

Through the Keyhole

As Keith Lemon might say: 'Who'd live in a smart yet welcoming, homely yet professional, office environment like this? Here are some clues!'

With the arrival of Caroline Edwards, our new Estate Manager, the PETRA office has undergone a modest yet significant makeover.



Out have gone the assortment of trestle tables cobbled together to make a boardroom table for committee meetings – these now take place in the comfortable concierge across the way from the main office.



In has come new carpeting, some fancy balcony plants, a re-gigging of the comfy seating, a smart work station for the manager in the main office, and facing 'his and hers' work stations for PETRA stalwarts Mike and Jan Davis. And very nice it looks too.

Mike and Jan busy at work in the office, as usual.

However, the most important thing is that you – PETRA residents – feel able to pop in anytime during office hours to register concerns, request repairs, find out about coming events, seek advice, or to simply have a chat.

Looks familiar...

Following the loss (up North) of our old friend and colleague Natasha, it is good to report that PETRA – in accordance with strict equality and diversity regulations – continues to maintain its quota of redheads. 'Leah,' seen here, was donated to the office by Ms Cruickshank on her departure, and she has settled in very well. Always on the move, she adds a splash of colour to the office, while keeping a beady eye on all the comings and goings. Just like Tash!

In brief

PETRA survey

There was a poor response (30%) to our latest residents survey. The results are being compiled and we will report on them in the next issue. Meanwhile, congratulations to Denise Glendenning (Parkview), Natalie Allen (Uphavering) and June Knight (PETRA treasurer and Overstrand resident). After completing the survey, their names went into the hat for the prize draw. As winners, each received a shopping voucher worth £100. Which just goes to show – it pays to be an active, engaged PETRA resident!

Macmillan coffee morning

Thank you to everyone who supported our recent coffee morning in support of the cancer charity. We raised £166. Special thanks should go to Jan Davis, for her wonderful baking, and our friends over in the sheltered housing, for their support.

Control your dog

A child was recently bitten by a dog. The incident happened on one of the stairwells. The dog was not on a leash. Owners, please make sure that your dog is on a leash and under control when on the estate. We live close by a large park. This is where dogs can be allowed to roam free.

Not so close, please

Please can car owner avoid parking close to (ie 'under') the tower blocks. Cars parked this close block access to the water system that allows the Fire Brigade to pump water up the building, and can block access to the bins. There is plenty of parking space elsewhere around the estate.

Chairman Mike's SOAPBOX

Uninvited guests



The Council has started using the visitor's room over in Sunrise Lodge for emergency housing of homeless families. A family of four were temporarily placed there recently. The residents – who have furnished this single room themselves for their relatives' occasional use – were given virtually no warning and certainly no choice in the matter. They were understandably anxious and upset by this development.

Subsequently, it seems that I upset a couple of council officers by speaking to the *Romford Recorder* about this matter. I did so because I think that using a room of this kind in this way is inappropriate and unfair – on both the residents and the unfortunate family concerned.

In a letter to Angela Watkinson, our local MP, I called the Council's decision egregious. She acknowledged my letter and forwarded it to Councillor Roger Ramsey (Leader of the Council) for his view on the matter. I am still waiting to hear from Roger.

If nothing else, this episode shows why the proposal PETRA made a year ago, to take on management responsibilities for the sheltered blocks, is so important. The residents there are relatively vulnerable. Their accommodation has not received the investment it should have in recent years. With PETRA on their side, they would be better supported and their rights better protected. We still await the Council's decision on whether to allow this proposal to go ahead.

Regards,
Mike

Your TMO needs you!



...to be a shareholder (PS You could win £100)

Jan Davis writes:

If you live on our estate, as a legal tenant, a leaseholder, or the tenant of a leaseholder, and you are over 18, you are entitled to be a PETRA shareholder.

In December, we will be running a shareholder drive. The names of everyone who becomes a shareholder will be entered in a raffle with the winner receiving a £100 shopping voucher – just in time for Christmas.

Although all members are welcome to attend committee meetings, only committee members and shareholders can vote. This means that if there is an issue discussed during the meeting which requires a decision to be made, you, as a shareholder, can have a say.

It's simple to become a shareholder, and you don't have to wait until December to become one – just call into the office and fill in a simple form and pay your 10p (Yes, that's all it costs!). We will then produce your certificate and deliver it to your door.

The certificate is issued only once and is valid for all the time you are living on the estate. Once you move away you are no longer a shareholder.

Did you know?

- If you have a difficult form to fill in – PETRA can help.
- If you want to write a CV but don't know where to start – PETRA can help.
- If you need advice but don't know who to turn to – PETRA can help.

PETRA staff and committee members have the skills and experience to help residents with many of the challenges life

throws at us. If you're looking for some help or advice, pop into the office for a confidential chat.



Meet the new Estate Manager: Caroline Edwards



Welcome Caroline. How have you been settling in?

Thank you. My first month has been great – I'm loving it. Everybody has been so welcoming, and, I think, I'm fitting in rather well.

Tell us about your professional background.

I worked for C&A in their London HQ for over 20 years. By the end of my time there I was running their call centre and building security. After that I worked briefly for Westminster Council (Urgh!) before realising I was ready to find work closer to home. I got a job with Havering Council, running their neighbourhood wardens service. For the last 10 years, I've been manager at PETRA's sister organisation, BETRA, over in Harold Hill.

So lots of relevant experience, then?

Oh, yes. Building up a community, maintaining and improvement the estate, tackling anti-social behaviour – it's all familiar territory to me.

What are your first impressions of our estate?

It's lovely. People are friendly, the grounds are delightful, and you have some very impressive and dedicated committee members. Of course there are problems and ways in which the estate could be improved, but I think residents are entitled to feel very proud of this estate, and their TMO.



What would you like to achieve in your first year with us?

Well, we've already spruced up the office a bit. Lighting around the estate could be improved, and we also plan to add a bit of colour by introducing a greater variety of shrubs and trees over the next year or so. Apart from that, I'm still doing a lot of listening and learning, and plan to do a full inspection of the estate shortly. Then I'll draw up some priorities.

Your message to residents?

Come in and say hello! Tell me what *you* think my priorities should be. And, most important of all, get involved – PETRA can only be as good as residents make it.

Team of many talents

At our recent open day, Jimmy and Sarah showed just how versatile they are. When the children's entertainer failed to turn up, 'Uncle Jimmy' and Sarah took it upon themselves to keep the children amused. Out came the flip charts, CD player, hula hoops and skipping ropes (amazing what Jimmy keeps in that filing cabinet!) and the fun began.

Afterwards, on a tour of the top garden, the children got to see, close up, a real live fox. 'Wow!' they all said, before settling down to mark the occasion with these fab pictures.



Peace of mind for £1 a week

Everyone's home is important to them. It is hard to imagine what it would be like to lose personal items from your home if you should be unlucky enough to have a flood, fire, or break-in. Now Havering Council is offering all tenants a new insurance scheme. It's cheap and easy to pay in with your rent. For more details, ask in the PETRA office or email julie.oakley@havering.gov.uk

Emergency numbers

PETRA holds emergency contact numbers for residents – leaseholders and tenants – in case of emergencies. But not everyone has given us their contact number. If that includes you, please let us have your number. We will not share it with anyone, or use it except in emergencies.

Events

Committee news

Two new committee members were elected at our recent AGM – Lesley Marsh, a Parkview resident, and Bob Giles, who lives in Overstrand. Lesley, who has been involved since she moved here earlier this year, also agreed to become Vice Chair. We remain short of two committee members, and other volunteers willing to help with the running of PETRA. And so...

Uphavering, here we come!

We are especially keen to hear from Uphavering residents, who are currently under-represented on our committee. So Caroline and Jan will be paying a visit to all Uphavering residents in the next week or so, to say hello, and to ask if you would consider becoming involved. Please give this some thought – volunteering (even just an hour or two a week) looks great on a CV, and opens all sorts of doors, to skills, training, work experience, and fun!

NFTMO

Our Chair, Mike Davis, was recently re-elected as the Vice-Chair and Membership Secretary of the National Federation of TMOs. The federation represents all TMOs across the country.

Mike says, 'It's a huge responsibility a great honour, and an extremely interesting position to fill. The NFTMO plays an important role at ministerial level, and I like to think in some small way PETRA residents are now represented even there.'

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. And these door numbers change every month. So what are you waiting for? Go to www.petratmo.weebly.com



Halloween: Arts and crafts for all ages

Wednesday 29 October, 1pm

There will be pumpkins, art and crafts, bobbing for apples and sweets. To book a place, please contact the PETRA office. A £2 deposit is required and will be refunded on the day of the activity.

Christmas Art

Tuesday 9 December, 4pm

There will be angels, advents bean bags (snowman) and decorations. If you would like to book a place please contact the PETRA office. A £2 deposit is required and will be refunded on the day of the activity.

Pamper Evening

Thursday 11 December 2014, 7pm to 9pm

In the concierge opposite the PETRA office. For the ladies – the young and not so young. Tickets include complimentary drinks and nibbles. Mini treatments between £5 and £10. Full treatments from £10-£35. Booking is essential so please contact the PETRA office

The PETRA Bake-off

Not a competition, just the chance to join our very own master baker, Jan Davis, in the concierge kitchen, preparing goodies for Christmas. For more info, visit the PETRA office.

Christmas Market, Leeds Castle (in Kent), 13 December

Special PETRA outing. Coach travel is free. You only need book your place in advance and give us a £2 deposit, returnable on the day. Non-residents (ie friends and relatives) are also welcome, but they must pay the entrance fee up-front, as follows: £14.75 per adult, OAPs £13.75, children 4-15 £10.50, babies and toddlers free. All bookings, and money, in ASAP please.

PETRA's Christmas get-together Friday 19 December, 3pm to 7pm

Bring the family and join staff and committee members for some drinks, nibbles and Christmas cheer in the concierge.

Christmas Panto: Sleeping Beauty, Friday 2 January, 2pm

For adults and children. Limited tickets available. If you would like to reserve a place please pop into or call the Petra Office. A £2 deposit will be required and refunded on the day.

Committee meetings

Monday 27 October, 7.30

Monday 24 November 7.30

CONTACTS

Mike Davis (Chair), Caroline Edwards (Estate Manager), Jim Brett (Senior Repairs and Grounds Maintenance Officer), Bradley Pavey (Repairs and Grounds Maintenance Officer) and Naomi Cooper (Accounts Administrator) are based at the PETRA office.
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