

Issue Thirty Seven | October 2024



# Lighthouse

sussex

Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change



**Welcome new Team members  
Your Housing Officers  
Tenant Scrutiny Panel  
In Bloom awards  
Blocked sinks  
Eco Tips  
Surveys  
and more**

Dear Tenant,

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Lighthouse Magazine. In this issue we are happy to announce the winners of BHT Sussex in Bloom gardening competition. As always the judges were amazed by the beautiful gardens created by our clients and tenants.

In this edition you will read important information about surveys of BHT Sussex properties, and about blockages in sinks, drains and WC. We are also informing you about our upcoming Tenant Satisfaction Survey, this year delivered by Acuity, a market research company who specialise in the social housing sector.

As always we have seasonal environmental tips, wordsearch and a few updates on changes in Housing services.

In this edition we also reintroduce your Housing Officers and share an update on the work of Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

Your feedback and input into the newsletter is very welcome, please get in touch with Anna if you would like to contribute to the next edition.

Enjoy the read,

*Anna Kuzan - Involvement Officer*

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## Hello from our new team members

Please welcome Leigha Bartlett  
Housing Services Administrator

*'Hello, my name is Leigha I am the new Housing Services Administrator for BHT Sussex. I joined the team in late July 2024. I Previously worked at Hastings Direct as a Claims Case Handler, this is a completely new career change which I'm really eager and excited to get stuck into a new challenge. I am looking forward to working with BHT and what my journey here brings.*

*In my spare time I enjoy spending time with my family and plane spotting.'*



Please welcome Hayley Rootes  
Tenancy Sustainment Officer



*'Hello my name is Hayley I am the new Tenancy Sustainment Officer for BHT Sussex. I joined late July 2024. Previously I have worked for Rother District Council as a Housing Management Officer where I picked up a lot of housing knowledge. I have also been a part of the YMCA DLG transitional housing team as support staff helping 18-35-year-olds sustain a tenancy and move on successfully. I am looking forward to meeting and working with BHT tenants. In my spare time I enjoy going for a swim, walking my Dogs and upcycling :)'*

# Changes in Housing services management

**Following the departure of the Director of Housing and Property Services in December 2023**, BHT Sussex took the opportunity to carry out a review of the management of Housing Services. As a result, the Director and Housing Services Manager posts were deleted. A new Head of Housing role has been created and following a successful interview in August, Paul Fagan took up this role from the beginning of September. There are further exciting changes in the pipeline including the creation of a Head of Asset Management and Head of Health & Safety. Recruitment is underway for these positions and a further update will be provided in the next edition of Lighthouse.

## Further changes in Housing services management and offices

**Sadly, we have had to say goodbye to Karen Moignard who left BHT Sussex at the end of September.** Karen transformed the administration side of our repairs service and will be greatly missed. She leaves with our best wishes, and we wish her luck for the future. Recruitment for a new Maintenance Administrator is already underway and I hope to be able to provide a further update on this in the next edition of Lighthouse.

Housing Services officially left Highlight House at the end of August, and we will no longer be making use of this office space in Eastbourne town centre. Instead, the team will now have the benefit of more modern 'touch down' desks in the Polegate area. BHT Sussex' Eastbourne Advice Services will remain at Highlight House and are contactable in the usual ways. There has been no change to their operations.

## Cover photo competition

**As always, we would like to invite the tenants to take part in our cover photo competition. The theme is up to you** but has to correspond with the season of the year. A suitable cover image is of vertical orientation. To make sure your photo will look good on the cover it has to be in original size and uncropped. The author of the winning cover photo will be awarded a £10 gift voucher. For more info please email Anna: [anna.kuzan@bht.org.uk](mailto:anna.kuzan@bht.org.uk)

# BHT Sussex Community Days



**Our annual program of Community Days has now concluded.** During the six events throughout the summer, we visited sites in Hastings, Eastbourne and Brighton. You can read about our visits to Marine Parade, Golf Drive and Cashman Lodge in the previous issue of the Lighthouse magazine by going to this website: <https://www.bht.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Lighthouse-Summer-2024.pdf>

These events are very important and provide an opportunity for our tenants to speak with us face to face and share their views on current issues directly impacting them where they live. We will be carrying out a review of this year's events in the coming weeks and then it will be straight on to planning the 2025 program with the aim of making them bigger and better than ever.



# How to take care of drainage

## Are Blocked Drains the Tenant's Responsibility?

Drainage Issues are a widespread concern. Tenants are usually expected to take reasonable care of the property they are living in, which includes avoiding actions that could lead to blocked drains. For instance, tenants should be cautious about what they dispose of down the drains, such as non-biodegradable items, cooking grease, or large food scraps. Only the 3 p's – pee, poo and toilet paper should be flushed down the toilet – no paper products, food or anything else!

Negligence on the part of the tenant can lead to clogged pipes and subsequent drainage problems. In these instances the responsibility for rectifying the problem typically falls on the tenant. Sorting out blocked WCs and sinks comes at a high cost in time and money to BHT Sussex.



On the other hand, BHT Sussex has the responsibility to ensure that the property's drainage system is in proper working condition. This includes periodic inspections,

maintenance, and timely response to repair requests from tenants. If a drainage issue arises due to factors beyond the tenant's control, the responsibility for rectifying the problem typically falls on the landlord.

Tenants should take responsibility for their actions, ensuring that they dispose of waste and debris properly. Avoiding actions that can lead to blockages, such as pouring cooking grease down the drain, is essential for maintaining a smoothly functioning drainage system.

## What are the consequences of unaddressed blocked drains?

### Damp and Mould Growth

When drains are blocked, wastewater can back up and seep into walls and floors, causing dampness and creating the ideal conditions for mould growth. Mould not only damages the structural integrity of the building but also poses health risks to the occupants.

### Foul Odours

Blocked drains often emit foul odours that can permeate the living space, making it uncomfortable and unhealthy for tenants. These odours can lead to respiratory problems and contribute to a generally unpleasant living environment.

### Structural Damage

The pressure created by blocked drains can exert force on pipes and joints. Over time, this pressure can lead to structural damage, including cracks and leaks in the drainage system. If not addressed promptly, this can result in costly repairs and further disrepair issues.

(continued on page 7)

## How to take care of drainage? (continued)

### Pest Infestations

Stagnant water in blocked drains can attract pests, such as rats and insects, which can infiltrate the property. These unwanted guests not only damage the building but also pose health risks to residents.

### Flooding

In severe cases, blocked drains can cause flooding in and around the property. This not only damages possessions but can also render the property temporarily uninhabitable.

It is crucial for both tenants and landlords to understand their roles and responsibilities in preventing and addressing blocked drains. By working together, we can maintain a safe and healthy living environment, ensuring that drainage issues do not escalate into more significant disrepair concerns.



If you are experiencing issues with your drainage system or would like to learn more about how to protect it, contact our repairs team. It is crucial to report any blockages issues as soon as possible.

**Contact us by phone or email.**

**Tel. 01323 340018**

**Email: [repairs@bht.org.uk](mailto:repairs@bht.org.uk)**

## Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Annual client and tenant survey for 2024/2025 will run for 5 weeks from 14th October to 16th November 2024.

This year the survey is being run by Acuity who will contact tenants by phone call, or text with a link to the survey online. The survey should take approximately 8 to 10 minutes to complete. Paper copies will also be available on request.

### When will they call our residents?

Acuity only make calls between the hours of 9:00am and 8:00pm Monday to Friday and between the hours of 10.00am and 6:00pm on Saturday. Interviewers allow the telephone to ring for a minimum of 25 seconds, or until a voice mail system kicks in, to ensure customers with mobility issues are given sufficient time to get to the phone.

### What telephone number is displayed?

If a resident receives a call from Acuity the number displayed is **01273 093939**, which is a Brighton Area code. If the resident sees a missed call from this number and calls back, they will hear a recorded message informing them that someone from Acuity tried to call them to complete a survey for their landlord.



Your feedback is very important to us and we will be happy to discuss the survey if you have any questions.

Call or email Anna Kuzan, the Involvement Officer, or speak to your Housing Officer; our contact details are on the last page of the newsletter.

# Our Environment

## Mary Stevens

### Environmental Officer

#### Enjoy seasonal food

In the autumn we have plenty of seasonal food available – often grown locally - which is cost effective and comforting. Winter squashes and pumpkins can be used as decorations, for Halloween, and used to make tasty soups and stews. If you have a slow cooker these can be cheap to make, or if you use the oven, this will also warm up your home while cooking. Other easy autumn treats include baked potatoes and baked apples – both can be cooked in the oven, or quickly in the microwave – perfect for bonfire night or any chilly evening.



**Baked apples with spiced sultanas - Heart Matters magazine - BHF**  
<https://www.bhf.org.uk/information-support/support/healthy-living/healthy-eating/recipe-finder/baked-apples-with-spiced-sultanas>

#### Energy saving tips

Using energy wisely can reduce your impact on the environment and your bills. Here are a few reminders of how to manage your energy use this winter, while bearing in mind cold and condensation can lead to black mould forming.

**Storage heaters** - these should use economy 7 electricity, storing heat during the cheaper night hours and releasing it during the day when needed. Switching storage heaters on during the day will lead to very high bills.

**Electric room heaters** - are effective for heating a room for a short time. The most cost effective options are an oil filled radiator for warming up a room for a few hours, and a halogen heater for heating up a small area quickly – for more information see Room heaters - Centre for Sustainable Energy (cse.org.uk). For heating for a longer period, using your heating system should cost less.

**Prioritise one room to heat** – if you are finding it hard to pay bills, prioritise the room you use most to heat. If you're unsure which room to use, a smaller the room will be cheaper to heat. Also, a room that gets more heat from the sun will stay warmer.

**Gadget charging** - consider how long any gadgets you have take to charge – leaving your phone/tablet on charge overnight uses more power and can ruin your battery.

**Cooking** – for making warming winter stews and soups, a slow cooker is a good option, as it uses less electricity than an oven, and costs around £20 - £30.



## Avoiding Black Mould

**In the colder months we have more condensation in our homes – so we need to look after our indoor environment to prevent this leading to black mould.**

Condensation is the drops of water you see on your walls or misting a window. In winter we are more likely to have windows closed and spend more time inside, so there is more condensation. Condensation forms on cold surfaces where there is little air movement – for example behind furniture or home appliances – especially if they are against an outside wall. Reducing condensation reduces the likelihood of mould forming in your home – to do this:

- Put lids on pans when cooking
- Don't leave the kettle boiling
- Dry washing outdoors if you can, in the bathroom with the door closed and window open, or fan on; or in a room, with door closed and window open. If you use a tumble drier, vent it on the outside
- Keeping your home warm reduces the likelihood of condensation forming
- Wiping off any condensation that forms.

Last winter I had black mould forming behind my microwave – and on it. It is in a corner with cold outside walls. To remove the mould I sprayed the wall with white vinegar, left it for about an hour, then wiped it with warm soapy water – then did this again to make sure it was all gone. Never scrub black mould as this will spread the spores. There are mould removing products you can buy – if you use these take care – wear gloves and cover your face as these can contain toxic chemicals.

Mould can also be caused by damp – so if you have taken the measures above and think you have a damp problem contact repairs. [repairs@bht.org.uk](mailto:repairs@bht.org.uk)

## Help Wildlife Keep Cosy

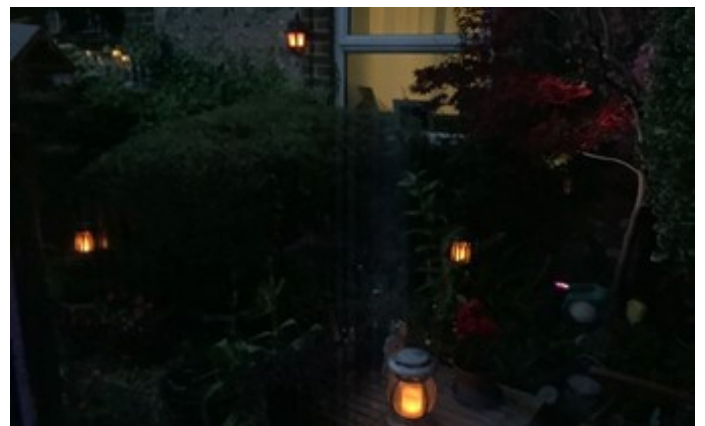
**Like us, birds, bees and bugs need somewhere to shelter over winter.** If you have a garden or outside space, leaving leaves, vegetation, and twigs provide safe spaces hedgehogs, frogs and toads to spend winter. Insects also need warm and dry shelters in the cooler month, so that in spring they will be here to pollinate our food plants and flowers and provide food for birds.



## BHT Sussex in Bloom - our

Thank you to all of you who took part in our gardening competition and shared your amazing work with us. It was a great experience to visit all the sites, to hear your stories and meet you all in person. Your gardening passion is truly contagious and surely will inspire more tenants to take part next year.

This year the first prize went to Cindy Carroll of Leybourne Road (MoveOn project). Cindy has designed her wonderful garden with a great attention to detail and created stunning rockery covered in colourful flowers. This perfectly maintained space brings joy to other residents and encourages them to be involved by providing handmade imaginative garden décor.



## in-house gardening competition



The second prize went to Clients of Recovery Project. The residents created an outstanding space filled with a variety of flowering and edible plants and herbs, where they can relax and enjoy their amazing work, both day and night thanks to secure bonfire place. The judges were offered a selection of yummy herbal infusions to taste.



The third prize went to Paul Cavill of Golf Drive who is a BHT Sussex tenant. Paul's front garden is presented with a variety of well-established shrubs and plenty of colourful flowers and tomato plants in pots. Paul's garden can also be enjoyed day and night. Paul has decorated his outdoor space with numerous solar panel operated lights and lanterns. This environmentally friendly approach illuminates the garden without additional cost to electricity bill. We have also awarded Chris Roberts from Shore House for his dedication and determination in establishing an amazing garden space at the service.



# Surveys in your block and flat

**BHT are continuing to carry out various surveys within our housing stock, these include Asbestos surveys, Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) and Stock Condition Surveys (SCS). We request tenants give contractors access in order for these surveys to take place as this information is essential for our records. Communication will be sent to tenants advising which survey is required and what contractor the work is raised to.**

**An asbestos survey** will involve our appointed contractor, Amstech Inspection and Testing Ltd to inspect the property, take photos and possibly take samples of areas where asbestos could be. We will then use the information obtained to update our Asbestos Register. It is very important that access is provided as these surveys are an essential requirement to maintain the building for health and safety and to ensure your and the contractors safety.

**A 'Stock Condition Survey'** is an inspection of the inside and outside of your home. These help us to assess the age and condition of each building element, so we can plan possible future improvements. We undertake these surveys to comply with the Government's 'Decent Home Standard'. It helps ensure all homes are safe and maintained to the decent standard.

An example of components included within Stock Condition Survey :

External - the roof, rainwater goods, windows, doors, fences and paths

Internal - kitchen, bathroom, heating system, and loft insulation.

A Stock Condition Survey is carried out by our appointed contractor, Infinity Surveying. They take images using a 3D digital scanner of the property so we have a visual record.

**Energy performance certificates (EPCs)** tell us how energy efficient a property is. All properties must have an EPC before being let, and a certificate is valid for 10 years before it must be renewed.

EPCs rate a home from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient). They assess elements including insulation, windows, lighting and heating. The higher rating a property has, the less it should cost to heat and the lower carbon emissions it has. Properties with a C rating are reasonably efficient, and the government has set a target for rented properties to reach C by 2030. We are carrying out EPC assessments on properties that don't have a certificate so that we can identify those that would benefit from measures to improve energy efficiency.

The EPC also gives recommendations to improve your rating. If any energy efficiency recommendations outlined in your EPC are implemented, it will be desirable to get a new EPC to reflect this.

## **Who is likely to survey your home?**

Paul Foster is BHTS EPC assessor  
Subcontractors: Kayron Heating and Redman Howard

They will book in appointments directly with tenants if they are due an EPC.

# Wordsearch created by Joe Ashdown

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

autumn  
leafblower  
apple bobbing  
Halloween  
umbrella

Thanksgiving  
pumpkin  
hibernation  
Equinox  
bonfire

darkness  
October  
Guy Fawkes  
squirrel  
robin

toast  
poppies  
foliage  
berries  
conkers

# Your Housing Officers



**Daisy Fellowes - a Housing Officer for Brighton and Hove.**  
Daisy can be reached by email: [daisy.fellowes@bht.org.uk](mailto:daisy.fellowes@bht.org.uk) or phone: 07786856478.



**Shirley Bridle - a Housing Officer for Hastings, Eastbourne, Saltdean, Marine Parade, and Southdowns Court.**  
Shirley can be reached by email: [shirley.bridle@bht.org.uk](mailto:shirley.bridle@bht.org.uk) or phone: 07824306591

Please note that due to the nature of their role Housing Officers do not have access to their emails at all times during working hours and they will do their best to respond within 5 working days. If your request is urgent phone call is preferable.

All out-of-office and urgent contacts are listed the last page of the magazine.

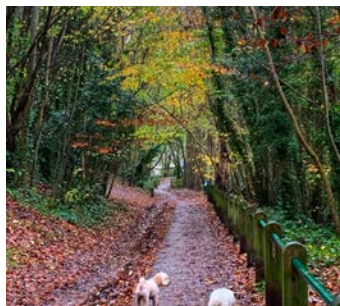


Image above sent by Peter Davies  
Image on the left sent by Kerry Mitchell.

# Tenant Scrutiny Panel update

The members of newly formed Tenants Scrutiny Panel have recently agreed on a project to scrutinise. This term they will be concentrating on Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy and procedure. During the upcoming meetings documents will be reviewed and potential suggestions for changes will be discussed. The panel will meet with members of Housing Services team to gain deeper understanding of practical aspects of ASB policy and procedure execution. If you are interested in joining the panel or have any suggestions for the panel regarding ASB, please get in touch with Anna Kuzan - Involvement Officer - contact info on the last page.

## What is tenant scrutiny panel?

Tenant scrutiny panel is a group of BHT Sussex residents who examine BHT's service areas in detail and make recommendations to the Board for improvement.



## Why do we need the panel?

The scrutiny panel brings the expertise of our residents and staff together. It ensures residents are engaged with BHT's services and processes, and represents their views on how to make improvements.

## What are the aims of the panel?

- Take an independent view of BHT's performance
- Establish priorities for reviewing performance
- Oversee resident-led scrutiny activities
- Collect evidence to enable services to be scrutinised



Detailed scrutiny projects can run on a number of areas such as: complaints and anti social behaviour (ASB), service charges and tenant involvement.

So far the panel has scrutinised repairs and welfare reform (UC)

## Contact Us

### Head Office and General Enquiries

144 London Road Brighton  
BN1 4PH  
01273 645400  
info@bht.org.uk

### Rents and Repairs

01323 340018  
rents@bht.org.uk  
repairs@bht.org.uk

### MyTenancy

www.mytenancy.co.uk  
Report a repair or check your  
rent statement online

### Housing Officers

Brighton Housing Officer:  
**Daisy Fellowes**  
01273 645454  
07826 874849

Officer for Hastings,  
Eastbourne, Saltdean,  
Marine Parade and  
Southdowns Court:

**Shirley Bridle**  
07824 306591

### Involvement Officer

Anna Kuzan  
07500 972509

### Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Redman Howard  
07493 223016

### Gas emergencies

Robert Heath Heating  
0333 014 1000

### Issues with fire alarms and detectors

Eastbourne Alarms  
01323 729420

Our mission: Combating homelessness; Creating opportunities; Promoting change.

Our values: Empowering People; Inspiring Change; Collaboration; Delivering Excellence; Being Accountable.

## Wordsearch Solution

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

### Congratulations to our prize draw winner

Congratulations to Deborah in Brighton who won a £20 shopping voucher in the Direct Debit quarterly prize draw simply for setting up a Direct Debit with BHT Sussex.

Your Housing Officers can guide you through the process step-by-step.draw.