Resident Terry Swinney (left) and Chair of the STRF Shirley O-Reilly (right) join Community Development Manager Stuart Long judging the cake baking competition at this year’s Southend Community Event.
Hello and welcome to the Autumn 2017 issue of Insight magazine.

In this issue, we are introducing you to two of our tenants who are passionate about making a difference in their communities. First we meet Bob on pages 4 & 5, who Chairs the Southchurch Residents Association and through dedication and a lot of paperwork has raised over £15,000 to provide events and activities for residents of three local blocks.

Then on pages 6 & 7 we speak to Linda – who has spearheaded a local group designed to combat social isolation. I had a lovely afternoon chatting to Linda and meeting Buddy (her huge black cat) and was thoroughly blown away by the success she is achieving and the lives that are being changed through Piertalk.
What an inspiring pair of residents!

We are launching a new feature which will see us turn the spotlight on one of our teams in each future issue of Insight so you get a better idea about what they do and how and when you should contact them. First off, we feature our Tenancy Services Team on page 3 which I hope you find informative.

As well as that we will be introducing you to members of our Board over coming issues and where better to start than with our newly appointed Chair, Roger Eastwood, on pages 10 & 11.

Believe it or not, this will be the last issue of Insight for 2017, so may I be among the first to send you all the best for the festive season! We will be back with the next issue in January.

Julia

Julia Pack
Marketing & Communications Co-ordinator
(and Editor of Insight)

South Essex Homes re-launches App

We are pleased to re-launch our free bespoke smart phone App, giving our residents the chance to contact us whenever and wherever they want to.

Residents can report issues and attach photographs to help explain their enquiry.

To download the App, please search for ‘South Essex Homes’ in your phone’s App store, Play Store or marketplace.

When you first download it and make your first report, you will be asked to complete your personal details including your payment reference number. Once you’ve done this, the information is stored securely so that every time you subsequently contact us through the App you don’t need to repeat that process and the report we receive will tell us who you are and the address you are contacting us about.

Through this App, residents can report repairs and anti-social behaviour. As well as these functions, users will also be kept right up to date with details of any forthcoming events. There is also a ‘Rent’ section where residents can set a rent reminder and access budgeting tools.

Lynsey Hurd, Marketing & Communication Co-ordinator, said: “The use of Apps and mobile technology is more popular than ever and we are pleased to re-launch our new app giving more choice for our residents about how they contact us. Residents can report issues such as graffiti, as and when they see it, take a photo and send it direct to us - it is really easy to use and completely free”

An elephant never forgets to wear its pendant - neither should you!

Remember to always wear your Careline pendant either around your neck or on your wrist – you never know when you may need to push the button!
Our Tenancy Services Teams are made up of 12 Officers, 7 Assistants and 2 Managers.

You, our residents, told us that you wanted to be able to speak to a member of staff who could deal with all of your questions and concerns rather than being passed from department to department.

To make this possible, a few years ago we split the 6000-odd homes that we manage on behalf of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council into 12 ‘patches’ - six in the ‘East Area’ and six in the ‘West Area’ – each containing roughly 500 properties.

Each of these patches is looked after by a Tenancy Services Officer, who is the first point of contact for those tenants regarding any tenancy issues, supported by Assistants. The team is managed by two Tenancy Services Managers – one for the East area and one for West.

The responsibilities of the Tenancy Services Team include dealing with:

- **Signing up new tenants** - checking the details of people’s housing register applications, carrying out the viewings and explaining the tenancy conditions.
- **Low level rent arrears** – visiting tenants to help them bring their accounts up to date before the matter escalates to our Income Management Team.
- **General tenancy matters** – such as making changes to tenancies including mutual exchanges, successions and changing tenant details.
- **Communal anti-social behaviour issues** – such as parking complaints, pets, and problems with the use of communal areas.
- **Breaches of tenancy conditions** – the Officers carry out property inspections to ensure homes are being maintained properly. They also deal with issues where tenants are not allowing access for important appointments such as gas safety checks.
- **Termination of tenancies** – when tenants move out or pass away, Officers deal with the necessary paperwork and when the property is available to re-let, they advertise it using OnTheMove.
- **Tenancy sustainment work** – working closely with colleagues in our Community Development Team, the team provides support to troubled tenants, working with partner agencies to help them through difficult times in their lives. They also help with hoarders, assisting them to maintain a safer living environment.
- **Estate Walkabouts** – carried out in every area twice a year, these involve walking around the area taking a close look at buildings and communal areas to highlight any issues that need attention. Any members of the public are welcome to come along during these inspections and point out any pressing issues - dates are advertised here in Insight magazine and on our website.
- **Suggesting estate improvements** – if staff become aware of an issue and can think of a potential solution then they will make a suggestion to the Council – for example suggesting the introduction of bollards to tackle parking problems.
- **Enforcement action** – although they always try to work with a tenant to help them sustain their tenancy, they do sometimes resort to taking action through the courts to obtain possession orders, for example.

You can find out who your local officer is by visiting the South Essex Homes website under the ‘Your Home’ section. Here you will find an A-Z list of every street and building where we manage properties – by clicking on your street, you will find your Tenancy Services Officer and details of how to contact them directly. Alternatively, please call our Contact Centre on 0800 833160.

And if you see your Officer out and about, don’t forget to stop and say ‘hello’!
Bob, who is 60 years old, has lived in Southend for 13 years, having moved here from Swanley in Kent, but is originally a South Londoner from Crystal Palace.

Bob has been married for 10 years to Ingrid, who is the reason he moved to Southend. He said: “I have two kids of my own with no grandchildren and Ingrid has three of her own with six grandchildren so I guess that makes me a step grandad to six!!”

Having achieved great success in obtaining funding for his local community, we asked Bob to tell us about the work he has done and offer advice to other tenants who are involved in a Residents’ Association or are considering starting up a new one…

How long have you been involved in your local community? When and why did you start?

That’s a good one! I was a pain in the backside to South Essex Homes originally trying to get things done in Barringtons such as replacing the main entrance security door and campaigned for the car park to be made residents only with a barrier. I had to go to Council meetings and pester anyone who would listen to get it done. It took about 2 years of hard work in the end but is in place now.

After this it was suggested that I should join some Focus Groups. I am currently on the Responsive Repairs and Gas Maintenance Focus Group, the Planned Maintenance Focus Group and the Estate Services Focus Group, and I am also a Resident Void Inspector.

I attend regular Local Community Meetings (LCM) and I am also on the Executive Committee of the boroughwide Neighbourhood Watch, as well as Chair of the Association. I can’t remember when I first became involved in local issues but it was because of the issues we had and still have in Barringtons and as you can see it has just grown from there. I was also a school governor while in Kent...I think that’s about it!

What does your role in the Southchurch Residents’ Association involve?

As Chair of the Association, I am responsible for organising the committee to fulfil their roles and carry out their duties whilst also finding leads for them to follow up regarding entertainment, trips etc. People know they can come to me and wherever possible I will try to help by pointing them in the right direction or giving advice, help and assistance. I am also responsible for the Newsletters and distribution and all that goes with the Chair’s role both in and out of regular meetings.
Why do you do it? What do you personally gain from your community involvement?

I do what I do because I care about the area and want it to become a better place for everyone to live in, with a better community spirit (maybe that’s my age showing through!). All I get from it is a sense of achievement when things get done to improve the area and make it a safer place for everyone to be.

What sort of thing has your Residents’ Association been involved with? What are its main achievements?

We are only a young organisation so as yet we have nothing major to shout about apart from bringing three nearby blocks together within the one Residents Association and allowing people to make new friends. I suppose our major success has been with the funding which will allow us to build the Association and achieve the aims we set ourselves.

Please tell us about the successful funding bids you’ve made…what are they for?

We have seen great success this year with our applications for funding – receiving a total of £15,760 from various sources including the People’s Health Trust (through the Health Lottery), Rosca Trust, Olympus Keymed, One Stop’s ‘carriers for causes’ and Tesco’s ‘bags of help’.

The bids were for equipment needed for us to deliver the sort of things residents have asked for such as coach trips, keep fit groups, bingo, karaoke and professional entertainers. It will also fund other equipment needed to bring the Association to life - such as all the outside furniture, BBQ, gazebo, indoor games and equipment and we hope to be able to purchase an indoor bowls set up soon.

Importantly though, it is essential that these things are sustainable into the future so local people continue to benefit from this funding.

What advice would you give other Residents’ Associations on how to be successful in bidding for money?

Research everything that residents want to achieve thoroughly. Talk to as many residents as possible to get their thoughts on the area they live in and how it could realistically be achieved. Find out what they want to see and get as many people as possible on board, either through attending meetings or joining the committee, or if they want to become involved but not at committee level, have a list of helpers ready. When you fill in applications do it from the hearts of the people you have talked to and be prepared for mountains of paperwork and online form filling!

What would you say to people thinking of joining a residents association or starting up a new one?

It is worth the effort involved but it is a lot of hard work so you need to join up with people who are just as dedicated as you are, as you will need a strong team around you. The major thing we have learnt is not to expect immediate success. Things take time and without funding it may seem like you are banging your head on a brick wall as you cannot hold the type of event you may want to.

You have to start with small events that may only make £30 or £40 but if you can do a few of those you can move onto bigger things. Our first event last Christmas made under £25 but we put that towards the next one and now the funding is in place. We are hiring professional entertainment and hiring coaches for outings as well as paying a fitness instructor weekly.

If you would like to join an existing Residents’ Association or want any help setting up a new one, please contact our Community Development Team on 01702 212650 who will be happy to assist you.

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

0800 833 160
Feeling lonely? Join Piertalk!

Linda Prince is on a personal crusade to tackle social isolation in Southend.

Linda, now aged 64, is Birmingham born and bred but moved to Essex in the year 2000, first to Chelmsford before relocating to her flat in Sherwood Way, Southend, 15 years ago.

With no family members and knowing no-one in the town, Linda soon found herself cooped up in her flat and scared to venture out. Apart from travelling to and from her job in London, for her first 8 years in Southend, Linda sat on the couch becoming depressed and extremely lonely.

It was then that she discovered 'Streetlife', a national website operating local social networking chat rooms for people of a specific area or town - so users could ask their neighbours for recommendations for local tradespeople and services, for example. However Linda decided to take to the website asking if anyone wanted to meet for a coffee or go to the cinema.

She explained: “It seemed like the perfect opportunity to meet new, local friends and companions but it took a few attempts before one lady felt sorry for me and responded! We met for coffee and gradually started up a social group within Streetlife and a few of us would meet up locally for walks, drinks or other social activities.”

When the Streetlife website was closed down last year, Linda started up a 'Streetlife Southend' Facebook page where she advertised the group's meet ups.

It was then that Kamil, one of the Council's social workers, heard about what they were doing and went to visit Linda with advice on what to do next. She went to the Southend Association of Voluntary Services (SAVS) in Alexandra Street and, with their help, formed Piertalk as a non-profit making group in April 2017.

A committee was formed and they started crowd funding. They have since received two grants – a Southend Borough Council ‘in year’ grant and one from the Rosca Trust. Olympus has also kindly donated £250 to the group.

Piertalk now offers a range of regular social activities that members are welcome to attend or dip in and out of as they like. There is something for everyone including meeting at the pub or going for a meal, walks, quizzes, snooker and Scrabble. Members also meet for trips to London for a walk or museum visit and late lunch. (please see full timetable on opposite page)

Linda added: “We arrange many of our events during the daytime or at weekends and always consider bus routes so people can get there cheaply and easily.

“We are even trying a new F&F event – which stands for ‘fun and frivolity’. It’s basically an afternoon night club downstairs at the Grosvenor Casino including a bubbly reception and a DJ playing 60s, 70s and 80s music – but it..."
tells place during the day so members can still get home safely on the bus afterwards! We’re holding the first one on 19th December and if it’s successful we can turn it into a regular event. We’re always open to suggestions of new events we can hold!”

Members are asked to pay a £12 annual subscription fee to cover administration costs, which ensures the group is sustainable into the future. These fees along with any funding received help to subsidise events, so most of them are free to attend or there may be a minimal charge.

Linda produces a weekly newsletter promoting that week’s events, which members are sent via email or Linda will send it by post for those without internet access.

Piertalk currently has over 130 members, most of whom are retired, soon to retire or new to the area - but anyone is welcome to join the meetings. Linda said: “I know the prospect of walking in somewhere where you don’t know anyone could be a daunting prospect, but we are a really friendly bunch of people and we all fully understand loneliness and isolation. I am happy to meet up with prospective new members over a coffee on a one-to-one basis to put their mind at rest and to ensure that they know at least one person when they then come along to group meetings.

“I don’t want anybody sitting at home alone when they could be out with us!”

Looking to the future, Linda would like to see Piertalk develop by reaching out to sheltered housing schemes and perhaps starting to offer a service whereby they look out for members, send them a birthday card or flowers when they’re in hospital – the sort of things that people take for granted when they have family and friends nearby. She is also keen to inform local GPs about what Piertalk offers so they can refer patients to the group who are suffering depression as a result of social isolation.

Linda said: “I genuinely think we have so much to offer anyone in that situation so they need never be lonely again… I know I won’t be!”

A party to officially launch the group is being held on 26th October – so please call to book your place.

To find out more, please visit www.piertalk.com or call Linda on 07474 119899 or Eric on 07779 415234 between 10am and 6pm.

### Piertalk monthly events (correct as at September 2017)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>What is it and where?</th>
<th>When</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular Meet Up</td>
<td>Last Post, Southend&lt;br&gt;For lunch, drinks and chat</td>
<td>2nd and 4th Friday of each month from 1pm onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Walk</td>
<td>Join us as we discover London by bus, boat or just for a walk – see newsletter for details</td>
<td>First Tuesday of each month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk and Breakfast</td>
<td>Walk along the seafront from Pier Hill to the Toby restaurant (Halfway House) for breakfast</td>
<td>First Saturday of the month. Meet top of Pier Hill at 10am or if you don’t wish to walk please arrive at the Halfway House at about 10.45am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday lunch</td>
<td>See newsletter for locations</td>
<td>Second Sunday of each month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrabble club</td>
<td>Nosh, The Forum, Elmer Square, Southend&lt;br&gt;Come along for a game or two!</td>
<td>2nd and 4th Saturday of each month at 10.30am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiz night</td>
<td>Naval and Military Club, 20 Royal Terrace, Southend&lt;br&gt;A good night out with cheap drinks!</td>
<td>3rd Friday of each month at 8pm – meet at the bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Snooker club</td>
<td>Naval and Military Club, 20 Royal Terrace, Southend&lt;br&gt;No experience necessary to play! Cost: £3</td>
<td>4th Thursday of each month at 2.15pm – meet outside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book club</td>
<td>Nosh, The Forum, Elmer Square, Southend&lt;br&gt;If you enjoy reading, come along to discuss our latest book</td>
<td>4th Saturday of the month at 10.30am</td>
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Children’s Christmas Party
at ROOM 24 24 Eastern Esplanade, Southend on Sea SS1 2ER

The Southend Communities Outreach Group are pleased to be inviting 100 children to their Christmas Party which will be held at Room 24 Southend on Sea on Monday 18th December 2017.

Only 100 places are available and these will be provisionally allocated on a first come, first served basis.

In order to help towards costs this year, there will be a small charge of £1.00 per child, which is payable upon return of the booking form.

The party starts at 4.30pm with food being served at 6pm; and with a visit from Father Christmas it is sure to be a fun filled afternoon, the party will then finish at 6.30pm.

Party with Sid will be in attendance. Children must be aged between 0-12 years old. Parents are asked to stay at the party with their children.

If your child would like to attend please return your form by Friday 24th November with relevant payment.

Cheques should be made payable to Southend Communities Outreach Group. Cash to be paid in person at the Reception, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS2 6FY. Please ask for Sue Rickard in the Community Development Team.

If you would like any further information please contact Shirley O’Reilly on 07876116552.

I would like my child(ren) to attend the Children’s Christmas Party at Room 24 - 18th December 2017

Name: ___________________________ Gender: ___________ Age: ___________________________
Name: ___________________________ Gender: ___________ Age: ___________________________
Name: ___________________________ Gender: ___________ Age: ___________________________
Name: ___________________________ Gender: ___________ Age: ___________________________

Are there any special dietary requirements? _____________________________________________

Parent’s Name: ___________________________ Telephone: ___________________________
Address: __________________________________________ Email: _________________________

Return with £1.00 to Southend Communities Outreach Group via Sue Rickard, Community Development Team, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend on Sea, Essex, SS2 6FY
Southend Community Event

Another year for the Southend Community Event has been and gone. This year’s event like all others has been a great success with more than 4,000 people turning out through the day in spite of the odd shower of rain.

Over the years the Community Event has grown, from the early days at the Kursaal then it moved to the Adult Community College in Ambleside Drive. From there it was relocated to the Youth Centre in Delaware Road and then to Garon Park, the last move was to Priory Park which was done to accommodate the vast amount of people who were turning up each year.

All of the committees that have arranged the event over the past 17 years worked tirelessly for several months each year to give residents a lot of information stalls and a great day out. The Community Event was the largest of its kind throughout the UK that was entirely organised by Tenants for Tenants.

Sadly, this year’s Community Event will be the last and Southend Tenants and Residents would like to give thanks to all the organising committees, past and present for the extremely hard work they have done to get the Community Event off the ground.

Where the Community Event leaves off, the Southend Communities Outreach Group (S.C.O.G) will take up the reins by doing smaller events on the many Housing Estates and in Sheltered Homes across the borough with the same type of theme as the Community Event.

We at Southend Tenants and Residents Federation would also like to thank all staff members from South Essex Homes and Southend Borough Council for their contributions and input to this great event over the years. It would be remiss of us to forget the valuable input and donations over the years from our many contractors employed by South Essex Homes and for that we thank you.

Thank you all and Goodbye

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 members of the 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
75 Southchurch Avenue,
Southend on Sea, Essex SS1 2RS
Or e-mail to: shirley.oreilly@strf.org.uk
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

Thank you all and Goodbye
A Bit About the Board

South Essex Homes is governed by a Board of Directors, who have overall responsibility for the company. Our Board of Directors is made up of three local residents, three Councillors and five independent members. Our current Board Members are:

- Roger Eastwood (Independent - Chair)
- Meg Davidson (Councillor - Vice Chair)
- David McGlone (Councillor)
- David Norman (Councillor)
- Rosalind Lane (Resident - Adult & Child Safeguarding Scrutineer)
- Keith Ducker (Resident)
- Barbara Lambert (Resident)
- Tony Churton (Independent)
- David Joyce (Independent)
- Sacha Jevans (Independent)
- Prof. Michael Oxley (Independent)

Board meetings are open to the public so, if you are interested, you are most welcome to come along to these sessions. Dates of future meetings are published in the ‘About Us’ section of our website under ‘Governance’, where you are also able to download and view Board papers just prior to each meeting.

The next meeting of the Board takes place on Wednesday 6th December.

If you want to find out any more about our Board, please feel free to give our Corporate Services Team a call via the Contact Centre on 0800 833160, send an email to sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk or write to us at South Essex Homes, PO Box 5817, Southend on Sea, SS1 9EL.

In this first issue of The Board Report, we will meet Roger Eastwood, who became Chair of the Board in September.

Name Roger Eastwood
Age 59
Where do you live?
In the beautiful village of Hartfield in East Sussex – where Winnie the Pooh was born and Poohsticks bridge is situated. It’s about 70 miles from Southend but I can usually drive there in about 1 hour 20 minutes on a good run.

Please tell us about your family
I live with my wife Penny and our two cats. We have two grown up children – my daughter is 33 and my son 31 and we are still waiting for our first grandchild!

Do you have any hobbies?
I am a keen reader of sci-fi novels and my favourite author is Philip K Dick, whose books I’ve read since I was a child but whose popularity has grown over recent years since his books have been made into films such as Bladerunner and Total Recall, and a recent series of ‘Electric Dreams’ short stories on TV.
I enjoy cooking and do most of it in our house and I find cutting the grass very therapeutic too, if you can call that a hobby?!

Having been born and brought up in South London, I am also a keen Crystal Palace fan.

**What is your career background?**
I am a Chartered Accountant and worked in the insurance sector for most of my working life. I am semi-retired now with no ‘day job’ so to speak, but do have a few non-executive positions.

**What non-executive positions do you hold?**
As well as being a Board member for South Essex Homes, I am also a Board member for Eastbourne Homes, who manage around 3600 council homes for the East Sussex town and sit on the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for the NHS. I am also on the Hartfield Parish Council.

I have previously been on the Board of other housing associations, including one in the East Thames area at the time they oversaw the building of the Olympic Village for the London 2012 Olympics.

Did you know that apartments in the Olympic village had to be built without kitchens, as the athletes were on a strict diet so ate specially prepared meals in a canteen area? Therefore one room in each Olympian’s apartment was left empty and a kitchen was only fitted later after the Games were over, once they went on to be sold as general housing. You learn all kinds of interesting facts through being on Boards!

**When and why did you first join the SEH Board?**
I joined the Board about 18 months ago because I could see how my experience could be put to good use at South Essex Homes.

**What do you think of Southend?**
I really like it here and have brought my wife up a couple of times for a short break – we enjoy going down to the seashore as we do especially like seaside resorts. Some previous research on our family history by a relative of mine has suggested an Essex connection and, since I found out that there is an area called ‘Eastwood’ near Southend, I do wonder if there is a connection there with my surname – some more research is needed on that I think!

**What does being a Board member involve?**
We meet regularly throughout the year and scrutinise how the company is being run – asking questions such as ‘Are the management team doing what they are supposed to do?’ and ‘Do we provide a good housing service to residents?’ We also check and balance the figures, looking out for any changes to trends of complaints figures or satisfaction with repairs, for example. We also take an interest in health and safety issues so, for instance, a current focus of the Board is on fire safety of the tower blocks following the Grenfell Tower incident.

**What do you personally gain from your non-executive work?**
It’s very rewarding to use the experience I’ve gained over the last 40 years and apply it to help another organisation. I have found that many of the issues faced in housing, cross over with those encountered by the NHS. After all, if people are provided with good quality, warm housing, they are less likely to get sick and visit their GP or need a hospital bed. Helping people to stay in their own, good quality, homes for longer is clearly of benefit to the resident as well as reducing the strain on Government resources – so everybody wins.

**What’s the most enjoyable part of it?**
Ultimately the work we do makes a real difference to people, so the best part of non-executive work is being in a position to help improve lives.

**Looking to the future, what do you think are the main challenges that South Essex Homes face?**
The most important thing is for us to work more closely with Southend Borough Council to widen the range of services that we can provide, while making sure that our core business of managing the council’s homes is maintained to a high standard.

**What would you say to any residents who have considered joining our Board?**
I would encourage anyone to get involved with the Board. I totally understand that it may seem a little daunting but it is an extremely rewarding thing to do, where you are in a position to really help make a difference to how things are done and how the organisation behaves by adding a resident’s perspective into the mix.

**Thank you for your time, Roger!**
Hello and welcome to the Autumn edition of Leasehold Matters, the page in Insight devoted to Leaseholders. The Leasehold Focus Group members and I had a great time at this year’s Community Event (despite the weather!) and would like to thank everyone who attended our stall and completed the survey and quiz. If you would like to discuss any issues with me at the Leasehold Drop In session, the details of the next event are below. If you are unable to make this date please feel free to contact us on 0800 833 160 with any queries you may have.

Best Wishes Jan

ACTUAL SERVICES CHARGES 2016-2017
The Service Charges for the financial year 1st April 2016-31st March 2017 have now been finalised.
If you have any questions about your charges please send them in writing to:-
South Essex Homes, Leasehold Services, PO Box 5817, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 9EL or email incomemangement@seh.southend.gov.uk
For payment enquiries only, please telephone Southend Borough Council’s Income Department on 01702 215797
For information in respect of Service Charges we invite you to view the document ‘Leasehold Service Charges 2016 – 2017’ sent with the statements or have a look at the Leasehold Handbook on our website: www.southessexhomes.co.uk
No internet access? Give us a call on 0800 833 160 and we will post you a copy of the handbook.

GAS SAFETY CERTIFICATES
If you have not supplied your annual Gas Safety Certificate please do so as soon as possible. Feel free to email copies to incomemangement@seh.southend.gov.uk or send them in writing to:
South Essex Homes, Leasehold Services, PO Box 5817, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 9EL.
As a leaseholder, you must provide this information to us on an annual basis. Please be aware that if you do not provide the Gas Safety Certificate and we need to take further action to ensure your property is compliant, then any costs we incur will be passed on to you.
If you have any queries in respect of Gas Safety please feel free to contact us on 0800 833 160.

LEASEHOLD Focus Group
Developing the service that South Essex Homes provides to its Leaseholders

KEY AIMS:
✔ To improve customer satisfaction
✔ To improve communication and the provision of information
✔ To improve value for money

KEY SUCCESSES TO DATE:
✔ Introducing Leaseholder events
✔ Promoting leaseholder participation within South Essex Homes
✔ Developing and assisting with ‘Leasehold Matters,’ the page in Insight magazine devoted to leaseholder news

The Group welcomes new members
If you are interested in joining the Focus Group, raising agenda items or submitting an article to Leasehold Matters, please contact us on 0800 833160.

LEASEHOLD & RIGHT TO BUY DROP IN SERVICE
Please pop in with any queries you may have to
The Hub at 151 West Road, Shoeburyness, SS3 9EF
on Thursday 2nd November from 10am until 12pm
Estate Inspections

Estate Inspections are now held throughout the year and involve officers from South Essex Homes surveying each area of the town which include properties managed by us, to look for any issues that require our attention. Residents are welcome to come along on these inspections to see this process in action and point out problems that they are aware of.

The table below contains the dates and locations of the inspections that are due to take place over the next three months. If you would like to come along, please meet us at the start point at the stated time. We appreciate your input and look forward to seeing more residents take part in estate inspections. Please note that after November, estate inspections stop for the Christmas period and start up again in January.

For more information about estate inspections please call us on 0800 833 160.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>START POINT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31/10/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Riverstone</td>
<td>Outside Riverstone Main Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/10/2017</td>
<td>10:45</td>
<td>Mornington House</td>
<td>Outside Mornington House Main Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Snakes Lane</td>
<td>Corner of Brendan Way &amp; Snakes Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Beaver Tower Senier House</td>
<td>Outside Beaver Tower Main Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>03/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Mendip Road, Mendip Crescent, The Mendips, Dunster, Avenue, Martock Avenue, Cheddar Avenue, Bruton Avenue, Treelawn Drive</td>
<td>Outside West Office, Mendip Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Wood Farm Close, Leighwood Avenue, Bellhouse Lane, Little Fretches</td>
<td>Corner of Little Fretches &amp; Eastwood Road North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Yantlet</td>
<td>Outside Yantlet Main Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Western Approaches, Lundy Close, Neil Armstrong Way</td>
<td>Corner of Western Approaches &amp; Eastwoodbury Lane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Shannon Close, Danbury Close</td>
<td>Shannon Close Car Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Bradfordbury, Rothwell Close, Eastwood Old Road</td>
<td>Outside Community Hall on Bradfordbury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Eaton Road</td>
<td>Corner of Eaton Road &amp; Herschell Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>East Street, Leigh</td>
<td>Outside 2-8 East Street, Leigh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Cecil Court, Hardwick Court, Burr Hill Chase</td>
<td>Outside Cecil Court Main Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Temple Court, Sutton Court, Cluny House, Norwich Close</td>
<td>Outside Temple Court Main Entrance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22/11/2017</td>
<td>09:30</td>
<td>Hamstel Road, Lornes Close, Lewes Road, Peartree Close</td>
<td>Corner of Hamstel Road &amp; Cokefield Avenue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Households urged to respond to Councils

HOUSEHOLD CANVASS

Households across the borough will have received a form asking them to check whether the information the council hold on the register of electors is correct. This also helps to identify any residents who are not registered to vote so that they can be encouraged to do so. The council is asking all residents to respond to their form promptly. Even if there are no changes to be made you should respond accordingly.

There are four ways to do this:
- **Online** – please follow the instructions on your form
- **Automated service** – please follow the instruction on your form
- **Telephone** – call Southend-on-Sea Electoral Services on 01702 215010
- **By Post** – Complete and return your form by post

Please note that anyone that you add to the names already printed on your form will not be registered to vote and will still need to register by visiting www.gov.uk/register-to-vote. This is because the household enquiry form is not an electoral registration form.

If they do not register, the council will write to those individuals separately to remind them to do so.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IT IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT TO RESPOND TO THE HOUSEHOLD CANVASS.
Residents of Southend are encouraged to take advantage of another location offering free computer support.

The ‘Southend Hub’ now offers services from HARP, in York Road, Southend, every Thursday.

This project received £2000 from People’s Postcode Trust, a grant-giving charity funded entirely by players of People’s Postcode Lottery, to support the project.

Maria Medina, Community Development Officer, South Essex Homes added: “Having computer knowledge and access is a skill many of us take for granted, but for some getting online is still a challenge. We are delighted that funding from players of the People’s Postcode Lottery has supported this project, which means we can offer free computer support from another part of the town.

“Anyone is invited to pop in and gain access to individual support and help. This can include help filling in online applications, looking for work or training, and developing IT skills.”

HARP’s Service Operations Manager, Gary Turner, says: “This is a fantastic partnership between South Essex Homes and The Hub, which we are proud to be involved with. Providing local people with the tools to overcome homelessness is at the heart of what we do at HARP. This new project will offer both our residents and local homeless people a great opportunity to learn important life skills and also manage their welfare benefits claim. Some of our service users are now on Universal Credit so managing their claim online is essential.”

Clara Govier, Head of Charities at People’s Postcode Lottery, said: “I’m delighted that funding from our players, through People’s Postcode Trust, is supporting this fantastic project. It’s an important project that will be a great support to local people.”

Peace of mind can be cheaper than you think...

Southend Careline specialises in an emergency alarm service operating 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - helping residents across Essex to stay safe in their own homes and offering reassurance to them and their loved ones.

All packages come with the rental of a Base Unit plus a wearable pendant (neck cord and/or wrist strap), as standard.

We also offer advanced packages with additional products such as bed and chair sensors, door exit sensors and flood, temperature and carbon monoxide detectors to provide residents with even greater peace of mind.

The service offers a fast, easy and reliable way for users to get help, whatever the time of day or night - making it ideal for people who are frail, disabled, live alone or suffer from a medical condition.

Our standard package costs just £12.56 per month

Call us on Freephone 0800 833162
or send an email to careline@seh.southend.gov.uk
MESSAGE FROM MIKE...

You will have read on pages 10 & 11, as you were introduced to Roger Eastwood, that in late September he took over as the new Chair of the South Essex Homes Board. Councillor Meg Davidson took over as Vice Chair. We have benefited from stability over recent years with the Chair and Vice Chair positions and we hope that with the new appointments we can look forward both to continued stability and further development of the organisation.

The Southend Community Event, in its various guises, has been an occasion that has successfully engaged residents over a number of years. While we all know that things change and move on, this is something we will all be able to look back on with very positive memories.

Fire safety continues to be an important focus for our organisation at all times. We have included a further article on this subject below – and we will carry on providing updates and information on this topic as we receive them.

I am extremely pleased to follow up my note in the summer issue of Insight whereby I was able to tell you that we had been shortlisted in the list of the Top 50 UK landlords but, at the time of going to press, had not been informed of our exact placement. I can now confirm that we went straight in at number 15 in that Top 50 list! A fantastic achievement that very much reflects the excellent relationship that exists between South Essex Homes and our residents.

Best wishes

Mike

Mike Gatrell, Chief Executive of South Essex Homes

FUNDRAISING FOR MACMILLAN

Well done to one of our residents, Tina McPherson from Southend, who recently dared to ‘Brave the Shave’ for Macmillan Cancer Support.

Tina may have lost her locks, but in doing so she raised a fantastic £180 in total for Macmillan.

Could you brave the shave for this brilliant cause? If so find out more here: https://bravetheshave.macmillan.org.uk/about/

FIRE SAFETY UPDATE

A review into fire safety by Southend Borough Council, Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and South Essex Homes is now underway.

The review is looking at the Council’s residential blocks as well as other buildings across the town. We will keep you updated on the outcomes of this review and any information we receive on a national level, for example from the Independent Expert Advisory Group chaired by Sir Ken Knight.

#BeFireSafe

You will remember that in the last issue of Insight, we included a four-page Fire Safety special.

This article had been approved by our colleagues at Essex County Fire & Rescue Service and Southend Borough Council and was a thorough guide on all things relating to fire safety, under the headings of ‘Prevent’, ‘Prepare’, ‘Advise’ and ‘Reassure’.

Keen to use this valuable information as much as possible to spread the messages far and wide, creating a social media campaign entitled ‘Be Fire Safe’, which ran throughout the month of September.

For this campaign, we split the information from the fire safety feature article into bite sized pieces under each of the headings and created 21 ‘infographics’ – before posting one of them on Facebook and Twitter on each working day of the month of September, with the hashtag #BeFireSafe.

These images were liked, shared and retweeted dozens of times and reached thousands of people.

We hope people have found these messages useful but we are not stopping there. We will be continuing our strong focus on fire safety, so look out for more messages over coming months as we progress our efforts to spread fire safety information as much as possible.