

# The choice is yours

PETRA News

Parkhill Estate Tenants and Residents Association

Number 139, September 2013

## For two weeks in October PETRA residents will have the chance to vote on the future management of the estate: the 'continuation ballot' is coming

Once every five years, as part of our management agreement with the Council, PETRA is required to consult with tenants and leaseholders on the future management of the estate. This consultation takes the form of a secret ballot, held over two weeks. We call it the continuation ballot.

This year's continuation ballot will take place between the **14th-25th October**. You will be asked to judge how effective your tenant management organisation – PETRA – has been over the last five years, and whether you want PETRA to continue managing the estate in accordance with the current management agreement.

### Majority rules

This is a big decision. If the majority of you vote for PETRA to continue to manage the estate, we will do so. If the majority is against PETRA continuing to manage the estate, we will have just 21 days to give the Council three months' written notice to end the management agreement. PETRA will then cease to manage the estate.

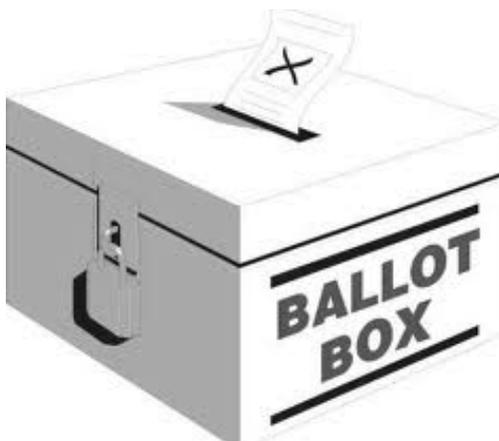
### **Should PETRA continue to manage this estate?**

Over the next few weeks, PETRA will obtain ballot boxes from the Council, prepare the ballot papers ready for delivery to all the residents, organise the open meeting at which councillors will oversee the count, and, last but not

least, work to convince you all to vote in support of PETRA's continued management of our estate.

### Making our case

As a community, we have a lot to be proud of and PETRA has led the way in making many of the improvements seen in recent years. In the next few weeks we will send you a special edition of *PETRA News* devoted entirely to PETRA's achievements in recent years.



We will also be arranging drop-in sessions for residents to come and discuss the future management of the estate with us, and we will go door to door across the estate to answer any questions you may have and encourage you to vote.

### **Local democracy doesn't get more local than this. Please use your vote**

Our message is clear. This is a big decision. We want as many of you as possible to take part in the ballot. Local democracy doesn't get more local than this, and your vote really will count. Please make sure to use it.

## **THE CONTINUATION BALLOT**

**WHO SHOULD RUN THE ESTATE  
PETRA OR THE COUNCIL?**

**WHEN CAN I VOTE?  
BETWEEN 14-25 OCTOBER**

**HOW DO I VOTE?  
PETRA WILL DELIVER  
A BALLOT PAPER TO EVERY FLAT**

**Our survey  
said...**

PETRA's annual summer survey was completed by 54 residents this year. Thanks to all of you who completed the questionnaire – your feedback helps us recognise the things we do well, and the things we need to work on.

Overall, your feedback was very positive (see page 3). But we also now know that some of you are dissatisfied with the Council's cleaning of the block landings. We know many of you are concerned about dog mess on the estate and the failure of dog owners to clear up after them. And we know that some of you feel aggrieved about the charges you pay for TV reception. The full survey results are available in the PETRA office. -CONTINUED PAGE 3



# Picture this

## Chairman Mike's SOAPBOX

Residents, who, like me, have lived on this estate for decades will remember what it was like when it was managed directly by the Council.

Picture the scene: Dumped cars, graffiti all over the place, and repairs carried out when and if council officers could be bothered to pass on your repair request to their in-house staff, usually taking a month or more if the repair was deemed 'non urgent'. Drug supplying and dealing rampant (especially in Overstrand House), and gangs who treated the estate and its residents with zero respect.

I predict that this estate could soon revert to that sort of place again if residents choose to vote against PETRA's continuation as the managing agent – or worse still can't be persuaded to vote at all.

We print opposite some of the results from our recent resident satisfaction survey which we put through your letter-box earlier this summer. Thank you to the 54 people who took the time to answer our questions. Yes, even the one who thinks PETRA's staff are rubbish and the estate would be better off going back under the direct control of the Council.

Democracy is a wonderful thing. It allows people to say what they think, with impunity. Please make sure you use your vote in the forthcoming continuation ballot.

**Regards,  
Mike**



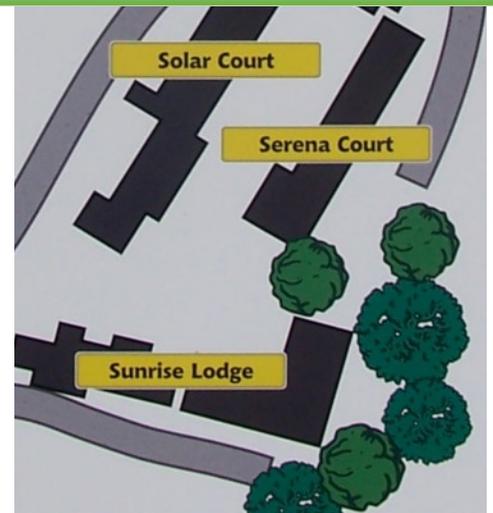
## Uphavering Watch

**When residents have concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour it is worth remembering that calling on PETRA or the police are not your only options – you could call out the Community Warden Service.**

We wanted to remind you of this because youths have recently been gathering at night in the parking area around Uphavering House. We think most of them do not live on the estate, but the facts are that the noise they make, the drugs they take, and the anxiety they cause residents going in and out is unacceptable.

If you have concerns, or if you have seen anti-social behaviour that needs to be reported, take action. Community Wardens, employed by Havering's Homes & Housing, patrol this area regularly. They are available six days a week through to 10pm, their vehicles have mobile CCTV cameras, and they work closely with the police.

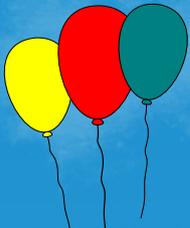
**Community Warden Service:  
Tel 01708 434000 / Out of hours  
(24hr) 01708 726685**



## What future for Solar, Sunrise and Serena?

PETRA's plans for taking on management responsibility for the three older people's residential blocks remain on hold. The Council said back in May that they would conduct a consultation with residents of the blocks before agreeing the move and signing a new management agreement with PETRA. Instead they have done nothing.

PETRA regrets this delay and apologies to residents for the continuing uncertainty. We want to see the upgrading of these properties (which is long overdue) and to that end we will continue to push for the Council to act in support of this initiative, which we believe could benefit Solar, Sunrise and Serena residents greatly.



# PETRA's party people

A big thank you to everyone who helped make PETRA's 10th anniversary party a memorable occasion, especially those of you – you know who you are, girls – who organised everything. The sun shone on your efforts, just as your generosity of spirit lights up this community. Well done.

## Our survey said...CONTINUED



### Smart meters

PETRA has some 'smart meters', which allow you to monitor electricity use in your home. If you would like borrow one of these meters please visit the office. We guarantee you won't ever again overflow your kettle!

### Pigeon netting

The pigeon netting and wire protection prevent pigeons from taking up residence. Please remember - if you cut or damage these barriers, you will be liable for the cost of replacing or repairing them.

### New windows

Some residents have found it difficult to open the new windows. If you are having trouble, feel free to ask Jim or Bradley – or a friendly neighbour – to show you how.

### Unbelievable – but true

Cat crap has been thrown down the stairwell of Overstrand House. This behaviour is completely unacceptable. Whoever is responsible for it, please start disposing of your cat litter properly, by bagging it and binning it.

### Uphaving's rubbish

Please remember: bulky rubbish needs to go in the green container, not the bin room.

### Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with PETRA as the managing organisation for the estate?

Very satisfied	44
Fairly satisfied	8
<b>96%</b>	
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	1
Fairly dissatisfied	0
Very dissatisfied	1
<b>4%</b>	
Grand Total	54

### Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way PETRA respond to repairs in your flat or on the estate?

Very satisfied	40
Fairly satisfied	11
<b>94%</b>	
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	1
Fairly dissatisfied	2
Very dissatisfied	0
<b>6%</b>	
Grand Total	54

### Overall how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the PETRA staff who work on the estate?

Very satisfied	43
Fairly satisfied	9
<b>96%</b>	
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	2
Fairly dissatisfied	0
Very dissatisfied	1
<b>4%</b>	
Grand Total	55

### [When you last asked for help] How satisfied or dissatisfied were you with PETRA's response to your request?

Very satisfied	42
Fairly satisfied	9
<b>95%</b>	
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	1
Fairly dissatisfied	1
Very dissatisfied	1
<b>5%</b>	
Grand Total	54

To read the full results, visit the PETRA office.

# Committee news

PETRA's committee meets every month and works to ensure the estate is maintained to the highest standards, and that residents benefit from the best possible estate management services. Of course every committee meeting is important, but arguably one – the annual general meeting (AGM) – is more important than most.

## The AGM

This year's AGM takes place on 24th September, starting at 7.30pm. Here's your chance to check up on what we're doing, hear directly from PETRA officers as they report on the year just gone, see the all-important financial figures, and ask any questions you may have. With the continuation ballot coming, what better time could there be to attend your first AGM?

The formal business of the meeting won't take long, and will be followed by drinks and nibbles afterwards, giving everyone the chance to chat. Do please join us.

## More than Parkview

PETRA is here for everyone who lives on the estate. It is important that the committee reflects that fact. We have two vacancies on the committee at the moment, and it would be great if we could find more residents from Uphaving and Overstrand Houses willing to stand – currently these blocks are under-represented. If interested, please get in touch with us – and put the AGM date in your diary.

## Thanks Roger

Roger Colby, Uphaving resident and a long-time member of PETRA's committee, has stepped down. Roger, who is a leaseholder, has for the last seven years been a solid and reliable contributor to our main committee and our finance sub-committee. Always fair, and with a pertinent question to ask, Roger will be missed. Thanks Roger. Best wishes to you from all your friends at PETRA.

*Season of mists  
and mellow fruitfulness...*

*Join PETRA's Jan Davis to make delicious sweets, jams and chutneys - Coming soon.*

## Fascinating facts

Jessie J was brought up in Romford, Ian Dury in Upminster, and the legendary jazz trumpeter Kenny Ball lived for many years in dear old Hornchurch.



# Top garden!



**The vegetable growing project, known fondly as 'the top garden' because of its location beyond the older people's residential blocks, has come on a treat!**

Thanks mainly to the efforts of Bradley, Jim and some of the older residents, an amazing range of veg has been grown over the summer. The plan is to share the crop among residents, especially those who helped with the project.

Want to share in next year's bumper crop? Then get involved early next spring when Jim and Bradley will again be looking for volunteers to help turn-over the soil, sow some seeds, and do a little watering. Then, by this time next year, you too could be enjoying the delicious benefits.



## Havering's grand designs

This year's 'Open House' Weekend, when interesting and beautiful London buildings are open to the public for free, takes place on 21–22 September.

In Havering, 18 fascinating buildings will be open to all, including the Queen's Theatre, the Town Hall, Langton's House, and the new Centre for Engineering and Manufacturing Excellence. Make a day of it and tour the lot! For more information: [www.openhouselondon.org.uk/havering](http://www.openhouselondon.org.uk/havering)

## Dates

### PETRA's AGM

Tuesday 24th September, 7.30pm in the office. Followed by drinks and nibbles.

### The Continuation Ballot

Voting: 14th – 25th October  
The count: Tuesday 28th October

### Sweets, Jams and Chutneys, with Jan Davis

From October, we will be holding three cookery classes with our resident expert, Jan, in PETRA's newly refurbished kitchen. For more details visit the office. Book early!

## 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.

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