

Autumn 2021 issue!

insight

The South Essex Homes Resident Newsletter



Morgan Sindall introduce their first electric van to their fleet



YOUR FREE COPY!

Be part of it!

HELPFUL HINTS & TIPS!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

SIR DAVID AMESS

Tragic loss of our great supporter



COMMUNITY NEWS SPECIAL

Loads of great local stories



AND LOTS MORE...

- Seasonal fire safety advice
- Introducing our new website

SIR DAVID AMESS MP

We are all devastated at the tragic loss of Sir David Amess, MP for Southend West, on Friday 15th October.

Sir David had been our MP since 1997 and therefore saw the creation of South Essex Homes in 2005. Throughout the following 16 years, he was a constant supporter of the work we do on behalf of residents and the homes they live in, working closely with a number of our colleagues over that period.

In particular, Sir David always showed a soft spot for residents in our sheltered housing schemes and would often be seen popping into those buildings to say 'hello' to residents and check on their welfare.

Without question Sir David was a wholly constituency-focussed MP and he always put the best interests of his constituents first and foremost in his dealings with South Essex Homes. His passing has left a significant gap in terms of a key relationship for our organisation over many years and he will continue to be sorely missed.



Our Vice Chair Meg Davidson accompanying Sir David in a visit to Parliament in 2013

Introducing OUR NEW WEBSITE

We are proud to have launched our brand new South Essex Homes website back in September.



The reasons behind the new site

It was necessary to create a new website for a few reasons:

- There are **new accessibility requirements** for public sector websites - which means our website needs to be fully accessible to people with sight problems.
- Our **old site launched in 2014** so it was looking tired and was no longer fit for purpose.
- The New Charter for Social Housing, also known as the White Paper, states that it is important for you as residents **'to have your voice heard by your landlord'** so we needed to incorporate more chances for you to do just that.
- There is an **increasing appetite** for digital means of communication and it's important we keep up with that demand.

Key features of the new site include

Improving the most popular pages of the old website

- This includes a much-improved function to search for the name and contact details of your Tenancy Services Officer using your road name. This search result also provides details for how to contact the Support Services Officer covering that area of the town.
- It also includes a clearer page for us to advertise our current job vacancies

Adding new pages as requested by residents

- At the resident workshops, we were asked to include more information about Universal Credit so we have actually added a 'mini site' within our own website which contains all you need to know about UC and the content is managed by external experts to ensure it is always completely up to date.

- We also now have a page dedicated to our Executive Management Team, so you can meet the people responsible for running different sections of the company.

Much improved navigation and search functions

One bit of feedback we regularly encountered about the old site was that it was difficult to find the information you were looking for and that the search function did not work very well. We have been careful to select a web provider that comes with a much clearer search facility and it also contains a function so you can hover on the menu bar along the top of the page and you can see the headlines of the information stored within each section of the site.

Increased functionality with the ability to create and manage our own forms

We have added some brand new online forms to our site - providing new options for you to complete and submit a short form to:

- Report a repair
- Make a complaint
- Pay a compliment
- Make a comment/suggestion
- Report a caretaking, cleaning or grounds maintenance issue
- Report anti social behaviour
- Plus more in the pipeline!



Please take a look at our new site at www.southessexhomes.co.uk and let us know what you think!

WELCOME

Welcome to the autumn issue of Insight!

Those darker evenings feel like they've crept up out of nowhere as once more we start planning for the festive season and thinking ahead to what the New Year may bring.

I'm delighted with the number of events and activities we have been able to cover in this issue of Insight! Our teams have certainly been very busy planning and helping out at all kinds of events across the borough over the summer and autumn months and it's been so wonderful to see residents being able to come out of their homes and congregate with their neighbours once again. 😊

I for one especially enjoyed seeing the antics of Secret the pony

as she made her way round many of our sheltered schemes – she clearly loved all the attention she got from residents and staff!

I'm very happy to say that our new website is now up and running, I hope you enjoy visiting and using the many new functions our website now offers.

I wish you the very best for the forthcoming colder months. I hope you are able to enjoy a lovely time over the festive season (oh, and check out our eco-friendly Christmas tips on pages 18 & 19 too)

All the best, Julia

Julia Pack, Editor



CONTENTS

Your Lives

- 12 My Health Matters
- 12 Essential winter protection
- 13 Totally Locally
- 17 You said, we did – resident surveys
- 18-19 Go Green this Christmas!

Your Home

- 2 New South Essex Homes website
- 8-9 Fire Safety – seasonal special
- 14-15 Condensation, Damp and Mould
- 16 Leasehold Matters
- 20 CarelineSOS

Your Southend

- 4-7 Community News
- 10-11 STRF
- 12 Southend Family Centres
- 17 Morgan Sindall goes Electric

Message from Mike

This edition of Insight is issued following the most tragic circumstances as reflected in our leading article on the opposite page. The sad loss of Sir David Amess MP leaves a gap in terms of one of our key relationships as an organisation, with someone who has always represented residents' interests to the best of his ability. Mine and the whole organisation's thoughts remain with Sir David's family, friends and colleagues following this awful tragedy.

We've been listening very intently to comments residents have been sharing with us through a number of ways; including the recent resident satisfaction surveys as well as more regular feedback we receive - where we have contact with residents when they report repairs or tenancy issues, through our social media channels and website, and through other emails and telephone calls.

In particular over the past few months, we've taken careful note of what you've been telling us about the new ways our teams have been working since the start of the pandemic and the first lockdown in March last year. We've recently spoken to our Board members and they've agreed that going forward we put in place a continuation of the more flexible working arrangements which we've worked with for the past year and a half. We believe this will mean we carry on providing a very effective service for you, our residents, and we will continue to ask you for

your views on how these new arrangements are working for you.

We are in the early stages of a new and vitally important project as far as I and the whole team are concerned. The project will see us reviewing the complete range of services, support and advice we provide for residents and indeed our own teams in terms of the issue of domestic abuse.

The government introduced some new legislation this year, the Domestic Abuse Act, which is serving to provide a very clear focus for organisations such as South Essex Homes and we are determined to make sure we tackle this problem to our best ability. To make sure we are providing the very best response to the issue, we are planning to work with a national agency, the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA), to test how effectively we deal with domestic abuse and hopefully to achieve accreditation to show we are doing our utmost to tackle the problem.

It feels strange to once again be penning these words in October and knowing the next Insight will be in 2022 so I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you all the very best compliments for the forthcoming festive season and to share my hopes that the New Year is a good one for all of you.

Best wishes, Mike

Mike Gattrell, 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



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



COMMUNITY

NEWS

Hamlet Court Road in Harmony

By Sarah Gallagher, Support Services Officer

The Hamlet Court Road in Harmony Festival took place on Sunday 19th September and South Essex Homes (SEH) were invited to have a stall on the day.

The festival welcomed many organisations from across Southend to take part in this multi-cultural family day with lots of music and activities. For SEH it was an excellent way to meet face to face with our residents and engage with the local community.

From early on I was chatting with people who were pleased to see the street full of red and white stalls filled with soft toys, children's clothes and lots of freebies! Many of the eateries were open providing delicious food and drinks and there was music and entertainment throughout the event.

The SEH stall offered lots of information and advice on many of our services and the support available to our tenants. We also handed out our famous blue hessian shopping bags, they proved to be very popular! Four of our residents – Jean, Chris, Jan and Brenda from Adams Elm, one of our Sheltered schemes - visited the stall and we chatted about the festival and how good it was to see

so many people out and about. They were very happy to pose for a photograph.

Some of the conversations were about how difficult these past 18 months had been but there were so many positive stories about getting back to a normal way of living but also being aware of keeping safe and looking after one another. One local resident spoke of how kind people had been, keeping in contact with her and helping her with shopping.

It was important to be part of this event not only to reconnect with our residents but to help in bringing communities back together again after such a challenging time with lockdowns and tier restrictions. People were really pleased to mix with others and revive the community spirit that has been so missed.

The festival attracted so many people throughout the day which was filled with lots of energy and laughter. One resident summed up the day by simply saying it was so good to see so many happy smiling faces. I look forward to being part of next year's celebration.



Secret on Tour!

The Ramblers Riding Club and Pony Parties have been bringing Secret the Shetland pony into the communal gardens of sheltered housing schemes across the town over the past few months, to bring a smile to the faces of residents and their families.

Neve Barr from our Support Services team said: "Secret did a great job of bringing people out of their flats and at the same time as meeting her/him, residents were able to meet and interact with their neighbours and sheltered housing officers.

"Research says that interaction with ponies can be very therapeutic - they have natural emotional understanding and increase health benefits such as adaptability, distress tolerance, emotional awareness, independence, self-esteem, social relationships and more.

"The feedback from residents has been very positive, with many saying how lovely it was to see some life back in the scheme. They particularly enjoyed the fact their friends and family could participate and the grandchildren adored the pony!"

Macmillan Coffee Morning

A Macmillan coffee morning was held on 1st October at The Jordans sheltered housing scheme in Maple Square, Southend. Residents and staff took part in the fun-filled event which raised an amazing £243.00 for Macmillan cancer support charity.

Well done to everyone involved 😊





Keats House Garden Project

By Angela Lloyd, Sheltered Housing Officer

At the beginning of 2020 I started a garden project with the residents at Keats House sheltered housing scheme in Shelley Square, Southend, along with Graham from Spiralseed.co.uk and the lovely people at Project 49 - with the aim to create a wildlife area and vegetable garden for residents to enjoy.

We managed to get some funding for tools and equipment and then unfortunately the dreaded news came that we were going into lockdown due to Covid-19.

Rather than stop the project, it actually made everyone aware of the importance of outside space and once things got back into a relatively safe rhythm, Graham started popping in and got some veggie beds sorted ready for planting up and orchard trees planted. The residents were planting up pots in the meantime.

The residents were brilliant during this time - working together and with staff to keep an eye on and help those more vulnerable residents, and giving each other both emotional and practical help.

As the restrictions lifted, we talked about the shed and what they would like. Two residents have building skills

and decided it would be better to build their own shed for what they needed in terms of potting and storage. These two gents, John and Jon, have done an amazing job and the shed is looking wonderful, it simply would not have been possible without their hard work and expertise.

Graham has sourced some wild fruiting hedgerow bushes for the wildlife garden and I am looking to make the access to the wildlife garden disability-friendly.

The Art Ministry are also going to help residents with some projects for the garden too. On a rainy day Graham brings his guitar for some music indoors.

The project is growing slowly and the guys from Project 49, an organisation providing a range of dynamic activities for adults with learning difficulties in Southend, have recently returned to the site to help with the project, which is fantastic news.

It is a slow process but I am so proud of them; Keats House is a pleasure to visit and has a real good sense of community. They are already thinking about having a meal from the veggies they will grow next year!

Balmoral Community Event

On Wednesday 6th October, we held the Balmoral Community event in the communal gardens from 3pm - 6pm.

It was a fun filled day with family activities, music, food and entertainment. It also provided an important opportunity for residents to ask questions to the contractors Houghton & Sons about the works taking place at the Balmoral tower blocks; Blackdown, Brecon and Grampian.

It was a great success, and the team were able to speak with many residents and raise awareness on the project.

Many thanks to all involved in arranging and attending the event.



Book store visit for Hostels kids

By Sarah Gallagher, Support Services Officer

A visit to the Jacqson Diego Story Emporium bookstore in Westcliff was arranged for the children and parents from our Hostels accommodation back in August.

We arrived at the bookstore for 11.30 and straight away the children were picking up books and the many soft puppets that are scattered around the bookstore. The staff are very welcoming and the place is so colourful and filled with the most amazing books. There are areas to sit and read and the office door is painted just like the police box from Doctor Who!

The children settled down and enjoyed several stories told to them with the help of Sheldon the puppet, who I have been reliably informed is counted as a full member of the team and has adventures on Tiktok so the children can follow him. It would be fair to say that the adults enjoyed the puppets just as much!

The children were all given National Book Tokens to purchase their own book so there were lots of excited children making decisions! Hayley and Jesse from our Support Services team arranged getting the book tokens and making sure everyone was there on time and then provided lunch back at the Hostel.

The feedback has been excellent and we are looking to arrange future visits!



Sports day at Chaucer House

By Chloe Hague

We had a brilliant turn out for our Sports Day event at Chaucer House as all hostel residents were invited to take part in a variety of sports day games, football, face painting and an offering of a homemade chicken dish, dessert, and ice cream.

A massive thank you to Morgan Sindall for sponsoring the event, who provided the games and ice-cream, and a special thank you to Luke Culling from MS for attending the event and supplying the fantastic face painter who painted a wide range of requests such as butterflies, lions, and spiderman.

A big thank you to Joe Nicholas who teaches football to children with learning disabilities in local schools for attending to play football with the children which they thoroughly enjoyed in the sun.

Some of the hostels residents who already work with local charities supplied an amazing chicken tikka dish and another room supplied a traditional Badam dessert for all families to enjoy - a massive thanks to these residents for prepping these individual meals for almost 20 families which went down a treat.

A big thank you and well done to all the hostel staff for their enthusiasm in getting families together to attend Sports day and ensuring it was a fun packed day for everyone, comments were made that the day was a brilliant success.



Betty is 101!

Betty Kemp has been a resident of Kestrel House in Shoebury since 1983. Her 100th birthday fell in August 2020, but unfortunately as we had not started being vaccinated yet and many of our residents were shielding, we were unable to hold a party at that point.

We therefore celebrated Betty's 101st birthday this August instead, and a party was held in the lounge with her daughter, son in law and fellow residents.

The Mayor joined in for the occasion along with her driver - they brought her beautiful flowers and had a lovely chat with her.

Teresa Kelly, the Sheltered Housing Officer covering Kestrel House, said: "Everyone who knows Betty loves her smile and character."



Let's **WORK TOGETHER** to **KEEP SAFE**

For those of you who do not know me my name is Graham Hart and I am the Fire Safety Manager for South Essex Homes. I thought I would give you an update on where we are with Fire Safety Improvements within the Borough of Southend on Sea.



After the dreadful night in 2017 when 72 people sadly lost their lives in the Grenfell disaster a tri-party group was formed with Southend on Sea Borough Council, South Essex Homes and the Essex County Fire & Rescue Service which still operates now and will do long into the future.

Before that terrible night Southend Borough Council and South Essex Homes had already invested millions of pounds in replacing all the doors within the residential high rise tower blocks with "Gerda" 30 minute and 60 minute fire doors.

This work is continuing at some of our blocks but is now almost complete at all of the Borough's high rise, medium rise and low rise buildings.

Work is ongoing within our Sheltered Housing schemes and hostels but, like every organisation, Covid-19 had a massive impact on us as I am sure it did yourselves.

So many improvements have been made and are still being made that I could go on forever.

What makes me angry is that whilst we are doing everything we can to keep the Borough's residents safe, a small minority of senseless individuals think it is a good idea to vandalise our buildings, smashing glass as well as vandalising the fire doors that are in place to protect them and their families. Also we have had four fires within two of our tower blocks due to rubbish being set alight and dropped down the rubbish chutes.

If you ever see this happening, please can you report it to our customer services team, you will be kept completely anonymous. You can also complete an online ASB reporting form.

This has a massive impact on our resources and the resources of the Essex County Fire & Rescue Service as well as putting residents in danger.

Anyway, on a brighter note we are speedily heading towards Christmas and other religious festivities. Before that we have firework night & Halloween however these will have passed by the time you receive this copy of *Insight*.

If I could please take this opportunity to give you some Fire Safety Advice. I hear you say 'I do not need fire safety advice', but during the recent fuel shortage a video was put on social media showing a woman filling a plastic carrier bag with petrol and placing it in her boot, that shows she definitely needs it - luckily for her she did not smoke or the situation could have been a lot worse.

At this time I am looking for suitable venues to hold "Fire Safety in the Home" meetings. These will be starting in the new year and all residents are more than welcome to attend - dates and locations will be promoted on our website and here in *Insight*.

If you require any more information please do not hesitate to contact me in an email to grahamhart@seh.southend.gov.uk



Anyway that's it from me, keep safe and have an enjoyable Christmas we certainly all deserve it.

Graham



CHRISTMAS

& other religious festivals

FIREWORKS

When it comes to firework night an organised display is usually a lot cheaper, safer and more fun than fireworks at home, but if you choose to have your own firework party, please make sure you **'Follow the Firework Code'**.

- Plan your firework display to make it safe and enjoyable.
- Keep fireworks in a closed box taking them out one at a time.
- Read and follow the instructions on each firework using a torch.
- Light the firework at arms length with a taper then stand well back.
- Keep naked flames away from fireworks.
- Never return to a firework once it has been lit.
- Do not put fireworks in your pockets and never throw them away.
- Ensure all fireworks are directed away from spectators.
- Never use accelerants on bonfires.
- Make sure that the fire is out and the surroundings are made safe before leaving.
- If possible have a garden hose or a bucket of water available.



Place your tree away from any heat sources, curtains or furnishings.

Do not place extension lead sockets with plugs in under your tree covered with gifts.

Never attempt to cook under the influence of excessive alcohol.

Ensure natural Christmas trees are kept watered to prevent the tree from drying out.

Ensure lights have the correct kite mark and the correct rated fuse in the plug.

Ensure all extension leads are uncoiled and do not place them under rugs or mats.

If using extension leads no more than 3 sets of light should be plugged into it.

Do not leave lit candles unattended and ensure they are out before going to bed.

Inspect all Christmas Lights for sign of wear and tear and do not leave switched on when your property is unoccupied or when you are asleep.

If smoking ensure all cigarettes are extinguished and never drop into a litter bin immediately after smoking.

Keep decorations and cards away from candles or other heat sources such as open fires.

Take care with candles, incense sticks or oil burners. Do not place them near combustibles such as curtains.



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 Civic Centre and Zoom meetings.

Balmoral Event Held on the 6th October

The Federation was at the Balmoral event supplying those who attended with burgers, sausages and water. Tea/coffee was available as well.



We gave away a lot of cinema tickets to those attending to go and see the film **Ainbo: Spirit of the Amazon** at the special showing at the Odeon Cinema. This has been supported by the following contractors: Aaron Services, Dulux, George Jones, Pilon and South Essex Homes, without whose sponsorship we would not have been able to put this on.

The Crafting Club had for sale the toys, blankets, bobble hats and clothes they made, to raise more funds to carry on doing their great work.

Our new mascot, Sparky the Squirrel, was there and the children loved having their photos taken with him, he was a great hit. He will be traveling everywhere we go, so come along and meet him and he will give you a very warm welcome.

TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC

This was held at the Hostel and the teddy bears that were all knitted by our Crafting Club ladies were all really loved by the children who attended along with their lovely food that they had. This will be held again next year and we will again be supplying the teddy bears for the children to take away with them.



CRAFTING CLUB



The club has many members who are knitting and you are welcome to join their ranks.

Everything is provided free of charge - like wool, patterns, needles, stuffing etc. - but the existing team do need more helpers to join them to make teddy bears for next year's Teddy Bears' Picnic. They are going to 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.

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. 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 and put you in touch with other Bear makers.



CHILDREN'S XMAS PARTY

STRF are pleased to announce that we will be running a FREE Children's Christmas Party for S.E.H. Residents/ Leaseholders & Leaseholders Tenants on the 20th and 21st December 2021 between 6.15 & 8.15 on both days.

The parties will take place at

k i d s k i n g d o m

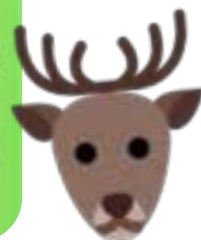
Garon Park, Eastern Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS2 4FA.

BOTH DAYS WILL BE STRICTLY LIMITED TO 120 PLACES.



TO APPLY FOR YOUR FREE TICKETS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE, STRF.UK AND USE THE CONTACT US FORM WHICH YOU WILL FIND ON EVERY PAGE, MESSAGE US THROUGH OUR FACEBOOK PAGE, [STRF-2020](https://www.facebook.com/STRF-2020), BY TELEPHONE ON 01702 309064 AND LEAVE A MESSAGE, OR YOU CAN APPLY BY POST BY WRITING TO STRF XMAS PARTY, 154 GAINSBOROUGH DRIVE, WESTCLIFF-ON-SEA, SS0 0SN.

WE ARE HOPING TO BE ABLE TO ATTRACT A SPECIAL VISITOR ON BOTH DAYS IF HIS SCHEDULE AT THIS TIME OF YEAR ALLOWS.



WINTER IS COMING



Please remember the winter is coming and we must all as neighbours look out for each other during the cold and wet weather. The Federation would like you to check on your neighbour if you have not seen them as you normally would. Inform SEH on 0800 833 160 of any concerns you have regarding your neighbours. It's not being nose, it's being neighbourly.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

The STRF committee would like to wish you a very Happy Christmas and a great New Year.

Introducing Southend Family Centres



Who Are We?

We are Southend Family Centres! We are a friendly team based across 9 Family Centres across Southend, Westcliff, Shoebury, Leigh and Eastwood. We are open to all families who are pregnant or have a child aged 0-5, running sessions in centres and offering support 1:1. All parents, grandparents, and carers are welcome.

Where Are We?

There are 9 family centres;

- Friars Family Centre
- Cambridge Road Family Centre
- Blenheim Family Centre
- Centre Place Family Centre
- Hamstel Family Centre
- Prince Avenue Family Centre
- Temple Sutton Family Centre
- Summercourt Family Centre
- Eastwood Family Centre

We also work with you in the community and in your home.

What Do We Do?

From pregnancy through to birth and beyond, we have a range of groups to support you and your family. There's something for everyone; Stay & Play, Messy Play and Mini Explorers, to Starting Solids and Toileting Workshops, we have a range of activities for you and your little ones to play and learn. We also run courses such as Understanding Your Pregnancy, Labour, Birth and Your Baby, and Understanding Your Child's Behaviour. We also provide infant feeding support and have a Breast Pump Hire scheme.

Bibs & Bobs is a scheme open to everyone where you can donate or receive baby clothes and equipment for free. It's great for the planet and the purse strings. We also host Family Action's Food On Our Doorstep (FOOD) Clubs, where you can get great quality food for £3.50/week, saving it from going to waste.

Our Family Support team can work alongside your family, getting to know your strengths and together overcome any challenges you may be facing.

How To Find Out More?

Find us on Facebook by searching 'Family Centres Southend', or search 'Family Centres' on Livewell (www.livewellsouthend.com).

If you think your family could benefit from 1:1 support, please contact us on **01702 220810** for a referral form.



ESSENTIAL WINTER PROTECTION



There are two essential vaccines that you may need this winter – flu and COVID-19 booster. Vaccines are the best way to protect yourself, friends and family from these dangerous viruses.

Find out if you're eligible now at nhs.uk/wintervaccinations

My Health Matters

The Mid and South Essex Health & Care Partnership is running a campaign called 'My Health Matters' and have created a new leaflet bursting with useful information and ideas about what's available to help you look after yourself and the people you care for.

You can download this leaflet via their website at www.msehealthandcarepartnership.co.uk/news/campaigns/my-health-matters/



Can you shop

TOTALLY

LOCALLY?

SHOP LIKE YOUR HIGH STREET DEPENDS ON IT BECAUSE IT DOES!



Totally Locally is Southend's independent high street, online.

Totally Locally covers the whole borough including Southend, Leigh, Westcliff, Thorpe Bay, Southchurch, Shoeburyness and Eastwood and is all about supporting your local shops and businesses.

It's widely known that the high street has taken many financial hits over the years, and less and less shops have been kept open physically for you to visit. So, it's important to help support local businesses and you can do it this ever so simply by shopping online at Totally Locally.

As a local shopper you can easily browse and buy online from many different Southend-on-Sea businesses at Totally Locally, all in one place at the touch of your fingertips. This means you can support the businesses and people that make our city special, and you can do it at the ease from you own home!

The website is very user friendly, easy to navigate, and you can checkout from different shops with one simple payment. It also has options available for click and collect or delivery where it is offered. For people leading busy lives, Totally Locally offers you an easy alternative, as at a click of a button you can order the new garden lawnmower you needed at the same time as that outfit ready for your weekend plans.

Where local businesses took a big hit during the coronavirus pandemic due to high street shops being shut, Totally Locally has provided them with a platform to reach their customers and allowed them to continue earning their living and keeping their businesses afloat. In one way or another everybody was affected during the pandemic, and we can all do our bit to help one another get our feet firmly back on the ground and keep Southend a great place to live and work.

Totally Locally offers a variety of shops and services. They range right from arts and design crafts, locally made clothing to the management of properties. There are clothing brands on there where local businesses have been able to find a platform to sell their beautiful garments fit for any occasion. There are also products for pet lovers and items available for those keen in the outdoors and adventures, to name but a few of the services.

As many will have noticed Christmas is drawing close now, it would be the perfect opportunity to get your loved ones and friends some wonderful Christmas gifts, all whilst supporting local people and their businesses.

TOTALLY LOCALLY

INVEST IN YOUR TOWN - INVEST IN YOUR FUTURE



If you want to find out more information about how to support your local business in your Borough then make sure to visit the website www.southendonsea.totallylocally.shop/

CONDENSATION

all you need to know

What is condensation?

Condensation is the most common kind of moisture and is caused by warm moist air condensing on cold surfaces such as glass and walls.

It's mainly a winter problem, as at this time of year walls are much colder than the air inside your property.

Condensation is made worse by poor ventilation and not heating the property to the correct temperature.

This article informs you how to reduce condensation, how to get rid of mould and stop it from growing back again.

Every home is subject to condensation at some time and it is quite normal to find your bedroom windows with moisture on them after a cold night. You may notice condensation on other cold surfaces such as walls, pipes and your toilet.

What causes condensation?

The average household produces between 24-29 pints of moisture every day. Moisture is held in the air and must be allowed out of your home, otherwise condensation will form.

Are my damp problems caused by condensation?

Not all dampness is caused by condensation, sometimes dampness can be as a result of:

- Leaking pipes and radiators
- Leaking roofs
- Guttering or chimney flashings
- Penetrating damp from porous bricks
- Rising damp

How much moisture can be produced in your home?

2 people active for 1 day = 4 pints



Cooking and boiling a kettle = 6 pints



Having a bath or shower = 2 pints



Drying clothes = 10 pints



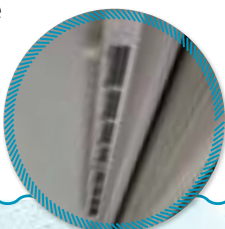
4 people sleeping = 3 pints



Keeping your home ventilated

Increasing ventilation will help prevent moisture laden air from being trapped in your home and condensing on the windows, walls and ceilings. Actions that can be taken include:

- Each morning, 'air' the affected rooms by opening the windows for a little while and wiping down any wet windows and sills
- Use extractor fans/hoods in bathrooms and kitchens where they are fitted
- Leave bathroom and kitchen windows open slightly for 20 minutes once you have finished cooking, showering or bathing, with the door closed
- If your windows have trickle vents fitted, leave these open as this will provide a steady flow of fresh air and remember to shut your windows before you go out.



Keeping your home warm

Condensation can be worse in a cold home. This is because cold air cannot hold as much moisture as warm air. Keeping your home warm can really help to reduce condensation.

Condensation and mould often form in rooms that are unused or under heated. Turn the radiators and heaters down in these rooms to save energy, but don't turn them off completely.

Important things to remember


- Move furniture away from walls to allow air to circulate around your rooms
- Do not block vents or extractor fans
- Clean condensation and mould away when you see it forming
- Avoid blocking chimney openings
- Leave cupboard and wardrobe doors open periodically so that air can circulate

The best way to heat your home is through steady background heating. This is because warmer air can hold more moisture and as the temperature of the walls increases the possibility of condensation forming on them is reduced.



How can I prevent condensation?

Ordinary activities can produce a lot of moisture quite quickly. Some steps you can take to reduce moisture production in your home:



Do not dry clothes or towels on radiators, if you dry clothes inside, dry in a room with the window ajar and the door closed.

Cover pans when cooking and use extractor fans if fitted.



Wipe down surfaces where moisture settles, such as windows, pipes, cisterns etc.

Reduce steam when running the bath by running cold water first and then topping up with warm.

Ensure that tumble dryers are properly vented to the outside through a proper wall vent.



Do not use bottled gas or paraffin heaters in your home; these produce a lot of water vapour when the fuel is burned.

Keep the internal bathroom and kitchen doors shut and these rooms well ventilated during and after bathing and cooking.

Mould

Every home, irrespective of its construction, contains within its fabric mould spores which are dormant and completely harmless. However, given the right conditions these spores will germinate resulting in extensive growths of black disfiguring mould. Mould needs very little nutrient and will grow on walls and ceilings irrespective of the decorative finish.

Where do you find mould?

It can be found on and adjacent to windows, in the corners and edges of rooms and behind and inside wardrobes and cupboards especially if they are against an external wall. Mould can even grow on clothes, handbags and shoes if they are hung up in wardrobes when still damp or wet, or stored so tightly to prevent air from circulating.

Do NOT use bleach to clean walls or ceilings. This may be hazardous.

Steps against mould:

Treat any mould you may already have in your home. If you then deal with the basic problem of condensation, mould should not reappear.

- To kill and remove mould, wipe down walls and window frames with a fungicidal wash which carries a Health and Safety Executive approval number. Follow the manufacturer's instructions precisely.
- Dry-clean mildewed clothes and shampoo carpets. Disturbing mould by brushing or vacuum cleaning can increase the risk of respiratory problems.
- After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint, sometimes known as damp seal paint, to help prevent mould recurring. Please note that this paint is not effective if overlaid with ordinary paints or wallpaper. The only lasting way of avoiding severe mould is to eliminate dampness.

Once you have cleaned all existing mould and started to follow the guidelines to reduce condensation, please allow a period of at least one month for your property to dry out completely.



If after that time, the problem of damp and mould is returning, please contact us on 0800 833160 and we will investigate the matter further.



Welcome back to Leasehold Matters; the page in Insight devoted to Leaseholder issues

We hope you all enjoyed the summer months. In this issue we focus on the new and improved South Essex Homes website. The site has not been live for long so if you have any suggestions or feedback, we would really appreciate it.

Please forward any comments to LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk

Until next time we wish you the very best *The Leasehold Team*

New Website! www.southessexhomes.co.uk

Throughout the last year our Corporate Services Team have been working hard to update our website which went live in September. The team liaised with resident groups to ensure the information available is useful to residents and the format made it easy to find.

Leaseholder Information

The Leaseholder pages can be accessed from the home page by clicking on the 'Your Home' section. The Leaseholder information section is on the right of this page. As well as general information in respect of your lease agreement the section also includes:

- A copy of the Leaseholders' Handbook
- Copies of the Buildings Insurance documents together with how to make a claim on your Buildings Insurance
- Contact information for a range of enquiries
- Buying, Selling and Letting your home

Other useful Information

More generally the site can be used to utilise other services including:

- Reporting Communal Repairs
- How to report Anti-Social Behaviour, Graffiti or noise problems

Frequently Asked Questions

As the site develops, be sure to visit the Frequently Asked Questions Section. Here, common queries received from residents will be added to assist you with information and resources to help you.

Actual Service Charges 2020-21

If you have any questions about your service charges please send them in writing to South Essex Homes, Leasehold Services, PO Box 5817, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS1 9EL or email LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk

Don't forget our new email address!

Our preferred method of contact for electronic communication is:

LeaseholderServices@seh.southend.gov.uk

The address is monitored by all the Leasehold Team which can assist in dealing with your correspondence in a timely manner.

Meet the Leasehold Team!

Jan Tate

I'm Jan, a Leasehold and Right to Buy Officer on the team. I've worked in this role since starting at South Essex Homes in 2012.

I enjoy the great outdoors and most of my hobbies are outside. I like running, mountain biking and hiking. My family love watching sport and attending events. We're looking forward to seeing Rugby League and the Commonwealth Games next year.



James Williams

I am one of the Specialist Income Management Officers working in the Right to Buy & Leasehold team and, also undertake recharge invoices and invoices for Careline. I have been in this role for about three years and I have worked for South Essex Homes since 2015, previously in the ASB team.

I undertook a degree in Housing, which helped me to escape a background of extreme poverty. Within housing, I have worked in homelessness, housing management, tenancy enforcement, income recovery, income maximisation, and resident participation.

For fun, I like travel, photography, genealogy and walking my lovely Cocker-Spaniel.



Laura Thomas

I'm Laura Thomas, the manager of the Specialist Income Management team which includes our Leasehold and Right to Buy service. I've worked for South Essex Homes since 2007 and spent most of that time in Income Management. I love going on walks in the woods and visits to the zoo with my family.



YOU SAID, WE DID



Every year, we carry out Resident Satisfaction Surveys to get a feel for how we are performing. This helps to identify any recurring issues and highlight areas of weakness as well as showing us what we are doing well.

This year's surveys have recently been completed and this involved over 1,100 residents being called up and asked some questions about their dealings with South Essex Homes.

We would like to thank each and every one of you who took part in the survey, for taking the time to provide this valuable feedback.

Where comments were made by the tenants being surveyed, they were recorded in a spreadsheet and shared with the relevant manager.

Bradley Staff, one of our Property Services Managers responsible for responsive repairs, has provided some feedback as to the comments they received from these recent surveys and the action they have taken as a result.

28 comments

were made relating to defects at their property/building that had not been reported to us previously, these have been allocated to our Building Surveyors to arrange an inspection or raise necessary orders.

2 repairs

were reported that had not previously been mentioned to us, where a repair was able to be raised using the information already provided.

11 comments

were made where the tenants believed they needed a new bathroom or kitchen to be fitted. These will be checked by our Housing Attributes Coordinator to see if the items meet the necessary criteria to be replaced, and if so they will be added to the next programme of works.

2 residents commented

they were waiting for a wet room to be installed, these were checked and are currently with the Access Team at Southend Council to progress this.

1 report of problems

opening new windows at Barringtons, this was passed to a Surveyor to follow up.

3 residents

at Great Mead mentioned problems with various fire doors in the building. Our Fire Safety Manager Graham Hart has been asked to inspect the doors and arrange any necessary reparative works.

Please be assured that we do listen to your feedback and take action to resolve any issues, so please continue to tell us how we are doing!

SHE'S ELECTRIC!

Morgan Sindall Property Services, our main repairs contractor, have introduced the first electric van to their fleet of vehicles here in Southend.

This is the start of a roll out by Morgan Sindall which aims to see all the company's vehicles replaced with electric models by the end of 2023, availability allowing, and the company itself being carbon neutral, by 2030.

We shall keep you posted on the success of this roll out, which supports our overall aims to make our business more environmentally sustainable.

A spokesperson for the Morgan Sindall Group said: "Already, the Group has achieved a 64% reduction in carbon emissions (Scope 1, 2 and operational Scope 3) since 2010, and our carbon intensity – the amount of carbon emitted per £m revenue – has been cut by 75% over the same period. We have set ourselves an ambitious target of net zero by 2030 and we are on track to meet it. Any residual carbon will be offset not

abroad, but in the UK, in independently audited projects we will help manage.



"We have been independently recognised for our leadership by organisations such as CDP, getting an 'A' score both for our leadership on climate change, and our engagement of our supply chain.

We were one of the first companies in the world to gain accreditation by the Science-Based Targets Initiative and for over a decade our emissions figures have been independently audited by Achilles, under the Carbon Reduce scheme."

Go Green

This

CHRISTMAS

Our Staff Environmental & Sustainability Group are full of ideas on things we can all do, big and small, to play our part in saving the planet.

With Christmas fast approaching, we thought we'd take the opportunity to share some ideas on how to make the festive season more eco-friendly, inspired by an article 'How to have an eco Christmas' on the 'Wildlife Trusts' website:

Gifts

Buying gifts can be a challenge at the best of times, but don't panic! Making sure you give planet-friendly presents isn't as tough as you might think - here are some tips to help you along the way:

- Look out for gifts that come with as little packaging as possible, or at least some you can recycle.
- Opt for second hand. If you're doing a secret Santa, how about a rule that it has to be bought from a charity shop?!
- Why not put together a zero-waste kit? You could include a reusable coffee cup, a biodegradable lunchbox, or some wax food wraps. There are some great designed items available - so they look attractive and are super practical too.
- Make something yourself. You can choose your own packaging, and the personal effort makes a gift priceless! How about cooking up some fudge and divide it into paper bags folded over and stuck down with a Christmassy paper sticker?
- Recycled tote bags are a fun and useful gift - available in countless designs so can be really personal too, and a great way to avoid plastic bags at the checkout.
- Adopt an animal as a gift - visit www.adoptananimal.uk.com
- Give the gift of membership to an organisation such as Essex Wildlife Trust.



Wrapping it up

Of course, choosing the gift is just the beginning - think before you wrap it up:

- Shiny wrapping paper is pretty, but it's not recyclable! The same goes for glittery paper. Use brown paper for a lovely vintage look.
- Sellotape is made of plastic but you can get brown paper tape - or get creative with some ribbon or string. Better yet, go for a reusable option like a box, bag, or cloth.
- Don't forget your Christmas cards - the same rules go for glittery and shiny cards. Watch out for the plastic wrappers too. Try to find ones sold loose or packaged differently - or have a go at making your own!
- Why not make a pact with your friends and family to not send each other Christmas cards this year? Perhaps send a festive greeting via email or text and you could even agree to donate the money you've saved to a charity that's dear to your heart.
- Save any Christmas cards you receive and cut them up to use as tags for next year.

Food

We waste a lot of food throughout the year but figures reach a high over Christmas!

- Don't buy too much. Plan meals so you know how much food you'll need.
- Compost vegetable waste if you have the outdoor space, or be sure to use your blue food waste bin.
- Eat your leftovers. Some of the tastiest meals are made from yesterday's food.
- Cut down on meat. Meat has a big carbon footprint so try out some vegetarian or vegan alternatives.



Decoration

Chances are you have a magical cupboard at home full of sparkly Christmas decorations that come out every year. If so, great! Make the most of what you have and don't throw them out unless you have to! BUT, if you want to add something new, make sure you think first!

- Avoid tinsel! Those little bits that end up sprinkled all over the house are plastic. So why not have a go at making your own decorations? How about some bunting, origami or pinecone decorations.
- Reuse your Christmas tree 😊
 - Buy a pre-loved fake one instead of a new one. Check out Freecycle, eBay or Gumtree.
 - Rent a tree. These trees are grown in special pots that can be dug up and replanted year after year. Check it is grown sustainably first.
 - Look after a real tree. Growing trees is always great but transporting and disposing of them isn't good for the environment. So look after your tree and reuse it year on year.
- Get creative for nature. You could make your very own wreath that'll feed the birds as well as looking great!
- Turn off your Christmas lights overnight and when you are out the house to save energy.
- Turn down your heating a notch or two and save money as well as the planet
- Avoid buying Christmas crackers which often contain plastic toys. Instead make your own using toilet roll tubes!
- Make your own natural table decorations - holly leaves look fantastically festive.

Avoid throwaway plastic, go homemade, and keep wildlife in mind. It'll add a sweet personal touch that'll mean the world to someone this Christmas!

**Go
home
made!**



Here for you CarelineSOS

living smarter together

With CarelineSOS, you needn't feel guilty about living your life to the full, because we are on hand to look after your nearest and dearest when you can't be.



As life slowly returns to something resembling 'normal', many of you are returning to the office for some or all of the working week, and your social calendars are filling up with all the events you've missed out on over the past eighteen months, so you may not therefore have as many opportunities to touch base with your vulnerable loved ones.

Our SOS personal alarm service offers the following benefits:

- **We provide 24 hours a day call centre response to our personal alarms and fall detectors**
Our ultra-fast team are always ready to help in an emergency
- **Affordable pricing for elderly alarms, response alarms and our support services**
Our call alarms and personal alarms for the elderly offer simple price plans that are designed to suit all budgets
- **Safety and peace of mind for the elderly or disabled in their own homes**
Our support services offer peace of mind from knowing that you or your loved ones can call upon help at any time, just by pushing a button on a personal alarm and we are at the end of the phone.

Personal alarms for the elderly from CarelineSOS

Most people hope to stay independent and secure in their own homes for as long as possible, but age and illness can leave us vulnerable or at risk. We provide personal alarms and fall detectors for the elderly and those in poor health so that they can feel more secure and less at risk in their own homes, which means being able to stay there longer.

Emergency support with personal and response alarms

Any of us can have an accident, a sudden illness, be threatened by an intruder in our own home, or just become less able and confident and therefore need some sort of support system in place in the event of an emergency.

Reduce worry with our alarm and support services for elderly and disabled

A personal alarm means that worry about a parent or parents is minimised and parents don't have to feel that they're a burden on their children. Our personal alarms, fall detectors and SOS alarms for the elderly and disabled enable both parents and their families to feel supported, reassured and secure.

Fast, reliable support service 24/7 for personal alarms

Our services provide a fast, easy and reliable way to get help for you, whatever the time of day or night. With our personal alarms, CarelineSOS can offer a confidential support service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. If you require more information on our range of personal alarms and the support services we can supply for elderly, disabled or those convalescing at home you can contact us to discuss what we can offer.

Call us on 0800 833162 | Email us on: info@carelinesos.co.uk

For more information or to place an online order, please visit www.carelinesos.co.uk