

Hey, kids!

PETRA News

Parkhill Estate Tenants and Residents Association

Number 134, November 2012

Read this-

Our first ever Junior Committee is on the look-out for new members aged between 8 and 15.

The committee held its first meetings in August and early November. The idea is to give children and young people on the estate a voice, some money to spend, and the chance to get together four times a year to organise events and social activities.

PETRA's Sue Vine and Sarah Peacock facilitate the meetings, which are held in the PETRA office during school holidays.

The next meeting takes place over the Christmas break, and if you would like to join in, pop into the office for a chat and more details.

PETRA has granted the committee a budget of £1,500 a year, for the young people involved to spend as they see fit. So watch this space!

We asked three members what they hoped to achieve. Callum said his number one priority was "to have fun". Charlotte agreed but added that she also thinks "being on the committee and learning how it works could help me in the future". Their friend Katie said she wanted to help organise fun

activities for adults and children. "I think we can help make the estate presentable for visitors and a really great place to live."

Pictured left: Members of the Junior Committee Charlotte, Callum and Katie get down to business.

What's cooking?

With PETRA's community kitchen now beautifully refurbished, Sue and Sarah have been busy organising the first of our new cookery classes.

On the 6 December, they will be hosting our first adult class - "Love Food, Hate Waste" - led by two professional cooks. There are eight places available.

The 6 December class will be from 11.30 and 1.30 and might well end with a very nice lunch! Booking starts on 15 November. Visit the office to book your place. Hurry while places last.

Local lad Jamie Oliver (almost) said:

"If you just give the kids bags of crisps all the time you're an idiot. If you're not cooking them a hot meal sort it out. Those geezers down at PETRA have their heads screwed on alright. Love Food, Hate Waste cookery sessions? That's a pucker idea!"



Chairman Mike's SOAPBOX

Two steps forward...



As the year end approaches, let's consider how well we've been doing recently.

Early in the year, PETRA began attracting the attention of ambitious businesses such as Carbon Leapfrog and the Richard Hodgkinson Consultancy. These companies are variously sources of valuable funding, professional advice and support for us.

Relations with the Council has been its usual rollercoaster ride. On the plus side, Chair of Housing Lesley Kelly paid us a visit, and the Council agreed to install new windows and cavity wall insulation in all blocks. On the down side, winter is here and we are still waiting for the windows, while the cavity wall insulation is now in doubt.

Back to the positive. The Council's Peter Doherty has supported our vegetable-growing project (roll on the spring!), while Homes in Havering gave the go-ahead for our shower programme and LED lights.

That said, Homes in Havering has just been wound up, with the whole operation going back "in-house". Who knows what confusion will now follow as they rearrange the bureaucratic furniture.

Meanwhile, PETRA's team – committee and staff – have, if I may say so, continued to do an excellent job, with the refurbishment of the community kitchen just the latest of our successes. And as Vice-Chair of the National Federation of Tenant -

- Management Organisations, I am now able to raise PETRA's profile and the good work we are doing nationally.

So overall a good year, then, and one well worth celebrating. Please join us for a Christmas drink and nibbles in the office on Monday 24 December, from 1pm onwards.

Regards, Mike

Compost binned

Oh dear. We've had to suspend our compost bins until the new year. Unfortunately, some people have been putting the wrong things in them. We will try again soon, re-opening the bins with a publicity campaign so that everyone knows what they can and cannot put in them.

The right rent?

A Parkview tenant has been paying £1.64 a week more for his flat than residents living in the equivalent properties in Up-havering and Overstrand.

PETRA Chair Mike Davis has written to the Council about this, and is to accompany the man to a meeting with a panel of councillors to discuss the situation. We will let you know what happens.

Window pain

We reported recently that the Council has agreed to install new double-glazed windows and cavity wall insulation in all three tower blocks, and that the work will be done before next April.

Now we hear that the wall insulation is not going ahead, and that the new windows might be delayed. A spokesman from the Council said the installation of the new windows "could slip into next [financial] year", meaning sometime after April.

We are trying to get clarification on this, and will keep you informed as best we can. Which is more than the Council is doing at the moment.

CCTV

The Council's Teresa Monroe, whose job she describes as 'designing out crime', has agreed to help us identify the most cost-effective solution for the monitoring of the outside spaces. We will update you on this issue in due course.



**Fancy coffee
with Barbara
and friends?**

See back page
for details.

***“A joyous traditional
pantomime” Evening Standard***

“Oh no it’s not!” The Daily Panto

It’s... Panto time!



We are planning a trip to see the show **JACK & THE BEANSTALK** at the Queen’s Theatre, Hornchurch, on 3 January starting at 2.30.

Join our brave hero Jack on a thrilling adventure as he climbs the magic beanstalk to save the day! In a marvellous Kingdom high above the clouds, Jack battles the dreaded Giant Thunderskull to rescue his sweetheart and win the golden treasure. So just another day in Hornchurch, really!

Watch out for the booking form coming through your door any day now. The show is suitable for 5–13 year olds. Under 8s may need to be accompanied by a parent/carer. Book your child’s place in the office by 30 November at the latest. But hurry – places are limited, and free.

“Glitz, glamour and gags” Romford Recorder

***“Another freebie from those wonderful folk
at PETRA!” PETRA News***

Go Natasha!

Our very own Natasha Cruickshank is running in the 10k Santa Fun Run in Greenwich Park on 9 December in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital.

“I love running,” said Natasha. “But I’ve never done it dressed as Santa before. Still, if it inspires people to sponsor me, it will have been worth it.”

“Every pound helps,” she says, “so if you would like to sponsor me, please pop into the office before 9 December, or visit my fundraising page by going to **www.justgiving.com** and doing a search for my name in the ‘Friend’s name’ box. Thanks!”

SNAP! And win a £50 gift voucher

Got a camera on your phone? Or just a camera? Then here’s your chance to win a £50 gift voucher, just in time for Christmas!

PETRA’s photo competition is still on, and the deadline has been extended.

You now have until 15 December to send us your entry, either via our email, or on a disc or memory stick. Alternatively, pop into the office – perhaps we can download it directly from your phone.

We’re looking for positive images of life on our estate – the people, the place, the lives we lead.

There are two rules. Each person can only submit one photo. And two, if your photo is of a person or people, please get their (or their parents’) permission before taking their picture.

The winning three photographers will each win £50 gift vouchers, and their photos will be printed, framed and displayed in the lobbies of our tower blocks. Good luck!

The view from here

Ethel Nicol, Uphavering House tenant for the last 28 years

How did you come to live here, Ethel?

I was born in Ilford and moved to Upminster when I got married. My husband was a caretaker for the Church and the job came with a lovely big house, just opposite Roomes, the furniture store. We brought up five children there, grew our own vegetables in the back garden, oh, it was lovely.

When my husband retired we lost the house and moved here. I hated it at first. I missed my garden terribly. But I've got used to it and feel safe here now.

How has the estate changed?

I think it's got better. There's not so much noise, not so much graffiti. The grounds are kept lovely. I'm in my 90s now, and it's good to know that I can knock on the doors of the neighbours on this floor and they will help me.

Is PETRA doing a good job?

They have been very good to me. Whenever I have a problem, I phone them up and they come right over. This morning, for example, I had a leaking pipe which Bradley kindly fixed for me. Before PETRA, I would have had to rely on the Council to come over, and that might take days.

My family are grateful because they know that with PETRA I have people close-by who can support me if I need help.

Should PETRA do more to organise social events?

Perhaps, but would people come to them? I've been to Barbara's afternoon coffee social and that's nice. But in general I don't get out much. I can't walk far these days, and I'm afraid I only feel safe when I'm with people who really knows me, like my family.



Ethel's gracious figurines

Dates

Next PETRA committee meeting
Tuesday 27 November, 8pm.

Barbara's coffee break

Barbara Davies' next Wednesday afternoon coffee breaks for older residents is on 14 November in the Parkview concierge from 2-30pm.

Fiesta trouble continues

We are sorry to report that Ford Fiestas are still being targeted by local thieves. If you own a Fiesta, please make sure it has an alarm and that you park in high-visibility areas whenever possible. If you see anyone acting suspiciously around cars on the estate, please report the incident to the office as soon as possible.

Who wants a shower?

The shower programme is under-way. Shower attachments over baths are now being fitted. If you have the compatible "combi" boiler and would like a shower, then let us know. Installation is free to tenants and available at cost price to leaseholders. Unfortunately, it is not possible to install them in flats with the old Elson boilers. The Council plans to replace these boilers in due course. Let's hope it's soon.

PETRA's website

Still a bit of a "work in progress," our new website is at:

www.petratmo.weebly.com

We will be making improvements to the site in the months ahead, so do tell us what you think.

Contacts

PETRA

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