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A recruitment event run at Havering College proved a success. Full story p6/7
Dear residents

Welcome to the summer edition of At The Heart.

This issue is full of good news and ways in which tenants and leaseholders can get involved and influence what is happening in their area.

We are launching two awards in this issue. The Housing in Bloom contest will recognise the many tenants who take a pride in making their homes look beautiful. Whether it is a planted tub, hanging basket or a large garden, all take time to plant and look after so all of us can enjoy the end result.

The second is the Good Neighbour Awards, which recognise people who go that extra mile to help people in their local community. We know there are many "unsung heroes" among our tenants and we want to thank them for the work they do by recognising them.

When I first took on this role I promised tenants and leaseholders would be more involved in the decision-making that affects them. There are three areas of involvement we report on in this edition.

At the end of this month the Residents’ Funding Panel is due to have its first meeting, which will look at suggestions for environmental improvements across the Council’s estates. We have £250,000 to spend on such improvements in this financial year and are asking tenants to put forward their ideas so the panel can discuss how we can get the best value for money.

A new grounds maintenance contract is due to be issued later this year and over the next few months we will be asking residents what they would like to see that new contract.

We are also looking at how we can improve our repairs and renewals programme so are surveying some tenants about their experiences to help us plan for the future.

In April we launched an email update, called At the Heart Online, which allows us to keep tenants and leaseholders up-to-date with events and information, as well as seek your views, very quickly. If you’re not one of the 4,000 subscribers already receiving that email update please sign up at www.havering.gov.uk/Havering-Updates to make sure you don’t miss out.

Councillor Damian White
Cabinet Member for Housing Services
and Deputy Leader of the Council

Growing for gold

Blooming lovely gardens, hanging baskets and planted tubs can be found at council flats and houses across the Borough and now their owners could be winning prizes for their floral displays.

Whether you have green fingers or not, the Housing in Bloom 2015 competition is looking for your entry.

It doesn’t matter if you have a massive garden, a display of hanging baskets and tubs or a single sunflower, you can still win a prize.

The categories for the competition are:

- Best back garden
- Best front garden
- Best communal garden
- Best hanging basket
- Tallest sunflower

The entry form is online and closing date for entries is Sunday 30 August.

Prizes will be awarded for the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in each category. The judging for each category will be held during the summer and the prize winners will be informed in writing.

How good is your neighbour?

Everybody needs good neighbours but do yours go that extra mile to lend a helping hand?

If so then it’s time to recognise the help they give by nominating them for a Havering Council Housing Services Good Neighbour Award.

The help they give could be to individuals or to the wider community.

It can be from doing your shopping to maintaining a housing scheme’s communal garden – the list is endless.

To make your nomination complete the form on the website to let us know who you think should receive an award..
Grounds maintenance service on our estates

Keeping estate green areas and gardens looking good is important and our aim is to make sure high standards are achieved in the delivery of this service.

As work begins on a new grounds maintenance contract residents will be asked for their views later this year.

Strict guidelines have been set down for what work should be done, how it should be done, and how often, by the Council’s in-house team.

Havering Council’s Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Councillor Damian White, said: “We will provide tenants with communal areas that are clean and tidy for all residents to enjoy.

“Our grounds maintenance service covers external areas, (including grass cutting, shrub pruning, weed control and tree maintenance.

“Our main focus is to make sure that our grounds look tidy and well-maintained all year round, whatever the weather.

“Later in the year we will survey residents on our estates with a range of options for you to let us know your preference on how the service should change in future years.”

A leaflet is available on the website that sets out the current standards for the caretaking and grounds maintenance services you can expect to receive as a Havering Council tenant.

Rent increases

The last edition of At the Heart included a table outlining changes to rents in the Borough.

This table demonstrated the average rent increase, however some tenants may be charged more or less depending on their individual circumstances.

If you have a query about how much you are paying you can contact the rent accounts team by email or check the website for details.

Radio Harold Hill

Volunteers needed

Radio Harold Hill, based at St George’s Church in Chippenham Road, Harold Hill is looking for volunteer studio assistants.

Residents of Harold Hill or Harold Wood are preferred.

More info: www.radioharoldhill.co.uk
Recruitment event is big success

More than 400 people visited last month’s Recruitment Event, organised by Havering Council and held at Havering College of Further and Higher Education in Ardleigh Green.

There were 31 exhibitors were booked to attend, ranging from Army Careers and Allied Health to Stagecoach and Barclays Bank.

Visitors to the event ranged from 15-year-olds planning their future careers to senior citizens looking for part-time jobs to keep them busy in retirement.

**Jobs Board**

One of the most popular stands at the event was the Jobs Board where current vacancies were displayed and visitors could post their details into a special box asking to be contacted about specific vacancies.

Brandon Perry and Tommy Smith, both aged 16 from Rainham, made use of this.

Tommy said: “We’re looking for some part-time work and coming to the event was very useful as we could talk to people about what we wanted and browse what was available.”

**Army Careers**

Colour Sergeant Steve Turner, from the Parachute Regiment, is the Army Careers Advisor for Havering, Redbridge, Barking and Dagenham. He said: “I thoroughly enjoyed what I have done during my 27 years in the Army. I particularly like my current role making people aware of the wide range of careers the Army offers.

“All the details are on the website and there are far more than people think.”

Sydney Welsh, age 15 and Ben Lucraft, age 17, both from Hornchurch were among the visitors who asked about careers in the Army.

Sydney said: “We came along to have a look and learn about apprenticeships and careers in general; we didn’t realise there was such a variety of opportunities in the Army.”

**Career change**

Lindsey Horne, age 24, of Romford, is considering a career change and popped in to see what was on offer.

“With starting salary of £23,000, plus travel concessions across London, the money isn’t bad either and drivers can earn as much as £27,000 as a basic salary.”

Tracy Mutter, of Hornchurch, came along with her son, Alfie. Tracy said: “I saw the event advertised in the local press and suggested to Alfie we came along. I was at last year’s event with my other son and we found it very useful because there are so many diverse opportunities available here.

On the buses

Jenni Jones was looking after the Stagecoach stall and said: “We’ve been busy most of the time.

“This event is proving very useful in helping us spread the word that we are constantly recruiting more drivers and that it is a job for life.

“With starting salary of £23,000, plus travel concessions across London, the money isn’t bad either and drivers can earn as much as £27,000 as a basic salary.”

Tracy Mutter, and her son Alfie, find out about opportunities on the buses from Jenni Jones of Stagecoach.

Lindsey (pictured above) said: “I saw details of the event on the Council’s email newsletter and thought it was worth coming along to see who was here. I’m in sales and looking for a new role in sales and marketing to help develop my career and there’s lots of firms exhibiting so hope I will find something suitable.”

Leader of Havering Council, Councillor Roger Ramsay, said: “Bringing together so many different organisations that can help people find work, including firms with jobs they are trying to fill, has made this event a great success and one we will consider holding again in the future.”
Cabinet Member’s Surgery

During 2015 Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Councillor Damian White, is holding regular surgeries across the Borough so Council tenants can call in and discuss housing issues with him.

The surgeries are on a ‘first come, first served’ basis and any tenants are welcome to come along. All discussions will be confidential. The next dates are:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 26 June</td>
<td>3pm to 5pm</td>
<td>Highfield – room next to Highfield Towers, Hillrise Road, Collier Row RM5 3DQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday 14 August</td>
<td>4pm to 6pm</td>
<td>Town Hall, Main Road, Romford, RM1 3BB</td>
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Flat out to boost recycling

Use orange to be green is the message for residents in flats as part of Havering Council’s campaign during National Recycle Week (Monday 22 to Sunday 28 June).

Cabinet Member responsible for recycling, Councillor Robert Benham, said: “Recycle Week is a national campaign that aims to encourage everyone to recycle more, whether that’s at home, on the go, at work or within the local community through various reuse events and schemes.

“This year, the Havering recycling team will be focusing on encouraging people who live in flats to recycle more. Recycling Advisors will be in various locations around the Borough talking to residents that live in flats about the recycling service, offering support and advice.”

Residents can recycle using the orange sack collection service.

Orange sacks

Items that can go in to these sacks are:
- Mixed paper and card. Corrugated cardboard can be flattened and placed next to the banks
- Food tins and drink cans
- All plastic bottles from around the home, this includes toiletries, cleaning bottles and drink/milk bottles

Once full the sacks should go into the orange wheelie bins at your flats.

Details of when the roadshows are in your area can be found on the website.

More info: www.havering.gov.uk/recycling

Improved Recycling on Chudleigh Estate

Residents living on the Chudleigh estate in Harold Hill are recycling more thanks to bigger bins.

Havering Council’s Senior Estate Officer, Donna Keyte, said: “In the past the brick-built bin areas on this estate have not been big enough to contain the two general waste bins plus the recycling bin, which has meant the recycling bin being left outside so few residents have been using it.

“As part of the Cleaner Havering campaign we are encouraging more residents to recycle as much of their household waste as possible as that is better for the environment and means the Council pays less in landfill charges.

“To help make it as easy as possible to recycle we are now using larger capacity wheelie bins – each taking 770 litres – which means we can fit a general waste and a recycling bin inside the bin areas.

New bins

“The first areas to benefit from the new arrangements were Haslingden House, Halifax House and Thrapston House. The new 770 litre bins will be introduced in other bin areas during the current year until all parts of the Chudleigh Estate have access to them.”

Estate caretaker, Paul Walker, said: “We are already seeing more recycling taking place as it’s much easier for residents to use the new bins and because they are now in the bin storage area the estate looks a lot tidier too.

“We’ve also been delivering recycling leaflets to residents to encourage them to recycle more.”

Thrapston House resident, Mandy Mountier, said: “It’s so easy to use the new bins as they are next to where we put our black sacks.”

Thrapston House resident, Mandy Mountier, using one of the new recycling bins.
A Bridge Club, Dance Group, Karate Club and Wiggles Toddler Group don't usually appear in the same sentence but these are just some of the groups which are already hiring the newly refurbished Hacton Lane Hall in Hornchurch.

Havering Council Housing Services Community Engagement Manager, Julie Bennett, said: “We have spent £85,000 refurbishing the hall, including refitting the kitchen, upgrading the toilets and buying new tables and chairs, and it is now available for hire.

“It is an ideal venue for club and society meetings and we already have a number of local groups using it on a regular basis.”

Karate
One of those groups is the Southern England School of Karate. Instructor, Tricia Jordan, said: “We teach traditional self-defence as well as competition karate, with some World and European Champions in the association.

“We use Hacton Lane Hall for three meetings each, Tuesday and Thursday from 5pm until 7pm and Saturdays from 10am to 12noon.

“The new look hall is ideal for our club and we are really pleased with the new facilities”

Other groups
Julie Bennett added: “Other groups that are using the hall regularly are a Bridge Club on Monday afternoons; the Wiggles Toddler Group on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings and a Dance Club is on Wednesday afternoons.

“The hall has a modern kitchen with fridge freezer, microwave and cooker, as well as on-site parking.”

Family parties
The hall can also be hired for family celebrations and can accommodate 80 people seated or 120 standing.

Hire charges are £33 per hour, Monday to Thursday and £50 per hour, Friday to Sunday.

The entrance to the hall is in Haydock Close, Hornchurch, RM12 6EA.
A day in the life of housing reception

When a tenant in the local area needs help or information their first port of call is usually the reception team at Havering Council’s Housing Services offices at Chippenham Road, Harold Hill.

The three staff have more than 30 years’ experience between them and handle between 100 and 130 calls and visits each day.

Stacey Bell, who has worked in the Contact Centre and housing reception for 15 years, said: “We’re open to the public from 9am until 5pm, Monday to Friday, but we’re usually here about 8.40am to catch up with any new information, make sure the leaflet racks are full and any new posters are on display.

“Because of the experience in the team we can usually answer about eight out of every 10 questions ourselves, without needing to refer the tenant to one of the specialist officers, which makes it a faster service, while still providing correct information.”

Telephone

Firdosia Qureshi, who has worked in the Contact Centre and reception for nearly 13 years, added: “Many of the queries are on the telephone and while the information is often on the website, the tenant may not be able to find it. “Because we use the website so much we can usually find it quickly, answer the tenant’s questions and let them know where on the website to look if they need more details.

“We also make a lot of calls to other teams to get the answers we need.

“There’s a lot of satisfaction knowing that you’ve helped people, especially elderly people who can get very worried if there is something they don’t understand.”

Issues

Newcomer to the team is Naina Ravalia, who joined around three years ago. She said: “There are two of us on the reception desk at any one time with the third person providing administrative and secretarial support to other officers in Housing Services.

“The range of issues that come to us is very varied.

“On just one day last week we had enquiries about repairs, Council Tax payments, benefit claims, anti-social behaviour, lettings, maintenance, renting a garage and grounds maintenance to mention just a few.

“It’s always nice when someone says thank you for helping them and the vast majority do”.

Stacey added: “Sometimes a tenant comes in who is really angry about something that has happened and a key part of our job is to try and calm them down, find out what the problem is and then get the best person to help resolve that problem.”

Good knowledge

Customer Services Team Manager Ben Smith, manages the reception team. He said: “These are not just ladies behind a desk; they have a lot of knowledge and expertise between them which they use to answer peoples questions.

“They are part of the Council’s Contact Centre Team so receive regular training as changes happen, such as to the benefits system.

“When required the receptionists also assist in the Contact Centre and have helped out in the Public Advice Service Centre (PASC). They are championing channel shift at the frontline by helping residents to self-serve on the computer available in the reception area.”

“The reception service is very important and helps provide an efficient service for housing tenants and staff.”

When a tenant in the local area needs help or information their first port of call is usually the reception team at Havering Council’s Housing Services offices at Chippenham Road, Harold Hill.

The three staff have more than 30 years’ experience between them and handle between 100 and 130 calls and visits each day.

Firdosia Qureshi checks online to answer a tenant’s query

Naina Ravalia restocks the leaflets

Stacey Bell puts up the latest information poster

More info: www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing
Like us for news and information

Facebook is an ideal way to keep in touch with family and friends, and now it can be used to keep up to date with what's happening with Havering Council Housing Services. If you 'like' us you will get alerts when we add news to our page, including details of job opportunities, training courses, events and useful information. So next time you are on Facebook check out our page and 'like' us.

More info:
www.facebook.com/haveringhousing

Housing news by email

Keeping tenants and leaseholders up to date with the latest news and information is important, which is why Havering Council issues an email update specifically on housing issues.

More than 4,000 tenants and leaseholders are already on the subscriber list and have been receiving At the Heart Online. Make sure you are ready to receive At the Heart Online by adding your email address to the subscriber list today.

www.havering.gov.uk/Havering-Updates

It's easy to do it online

Sign up to Havering Council's 'My Account' service at www.havering.gov.uk/myaccount and you can then access a wide range of services 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the web site.

You can apply to move house, for energy efficiency advice, to rent a garage and much more at www.havering.gov.uk/applyhousing.

You can also pay your housing or garage rent and Council Tax by Direct Debit by completing and returning the online form, or you can pay online using credit or debit cards through www.havering.gov.uk/payforit.

The Report It service is available to let the council know about community and neighbourhood issues, housing issues and a lot more at www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing.

Council tenants and leaseholders can get secure access to all their housing information online through www.havering.gov.uk/SeeMyData.

Property management service

- 100% guaranteed rent paid in advance with no hidden charges
- competitive management fees
- 'one-off' cash incentive payments of up to £1,000
- some repairs free of charge
- payment of a bond guarantee
- free annual gas safety checks

Property leasing service

- long leases
- guaranteed rent even if the property is empty
- some free repairs

For more information call 01708 431515
email libertyhousing@havering.gov.uk
or visit us at 163 High Street, Hornchurch RM11 3XS.
Maximise your income

A special event to help you make the most from your money is being held between 10am and 2pm on Tuesday 30 June at the Betty Strathern Centre, 41 Myrtle Road, Harold Hill, RM3 8XS.

The free to attend event includes workshops to help you find work or gain extra skills; provide information on credit options that are available and about illegal money lending, as well as CV writing.

Among the stallholders will be the Mary Ward Legal Centre, Citizens’ Advice Bureau, Family Mosaic, private pousing solutions, community engagement and HAVCO who give assistance with completing CVS, deal with employment and volunteering opportunities.

£2,000 per year extra for 65+

Many people over the age of 65 are not claiming all the benefits available to them but, thanks to Project 65, 21 Havering residents are better off by around £2,000 a year each.

Havering Council Housing Services Income Manager, Janis Robert-Edwards, explained:

“There is £5.5 billion worth of benefits unclaimed every year by people over the age of 65. That is money that could help improve the quality of life for those senior citizens, so we have set up Project 65 to help Havering Council tenants claim the benefits they are entitled to.

“So far 21 tenants have been helped and we have identified extra benefits worth around £2,000 per person per year.

Phone call

“Two members of the Council’s Welfare Reform Team, Tina and Dionne, are currently phoning tenants over the age of 65 to carry out a benefit calculation for them and provide information about organisations that can help individuals make a claim for any extra benefit they should be receiving.”

When you get the call do take a few minutes to talk to Tina or Dionne as it could bring you hundreds of pounds extra income each year.

Have you got high energy bills?

Havering Council tenants can get a free home energy check visit, which includes advice on:

- Heating controls
- Lowering energy bills
- Energy switching
- Damp and condensation
- Draught proofing
- Saving energy in the home
- Grants and discounts
- Providing an information pack and thermometer card or warm pack.

After the visit you will receive a personal home energy check report.

Help available from Mary Ward

From July this year a new service will be available at the Housing Services office at Chippenham Road, Harold Hill, RM3 8YQ.

The Mary Ward Legal Centre will be available to offer free, independent and confidential advice to tenants.

If you are in debt and are struggling financially, or if you need advice and assistance with housing, employment or welfare benefits, you can book an appointment to see a specialist advisor using the askhousing link below.

Council houses survey

To help Havering Council plan its future repairs and renewals programme it needs to know the condition of its flats and houses.

Michael Dyson Associates has been appointed to survey a sample of council houses.

If your home is one to be inspected a surveyor will call to check inside and outside, including walls, roofs, kitchens and bathroom heating appliances. The survey should take around 20 minutes.

Every surveyor will carry an ID badge and a letter of authority from Havering Council – you can check if they are genuine by calling 0800 151 3444.

Walk-in for debt help

When financial trouble hits, it’s easy to feel alone.

Christians Against Poverty (CAP), which has two centres in Havering, is already helping hundreds of people who call up every week, through their free of charge Debt Help service.

It has now launched a walk-in debt advice clinic on the last Friday of each month between 12noon and 2pm at the Salvation Army, High Street, Romford, RM1 1JJ.

CAP also visits people in their own homes, negotiates with creditors and supports residents right up until they are debt free. It is available to anyone regardless of age, faith, gender or background.
Cleaning at Kipling Towers

In every *At the Heart*, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, Councillor Damian White, invites residents to tell him what they think. Residents at Kipling Towers, in Heaton Avenue, Harold Hill, did just that in our last issue.

Councillor White said: “Residents sent me a list of cleaning problems at Kipling Towers, I raised them with Housing Services and an investigation took place.

“Sadly the residents who sent in the complaint didn’t include their names and addresses so the reply to them has been delayed and is detailed below.”

Interim Head of Housing Services, Neil Stubbings, said: “The caretaking team have confirmed that the lobby and lift areas are swept and mopped on a daily basis. The stairs are checked daily for litter and all floors are mopped every week.

“Caretakers use water and a cleaning powder, mixed into the water, for washing floors. Mixed into the water, for washing floors. Caretakers use water and a cleaning powder, mixed into the water, for washing floors. Caretakers use water and a cleaning powder, mixed into the water, for washing floors. Caretakers use water and a cleaning powder, mixed into the water, for washing floors. Caretakers use water and a cleaning powder, mixed into the water, for washing floors. Caretakers use water and a cleaning powder, mixed into the water, for washing floors. Caretakers use water and a cleaning powder, mixed into the water, for washing floors. Caretakers use water and a cleaning powder, mixed into the water, for washing floors.

**Pigeons**

“We are aware there is a problem with pigeon mess at the rear entrance, due to the high number of pigeons nesting on the outside of the block, which is why the caretaker washes this area, including door handles, every day. The area is also jet washed regularly by one of our specialist team, to try and minimise the problem.”

A new career path: becoming a foster carer

With around 250 children in care within Havering at any one time, the Council is always looking for new people to join our group of successful foster carers.

Fostering is about providing a caring and safe home for children and young people. These few questions explore the main issues raised by people thinking about becoming a foster carer, but if you have anything else you want to know please check out the website.

Q: Can I apply to become a foster carer?
A: Anyone over the age of 25 can apply to become a foster carer; you just need to have a spare room in your home and time for a child in your life.

Q: I am single and live in rented accommodation, can I still be a foster carer?
A: Anyone can apply no matter their marital status, sexuality, religion, whether you are a homeowner, living in council or other rented accommodation. Also you do not have to be employed; the most important thing is that you could make a difference to a child’s or young person’s life.

Q: Can I meet someone to get more information?
A: Yes, we hold information evenings on the first Thursday of every month at the Town Hall, Romford between 6pm and 7.30pm or the fourth Wednesday of each month in The Liberty Shopping Centre, near Starbucks, between 9am and 6pm.

Q: What support do I get?
A: Each foster family has their own social worker who provides on going support and regular training. There is an active community amongst foster carers, with regular coffee mornings and group meet-ups. We also offer 24-hour telephone support.

Q: Do I get financial help?
A: Foster Carers can earn up to £433 per week from Havering Council, depending on the ages and number of children you foster.

Q: Will this affect my benefits claim?
A: If a foster carer is in receipt of benefits, you can still receive a fostering allowance and it will not affect your benefit claim. You can continue to claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit and your fostering allowance will not be counted as income.

Q: I want to be a foster carer, what do I do next?
A: If you are interested and would like to find out more information, start by looking at our website.

Techy Teas

Active Living 50+ is working in partnership with NatWest Bank’s Romford Branch to deliver Techy Tea sessions. These help people aged over 50 learn how to use their own mobile phones, lap tops and tablet devices.

If you need help to use any of your IT devices, come along to NatWest Bank, 10 South Street, Romford on the third Thursday of any month between 10am and 12 noon.

There is no need to book just come along and join in.

Active Living 50+ is also looking for volunteers who would like to help people over 50 use their laptops, mobile phone and tablet devices. Training will be provided.

More info: kim@haveringcab.org.uk

Fostering rise to the challenge | reap the rewards

More info: www.havering.gov.uk/fostering
Gas check finds leak

When a leaseholder in Cross Road, Romford, arranged the annual appliance check for his Gas Safety Certificate it could well have saved his life.

When the registered Gas Safety Contractor called, two out of the three appliances passed the checks with no problems, but a thermostat on the cooker was found to be leaking gas.

The cooker was quickly made safe and advice given on what needed to be done before it could be used again.

Havering Council Housing Service’s Home Ownership Manager, Jane Shaw, said: “Making sure the annual gas safety check takes place may look like administrative overload to some leaseholders but this example shows that regular checks can find potential safety problems so they can be repaired before anyone gets hurt.”

No gas certificate leads to enforcement action

In the first case of its kind by Havering Council, a leaseholder’s failure to supply a valid gas safety certificate led to a case being heard at the First Tier Tribunal, which is legally responsible for resolving leasehold disputes.

This is the first time that Havering Council has used this legal process when a leaseholder has failed to supply a Gas Safety Certificate. As the tribunal supported the Council, enforcement action can now be taken.

This could include ending the lease and evicting the leaseholder from his home.

Currently just 120 out of the Council’s 2,240 leaseholders have not supplied a current Gas Safety Certificate and these now face action from the Council.

There have recently been some changes within the Home Ownership Team and we welcome two new members of staff, Jane Bhatti and Sharon Howe.

Jane Bhatti has replaced Kent Long as the Section 20 Consultation Officer, and Sharon Howe has replaced Paula Carroll as the Home Ownership Administrator.

In addition and following the departure of Alain Cooper, Claire Bailey will be covering his patch.

If there is anything the team can help you with regarding service charges or the Right to Buy scheme, please contact any member of the team.

Get involved - speak to Sandy

Havering Council’s Home Ownership Team, with the help of the Leasehold Focus Group, continuously seeks more efficient ways of working and transferring the savings made to leaseholders.

Sandy Stevenson is the Chairman of the London Borough of Havering Leaseholder Focus Group and she can help you to bring general leasehold issues to the attention of the Home Ownership team.

The group meets four times a year with the aim of improving the service provided by the Home Ownership Team.

If anything about your lease is on your mind, feel free to email Sandy on sandystevenson44@aol.com or phone on 01708 479764.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jane Shaw</td>
<td>Home Ownership Manager</td>
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<tr>
<td>Claire Bailey</td>
<td>Home Ownership Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenda Broad</td>
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<td>Denise Hall</td>
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<td>Claire Grover</td>
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<td>Janet Reid</td>
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<td>Sharon Boyce</td>
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<td>Jane Bhatti</td>
<td>Section 20 Officer/Right To Buy Officer</td>
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<td>Vacant</td>
<td>Home Ownership Income Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Danielle Thorogood</td>
<td>Home Ownership Income Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sharon Howe</td>
<td>Home Ownership Administrator</td>
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More info: www.lease-advice.org

More info: home.ownership@havering.gov.uk
Be aware to prevent crime

Tenants in Collier Row, Elm Park and Romford have been getting special advice on how to be aware of crime and not be a victim.

Residents in Chelmsford Avenue, Collier Row; Bader Way, Malan Square, Silverdale Drive and Wood Lane in Elm Park and Angel Way, Queen Street, St Andrews Road and Waterloo Road in Romford were invited to attend crime prevention events.

Havering Council’s Housing Services Senior Community Warden, Claire Clayton, said: “We have been holding ‘crime aware days’ for tenants in these three areas, which has included giving out crime prevention packs as well as talking to tenants.

“We were giving out two types of packs, one for improving home security and one for improving car security.

“These days have proved so successful we are now planning similar events in other areas later in the year. These are part of our commitment to providing a safe and secure environment for our residents.”

The home security packs include crime prevention advice and UV pens for postcoding property, as well as window locks and timers that can be used to control lights and radios to make a home look lived in when empty. The car security packs include number plate security screws, satellite navigation screen wipe, and window stickers to warn off possible thieves.

More info: www.havering.gov.uk/communitysafety
www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing

Stolen bike recovered

While on patrol, the Council’s Community Wardens often have a chat with residents about what’s happening in their area and during a recent visit to Knighton Close, Romford wardens, Gael Gateson and Nadeem Mohiuddin, were told about a motorbike that had appeared in their car park.

Nadeem said: “Residents told us they were sure the motorbike didn’t belong to any of the people living in Knighton Close, and that it had been there for a few days.

“Gael contacted the police and got a number plate check on the bike and was told it had been reported as stolen.

“The police picked up the bike later that day, and we assume it’s now back with its owner.”

Gael added: “This is an excellent example of how residents noticing something unusual, tell us about it and we then get a successful outcome.

“It’s only by working together that we can make Havering a place which criminals avoid and ensures our Borough remains one of the lowest crime areas in London.”

Recycling selfies are worth £3

As part of Havering Council’s Cleaner Havering campaign, LondonGreen Points - Havering members can now claim green points for recycling at Bring Banks including food and drink cartons, textiles, glass, paper, cans and plastic bottles.

To claim 1,200 green points (worth £3) you need to take a ‘selfie’ at a Bring Bank with your waste and tweet it to @RecycleLBH using #greenpoints

Fly-tip fire

Swift action by Community Wardens

Gael Gateson and Edward Olukanni saw a fire in Ongar Way, Rainham quickly put out.

Gael said: “We were on one of our regular patrols, which includes the garage area at Ongar Way.

“When we turned in we saw a group of youths run away leaving behind some rubbish which had been fly-tipped and that had been set alight.

“I got the fire extinguisher from our vehicle and put the fire out before it could spread and cause more damage.”

Edward added: “Once the fire was out we had a chat with residents who had come to see what was happening, reassured them that everything was under control.

“We encouraged them to report any fly-tipping, using the Council’s website form, as soon as it appears, so it can be cleared away quickly, before anyone sets light to it.”

More info: www.havering.gov.uk/flytipping
Safe Havens now available

Three shopping centres in Romford have signed up to a new scheme being rolled out by Havering Council, to keep the Borough's town centres safe.

The Brewery, The Liberty and The Mercury Mall, have all signed up to Havering Council’s Safe Haven scheme. Many more shops and businesses across the Borough are expected to sign up as the scheme rolls out. Safe Havens are part of the Council’s Safer Havering programme.

Daunting

Havering Council’s Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Councillor Osman Dervish, said: “Busy town centres can be daunting for some people, others might just run into some sort of difficulty while they are out.

“Safe Havens will be a great way for businesses and communities to come together and make sure that everyone in the borough is safe.”

Need assistance

A Safe Haven is a place where people can find help if they are lost, in trouble or just need some sort of assistance.

Businesses and shops will be asked to display a Safe Haven logo sticker in their window so that they can easily be identified by anyone who needs help in any of Havering’s town centres.

Any business can apply to become a Safe Haven, including cafes, shops, libraries, pubs and places of public interest.

ICE Cards

Residents can pick up an In Case of Emergency (ICE) card, to record their name and the contact details of someone who can help them. The ICE card will help staff at a Safe Haven assist them quickly and effectively.

Residents do not have to have a card to use the service, but it would be useful.

Businesses that sign up to be Safe Havens can help the community without having much of an impact on their day to day work.

There if needed

Duty Manager at the Mercury Mall in Romford, Ben Robinson, said: “We signed up to the scheme straight away - it was a simple decision to make because we have thousands of customers through the doors every day.

“I don’t expect everyone to use the service but displaying the logo shows our customers that we are there should anyone need us.”

To be eligible for the scheme you must:

• be a secure Havering Council tenant for five years or more
• be able to get a mortgage offer in principle
• have at least £3,000 in savings to cover legal and other fees you’ll need to pay when you buy a property
• leave your current Council property when you move - family members can’t stay living in your current Council property.

Up to £33,000 could be available for Havering Council tenants looking to buy their own home.

The Tenant Incentive Scheme (TIS) is available if you have been a Havering Council tenant for five years or more. It is an alternative to buying your home through the Right to Buy scheme.

The one-off grant, to a maximum of £33,000, can help with a deposit for a home anywhere in the country, not just in Havering, but can’t be used to buy your existing Council home.

Priority is given to applicants currently in two-bedroom properties, as these are in highest demand from people on the waiting list. However, applications are welcome from any existing tenant.

Money for TIS is limited, so grants will be made on a first come first served basis, so apply now if you are interested in the scheme.

More info:
libertyhousing@havering.gov.uk
Supporting the community

The Havering Community in Action Portal is a website designed to help individuals or groups who want to develop services for local people in Havering.

It is designed to guide you in starting and running a group or organisation, or finding one that already exists.

The portal has been created by the Havering Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations (HAVCO) and Havering Council, and they are keen for community groups to sign up. The website is free to use for organisations and volunteers.

You can find out more here: www.haveringcommunityinaction.org.uk

Need a garage?

Council tenants can receive preferential rent rates for council garages. Weekly charges for council tenants range from £7.41 to £12.64 while costs for non-council tenants start from £9.02 to £15.30 a week.

There is a waiting list for some areas and you will need to ensure you are using the garage for a vehicle and not just for storage.

If you would like to apply to rent a garage you will need a driver’s licence, log book, MOT certificate and valid insurance.

Applicants with rent arrears will not be considered.

More info: www.havering.gov.uk/garages

Ideas to improve your estate

Tenants and leaseholders can have their say on what improvements they think should happen on their estate, as part of a £250,000 investment in communal areas across Havering.

Havering Council Community Services Manager, Marina Crofts, said: “We have £250,000 to spend in this financial year on improvements to our estates, including £50,000 for our sheltered housing schemes.

Projects could range from a new park bench to a children’s play area or a new planting scheme.

“Projects could range from a new park bench to a children’s play area or a new planting scheme.

“We are open to any ideas which will improve the local environment for our tenants and leaseholders.

“We are asking residents to let us know their ideas of what needs to be done as soon as possible.

Residents’ Panel

“The suggestions will be discussed at the first meeting of the Residents’ Funding Panel, which meets at the end of June.

“We are in the process of setting up a panel, which we hope to consist of at least nine tenants, one leaseholder and two young people, to let us know their views on schemes which could benefit other young people throughout the Borough.

“We want this money to be spent in the most effective way so it benefits as many tenants and leaseholders as possible so we hope there will be a lot of good ideas sent in for us to consider.”

Performance Targets

The performance figures for April 2015 were:

- Anti-social behaviour case satisfaction: Outcome 85.7%, Target 90.0%
- Average time to re-let empty properties: Outcome 15.2 days, Target 22 days
- Percentage of all repairs completed within target: Outcome 92.7%, Target 90%
- Percentage of properties with valid gas certificate: Outcome 99.88%, Target 100%

More info: www.havering.gov.uk/
Do it in a day

Getting repairs done quickly and effectively is important, which is why a new system is being introduced so that all day to day repairs in a specific street will be tackled on one day by the Council’s contractor, the Breyer Group.

Housing Services Maintenance Manager, Paul Wallis, said: “The aim is to improve the repairs service to Havering’s tenants and leaseholders.

“By having a known day residents can plan ahead and the Council will do more repairs on time and at the first visit and because we will be in one location, if a tenant needs something done we will be available to assist.”

Tenants should report repairs in the normal way and the Council will programme non-urgent repairs to be carried out during these special days. Also if there is a repair that hasn’t been reported, we may be able to complete it for you on the day.

The dates for the events are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Locations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 July 2015</td>
<td>Maygreen Crescent.</td>
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<tr>
<td>08 July 2015</td>
<td>Rush Green Gardens.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 July 2015</td>
<td>Ongar Way, Theydon Gardens, Danbury Road, Fyfield Road, Canfield Road, Harlow Road, Writtle Walk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 July 2015</td>
<td>The Rotunda.</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 July 2015</td>
<td>Farnham Road, Hilldene Avenue, Chippenham Road, Kings Lynn Drive, Dartfields, Rothbury House, Credilton House, Wantage House, Ingleton House, Stratford House, Ripon House, Keswick House, Ringwood House, Morpeth House, Matlock House, Lincoln House.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05 August 2015</td>
<td>Malan Square, Bader Way, Wood Lane.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Councillor Damian White said:
“It was with great pleasure that I accepted the job as Cabinet Member for Housing Services.
“I firmly believe that the Council needs to focus on the needs of tenants, listen even more to their views and, most importantly, act on them so they are reflected not just in housing policies but also in our day to day work that has such a big impact on where people live.
“That is why any tenant or leaseholder can contact me directly to raise any housing-related issue they wish.
“Whether you contact me by email or post when you send the form back to me I guarantee that it will be seen directly by myself and you will receive a reply from me.
“I look forward to hearing from you.
“Keep-up-to-date with news from Havering Council by signing up for our email updates at www.havering.gov.uk/havering-update then choose the service areas that interest you.

Victim Care Event
Thursday 18 June, 6.30pm until 8.30pm
Havering Town Hall, Main Road, Romford, RM1 3BB
Agencies present will include Metropolitan Police, Victim Support, Neighbourhood Watch and Havering Council.

RECYCLE WEEK
Monday 22 until Sunday 28 June
W: www.havering.gov.uk/recycle

KEEP-UP-TO-DATE

Tell Damian what you think...

YOUR DETAILS
Name:

Address:

email:

phone:

Your comment:

OTHER FORMATS
Havering Council will consider requests for documents to be translated or converted into other formats. More info:
www.havering.gov.uk/askhousing

www.facebook.com/haveringhousing
E: getinvolved@havering.gov.uk
Foster with Havering

For more information, meet the fostering team

Thurs 2 July 6pm-7.30pm
Town Hall, Romford

Fri 3 July 9.30am-5pm
Queen’s Hospital, Romford

Weds 15 July 1pm-2.30pm
St Peters Church, Harold Wood

Weds 22 July 9am-6pm
The Liberty, Romford

Thurs 6 Aug 6pm-7.30pm
Town Hall, Romford

Weds 26 Aug 9am-6pm
The Liberty, Romford

Call today: 01708 434 574
www.havering.gov.uk/fostering

email fostering@havering.gov.uk