



PETRA News

Parkhill Estate Tenants and Residents Association

Number 147, April 2015

Just foul!

Dog mess fouls the lawns that help make our estate one of the nicest in the borough. Why should residents have to put up with this?

We didn't want to make dog mess the subject of our lead story, by how else are we going to shame certain residents into doing the right thing?

Let's be clear. Most dog owners on this estate behave responsibly, taking their dogs over to the park and disposing of their mess using the bins provided. But there are some residents who do not act responsibly.

These dog owners allow their dogs to foul on the grass outside the three tower blocks. Some attempt to clear up the mess afterwards, others simply leave it where it falls.

This is unacceptable. Aside from it being disgusting when you get this stuff on your shoes or worse, there are also serious health risks – particularly to our children – created by this thoughtless behaviour.

The slightest contact with dog mess can leave children vulnerable to contracting Toxocariasis, which causes partial blindness in up to 100 children a year. If the child is lucky enough to avoid loss

of sight, they may still be affected by allergic reactions such as asthma.

Other diseases carried in dog faeces include Whipworms, Tapeworms, Giardiasis and Salmonellosis. You wouldn't want your child to have any of them.

The park is nearby, equipped with bins for the disposal of dogs' doings, so there are no excuses. Residents with dogs: do the right thing – do not allow your dog to defecate on the estate, take them to the park, and dispose of their mess properly.

Right royal treat

At the end of January, Chairman Mike received an email from DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) inviting him to attend a garden party at Buckingham Palace on 28 May. He didn't want to go as it involved a lot of standing around for a long time, so he has asked committee member (and wife) Jan and estate manager Caroline to go in his place.



The invitation came, we think, as a thank you for hosting two visits from Government advisors at DCLG and the fact that Mike is the Deputy Chair of NFTMO (National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations).

We wish Jan and Caroline, resplendent in new outfits and hats, no doubt, a lovely afternoon. Watch this space for photos of the day!



Management agreement: Almost there...

Readers will be aware that PETRA has been trying for some time (!) to reach agreement with the Council on our three-year management agreement. After many frustrating months, we may now be close to reaching agreement.

These are difficult times financially, not least for local councils, and the new agreement will represent a cut in our budget of about 8 percent over the next three years. This was expected, but that won't make it any easier to bear.

As always, we will do our best to deliver services to a high standard. These could now include block cleaning – a service we have not previously been responsible for – as the Council has agreed to extra funding specifically to cover this work.

We will confirm the above in our next newsletter, hopefully. Sadly, there is nothing to report on our longstanding request to take on greater responsibility for the management of the sheltered housing blocks – the Council's internal review of sheltered housing policy continues.

Chairman Mike's SOAPBOX

Our treasured treasurer

Following a fall, our treasurer, June Knight spent the past several weeks in Queen's Hospital before being moved to a local rehabilitation unit.

It is not easy to get over trauma when you get to be a senior citizen, and we all wish June a full and speedy – or at least as speedy as possible – recovery.

June was well into her retirement when PETRA took over the estate 12 years ago and she has admirably held the treasurer's position for all those years. What I particularly like about June is the friendly dependability and support she always brings to the various projects and ideas we might discuss as future and mid-term plans. As one of our bank signatories for the last decade and longer, her honesty and integrity has served us so well, we will all be so disappointed if health problems no longer allow her to continue.

We wish you all the best, June.

Regards, Mike



It's all go!

Thanks to our new activities sub committee – Sarah, Colin, Lesley, Roxanne and Amber – PETRA's social activities just get better and better. Have you joined in the fun yet?

Since the sub-committee's formation, the team have got off to a flying start organising a wide range of activities and day trips for the spring and summer.

Over the recent holidays they organised an Easter crafts session for youngsters, as well as another of our popular cookery classes with our very own resident master baker, Jack.



Jack (pictured above), who works for the London Bread and Cake Company, has won awards for his hot cross buns. At our Easter bake-off with Jack, we discovered why – they are delicious!

New activities and trips are being added to the diary all the time, and we hope to organise another baking sessions with Jack in the not too

distant future. So watch this space, and the notice boards around the estate, for further details.

Ideas welcome

And if you have any ideas for activities and trips that we could organise (or that you would like to *help us* organise) please get in touch with Sarah and the team. They will be delighted to hear from you.

Meanwhile, feast your eyes on this lot, then tell us: which of these do you and your family fancy doing?

Dates for your diary

23 May: Tiptree Jam Museum, in Tiptree, Essex



The Tiptree museum is a great place to trace the history of the famous Wilkin & Sons and Tiptree preserves. You can also find out more about village life in Essex, and of course find out all about jam-making.

Free to residents, but you will need to provide a £2 deposit, returnable on the day, providing you turn up.

Any ideas?

If you have an idea for an activity of trip that you think PETRA could organise, let us know about it - with your help, we might be able to make it happen.

29 May: Mountfitchet Castle, near Stanstead, Essex



Mountfitchet Castle and Norman Village from 1066.

Ever wanted to put the kids – or their dad – in the stocks, and throw rotten tomatoes at them? Well, now's your chance! Mountfitchet Castle is a unique open-air museum experience where the visitor can travel back in time over 900 years and truly witness life in a medieval Motte and Bailey castle.

Free to residents, but we will need a £2 deposit from you, returnable on the day, providing you turn up.

18 June: Arts and crafts for Father's Day

A chance for children to make a Father's Day card and gift for their dear old dad.



19 June: Ladies' Pamper Evening



Light the scented candles, line up the nail polish, and tell the old man there's something in the microwave – it's time for another of PETRA's pamper evenings, especially for the girls!

26 June: PETRA Open Evening

A chance to meet our committee, share your thoughts on how we can improve life on the estate, while enjoying a drink and some nibbles with your neighbours.

Love food, hate waste?

A shocking 8.3 tonnes of food is wasted by households in this country every year. The charity Love Food Hate Waste aims to change this by raising awareness of the need to reduce food waste and help us take action. It shows that by doing some easy practical everyday things in the home we can all waste less food, which will ultimately benefit our purses and the environment too.

Our own Jan Davis – a keen and talented cook in her own right – has been studying the Love Food Hate Waste philosophy and is planning a workshop based on the charity's excellent ideas. We don't yet have a date for Jan's workshop, but you might be interested in coming, please let the office know as soon as possible.

The workshop will cover:

- meal planning
- avoiding waste
- understanding sell-by and use-by dates.
- savvy store cupboard ingredients
- and making the most of leftovers.

26 July: PETRA Fun Day



Join us on the green for food, music and fun in the sun (hopefully!)

25 September: Macmillan Coffee Morning

Help raise valuable funds for Britain's leading cancer charity by drinking coffee, eating cake, and chatting with your friends and neighbours – what's not to like about that?!





Caroline means business: 'Irresponsible use of the play/spare rooms has to stop'

Playroom blitz

Estate manager Caroline is currently in the process of inspecting all the play/spare rooms across the estate, to check that they are being used properly. She has already had to shut off two of these rooms because of inappropriate use. One was being used as a smoking den, while the other was being used to store inflammable materials. These are fire hazards - remember what happened in Overstrand a couple of years ago? Please make sure you use the play/spare rooms responsibly.



What a fag!

We are still receiving numerous complaints about lighted cigarette butts being thrown from balconies and kitchen windows. Please don't do this. It is a fire hazard and an example of unnecessary littering.

There are also frequent reports of people smoking in the communal areas of the three blocks - the stairwells and lobbies. This is illegal and perpetrators could be prosecuted. If you smoke, please make sure you confine yourself to your flat, and that you dispose of your cigarette butts responsibly.

Did you know?

Some PETRA Committee members and our estate manager, Caroline, have a wealth of experience in different areas. For example we can help if you are unsure how to

- fill in a form
- write a CV
- write a formal letter
- write a reference

Come into the **PETRA** office and see if we can help you.



Top garden

Colin and his helpers (including Jim, here in the greenhouse) have been busy preparing for the new season. The list of vegetable they hope to grow in the garden this year is too long to name in full, but include: potatoes, carrots, beetroot, parsnips, broad beans, rocket and radishes.

Meanwhile, in the greenhouse, they are starting off the runner beans, cucumbers, mint, squash and fennel, to name but a few. Some of these will later be transferred to the garden.

Residents in the sheltered housing will be among those to benefit when our crop arrives, as we donate much of it to their kitchen. If you fancy eating organic veg this summer, have a chat with Colin about getting involved.

Letterbox Lotto!

Every month, we give away three gift vouchers worth £20 each to residents who have gone online to our website and spotted their door number in the Letterbox Lotto section of our home page.

These door numbers change every month... Is April your lucky month...? Find out at:

www.petratmo.weebly.com

Next Committee meetings

Monday 27 April
Monday 18 May
Monday 29 June
Monday 27 July
All at 8pm in the Concierge

CONTACTS

**Mike Davis (Chair),
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