Summer days in Southend

Want to learn how to take a professional quality photo? Find out how at our Camera Club!

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Welcome… to the summer issue of Insight magazine!

This edition is again arriving along with your rent statement. I hope you like the new format of the statement and find it easier to read and understand.

We are celebrating another addition with this issue – as we welcome the Fed Mag to join with Insight! This double page will be a regular feature from here on in and is written by the Southend Tenants & Residents Federation (STRF) – so if you have any questions about articles on their centre spread pages, please contact them using the details provided.

In this edition you will find a Fire Safety special feature on pages 4 & 5 - an article we were already planning before the fire at the Grampian tower block in Westcliff, which led to the tragic and sad death of a young woman and her unborn child in May. I would encourage you all to read this article and refresh your fire safety knowledge.

We also focus on the new Camera Club which has been running since late last year and now benefits from the expertise and enthusiasm of James Vessey-Miller. Read more about the club on pages 10 & 11.

I make no apology for the repeated mentions of the Southend Community Event, which takes place on 3rd August! The full advert is on the back page – mentions of the Southend Community Event on pages 10 & 11.

We are also working with South Essex College to offer ten free places on Saturday art classes in 2017 – in the wake of the Portrayal exhibition, Portraying a new image of social housing was organised by South Essex Homes, explained the inspiration for the exhibition. Maria Medina, Community Development Officer for South Essex Homes, explained the inspiration for the exhibition. She said “A national housing portrait competition was held recently, which invited housing organisations like ours to submit photos which challenged the stereotypical views of social housing tenants.

We were able to enter a number of photos for this competition, a process which made us all realise just how wrong those stereotypes can be - as we have some really interesting and inspirational council tenants living here in Southend.

The talents of Southend residents were showcased in an exhibition set up to challenge stereotypes about social housing tenants. There was an overwhelming response to our open call for residents to submit their selfies, poems, artwork, stories, photos and biographies. The exhibition, Portrayal, was organised by South Essex Homes and was hosted at The Forum, in Elmer Square. The exhibition was written works, including poems which challenged the stereotypical views of social housing tenants.

“Off the back of that, we decided to encourage our residents to show us who they are, and how they contradict the stereotypes, through whatever artistic method they preferred, and we received a fantastic range of submissions.”

We will be featuring residents’ artwork and written work in future issues of Insight.

Get Arty!

Caring around the clock

Southend Careline offers reassurance and peace of mind to our service users, their family and friends by providing a fast and reliable way to receive help quickly in an emergency, 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. Careline has received the Telecare Services Association (TSA) Accreditation for its services to residents.

Performance targets are set by the TSA regarding call response times. These are monitored regularly to ensure the quality of service provided to our customers is of the highest standard.

Southend Careline answered in excess of 141,386 alarm calls from April 2015 to March 2016.

TSA Code of Practice sets targets for answering alarm calls at 97.5 per cent of calls to be answered within 60 seconds and 99 per cent of calls to be answered within 180 seconds.

The Chart below shows Southend Careline’s response times:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Sep</td>
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<td>Oct</td>
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<td>Nov</td>
<td>97.3%</td>
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<td>Dec</td>
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</table>

Also, between May 2015 and March 2016, 321 new Careline units were installed into people’s homes – and our timescales for fitting equipment exceeded the TSA targets.

Sheltered Housing & Careline Service Manager, Margaret Hutchings, said: “We provide an excellent service to Careline users here in Southend, however we will not rest on our laurels and will continue to strive to improve further. If you have any questions about the service please call us on 01702 332062 or visit the South Essex Homes website for more information.”

Some of our excellent entries to the Portrayal exhibition were written works, including poems and short stories, so as a result of that we are launching a creative writing group to get together over the summer and attend workshops.

Essex County Council are running a project in September, offering opportunities for residents to enter items for a book they are creating entitled ‘Essex Belongs to Us’. The group will be looking to submit entries for this book.
FIRE SAFETY SPECIAL

Whilst fortunately uncommon, serious house fires can be devastating to those affected. We want to take this opportunity to encourage you, our residents, to stop what you are doing for a short while and think seriously about fire safety in your own home.

Are you doing all you can to prevent a fire? Would you know what to do if a fire broke out inside or outside your home? Please read on for some pointers which will help you to ensure that you are prepared to best respond if ever faced with a fire.

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Please take all possible steps to prevent a fire from starting in your home and building, including:

- Ensure all smoking materials are completely extinguished and never smoke in bed.
- Never leave the hob unattended whilst cooking.
- Check your electrical sockets are safe and not overloaded with multi-socket adapters.
- If you require any further Home Fire safety advice please call 0300 303 0088 or follow the Home Fire Safety link from the website: www.essex-fire.gov.uk

IF THERE IS A FIRE INSIDE YOUR HOME

- A working smoke alarm should alert you to the fire.
- Don’t open doors looking for the source of the fire. Don’t try to save personal items; your life is more important.
- Don’t try to put the fire out yourself, unless you are sure it is safe to do so.
- Leave the room at once and close the door behind you. All people should leave your home and when you are sure it is evacuated, close the front door behind you.
- In blocks of flats, use only the designated fire escape route and exits from the building. Use the stairs and not the lift.
- Don’t go back into your home for any reason.
- Call the fire brigade on the nearest telephone by dialling 999.
- If escape routes are blocked - get everyone into a room with a window that opens. Put bedding round the bottom of the door to block smoke. Open the window to attract help.

REMEMBER: FIRE SPREADS IN MINUTES... SMOKE KILLS IN SECONDS.

IF YOU LIVE IN A BLOCK OF FLATS AND THERE IS A FIRE SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE BUILDING - ‘STAY PUT - STAY SAFE’

- Buildings have been designed with fire safety as a priority. Doors, walls and floors are all designed to stop fire and smoke from spreading to other areas of the building, but this relies on the doors being kept shut and not left open.
- It should be safe to stay in your home, but close all windows and doors.
- Call the fire brigade on 999.
- You must leave immediately if smoke or heat affects your home or if you are told to by the fire service. If you are told to leave, use the stairs and not the lift.
- If escape routes are blocked - seal your front door from smoke with tape or bedding and close any ventilators.

KEEP SAFE THIS SUMMER

Essex County Fire and Rescue Service is called to an increased number of outdoor fire calls every summer as people head out for a barbecue in their gardens, to enjoy the countryside or to take a camping or caravanning trip. Divisional Officer Neil Fenwick said: “If you are planning in taking the party outside and enjoy a barbecue, it’s important to take extra care; make sure outdoor fire safety is at the top of your list.”

WHEN HAVING BARBECUES ENSURE THAT YOU:

- Follow the safety instructions provided with disposable barbecues. Never use a barbecue indoors.
- Never leave a barbecue unattended.
- Make sure your barbecue is well away from sheds, fences, trees, shrubs or garden waste.
- Use enough charcoal to cover the base of the barbecue, but not more (normally around 5cms or 2 inches).
- Keep children, pets and garden games away from the cooking area.
- After cooking, make sure the barbecue is cool before moving it.
- Empty ashes onto bare garden soil, not into dustbins or wheelie bins. If they’re hot, they can melt the plastic and cause a fire.
- Enjoy yourself, but don’t drink too much alcohol if you are in charge of the barbecue.
- Store gas cylinders outside, away from direct sunlight and frost.
- Take care when turning bottled gas barbecues on and off.
- Make sure the tap is turned off before changing the gas cylinder.
- After cooking, turn the gas supply off first and then the barbecue control. This will stop any gas from leaking.
- If you suspect a leak, turn off the gas cylinder and try brushing soapy water around all joints, watching for bubbles.
- Make sure all joints are tightened, safe and secure.
- Change gas cylinders outdoors or in a well-ventilated area.

CAMPING AND CARAVAN:

- Fit and regularly test a smoke alarm in your caravan.
- To avoid a build-up of poisonous gases make sure the caravan is ventilated, and never block air vents.
- Never use candles in or near a tent – torches are safer.
- Don’t smoke inside tents.
- Never bring a barbecue inside a tent or caravan. They create deadly carbon monoxide gas which will soon fill an enclosed space suffocating all sleeping inside.

COUNTRYSIDE SAFETY:

- Avoid open fires in the countryside. Always have them in safe, designated areas.
- Put out cigarettes and other smoking materials properly before you leave your vehicle.
- Don’t leave bottles or glass in woodlands. Sunlight shining through glass can start a fire. Take them home or put them in a waste or recycling bin.
- If you leave a fire in the countryside, report it immediately.
- Don’t attempt to tackle fires that can’t be put out with a bucket of water – leave the area as soon as possible.
- Never throw cigarette ends out of car windows – they could start a fire and endanger lives.
South Essex Homes Counselling Service

Thirty year old Holly from Leigh has completed her BA (Hons) degree in Counselling and Psychotherapy. As part of her drive to clock up the 100 hours’ worth of placements necessary to complete her degree, Holly helped South Essex Homes to launch a new counselling service for residents back in November 2015.

The project started with just two student counsellors but demand quickly grew and now South Essex Homes has a database of 13 student counsellors from both the University of Essex and Southend College.

Holly said: “I have worked for community projects in Southend for a while now, having worked with HARPs homeless charity for seven years, so I am familiar with services available in the town.

“It can be difficult to obtain counselling through the NHS as referrals are made for just six sessions and there can be lengthy waiting lists.

“As counsellors, we have far more flexibility through the South Essex Homes scheme. We can offer longer term support with a minimum of 12 sessions, which allows us to build up therapeutic relationships and gain the trust of the clients.

“I have gained invaluable experience through my work with this project, as it has allowed me to practice a number of skills working with clients with a range of issues. This in turn is also great for South Essex Homes’ residents – as whatever their problem may be, a counsellor is able and happy to help. Some of us are starting to specialise in certain areas of expertise and to use different methods of counselling too – so it is a win/win situation for the counsellors and the clients alike.”

The counselling sessions can be held at The Hub in The Victoria shopping centre or at the client’s home if they prefer.

Even though Holly’s placement has finished since her degree course ended, she is staying on the South Essex Homes database to continue seeing her existing clients and to carry on gaining experience. She added: “It’s so exciting and so rewarding to be part of this scheme. I would thoroughly recommend it to our residents and would also encourage other student counsellors to get involved.”

If you feel like you would benefit from talking through your issues with a counsellor, you can refer yourself to the counselling service by approaching South Essex Homes. It may be that you have existing mental health issues, are suffering from depression or anxiety or are not coping with grief or loss? Perhaps you have issues with hoarding or are struggling with LGBT issues, unable to come to terms with your own identity? Whatever your issue may be, our free and confidential counselling service may be the answer you are looking for.

Do You Have a Dog? Are you legal?

On 6th of April 2016, it became law that all dogs in England must be microchipped and the keeper details registered with an authorised database under the Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015. It is also a condition under the regulations to not have the keeper’s details up to date on the register. The Keeper is classed as the person with whom the dog lives most of the time.

Microchipping is a quick and painless procedure that involves a microchip being injected under the skin of the dog between the shoulder blades. The microchip has a unique number on it that is registered against the dog and keeper’s details on a national database and it lasts a lifetime.

It means that if your dog gets lost or stolen and then found, the dog will be scanned and the microchip details will be detected. This can then be checked against the database and he or she can be traced back to you, so you will be reunited straight away.

Breeders of puppies must microchip their puppies by the time they are 8 weeks old and definitely before they go to new homes. If you rehome your dog, you must pass the microchip certificate to the new owner to change the details or, to make sure it is done, you can do it yourself.

If your dog comes to the attention of the authorities and is not microchipped, you will be served with a notice to have it done within 21 days. Failure to do this will result in court proceedings and a possible fine of up to £500. This also applies to keeper details being out of date.

Southend Borough Council and Dogs Trust have been running roadshows throughout the year, providing free microchipping and checks to make sure the details are up to date. These will continue with an event on 11th August at the Woodgrange Estate with a further event in October - date and venue to be confirmed.

If you have any questions or would like to know where to get your dog microchipped, please contact me on 01702 215005.

Val Howells
Animal Warden

Garden in Bloom competition 2016

South Essex Homes and The Estate Services Focus Group would like to invite you to enter the 2016 Garden in Bloom competition.

If you are interested in participating, please complete and return the entry form below to FREEPOST South Essex Homes by 12th August.

You can send us images of your garden at its best along with your application if you wish – you can enclose photographs or a memory stick/CD so we can download the pictures electronically. If no pictures are submitted with your application, we will contact you to arrange a suitable time for someone to come to your home to take photos of your garden to be passed on to the judging panel.

The Estate Services Focus Group will finalise winners at their meeting in September.

Anyone living in any South Essex Homes property can enter!

The awards will be judged on impact, overall design including use of space, colour, originality, upkeep and presentation.

There will be three awards awarded in each of the main categories – gold, silver and bronze.

Closing Date for applications of interest is Friday 12th August.

The competition is for anyone living in any South Essex Homes property including residents in tower blocks.

Each applicant can only enter one category.

Only one entry will be accepted for each communal area.

The Estate Services Focus Group will finalise winners at their meeting in September.

If you have any questions or would like to know where to get your dog microchipped, please contact me on 01702 215005.
Dear Tenants & Residents,

Membership of the Federation is made up by recognised tenants, nominated members of the Southend Tenants & Residents Federation and a nominated member of an Action Group. Meetings of the group are held on the last Tuesday of each month except August and December. Two elected voting representatives from Residents Associations or six elected voting representatives from the Tenants Voice Association attend the meetings to debate topics of importance to the Social Housing sector.

Over the years, the Federation has adopted, through consultation with its members, a constitution, an equal opportunity policy and a code of conduct. There is dedicated support from Community Development Officers from South Essex Homes.

The Southend Tenants & Residents Federation is in place to ensure that the services obtained by your landlord are justified by you, the residents, and that you constantly have a valuable input into improving the community and environment that we all live in.

The Federation are tenants and residents who are trying to make the place we live the best it can be for all of us. They are totally independent from both South Essex Homes and Southend Borough Council. The Federation have now got their own office where all tenants and residents of Southend can come along and discuss any issues, concerns, comments, enquiries, suggestions, etc.

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Gold Award

Have you had contact with an Officer of South Essex Homes, or maybe a contractor who has gone that extra mile to provide you with excellent service? This would involve the officer or contractor dealing with something that is not normally part of their every day job.

Or perhaps you have a good neighbour who helps you or others around you who are less able than themselves?

If so, then why not nominate them for a Gold Award?

We’ll need information on what the person does that’s beyond the call of duty. If possible, please also get other people to sign their support of your nomination. Please complete the slip below and attach it to a letter detailing your nomination. Once received, we will put your nomination forward to the panel made up of Southend Tenants and Residents Federation and the Tenants Voice Association for consideration; the winners will be awarded a certificate and £25 shopping vouchers.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please forward this slip to:

The Chair of the STRF
79 Southchurch Avenue
Southend on Sea, Essex SS1 2RS
Or e-mail to: shirley.oreilly@strf.org.uk
Telephone: 01702 610408
Mobile: 07876 116552

Nominated Person
Their address or department
Their telephone number (if known)
Your name
Your telephone number
Please include details of the nomination on a separate sheet of paper

The Residents Scrutiny Forum

The Residents Scrutiny Forum (RSF) have now finished their report on Sheltered Housing which is available to read on the STRF website. We are now working on a short review into the Contact Centre.

We originally scrutinised the Contact Centre when it was based at Cheviot House, but for over a year now it has been based in the Civic Centre. The RSF was asked by a number of residents to look into the contact centre as delays problems were being reported at various focus group meetings.

So the RSF made arrangements to visit the Centre so we could gain a better idea of how they work, and to see if we could identify the issues raised. The report is now in the final phases and will be ready for publication soon.

The RSF has also been asked to look into the Anti-social behaviour (ASB) service, which we have agreed to do. However, the ASB service is very complex and will take around a year to complete. In the meantime we will be looking at the service delivered by the Community Development Team.

We would like to thank residents for all the input and encouragement we have had, and ask if any resident has any ideas or suggestions into a service they feel is not working well. Or if indeed it is working well please let us know, as we work for you!
Do you enjoy taking photos and ‘capturing the moment’ on camera?
Do you want to expand your photographic knowledge and skills?
Then read on!

The Southend Camera Club is a friendly local social photographic group that is free and open to all, regardless of age or ability.

With regular meetings, tutorials and workshops, the group is the perfect place to learn and develop your photographic skills.

Covering a broad range of subjects from a beginner’s guide to photography right through to more advanced photographic techniques, the group caters for all.

It is a fun and engaging social experience for all those with an interest in photography.

The Southend Camera Club was launched in late 2015 after an article in a previous Insight magazine asked interested residents to come forward.

The club meets monthly either in a sheltered scheme communal lounge or out on location within the borough of Southend. The members are of varying ages and from different walks of life but have one shared interest; photography!

When they meet on location, they gather socially before going off to take photographs. The range of photos produced highlights how we all view the world individually and see beauty in different things. The pictures on this page were taken by club members during a meeting at the Western Esplanade beach in May.

By getting together, the group can discuss techniques, equipment and share best practice on how to achieve the perfect shot.

Earlier this year, the Camera Club visited the Insight Design studios in Sutton Road, where this very magazine is designed, but which also houses a professional photography studio. Owner Matt Crew showed the members around and was able to answer technical questions about their cameras and photography in general.

Pat Butcher is a resident in Maple Square, Southend and first approached South Essex Homes with the idea of launching a Camera Club last year. Pat’s vision is to see the club expand to include a diverse range of people from all ages and backgrounds meeting up to share their love of being behind a camera.

He explained “We are really keen to expand the club so would be very interested to hear from anyone with an interest in cameras and photography who would like to join our friendly group, share ideas with likeminded people and add to their photo portfolio!

“You don’t need to be an expert photographer – anyone can join! Our members so far include beginners through to people who have been professionals and we can all learn things from each other.”

Club member Kirston Tozer of Southchurch Road, added: “I have been taking photos for many years as an amateur with the hope that someday I would be able to help other likeminded people to take their hobby to the next level. By joining a club hopefully we can all pass on the knowledge that we have learnt over the years to each other to enable us to take better photos. A lot of people buy cameras, have them set on ‘auto’ and never get to use some of the fantastic features that their camera has – so by joining our club this is something that you will be able to learn”

The club has recently appointed professional Freelance Photographer James Vessey-Miller who has volunteered to facilitate and run workshops, tutorials and events. James is a local Photographer with many years of industry and Fine Art experience, who is also the Curator of Photography for the Estuary Fringe C.I.C. You can learn more about his work at www.jamesvesseymiller.com.

So if you enjoy capturing the perfect portrait or are always on the lookout for a lovely landscape – the camera club could be a great new adventure for you!

For more information please contact Sam Elliott in the Community Development Team on 01702 212650 or you can email the group at southendcameraclub@gmail.com.

The Southend Camera Club was launched in late 2015 after an article in a previous Insight magazine asked interested residents to come forward.

BOOK CLUB

MEETS EVERY 1ST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH
@ THE HUB, 1ST FLOOR, VICTORIA SHOPPING CENTRE,
4.30-6.30PM

DO YOU LIKE READING?
WANT TO CHAT WITH OTHERS
ABOUT YOUR VIEWS?
COME ALONG & FIND OUT MORE WITH A CUPPA. CALL MARIA MEDINA FOR MORE INFO 01702 212704

OVER 50 DIFFERENT TITLES
LARGE PRINT & AUDIO VERSION AVAILABLE

INTERESTED?

SOUTHEND CAMERA CLUB | 11
Estate Inspections

Estate inspections involve officers from South Essex Homes surveying each area of the town which includes properties managed by us, in order to look for any issues that require our attention.

These inspections are now concentrated in the spring and autumn months of the year – which hopefully avoids the worst of any adverse weather in the winter as well as the busiest time for staff holidays in the summer. In view of this, there are no inspections in July or August.

The table below contains the dates and locations of estate inspections up to the time that the next issue of Insight is due out in the autumn.

Residents are encouraged to come along on these inspections to see this process in action and point out any problems that they are aware of. If you would like to come along, please meet us at the start point at the stated time.

### Estate Inspections

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<th>LOCATION</th>
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<td>07/09/16</td>
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<td>John Street, George Street, Dane Street, Longmans</td>
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<td>Norman Harris House</td>
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<td>09/09/16</td>
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<td>Kingfisher Close, Sandpiper Close, Eagle Way, Fraser Close, Cunningham Close</td>
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<td>Anson Chase, Ashanti Close</td>
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<td>Saxton Gardens, Viking Court, Woolpack</td>
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<td>Delaware Road, Delaware Crescent, Ness Road</td>
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<td>Avon Way, West Road</td>
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<td>Barringtons, Christchurch Court, Nursery Place, Nicholson House</td>
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<td>22/09/16</td>
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<td>Blackdown, Brecon, Grampian, Buckingham House</td>
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<td>Townfields, St Mary’s Court (both inspections being completed at the same time)</td>
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<td>14/10/16</td>
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<td>Fairfax Drive, Cleveland Drive</td>
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Gas Safety

All property owners, including leaseholders, are legally responsible for ensuring their gas fittings and appliances are safe and in good working order – you are advised to have everything checked annually by a Gas Safe registered installer.

A major problem caused by defects is carbon monoxide poisoning, which can kill in less than two hours. It is a gas which has no smell or taste and is quite invisible, killing up to 50 people a year and causing hundreds of injuries.

If your gas appliance has not been checked for 12 months it may not only be unsafe but you will also be in breach of your lease. The Mulberrys please note that if you currently sub-let (rent out) your flat you are a Landlord and you are required by law to provide evidence that your gas appliances are in good and safe working order. You can find a Gas Safe registered engineer at www.gassaferegister.co.uk.

Please note that if you have any doubts about the safety of gas equipment it should be turned off immediately.

### What you need to do...

Faulty gas appliances cause around 40 deaths a year – deaths that could be avoided. As a leaseholder it is your responsibility to have an annual gas safety check carried out on all your gas appliances.

- **As a leaseholder** it is your responsibility to ensure that your gas appliances are safe and regularly serviced.
- **It is advised** you get your appliances gas serviced every 12 months, which must be undertaken by a Gas Safe Registered Installer, you must also produce the certificate to South Essex Homes.
- **If you have any doubts about the safety of gas equipment** it should be turned off immediately.

### Why?

Getting your gas appliances checked regularly will:

- **Help to keep you, anyone else who lives with you and your neighbours** safe.
- **Reduce the risk of your appliances breaking down**
- **Make sure your appliances work safely and efficiently**
- **Help to reduce the running costs of appliances**
- **Give you peace of mind**

### DON’T

- Smoke or strike any matches
- Turn electrical switches on or off as they cause sparks
- Use any phone at your home to report the gas leak

### DO

- Put out any naked flames
- Open any doors and windows
- Keep people away from the area affected
- Turn off the meter at the control valve

If you haven’t provided a Gas Safety Certificate to South Essex Homes in the last 12 months you will be in breach of your lease. Please send a copy of the latest certificate to:

**Leasehold Services, South Essex Homes, PO Box 5817, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS1 9EL**

You will be in breach of your lease and may face legal action if you cannot provide a valid record to us that your gas appliances are safe.

**If you smell gas or suspect you have a gas leak in your home, however slight, you should: Contact TRANSCO emergency on free phone 0800 111 999**

Kind regards

Laura Pope

Specialist Income Team Manager

As ever, our Leaseholder Services team will be represented at the Southend Community Event in Priory Park on 3rd August. Please see the adver on the back page for more details and we’ll look forward to seeing you there.

Get involved in Insight devoted to Leaseholders.

In this issue we are focussing on the very important issue of gas safety so please take the time to read this page and then double check that you are complying with the regulations. I hope you find this information useful.

As ever, our Leaseholder Services team will be represented at the Southend Community Event in Priory Park on 3rd August. Please see the adver on the back page for more details and we’ll look forward to seeing you there.

Laura Pope

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WHAT'S ON IN SOUTHEND?

WHAT IS IT?
WHEN CAN I GO?
WHERE IS IT?
TELL ME ABOUT IT!

Southend Community Event 2016
Family fun and information day
Priory Park, Southend: Wednesday 3rd August 11am - 4pm

A Present from Southend
27 February - 31 December 2016
Beecroft Art Gallery
So much more than fish and chips on the beach - in the past, a day at Southend could include a funfair, a dance or a film, shopping for souvenirs; not to mention the journey here and back. This exhibition includes paintings, posters, photographs and souvenirs from the art and social history collections representing seaside holidays in Southend from the early 1800s to the present day.

Puppet Festival
06 - 07 August 2016
11:00 - 17:30
Southend Pier, Royal Pavilion, Southend-On-Sea
The Southend Pier Puppet Festival returns this August for a weekend of fun and entertainment. With Punch and Judy shows running throughout both days this event promises to appeal to families and people of all ages.

Music in the Park
Saturdays and Sundays throughout the summer
3-5pm
At Bandstand, Priory Park
FREE to attend
Bring a chair or a blanket and come and enjoy a summer season of fantastic open air live music concerts at the beautiful Priory Bandstand.

TELL ME ABOUT IT!

Mike Gatrell says...

In the last issue of Insight, I shared with you some of the main headlines from the Government's new housing legislation. Now that the Housing & Planning Act 2016 has been given royal assent, its significant implications are beginning to be understood, so I would now like to elaborate on my last message by sharing further details with you.

A number of the more detailed elements of the legislation are however still to be finalised through powers delegated to the Secretary of State or by further reference back to parliament at some stage.

What we do know is that, at some point, all new tenancies of council properties will be for a fixed term period of between two and five years, although possibly in certain situations up to ten years. Towards the end of any fixed term period, the household circumstances will have to be assessed again in order to determine whether the tenancy can be extended or will need to be ended.

We also know that tenants on a higher income (likely to be a combined total of £31,000 or above for the two highest earners in a household) will begin to pay higher rents, eventually up to 80 per cent of the assessed local market rate level.

An accompanying change is that tenants of housing associations are to be given the right to buy their homes, with a similar discount to council tenants. The housing associations will have the value of the discount refunded to them by the Government, who in turn will charge a levy to local authorities, like Southend, with council housing stock in order to recover the payments made to housing associations.

In order to fund this Government levy, councils will be expected to sell off their higher value properties as they become empty.

It was announced last year that from the current financial year and for the following three years, tenants rents will reduce cumulatively by one per cent per year – which will mean a 0.9 million plus reduction in rent income for Southend by the end of that period. Alongside that, the changes being introduced by the new Act are certain to have significant implications for the Council and South Essex Homes.

All change for the South Essex Homes Board

The three newly appointed Councillor Board members are: Meg Davidson, David Burzotta and David Norman.

The independent members are: Tony Churton, David Joyce and Sacha Jevans. There are two vacancies for independent Board members and Corporate Services are actively recruiting for those positions.

The tenant members are: Wendy Greenberg, Catherine Haycock and Keith Ducker.

South Essex Homes has partnered with swapandmove.co.uk to offer our tenants an easy-to-use online service to help them swap and move homes.

This new service matches our tenants with other tenants who may wish to swap homes with them. Swaps are available both locally and nationally.

Tenants of South Essex Homes can use www.swapandmove.co.uk free of charge. Rather than waiting on a transfer list, tenants can now actively search for the right home for them. Mutual exchange can be a much faster way of finding a new home, and is becoming increasingly popular for both tenants and landlords. It enables landlords to increase the housing options that they offer, while giving tenants access to a larger number of properties.

Traci Dixon, Group Manager, stated “Partnering with swapandmove.co.uk will ensure that we offer our tenants a highly effective mutual exchange service, where they can swap and move homes anywhere in the UK.”

www.swapandmove.co.uk is run by Abritas Ltd, the largest supplier of web-based housing software solutions in the UK and a founder member of the government’s Home Swap Direct scheme.

Helping tenants to swap and move homes

If, for whatever reason, you have a problem reading this document, please contact us to discuss alternative formats available.

0800 833 160

Facebook (figures correct as at 21st June 2016).

Next time you’re online, check us out!
Southend Community Event

Family fun and information day

Loads of useful info stalls

All-day Entertainment
Come and meet our characters Tilley, Daisy & Rory

Cake bake competition

Tea Marquee
Barbecue
Indian Food

Bouncy Castles
£1 all day per castle

Mr Dickie Bows school of dance

Dog Show... bring your dog

Priory Park, Southend
Wednesday 3rd August 11am - 4pm

This year, we are proud to be supporting our chosen charity: Guide Dogs for the Blind
Registered Charity No: 209617

Find us on Facebook: Southend Community Event
Follow us on Twitter #sendcommunityev

For more information, please contact Shirley O’Reilly on 07876 116552