



PARTY THIS SUNDAY!!

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PETRA News

Parkhill Estate Tenants and Residents Association

Number 138, July 2013

Council cuts will challenge

PETRA

PETRA's plans for taking on management responsibility for the three older people's residential blocks – Serena, Sunrise and Solar – has hit a snag.

The council, which agreed to conduct a consultation with residents of the three blocks, has not acted as quickly as we would have hoped. At the time of writing, the formal consultation with residents has still not begun.

To complicate matters further, PETRA is currently in negotiation with the council about the renewal of our management agreement for the running of the estate. The council, under huge pressure from the government to make cutbacks, is proposing to cut our management allowance by up to £40,000 over the next three years.

PETRA Chairman Mike Davis says: "These are challenging times. However, by managing the estate efficiently, PETRA has been able to accrue a surplus from its annual budgets over the years. This means we should be able to absorb a cut to our management allowance without it affecting the quality of service experienced by residents.

"However, if PETRA does eventually take on responsibility for Serena, Solar and Sunrise, this will, of course, need to be reflected in the new management agreement and the funding that comes with it."

Mike says he is particularly concerned about the condition of the three older people's blocks and wants assurances

from the council that if PETRA does take over their management the cost of upgrading this accommodation will be fully included in the new agreement.

We will keep you informed of developments as they happen. If you have any questions regarding this issue, please feel free to pop into the office for a chat with Mike or any other member of the committee.



SORRY BRAD!

Have you noticed our repairs and ground maintenance man Bradley Pavey (left) looking a bit moody lately? Brooding over something or other, those smouldering looks of his even more intense than usual?

The truth is Bradley has been feeling a little aggrieved ever since he read a piece about PETRA's new vegetable-growing project (situated in the top garden) in the May edition of *PETRA News*. We said the progress made had been down to the hard work of Colin Roast and Jimmy Brett. In fact, Bradley had had a lot to do with it too.

We apologise and trust that with this correction normal service will soon be resumed. Look out for Brad's beaming smile, back in place once more for all to enjoy, as our man with the sink plunger goes about his business happy again in his (much appreciated) work.

And as if he hasn't enough on his plate already, Brad has also found time to write our latest blog post. Read what he has to say at: www.petratmo.weebly.com/bloggers-corner.html

Survey: We need to hear from YOU

To date, we have received just 50 responses to our recent survey, yet there are 146 households on this estate. It is important that we hear the views of everyone. For that reason, we are extending the deadline for responses to mid August.

We will also have the survey available on the PETRA stall at our party on Sunday. Please make sure you tell us what you and your family think of PETRA and life on the estate.



Committee news

Two residents keen to help improve the estate are considering whether to join PETRA's committee. Colin Roast lives in Overstrand and Margaret May in Parkview.

If they do join, Colin and Margaret could look forward to making a difference to their community, and to making friends and influencing people. They will be offered free training opportunities, the support of PETRA's small but beautifully formed staff team, and the appreciation of their fellow residents.

Margaret, who has lived in Parkview for seven years, attended her first meeting (as an observer) in June. We asked for her first impressions.

"There was a lot to take onboard, but I was impressed by how professional it all was. Hearing how PETRA spends its money, making savings along the way, was really interesting, and I felt very welcome – they're a friendly bunch.

Are there any issues in particular that she wants to see addressed? "Yes. I am concerned about the use of drugs on the estate, with people smoking the stuff in the car parks, lifts and elsewhere."

Tenancy checks

PETRA is required by law to regularly make checks on who is living here. We aim to check six flats per month on a rota, but sometimes have difficulty doing so. We ask all residents to co-operate by responding to the request when we post it through your door. The check is straightforward and not at all intrusive, simply a council form that we need to complete with you. When we visit, we will ask you to show us a form of ID. In the meantime, if you have any questions about this, you know where to find us.

Did you see anything?

On Wednesday 29 May at 12-30pm the number plates from a black Renault Cleo were stolen. The car was parked close by Parkview House, in the bay at the end of the road. If you saw anything suspicious, please contact the office. Thank you.

It has been a busy period since the last newsletter. In house, the refurbishment contract is nearly finished. Not everyone involved impressed me, but the actual contract coordinator Russell and his team could not have been more helpful. All in all, Morrisons are to be congratulated on carrying out a big multi-faceted contract well.

The National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations (NFTMO) conference at the beginning of June turned out to be a bit different from what we first imagined. An hour before we left to travel to conference, I had a phone call from Trevor Bell, the NFTMO company secretary, who said that one of the workshop presenters had had an accident and could I take his workshop on "energy" the next day?



Luckily (or perhaps not for the captive audience), in a previous life, I was an active politician, as was Jan, and between us I think we made a fair job of presenting an hour's verbal report on what PETRA had achieved here in Hornchurch and what we see as future energy savings that can be achieved.

Later, again following a phone call from Trevor, I was asked to represent the NFTMO at a meeting between Leathermarket JMB (Joint Management Board) in Southwark along with the Minister for Communities Don Foster.

Leathermarket are the first TMO in the country to apply for self funding status. Just as an aside, I would be more than interested in looking into self funding for PETRA and whilst there we did discuss a mutual exchange visit of our committee members to Southwark, with their committee coming to see us.

Finally (because Andrew, our newsletter editor will shout at me if I go on too long), HSBC and Carbon Leapfrog – two big organisations that are helping us to coordinate "an idiot's guide" to setting up a TMO, have instigated a group from HSBC in France to contact us about our activities in seeking to save energy. We have arranged to host a meeting in the first week of July. More on that visit in the next issue.

See you at the party.

Au revoir!

Mike

Chairman Mike's SOAPBOX

Here, there, and everywhere

LIVE DJ!

BUCKING BRONCO!

Fun in the sun

SWINGBALL!

(we hope)

Our anniversary party is now just days away. On Sunday, please join us 'out front' to celebrate 10 years of progress on our estate, and to raise a toast to our community and all that we can achieve together in the years ahead.

Yes, there will be food, drink and loads to do for all the family, and we hope to be joined by some special friends and neighbours including the leader of Havering Council Michael White, PETRA's former manager Paul Taylor, and Nick Reynolds, the leader of the National Federation of Tenant Management Organisations. Should be fun!

HOG ROAST!

THIS SUNDAY!

14 July

**Venue: The Parkhill and Sunrise
Estate grounds**

Time: Lunchtime till late

Food, Dancing, Disco & Kids' Stuff



FOOD AND DRINK!

URGENT – Pictures wanted

Do you have any good photos of our estate (especially digital ones)? If so, we would love to see them. Jan Davis is creating a display for the party and wants to include some photos of the estate in days gone by.

Perhaps you took some photos at one of PETRA's previous events, or one of your own? Perhaps you have some nice pictures of you and your children playing outside in years gone by? Maybe you took some photos on the day you moved in?

If so, and you would be happy to share them with us, please contact Jan in the office as soon as possible. Thank you.

Showers continuing

No, not a weather forecast. Just PETRA's major improvement programme – the installation of showers in residents' bathrooms – which has been continuing at a pace. Over thirty have been installed so far, and with the council replacing more and more of the Elson boilers with the new Combi type, we will soon be able to offer this improvement to most if not all our tenants.

Jimmy and Bradley have been overseeing this work, mostly done by Keith from E&M Installations. Keith has been receiving high praise for his efforts. One tenant wrote: "Just wanted to say a BIG THANK YOU for installing my new shower. It looks really nice. Finished in two days, not three. Always polite, very little mess, and nothing too much trouble. Thanks."

If you are a leaseholder you too could benefit from the programme, though you will need to pay for installation. Visit the office to find out more.

Central heating upgrade

Estate Manager Jimmy Brett writes:

The scaffolding is still up on the three tower blocks, but not for much longer.

For residents with Elson boilers in their flat, this might be a good time to request a central heating inspection from the council contractors, Castlepoint. They might – and I'm not guaranteeing anything – they might be able to offer an upgrading of your central heating while the scaffolding allows them easy access to the outside flue pipes.

I stress again, there's no guarantee they will oblige, but if you want to enquire, call Castlepoint on 01268 565811.

Next PETRA committee meeting
Tuesday 23 July, 8pm. Observers welcome.

Dirty jobs

Someone has to do 'em. Sometimes it's you

PETRA staff and contractors have to deal with some pretty unpleasant jobs at times – blocked toilets, pest control, litter louts, you get the picture. But that doesn't mean they like or, or should be expected, to work in filthy dirty conditions.

Jim and Bradley have lost count of the number of times they have been expected to lie in cat litter, or on disgustingly dirty floors, while sorting out bathroom plumbing or kitchen pipes of one sort or another.

Please show consideration by tidying up and making the room reasonably clean before you ask a member of staff or a contractor to visit your flat to do some work. Thank you.

Disgusting!

For example, a recent problem to have come to manager Jim's attention has been dog mess blocking the balcony drains. How disgusting is that? Dog owners: please take your responsibilities seriously. Take your dog for regular walks, and tidy up after it has done its business, disposing of the mess in one of the dog mess bins conveniently placed around the estate.

No ifs, no butts

Fag butts, like used chewing gum, are a nasty little forms of litter. Yet some people think it's ok to throw them away just anywhere. Off of balconies, for example. Or in the lifts. While out on her balcony recently, a local mum found a discarded fag butt in her child's sandpit, and was understandably very upset about it. No one in her flat smokes, so it must have come from above. Please show respect for our community by disposing of all your rubbish responsibly.



Ladies, could this be your local fire safety Officer?!

Free fire safety checks

The Fire Brigade are offering free fire checks. A fire safety officer will visit your flat to advise you if there are any fire precautions that you need to take, and to check any existing fire alarms you may have installed. This is a valuable service as well as a free one. It could mean the difference between being safe and losing everything. Pop into the office if you would like to arrange a fire safety check.

Your old batteries!

WANTED Dead or Alive

There is now a battery recycling bin in the sheriff's office.

Dead batteries are dangerous and polluting – except when recycled.

Recycled batteries can be used to make new batteries and other stuff.

Please do the right thing. Pop into the office with your old batteries today.

(Your reward will be in heaven)

REWARD OF \$250,000

BY ORDER OF THE SHERIFF
(Mike)

Kids' stuff

The summer holidays will soon be here, and Sarah has been busy planning two fabulous trips to take place during the schools' summer break. Here's where we're going:

Barleylands Farm Park and Craft Village on 10 August

Stubbers Activity and Adventure Centre (especially for 8-15 year olds) sometime in the last week of the school holidays.

The coach for Barleylands is now full, but we still have places for Stubbers. Pop into the office to book your seats.

Fancy writing?

Would you like to write a blog article for PETRA's website?

www.petratmo.weebly.com

Then here's your chance! If you're a teenager living on the estate, try writing a 200-word article for us on what it's like living here - the best bits, the worst bits, and how we could improve the place.

Pop into the office and show us what you've written and we will happily consider publishing it.

Don't worry if your spelling is a bit wobbly - we can fix that.

Contacts

PETRA

Mike Davis (Chair), Natasha Cruickshank (Special Projects Officer), Jim Brett (Estate Manager), and Bradley Pavey (Repairs and Ground Maintenance Officer) are based at the PETRA office.

Tel: 01708 475358

Fax: 01708 469530

Email: petratmo@aol.com

www.petratmo.weebly.com

Homes and Housing, Havering Council

Tel: 01708 434000

Email: homes@haverling.gov.uk

Website: www.haverling.gov.uk