

Spring **2021** issue!

insight

The South Essex Homes
Resident Newsletter



Sue's kind donations for
hardworking nursery staff (page 7)



HELPFUL HINTS & TIPS!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

**FLATS
TO LET**

Take shelter in
our schemes!



**HILDA
THE TECH
WHIZZ**

Helping tenants
to go digital



AND LOTS MORE...

- We're All Ears! So please get in touch
- Introducing Chief Insp Ian Hughes


southessexhomes
working smarter together

PENSION CREDIT

are you claiming what you're entitled to?

Firstly, what is pension credit?

It is a means-tested benefit aimed at people over state pension age offering a top-up to their income.

It's made up of two parts, and while some people get both, many can qualify for just one:

- **Guarantee credit** - the main part of pension credit, giving you a top-up of your weekly income to a minimum guaranteed level. This minimum standard guarantee level for 2021/22 is £177.10 if you are single, and £270.30 if you're in a couple.
- **Savings credit** - for those who reached state pension age before April 2016, there is an extra boost available if you've made provision for your retirement via savings, work or a private pension. This gives you up to £14.04 per week if you're single, and £15.71 if you're in a couple. To qualify you've got to earn above a threshold amount of £153.70 if you're single and £244.12 if you're in a couple.

More than three million households are eligible for pension credit, but an estimated one in three don't claim – in many cases because they don't realise they could be entitled to it.

Some of the benefits of receiving Pension Credit may include:

- **Free TV licence for over-75s** - worth up to £159 a year
- **Council tax reduction** - worth about £1,000 a year typically
- **Cold weather payments** - worth £25 a week when it's really cold
- **Warm home discount** - worth £140 a year.
- **Free dental care** - worth £100s a year for some.
- **Voucher for glasses/contact lenses** - worth £39-£215 a time depending on your prescription.
- **Housing benefit** - worth £1,000s a year for some.



To qualify for pension credit:

- You must live in the UK – England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.
- You must have reached state pension age.

If you are in a couple, you'll both need to have reached state pension age. You don't have to be married or in a civil partnership, you're considered a couple if you live together. For couples, one partner claims and gives income and savings details for both partners.

Extra criteria for savings credit:

To qualify for the savings element as well (if you're making a new claim) you also need to have reached 65 if you're a man, and 63 if you're a woman, before 6 April 2016 – which were the state pension ages at that time.

However, if you're part of a couple and just one of you satisfies ALL of these conditions, you could still qualify for savings credit as a couple.

You or your partner must:

- Have been entitled to savings credit immediately before 6 April 2016.
- Have been awarded savings credit with effect from a day before 6 April 2016.
- Have remained continuously always entitled to savings credit since the beginning of 6 April 2016.

Importantly, pension credit is not automatic so you MUST claim - here's how.

You can apply via Gov.uk if you've already claimed your state pension, but otherwise you'll need to phone the Pension Service on 0800 99 1234 (or the NI Pension Centre on 0808 100 6165). They will fill in the form for you, though you can also request it to be posted to you, whether for yourself or someone else. While you can backdate your claim, you can only do it for the last 3 months, so if you think you're eligible, the quicker you check, the quicker you'll benefit.



WELCOME

Welcome to the spring issue of Insight!

I'm sure that, like me, you are pleased with the progress we're making as a country in terms of the vaccine rollout, as we start to see the light at the end of the tunnel with the gradual easing of restrictions. It's been a very long winter, but better times certainly now appear to be on their way. 😊

At the end of last year Miranda Edwards joined me as a new member of the Communications Team and she has written her first article for Insight in this issue, which features on page 11. You'll be seeing more from Miranda over future editions, and I'm delighted to have her on board!

I've really enjoyed compiling this magazine, which has enabled me to get out and visit some residents (safely of course) and we've been able to once again cover some of your real life stories. If you have a tale to tell, we would love to hear from you! Please get in touch using the details at the foot of this page.

The next Insight will be with you in late July/early August so please stay safe until then!

All the best, Julia

Julia Pack, Editor



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Message from Mike

Hopefully everyone has managed to stay safe and well throughout the latest lockdown and I'm sure you'll join with me in looking forward to the continued releasing of restrictions in line with the government's roadmap, which hopefully will be able to follow the Prime Minister's announcement and see a majority of restrictions lifted later in June.

For South Essex Homes, like our colleagues at Southend Borough Council, we have had to continue to provide many of our services more remotely than was the case in the past. We are looking closely at how some elements of our services will be able to revert to a more face to face approach, but it is already clear that some of the changes we have seen over the past year are likely to remain with us for the foreseeable future. Of course we will continue to update you on developments with our services

not only through Insight but through Facebook, Twitter and our website – www.southessexhomes.co.uk.

On that note, I am looking forward to a point later on in the year when we can launch our brand new website. I was really pleased and impressed with the number of residents who took part in the development session with our IT consultants at the end of April. Our hope is that our new website will be a much more usable, accessible and useful website for you, so look out for future updates in Insight and social media and I'll be interested in your views when it does launch.

Our team continues to watch closely as the discussion around the government's Housing White Paper progresses. The intention of this new legislation will be to provide

assurance to all residents that their homes are brought up to the highest standards of safety and are then regularly maintained in that safe condition – and a new Building Safety Regulator is being created to ensure landlords carry out their role in this respect. The legislation importantly will ensure tenants have access to their landlords and that their voice is heard. For us at South Essex Homes, we are particularly pleased to see this as the involvement of you as our residents has always been key to everything we do and we see this as an opportunity to develop our relationship with you even further.

Best wishes

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



DIGITAL INCLUSION

By Sarah Gallagher, Support Services Officer

Last year the Sheltered Housing Team established the Digital Inclusion Programme. The project aimed to get residents online and help them understand the benefits of using technology, and to enable them to focus on the positive changes it could bring to their day to day lives. This could mean anything from ordering shopping, getting cheaper utilities or seeing family or friends on Zoom. Digital inclusion can help our residents maintain their independence and improve their wellbeing.

The first stage of the project involved staff talking to residents about digital inclusion and finding out the barriers to understand why people do not access the internet. Sheltered Housing Officers completed a digital audit for each housing scheme, which enabled us to identify tenants who owned internet devices, who were using the internet frequently and felt confident in doing so. More importantly, the audit highlighted those who had no devices or connectivity and those who lacked the confidence and skills to get online. At the same time, staff attended digital workshops to increase their own knowledge and skills. The idea behind this was that increased confidence in staff would lead to better support for residents.

The second stage included sourcing funding that would be used to purchase devices for tenants to use, who will be supported with one-to-one sessions by volunteers and digital buddies. It is important to recognise that the training and support will be ongoing and tenants will be able to shape the sessions in what they want to do and what they feel most comfortable with.

Staff have arranged online meetings with many of our residents to discuss the digital inclusion programme. This is an opportunity to ask questions, provide feedback and generate ideas on how we can help other tenants get online. From the positive feedback we have received, it seems that they have enjoyed these meetings. Some have commented that accessing the internet has given them a new-found confidence as they are able to meet

with family, follow hobbies and access information about health and other services much more quickly and easily.

As part of the digital inclusion programme, a small group of tenants are co-designing a project with Focal Point Gallery. Currently they are meeting online on a weekly basis to talk about their lockdown story, including their digital journey during the pandemic. This will be made into a short film later this year and we hope it will inspire others.

We are also working with Southend Borough Council to trial a tablet used for video calls only. This will primarily assist residents with disabilities to keep in contact with family and friends and those who may feel intimidated by technology. The contact details of the person's friends and family, doctor and/or carers, will all be added to the tablet for them. Another function of the tablet is that it can be used as a medication prompt which may be beneficial to service users.

The pandemic affected the traditional ways that our staff interacted with residents. One positive outcome of the COVID-19 outbreak was that it encouraged us to establish the digital inclusion programme and support older people in getting online. By using the internet of their own accord residents are less likely to be socially isolated and are better equipped to face the challenges of living with modern technology.



HILDA'S STORY

Hilda Berry, 64, lives in a sheltered housing flat at The Brambles in Eastern Avenue, Southend, and is keen to encourage other sheltered residents to embrace the internet!

Having been visiting Southend every other weekend from their home in London, Hilda and her husband Robert made the decision to move to the sea in 2015.

Robert still commuted back to London to his civilian job for the Metropolitan Police whilst Hilda got a job as a Healthcare Assistant working from Southend Hospital. Soon after, Hilda began to notice slight changes in Robert and he was later diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. She took early retirement to nurse him through the final years of his life until Robert sadly passed away in 2017.

"The first year after losing Robert was all about the paperwork and getting stuff done", Hilda explains, "Then the grief kicked in later. I would put my key in the door and be met with silence whereas before there would always be a carer there or Robert welcoming me home. It was a very lonely time and I didn't know what to do with myself".

It was then that Hilda started to think back 8 or 9 years to before Robert became ill, when she had been active on Facebook and in fact had used the social media platform to rediscover some long lost family members. Having not had time to keep up with it whilst nursing Robert, she then started to use Facebook again to keep in touch with Robert's family and check how they were coping since losing him.

"Facebook provides a great way to stay in touch with friends and family and it has really helped to keep me going since losing Robert. Over the past year or so since the first lockdown, I've really been getting into Zoom too – I find it fascinating that even though my sister is all the way up in Scotland, I can press a button on my phone and it feels like I'm right there with her.

Hilda is keen to encourage other residents to not be fearful of new technology but instead to embrace it and simply 'give it a go'. She said: "I know that lots of my neighbours here at The Brambles have phones and tablets but are worried to use them in case they press the wrong button and break it. We have got computers in our communal lounge that anyone can use so even if they don't have their own devices, all sheltered housing residents have the ability to access the internet should they wish to and there are South Essex Homes staff and fellow residents around who are happy to help them".

Since losing Robert, Hilda has also discovered a passion for art and has set up a studio area in her flat. She creates abstract pieces using acrylic paints and also enjoys '5 Diamond painting'. Roy, another resident of the Brambles, organises a weekly art session in the lounge every Sunday (when Covid restrictions allow) whereby residents can create artistic pieces of their own choosing together followed by a cup of coffee.

She has also joined The Show Choir and has sung at the Cliffs Pavilion and out in Spain, but unfortunately the first lockdown meant they missed out on a planned trip to

Italy last year.

Hilda said: "You don't have to stay within your own four walls if you don't want to! There are lots of hobbies and activities out there to be discovered. Through the sadness of losing Robert, I have pushed myself to embrace my 'techie' side and I want to help others to discover the possibilities of technology that are available to us all and make new friends in the process.

"I will always find time to talk to people, find out where they are in terms of their technical abilities and help them to start their journey to learn and make the most of all the wonderful things you can do using a mobile phone.

"The main message I want to get across is that you don't need to be scared of breaking a device by pressing the wrong button. It's not like the early days of computing where one wrong move could break everything – modern devices are pretty fail safe so there's no harm in exploring away because you can always easily get back to the beginning."

Support Services Officer Sarah Gallagher said: "Since I first met Hilda, I have seen such a difference in her as she has grown in confidence, most recently as part of the Focus Point Gallery project. She has attended several meetings including an Older People's Strategy meeting where she is helping to shape the provision of services and she is passionate about encouraging fellow sheltered residents to use Zoom and Facebook to communicate both with friends and family but also to join in other meetings, if they are unable to get out.

"South Essex Homes are committed to supporting and encouraging residents to get online as it provides so many benefits in terms of accessing information and cheaper bills, as well as enabling them to virtually keep in touch with people. Having Hilda's help in spreading these messages is so powerful and she is an inspirational lady – from dealing with her husband's passing and recently the feeling of disempowerment during lockdown, she has turned this into something positive and she is a great role model to other residents".



Hilda and Robert's wedding



Introducing your

DISTRICT COMMANDER IAN HUGHES



I would like to introduce myself to you, my name is Ian Hughes and I am a Chief Inspector at Essex Police and I am your District Commander, which basically means that I am the person responsible for delivering uniformed Policing in Southend.

So, a bit about me...

I am born and bred in Southend and continue to live in our fantastic borough. I have been a Police Officer for 17 years, I am a bit of an anomaly as I have spent my entire career at Southend, so I would like to think I know the town pretty well and recognise the challenges it faces, as well as understanding the diverse and committed community I serve.

Local Policing

The uniformed side of Policing in Southend consists of Local Policing Team (LPT) Officers who respond to your 999 calls and a Community Policing Team (CPT) that review and respond to short, medium and long term problems such as Antisocial behaviour and crime spikes.

An important part of their work is to work with other partner agencies such as South Essex Homes, ensuring a collaborative approach is adopted through information sharing, shared awareness of priorities and working together to deliver an effective service to our community. In addition to the LPT and CPT there is an Investigations Team who investigate crimes which attract a higher level of risk including Domestic Abuse. There are a number of Force wide resources which also patrol Southend on a daily basis which provide fantastic specialist support and increase our Policing visibility in our community.

'Valuing difference'

Essex Police is committed to ensuring its workforce reflects the community it serves and valuing difference, a diverse workforce serving a diverse community is our ultimate goal. To find out more information about joining the Policing family please visit the link at the end of this article.

'We want to hear from you'

If you have been a victim of crime, or are aware of an ongoing problem, be it Antisocial behaviour or if you believe someone else to be at risk, please don't assume someone else has reported it – Essex Police want to hear from you, what we don't know we can't tackle. There are many ways you can contact Essex Police, via 999 for emergencies or 101 for non emergency calls or online via the link at the end of this article.

Policing Priorities

As an organisation, Essex Police is very clear about its priorities which are to help people, keep people safe and to catch criminals.

My local priorities are aligned to this but are specifically focused on reducing serious violence, reducing vulnerability – especially linked to our young people and to dismantle organised crime groups.

We cannot do this on our own and we need other organisations and the community to come together, share information, tell us when you know so 'we' can react.

Sharing our successes

Increasing Public Confidence is fundamental to delivering our service effectively, a huge amount of work has been invested in ensuring that you have the chance to see the successes that your officers achieve on a daily basis, be it first hand or through our media streams. My drive around this is focused on a concept of 'listen, take action and then tell the community what has been done'.

There are a number of ways we share our information and messages to the community, our two main social media platforms are 'Essex Police – Southend' Facebook page and '@EPSouthend' Twitter feeds, both platforms reflect some of the fantastic work that your officers are doing daily to keep Southend safe.

The '4 E' approach to Covid

It would be remiss of me to not mention the pandemic we have all be living and working in which has certainly brought challenges to all of us. I would like to thank the Southend community for their commitment and support through the last 12 months. Overall the compliance has been fantastic and where the minority have chosen to flout the rules, Southend Police has done its very best to robustly address it. We maintain our '4 E' approach of Engage with individuals, Explain how they are not complying with the rules, Encourage people to change their behaviour and as a last resort Enforce. In the majority of cases the last E is avoided, however it is important that the community know that we will not hesitate to take firm action on those that do not heed the advice that they are given. The team continue to patrol key locations throughout the borough that are likely to see large numbers of people gathering – this will continue right through the summer and beyond.

Please think about your actions and behaviour as we navigate through the Government's roadmap. The less we have to address or challenge simply means my officers have more time to focus on what matters to you.

Please continue to support your Essex Police, we really can't do it without you!



<https://www.essex.police.uk/police-forces/essex-police/areas/essex-police/campaigns/campaigns/2020/we-value-difference-at-essex-police/>
<https://www.essex.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

RESIDENT ZONE

Caring for the Carers

Sue, a resident of Trafford House, recently made up 22 gift bags for staff at a nursery where her daughter works.



"Last year at the beginning of the first lockdown. I decided to do something for elderly care home residents. The only thing I can do is knit so I donated 17 knitted animals to a care home in Chalkwell. They were delighted. This time I wanted to do something different for a group of nursery workers in an early years establishment. They work extremely hard looking after keyworker's children. My daughter is the manager so I told her I would make up a care bag for each of them containing things like hand sanitiser, hand cream, tissues, lip balm and several other items. My daughter is excited for the staff and is sure they will appreciate it. They certainly deserve it!"

Easter at Nayland

Once again a lovely resident at Nayland House treated everyone to chocolate treats this Easter – this is a wonderful gesture and is very much appreciated by fellow residents.



WE WERE THERE

WE WERE THERE is an online exhibition which documents the amazing memories and experiences of South Essex residents who lived before, during and after World War II.

Developed in partnership with ATF, South Essex Homes and Essex Records Office and supported by Heritage Fund, this online exhibition captures the stories and emotions of those who witnessed incredible events, in their own words.

It is well worth a look and a listen to hear some incredible stories which provide a fascinating insight from those who experienced the Second World War first hand.

Visit www.atfcommunity.com/introduction to view the exhibition, which involves clicking on individual photographs to listen to that person talk about their experiences.



Achieve Thrive Flourish



ESSEX AT WAR WE WERE THERE

Southend-on-Sea and area during World War 2

Do you have any photographs or memorabilia of Southend-on-Sea and the surrounding area from 1939-1945? If you would like to share them on this page for others to enjoy, please feel free to get in touch. Coming soon... An audible collection of memories of Southend and area before, during and after the war.



Children being evacuated in 1940 from Southend Central Train Station. With thanks to Southend Museums Service.





NEWS FROM YOUR FEDERATION

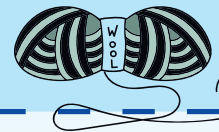


Are you missing out on all that is going on around you as a Resident? Then don't, join us at our Zoom meetings.

STOP PRESS NEWS!



For the Family Cinema Trip & the Crafting Club, please see the leaflet enclosed in this issue.



Would you like the Federation to come to your area?

The Federation would like to know if you would like us to come to your neighbourhood with our gazebo, allowing you to meet us and discuss any matters in relation to either your property or area you have not been able to resolve yourself.



We would bring a range of refreshments for which we only require small donations to cover our costs.



We are also able to provide free of charge children's entertainment for the duration of our stay with you if required. We can also arrange for various South Essex Homes department representatives to attend when they are available, as well as representatives from other organisations you may feel will be of benefit to your fellow residents.

We would need an area of approximately 5x4 metres for our gazebo as well as an area for the children's entertainment and of course the refreshments.



If this appeals to you, then please get in touch with us...

...using Facebook, (STRF-2020), 

our website strf.uk by using the contact us form 

 or email info@strf.org.uk, giving your area and a contact number.

We can then arrange when The Federation can come to you.

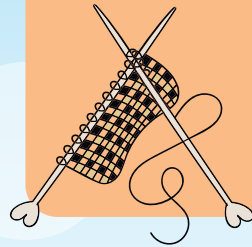


A BIG THANK YOU

Now we are on our way out of lockdown, I would like to say a big thank you to all the staff at SEH for all they have done for the residents across the borough. From delivering food parcels to contacting residents on a daily basis to make sure they are alright, to find out if they are well and if they need any help. Most gave up their own time to do this for us and they did not have to do that, but being them what else would you expect. They are and have always been our champions and for myself and I'm sure I speak for the rest of you, I would like to say a great big THANK YOU to them all. Every one of them deserve one of our Gold Awards for what they did and are still doing even though we are on our way out of this terrible thing, but we will not be beaten by anything and will fight on regardless.

CALLING ALL KNITTERS!

We are looking for residents who can knit toys for us. We will provide everything you need - wool, patterns, needles etc., Contact via Facebook – strf-2020 our Website – strf.uk or call 01702 309064.



This is your last chance to nominate anyone for the

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.

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

WE'RE ALL EARS!

We want our residents to know that if there is an issue relating to your particular property or tenancy that is affecting your quality of life, we invite you to raise it with us.

South Essex Homes looks after around 6000 properties on behalf of Southend Borough Council, so it's important that we have policies and procedures in place to explain what we will do to maintain and manage those properties in order to ensure consistency of service.

These policy and procedure documents cover the vast majority of things we get involved in across all property types and tenancy situations. However, we are aware that each home and each tenant is individual and that some sets of circumstances may be unique and therefore may fall outside of the remit covered by our policies and procedures.

While we can't promise that all individual matters will be met with the response you request – we do promise to LISTEN and to help you to find a solution. If standard

actions to remedy the situation are tried but don't work, we are open to considering a bespoke response where it is deemed relevant and each case will be considered on an individual basis.

Going forwards, we would like to share stories of where we have listened to our tenants and responded 'outside of the box' – so please find an example below and look out for 'You Said...We Did' in future issues of Insight.

If you've been happy with the response you've received, please tell us! We'd be delighted to feature your experiences to show how we respond to issues raised with us.

A resident of Senior House complained about an ongoing issue relating to their flat, which was adversely affecting their quality of life. Attempts to address the problem via the standard channels were not effective so we agreed a bespoke solution to fix the issue, and the resident reports it is now much improved and is very grateful that we were able to help.

*You Said...
We Did*

SUCCESSION:

Staying in your council home when someone dies

We often get asked the rules around succession so thought it would be useful to share some basic information on this topic with you.

You might be able to stay in your council home if the person named on the tenancy agreement dies – this is called succession. If you can stay, it will mean you'll take over their tenancy – this is known as succeeding.

You'll be responsible for paying the rent if you take over the tenancy – you'll usually need to pay rent from the date the previous tenant died.

Being able to stay in your home and take over the tenancy will depend on various factors and legislation. Some of these factors include qualifying rights, which are detailed within the Housing Act 1985 and the Localism Act 2011.

You'll need to tell South Essex Homes when the person named on the tenancy agreement has passed away.

Check if there's already been a succession or assignment

There can only ever be one assignment or succession to a tenancy.

An assignment is when the tenancy

is transferred from one person to another, for example when a joint tenancy is changed to a sole tenancy after a relationship breaks down.

If a succession or assignment has already happened, such as the example above or if one partner dies and the other one takes over the tenancy, it can't then happen again. This means that when the second partner dies, no one else will be able to take over the tenancy.

If you were joint tenants

If you're a named tenant on the tenancy agreement, you'll keep the tenancy automatically through what is known as 'survivorship'.

Taking over the tenancy

You'll need to fill in a form and prove you have the right to take over the tenancy. We will send you the form when you tell us about the death.

You'll need to provide evidence that you lived in the property, for example bank statements, bills or benefit letters.

You may also need to provide:

- **The death certificate of the deceased tenant.**
- **A copy of relevant certificate if you were married or in a civil partnership with the person who died**
- **Proof that the property was your main home for at least a year before the person died**
- **Proof that you currently live in the property**

Each situation is personal to each individual so if you have any questions relating to succession, please contact our Tenancy Team on **0800 833160** or email sehcustomerservices@seh.southend.gov.uk.

If you want further assistance, you may wish to contact Citizens Advice Southend on **0344 4770808** or visit their website www.citizensadvice.org.uk

JUNE'S 45 YEARS IN ROTHWELL CLOSE

By Miranda Edwards

June was born in the 1930s in Old Town in Leigh. June is the eldest sibling, with an 18-month gap between her younger brother, Brian, who despite his emigration to Australia has remained close to her throughout their lives.



Officially classed as a 'Leighite' June has lived in Leigh her entire life (90 years of age). She attended Leigh North Street school and went onto West Leigh school. In those days many children started work when they were younger and at the age of 14, June got her first job working at Jack's pyjama factory. After a small stint there she then moved onto working at a shoe factory through a friend of the family.

June met her husband, John, in the Ship Hotel in Old Leigh, he used to come in and play darts whilst she was there, one day their friendship took off. John was an engineer who worked locally. He was 26 and June was 21 when they married, and at the start of their marriage they lived in rooms in Brightwell Avenue. June fondly remembers her husband as someone who enjoyed having a laugh, he was her best friend whom she trusted deeply and who always knew how to cheer her up. Sadly 22 years ago John lost his battle to lung cancer.

How did June come to live in sheltered accommodation?

Initially June and John were placed on an engagement list, then the marriage list and once they had a child, they were on the family list with Southend Council Housing. In the beginning of their marriage, they moved into Wood Farm Close in the maisonettes when her daughter was born, and they spent six and half years there. Unfortunately, June had to undergo a spinal operation which left her unable to climb the stairs in the maisonette and plans were made to move the family to more suitable accommodation.

That was when June and the family moved to Rothwell Close, which gave her the ground floor space she needed. June has many fond memories of the neighbours who became friends over the years. Now she finds that she

spends a lot more time on her own.

June has remained at Rothwell Close for all those years since, 45 to be exact. She is visited once a week by her daughter who is a Sister at Southend Hospital, and she is immensely proud of her. Also, there are communal gardens attached to June's flat and every morning she goes out and gets fresh air and keeps the garden tidy, the garden being quite the suntrap.

A memorable moment in the flat was June and John's 25th wedding anniversary, which John celebrated by saving up and buying a brand new carpet for the flat which is still laid there today. June reflects that John and her would often share and discuss things, Friday nights she would empty her purse and he would empty his pockets and they would work out if they could afford a bottle of lemonade or six pence of chips.

We think that June's 45 years at Rothwell Close may be a record for the longest time a tenant has lived in the same sheltered housing flat - but if you know otherwise please let us know!

Something June has been justifiably proud of is her crochet and knitwork blankets, pictured here...

June in partnership with another lady carefully craft these blankets from scratch, even sourcing the materials themselves. These blankets are taken to a church in Leigh to be further transported to London, from there they are distributed overseas for new-born babies. The blankets are exquisite and will bring much sentimental value to many families. Some have even gone to China. This hobby of June's has kept her busy during the pandemic, the craftsmanship honed over the years after she was taught by her mother.



SHO Sue Birch presented June with flowers to mark the length of her tenancy at Rothwell Close.





TAKE SHELTER

In our

COSY SCHEMES!

The Council's sheltered accommodation is managed and maintained by South Essex Homes and consists of complexes of one-bedroom flats and studio flats across the borough of Southend.

Sheltered housing is perfect for those looking to downsize from their current property, or who are looking for a bit more support and reassurance. This article describes 'Part 2' schemes available to people aged over 60 but we also manage 'Part 1' schemes for the over 50s.

Small but perfectly formed

The idea of downsizing may feel a bit daunting – studio flats may seem small but they are cleverly designed to contain everything you need whilst being much easier to maintain than a larger property.

We see several beautifully kept studio flats that serve to demonstrate how homely and cosy these properties can be made to look. On this page you can see a few photos of some such flats – with our thanks to the residents for letting us look around their lovely homes and take photos to share with you all.

When you move into one of the sheltered schemes, you will have:

- Open-plan living accommodation incorporating a contemporary style fitted kitchen, the majority of which have eye level oven & hob supplied and maintained
- Modern wet room, or bathroom with three-piece suite
- Your own front entrance door with spy hole
- Entrance hall, most with storage cupboard
- Full gas central heating
- 24-hour emergency alarm system
- Smoke and fire detectors
- Free Wi-Fi in the communal lounge for internet access

Communal Facilities

All of the sheltered schemes provide:

- Door entry system for your security
- Lift
- Car Park
- Communal lounge
- Kitchen
- Cloakrooms
- Guest room - so you can invite visitors to stay
- Laundry room
- Gardens



Some of the larger schemes offer additional communal facilities, such as:

- Additional Garden and/or patio area with outside seating
- Hair care room with visiting hairdresser
- Outside laundry drying area
- Hobbies room
- Library
- Treatment Rooms

In addition to excellent accommodation and communal facilities, during normal and unrestricted times, residents of the sheltered schemes also enjoy a busy and varied programme of social activities.

Typical activities may include:

- Arts & Crafts
- Bingo
- Keep Fit
- Seasonal parties and entertainment
- Musical evenings
- Tea and Coffee mornings

Sheltered Housing Officers

All of the schemes are managed by Sheltered Housing Officers, who can:

- Contact you or visit you to check on your wellbeing and your needs
- Be a source of advice and advocacy
- Report repairs
- Oversee management of the building
- Co-ordinate and encourage social interaction
- Respond to emergency situations
- Where necessary, liaise with statutory services and voluntary agencies on your behalf
- Help to plan any additional support for you, if needed

Rent

The amount of rent you will pay depends upon the size of the property you are offered.

Other charges may include:

- Water rates
- Heating (radiators and hot water)
- Services (for example mobile caretaking, cleaning of communal areas)
- Supported Services (Sheltered Housing Officer and Careline)

Please rest assured that there will be no hidden costs – all applicable charges will be fully explained to you.

If you are considering moving into sheltered accommodation in order to take advantage of all the benefits listed above but still have questions, please feel free to contact our friendly team for information and advice on 0800 833160 or email chloehague@seh.southend.gov.uk

I want to apply to live in a sheltered scheme – what do I need to do?

Firstly, you need to register your details and be accepted on the Council's Homeseekers' register. Details of how to do this can be found in the 'Housing' section of Southend-on-Sea Borough Council's website – www.southend.gov.uk.

Once you are registered, you can bid for properties which interest you via Southend's 'On the Move' website – www.southend-on-the-move.org.uk

Don't worry if you don't have internet access – if you require assistance, you can call the Housing Advice and Choice Based Lettings team at the Council who will be happy to assist you through this process. Their telephone number is 01702 215002.

Current Vacancies

We currently have a number of studio flats available across the town, as listed below. Please note that this information is correct at the time of going to print but may change by the time you receive Insight through the post!

- **Adams Elm House**, London Road, Leigh, SS9 2AQ – 2 studio flats (1 x 1st & 1 x 2nd floor)
- **Bishop House**, Western Approaches, Southend, SS2 6TT – 1 x one bedroom flat (1st floor), 3 x studio flats (1 x ground & 2 x 1st floor)
- **The Brambles**, Eastern Avenue, Southend SS2 5NJ – 1 x studio flat (1st floor)
- **Furze Field**, Priorywood Drive, Leigh, SS9 4DP – 2 x studio flats (both on ground floor)
- **Keats House**, Shelley Square, Southend, SS2 5JP – 2 x studio flats (1 x ground & 1 x 1st floor)
- **Nayland House**, Manners Way, Southend, SS2 6QT – 1 x studio flat (ground floor)
- **Nestuda House**, Grovewood Avenue, Eastwood SS9 5EF – 1 x studio flat (ground floor)
- **Scott House**, Neil Armstrong Way, Eastwood, SS9 5YZ – 4 x studio flats (2 x ground floor & 2 x 1st floor)
- **Stephen McAdden House**, 21 Burr Hill Chase, Southend, SS2 6PJ – 4 x studio flats (3 x 2nd & 1 x 1st floor)





*Welcome to the page
in Insight devoted to Leaseholders.*

Welcome to the page in Insight devoted to Leaseholders. I hope you and your family are keeping well. Following from the last issue, I would like to thank all the leaseholders who expressed an interest in attending the Leasehold Focus Group. We look forward to meeting you all as soon as it is possible. I hope you find the information in this edition useful.

Best Wishes *Jan*

Don't forget our Leaseholder Email Address!

Should you wish to contact us via email in relation to any queries please use the following email address:

LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk

Given the increase in electronic correspondence over the last year it's worth noting that the address is monitored by all team members so using it will help you to receive a timely response to any queries.



Buildings Insurance 2021-2022



The Buildings insurance documents for this year are now available on our website:

www.southessexhomes.co.uk

Should you require a paper copy to be posted please call our Customer Services Team on 0800 833 160.

Should you need to make a claim Avid use a claims administrator to process claims.

Questgates Limited can be contacted on 01204 860427 quoting Policy Number 2020CP000180.

To make a claim outside of normal office hours you can contact Avid directly on 0121 411 0535.

Website and the Leasehold Handbook



South Essex Homes is in the process of redesigning its website and we would like to hear from you if you have any suggestions on how to improve the leasehold section.

In addition, we will also be updating the Leasehold Handbook which is available on our website. Again, if you have any comments in this respect or could think of material to include please let us know by emailing LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk or calling 0800 833 160.

Have you thought about buying your home?

You could be eligible for a Right to Buy discount if:

- ✓ You are a council tenant
- ✓ You have been a public sector tenant for at least 3 years (it does not have to be 3 years in a row)
- ✓ You don't live in sheltered housing or housing particularly suitable for disabled people
- ✓ You don't have any legal problems with debt
- ✓ You don't have any outstanding possession orders

What discount could you get?

The longer you have been a tenant, the bigger discount you get off the market value of your home, up to a maximum discount of £84,600 or 70% of the property value.

A Right to Buy Calculator is available at www.righttobuy.gov.uk

For further information including details on how to apply visit our website www.southessexhomes.co.uk or the governments website dedicated to the Right to Buy www.righttobuy.gov.uk





5 BEST REASONS TO RETHINK, UPSKILL AND RETRAIN

The current pandemic has led many people to wondering about changing careers and finding work. It is not just the pandemic that is pushing people to rethink, retrain and reskill, but unexpected events or shocks can disrupt our routines and lead us to ask big questions about our lives and our career future. Southend Adult Community College is open and ready to support all adults in the community. We have put together 5 reasons we are encouraging adults to Rethink, Upskill and Retrain.



1. Wellbeing is important and rethinking gives you downtime

This is crucial, not only for replenishing the mind, but it improves our health outlook and mood. As the current health crisis has taken its toll on both our physical and mental wellbeing. Our FREE, short Ways 2 Wellbeing courses and Health and Fitness classes can help you manage your own mental health and support others who are struggling in a friendly, non-pressured and supportive environment. Contact us for more information at wellbeing@southend-adult.ac.uk

2. Starting something new and meet different people

Attending college can give you an opportunity to learn about yourself, your preferences and dislikes, and the kind of things that bring out the best in you.

One of the reasons potential career changers benefit so much from attending courses is that their fellow students represent a ready-made community of kindred spirits to talk to. Just the simple act of creating and telling a story about what you want to do, or why you want a change, may help. We offer a range of support from our Information, Advice and Guidance service where you can get the career coaching and guidance you need, or book on to our weekly Job Hub to help you create the perfect CV or complete job application forms.

3. Brush up on the basics and boost your employment opportunities

English and maths are key to increasing your chances of finding work and employers look for qualifications in these subjects. English and maths courses are free. To help your career change, pursuits you already do or have you thought about turning your hobby into a business? The growth in regeneration projects and

house building in Southend has created a huge demand for people to work in Construction and this will continue for years to come. There are many job roles, it's not all about working on site.

We offer FREE adult workshops, and 'Have a Go' sessions to help you discover how you could be part of the growth and regeneration of Southend or convert your interests into a new career. Why not take a Skills Health Check and visit our Information, Advice and Guidance Advisors, contact LindaWagstaff@southend-adult.ac.uk

4. More financial help is available to all adults in England who want to study

If you are unemployed and looking for work many courses are free. The Government's Lifetime Skills Guarantee means many level 3 courses are now free. It's hoped it will help tackle the local skills gap in many sectors like Teaching, Construction and Engineering, Digital Science and Health and Social Care. Contact our Learner Services Team at sacc@southend-adult.ac.uk

5. Our apprenticeship programmes will enable you to learn the skills and gain the knowledge needed for your chosen profession

You can learn whilst working and earn a wage at the same time. Each apprenticeship is different, just like you. We offer apprenticeships and vocational courses to all adults, find out more on our website or contact JuliaWalker@southend-adult.ac.uk

Remember, when it comes to reinventing your career, the time to start is now! You don't need to go it alone, Southend Adult Community College is here for you! Call us for a chat about your future on 01702 445 700.

WASTE NOT, WANT NOT...

Veolia answer your FAQs about waste



What should I do if my rubbish hasn't been collected on the usual day?

Your waste is being collected by several vehicles and the time of your collection may not always be the same, please wait until 6 pm on the day of your collection before reporting a missed collection. Check the Southend website for the latest updates on collections, it will give you information on any delays Veolia might be experiencing. Please, also check your collection day online in case there is a planned change.

The easiest way to report a missed collection is through the **MySouthend portal** (<http://my.southend.gov.uk/>).

Full recycling services aren't yet available to me because I live in a block – is anything being done to improve that?

Veolia is continuously working to improve access to the range of recycling streams to residents of flats. If you do not dispose of the three recycling streams (mixed recycling in pink sacks, paper and card, and food waste recycling) you can request them by getting

in touch with us at uk.veolia.waste.southend-recycling.mailbox@veolia.com. We will be able to carry out a site visit to assess or let you know if we have already assessed your block and if the service can be expanded.

My neighbours put rubbish out too early and it sometimes ends up strewn on the street – whose job is it to clean that up?

It is very important that residents present waste correctly, which means before 7 am on the morning of their collection day and not on the evening before. If Southend-on-Sea Borough Council become aware of recycling or waste being put out incorrectly, we will aim to explain to the residents how this is causing a problem and damaging to the area. Sometimes we may have to give clear instructions to residents that continue to put out their recycling and waste out wrongly, by giving them a formal Warning Notice.

If you are aware of someone that keeps presenting their recycling or waste wrongly you can report it under fly-tipping by visiting the **MySouthend portal** (<http://my.southend.gov.uk/>).

Need to get rid of a bulky item?

Don't dump it and risk a fine

Call us!



We collect bulky items for as little as £8!

To book a collection, call Veolia on 0203 567 6955 or email uk.southend-on-sea@veolia.com



Draw a line from each item to the correct sack or bin

Answers: A:5,7,12; B:1,3,6,10,13; C:4,8,9,14; D:2,11