

Summer **2021** issue!

# insight

The South Essex Homes  
Resident Newsletter



The Baker family take responsibility for litter picking in their streets (page 14)

The Hares About Town public art event runs until 12th September - find out more at [www.haresabouttown.co.uk](http://www.haresabouttown.co.uk)

**YOUR  
FREE  
COPY!**



**HELPFUL HINTS & TIPS!**

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE...**

**GARDEN  
TIPS**

How to attract  
wildlife to your  
outdoor space



Be part  
of it!

**LOOKING  
TO THE  
FUTURE**

Our AD reflects  
on the past year



**AND LOTS MORE...**

- Back to School money saving tips
- We join the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

  
**southessexhomes**  
working smarter together

# TACKLING DOMESTIC ABUSE

## What is Domestic Abuse?

Domestic abuse (or domestic violence) is defined by law as any incident of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence, or abuse between people aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of their gender or sexuality. It occurs amongst people of all backgrounds and ages. Although mostly committed by men against women, victims can also be male, and abuse happens within same-sex relationships.



Domestic abuse is widespread: 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic abuse in their lifetime and 2 women a week are killed by a partner/ex-partner in the UK.

During the pandemic, reports of domestic abuse have soared. People who abuse tend to isolate their victims, making it extremely difficult or impossible for them to seek help.

If you are worried about someone being a victim of domestic abuse or at risk of being a victim, we are here to support you in coming forward. We as a housing organisation are here to support our residents and make sure that they feel safe in their own homes.

To further provide support to residents at risk we have joined with DAHA – the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance.

## What is DAHA? (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance)

DAHA is a national partnership between three agencies: housing associations Peabody (London) and Gentoo (Sunderland), and London-based charity Standing Together Against Domestic Violence. The mission of DAHA is to improve the housing sector's response to domestic abuse through the introduction of a set of standards and an accreditation process.

Housing is the primary barrier for victims attempting to leave abusive situations. We have also seen that domestic abuse is one of the highest causes of homelessness amongst women.

Housing providers are ideally placed to spot and respond to domestic abuse as a first point of contact, and DAHA continue to work with their partners to provide support for victims of domestic abuse and their families.



Sarah Lander, Assistant Director (Operations) at South Essex Homes said:

“Domestic Abuse (DA) is a growing issue nationally, so South Essex Homes is determined that as an organisation, we can confidently and effectively support and guide survivors of domestic abuse – whether they are our customers, partners, or our own staff.

“We are proud to say that we have recently become a member of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance and have started to undertake the DAHA Accreditation process which will help us ensure that the quality of our response to DA survivors including making sure the right policies and procedures are in place, staff have proper training and we are fully equipped to support and advise anyone affected by DA.”

**NEED URGENT HELP?**

If you are experiencing domestic abuse, help and support is available:

- In an emergency call the Police on 999.
- National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 200 247.
- Essex Domestic Abuse Helpline (COMPASS): 0330 333 7 444

# WELCOME

## Welcome to the summer issue of Insight!

I'm not too sure where the year has got to – it's going so fast! I hope you're staying safe and well and have been able to enjoy re-connecting with friends and family over recent months as the restrictions have relaxed a bit.

Miranda Edwards, my new colleague in the Communications team, has once again assisted me in gathering articles for this issue of Insight so I do hope you enjoy reading them.

The pair of us have been very busy building the brand new South Essex Homes website, which we're excited to announce will be launching later this summer. Please keep a look out for updates on our social media pages and we'll be telling you all about the website in the next issue of Insight.

Our staff members have had a big input in this summer issue – including Laura Thomas sharing top tips on attracting wildlife into your outdoor spaces and Phoebe Baker telling us about her family's efforts to keep their neighbourhood clean – so I hope you enjoy meeting them both and their very cute kids!

**We will be back with the next Insight in November.**

*All the best, Julia* Julia Pack, Editor



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## Message from Mike

I hope that all of you have managed to stay safe and well and I also hope that you have managed to benefit from the national Covid vaccination rollout which, as the government have been making clear, is the key to their journey for releasing restrictions across the country. It is equally clear that the impact of the pandemic will continue to be felt in many ways for a long time.

One of the positive outcomes we see is the opportunity to continue to review how we provide our services, on the back of having to have worked much more remotely during the various lockdowns. In this edition of Insight you will find an article produced by Sarah Lander, one of our Assistant Directors, which explains how we have been working with residents to review our method of working, or 'operating model' as we call it, and invites your feedback about your experience of dealing with us over the past year.

Another key piece of work that is happening at the moment is our preparation to seek the national Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation, which will enable us to be assured we have the most robust policies and practices in place to work with people affected by domestic abuse. Again there is an article in this edition which explains more about our work to combat domestic abuse and what our work with DAHA will achieve.

On another aspect of the work we carry out on behalf of residents, I have often mentioned the focus on both fire safety and building safety more generally over the past few years and in April we saw the first of two important pieces of new legislation come into force when the Fire Safety Act was introduced. We expect this to be followed later in the year by a new Building Safety Act and Parliament is currently looking through the proposed legislation and working with stakeholders across the country to ensure it provides the current and future protection, which residents should and must be able to expect in their homes. Further details about this new legislation will be shared in future editions of Insight.

At the time of writing this note, the weather has been mixed to say the least! And by the time you receive this edition of Insight I hope we will have been able to enjoy some extended periods of real summer weather and that you and your family have been able to make the most of the summertime.

*With best wishes as ever,*

*Mike*

Mike Gatrell, Chief Executive of South Essex Homes



**GET IN TOUCH!**

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](mailto:juliapack@seh.southend.gov.uk)

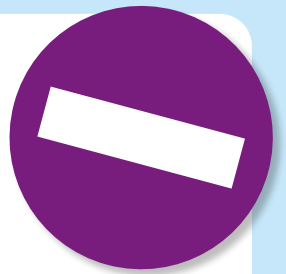


Contact us via Facebook during office hours – simply search for 'South Essex Homes' to find and like our page!

For general information about our services, please visit our website at [www.southessexhomes.co.uk](http://www.southessexhomes.co.uk)

# GARAGE WAITING LIST

## Suspended



**Due to the Government's COVID-19 restrictions, we are not currently able to arrange new garage rentals.**

We have a very long waiting list for garages at present and unfortunately we are not therefore currently able to accept new applications for garages while we work to get the waiting list down to a more manageable level.

A list of the garage sites we manage can be found on our website and we will update that page of our website once we are able to start accepting applications again.

*Many thanks for your understanding.*

*Did you know*

## YOU COULD WIN

## From Aaron Services?

# £100

**Aaron Services, our gas services contractor, operate a scheme that could mean you are in with a chance of winning £100 just by opening your front door to them at the first time of asking!**

To qualify for your chance to win all you have to do is to agree an appointment with Aaron Services and then allow them into your property on their **FIRST CALL** to carry out your annual gas service.

You will then be entered into a monthly prize draw for your chance to win the cash prize, as well as having the reassurance that your home is a gas safe place to live.

**Recent winners of the £100 prize include residents of:**

- Sandpiper Close, Shoebury
- Danescroft Drive, Leigh
- Cheddar Avenue, Westcliff
- Hornby Avenue, Westcliff
- Dickens Close, Southend
- Howards Chase, Westcliff
- Denton Close, Westcliff
- Purley Way, Westcliff
- Waltham Crescent, Southend
- Norwich Avenue, Southend
- Eastwood Old Road, Leigh

**CASH PRIZE DRAW!**



# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

By Sarah Lander, Assistant Director (Operations)



**I think it's fair to say that the last year has been like no other! The Covid pandemic has changed how we live in ways that none of us could have predicted. However, for all the difficulties, there have been some real positives.**

**We have seen an improved sense of community, looking out for our neighbours who need help, millions of people volunteering in Vaccination Centres, Befriending Services and Soup Kitchens and of course a renewed appreciation of our wonderful NHS. At South Essex Homes, we have also changed how we work, which has been challenging but looking back, has had some really positive impacts too.**

In March 2020, when lockdown came in, as your housing managers, South Essex Homes had to very quickly look at all of the services that we deliver to tenants to see how we needed to adapt them so properties were maintained, repairs completed, houses, flats, sheltered schemes and hostels kept clean and tidy, new tenants could move in and you could still talk to us about anything you needed to, like your rent account or tenancy issues. Luckily, we were able to put things in place promptly.

Many of our staff continued to work out on our estates and in some of our offices, but of course, had to get used to keeping distance from others, cleaning down equipment regularly and wearing all this PPE that we have since become very accustomed to. However, like many organisations, lots of our teams had to work from their homes and, for the safety of everyone, more communication with customers was done over the phone, by email or letter rather than face to face. In fact, we found that we were speaking to more residents over the phone than we ever had, as we were making calls to check on the welfare of more vulnerable residents that we may not have been in touch with otherwise.

Now that the country is starting to get used to living with Covid, we have been evaluating how we will deliver services in the future – do we need to go back to how things were, or should we continue with working in a more flexible way? When we spoke to tenants, it was clear that the most important thing is that we continue to maintain properties and our estates, that we must make sure that we do

what we say we will and that we are accessible and easy to contact.

We believe that by taking the best of how we worked over the last year and continuing with what we call a 'hybrid' way of working, that this provides the best and most efficient way of delivering services. We have called this a 'Hub, Home, Roam' approach. So staff could be doing their job from one of our offices, in their home or 'roaming' on our estates. We still rely on the telephone to talk to our customers but we know that residents also are happy to use email and social media to keep in touch and we will always see customers face to face either in your home or in one of our offices if that is the best way to communicate with you.

The message we want to make clear to all our customers is that we continue to deliver the range of housing services that we always have and we want customers to have an excellent experience when dealing with us. Residents are at the heart of what we do, whether we are in an office, working remotely or out in your neighbourhoods.

## Your feedback is important to us!

We would love to have your feedback about your experience of dealing with us, particularly over the last year, and if you have any ideas that could make this experience better for you and other residents.

Please send any comments in a message to our social media pages:

**Facebook:** search for 'South Essex Homes' and like our page, then contact us on Messenger

**Twitter:** follow @SouthEssexHomes and send us a direct message

Or if you prefer, you can email me directly on [sarahlander@seh.southend.gov.uk](mailto:sarahlander@seh.southend.gov.uk).





# BACK TO SCHOOL!

The school summer holidays evoke childhood memories of long sunny days spent playing outside with friends at the park – or for those of us lucky enough to have grown up in Southend, down on the beach.

The weeks seemed endless and yet, almost as soon as school had broken up in July, the dreaded 'Back to School' posters would start appearing in shops. The same remains true today – reminding kids that the summer holidays have an expiry date and reminding parents of all the expensive purchases associated with the start of the new school year in September.

Around this time of year, here at South Essex Homes we often have conversations with worried tenants who are struggling with the pressures of paying for school uniforms and essentials whilst also paying their rent and other bills.

We therefore thought it would be useful to share some top tips with parents on how you can save money on Back to School necessities.

## Supermarket savings

Every school uniform is different, so check what the uniform requirements are for your kids' school. Some items may be bespoke; specific items of uniform which can only be purchased from the school directly or from uniform stores. But for the generic items of uniform (usually shirts, polo shirts, trousers etc) that you don't necessarily need to buy from school uniform shops, it's worth looking at the deals that supermarkets are offering

## Do your homework!

All the major supermarket chains (including Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury's, Lidl and Aldi) offer basic school uniform items at bargain prices so it's well worth doing some research and shopping around for the best deals – as there are usually price wars over the summer holidays as they try and attract parents and outbid the competition.

## Remember your Loyalty Points

If you're a regular Tesco customer, for example, you may even be able to use Clubcard points towards the cost of school uniform to bring the price down even further.

## Pre-loved

It's often the case that kids hit growth spurts and can grow out of uniform items very suddenly and unfortunately, as Murphy's Law would have it, this quite often happens soon after new items are purchased. On the plus side, this means that there are often good quality second hand uniform items available at a fraction of the price of buying new.

## Get social

Check out your school's social media pages – there may well be Facebook pages for example where parents advertise outgrown items available for sale or even for free.

## Ask at Reception

Ask at your school reception for details of any programmes they may offer parents who are struggling with the cost of uniforms.





### Swap Shop

Some schools offer uniform swap shops whereby you bring uniform items your child has outgrown and swap them for the next size up for a small donation, meaning that parents of smaller children can benefit from your donations too. If a swap shop doesn't exist at the moment, why not try to set one up?

### Sweet Charity

Visit charity shops near your child's school and you may be able to grab yourself a second hand bargain.

### Buy and sell

Check out the website [www.grownoutofit.co.uk](http://www.grownoutofit.co.uk) and enter the name of your child's school. Not only might you grab yourself bargain pre-loved uniform products but there's even the opportunity to sell the uniform items your child has grown out of so you may be able to get some money back.

## Financial help may be available

You can now claim for a grant towards school uniform under Southend Borough Council's Essential Living Fund (ELF) Scheme

### To be eligible for this support the following conditions apply:

- you are a parent or guardian of a child who is in the school years from Reception up to Year 11

### You must meet one of the below Exceptional Circumstances:

- you have been made homeless and supported by the Local Council and placed into temporary accommodation and had to change schools
- you have been placed into a refuge and had to change schools
- you have lost school uniform in a fire or flood

### Evidence from the relevant services may will be needed to support your application.

### And you must be in receipt of one of the following:

1. Income Support
2. Income-Related Employment and Support Allowance
3. Income Based Job Seekers Allowance
4. Child Tax Credit, but not Working Tax Credit, with an annual income of less than £16,190
5. The Guaranteed Element of Pension Credit
6. Universal Credit, with an annual income of £7400 or below

For further information, copy of the policy and access to the online claim form please visit [www.southend.gov.uk/extra-financial-help/essential-living-fund](http://www.southend.gov.uk/extra-financial-help/essential-living-fund)



## Need help or advice?

If you're struggling financially, please get in touch with your Tenancy Services Officer via 0800 833160, or a member of the Income Management team on 0800 0234 057, who will be happy to offer advice and support.



# NEWS FROM YOUR FEDERATION

There is a new project that the Federation has started up and all are welcome to join.



During the recent lockdowns it became obvious to STRF that residents were suffering from loneliness and isolation issues that then led to some residents suffering from mental issues caused by having to isolate themselves from friends, family and loved ones. To help alleviate these issues STRF formed The Crafting Club which helped to give residents a purpose during the lockdowns by making toys and clothes etc to either give to friends and family or donate to STRF or another body of their choice.

With the restrictions now relaxed, and hopefully finished with completely, we are now finding that people are reluctant to venture outside again. With this in mind, STRF would now like to commence a Photo Club to encourage people to once again venture outside safely and enjoy what the great outdoors has to offer us all.

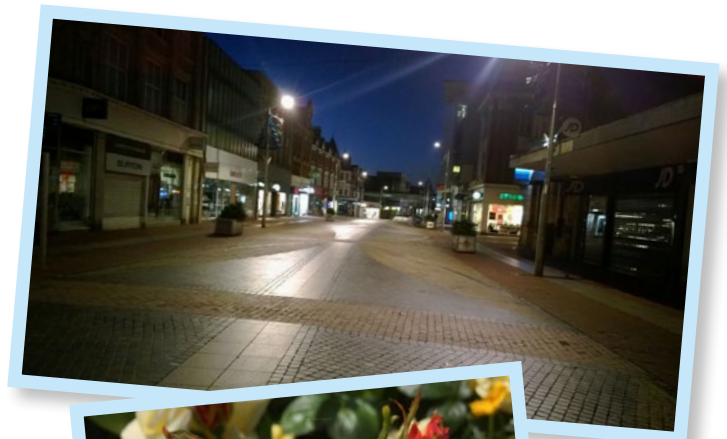
To take part you do not have to be a professional photographer, just someone with either a camera or even a camera phone that will enable them to capture certain moments in time, landscape or sunset scenes, buildings, wildlife, nature, in fact anything that seems worthy of taking a picture of.

The Photo Club will initially run online through our website and Facebook page with some of your photos on display on the Media page at **STRF.UK**, or on **Facebook at STRF-2020**. Our aim is to be able to run regular competitions based on a theme such as those listed above. Also with those with access to photo editing software, there will also be a creative theme giving everyone an opportunity to compete, regardless of the equipment they have at their disposal.

After any remaining restrictions have been eased we then aim to have meetings at various locations in and around the area such as Leigh, Chalkwell, Priory Park and Southchurch Park giving people the chance to meet up again, forge new friendships and pick up tips from other members of The Photo Club. Our own

photographer/videographer will be on hand to offer his help and advice with both equipment and editing and we are also hoping to attract a local professional photographer to come along when available and give advice on studio work for those that wish to take on more professional tasks or roles.

Please remember that as with The Crafting Club, The Photo Club cannot function without interest from you so if you have an interest in photography in anyway or you would like to see some of your pictures shown online for the whole world to see then please contact us through our website **STRF.UK** or email **bob.ayriss@strf.org.uk** for more details and to register your interest.



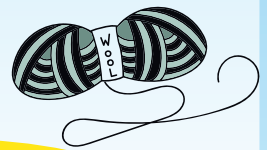


# SUMMER EVENTS



The STRF are holding events around the Southend area to which you are invited. We shall be attending with our Gazebo along with departments from SEH, our contractors and other organisations will be in attendance. At each event we will be holding a barbeques with tea & coffee that we will only be asking a donation for. There will also be some knitted children's wear, knitted toys and paintings made by our Crafting Club members, that will be available for a reasonable donation. Please see our website [www.strf.org.uk](http://www.strf.org.uk) under STRF IN YOUR AREA for dates and venues. At the events you will be able to get information on a number of things, meet SEH officers, contractors that look after your home and also other organisations that operate within Southend.

If you would like us to come to your area, then please contact us on **01702 309064** or email [info@strf.org.uk](mailto:info@strf.org.uk) and we will call you back to discuss where and when this could happen for your residents.

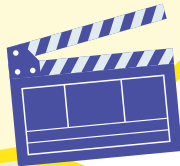


## CINEMA TRIP



There are still some tickets for the Odeon cinema on October 25, 26 & 27th half term that the whole family can enjoy totally free. Why not go to the cinema as a family **FREE OF CHARGE**.

Where else do you get such a good offer as this, to take the children to see one of the latest films out, that does not cost you anything except the cost of getting to the Odeon.



## RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVES

The STRF is still looking for representatives who would be able to work with them and your own residents. This is very rewarding and a worthwhile position within your own community. There are only a few things you need to be able to do, speak to your neighbours and help with providing information that we would supply for you. You would also have access to your notice board that would be put in your area for resident's information. Being the representative in your area helps so many people and brings you closer to SEH, the Council and STRF.



## CRAFTING CLUB

The club has many members that are knitting and painting and you are welcome to join their ranks. Everything is provided free of charge, like wool, patterns, needles, stuffing etc., but they do need more to join them. They hold coffee/tea mornings where they can meet each other, exchange ideas and help each other out with the projects they are involved in at the time. We are hoping that once the club gets established, we can arrange outings to interesting places for them to go to. So, if you would like to join them, you will get a very great warm welcome and meet likeminded people who have the same interests as yourselves. Again, to join us or to just find out about us, contact Jackie on **01702 309064** she is always willing to have a chat with you. We are also starting up a section of the club that can help with photography (See the article above). This will be organised around what the residents themselves need. So, if you are interested, call Bob Ayriss on **07397 796269** or email him at [bob.ayriss@strf.org.uk](mailto:bob.ayriss@strf.org.uk)





# LEARNING *to* LIVE *with* COVID

**Over the past 18 months or so we have all individually experienced a rollercoaster journey during the Covid-19 pandemic. There have been some genuine highs and some devastating lows. Despite us all having a unique ride, unknowingly we may also have shared many of the same experiences. For example, how our mental health has been affected by the pandemic. Contributing factors such as social isolation, health fears and financial concerns have caused new mental health problems for many of us.**

With vaccination rates soaring in the UK, and the recent move into Stage 4 of the Government's roadmap out of Covid meaning a more 'normal' way of life outside of our bubbles, it is important to reflect and think about how far we have come from the initial March 2020 lockdown that the UK was placed in and to identify that we have shared many similar experiences.

As a society our mental health has been hugely impacted across all age groups. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) conducted surveys during December 2020 to understand the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on people, households, and communities. It found that almost half of adults (48%) reported that their well-being was being affected by the pandemic; this increased to 81% for those who had experienced some form of depression and/or some form of

anxiety. It was a particularly difficult time for many during the winter months of the pandemic.

A BBC article identified how coronavirus has affected mental health by fuelling feelings of loneliness, anxiety and fears for the future for many people. Factors such as quarantine and self-isolation most likely caused a negative impact on people's mental health. A review published in The Lancet said that the 'separation from loved ones, loss of freedom, boredom, and uncertainty could cause a deterioration in an individual's mental health status and lead to overthinking and overwhelming negative thoughts worrying when normal life would return or if they would contract the virus.'

Despite the fact we should be aware it has been very impactful in negative ways, there are also overwhelmingly huge positives we

can take away from this period. It has resulted in many people taking back an appreciation of their personal time such as being with family and friends. Many people have managed to find a healthier work/life balance as the way we work has shifted for much of society. The pandemic prompted workplaces and organisations to create new strategies and rethink their policies to better suit their staff. Here at South Essex Homes the pandemic resulted in many of our office-based staff working from home if their work was considered not on the front line.

Society managed to truly pull together to help one another in many places. Whether it was frontline workers continuing to provide essential services for others, or delivering supplies to those less capable, helping your elderly relatives and friends with getting online, or working in the emergency



services. In so many heart-warming ways people came together to help one another.

During the pandemic, an inspiring digital engagement campaign was rolled out in our sheltered schemes, so that our older residents were able to get online and connect with family and friends. A big worry during the pandemic was loneliness and concern especially for our elderly residents who had no means of accessing digital communication. In one of our sheltered schemes there was an art crafting club created, which allowed residents to engage in a fun activity whilst remaining socially distanced. This is something that will be continued even now which is a positive outcome from the pandemic.

The key message to take from this journey is that going forward we must be aware that this will take time. The Covid-19 pandemic affected everybody, for different reasons. The reality is that things will still feel different to pre-pandemic life but that is completely understandable and much of us feel the same way. We urge you to make sure to regularly check in with your friends, family, colleagues and keep connected with each other and provide that support system.

We especially would like to say a big thank you to all our frontline workers, including our caretakers,

cleaners, hostel managers... everybody who continued to be out on the ground despite the fear of the pandemic spreading. Thanks also to our staff who continued to go into the CarelineSOS and Civic Centre offices to do essential work and to those who adapted to work efficiently and effectively from home, often while also juggling other home and childcare duties.

**Ultimately, we want all our residents and our staff to feel supported by South Essex Homes as we are a people-centred organisation.**

**If you are suffering with your mental health, you may wish to contact:**

#### **South East Essex Mind**

They provide counselling and video counselling and an 'appropriate adult's service'. They support those with a mental health issue or a learning disability. They also offer support for those who have been arrested or require help from a housing support service.

South East Essex Mind can be accessed on 01702 601123 or visit their website [www.seandcessexmind.org.uk](http://www.seandcessexmind.org.uk)

#### **Age Concern Southend**

Due to Coronavirus they have changed their service. They have expanded their befriending service to meet the needs of adults of all ages.

They can be contacted on 01702 345373, [enquiry@acsos.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@acsos.co.uk) or visit their website [www.acsos.co.uk](http://www.acsos.co.uk)

#### **NHS 111**

If you need to seek help urgently, call NHS 111.

NHS 111 may refer you to 'Sanctuary by Sea'. This is an out of hours crisis service in Southend. You can go here for a chat and to get support and advice.

**Suffering from loss, bereavement or need some mental health support? These charities or support group websites may offer help:**

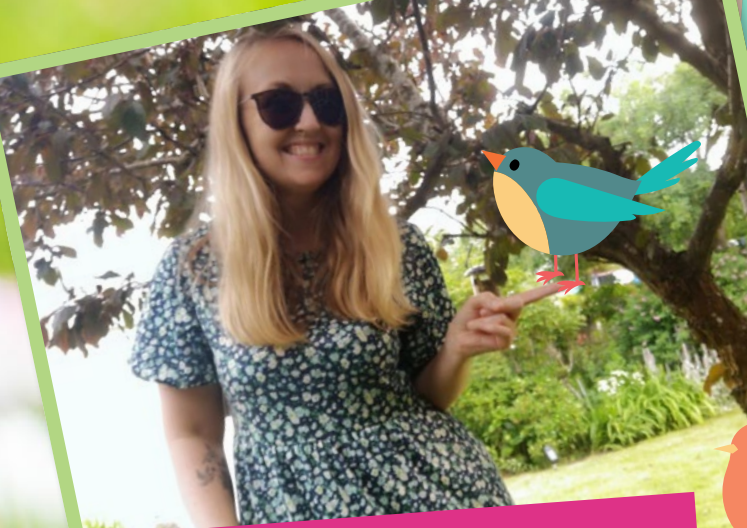
Sudden – [www.sudden.org](http://www.sudden.org)

National Bereavement Service – [www.thenbs.org](http://www.thenbs.org)

Samaritans - [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

At A Loss - [www.ataloss.org](http://www.ataloss.org)

The Good Grief Trust - [www.thegoodgrieftrust.org](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org)



How to create a

# WILDLIFE FRIENDLY GARDEN

Laura Thomas, our Specialist Income Management Team Manager, is passionate about wildlife and conservation. She is a member of our newly formed Staff Environmental & Sustainability Group and is keen to share ideas on how we can all get involved in supporting local wildlife. Having volunteered for Essex Wildlife Trust for several years, she is South Essex Homes' nature expert and here she shares her top five tips on how you can make your garden, or even your windowsill, wildlife-friendly...

## 1. Plant insect friendly plants

Encourage wildlife into your garden and give them the things that keep them coming back, time after time! There are lots of different species of insects, birds and small animals and their tastes in plants are all different so try to plant a variety. Here's a few suggestions to get you started...

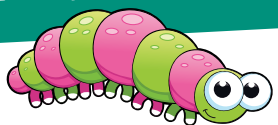


My daughter loves to help out in the garden!

**Sunflower** (grow these from seed and see whose grows the tallest)



**Crocus** (plant bulbs in autumn and they will pop up once winter is over)



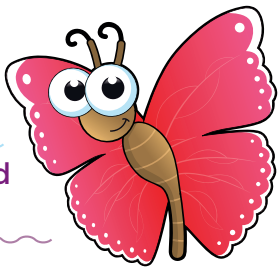
**Lavender** (I think this smells great and the bees agree)



**The snapdragon** (my personal favourite, I used to call these bunny rabbits as a kid and it's great watching the bumblebees prize them open)

**Foxgloves** (so pretty and will come back year after year)

**Bluebells** (for any wooded areas)

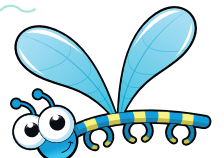


**Buddleia** (butterfly bush but good for bees and other insects too)

**Viper's Bugloss** (the ultimate bumblebee plant!)

**Honeysuckle** (quick-growing)

**And we don't want to forget the forget-me-nots**



**To save on costs try planting from seed or if a friend has a plant that you quite fancy you could try growing from a cutting.**

### Don't have a garden?

How about planting some flowers in a window box?

## 2. Compost heap or compost bin

How about creating a compost heap or using a compost bin? You can use kitchen waste to reduce what goes to landfill whilst creating a haven for minibeasts! If minibeasts aren't your thing, they are a great source of food for other wildlife such as birds and hedgehogs. Worms who do all the hard work creating compost help to improve soil drainage and transfer important nutrients to the surface



so make sure you spread some compost all round your garden to help your plants. Slugs and snails are important recyclers too so if you see them munching on your pretty flowers you can just relocate them to the compost heap!

You can buy compost bins (or find preloved), make your own or just create a compost heap.

## 3. Add a pond

Now maybe you think I've gone a little mad here suggesting you install a pond in your garden but how about a little bucket pond? In my previous home I had a completely decked



garden so I had to be creative with how I encouraged wildlife into my garden. I created a little bucket pond and I must have done something right because a frog moved in! You'll need a couple of pond plants (such as hornwort) to keep the water oxygenated but otherwise you can use things that you might have laying around such as an old bucket and some stones/old bricks. The stones/bricks are important so your new little frog friend can climb in and out safely. It's worth having some stones/bricks around the outside too.



## 4. Create a woodpile

This one is a really quick win especially if you've got some rotting wood knocking around! I recently moved into a new house and there was a dead tree that needed pulling up. I pulled it up, broke it up a bit and TADAH... woodpile! I've popped it in the corner of the garden and am desperately trying to discourage my daughter from climbing on it! It's only been in place a few days and already we've seen lots of snails, slugs and other bugs. Butterflies will also use woodpiles as a place to hide and hibernate in colder months.

You might even be lucky enough to find slow worms, newts, frogs and toads sheltering between the logs. Larger logs with bark still attached work best and even one log provides a great habitat. Find an area that is partially shady and keep it topped up with any wood and leaf litter.

You could even get fancy and make a bug hotel instead! Pallets work well for these so maybe ask your local shop if they have any going spare.

## 5. Let things grow a little wild

I'm not suggesting you let your whole garden grow wild, I know we all like a bit of patio or decking and besides that, mown areas are important for birds such as blackbirds and robins to be able to find worms, but think about letting an area of your garden "go wild". Longer grass provides shelter, allows wildflowers to bloom and is a good spot for insects, such as butterflies, to lay their eggs. You could have an area of longer grass with a path cleared through it so you can enjoy all the wildlife the longer grass encourages. Plants that we call weeds such as dandelions, nettles, thistles and ragwort are important for insects so let them grow too. If you're worried about nettles spreading you could plant them in pots. I've heard nettle tea can be good for hay fever sufferers too.

**A variety of habitats in your garden is what's best for a variety of animals. Use some of the ideas above to create little habitats and see what creatures pay you a visit! We'd love to see the wildlife in your gardens, please share your photos with us using the contact details on Page 3.**

# KEEP SOUTHEND TIDY

*It's everyone's job!*

**Phoebe Baker, who works as one of our Estate Services Admin Assistants, has taken up the challenge of keeping her local neighbourhood tidy, with the help of her young family.**

Fed up with litter making the area near her home look untidy, Phoebe's family decided to take matters into their own hands and to take responsibility for keeping their local streets clear of rubbish.

Phoebe said: "My 3 year old daughter was noticing all the litter on the ground on a daily basis and she kept wanting to pick it up because she knows that rubbish is meant to go in the bin. We decided we wanted to actively do something about it, so I let Veolia know about what our family wanted to do and they kindly gifted us a litter picker and street cleansing bags to make it easier and safer for us. It's not about it being 'someone else's job to do', it's about each of us being responsible for our environment and doing our bit, it's a group effort, and that's a message I'm keen to pass on to my children.

"In an ideal world of course, people wouldn't throw their rubbish on the streets in the first place, but perhaps by keeping the streets clean this will deter people from being litterbugs. It's certainly worth a try I think and it isn't fair that it should all be down to Veolia or the Council, I believe that as residents we need to take some responsibility too. Something so small as picking up a few cans off the path and putting in your own kitchen bin can make a big difference...if everyone does it."

## Quick Wins for Happy Bins!

Here are some quick and easy ideas for how you can do your bit to keep your home, your estate and your town tidy:

- If you live in a block of flats, use bin chutes for bags of rubbish only
- Report any blocked bin chutes to us asap to avoid a build up of waste
- Don't leave rubbish bags and general waste in communal areas – not only is it unpleasant for neighbours but is also a dangerous fire hazard
- If you have old furniture or white goods to dispose of, you can request a bulky waste collection from Veolia for a small fee
- For residents who receive kerbside collections, remember that rubbish bags should be left ready for collection by 7am on the collection day and not beforehand; we get repeat issues of animals ripping bags open overnight causing a mess which caretakers are then requested to clean up.
- If you run out of pink recycling sacks or have lost your reusable hanger to request compostable food bin liners, you can pick up extra supplies from all Southend libraries



**If you need to contact the Waste, Fly tipping, Fly posting & Graffiti team at Southend Borough Council you can do so on:**

**Telephone: 01702 215006**

**Email: [council@southend.gov.uk](mailto:council@southend.gov.uk)**

# MAKING YOUR PLOT

more Productive!



Productive Plots is a no money, volunteer run organisation that looks to address climate change through reducing our society's dependence on industrial agriculture. Their work also aims to improve our local environment and build community through providing volunteer gardeners, expert knowledge, ongoing support and plants/seeds, **FOR FREE**, to help turn people's front gardens into small food producing plots.

Aside from the benefits to our planet of producing organic food on your doorstep, this work creates multiple other benefits, such

as providing pesticide free food, eliminating the need for single use plastic, improving mental health, and providing more nutritious, fresher, and far tastier food than anything that can be bought in the shop.

Check out their website [www.productiveplots.co.uk](http://www.productiveplots.co.uk) if you would like support with turning your front garden into a veg patch, or if you are willing to donate your time and gardening knowledge.

On their website you will also find interesting green facts, projects, and changes you can make to be more sustainable, and much more.

## Good to know...

The Little Royalty Kids Club at The Royals Shopping Centre runs completely free events for children aged 3-9 years old... between 11am and 3pm every Wednesday throughout the summer holidays!

## The Southend Arts Festival

The Southend Arts Festival takes place from Friday 3rd to Sunday 19th September 2021, and will host an eclectic mix of art, poetry and literature, comedy, music, theatre and more! Including art workshops and a story telling day for the kids too, there really will be something for everyone and it is all **FREE and FAMILY FRIENDLY!**

Find out more at [www.visitsouthend.co.uk/event/southend-arts-festival/](http://www.visitsouthend.co.uk/event/southend-arts-festival/)

# Are you a recycling expert?

Test your recycling knowledge by spotting the items which cannot be recycled in your pink recycling sacks! This item should be placed in your black sacks with the rest of your non-recyclable waste.

**Which one of these 3 items cannot be put in your pink recycling sacks?**

<p><b>1</b></p> <p>a. </p> <p>b. </p> <p>c. </p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>a. </p> <p>b. </p> <p>c. </p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p>a. </p> <p>b. </p> <p>c. </p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>a. </p> <p>b. </p> <p>c. </p>

Answers: 1:b, 2:a, 3:c, 4:c

## Recycling at home is one of the most important things we can do to help preserve valuable resources.

Did you know that making one aluminium drink can from raw materials uses the same amount of energy that it takes to recycle 20?

It is very important that you do not put the wrong items in your recycling sacks and receptacles as it makes it much harder to sort your recycling for the Materials Recovery Facility workers, increases their risk of injury and can even result in the whole lorry load being rejected, preventing valuable recyclable material from being recycled.

### Unsure what goes in your sacks and bins?

Visit <https://www.southend.gov.uk/recycling> for more information.



*Supporting the community...*

# WITH PRIDE

June is Pride Month, which is the annual LGBTQ+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer or questioning plus all other identities) celebration where the LGBTQ+ community come together and celebrate in several different ways. Usually in the form of big parades and marches across cities, plans were slightly different this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing plans.

## What is Pride all about?

It is about equality, acceptance, celebrating the work of LGBTQ+ people and educating and raising awareness around the history and issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community.

## Why is June Pride month?

The Stonewall riots took place in 1969 in the United States during June, the protests changed gay rights for a lot of people in America and around the world. Pride celebrates people coming together through love and friendship and to show how far their rights have come and where there are still places to be worked on.

## What are SEH doing to support Pride?

We want to celebrate our diverse workforce and the brilliance of individuality, all year round. We want to

empower our residents and staff, by being even more inclusive and increase our diversity as an organisation. Therefore, in our new intranet and on our new website, we will have a space to offer support and information on LGBTQ+ community in Southend. This space will signpost to different networks and forums that celebrate diversity and offer support to those who need it.

**Southend Borough Council have an LGBT forum called OUTreach** which reaches out to LGBTQ+ staff, allies, other forums, external sites, other organisations and community groups, to engage with and learn from the experiences of similar groups from around the borough and beyond. The forum has also supported the Council's Stonewall Workplace Equality Index submission and continues to support ongoing work to enhance LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace and borough.

**WHERE  
CAN I FIND  
OUT MORE?**

If you want to find out more about Pride and supporting the LGBTQ+ community, there are lots of resources online. Visit [www.livewellsouthend.com](http://www.livewellsouthend.com) and search for LGBT.

Check out [www.southendpride.org.uk](http://www.southendpride.org.uk) for details of local events.