

Driven up the wall!

PETRA News

Parkhill Estate Tenants and Residents Association

Number 151, April 2016



Guys, we know how you feel - residents have been driven up the wall ever since the new windows went in!

Soon after installation rain water ingress - or damp patches as we shall call them - began making unwelcome appearances inside residents' flats.

On PETRA's insistence, the council has made repeated investigations, to try to get to the root of the problem and its solution. But nothing has been revealed. The underlying problem remains a mystery.

Enter AAA (Access All Areas), a specialist rope access/abseiling contractor, commissioned by the council to apply a special waterproofing material to the exterior of the south facing elevations of all three tower blocks on the estate.

It's a specialists' job which can only be undertaken in certain climatic conditions. So the work could only begin in late March. If the outcome is good the council will consider applying the material to the remaining sides of the three blocks.

Keep us informed

For this reason, we need to monitor the situation carefully. It is important that residents let PETRA know if you have experienced rain water ingress, so that we have a clear picture of the extent of the problem and whether or not this latest work has made a difference.

The council has said they will put right the damage that has been caused to the inside of residents' flats by water ingress, and that they intend to start a programme of works for re-decorating as soon as the external works are completed.

PETRA'S VISION

A safe, pleasant neighbourhood where people want to be part of a vibrant, caring community



Liz's Birthday Bash



Sunday 12 June, between 12 and 4, on the green

Please mark this date in your diary and on your calendar. It's the Queen's official 90th birthday, and to celebrate PETRA is holding a special Picnic in the Park family fun day. Details are still being finalised, but you can expect all the usual treats, DJ, food stalls and bouncy castle, etc.

As always, PETRA is on the lookout for residents willing to help organise the event or lend a hand on the day. If that's you, pop into the office for a chat with our social secretary Lesley Marsh.

Here's looking forward to Liz's birthday bash! Please remember to bring your own picnic along and enjoy a great day with friends and neighbours.



Don't forget the picnic

Jan's



SOAPBOX

Progress and problems

Now that the weather is beginning to improve we have started some of our improvements to the outside areas. Starting with the benches on the green, we have concreted underneath to make a neater look and to keep it tidier when we cut the grass.

We have arranged for a path to be laid in front of Overstrand House from the path through to the road. This will make for a better appearance and stop the mud walking into the blocks.

We have other projects in the pipeline, but are waiting for permission from the council to proceed. The saga of trying to get our management agreement allowances sorted out (see opposite for the Latest episode) means we remain in a kind of limbo, not knowing what improvements we can afford to commission in the near future, or even who we will be liaising with at the council.

Talking of long-standing problems, it's such a shame that some residents are not respecting the estate, both inside and out, and still dispose of rubbish in inappropriate ways. This has resulted in us having to bring in extra staff to clear the areas along the riverside where rubbish had recently been blown and was unsightly. There are plenty of bins on the estate, please use them.

Best wishes,
Jan Davis
Chairwoman

Police panel

The local Police panel are looking to recruit a PETRA resident to join them for their regular meetings. Estate manager Caroline attends these quarterly meetings, but a resident could be a valuable additional voice, speaking from first hand experience and in the interests of all residents. If this opportunity interests you, please pop into the office for a chat with Caroline.

Rubbish!

Bradley Pavey writes: 'Some residents continue to have trouble working out where they should and should not put different types of rubbish. The area set aside for bulk rubbish disposal, situated below Overstrand and Parkview, should only be used for large items. The clue's in the name: bulky! That means things like bookshelves, old sofas, fridges, etc. Unfortunately, I continue to find mops, bags of crockery, picture frames and all sorts left down there. These small household items should be put in the ordinary bins. If in doubt, please ask me.'

Yellow lines

The recently painted double yellow lines round the base of the three blocks might not have pleased everyone, but PETRA welcomes the development. The gas intake pipes are now accessible throughout the day, as is emergency access in general. The garage entrances and designated disability access areas are also now protected.



In brief



Dog's life

Oh dear. There are some things we would love not to have to mention in this newsletter. Dog poo is on the top of that pile!

The most basic responsibility of any dog owner is the proper disposal of its poo. So, will all dog owners please follow these basic rules:

- Take a dog poo bag with you on every walk, and dispose of your collection in the appropriate bins.
- Do not leave your dog's mess on your balcony! It will only mount up before being washed down the drain by the rain, causing blockages and the most unpleasant kind of flooding on lower balconies.

Road safety

The PETRA committee has approved the purchase and use of two further CCTV cameras, one on each of the access roads onto the estate, and is also now looking at spending money on traffic calming measures.

Most residents and visitors drive with due care, but not everyone does. Two hot spots in particular are of concern. The top bend can catch out even the most experienced of drivers if approached too fast, and likewise the slip road leading down past Overstrand to the car park.



Committee news

Remember, you should drive no faster than 20 miles an hour on the estate. As well as negotiating these bends, drivers will often meet pedestrians crossing to or from the park at these points, including mums with pushchairs and dog walkers.

So, does PETRA have to invest in traffic calming measures? That's up to you. If we all drive carefully, we can save money as well as lives.

Caged bins

Talking of rubbish, you may have noticed we have a new caged arrangement for the bins outside Uphavering. Previously, their location meant that unpleasant smells drifted over to nearby flats.

Also, some residents, too lazy to walk to the bins, were in the habit of throwing rubbish over the bridge walkway onto the bins, only for them to split open and trash the surrounding area. The new location prevents all this and also creates an extra parking space in the basement.

Stratford bound

Five members of the PETRA committee will be attending this year's National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations (NFTMO) annual conference, held in Stratford upon Avon in June. Representing PETRA will be committee members Anna, Sheila, Trisha along with our Chair Jan and former Chair Mike.

Attending the conference will enable the five to share their ideas and frustrations with TMO colleagues from across the country, and seek advice from experts in the field. We will have a special report on the conference in our next newsletter.

Management agreement

The saga continues. A meeting between our representatives and the council in December was cancelled. Then in March the rearranged meeting was also cancelled - on the morning of the meeting! By the time you read this we should have met with them. (Though don't bet on it!)

We believe the council will ask us to sign a new agreement for the next three years sometime in July. This will almost certainly include a 15-20 percent cut, introduced gradually over that three-year period. We should get 90 days' warning of this, which is some consolation, but still it will be a serious cut in our funding. Will the agreement include covering the cost of the block cleaning which we long ago asked to take over in order to deliver a better service for residents? Your guess is as good as ours!

'It is all very, very frustrating,' says our Chair, Jan. 'The uncertainty makes planning almost impossible. New flooring and entrance halls, redecorating the landings - we just don't know when we are going to be able to deliver these improvements to our estate.'

Three chances to win Prizes!

Photo Competition 2016

Once again we have three £50 gift tokens to award to the three winners of this year's competition, whose winning photos will, with your consent, be enlarged, framed and displayed in the foyers of our three tower blocks.

Entries: One picture per person, please. Should be submitted to the office, by email as a jpg, or as a hard copy print, by 1st June.

Subject matter: 'Summer's here!' Put your imagination to work and see if you can capture a scene that says 'Summer's here!' You are free to choose what you point your camera at, but please - if people are involved, you must have their, or their parents permission. We will check on this.

Deadline for entries: 1 June.

PETRA survey 2016

We will be sending round our annual survey to all residents in June, with a prize draw for **three winners of £50, £20 and £10**. We will not be asking so many questions this year, so please take a few minutes to complete the survey. It really helps us if we know what you think about key issues and what you want PETRA's priorities to be for the next year.

Letterbox Lotto now £25!

Each month we give away three gift vouchers - now worth £25 each - to residents who spot their door number on our website. Visit www.petratmo.weebly.com each month to see if it's your lucky month.



Kids activities - what next?

Where have all the kids gone? Lack of interest led to the cancellation of our planned Easter egg hunt recently, and aside from the disappointment we felt, this has made us question what kind of social activities we should be providing in future.

Children of all ages live on the estate, but the proportions in each age group do change over time. It may be that there simply aren't many children in the 3-10 age group for whom the Easter egg hunt would have been a winner.

With summer holidays on the way, our social secretary Lesley wants to hear from you and your children. What would you like to do this summer? Here are some ideas. What do you think of them?

- Colchester Zoo
- Arundel Castle
- Eastbourne Air Show

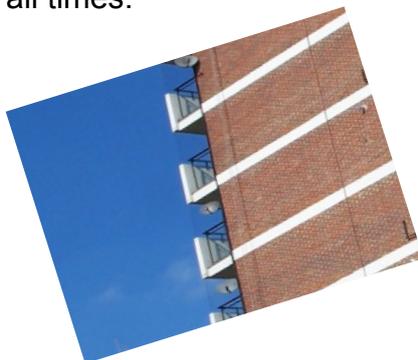
Our budget is limited, of course, and we will not be able to subsidise trips to the extent that we used to, but we are open to suggestions. And if you don't fancy our ideas, tell us yours!

Is your home secure?

With the new front doors that were installed a couple of years ago came a new locking action involving lifting the handle and turning the key.

Residents soon got the hang of this, but the concern has been raised that some people are leaving their doors closed but not locked when, for example, they go to bed, or when they go out to dispose of some rubbish or visit a neighbour. Please remember to lock your door. A door that is simply closed but not locked gives a false sense of Security.

There was a recent incident involving two men knocking on doors, supposedly to deliver Leaflets. Our suspicion - which we shared with the Police - was that these men were probably 'casing the joint' - looking to see who lives where and what might they have worth nicking. Please make sure your home is secure at all times.



Letterbox Lotto!

Every month, we give away three gift vouchers worth £25 each to residents who go online and spot their door number on our website home page.

Play Letterbox Lotto today!
www.petratmo.weebly.com

Events

Coffee Mornings

4 May, 1 June and 6 July,
11-1pm in the concierge

A chance to meet neighbours who then become friends, over coffee, cake and a chat.

11-1pm, in the concierge.

Picnic in the Park, to celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday

12 June, 12-4 on the green

Join in the fun and make it extra special with a picnic.

Open evening at PETRA

24 June, 7.30PM

Come and meet your committee, share with us your ideas for the community, and enjoy a drink and some nibbles with neighbours and friends.

Next committee meetings

25 April, 23 May, 27 June,

All at 8pm, in the concierge.

CONTACTS

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