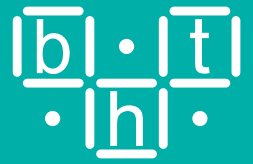




Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change

Lighthouse



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“ *I was told that finding a
dog-friendly flat was almost
impossible, but I persevered.
Then a flat came up in Newhaven
where the landlord allowed pets.*

Turn to page three to read Martyn's BHT Story



tree
tenant

Gardening Volunteer Opportunity in Brighton

The growing project at Richardson's Yard in the New England Quarter is looking for a regular volunteer.

Running on a Wednesday afternoon for an hour and a half, the project uses vegetables and flower wooden planters for the 36 residents of the yard.

The volunteer would assist horticultural therapist and project manager, Jess Bayley, in maintaining the crops, keeping the growing area accessible for all, liaising with, and encouraging participation from residents.

Skills required: some knowledge and/or particular interest in vegetable growing; experience of moving from homelessness/vulnerably housed to independent renting; a desire to help others through peer support/mentoring; ability to keep to a regular weekly commitment.

Interested In Being a Green Inspector?

Are you passionate about your garden? Would you like to feedback and help improve how it's maintained by our contractors?

This summer we are launching the Green Inspectors programme and are looking for tenants across BHT's properties in Brighton and Hastings to get involved.

The role will involve carrying out regular inspections and attending occasional meetings to rate and comment on different elements of the gardening such as grass cutting, shrub beds, hedges, paved areas and weeds after the contractors have visited, then emailing/sending in the post the completed form.

A full induction and training for the role will be provided. Your rating and feedback will then be used to help improve the gardening service received from our contractors.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN EITHER OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES:

Please call Juliet O'Brien on **01273 645443** or email her at juliet.obrien@bht.org.uk



My BHT Story

My name is Martyn. I'm 67 years old and I now live in Newhaven in a private rented sector flat.

I'm originally from Lancashire but have lived in Brighton for 32 years. When I was younger I served in the navy for eight years as an able seaman/torpedo and anti-submarine specialist.

Following serving a six month prison sentence, I found myself homeless but was lucky enough to be housed by BHT in temporary accommodation in Brighton. I was aware that after two years I needed to move on, which I knew wasn't going to be easy with two dogs. I was beginning to feel mildly depressed as it seemed so difficult to find anywhere.

I was recommended to attend the PRS drop-in on Thursday afternoons at BHT's London Road office. I'm no good with computers so needed a lot of help and support, which I received from staff and volunteers. I was told that finding a dog friendly flat was almost impossible, but I persevered. Then a flat came up in Newhaven where the landlord allowed pets. I was so pleased, as I wanted somewhere quieter so Newhaven is ideal. The deal is that I get the carpets cleaned regularly which I am happy to do once a month as I know dog owners can become nose blind.

As an ex-serviceman it was suggested I get in touch with the armed forces charity The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association and I was given support to do so. When SSAFA got in touch to say they could help, I found friends I never knew I had. Amazingly they have awarded me a grant to help me with my removal costs, to buy a fridge/freezer and help pay towards a deposit which has meant I'm now able to move on. I'm so happy and can't wait to move in my new place!

I would like to thank staff at BHT for helping me to move on and achieve a new start.

Welcome to your new Director of Housing

We are pleased to report that David Chaffey has recently been appointed to the post of Director of Housing and Property Services.

David brings with him thirty years of experience across housing management, lettings, repairs, resident involvement and mental health.

I am very excited to have this opportunity to work for Brighton Housing Trust and my aim is to ensure you receive a quality housing and repairs service from a dedicated, efficient and friendly team.

We hope to involve residents in helping to achieve this so please look out for opportunities to be involved with us including Focus Groups and Green Inspectors.



'BHT in Bloom'

Competition Announced

Gardens play a very important part in keeping Brighton, Hastings and Eastbourne nice places to live and gardening itself has been linked to having better health and fitness levels.

For the second year running, we are holding a gardening competition and this year our contractors Southern Land Services are supporting us. There are five fantastic prizes you can win including £30 B & Q vouchers for the two winners and £10 B & Q vouchers for the three runners up.

We are encouraging all tenants with gardens or indoor plants to get involved.

You can pick up some free seeds and an entry form from your local BHT office, or call **01323 340018** and we would be happy to post them out to you.

This year's categories include:

- best individual garden/indoor plants
- best communal garden

The closing date for entries is Monday 26 June and judges will be visiting the entrants in the first week of July to pick the winners.



Interested in being a tenant representative on the Board of Trustees?

This year BHT has made a commitment to recruiting two tenant/client representatives to join the Board of Trustees.

It's a great developmental opportunity for a tenant to bring their ideas to the table, share with other tenants how the board is working for them and to be involved in decisions the board makes about housing and other services. Full training will be given and a mentor assigned to help the representatives learn about board policies and protocol. Out of pocket travel expenses will be reimbursed.

We are looking for someone with integrity, a willingness to speak their mind, an ability to think creatively, good independent judgement, an ability to work effectively as part of a team and a willingness to attend ten meetings a year.

If you are interested in applying please contact Juliet to request a recruitment pack and expression of interest form at juliet.obrien@bht.org.uk or on **01273 645443**. Interviews will be held in July/August with the role starting in September.



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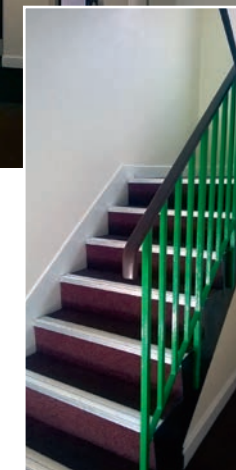
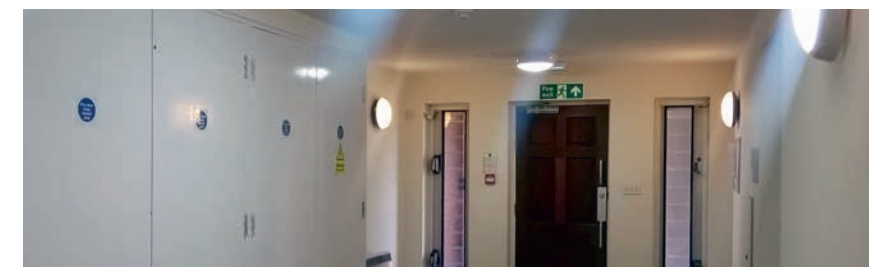
Blake Court brightened up after internal decoration work



I moved into Blake Court during the summer and the place looked worn and dirty.

It has been painted now and looks clean and bright. Makes such a difference.

Anthony Carney



Janny's Tips for Carers

Carers give of themselves on a daily basis, even 24/7 but it's important to recognise your needs too.

This is primarily concerned with dealing with mental health issues such as schizophrenia, but can refer to any role as a carer. See what fits your situation. Take from it what helps you. Putting boundaries in for yourself can avoid burnout. Here's a few tips that I found useful as a carer of someone living with schizophrenia. Tick those you identify with:

1. If you feel much resentment you are giving too much.
2. It is NOT ok for you to be neglected. You have needs and wants too.
3. Don't forget your sense of humour.
4. It may be necessary to re-negotiate your emotional relationship.
5. Don't shoulder the whole responsibility for your mentally disordered relative.
6. Mental health professionals have varied degrees of competence.
7. Separate the person from the disorder. Love the person even if you hate the disorder.
8. It may be necessary to revise your expectations.
9. Your family member is entitled to his/her own life journey, as you are.
10. Survival oriented response is often to shut down your emotional life. Resist this.

Reference: '60 tips for helping people who have schizophrenia'.

Rex Dickens or the NAMI Sibling & Adult Children Network <http://schizophrenia.com/>

For further advice see this useful site: www.carersuk.org/

Benefit News Corner



What is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work.

It is a new benefit to support you if you're out of work or on a low income.

When is Universal Credit coming my way?

Universal Credit continues to roll out nationally.

The claim is usually made online. Hastings already has all original benefits moving over to Universal Credit. Eastbourne is set to go fully operational in October 2017 and Brighton in November 2017.

You may be asked to claim Universal Credit if you have a change in circumstances or start a new benefits claim.

How does it affect my payments to BHT?

Under Universal Credit, your housing costs will be paid to you direct, then you will be required to pay your rent to BHT.

You can ask for Managed Payments when making a claim if you are already in arrears or will have difficulty managing rent payments yourself. The rent will then be paid to BHT directly instead of to you.

How can my Housing Officer or the Income Recovery Officer help?

They can answer your questions or help you find the answer.

If you need a computer to make a claim or log onto your claim, we have them in all our offices and staff are on hand. Please call us if you have any queries

Benefits that can become a Universal Credit claim

These are the benefits that will be moving over in time to become the one benefit: Universal Credit.



Photo Competition

Congratulations to Vicky Parramore who has won the 'Every day moments of happiness' for her lovely photo of an otter (above). She wins a £10 Amazon voucher.

Results of the 2016 tenants' survey

Thank you to everyone who took part in the tenants' survey and congratulations to Muzamel from Southdowns Court Saltdean, Kim from Southwater Road, St Leonards, Frances from Deepdene Gardens, Hastings, Joanne from Cambridge Road, Eastbourne and Sharon from Manston Way, Hastings who all won a £20 shopping voucher.

Responding to our tenants' needs is an important part of our job. Staff continue to work hard to improve. We now have weekly drop ins at all locations, provide generic emails to contact us such as info@bht.org.uk, as well as texting to ensure a speedy and relevant response to queries. If we fail to manage your expectations, let us know.

Some tenants said they were dissatisfied with the way we manage complaints. We will review our housing management procedures before the next tenant survey to see if improvements can be made.

As a minimum we aim for an annual visit to every tenant and to follow up on any queries or problems. Knowing our tenants is central to understanding which services to provide. If you have not had a review and would like one please email the Housing Services Manager on penny.laycock@bht.org.uk

We will continue to have information sections on crucial changes to benefits such as Universal Credit in your quarterly Lighthouse magazine. We will explore the usefulness of a workshop session in Eastbourne, Hastings and Brighton to more fully explain the changes that have and will happen. Meanwhile we are here to answer your questions. Staff keep up to date with benefit changes.

Set Up a Direct Debit and You Can Win a Voucher

Each month, we hold a prize draw for the tenants who have set up a Direct Debit to pay their rent.

Congratulations to **Gillian** and **Ian** from Springfield Road, Brighton, **Stephen** from Golf Drive, Brighton and **Derek** from Southdowns Court, Brighton, who all won a **£10 Sainsbury's voucher** in the draw.



You too can win a shopping voucher when you set up a Direct Debit.

Setting up a Direct Debit can be done over the telephone.

Your Housing Officer can guide you through the process step-by-step, so that you fully understand when and how often you will be making a payment and how much you will be paying.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Please speak to your **Housing Officer** or call our **Eastbourne office** on **01323 340018**.

Free Training Courses for Tenants Coming Soon

Interested in DIY or cooking but unsure where to start?

If so, you will be pleased to hear we are launching a number of courses which will be free for tenants to attend, and travel expenses will be reimbursed.

Courses on offer include hands on tips for **Making Repairs In Your Homes** on **Monday 10 April** from **10am to 1pm** in **Eastbourne** and **Level 2 First Aid** on **Tuesday 9 May** from **10am to 4pm** in **Portslade**, with many more such as **Cooking on a Budget** to follow.

These will be held at a variety of locations including Brighton, Hastings and Eastbourne and will be delivered by **South East Training Uniting People**, a partnership with other housing associations and councils in East Sussex which BHT has recently joined.

Further details to follow about the courses on offer, dates and locations.

Please visit www.setup.org.uk/

Help improve our repairs service with your feedback and you could win a prize

Have you had a repair carried out recently?

If so, how did you find the service?

Your feedback is vital in helping BHT to improve the service that you receive.

Please take five minutes to fill in the survey that you received in the post and you could be in with a chance of winning a **£50 shopping voucher** in our **quarterly prize draw**.