

# Bright future for Serena, Solar and Sunrise?

PETRA News

Parkhill Estate Tenants and Residents Association

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**PETRA has approached Havering Council to ask if we can take over the repairs service for the older people's residential blocks.**

Speaking at a recent meeting with some of the residents, Chairman Mike Davis said, "We already think of you as part of the PETRA family. And because we are based here on the estate, we believe we can provide a quicker, more efficient repairs service for you."

A secret ballot of Serena, Solar and Sunrise residents is being organised by PETRA in collaboration with the Council. Residents will receive a letter inviting them to vote either for or against the change. This should happen within the next few weeks.

The Council's Resident Involvement Officer Julie Pocock attended the meeting. Julie said the Council would support the switch providing a majority of residents voted for it. The choice was entirely theirs.

Mike said that PETRA would try to talk with every resident before the ballot, to answer their questions and address any concerns they may have. Both he and Julie made it clear that if the switch went ahead it would not, in any way, affect residents rights or status as Council tenants.

"So why make this change?" asked one of the residents at the meeting. "Why does PETRA want to take over the repairs service?"

Jim Brett, PETRA's Estate Manager, said, "By providing this service ourselves, we believe we



**Residents discuss the offer from PETRA.**

- will be able to make a profit from it. But unlike the Council, we can guarantee that any profit we do make will go straight back into improving this estate. The money we save will directly benefit you, the residents."

***If you have any questions for Mike or Jim about this proposal, please do get in touch.***



# Chairman Mike's SOAPBOX Carry on PETRA?

**Some residents may remember that every five years, under the rules laid down by the Government, we have to conduct what's called a Continuation Ballot, to decide who runs the estate.**

A little later this year, we are due to hold that ballot again. Residents will be asked to vote (by secret ballot) if they want PETRA to continue managing the estate. This is a very straightforward question with an even simpler two-word "YES / NO" voting paper for you to complete.

Naturally, I hope you'll vote for PETRA. If you don't, and PETRA gets less than 50% + 1 of all the votes cast, the estate will go back under the control of the Council.

It is probably stating the obvious, but PETRA makes a huge difference to life on the estate. We carry out most repairs within the hour – unlike the Council's routine repair target time of 28 days. PETRA's ground maintenance includes "box-cutting" the grass – the Council will just leave the cut grass to rot on the top. All the communal areas inside the blocks have been decorated to a high standard by PETRA – whereas other estates are yet to have any new decoration. Fire risks are inspected on a weekly basis, and it was PETRA pressure that led to us getting our new windows recently. I could go on!

Instead, I'll just say this: Whether you love PETRA or loathe us, when that ballot paper arrives through your door, please, please, please exercise your right to vote.

It is really important that as many estate residents as possible take part in this democratic vote. Remember this your estate, and your decision.

*Regards, Mike*

## **What has PETRA ever done for you?**

- Faster repairs service
- New flooring and decoration of communal areas
- The shower programme
- Social events and activities
- Promoting a real sense of community
- Provided residents with a voice in the running of their estate.

***We could go on ... and with your permission, we will!***

## **Sue Foot**

As Chair of the PETRA Committee, I was deeply shocked to receive a telephone call from the partner of our book-keeper last week, saying that Sue had suddenly passed away. Sue had worked for PETRA since February 2012 and was well liked by all the staff and senior committee members. No one would have ever thought that Sue might

suffer a heart attack, especially as she was a relatively fit, netball playing, forty-something. Sue only worked part time for us, but always when in the office she was bright and bubbly, chatting about her family and friends. At that young age there will have to be a post-mortem I expect, so we don't yet have any details of the funeral arrangements. R.I.P. Sue. **Mike.**



## **Growing Project sprouts!**

**Things are happening in the garden. Thanks largely to Jimmy and Colin Roast, an Overstrand resident, our veggie growing project is finally up and running.**

Jimmy and Colin are looking for volunteers, young and old, to help them along the way.

Are you a parent whose kids might be excited to discover that vegetables don't just come from Tesco?

Are you a teenager thinking you might like to work outdoors someday, with plants perhaps, growing stuff, that sort of thing, but don't know where to start?

Or are you one of our older residents, keen to get some exercise and to do something useful while the sun shines?

Well, here's your chance! Even if you have just an hour a week to spare, Jimmy would be delighted to see you. Pop into the office for a chat any time.

# Come Party with PETRA!



This year marks the 10th anniversary since the formation of the Parkhill Estate Tenants and Residents Association, otherwise known as PETRA. We believe that's well worth celebrating.



## “All day long...”

Or as the great Lionel Richie once sang (almost):

*Well, my friends, the time has come  
To raise the roof and have some fun  
Throw away the work to be done  
Let the music play on...(play on, play on, play on...)  
Everybody sing, everybody dance  
Lose yourself in wild romance  
We're going To Party with PETRA,  
fiesta, forever  
Come on and sing along!  
We're going To Party with PETRA,  
fiesta, forever  
Come on and sing along!*

*All day long (and on, and on),  
All day long (and on, and on)  
(Repeat several times)*

*People dancing all in the street  
See the rhythm all in their feet  
Life is good, wild and sweet  
Let the music play on... (play on, play on, play on...)  
Feel it in your heart and feel it in your soul  
Let the music take control  
We're going To Party with PETRA,  
fiesta, forever  
Come on and sing along  
We're going To Party with PETRA,  
fiesta, forever  
Come on and sing my song!*

*All day long (and on, and on),  
All day long (and on, and on)  
(Repeat several times)*



*You are cordially invited to...  
Party with PETRA!*

**Date Sunday 14 July**  
**Venue: The Parkhill and Sunrise**  
**Estate grounds**  
**Time: Lunchtime till late**

**Food, Dancing, Live Entertainment  
& Kids' Stuff**



PETRA  
people  
Drawn by  
Sue Vine

## Help!

In short, We Need Your Help

Parties don't organise themselves. We need as many volunteers as possible to help us plan, prepare and run this very special day. We need people for the set-up. We need people to help with the catering. We need people for the take-down. And we need people to help run the show.

Please – whether you have a couple of hours a week to spare in the run-up to the big day, or you would be happy to lend a hand on the day itself – get in touch with Sue, Sarah or Natasha via the PETRA office. In anticipation, thank you.

# The view from here

**With Sarah Peacock,  
Parkview resident,  
young mum and  
PETRA activist**

## **What were your first impressions of the estate?**

It was just over three years ago. With two young children, I needed somewhere nice to live. I liked the look of these flats. They were a decent size, for one thing, though the décor I inherited left a lot to be desired! It was a kind of grimy orange. Urgh! Still, I could see the potential.

## **Happiest of times?**

Has to be in the summer, when we can sit outside and the girls, Skye and Hallie, can play with their friends on the grass. That's when you realise how lucky we are. One day I'd like us to have a garden of our own, but for now this will do nicely.

## **Are you ambitious in other ways?**

I'm busy being a mum at the moment, but I do have other ambitions. I have a legal secretarial qualification and I'm currently looking at studying business administration part-time somewhere local. I've also applied to volunteer in the local Cancer Research charity shop, and then there's my work with PETRA...



## **How did you become involved with PETRA?**

A friend of mine invited me along to one of the meetings. I found myself getting drawn in and before I knew it I'd gotten myself voted onto the committee! Actually, it's been great. Getting involved has meant meeting

new people and learning how things work. It's helping me to develop my confidence – plus it's going to look good on my CV.

## **What is currently top of your PETRA agenda?**

It has to be PETRA's 10th anniversary party on Sunday 14 July. I'm working on organising that at the moment, along with Natasha and Sue. There's a lot to do. We want it to be a very special occasion, and we want as many residents as possible to take part. We're planning on having music, dancing, food and fun for the kids. And that sort of stuff doesn't organise itself! So if you'll excuse me...?!

## **Finally, is there anything you would like to say to residents?**

Come to your party! Better still, help us organise and run it! You'll have fun and feel you've been part of something very worthwhile. And I can tell you, that's a good feeling.

## **Kids fun in the sun**

**The summer holidays will soon be here – so what shall we do?**

**Natasha, Sue and Sarah are busy planning special trips and activities for the estate's younger residents during the long break.**

**If you (or your mum and dad) have any ideas for where we could go and what we could do, please let us know - as soon as possible, please!**

## **Next PETRA Committee meeting**

**Tuesday 28 May, 8pm**

**in the office**

**Observers welcome!**

## **PETRA Committee – two places available**

Fancy joining the PETRA Committee? We are looking for two new members. No previous committee experience is necessary. All you need is enthusiasm and a willingness to work with others to improve our community. Committee meetings take monthly, usually on a Tuesday evening, in the PETRA office. Where needed, we can pay expenses including carers' costs.

Committee members find the experience rewarding. They learn useful skills, attend free training, and often find their confidence is boosted in the role.

For more information, please pop into the office for a chat with Mike, Jimmy or Natasha. If you would like to attend a meeting as an observer before deciding, please come along to our next meeting - see below - you will be very welcome.

## **Contact us**

### **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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