supply is not connected to anything), in your home are checked and certified as being “safe” every year.

What do I need to do?

When you receive an appointment for your annual gas safety check, if the date or time is not convenient please call the number on the letter to arrange a different date / time. Once the gas safety check has been done you will receive a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) certificate within 28 days, which you should keep in a safe place.

What happens if I do not allow entry?

We are pleased to say that most tenants do provide access to the contractor so that they can carry out the annual safety check - within 365 days of the last service date. If you do not allow the contractor access, in line with legislation, the Council is entitled to commence legal proceedings to obtain a court injunction to allow them to enter your home, and you as the tenant will be liable for the cost of obtaining an injunction and attending the Law Courts approximately £1,200.

What if the gas appliance requires repair?

There is a 24 hour repairs service from the contractor. You can contact them via the councils usual repairs contact telephone numbers **01273 417600**. General repairs are carried out separately from the annual gas inspection.

What about my own gas appliances?

The Council will carry out an inspection of your gas equipment annually and, in order to ensure the safety of their tenants and help increase energy efficiency, you will be informed of any necessary repairs and improvements that are needed. Please be aware that any gas work must be undertaken by a qualified engineer that is Gas Safe registered. It is illegal and extremely dangerous to attempt a DIY repair to gas pipework or appliances. If you need to fit a new gas appliance, you will need permission from the Council. Please contact them to obtain a “permission to carry out alterations / improvements” form.

What if I am a leaseholder?

As a leaseholder you are responsible for ensuring that your gas installation pipework and appliances are safe and do not endanger neighbouring flats or other buildings. You can achieve this by having your appliances inspected and serviced annually. As a leaseholder you can, access the gas contractor’s services, you will be charged directly for the inspection and service to your appliances.

What if I am leaseholder that sublets my property?

You will have a responsibility under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations to have your gas appliances and pipes checked at least once a year by a qualified Gas Safe registered engineer. You must supply your tenants with a copy of the Landlord Gas Safety Record (LGSR) document. If you do not comply with the regulations, you could be liable for a fine and possibly imprisonment.

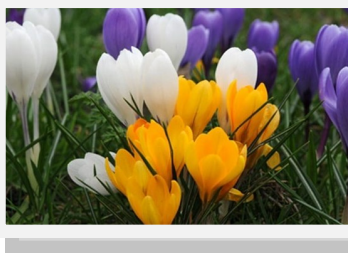
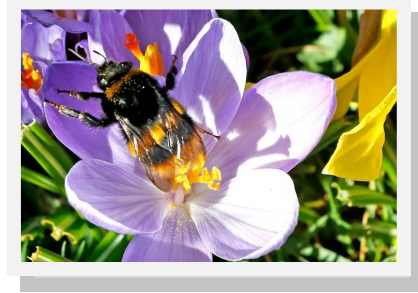


The Wildflower Meadow project has been running since 2017, and is a partnership with Burleys, Wildflower Lewes and Lewes District Council. There are now ten established perennial beds across the district with two more planned for 2019.

The existing meadows were created in

2017 and sown with seeds or wildflower turf that were chosen to be beneficial for wildlife and which will flower year after year.

Management of these mini meadows mimics meadow management, each autumn when the plants have dropped their seeds, the meadow is cut and the debris taken away. Removing the vegetation ensures that we don't get a build-up of nutrients on the meadow sites it also reduces the potential for a wet thatch that can inhibit the seeds germinating the following spring.



In addition to the established meadows there are eighteen planned annual meadows scattered across the district, which are more visually pretty. These are managed more intensively e.g. the site is weed treated, rotovated and then sown with seeds that are picked to provide nectar for our pollinating insects.

The Wildflower Meadow Project, work closely with Burleys through surveying and monitoring the perennial wildflower meadows. There are lots of opportunities to get involved with this, if you're keen to get out and have a look at your patch, Wildflower Lewes will provide training and support; the data collated helps inform the future management of these meadows.

In addition to these nectar rich meadows, over 4000 crocuses were planted across the district in autumns 2018, the crocus is one of the first flowering plants to provide nectar for our emerging hungry bees and butterflies. Please get in touch with the Community Liaison Officer Krigby-faux@qburley.co.uk at Burleys for further information and how you can get involved in your wildflower meadows.

You Said...

STAR SURVEY FEEDBACK: You were concerned about problems with communication when making a general enquiry to the Neighbourhood Housing team or during the investigation of your anti-social behaviour case.

We Did

As a result Nikki Richardson, has now become a Specialist Advisor to the Neighbourhood team. She says 'The Housing team are now recruiting an extra Team Leader (One for Eastbourne and one for Lewes). This will enable us to provide additional support and training to the team, to increase our expertise in dealing with specialist cases and to free up more time for casework enquiries'



COMPUTER BUDDIES

Help is available at your local library

Computer buddies are volunteers, if you know the basics of using computers but sometimes get stuck, you can ask for help, by booking a session in Lewes, Newhaven, Peacehaven or Seaford by calling **0345 6080196**.

If you need more IT support, i.e. how to use email, how to write a job application, search and apply for work online and other services and support, then **IT for You** volunteers offer group and individual training sessions at the following libraries during the following times

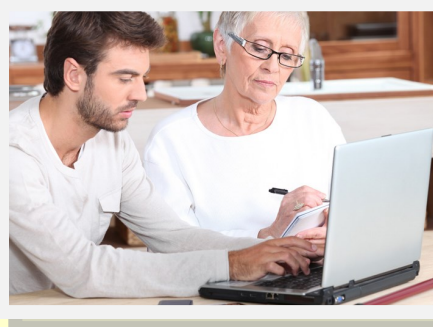
Lewes: Monday 10.00am – 12.00pm and Thursday 10.00am – 12.00pm.

Newhaven: Tuesday 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Peacehaven: Friday 2.00pm – 4.00pm

Seaford: Thursday 3.00pm – 5.00pm

To book, phone 01323 463759 or drop in to a participating libraries during their IT for You session.



Help us improve our service to you

Are you a great listener, who can take a common sense approach, and who loves to solve problems?

If so an opportunity has arisen for enthusiastic tenants or leaseholders to sit on the Tenant Scrutiny Panel to improve Housing Services.

No formal qualifications are required to be a Tenant Scrutiny Panel Member, just a desire to make a real difference to the services experienced by tenants and leaseholders.

The Panel in the past have been involved in:

- New procedures for tackling anti social behaviour
- Procedure for tenants to view multiple hard to let properties to help reduce the time that these homes are vacant
- On the job training for staff in the customer service centre to be supported by written guidelines to help answer customers queries

As part of its promise to Panel Members, the Council will:

- Provide training and support in all aspects of the work you undertake
- Ensure that information is kept clear and concise
- Provide transport and contribute toward childcare costs if required

For more information please contact the Tenant Participation Team on 01273 487249 or email tenant.participation@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk.





Thank you to everyone that entered the Winter Word Search. The winner was Mr Pike, of Newick. Please see below for your chance to win a £10 shopping voucher. **Please make sure you include your name and address with your entry**

SPRING
WORD SEARCH

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- APRIL
- BLOOM
- BREEZE
- BUNNY
- BUTTERFLY
- CHICK
- DAFFODIL
- EASTER
- FLOWERS
- GALOSHES
- GREEN
- GRASS
- GROW
- JUNE
- LAMB
- MARCH
- MAY
- NEST
- PUDDLES
- RABBIT
- RAIN
- RAINBOW
- RAINCOAT
- SHOWERS
- SPRING
- SPROUT
- SUNSHINE
- TADPOLE
- TULIP
- UMBRELLA
- WINDY
- WORM

Hidden in our word search are words associated with Spring.

See if you can find and ring them all.

The words may read forwards, backwards, vertically, horizontally or diagonally.

Once you have found them, send your completed entry to the Editor, Tenants Voice, 2a Horsfield Road, Lewes, BN7 2TA by the **end of May**.

Please make sure you include your name and address

One lucky winner will be picked at random and the winner's details will be in the next edition of Tenants Voice.

TOLD WEBSITE:

For more photos from the conference, further features about the Environmental Budget projects, together with news round ups from Tenant meetings, please visit the TOLD website www.told.org.uk