

PETRA

Tenant Management Organisation



Annual Review 2017-18



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Welcome from PETRA Chair Jan Davis

2017-18 marks our 15th year as a TMO and it has been no less hectic than previous years. We marked the event with a special Family Fun Day on 15th July, which was very successful and enjoyed by all who attended. I would like to thank everyone who helped make the day such a resounding success.

These successful 15 years are due to staff both past and present and the fact that most residents do appreciate and take ownership of where they live and want it to remain a very pleasant environment to live in. My thanks to our great staff who are dedicated to keeping the estate looking so good. Also to the Committee, all of whom are volunteers, who work so hard to ensure we are running correctly and within our budget.

The aftermath of the terrible Grenfell Tower tragedy has at least proved that our own fire safety procedures are good and indeed after a number of inspections following that fire, we came through with flying colours. This doesn't mean we can grow complacent and we must all make sure we keep up measures to ensure everybody is safe. The responsibility for this lies with both residents and staff. The Council have implemented a number of initiatives such as keeping the communal area clutter-free (including removal of doormats).

The closure of the sheltered complex situated on the estate comprising Sunrise Lodge and Solar and Serena Courts (SSS) has been sad as we have had very close links with the residents. Most have now moved away and those remaining will soon follow. We are attending meetings, and will be looking at plans and consulting with the Council and their building partner (Wates Residential) to advise them of our concerns and to keep disruption to a minimum. The new build is expected to start in early 2019.

This year we lost a long-standing and very valuable member of PETRA in June Kight. June had lived on the estate for almost 40 years and had been a member of both PASTA (the tenants association that preceded PETRA) and served PETRA for many years as our Treasurer until ill-health prevented her from carrying on these duties. Our deepest sympathies go to her son David. Other losses this year included David Cullan of Parkview House, Sue Hooking and Bob Giles of Overstrand House.

How TMOs work

PETRA TMO is a London Borough of Havering Council estate, managed by a TMO (Tenant Management Organisation) Committee to provide general estate management under a Modular Management Agreement (MMA). This covers a day-to-day repair service, grounds maintenance, signing up of new tenancies, dealing with anti-social behaviour, and void (ie empty properties) turnaround actions.

There are a number of functions which we are not responsible for, such as internal redecoration, lift maintenance, cleaning of landings, stairs and windows, boiler maintenance, CCTV, TV aerial maintenance and door entry maintenance. However, we have in the past match-funded some projects such as internal redecoration and CCTV cameras from our surplus funds to help keep the estate looking presentable.

With an annual allowance, built on the Council's historic cost for these services, PETRA has managed to accrue savings (reserves) each year that has to be ploughed back into the estate for the betterment of our residents' living conditions.

Throughout the year we have had extensive negotiations with the Council regarding signing a new and vastly amended MMA (Modular Management Agreement), but without much luck. We know the new calculations meant that we would have a huge reduction in our annual allowance - something like £40,000 plus the loss of the grounds maintenance contract for the SSS site. We will need to look at the new figures very carefully and question the Council where figures are not transparent enough. Liz Michael, our consultant, will help us with this and hopefully be able to find some more funds for us. We will also look at taking on more functions from the Council to give us further funding streams.

The problem of water ingress into the flats following the major refurbishments four years ago are still ongoing. A major survey was carried out by the Council, and some remedial works were carried out to all the blocks by abseilers on a few occasions, together with some additional work which is being carried out on balconies.

Supporting our community

Supporting our community has always featured high on PETRA's list of priorities. And that's why our stated vision is of 'a safe, pleasant neighbourhood where people want to be part of a vibrant, caring community'.

To this end, an Activities Sub-Committee has now been set up and any resident is welcome to participate. You don't have to be a member of the PETRA Committee to be a member of one of our sub-committees, and all ideas are welcome for future events.

We are proud of our record on social activities, and here are some of the things we have organised in recent years:

Children's activities

- Arts and crafts sessions during school holidays
- Special sessions for making Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day cards and gifts
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Stay and Play for 2 to 4 year olds (with Havering Adult College)
- Sunflower competition
- Halloween activities

Adults activities

- Trip to Xmas Market at Rochester
- Cooking sessions
- Pamper evenings for the ladies
- Day trip to the cockle sheds at Leigh-on-Sea
- Theatre trip to the Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch
- Monthly Coffee Mornings and Afternoon Teas (first Wednesday in the month)
- Annual Macmillan Coffee Morning (Friday 29 Sept)

Open evenings

These events, held twice a year, are to encourage residents to come and ask questions about PETRA, to find out what we do, and how we do it. To find out what is being planned, and offer your suggestions on the things we should tackle. It's a great opportunity to meet other residents as well

as committee members, and to find out how you can become involved. Even if you only have an hour or two to spare each week, we would welcome your support. So, when you see our next open evening advertised on the notice boards, make sure to come along.

Mini Library

On the ground floor entrance to Parkview House we have installed a free library of fiction and non-fiction books, including a whole section of children's books. The cupboards are open daily during office hours and books may be kept or returned when finished with. This facility is proving to be quite popular, so if you have any spare books (in good condition, please) that you have finished with, feel free to donate them.

Publications

Our quarterly newsletter *PETRA News* goes through every letterbox on the estate. It also appears on our website, and can be sent to residents electronically, via email, if residents prefer.

We also produce periodically the following booklets, all of which can be found on the website:

- A Welcome booklet for new tenants (see below)
- Committee members handbook
- Our Annual Review
- A Guide to out of hours procedures

Website

Our website, petratmo@weebly.com, provides a range of information including useful contacts, news on upcoming events, and updates for residents, as well as access to electronic versions of all our printed publications. To encourage visits to the site, we run a 'Letter-box Lottery' each month. We put three addresses - one from each of the blocks - on the website, and if a resident spots their address they can contact us by email to claim their £25 voucher. So remember to look at the website at least once a month - your number's bound to come up sooner or later!

Welcome pack

Along with all our information booklets, we provide new tenants with a PETRA welcome pack of practical items to help them get sorted. These include a bucket, mop, broom, dustpan and brush, and an assortment of cleaning products.

Democracy

PETRA's committees

As a TMO, PETRA strives to be a democratic organisation, with a main committee of residents, including elected officials, overseeing the running of the organisation, and a flexible number of sub-committees - currently staffing and finance, and social activities - looking into particular responsibilities and issues.

Our main committee has varied in size each year, from as little as eight or nine people to several years where almost every available committee place (maximum fifteen) has been filled with resident volunteers.

The committee is made up of representatives of our tenanted dwellings (100 properties) as well as leaseholder dwellings (46 properties at present), acquired by individual tenants who exercised their right to buy or by residents who have bought from those original residents. In addition we have a Council-nominated member (usually one of our local ward councillors) and two co-opted members from the sheltered complex who we work closely with.

We hold regular monthly committee meetings (on the last Monday in the month) ensuring that each committee member has had the opportunity to fully participate in the formal debates. All participants receive the relevant papers at least a week before the formal meeting and the committee Secretary, in discussion with the Chair, draws up the agenda. As well as formally accepting, with amendments if necessary, the minutes of the previous meeting, the Treasurer's report consists of reports to the committee on bank balances, and the spend for the previous month.

Each quarter the Treasurer reports to our staffing and finance sub-committee with a spreadsheet showing a breakdown of the three-monthly notional spend for each quarter against the actual budget spend figures.

Each year one third of the committee are required to stand down and submit to re-election. This maintains a continuity of experience and skills on the committee, although each committee member needs to apply for their place on the committee every year.

Every five years residents across the estate are required (by secret ballot) to agree or disagree as to whether PETRA should continue to provide the above services. The last ballot took place in September 2013 with an overwhelming 92% in favour of PETRA. Hopefully this year's ballot, which takes place in October, will deliver an even better result.

One way of showing your support for PETRA is to become one of our registered shareholders. Anyone who is over 18 years of age and legally resident on the estate is entitled to become a shareholder. Residents are also welcome to attend committee meetings, but only committee members or shareholders are eligible to vote. Becoming a shareholder is easy. All you need to do is fill in the application form in the PETRA Office and pay 10p. We will then produce a certificate and deliver it to your door.

Caring for the environment

PETRA cares about the environment in which we all live, and we encourage residents to do the same. We pride ourselves on being eco-friendly and to this end we have undertaken the following initiatives.

Retro-fitting energy efficient facilities in void flats

There are approximately ten void flats per year on the PETRA estate. We use these voids as an opportunity to retro-fit energy efficient facilities. This meets our principal objective of attacking fuel poverty at source, and includes:

- **Thermostatic showers**

We are in the later stages of installing thermostatic showers over the new bath with the necessary shower curtain and walls tiled to the ceiling height. This is only possible if you have a 'combi' boiler. Ask in the office if you are unsure.

- **Water efficient toilet cisterns**

At the same time, we also renew the toilet cistern.

- **Replacement of copper waste pipes**

Where possible, the old copper waste pipes, which were installed when the flats were built and were causing concern, are replaced with plastic pipes and fittings. This reduces the risk of leaking pipes which can cause considerable damage by water penetration to flats on floors below.

Amenity areas

The committee is firmly of the opinion that the physical surroundings impact dramatically on our residents' everyday quality of life.

Consequently PETRA has a programme of enhancements all of which are intended to improve the daily experience of life on the estate. In short, we strive to make ours the greenest and best kept estate in Havering.

Recycling facilities

The proper disposal of rubbish - recyclable and non-recyclable materials - is an important responsibility of us all, residents and staff alike. PETRA's staff work tirelessly to keep the estate clean and tidy, but we can only maintain high standards with our residents' cooperation.

Paper, card, cans, plastic and glass can all be recycled, as can furniture, which, where appropriate, we make available to other residents.

To ensure residents know how to dispose of their rubbish properly, we recently produced a PETRA *Guide to Rubbish and Recycling*, which we delivered to all properties on the estate. A copy of this guide is also available on the website.

Cigarette receptacles

These are placed at the entrances of each of the tower blocks at both ground floor and basement levels. Despite this, many residents continue to throw cigarette butts on the floor beside the receptacles and many still throw butts from kitchen windows or balconies, creating litter which, especially during hot weather, is dangerous (they can be blown onto balconies below causing a fire hazard) as well as unsightly.

Cleaning of rubbish chutes

We started this two years ago as the chutes had not been cleaned thoroughly for a number of years and were beginning to smell badly, particularly in the hotter weather. This was aggravated by people disposing of rubbish without bagging it and as a consequence leaving a residue in the chute hoppers. Despite reminders being sent out it is a recurring problem. The company employed to steam clean the chutes did a professional and clean job resulting in a much better environment for all. We will be repeating this procedure on an annual basis from now on.

Cleaning of Eurobins

A professional company was also engaged to steam clean the bins and made a very clean and successful job of this.

Estate roads and walkways

We have had various areas on the estate re-tarmaced and, where needed, some speed bumps have been added to deter dangerous driving. Again, where needed, we have also added parking restrictions in certain areas, to discourage poor or selfish parking, and ensure safe access for emergency vehicles. Residents were cutting across grassed areas and leaving a muddy footprint which carried into the blocks, so we have concreted these areas to help minimise the risk of people slipping.

Repainting entrance lobbies

We have painted the lobby areas and are in the process of painting the outside of the entrance doors and installing new notice boards. We also intend changing the wooden information boards by the lifts in each block.

Looking forward

PETRA is not content to stand still, and we continually look for opportunities to make improvements where possible. Our ambitions for the year ahead include plans to:

- Repaint communal area – actually a council responsibility
- Replace security doors at ground floor level – actually a council responsibility
- Replace flooring to all lift lobby areas – actually a council responsibility.

Despite all the above being the Council's responsibilities, we have offered to match fund these initiatives. Unfortunately the Council have either refused point-blank or are content to fall back on the much overused mantra 'there are far worse estates than yours'.

We want to get more residents to attend first aid sessions which we will fund, as you never know when you might come across an accident. We do keep a defibrillator in the PETRA office for emergencies.

We would also like to run some fire safety courses. Again we will fund these, in order to heighten residents' understanding of what to do in the event of a fire.

If you would like to know more about becoming a PETRA committee member, or if you would like to help PETRA in other ways, then please visit us for a chat.

PETRA's staff team

Jan Davis (Chair)

Caroline Edwards (Estate Manager)

Bradley Pavey (Repairs and Grounds Maintenance Officer)

Micky Hughes (Repairs and Ground Maintenance Officer)

Naomi Cooper (Bookkeeper)

All based at the PETRA office.





**1 Parkview House
Sunrise Avenue,
Hornchurch,
Essex
RM12 4YW
Tel: 01708 475358
Email: petratmo@aol.com**

Website: www.petratmo.weebly.com

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