

Room with a view

Our new neighbouring blocks are making their presence felt even before their inhabitants have moved in.

Once upon a time, PETRA residents enjoyed uninterrupted north-facing views of the sheltered flats' communal gardens and beyond, plus the early morning sunshine. Now they feel overlooked by the new flats, and blocked off from the sun.

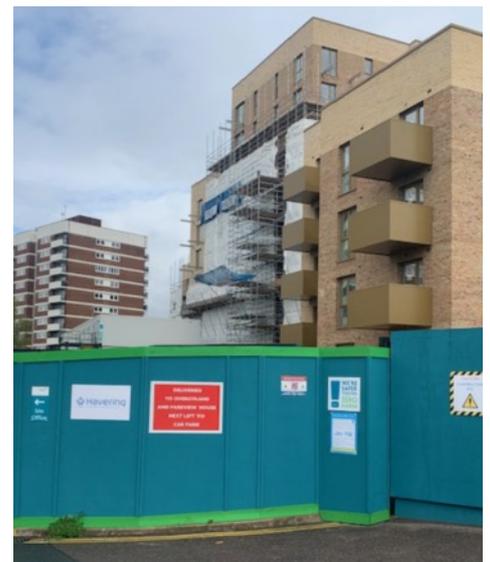
This unhappy consequence was predicted by former PETRA Chair, Jan Davies, who lobbied for the council to restrict the height of these new buildings. Sadly, Jan's was pretty much a lone voice at the time, enabling the council to go ahead without much regard for the wellbeing and interests of our residents.

That negligence has continued with the Council's inability to deliver any action on street calming measures to address the disruption and construction traffic caused by the building site. Or indeed their failure to permit the introduction of parking permits, in readiness for the arrival of another 175 new households into the vicinity in the next eight months.

Fire spotted

There is one silver lining to all this. In February, thanks to the vigilance and quick action of a couple of Wates employees, a fire on an Overstrand balcony was spotted and put out. A cigarette butt, possibly blown in when someone discarded it from above, had set a cushion alight.

If it wasn't for those Wates employees, the fire may well have become established and spread inside before anyone spotted it. Especially as, it was later discovered, the nearest smoke alarm had been disabled!



Fire safety: everyone's responsibility



Since the Grenfell tragedy, fire safety has been a top priority for councils and all providers of social housing.

Whether it's been the removal or remediation of unsafe cladding, or the installation of new fire safety procedures and equipment (such as the new front doors currently being installed), the amount of money spent has been huge.

With so much of this work going on, it's easy to forget that the most important people when it comes to fire safety are you, our residents. More than anything, it is the things we do, or are careful not to do, that determine our safety, and that of our neighbours, when at home.

Please remember to:

- have at least one working smoke alarm in your home - and never disable smoke alarms
- keep balconies free from clutter - don't leave rubbish or bikes in communal areas or obstruct escape routes
- never store combustible items on balconies
- no barbecues on balconies
- make sure you know where your nearest fire exit is
- do not smoke in common areas
- all fire doors must self-close properly - do not prop open
- always fully extinguish cigarettes smoked in your home and dispose of them carefully and safely
- close internal doors at night to prevent fire from spreading
- make sure to have gas appliances safety checked regularly.



Caroline's

viewpoint

What makes a community?

It's a word that gets banded about a lot these days, but what is community, where do we find it, and why do we prize it so highly?

When we think of community, we often think of a village. A place where everyone knows everyone, and the pace of change is slow.

Very few of us live there nowadays! Modern life is urban, fast, diverse and digital. We're as likely to bond with someone on the other side of the globe, via the internet, as we are to know and be friendly with our immediate neighbours.

Yet some things haven't changed. We do all still have neighbours. We still live in Distinct neighbourhoods, sharing the same shops, schools, pubs, estate grounds.

Today's internet communities are all well and good, but they won't look after your parcel or keep an eye on your flat when you're away for a few days.

We still need community in that old-fashioned sense, just as much as we ever did. PETRA does what it can to support and encourage community initiatives – remember our fun day last year? - But ultimately it's down to you - our residents.

From the smallest gesture of kindness and consideration, through to the heroic efforts of the devoted community champion, we all know the difference it makes. Say "Hi, how's it going?" to your neighbour today – you never know, it might just make their day.

Regards,
Caroline

September social, anyone?



Later this year (if residents vote for its continuation in our five-yearly residents' ballot due in July), PETRA will celebrate 20 years since its formation. That could be worth celebrating

Reviving the social side of life here at PETRA has not been easy since Covid, though last year's fun day was a happy reminder of times past when the Committee would organise all kinds of events for residents young and old alike.

The forthcoming Coronation of King Charles might have been a suitable



occasion for a get together, but enthusiasm for this has been lacking, so instead the Committee is look at the possibility of a fun day in September to mark the 20th anniversary of the formation of PETRA.

Caroline would like to hear what residents think about this idea. Do any of you have suggestions for what that might involve? Do any of you know of local children's entertainers/caterers/equipment providers/face-painters etc that might be able to help?

Would you like to get involved in the planning and running of such an event? If so, Caroline would love to hear from you.





PETRA'S VISION
 A safe, pleasant
 neighbourhood where people
 want to be part of a vibrant,
 caring community

on the estate

Providing residents ask permission, choose an appropriate animal, and register them with us, you are allowed to keep pets on the estate.

But that is not where your obligations end. You must also be a responsible pet owner. That means paying attention to your pets needs, and having consideration for others, in particular your neighbours.

Your pets needs

The RSPCA outlines five basic needs:

- healthy food and clean water
- suitable place to live
- being looked after by a vet if they fall ill
- companionship (family and friends)
- opportunity to behave naturally

These shouldn't be too difficult to achieve, and yet the RSPCA comes across cases of Severe neglect every day. Of animals being kept in crowded or unsuitable conditions, of not being fed or looked after properly. Are you fulfilling all of these requirements, consistently, week in week out?

Consideration for others

Again, this shouldn't be difficult, and yet... Dogs with a tendency to bark incessantly, Especially when left alone or when tormented, perhaps by excitable children, need careful handling, to avoid them disturbing neighbours. It shouldn't need pointing out that leaving them out on the balcony is not an appropriate solution to this problem.

Likewise, keeping a dog on its lead while walking on the estate is a requirement, and the clearing up and disposal of dog's mess is the owner's responsibility.

Pets are great, and liable to bring a smile to the glummost of faces - but only when they are cared for by a responsible pet owner. Be that person.

New campaign says

"Bin the Wipe"

Wet wipes are everywhere these days. We use them in the kitchen and in the bathroom, we use them when changing nappies, and to remove makeup. What we often don't realise is that they pose a threat to the environment, especially if we don't dispose of them properly.

Many problems with drains begin in the home. Water UK, the charity that launched "Bin the Wipe", says as many as 75% of drain blockages are caused by people flushing wet wipes down the toilet.

If the blockage occurs on a section of pipe you are responsible for, it can leave you with an expensive mess to get fixed. But it doesn't necessarily stop there. It may affect neighbouring properties and communal areas, and worse...

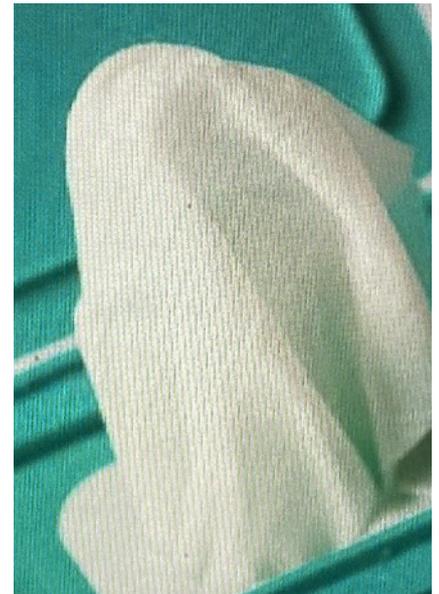
The environment

When heavy rainfall occurs, sewers can overflow and flushed wipes can make their way into rivers, which leads to river and marine pollution.

Once in our waterways, animals consume these products, which can result in them suffocating or starving to death. But it doesn't have to be like this.

How can we tackle this problem?

The solution is quite simple, only flush the three Ps – poo, paper and pee. This will help to prevent a countless number of blockages, in addition to reducing the number of wet wipes entering our watercourses.



What's the alternative?

If you're looking to swap wet wipes out for eco-friendlier alternatives, there are plenty of options you could explore, including reusable baby wipes and good old-fashioned products like toilet paper and sponge cloths. Or, of course, we could all simply remember to do the right thing: Bin it, don't flush it!

Scared of your partner or ex?
 Talk to us any time, day or night.

Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline
0808 2000 247
 Confidential non-judgmental support

Or reach us online:
www.nationalDAHeline.org.uk

Refuge
 For women and children.
 Against domestic violence.

Letterbox Lotto!

Prize **DOUBLES!**

Every month, we give away one £50 shopping voucher to the lucky household whose number appears on the website?!

Spot your number on the website and report seeing it to the office to gain your prize.

Play Letterbox Lotto today at
www.petratmo.weebly.com
Good luck!

Events



The Coronation

Looking for an event to celebrate the King's Coronation on May 6? You shouldn't have to go far.

Over 100 applications have been agreed for street parties across the borough, as well as several other gatherings.

Volunteer Market Place – 5 May

As part of the 'Big Help Out' we will be holding a volunteer market place event outside Havering Town Hall from 11am to 4pm.

The event will host various organisations from the Havering volunteer community, providing information on their services as well as how you can also get involved. You can read more about the 'Big Help Out' at thebighelpout.org.uk

Coronation Day – 6 May

Romford Business Improvement District (BID) will be hosting an event in Romford Town Centre by

Tollgate House. The event will include, a live screening of King Charles III Coronation, live performances, children's entertainment and games.

You can also book an exclusive afternoon tea experience and VIP area. For more information on this event, please visit the Romford BID Facebook event page.

The Big Lunch – 7 May

Communities across the UK are invited to share food and fun together at Coronation Big Lunches on Sunday 7 May 2023, in a nationwide act of celebration and friendship.

From a cup of tea with a neighbour to a street party, Coronation Big Lunch brings neighbours together and is a great way to get to know your community a little better.

Find further information on The Big Lunch on the Eden Project Big Lunch website.

Diabetes UK

Havering Group runs regular meetings offering help and support to local people living with diabetes along with their families and carers. Meetings take place at Large Hall, Hornchurch RM11 1QX, and are completely free to attend. Call the group secretary on 01708 935779 for more information.

Committee meetings

- April 24
 - May 28
 - June 26
- All at 6.30pm

CONTACTS

PETRA

Opening Hours: 7.30am - 1600pm
(Closed 12pm - 13.00 for lunch)

Sheila Slater, Chair
Caroline Edwards, Estate Manager
Bradley Pavey, Repairs and Grounds Maintenance Officer
Tim O'Shea, Part-Time Repairs and Maintenance Officer

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Website: www.haverling.gov.uk

Out of Hours Emergency telephone number: 01708 756699

(We answer the PETRA office phone up until 5pm.)