In our last newsletter (July), we broke the news that Havering Council has plans to demolish Sunrise Lodge and Serena and Solar Courts in order to build an ‘older persons’ village’.

We applaud Havering’s ambition to increase provision for dementia care. However, we are frustrated that ‘consultations’ did not take place before the drawing up of this plan, and we are saddened by the impending loss of a rather delightful settlement of spacious low-density buildings and beautiful grounds that, as far as we are concerned, already constitute a much loved ‘older persons’ village’.

Keith Brown, Havering’s Community Engagement Manager, has asked us to print a piece written by him outlining the Council’s plan. We print Keith’s piece opposite in full.

By the end of November we will have given each individual who needs to move a summary of their housing needs and an indication of how long we think it will be before they are likely to move – this will be only an indication as it depends on properties becoming empty.

‘There is a firm commitment that any current resident of Serena, Solar and Sunrise wishing to return to the new scheme will be able to do so. That commitment will be included in the special Serena, Solar and Sunrise Local Lettings Plan, which is due to be published this month.’

If you wish to see some examples of older persons’ villages, details are available at www.havering.gov.uk/ShelteredHousingDevelopments. More information will be online at www.havering.gov.uk/SSS as it becomes available.

Progress shared with residents on regeneration plans

At a meeting with residents on Friday 30 September, Interim Director of Housing, Neil Stubbings, updated residents on the older persons’ housing review, which includes a proposal to regenerate the site of the Serena, Solar and Sunrise sheltered housing scheme.

Mr Stubbings said: ‘The final report, which will go to Cabinet on Wednesday 12 October, will propose that Serena, Solar and Sunrise be redeveloped as an older persons’ village and that it should be in the early part of the programme."

‘The older persons’ village will provide modern extra care sheltered housing along with specialist provision for dementia care flats in buildings more than two storeys high. Work on site is expected to start during 2018 and take 18 months for the work to be completed.

‘During October and November the Council will be serving a legal document, called a Demolition Notice, on each property that is going to be regenerated.

‘This sets down the Council’s plans in legal terms but does not mean that work is imminent. The final decision on phasing of the proposed redevelopments is unlikely to happen until 2018 at the earliest. Residents will be consulted about the proposed designs when they become available."
Kids’ stuff

Remember the coffee morning we advertised early in the summer? You know, the one where we were going to ask parents what activities they would like PETRA to organise for their kids over the holiday.

Well, the date duly arrived. Kettles were boiling, coffee machines bubbling and cakes waiting to be eaten. But unfortunately nobody bothered to turn up! No one.

Both Tess, a primary school teaching assistant, and Lesley were waiting to receive some ideas on how we could use the resources we already have, and to hear your ideas on new things we could do.

There was a host of possibilities plus money available to make things happen. But with no parents taking any interest, no activities were organised.

Instead we had bored, unsupervised kids running around the estate and getting into mischief over the summer. Come on Mums and Dads! Surely, with a little effort, we can do better than that?

Our activities sub-committee want to do things for our children. But without your input there will be no kids events. None. So, come on, get involved, let’s make plans and give our kids some exciting stuff to look forward to.

Regards,
Jan Davis

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At the AGM, PETRA’s Chair, Jan, reflected on the main developments marking an often difficult year. Once again, she spoke of our frustration at the lack of a settlement from Havering on the question of PETRA’s Modular Management Agreement (MMA) funding. She expressed our shock at the news that the sheltered housing complex is to be demolished and replaced with new housing - not least because of the upheaval this will cause our neighbours and ourselves (see page 1). And she expressed the sadness we all felt at the recent death of our friend, committee member Colin Roast (see page 3).

Manager’s report

PETRA Manager Caroline reported on some of the works that have been carried out this year. These included: the clearing of the playrooms of rubbish and unwanted / flammable items; the removal of the bin areas for Parkview and Overstrand to a new location, freeing up some extra parking spaces in the basement area; the painting of the handrails and walls and the setting out of a new walkway outside Overstrand; additional CCTV cameras installed on the roads leading onto the estate; and the arrival of new hanging baskets dotted around the estate, giving a much-needed splash of colour.

New committee

As for our committee, the AGM marked the end of some people’s involvement and the beginning for others. George MacDonald stood down and was thanked for his many years service. Anna Duffy and Amber Barry stood down from their roles as treasurer and secretary respectively, though both, we are pleased to report, agreed to remain committee members. Tricia Fitter was elected as the new secretary, and Sheila Slater was elected treasurer. Marilyn Shepherd was elected on to the committee, and Lauren Gough was elected vice chair. Mike and Jan Davis (Chair), and Sandra Kinch were all required to seek re-election this year, and all three were duly re-elected. For full details of the new committee visit the website.

NOTE: At present the committee is short of three tenant members. If you could be interested in getting involved, please pop into the office for a chat with Jan or Caroline.

Thanks Jim

Mike Davis writes:

Jim’s retirement from PETRA is a great loss to the estate. He was one of the first appointments we made when PETRA went live in 2003. At his interview, Jim’s knowledge and expertise soon became apparent. He had visited the estate and noted the rampant graffiti, dumped vehicles and infestation of sewer rats in the basements. He had experience of TMOs, having previously worked for two in north London, and he had experience of handling anti-social behaviour. He got the job.

He proceeded to take it all in his stride, with gentle southern Irish charm and charisma. Mind you, he was no push-over. Residents behaving badly were soon put right, such as the Continued >
Colin Roast

We are very sorry to have to tell you that Colin Roast, Parkview tenant and good friend to PETRA, has died.

Colin went in to hospital in July for a heart operation. He was full of optimism for the future, looking forward to feeling brighter and better after his treatment. Sadly, there were complications and Colin never recovered consciousness. He was 68.

We first got to know Colin about four years ago. He started coming into the office to lend a hand and to chat. Soon he was taking a lead on the development of our now thriving vegetable garden situated above Sunrise Lodge.

Colin was a local lad. A motorbike enthusiast, he worked as a gardener and with horses at a local riding school, volunteered at Duxford air show, and lived with his mum off of Ford Lane. It was after she died that Colin came to live here. The Good Intent was his local, where he would go for a pint or two and to catch up with mates.

In return, Colin said PETRA gave him ‘a reason to get up in the morning’. He enjoyed being involved, appreciated the company of the PETRA team and the support they gave him, and gained quiet satisfaction from knowing that he was making a contribution to his community.

Colin’s funeral was held at the crematorium in Upminster. Members of his family were surprised and moved by how many of Colin’s friends, including his PETRA pals, came to pay their respects. Our neighbours in the sheltered housing have donated a bench, now in place on the hill overlooking the estate, and we will soon be painting this green (Colin’s favourite colour) and unveiling a plaque in our friend’s memory.

Youngster who brought her gang of young thugs on to the estate, scaring many of the elderly residents.

The problems Jim dealt with were many and varied. The daily blockage of rubbish chutes, continual plumbing problems due to previous poor maintenance, trouble with our lifts and their maintenance, to name a few. As a new TMO, we were on a huge learning curve, and often hampered by an obstructive council. Having Jim onside at various meetings with officials would often prove crucial, with his knowledge of the estate and its workings making all the difference.

Back on the estate, Jim became endeared to the local kids. He would take the time to talk to them, and they in turn respected and listened to his sage advice. As a result, there were fewer incidents anti-social behaviour, graffiti and the like, and, when out and about, people starting talking to one another. For everything you’ve done Jim, thank you.

Caroline Edwards adds:
Retiring means Jim and his wife will have more time to enjoy their grandchildren, not to mention their beloved caravan in Western Super Mare. We, meanwhile, will miss almost everything about Jim - almost everything. You see, he is notorious around these parts (the office, the workshop) for picking things up and not putting them back where they belong! But we forgive him. His sense of humour, his banter, and his teasing - these things we will miss sorely. We all wish him well in his retirement, he deserves it.
Is it a bird, is it a plane…?  
No, just the men from AAA (Access All Areas), a specialist rope access / abseiling contractor, back on site recently to complete the work they began back in the spring. You will remember they were applying a special waterproofing material to the exterior walls of our three tower blocks following the problems we’ve been having with water ingress since the new windows went in. The work continues.

Our survey said…you’re not bothered  
Once again we had a poor response to our annual residents survey. Just 24 percent of you bothered to complete it for us. A big thank you to those of you who did - your answers will help us identify the things we need to focus on in the year ahead. The low response rate is disappointing but hey, looking on the bright side, it does suggest there can’t be much wrong with the way PETRA is managing the estate!

Do you have a tumble dryer?  
These supposedly harmless kitchen appliances have been making the new recently as a fire risk. Most makes are perfectly safe, but just to be sure, always remember to turn yours off at the main, and don’t leave leave them on when you go out.

Rubbish!  
People continue to misuse the bins. Some fail to put rubbish inside the bins properly, leaving foxes and squirrels to make a huge mess. Some are too lazy to flatten cardboard boxes and put them in the orange bins. Some continue to put inappropriate items into (and in front of) the container. We will deliver a leaflet to every household shortly outlining how to dispose of rubbish properly. Meanwhile, if you have doubts, read the instructions on the bins carefully, or ask PETRA staff for help.

Coffee in a good cause  
Well done everybody - but especially Jan and Lesley - who arranged and attended our recent Macmillan Coffee Morning. We raised just over £160 for the leading cancer care charity.