

Winter **2021** issue!

insight

The South Essex Homes
Resident Newsletter



Doris celebrates her 100th birthday

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of it!

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HELPFUL HINTS & TIPS!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

**KIND HELP
FOR HOSTELS**

Community
donations for
families



**Longbow Safety
Measures**

Innovative
annunciation
system being
installed



AND LOTS MORE...

- Balmoral tower block improvement works
- Fuel Poverty and help available


southessexhomes
working smarter together

INNOVATIVE VOICE SAFETY PILOT SYSTEM

for high rise flats

A pilot system designed to give clear instructions to residents in high rise social housing during emergencies is being launched in Southend-on-Sea.



The voice annunciation system is being trialled in Longbow Flats, and is thought to be one of the first installations of its kind into a tower block used for social housing.

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, in partnership with South Essex Homes and Essex County Fire & Rescue Service's Technical Fire Safety Team, have approved the installation, the design of which enables fire rescue services to access a one-way microphone located on the ground floor in the event of an emergency situation.

If successful, the pilot scheme could be rolled out to other social housing blocks within Southend-on-Sea, as a direct response to the report into Grenfell Tower fire.

One of the early findings in the public enquiry following the tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire on 14th June 2017 was the inability of the Fire Rescue Service to be able to communicate with the residents in the block to advise them to either stay put or to leave their flats.

The recent publication of phase one of the public enquiry, by Sir Martin Moore-Bick, has highlighted a need for the Fire Rescue Services to be able to send an evacuation signal to the whole or a selected part of the building.

Cllr Ian Gilbert, leader of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council said: "We will support any scheme which helps keep our residents safe, especially within their own homes and we are grateful to South Essex Homes and Essex County Fire & Rescue for initiating this pilot and putting Southend's high rise social housing at the forefront of these changes within the UK."

The system allows the fire rescue services to communicate directly to the residents of Longbow through a distributed network of loudspeakers

in the block, giving them guidance and assistance. There is an option to select individual floors or multiple floor levels and loudspeakers will be mounted in the communal landings, stairwells and above the entrance doors within every property.

The system shall only ever be used in the event of an emergency situation and may, for example, enable fire rescue services to coordinate an evacuation of the building or to reassure residents that they need to stay indoors.

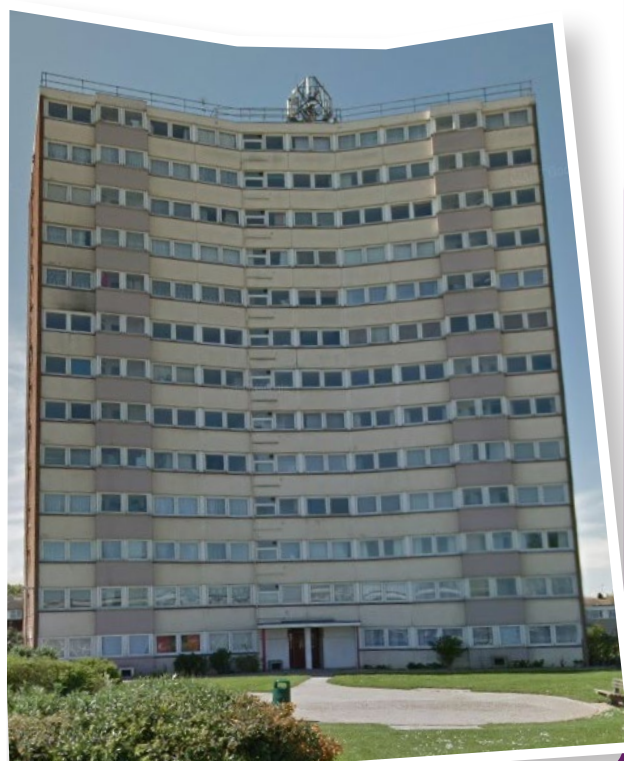
Mario Ambrose, Executive Director at South Essex Homes, said: "As this project is unique in the social housing sector, once it is complete we will need time for Essex County Fire & Rescue Service to assess its effectiveness as they will ultimately be the end users. Should it prove successful, we will then look to begin a programme to have similar systems installed in all the high rise blocks in Southend."

Works began at Longbow in Sherwood Way, Southend, at the end of November and involve minimal disruption to residents, with a small speaker being installed above the front door just inside each flat. Work is expected to be completed in March 2021.

Mark Earwicker, Group Manager of Essex County Fire and Rescue Service, said: "The installation of an annunciation system will enable our firefighters to remotely sound the alarms and communicate with specific floors or the whole building should it be required during a fire.

"With this system in place, residents can be reassured that they can safely stay in their flats during a fire unless circumstances mean that we need them to leave the building.

"This is a positive advancement in fire safety equipment which will not only help to protect the residents of the building, but make it easier for firefighters to communicate and evacuate the building if required".



WELCOME

Welcome to the winter issue of Insight

...and what a strange winter it is proving to be!

I've said it before and I'll say it again, it's almost impossible to ensure Insight is completely up to date because between the time of writing and the date it lands on your doormat, we have no way of guessing what changes will take place!

It's certainly been a most difficult few months, as just when we perhaps thought things were improving, everything changed once again and it turned out to be a very different Christmas and New Year to what we are used to. Despite everything, I hope you managed to enjoy it and I'm sure we are all hoping that the vaccine roll-out will lead to us turning a corner in 2021.

Things haven't stopped for us at South Essex Homes, far from it in fact, and in this issue we introduce two new projects at our high rise blocks (see pages 2 and 4).

Please also take a look at the STRF article on page 10 – could the Crafting Club they are launching help to ease the boredom for you during this lockdown period? As ever we're grateful to them for thinking of new ideas to support residents.

We'll be back with the next issue in early May, so we wish you well until then.

All the best, Julia

Julia Pack, Editor



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Message from Mike

Happy New Year to you all – I do hope you managed to have an enjoyable festive season despite the unusual circumstances we found ourselves in.

I am pleased to be able to share with you the news that we have recently made three important appointments to our team. Firstly, a new resident representative on our Board of management, Carly Volke, who lives in one of our high rise blocks and who I'm sure will bring all her energy and commitment to doing a good job on your behalf.

Additionally, over the coming weeks, our team of Officers will be joined by two colleagues who will lead our Property Services and our Finance & Corporate teams as we enter the beginnings of our new term, having just signed a new agreement with Southend Borough Council which will see us continuing to provide the full range of services to you and your homes through until at least 2026 and I see no reason why that arrangement will not continue well beyond that and into the future.

Since it was published in November, we have been busy familiarising ourselves with the Social Housing White Paper, which sets out the actions the government will take to ensure that residents in social housing are safe, are listened to, live in good quality homes, and have access to redress when things go wrong.

This year is expected to see 2020's Fire Safety Bill become an Act of Parliament so we are preparing for that to ensure we are ahead of the curve when it comes to complying with the new measures.

We will be discussing these big issues with our Board and in the next edition of Insight in the springtime we will be able to share more information with you about these important pieces of legislation that affect us as an organisation and, in a number of cases, also affect you as our residents.

When we get to the other side of these most challenging times - which we are all currently going through - here's hoping that as 2021 progresses, it fulfils its promise of being a more positive and productive year for all of us and for the rest of the world in general.

Please continue to stay safe and well.

Mike

Mike Gatrell,
Chief Executive of South Essex Homes



GET IN TOUCH!



Contact us via Facebook during office hours – simply search for 'South Essex Homes' to find and like our page!
For general information about our services, please visit our website at www.southessexhomes.co.uk

For all telephone enquiries freephone **0800 833 160**

For general correspondence write to us at: Insight Magazine, South Essex Homes, Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6FY

Email: juliapack@seh.southend.gov.uk

BALMORAL PROJECT

South Essex Homes is soon to begin a major project to improve the structure of Brecon, Blackdown and Grampian; the high-rise blocks of flats that make up the Balmoral Estate in Westcliff.

Why are structural improvement works being undertaken?

Our ongoing housing stock improvement programme involves us conducting regular structural surveys of all the buildings we manage in the town, and planning any improvement works needed in properties as part of our 30-year plan.

A recent structural survey of the Balmoral blocks showed that additional structural support was needed for the top three floors of each block (plus the top 'penthouse' flat). This reflects the latest Government guidelines and aims to improve the resilience of the floors and walls in the unlikely event of an explosion.

What works are being carried out?

The structural work in the communal areas of the top three floors and within the flats themselves includes:

- Fitting steel angle cleats.
- Safe asbestos removal.
- Reinstatement of wall and floor finishes and installation of larger skirting boards.

Additional work has also been identified to improve the wall insulation and upgrade the heating system to improve the energy efficiency of the buildings using 'A' fire rated materials and reduce ongoing heating costs for residents.

Also, for tenants of Southend Borough Council living in those

top three floors - the electrics, kitchens and bathrooms will also be renewed. Once these works are finished the properties will also be fully redecorated.

All leaseholders who own their flats in these blocks will receive the insulation works, and redecoration of all rooms affected by the works, free of charge.

How are these works being approached?

The works will be carried out at the 18 flats in each block that are situated on top three floors, so 54 flats in total will be directly affected.

The work will be carried out over a period of around two years and will be approached on a block-by-block, floor-by-floor basis.

Brecon will be the first block to receive the structural and improvement work. Due to the time taken obtaining approval for materials and additional fire safety consultation, the likely start date is envisaged to be late April or early May this year.

Decant Process

The works are expected to take around 12 weeks to complete on each floor level and will involve the residents needing to move out of their flats while this takes place – this process is known as 'decanting'.

Those residents who need to move out will be given two options; 'temporary decant' where they move into another property while the work is being completed on their flat, or they can ask to be considered for a

permanent move to other available accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

The occupants of each affected flat will be contacted to discuss their preference at the appropriate time.

Show flat

The 'Show Flat' is now ready having had all the above works completed and is available for residents to view so they can see what they have to look forward to. We appreciate that the prospect of moving home even temporarily may be stressful for our residents so we believe the show flat will be a welcoming sight and one that will prove that the inconvenience of decanting will be worthwhile!

Each flat will be finished to the standard shown in the photographs. Invitations will soon be sent out inviting affected residents to attend a viewing of the show flat.



Get in Touch

If you have a question, comments or want to offer assistance please get in touch:

Telephone: 0800 833 160 – ask for Paula De'Ath – Resident Liaison Officer

Mobile: 07768 122197

Email: paulade'ath@seh.southend.gov.uk

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF THE REPAIRS CONTACT CENTRE

We have listened to what you have said about communication of repairs and have sought to make the process user-friendly. Whilst your Conditions of Tenancy booklet gives a clear indication of your and our responsibilities, when it comes to repairs there will always be queries. This is why we have set up a specific Repair Contact Centre for you, where operatives are available from 8:45am to 5:00pm, Monday to Friday.



Whether they receive your repair issue via email or telephone, the team are trying to improve our service by answering your query at the first point of contact.

Please welcome Isabel, Victoria, Dawn and Joni – who make up the Repairs Contact Centre, which opened back in the summer of 2020.

This is their advice for a prompt and speedy service:

Victoria said: "It is always worth having a pen ready when making a repair call query as the very first action will be to listen to the telephone options given in order to ensure you go through to the correct area for your repair. You will be given repair codes unique to your repair being raised and this will ensure that any further communication with us, given the code, will be dealt with much quicker".

Isabel added: "We will always be courteous and helpful, we are here to ensure we get it right but it is a two way process. Please provide us with as much factual detail as possible and by sharing accurate information and listening carefully to each other we will improve the service we are able to deliver".

Joni said: "If you cannot get through to our staff in the Repair Contact Centre, it will usually be because we are extremely busy. Please feel free to email us your repair,

quoting your address in the subject line, and in the message itself provide as much detail as possible and be sure to include a contact telephone number. The address to send it to is sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk".

Dawn added: "Please ensure you choose the correct option for your repair - remember we are here to raise new repairs, but existing repairs with our main contractor Morgan Sindall are a different option. If you are having problems getting through to other options you can also contact us on the above email address including the time you tried to call, the details of your enquiry and the repair code you were issued with when you initially reported it and we will ensure this is highlighted immediately".

Choosing the correct option on the freephone number 0800 833 160, will save you time and get you through to the right person, who will be able to deal with your issue. Our in-house team only deal with new repairs. For any ongoing Morgan Sindall repair issues, you will need to go through to the contractor direct.

Deborah Hill-David manages the new Repairs Contact Centre. She said: "Our repairs team are currently working from home in order to ensure we can continue to deliver the service feeling safe and secure. We are pleased to announce there will also be an option to engage with our service through the South Essex Homes' Facebook page which is currently under construction - so watch this space!".



How to contact the team

Call 0800 833160

For Repairs: Please press option 2. You will then have two further options to choose from:

Option 1 - For existing repairs booked with Morgan Sindall. If you have the reference number of your repair this will make the process faster.

Option 2 - For new repairs and existing repairs with other contractors.

Email sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk

Remember to use your address as the subject line and include as much detail about the repair as possible.

FUEL POVERTY

What is fuel poverty?

In winter millions of people struggle to keep warm in their homes, rising energy costs combined with low incomes puts people in difficult situations. People can no longer afford to heat their homes, feed families and pay their rent. It is estimated that four million UK households are facing fuel poverty, meaning they are unable to heat their homes to a temperature that will keep them warm and healthy.

How can this impact on health?

Living in a cold home can impact upon people's physical and mental wellbeing in several ways.

As National Energy Action state 'cold homes can cause or worsen a range of serious health conditions such as heart attacks, strokes, bronchitis and asthma'. GovUK declare that 'excess winter deaths in the coldest quarter of housing are almost 3 times as high as the warmest quarter'.

We must take note that this is not a normal winter

The additional issue of Covid-19 this year has made things even harder. As a result of being unable to take warmth from local hubs such as libraries and cafes, people are spending more time inside their homes which they cannot afford to heat, further impacting their health.

There are ways to combat fuel poverty:

Here are a few tips

- 1.Look at your Energy Consumption.** Energy Saving Trust found 7 in 10 of us are surprised by how unsustainable our homes are. British homes being responsible for 25% of CO2 emissions. Review your utility bills, change your provider.
- 2.Bright idea.** Switch to low energy light bulbs as these last up to 10 times longer than normal bulbs, you could save £7 per bulb per year! An average house can save up to £40 a year with this change. Remember to turn off lights when you leave a room as well as your outside lights as this reduces energy usage and can save up to £10 a year. Could you use solar lights for your shed or garage?
- 3.Showers.** Switching to shower instead of the bath saves you a huge 50 litres of water each time! This saves the energy it takes to heat the extra 50 litres of water. This easy change could save you up to £42 a year.
- 4.Tea time.** Remember to only fill the kettle with as much water as you need. Over £91 million of electricity is wasted in the UK when boiling kettles with too much water in them. You can save up to £10 a year by just boiling what you need.





Claim money for energy payments

The Warm Home Discount Scheme

You may qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme. This is run by the Government and energy suppliers to provide rebates on electricity bills for households which need it most in England, Scotland and Wales. The Warm Home Discount Scheme offers eligible customers a one-off payment on their electricity bill.

Cold Weather Payment

If you are getting certain benefits you may get a Cold Weather Payment. You will get a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees celsius or below for 7 consecutive days.

Winter Fuel Payment

Were you born on or before 5 May 1953? You could get between £100 and £300 tax-free to help pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'.

Find out more about the above schemes, including if you are eligible and how to claim, by searching on www.gov.uk.

There are several resources, guidelines and toolkits that are available. Here are a couple of useful websites:

National Energy Action – www.nea.org.uk

Power Compare – www.powercompare.co.uk/fuel-poverty



Free help to stay warm and cosy this winter with Warmer Homes

This winter you may be working from home or staying at home more than usual, so having a comfortable and warm home is particularly important. Call Warmer Homes, our free energy efficiency service and we can help you access grant funding for measures such as solid wall insulation and low carbon heating through our new Local Authority Delivery (LAD) programme, to get your home ready for the colder months ahead.

**Warmer
Homes**

**To check your eligibility
and book a free assessment:**

- **Call 0800 038 5737 (free)**
- **Go to: www.warmerhomes.org.uk**

CHRISTMAS CARING FOR SOUTHEND HOSTELS

Children living in Southend's temporary accommodation all saw a decorated tree and received a gift this Christmas, thanks to kind donations from the local community.

The teams at Let's Get Noticed, a Social Media Marketing Agency with a base in Southend, and Ignite Training Academy approached us at South Essex Homes as they were keen to give something back to the local community and ensure that no child goes without over the festive season.

With help and generous discounts from Toys 'N' Tuck in Queens Road, the team set about choosing and buying gifts for almost 100 children of all ages who will be living in a hostel over Christmas and then their team went to work with the wrapping!

Additionally Nicky Walmisham, who is now the landlady of the Park Tavern in London Road, Southend, but lived in hostel accommodation after fleeing domestic violence 20 years ago, donated Christmas trees to bring festive joy to the communal lounges of hostels in the town, as well as also donating gifts for residents of all ages.

Stuart Long, Support Services Manager at South Essex Homes, said: "On behalf of all the children who benefitted, we'd like to say a huge thank you to Alek and Alice at Let's Get Noticed and Ignite Training Academy and to Nicky at The Park Tavern for their generous donations of gifts and Christmas trees. Many of these families are living through extremely difficult situations so to receive such kindness from strangers must have helped to lift their spirits, I am sure."

Alice Baker, Managing Director of Let's Get Noticed, said: "2020 was extraordinarily tough for people, and for some where Christmas is already difficult, the pandemic made it worse. Even though we had a tough year ourselves, we fully appreciate that we are probably in a better position than many, so we wanted to get a couple of small local businesses together, and help those that may not have been in a position to have the Christmas they would have liked.

"A member of our staff, like Nicky from The Park Tavern, had also been living in a hostel a few years back fleeing domestic violence, and has shouted from the rooftops that without South Essex Homes and their support, she would not be the woman she is today. This is why there was no other option - we HAD to contact SEH and offer to donate these presents to all the kids in a hostel setting - because we know, from our staff, how hard that time of year is and actually we owe them a debt of gratitude for supporting one of our team!

"Toys 'N' Tuck have been amazing and we couldn't have done it without them! They didn't hesitate and jumped at the chance to support us in our cause - for an independent toy store to do this even when they had been closed the majority of the year, is an incredible feat!

"Alek and I are so honoured and humbled to be part of this, and we truly hope that it brought a smile to the kid's faces, even if for a short time!"

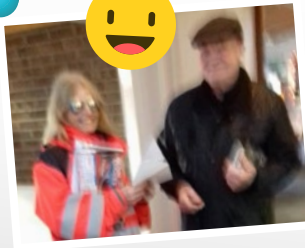
Nicky, landlady of The Park Tavern added: "It's extremely hard living in a hostel, confined to one room with everyone living on top of each other. Christmas is the hardest time of all - most people have the support of a big family and friends and assume everyone else has the same but they haven't, life isn't always that straight forward.

"I am a real Christmas person - and unless we look after each other, they'll be no one to look after us if we ever need it will there? Sometimes in life, you just need a leg up. If a small gift helped put a smile on the face of people living in hostels and helped to make them feel valued then that's a wonderful thing."



RESIDENT ZONE

Bill Stockwell presenting the postlady Sue her with a 'Christmas box' to say thank you from a few of the tenants at Nayland House for all her hard work through the year and for never letting them down during the pandemic.



Community Christmas Dinner Donations



There's nothing like some heart-warming stories of community spirit to cheer you up on a chilly winter's day, so our Support Services Team were thrilled to be contacted by two separate groups in the run up to Christmas with the offer of providing hot meals to our vulnerable residents.

The **Southend Christian Fellowship Centre** (Southchurch) asked for nominations for people who we felt would benefit from a free dinner on Christmas day and the team made some referrals.

Sheltered Housing Officer Tracey Waller said that one resident became overwhelmed with emotion telling her about it, saying he had a wonderful meal with treats delivered by a wonderful person, the only person he saw all day, and they made it special.

Another said he has posted a letter of thanks through the fellowship door as wanted to personally express his gratitude.

Separate from this on the Leigh side of town, The 'Jingle Meals' project was a success and 120 meals were delivered on Christmas Day to the local community, including seven at Nestuda House thanks to a local resident who set it up with help from **Leigh Bistro**.

It's great to know there are caring individuals and organisations out there who want to help the most vulnerable residents of the town and we look forward to working with these people more in the future.



Many thanks to one of our residents, Pat Butcher, for sending in this poem. Following Christmas 2014, many people suffered 'flu-like' symptoms. Pat was one of the people affected so he used the experience to write the following.

I've got the 'man flu'

Read as if 'grumpy' and have a 'banged-up' nose.

Don't you come near me; I've got 'the bug'
Though it would be nice if I had a hug,
I've been coughing and sneezing,
And choking and wheezing;
There is not one hugger,
Who'd come near this old b###er.

My nose is banged-up, so I can't sleep at night
That nose is bright red, I'm sure I'm a sight,
It also keeps dripping, and all my joints ache;
That's something else to keep me awake
I doze in a chair then the 'phone will peal
For someone to ask me, "How do you feel?"
I cannot answer without giving offence,
They have been here before; do they have no sense?
I know it's just 'man flu' but the very worst kind;
I'm unlikely to want to get off my behind
I just feel grumpy, so leave me alone,
Or I'll pester you, when you're stuck at home.

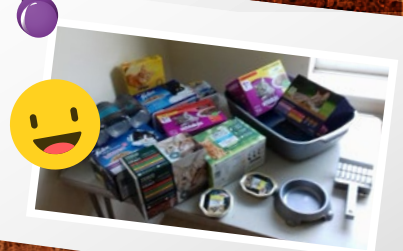
DORIS IS 100

Mrs Doris Gunn, who lives in sheltered accommodation in Leigh-on-Sea, celebrated her 100th birthday just before Christmas.

Sheltered Housing Officer Sue Birch said: "As she couldn't have a party, the neighbours decorated the entrance to Doris's flat and all stood in the garden with a Bucks Fizz and piece of cake. Sir David Amess also came to wish her well."



As they do every year, all this cat food was donated by a few of the tenants at Nayland House for CAT'S PROTECTION at Christmas.





NEWS FROM YOUR FEDERATION



Are you missing out on all that is going on around you as a Resident? Then don't, join us at our Zoom meetings.

STOP PRESS NEWS!

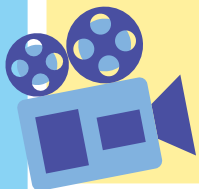
THE FAMILY CINEMA TRIP



Cinemas may be closed at the moment but we all want something to look forward to – so as soon as they reopen we will be re-booking our family cinema trip that has been postponed since its original date in December. This will be arranged as soon as possible following the lifting of COVID restrictions and, whilst we can't say what film will be shown, it will be the latest family blockbuster!

We need to get an idea of numbers who would be interested so please let us know if you'd like to join in the fun!

If you would like to be part of this FAMILY DAY then please contact the Federation through our Facebook page **strf-2020**, our website, **www.strf.uk**, using the Contact Us form, or by email



info@strf.org.uk, telephone us on **01702 309064** & leave a message and we will get back to you, or apply by post by writing to Keith Ducker, 154 Gainsborough Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea. SS0 0SN marking the envelope 'STRF CINEMA'.

We would like to remind you that this will be for South Essex Homes' residents & children, leaseholders & leaseholder's tenants & children ONLY. All you need is your Name & Address, Children's name, contact number & email address (if you have one).

Grandparents - why not take the grandchildren to the cinema as a treat, as long as they & you are all South Essex Homes' residents.

We'll follow up with an update about this event in the next edition of Insight.



CRAFTING CLUB

to combat Health, Isolation and Loneliness

Southend Tenants and Residents Federation have commenced a scheme whereby residents from across the borough can be helped to cope with the loneliness and boredom of restrictions put on them due to Covid-19.

We have found that many residents have been making items that will help others in the borough by knitting items, crocheting baby items, wooden toys, paintings (giving them away to brighten up homes) among other things. This helped keep their minds and bodies active and helped them to focus on other things rather than the pandemic. They now find that they cannot do this due to the cost, as they were using their own money to make these items. The Federation would like to supply items that residents across the borough need to continue with these great ideas. All we ask in return is that they provide photographs of the items



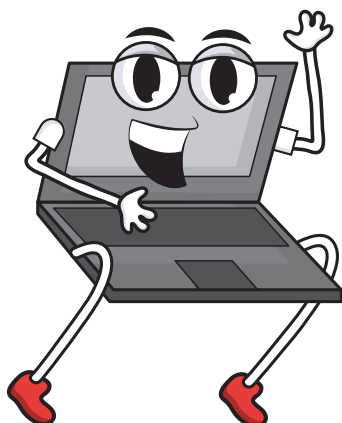
for us to publish on our website, **strf.uk**, to show what can be achieved. These items can either be given to a relative, friend or colleague or donated to good causes or even used as prizes at events later in the year.

The Federation are asking for any resident who has crafting skills to contact us on the details below to see if we are able to offer assistance to them in any way.

Contact us through our website - **strf.uk** our Facebook page **STRF2020** - email **info@strf.org.uk** or by phone on **01702 309064**

WWW.STRF.UK

& FACEBOOK STRF-2020



Did you know that you have a website that is all yours? The Federation have set up www.strf.uk for you to get all the information on your Focus Groups, Events that have been arranged, photos of yourselves & Southend, and the resident section for you to put your ideas, letters and items of interest on. Take a look and let us know what you think & give us feedback on how it looks, what you would like to see on it & any ideas you may have to improve it. Remember it is your website so please use it. There is also the Facebook page www.facebook.com/strf.uk with lots of information for you to read including information on how to get money for being a good Tenant/ Resident. You can also post on the Facebook page for other residents to enjoy. We are looking for as many pictures or videos as you can send us and also any stories you have that you think may be of interest to other residents especially as we go through this New Year.

GOLD AWARDS FOR STAFF, CONTRACTORS AND RESIDENTS

The Federation would like to reward the achievements of Staff, Contractors and Residents and now invite you to nominate them in the following categories:

South Essex Homes staff members

(includes Office, Caretaking, Ground Maintenance, Careline and so on.)

Do you know a staff member who you believe has gone above and beyond to help you, perhaps they've provided excellent service to a resident or the wider community. Please let us know!

We are also looking for specific nominations for the **2020 - Staff COVID-19 Heroes Award** for an officer that has supported others during the Covid pandemic. It recognises the officers who have gone out of their way to help others in such a difficult time.

Contractors

(such as Morgan Sindall or Aaron Services)

Has a member of the contracting teams gone that extra mile to help you or made you feel special

Don't worry if you do not know the name of the person - just give us the date, time and details of the job and we will find out who they are.

Residents

We have a number of specific awards for residents so when you contact us please tell us which category you are nominating them for.

1) Resident of the Year

A resident who spends time carrying out activities that benefit other residents. The award recognises those empowering and inspirational individuals who use their insight, energy and positivity to make a difference.

2) Making a Difference Award

As suggested by the title, someone who has truly made a difference somehow within their neighbourhood.

3) Young Person of the Year

Awarded to a younger resident (under 16) who deserves to be recognised for making a difference to their neighbours or their local community.

4) 2020 - Resident COVID-19 Heroes Award

A resident or community that has supported others during the Covid pandemic. It recognises the residents who have gone out of their way to help others in such a difficult time?

5) Good Neighbour Award

A 'good neighbour' is someone who you think has done something to help improve their neighbour's lives within their community.

You as the resident would be awarding these to those you think deserve them, by sending in your recommendations. Once they are all received, the Federation will set-up a panel to sort through the recommendations and give the awards to the most deserving ones.

Closing date for this is 31st May 2021. Entries can be sent in via the website (strf.uk) via email (info@strf.org.uk) or by post at: Gold Awards, 154 Gainsborough Drive, Westcliff-on-Sea. SS0 0SN.

Keith Ducker
STRF Chair





Welcome to the page
in Insight devoted to Leaseholders.

On behalf of everyone on the leasehold team I would like to wish you and your family a safe and happy new year. Given the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic; many of our leasehold events were cancelled last year. The team look forward to restarting these as soon as possible and will supply the details of any events when available. In the meantime, if you would like to participate in the Leasehold Focus Group in future please view the article below.

Best Wishes Jan

THE LEASEHOLD FOCUS GROUP

What is it?

The Leasehold Focus Group is open to all leaseholders who own a property within blocks managed by South Essex Homes. The group would normally meet 4 to 5 times each year. Here, meetings are held in both the afternoons and evenings to assist members in attending. Similarly, we appreciate not everyone can attend all the time so membership is very flexible.

What does it do?

The primary goal for the group is to ensure the Leasehold Service is constantly developing for the improvement of leaseholders. Its key aims are to increase satisfaction of the service, improving communication and information whilst providing value for money.

What are its achievements to date?

The Group have been key in developing events throughout the year. This includes specific leasehold events and drop-in sessions. Last year, the Group were instrumental in rolling out an assessment of leaseholders' Reserve Fund contributions. In addition, the group assess information available to leaseholders including the website, common correspondence sent and the Leaseholder Handbook - suggesting any amendments or if more detail is required. The Group also suggest articles which will be useful in Insight.

What happens at meetings?

The format is varied but it is common at each meeting for a representative of South Essex Homes to attend from other parts of the organisation to explain their role and the service they offer to residents. Previous attendees have included repairs, caretaking, major works and members of the Executive Management Team. Following this the Group would focus on policy, communications and procedures covering matters mentioned above. If there are any matters which require particular emphasis e.g. the organisation of an event, these are also discussed. Finally, members provide an update to the group on matters which are of interest. This includes a general update of issues across South Essex Homes and other groups that members may be involved in. In addition, any other business or questions are dealt with before the meeting concludes.

How can I join?

If you are interested in becoming a Focus Group Member please contact **0800 833 160** or email **LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk**. The Group are always happy to welcome new members any time.

If you wish to raise a question or agenda item directly to the group please use the above contact details.

Southend Tenants and Residents Federation

Did you know the group welcomes all leaseholders, their tenants and any members that reside in the property? At present Federation meetings are held on Zoom but they normally meet at the Civic Centre at 10am on the first Monday of each month. All are warmly welcome.

For further information on the Federation visit their new and improved website **www.strf.uk**



Don't forget our email address!



To assist with any of your queries; don't forget to use the following email address **LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk**.

The inbox is monitored by all the team rather than only being visible by one individual staff member.

Our message is that we are here for you with courses that promote positive mental and physical health, skills that help you get a job and opportunities to explore your creativity. You, like many of our students past and present, may have lots of questions bubbling away that you would want someone to answer before taking that first step back into learning. So here we go....

1. I left school years ago, I didn't do very well, what if I am the only one that doesn't know what to do?

You may be surprised how many students tell us they felt like that at first. Soon they realise our small and friendly classes are supportive and made up of many people who share that worry. As an adult college our experienced and caring tutors cater for people at all stages in their lives and at whatever your starting point is.

2. I'm really anxious and my anxiety has got worse during lockdown, what can you do to help?

You are not alone! We have worked hard to create an environment that is safe and reduces risk to our staff and students. We have lots of courses that are both online and face to face that support your wellbeing. We are here to help you regain your confidence and boost your self-esteem.

3. I just need a job – how can you help me?

We have trained and experienced staff who can help you search. You can gain new qualifications that most employers ask for, like English, maths or a qualification or apprenticeship related to the job you want to move into – they are not just for young people. From preparing a CV that stands out, to starting your own business, we can help you explore all your options.

4. Am I too old?

You're never too old to learn, we have learners of all ages, some in their 90's, all taking part in classes such as using a computer or mobile phone, learning a new language, history, yoga and art. We recognise that the

pandemic has been very isolating and we provide all sorts of learning that brings people together to share an interest, learn a new skill and explore their creativity.

5. I'm worried about the cost, especially at the moment. How can I afford to learn when I am struggling to pay my bills?

We do not want finance to be a barrier to you taking part in learning with us. Many courses are free and for those with a cost you may be entitled to discounts – just give us a call and we can talk you through the many options available.

6. Are all your courses online? There's so many cheap or free online courses, why should I come to the college?


Not all courses are just online and some have a mix of online and face to face. However, our online courses are different, each session has a tutor who will guide you through each class alongside your group. Sessions are interactive and supportive so you can take part fully and stay motivated. We can also help you with your digital skills to make learning online easier for you.

Let's make 2021 a year to remember for all the right reasons, we would love to be part of that journey with you.


For 2021 we're exclusively offering FREE Courses to all Tenants, find out more or book your place here.




Ros Parker, Principal



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community college**



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Contact us for **FREE** information, advice and guidance on courses and careers

southend-adult.ac.uk ☎ **01702 445700**

FIRE SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Whilst Working from Home

Whilst working from home most of us have increased the amount of electrical appliances into our home, this may also include other members of your family using laptops, I pads, monitors etc. at home.

Here are just a few fire safety tips to think of, I hope these help.

Do not place leads under any rugs or mats as there is a possibility that a chair or table could be placed on the lead causing damage.

Do not overload electrical sockets.

If using extension leads ensure they only have the correct amount of plugs installed and never "daisy chain" (add extension leads to other extension leads).

Ensure all electrical appliances are in a good state of repair with undamaged cables and the correct fuse fitted.

If using coiled extension leads please ensure all the cable is pulled out from its container.

If using a laptop sitting on a sofa or sitting on a bed please ensure that you have the laptop on a hard surface as the laptop has a fan underneath that needs to draw in air to prevent the device overheating.

Do not leave any devices on charge overnight, laptops, I pads, mobile phones etc. and turn off all screens, monitors and other electrical equipment when not in use.

Never leave any electrical device on soft furnishings unattended for a long period of time.

If you require any further information please contact me on 07557 845254 or you can e mail me grahamhart@seh.southend.gov.uk
Keep Safe & Well. *Graham Hart* Fire Safety Manager, South Essex Homes.

CABLE INSTALLATION

South Essex Homes have recently completed an extensive programme of fire compartmentation works including fire stopping to common risers, installation of fire doors to common areas, and flat entrance doors to a number of blocks.

We have had a recent situation where a cable service provider has drilled through a fire door frame to one of our properties. This hole has now invalidated the fire certification of the door and has compromised the compartmentation. No holes must be drilled through the frames to any fire doors.

If you are intending to have broadband, cable, fibre, Sky or any other similar company or product installed at your property you must first obtain our written permission by the use of a Tenant Improvement form.

Secretary Minute Taker wanted



We are looking for someone to help with minute taking at our monthly meetings which are held on the last Tuesday of the month between 10.00 and 12.00 in the morning.

At the present time these meetings are held by Zoom but are normally held at the Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend. If you feel you could take on this role that might include a few other duties such as replying to mail and postage, please contact us through Facebook or our website strf.uk.

'STAY AT HOME' WORDSEARCH

We have hidden 20 words in the wordsearch below - all are things that you are likely to find in a house ...can you find them all?

Bathroom
Bedroom
Blinds
Carpet
Chairs
Curtains
Door
Hallway
Kitchen
Landing

Lights
Lounge
Sofa
Stairs
Table
Television
Tiles
Wallpaper
Wardrobe
Window

S	A	B	N	O	I	S	I	V	E	L	E	T	W	P	B
E	R	E	B	K	I	G	J	X	C	E	I	W	A	L	N
F	B	H	E	Y	V	G	H	A	L	L	W	A	Y	I	M
B	U	O	D	L	N	N	O	S	E	L	E	L	B	A	T
H	C	U	R	T	A	I	N	S	R	W	C	L	L	G	E
L	R	O	O	D	E	D	S	B	A	K	I	P	P	I	P
V	N	Y	O	I	R	N	S	D	A	G	L	A	W	B	R
S	R	N	M	O	E	A	A	C	H	T	B	P	I	M	A
U	O	T	R	H	D	L	W	T	W	L	H	E	N	E	C
Y	I	F	C	E	S	T	S	L	I	W	X	R	D	P	L
R	S	T	A	I	R	S	E	N	E	G	N	U	O	L	B
H	I	Z	A	E	N	T	D	L	R	G	W	B	W	O	R
K	B	C	E	E	L	S	R	I	A	H	C	R	F	H	M



Census 2021 will provide a snapshot of modern society

Households across Southend-on-Sea will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941.

It will be the first run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

"A successful census will ensure everyone from local government to charities can put services and funding in the places where they are most needed," Iain Bell, deputy national statistician at the Office for National Statistics, said.

"This could mean things like doctors' surgeries, schools and new transport routes. That's why it is so important everyone takes part and we have made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them."

Census day will be on 21 March, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March.

The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. And, for the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the armed forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations.

For more information, visit [census.gov.uk](https://www.census.gov.uk).

Help to go online: Census Support Centre

Southend Adult Community College will be operating as a Census Support Centre during Census 2021 to help people complete the census online. The college will be offering support from 1 March until 4 May 2021. If you need assistance getting online or completing the census digitally, you will be able to book an appointment to use a college computer and receive advice from a trained census support advisor.

What to take

You will need the access code from your letter.

1. You might need information about the people you live with. The census asks questions about everyone who lives in your household. For example, there are questions on people's health, qualifications, passports they have and where they were living a year ago.
2. You can take your own mobile device, or you can use a computer provided at the centre.

You don't need ID and you don't need to prove any information about yourself. The census support advisors will not ask you for evidence. They will not ask to see any documents you've brought with you, but you can show them if you wish.

To find out more, please visit www.southend-adult.ac.uk or call 01702 445700.

Free digital courses

Southend Adult Community College will be running free short courses in the New Year to support residents to improve their digital skills. More information about the courses will be available in the New Year on their website www.southend-adult.ac.uk or by calling 01702 445700.

Please see the article on page 13 for more information about Southend Adult Community College.



**southend adult
community college**