

# Wake up!

PETRA News

It's April 2020. Five years ago, PETRA closed down because residents couldn't be bothered to support it. The Parkhill and Sunrise Estate became, once again, just another bog-standard estate...

Parkhill Estate Tenants and Residents Association

Number 143, April 2014



Things went downhill rapidly.



People didn't go out after dark. Well, most people.



Graffiti spread like a disease.



The grounds went to rack and ruin.



Only burglars visited the office.



Still, not everyone was miserable.

This time it was just a bad dream, but if residents don't start *actively* supporting PETRA it could soon be for real. You have been warned!

# The Chairman's wife's Soapbox Let's work together



**Following Mike's stroke in mid February, I've been working around the PETRA Office a lot more. It's meant I've been able to take some of the pressure off of Mike. It's fortunate that I retired from the day job last July. It has left me free to get more involved with PETRA.**

Regarding Mike's health, I want to say thank you to all the people who sent their good wishes for his speedy recovery. The last few weeks have brought home to all of us in the PETRA office just how much Mike does for the estate. I've no doubt the additional pressures that came with the power cuts over Christmas contributed to what happened.

## **Share the burden – and the fun**

It is obvious that we need more people from the estate to take

an active part in PETRA, so that the responsibility and pressure can be shared more evenly.

Becoming involved in PETRA is hugely rewarding. Friendships are forged, and helping to make a difference to your community makes you feel good. Committee members, Mike included, are all unpaid volunteers and yet they act like directors of a company, sharing the responsibility for decisions made and the general direction of PETRA. For this every committee member receives support and training.

If you are looking for a new job, a new challenge, or just to bolster your CV, volunteering is a great way to do it. Saying you are part of a residents' management committee for an estate of 150 households will impress people.

## **Just do it**

So please, follow Sarah's example (see opposite) and join us. If people don't come forward PETRA will fold. And trust me – or anyone else who remembers the old days before PETRA was formed – you wouldn't want that!

Best wishes,  
Jan Davis

## ***In brief***

### **Having contact**

The Council has appointed a new liaison officer, Laura Moore, to work with the borough's three tenant management organisations. Laura will work Thursdays and Fridays, and she will visit PETRA monthly to liaise with Mike Davis and the team on all aspects of the PETRA-Council relationship. Mike says: "We have known Laura for some time as she has had various different roles within the Council. We have a lot of respect for her and believe she will do a good job."

### **On the books**

PETRA's bookkeeper, Naomi Cooper, has joined the team. Naomi has of course been working with us for the best part of a year now, but only as an agency worker. In January, the Committee agreed to her joining the permanent staff. A great asset for PETRA, Naomi will continue to work four hours a week for us, sorting out the books and keeping us on the financial straight and narrow.

### **Visit the library**

Talking of books – the real ones this time – have you visited our mini library yet? Situated just outside the PETRA office door, it's a great place to borrow (and donate) adults and children's books of all kinds. Come and take a look.

### **Windows worry**

Twenty-five properties have now reported water ingress – in other words leakages – around the new windows. The council has asked experts to investigate the problem and report back with a recommendation for the best solution. We'll let you know as soon as we hear something.

# When ARA met PETRA



**Volunteering for PETRA  
Sarah's story**



**In January, the committee from a housing estate in Enfield – the Alma Residents' Association (ARA) – visited PETRA to learn about what it takes to become a tenant management organisation (TMO). Their chairman Damian Tissier writes:**

When we got off the minibus, our first impression was how nice the estate looked – it looked almost like a new estate although it was built in the 1960s. It was clean, tidy and well cared for. What was very telling was that there were squirrels, but no pigeons.

#### **Warm and welcoming**

The estate office was warm, welcoming, and homely. There we met the PETRA committee, who told us how they had set up the TMO ten years. Then we were taken on a tour of one of the tower blocks.

We walked from the top to the bottom of the building. The stairs were spotless and fresh unlike any council estate we've ever seen. There was no graffiti on the walls and no mess on the landings. Even the handrails shined!

We learnt that the TMO employs its own team, including a full-time handyman/caretaker who does minor

repairs and even helps residents to put up shelves and install showers.

#### **Community spirit**

Because the TMO manages the services better than the Council did, it makes a surplus every year which it ploughs back into community projects. Those community projects included cookery classes, summer trips and a community allotment.

As PETRA's Chairman Mike Davis said: "We have built a strong community spirit through our TMO, and you could do the same in Enfield". The visit certainly inspired us. We left even more determined to become a TMO.

#### **Join the job club**

Havering Association of Voluntary and Community Organisations (HAVCO) is planning to start a job club here at PETRA, based in the Concierge. The club will meet weekly and be open to local residents from the estate and beyond. An advice session will take place in the mornings, and computer classes in the afternoons. Register your interest in the office today.

#### **Neighbourhood watch**

Youths with nothing to do sometimes get up to trouble. Recently, groups of youngsters – including some who do not live here – have been seen near Overstrand House, in particular around the bins and parking areas.

If you see illegal or troubling behaviour, such as drug dealing, on the estate, call 101, the Police non-emergency number. The more calls they receive, the more frequent will be their patrols of our estate.

#### **What prompted you to get involved?**

My friend Zena asked me to help with the kids activities. When Zena stepped down, I didn't want the kids' activities just to stop, so I carried on.

#### **What's rewarding about it?**

Getting to know more people from the estate. Even when they're not exactly friends, it's good to know your neighbours. You become part of a community.

#### **What are you working on at the moment?**

I'm busy organising the Easter egg hunt. Then there's the Fathers' Day craft activity. I'm also on the lookout for good ideas for the kids' summer holidays. Ideas welcome!

#### **Who in the PETRA office:**

- A. is the biggest gossip?** Brad.
- B. makes the best cuppa?** Brad again. He's the tea master.
- C. has the worst dress sense?** Bra... No, wait a minute, there's always Jim!
- D. deserves the most praise?** Mike, coming back so soon after his health scare, and for all he has done for everyone.

#### **Why should somebody reading this follow your example?**

You will develop new skills, but also it's amazing how rewarding it is when you do something for other people and not just for yourself.

# Fascinating Easter facts

This year, Easter Sunday falls on April 20. With two bank holidays either side, that's four days rest from the daily grind

For Christians, Easter marks the resurrection of Jesus after his crucifixion. He was put to death on Good Friday, but rose again on the Sunday.

So why does the date change from year to year? It's all to do with a calculation based on the fullness of the Moon first devised in the Middle Ages. The Moon's position in relation to Earth changes from year to year, which is why Easter is a movable feast.

Talking of which, why the chocolate eggs? The eggs are a symbol of the new life that comes in the spring. That's my excuse anyway, and I'm sticking to it. Pass the Cadbury's...

Happy Easter  
Everybody



From All  
at PETRA

## April is 'Stop sub-letting month'

Havering Council has informed us that it is holding a key amnesty throughout the month of April in a bid to drive down illegal subletting. People misusing their council housing will have the chance to hand back their keys rather than face legal action – but only in April.

Subletting of a social tenancy without permission is illegal and carries a maximum prison sentence of two years. Local authorities are also able to claim back any profit made illegally by the tenant through subletting.

Havering wants to give anyone currently falling foul of these rules the chance to stop subletting and avoid prosecution.

PETRA is obliged to report to the Council any case where we suspect a flat on the estate is being sublet – and we will do so without hesitation. Social housing exists to provide good homes for those most in need; not to provide a tidy income for someone living elsewhere.

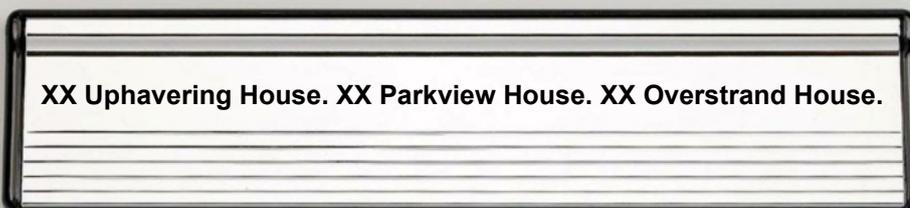
## It's Letterbox Lotto!

Win a £20 gift voucher - just by visiting our website

Starting this month, PETRA will be giving away one £20 gift voucher every month to the first resident who visits the PETRA website and spots their flat's address on one of the website pages.

On the first day of each month, we will post three addresses on the website, one each from the three tower blocks. They could be on any of the website's pages.

The first three addresses are on the website right now!



If you spot your address, send us a message via the message board on the website. If you are the first to do so, you will win that month's £20 voucher. It's as simple as that.

But remember – only the first household to send us a message claiming the £20 voucher will win it. **So what are you waiting for? > > > > > > >**

### Clean bins – but for how long?

PETRA has had the tower blocks' bins jet steam-cleaned for the first time in 40 years. The chutes will shortly receive the same treatment. Of course these facilities won't stay spotless for long, but please use them responsibly, bagging rubbish every time. For example, please do not dispose of your un-bagged pet litter down the chute! Thank you.

### Sheltered housing review

PETRA wants to take on greater responsibility for the sheltered blocks Solar, Sunrise and Serena courts. We believe the residents there get a raw deal and we could improve their lot considerably, given the chance.

Now we hear the Council plans an overall review of their sheltered housing provision. In the short term that's disappointing - nothing will happen quickly. But in the longer term, who knows? If consulted, PETRA will make it clear where we stand: ready and willing to support our neighbours and friends in Solar, Sunrise and Serena.

### Events

#### Next Committee meeting

Monday 28 April, 8pm in the office

#### Fathers' Day Special Craft Activity

Wednesday 11 June, at 4pm. Crafts activity for children and youngsters keen to make something extra special for their dads.

### Contact us

#### PETRA

Mike Davis (Chair), Natasha Cruickshank (Special Projects Officer), Jim Brett (Estate Manager), Bradley Pavey (Repairs and Ground

Maintenance Officer) and Naomi

Cooper (Bookkeeper) are based at the PETRA office.

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