

Issue Twenty Four | April 2021

Lighthouse

Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change



Covid-19 update from
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of Housing Services

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during Covid-19

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Editors note from Alasdair, BHT Involvement Officer & Lighthouse editor

We’re back, with an edition again packed with interesting and informative articles which I know you will enjoy.

We are aware that you are having to hold firm in the face of continuing extremely challenging times. We continue to be incredibly impressed with the resilience and strength shown by our tenants, and the way so many BHT communities have helped each other through these difficult times.

In the last edition we paid a sad farewell to our Housing Manager of 8 years, Penny Laycock. However, every cloud has a silver lining, and we welcome Katherine Pope to the role. Katherine tells us a little about herself and her hopes for her new job.

We also meet Roxanne, our new intern, who introduces herself and the work she is looking forward to getting stuck into when COVID restrictions allow her to start work properly.

We’ve got updates on the progress of the Tenant Scrutiny Panel, the BHT Focus Groups and the BHT Snapshot Survey.

And of course, we’ve got all the regular features, for example Joe Ashdown’s near-legendary crossword and the Lighthouse What’s On page with picks to watch, read or listen to during the pandemic.

All the best,
Alasdair



Covid-19

Updates from David Chaffey, Director of BHT Housing Services

For now, tenant related services continue to operate in line with government restrictions. For example, BHT staff are working from home wherever possible.

We continue to offer a full, COVID secure repairs service (including out of hours emergencies). The UK Government requires us to continue all compliance related work-fire risk assessments and gas safety tests, so access should be provided when you are contacted about these.

Housing Officers will only visit if essential. The only office that is open is Brighton (London Road)– you can make a face to face appointment, but only if essential.

Our work continues online, and we are available by Pyramid Messenger, phone or email for any tenancy related issues. Tenants should refer to our website, where any tenant-related changes will be published as and when they are announced.

Introducing...

Your new Housing Manager, Katherine Pope



‘I was fortunate enough to join the organisation as Housing Services Manager in January this year. I feel very privileged to be part of an organisation where our vision and aim is so clear and underpins all that we do.

I have had a varied career since joining housing over 11 years ago, in roles such as Housing Assistant, Housing Officer, Housing Manager and Tenancy Services Manager for community safety and anti-fraud.

My welcome to BHT has been extremely warm and friendly, all of the team are really knowledgeable and willing to help one another, I can’t wait to go out to visit tenants, our communities and get a further understanding of the fantastic work we do.

Our main aim for the next few months is to continue as a team to carry out welfare calls to tenants during the pandemic assisting with concerns where possible. Another key priority is

to streamline our voids and lettings process, ensuring we can offer safe, secure and desirable properties to welcome new prospective tenants. I look forward to visiting your community soon!’

Roxanne Goodwin, Housing Services Intern

Roxanne originally started her internship late last year, but the post has had to be put on hold until we are able to work in the office again – hopefully very soon!

‘I am pleased and privileged to be given this opportunity to assist as an intern for the BHT Client and Tenant Involvement department. I have experience using the services provided by this supportive and caring organisation. I also have background experience working within the Tenant housing sector, which I’m hoping to put into practice when restrictions are lifted enough for me to be able to continue my internship.

I look forward to assisting the team and meeting the tenants, as well as learning new skills along the way.’

Support Services during COVID-19

We all need a bit of support sometimes, never more so than during the current pandemic. The following local services continue to be open and free to use throughout the lockdown.

Libraries’ Services

Library buildings remain closed for the national lockdown but a wide range of services are available to access remotely. Those not yet a library member can join online and start using services straight away, and make use of lots of free online resources and activities.

libraries@brighton-hove.gov.uk | 01273 290 800

Need help to get online?

Digital Brighton & Hove offer free one-to-one digital support. Phone the Digital Helpline on 07475 946 084 and get help from a volunteer Digital Champion – just leave a message with your name, telephone number and what help you need.

Ability.Net also provide free one-to-one remote support for anyone who needs help to get online during the pandemic. This could include setting up a new device, keeping in touch with family, online shopping and staying safe online. Call **0800 048 7642**.

The Wellbean Hope and Wellness Centre

Aims to provide a safe space for homeless and vulnerable women through workshops. The current workshops for women include Art, Emotional Health, and Alpha: Conversations Exploring Faith.

Contact Jen Pringle: **07306014252** or jen.pringle@stpetersbrighton.org



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Front Cover: The 16th century parterre-style walled garden in Preston Park, Brighton, was owned by the Stanford family who lived in nearby Preston Manor. It has changed little since then.

Across: Alasdair, Lighthouse Editor and Tenant Involvement Officer out enjoying a bike ride.

Online Scams – Top Tips to Help You Beat the Cyber Criminals

While everyone is, quite rightly, worried about the coronavirus, unscrupulous cyber criminals have seen this as an opportunity to defraud innocent victims. Spotting online scams is becoming increasingly difficult.

However, there are things to look out for:

1. Does it make you panic? You may then respond quickly without checking properly.
2. Check the email address. What’s hidden underneath the sender name might be quite different from the name that you can see.
3. The email doesn’t address you personally, but uses ‘Dear Customer’, ‘Dear Friend’, or something similar.
4. Does it look wrong? For example, written in poor English, or logos don’t seem quite right.

Avoiding cyber attacks:

- Never click on links or open attachments in the email unless you’re certain
- Never, ever give personal or financial information unless you are certain it is valid.



- Software updates help keep your device secure. Always install if prompted.
- Use strong passwords, and keep any password records well away from your device(s)
- Use two factor authentication for important websites like banking and email, if you’re given the option.
- Always lock your device when not using it.

Finally, always report cyber attacks as soon as possible. Call Action Fraud (0300 123 2040). You can also forward emails to the Suspicious Email Reporting Service (SERS) at report@phishing.gov.uk. Suspicious text messages should be forwarded to 7726.

BHT Tenant Scrutiny Panel Update

From the chair Charlie Green

You may be aware that in 2020 we completed our review report on how well BHT are dealing with tenant problems created by the move to Universal Credit.

The report was presented to the BHT Board, and the recommendations we made were all agreed by the Board. It will be one of our jobs over the coming months to ensure that all the recommendations we put forward are implemented properly.

On the back of the report, Joan Mortimer (Chair of the Board), wrote a letter to Will Quince MP, Minister for Welfare

Delivery, asking for Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) response to the Panel’s findings, specifically the difficulties that had been caused by the mismanagement of the roll out. At the beginning of March, a response was received from the minister. Speaking personally, I am glad that DWP has replied to the matters raised. However, I feel that Mr Quince has failed to properly address the individual points raised in the Panel report. However, it’s good to see the Government taking notice of our report!!

Our next report addresses BHT’s Repairs process, and the extent to which it is meeting the needs of BHT tenants.

Please contact Alasdair Tenquist (a.tenquist@bht.org.uk) if you would be interested in joining our team.

Stay Safe everyone!
TSP Chairman, Charlie Green

The 2020 BHT Annual Snapshot Survey Update

Every year we ask our clients and tenants to let us know what we are doing well and where we need to improve in our annual survey.

Nearly a third of our tenants completed the latest survey, the highest return level ever. We are always glad to have increased returns as it means we have a clearer picture of what our tenants are feeling about our services.

We are currently processing the results. Once complete, we publish a report on the survey, available to view and download on the BHT website. We follow up any areas of concern either individually or in focus groups which will be announced later this year.

Look out for announcements to this effect on the BHT website. If you have any questions about the survey, please do contact me, Alasdair, on a.tenquist@bht.org.uk.

Brighton Choir With No Name Update

Towards the end of 2020, we finally found a COVID safe venue – St Paul’s, a lovely church next to the Brighton Odeon. We met and rehearsed there (socially distanced) for 5 sessions.

However, just before Christmas the next round of lockdown began, so we had to return to Zoom for our BOOM! Shake the Zoom sessions. However, this is not the terrible news it might at first sound – because after almost a year, we’ve become experts at making a Zoom session a fun and musical space!

Freya our choir director is teaching us *Dog Days are Over* by Florence and the Machine, *These Boots are Made for Walking* by Nancy Sinatra and more. We’re able to experiment with harmonies from the safety of our own homes (no-one can hear those awful yet inevitable mistakes that happen when learning), and we frequently do open mics, or music quizzes.

We plan to start meeting again safely as soon as we’re legally allowed, and we’re also hoping to start accepting new members! So, if you’re interested in joining us on Zoom or being kept in touch about real life sessions when thing re-open, drop me a line on **07825079132** or email alex.procter@bht.org.uk.



The choir has recieved rave reviews from its members when asked recently. This is one example from choir member Dee.

BHT Policy Review

Tenant Janette tells us about her experience on the Tenant Pet Policy Review Panel

BHT policies need to be regularly reviewed and revised. It is important that where BHT these policies affect tenants, we involve you in their review. Tenant Policy Review Panels, comprising tenants and BHT staff, are set up for this purpose. Janette, a tenant from St Leonards on Sea, was on the Pet Policy Review Panel in 2020, and here she says a little about her experiences:

'This was done online, but it was well managed – it's not always easy to manage a bunch of us tenants, all with views and opinions – and quite strong ones at that!

I think all those involved were satisfied with their participation. The resulting revised policy and associated documents were sent round and approved, and the new policy is now in place and being used by Housing Services staff. This was a useful exercise, and has to be good for communication between BHT and its tenants.'

If you're interested in joining future policy review panels, please get in touch with Alasdair: a.tenquist@bht.org.uk.

Our gardening contractors go the extra mile

It's hard to believe that we have been in Government restrictions for over a year now. As you can imagine, throughout this time we have had to work closely with our gardening contractors to ensure our properties' grounds continue to be well maintained.

Certain practices were adapted- for example, operatives maintaining 2m distance, wearing masks, and following enhanced hygiene advice. But they have never stopped their maintenance programme despite all the difficulties that has caused for them, for which we are very grateful on behalf of you, our tenants.

Groundscapes, one of our contractors, went just that little bit further. Michael Steel, Grounds Divisional Manager, explains:

'We saw how difficult BHT tenants have found the restrictions, and we wanted to do something to show our recognition of this. We were also aware that we need



Above: Michael Steel Groundscapes Divisional Manager. He always enjoys chatting with tenants so do say hello if you see him on your property!

to offset our carbon footprint. We decided to offer BHT properties a selection of 5 trees free of charge, to be planted by our operatives.'

We were delighted with this wonderful gesture, and immediately set to thinking about where these lovely trees could be best utilised. As Michael reminded us, they need to have the right soil, plenty of space, and not obstruct tenants' views

One of the trees will be dedicated to Penny Laycock, our ex Housing Manager, who retired in January after eight great years with BHT.

It may be that you think you have a space near you that you think would be a good spot to plant a tree. If you do, please contact me on a.tenquist@bht.org.uk.

Read about the man behind BHT Quiztime: Joe Ashdown



Since the start of the first lockdown last year, BHT has been keen to find ways in which its tenants can remain stimulated during a time of increased isolation for so many.

One such example is the fortnightly quiz available for tenants – BHT Quiztime. Tenants are asked to answer ten multiple choice general knowledge questions and then take the initial letters from each answer to spell out a word or phrase. The tenants who get the most answers right then go into a draw, with the winning entry pulled out of the hat receiving a **£20 shopping voucher**.

The BHT quiz is compiled by BHT's Housing and Performance Administrator and quiz enthusiast, Joe Ashdown. Joe is also responsible for compiling the crossword in each edition of Lighthouse. Joe is a keen quiz player and setter and during lockdown he is part of a team that plays in the weekly Online Quiz League. He recently played in a quiz competition against Paul Sinha from TV's *The Chase*. Previously he has hosted two pub quizzes in Brighton.

Joe says, 'I have been interested in quizzes since childhood, when I used to watch *Fifteen To One*. I also got the chance to take part in my school's *Mastermind* quiz'. He adds, 'taking part in quizzes is a fun way to keep your mind active and to get your competitive juices flowing'. When asked for any tips on improving your general knowledge, Joe said that reading regularly and listening to podcasts are good ways to learn new information.

Further information about this quiz is available by visiting the Housing Services page on BHT's website at www.bht.org.uk/housing-services

Want to help run a BHT LGBT+ page in your Lighthouse?

We at Lighthouse are asking for volunteers to help run an LGBT+ section in your Lighthouse newsletter.

We are also looking to enlist BHT LGBT+ staff volunteers to help us with this venture. As a group, you will be discussing input into the Lighthouse LGBT+ Corner. For example, sharing upcoming events, webinars and links with tenants, and signposting them to other useful local information, services and resources.

If you are up for this, then please get in contact with Alasdair on **07825425084**, or email a.tenquist@bht.org.uk.

The BHT Good Neighbour Award

Is your neighbour one in a million?

We're looking for nominations of tenants for this award for 2021. This is a chance for neighbours to say 'thank you' to a BHT tenant who goes out their way to help others, someone who shows kindness and consideration.

The winner will be selected by representatives from a Good Neighbour Selection Panel made up of tenants and Housing Services staff. The winner will receive £50 worth of vouchers and a commemorative certificate. We would also like the winner to be featured in a press release on the award and to highlight why they won it.

The closing date for nominations is June 30th 2021. Nomination forms are available from Alasdair. Email a.tenquist@bht.org.uk, or call **07825425084**.

Unfortunately, we cannot accept nominations from relatives or anyone who live together in the same dwelling.

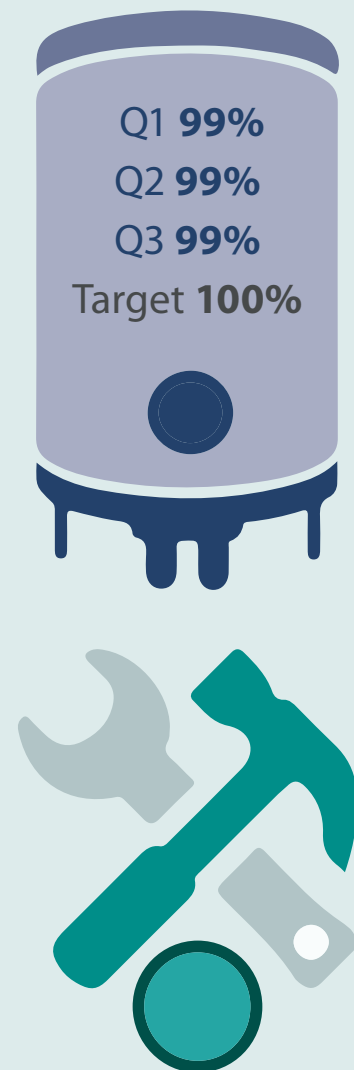
BHT Housing Services

How Well Are We Performing?

Q1 Apr-Jun '20, Q2 Jun-Sep '20, Q3 Oct-Dec 20

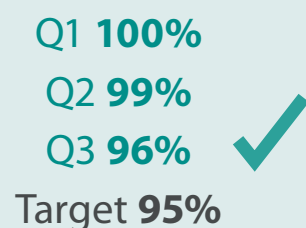
Boiler Servicing

Percentage of boilers serviced yearly



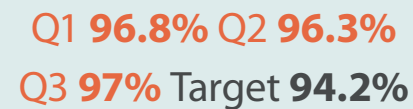
Repairs: Routine

Response time: 28 days



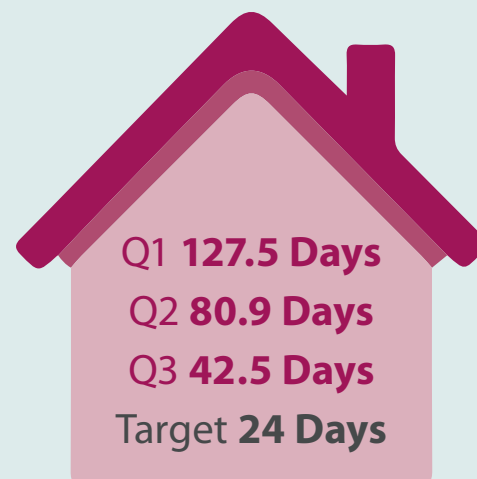
Rent Arrears

Percentage of overall rents collected



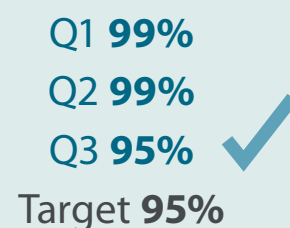
Letting

Days until vacated property is re-let



Repairs: Urgent

Response time: Four to seven days

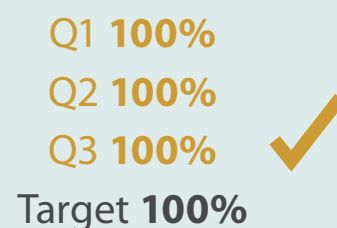


Repairs: Overall Satisfaction



Repairs: Emergency

Response time: 24 hours



BHT Services Advice

Charges for missed repairs appointments

BHT recognises the importance of operating an effective repairs service and is committed to ensuring our properties are maintained to a high standard.

As part of the costs of any visit, all contractors who work on BHT's behalf charge a call out fee if a tenant misses an agreed appointment. As this is a charge incurred by BHT and therefore in effect borne by other tenants, our policy is to recharge this fee to the tenant.

To avoid this, if you have made an appointment for a repair that you cannot keep please contact BHT Repairs department straight away to rearrange. No charge is made for rescheduled appointments.

Do we have your latest contact information?

It is extremely important that our contact details for you are kept up to date. For example, we may need to have emergency access to your property to deal with a repairs or maintenance issue relating to the property, or to carry out mandatory gas/electricity checks.

As such, we ask that if you change your e mail or phone number, you inform us accordingly, so we can continue provide all our tenants with the best possible service.

BHESCo

Get help to reduce your energy costs

Brighton and Hove Energy Services Co-operative (BHESCo) is a not-for-profit social enterprise which provides free heating and energy bill support, e.g. help with finding a cheaper energy tariff, applying for the £140 Warm Home Discount and general advice on reducing energy costs.

Additionally, they can deliver free energy improvement measures such as light-bulbs and draught excluders for those living in cold or damp homes.

The service is intended to reach those whose health may be at risk from living in a cold home, for example:

- the over-55s,
- people with a physical or mental disability and
- low-income families with school age children.

Referrals can be made by calling **01273 284472** or by emailing **info@bhesco.co.uk**.

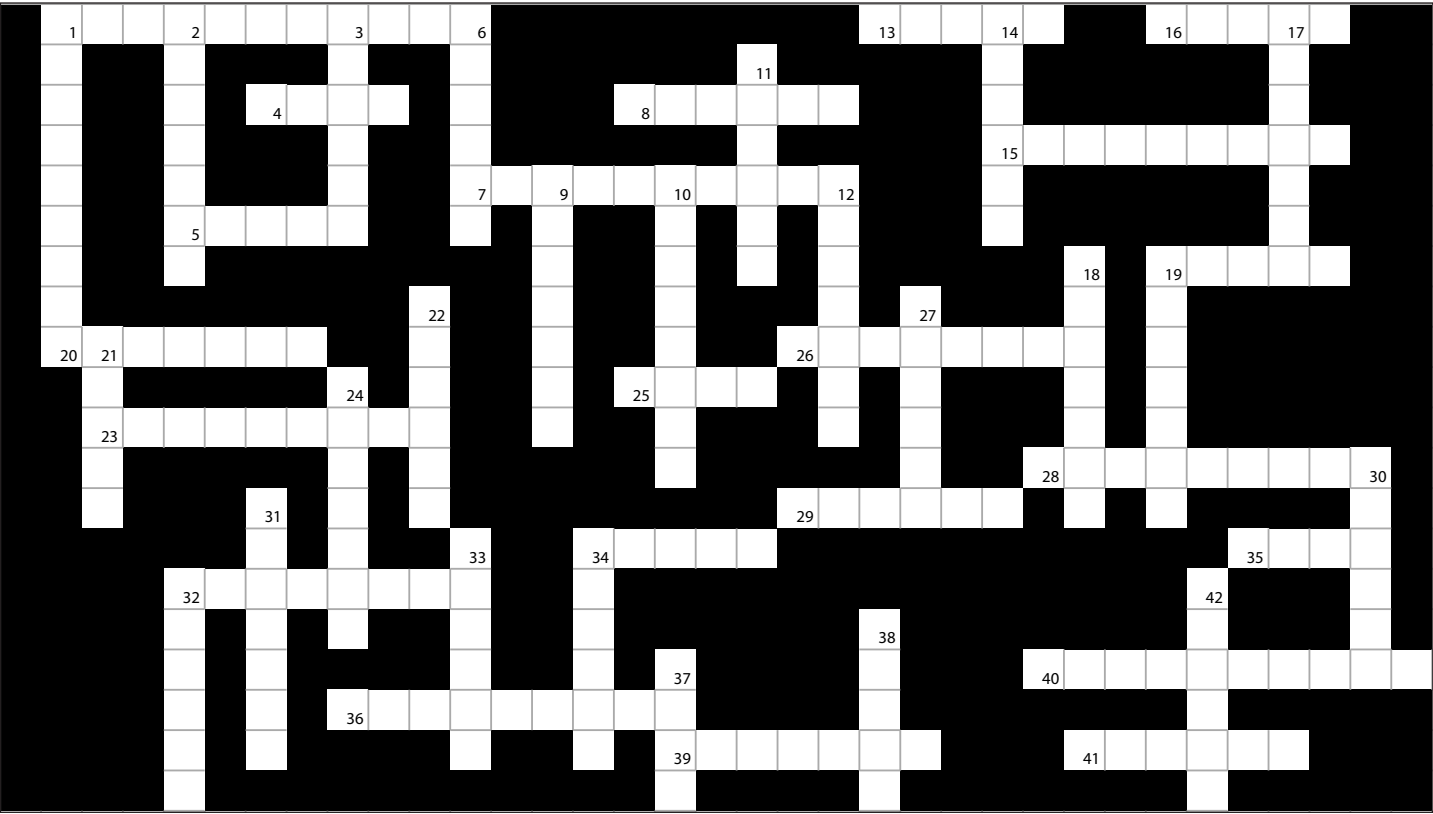
MyTenancy – all your tenancy information at your fingertips!

Did you know that BHT has an Internet based service for our tenants which enables you to manage aspects of your tenancy online?

This service is called MyTenancy and it enables you as a BHT tenant to view your personal information, inform us of changes to your contact details, such as your mobile phone number or email address, to place a repair request and to check the status of existing repairs, to check your rent payments and to read and print your rent statement. You can also check the contact details of your Housing Officer if you need them.

We would particularly encourage you to check the contact information we hold for you so that we can contact you if access is required to your property or if there are any matters we need to discuss with you about your tenancy.

When your tenancy with BHT began, you should have been sent a username and password to access the MyTenancy website. However, if you do not have these details or you have experienced difficulty logging in to the site, please contact Joe Ashdown for further assistance on **07551 402265** or via email at **joe.ashdown@bht.org.uk**.



BHT Crossword: Fruit & Veg (Answers on the back page)

- Across**

 - 1. White-fleshed vegetable paired with cheese in a side dish (11)
 - 4. Small, circular vegetables found in pods (4)
 - 5. Spice used as a seasoning in roasts (5)
 - 7. Small red fruit traditionally served with cream (10)
 - 8. King Edward is a variety of this popular vegetable (6)
 - 13. Main fruit ingredient in the dessert called Melba (5)
 - 15. Fruit that gives its name to an award for bad acting (9)
 - 16. Tropical fruit often used in Indian cuisine (5)
 - 19. Alternative name for a dried plum that is rich in Vitamin K (5)
 - 20. Small varieties of dried grape often used in cake baking (7)
 - 23. Large exotic fruit known as L'ananas in French (9)
 - 25. This variety of maize is often served "on the cob" (4)
 - 26. Cylindrical shaped salad ingredient (8)
- Down**

 - 1. Herb commonly used in cooking (9)
 - 2. Popular type of salad leaf (7)
 - 3. Fruit grown on trees in Southern Spain (6)
 - 6. Dark red, crunchy salad vegetable (6)
 - 9. Plant stalk served with custard as a dessert (7)
 - 10. Red vegetable used in the Russian soup Borscht (8)
 - 11. Popular vegetable used to make a snowman's nose (6)
 - 12. Dairy product often flavoured with fruit (7)
 - 14. Small red fruit placed on the top of cakes (6)
 - 17. Pickled cucumber or commercial building in London (7)
 - 18. Narrow root vegetable that is often roasted (7)
 - 19. Variety of squash that is traditionally carved on Halloween (7)
 - 21. Eating one of these a day is said to "keep the doctor away" (5)
 - 22. Traditional ingredient in a Waldorf Salad (6)
 - 24. Popeye ate this vegetable to give him extra strength (7)
 - 27. The favourite root vegetable of comedy character Baldrick (6)
 - 30. Red fruit used to flavour and colour a popular sauce (6)
 - 31. Pear-like fruit associated with Mexico (6)
 - 32. Yellow-skinned fruit that is peeled before eating (6)
 - 33. Type of dark red bean that often features in Indian cuisine (6)
 - 34. Healthy pulse vegetable often found in soups (6)
 - 37. Bulbous fruit with a variety called Conference (4)
 - 38. The "spring" variety of this vegetable is found in salad dishes (5)
 - 42. Large, mature vegetable grown to win prizes (6)

Top picks of books, films, shows and podcasts

BHT Housing Services staff & tenants share their recommendations

TV Series

- Abandoned Engineering, On Sky One**
Recommended by Steve (Tenant)
This series reveals things like abandoned settlements, buildings and deserted ships in the desert, all unused for decades, centuries even. Their stories are really fascinating.
- Small Axe, BBC iPlayer**
Recommended by Kerry (Tenant)
This is a series of five powerful and very topical films, based on the real-life experiences of London's West Indian community between 1969 and 1982.
- The Great Pottery Throwdown on All 4**
Recommended by David Chaffey (Director of Housing)
Likeable contestants doing something many people my age did at school but to a much higher standard – the judges' passion and the potters' determined skill make it perfect lockdown viewing.
- Grace, on ITV Hub**
Recommended by Katherine Pope (Housing Manager)
This series is based on the Peter James novels. Great to watch as they are set in Brighton and surrounding areas.
- Behind Her Eyes on Netflix**
Recommended by Katherine Pope (Housing Manager)
A great series based on twisted mind games – very gripping. A single mother begins an affair with her

psychiatrist boss while secretly befriendng his mysterious wife.

Films

- Twin Town, on Amazon Prime**
Recommended by Steven (Tenant)
Possibly the best Welsh film to date. Set in South Wales, it's about a pair of male twins and their capers. Very funny and bursting with Welsh self-deprecating humour.
- Sleuth, on Amazon Prime**
Recommended by Steven (Tenant)
Starring Laurence Olivier and Michael Caine. This is a brilliant film where you just can't leave the room. And virtually no violence – just suspense!

The Home Pimp – How to skimp and primp on a budget
On YouTube, recommended by Janette (former Tenant)
Alexandra Gater does fabulous makeovers on small apartments with great ideas for doing up your rooms on a budget. She's fun and trendy and a great watch!
Link: youtu.be/gWFB3xP0lCI

Books & Podcasts

- Fluke by James Herbert, Amazon**
Recommended by Steve (Tenant)
This great tear-jerker is about a dog who realizes that he used to be a man. It has a lovely ending!
- The Midnight Library by Matt Hague, Amazon,**
Recommended by Kerry (Tenant)
This is the absolute best book of lockdown for me- very therapeutic as well as a good read!
- Touch by Claire North, Amazon**
Recommended by David Chaffey (Director of Housing)
This intriguing book is about someone who moves in and out of other people's bodies. Surreal and unbelievable on one level, but fascinating in terms of who we really are.
- Made of Human, Apply & Google Podcast App**
Recommended by Kerry (Tenant)
Comedian Sofie Hagen chats to comedians, authors, actors, musicians, activists, medical professionals, podcasters, influencers and artists about how to do life.
- Curious Under the Stars, Radio 4**
Recommended by David Chaffey (Director of Housing)
A great series set in the country of my birth Wales – an amusing story about a couple who move to a small village and all the characters they encounter along the way.

Contact Us

Brighton Housing Trust
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 on-line

Housing Officers
Brighton Housing Officer:
Kiri Black 01273 645454 / 07826874849

Hastings, Eastbourne & Saltdean
Kittie Ogden 07824306591/
07824306591

Tenant Involvement
Alasdair Tenquist
01273 645443 / 07825 425084

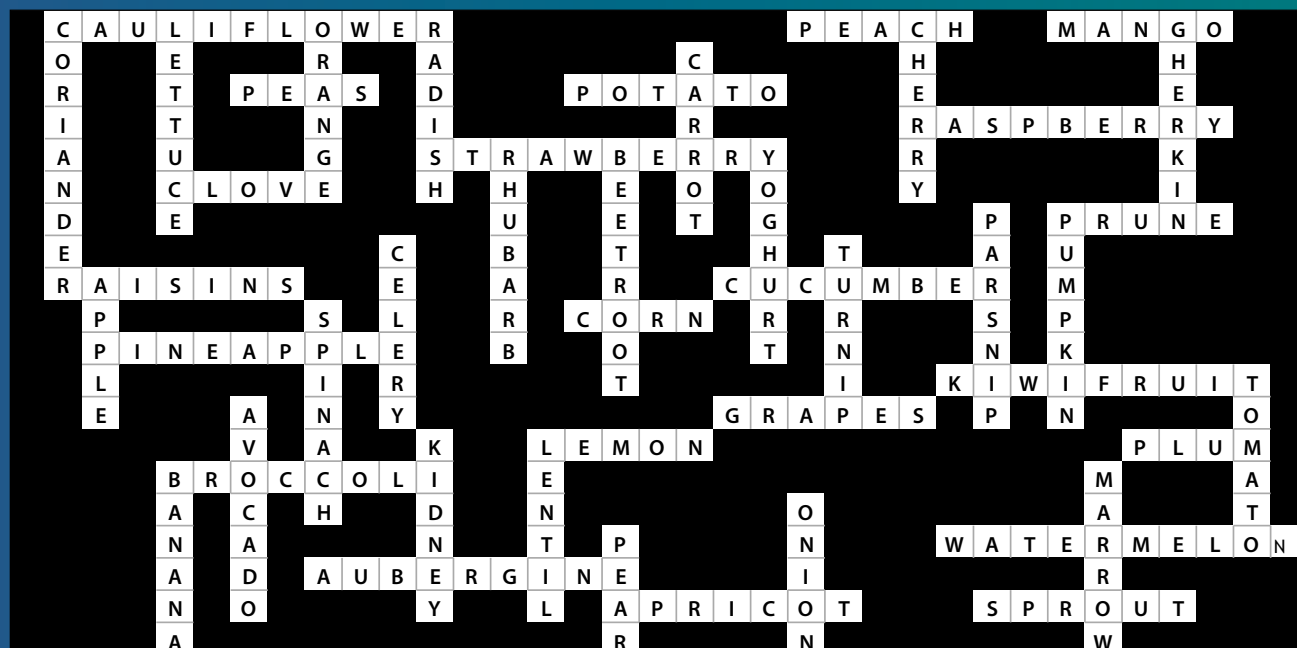
Out of Hours Emergency Repairs
01323340018

Gas emergencies
0800 030 4425

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

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

Crossword Answers



Congratulations to our prize draw winners

Congratulations to Joanne from St Leonards On Sea, who won a £20 shopping voucher in the Direct Debit prize bi-monthly draw simply for setting up a Direct Debit with BHT. Your Housing Officer can guide you through the process step-by-step.

Congratulations also to Chloe from Brighton, who won a £50 shopping voucher in the prize draw for the repairs survey. Have you had a repair carried out recently? If so, how did you find the service? We need your feedback, so fill in the survey you receive in the post and you could win a £50 shopping voucher in our quarterly prize draw.