lbl•ltl •lhl• sussex

Issue Twenty Seven | December 2021

Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change

Meet Toyah, your new Housing Officer

(1) (4)

Environmental Corner: Some green Christmas tips from Mary Stevens

Where to find provisions if you're hard up this Christmas

Top entertainment picks from the Management Team

Meet Paul, Maintenance lead and astronomer

Digitally confused? There may be help around the corner with BHT Sussex Digital Champions

*

It is with great pleasure that we present your latest edition of Lighthouse.

Here at BHT Sussex we continue to operate as normal, albeit within certain restrictions necessitated by ongoing COVID conditions. We continue to apply our pre-19th July COVID protocols regarding how we work, whilst making sure we deliver our services as well as possible. Bearing that in mind, rest assured that we are doing all we can to continue to provide a regular service to you whilst ensuring the safety and security of our staff, tenants and contractors.

The 23rd November 2021 was a big day for BHT Sussex as we welcomed over 100 new members of staff. This is due to BHT Sussex successfully winning the contract to manage the East Sussex Floating Support Service contract, which aims to further reduce homelessness and help vulnerable people who need support to live independently. It's the largest increase in staff in our history, and we're pleased to announce that the introduction of the new staff and service went brilliantly.

In this edition of Lighthouse, Mary Stevens, Environmental Officer, gives an update on the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) and some handy hints on staying warm during the winter months. We introduce Toyah, Housing Officer, and share interesting interviews with Kiri, Housing Officer and member of Brighton's LGBTQ+ community, and Paul, BHT Sussex Maintenance Supervisor.

Finally, please remember to use our website for the latest information on COVID and look out for our text messages too. Do keep in touch with us and your neighbours during the upcoming winter months – together we can support each other through these challenging times.

I wish you all the happiest of Christmases and a New Year filled with all good things!

Best regards Alasdair,

BHT Sussex Involvement Officer

藆

Be a BHT Sussex Digital Champion

Digital Transformation is a part of BHT Sussex's future initiatives and as we embark on this exciting journey, we're looking for tenant volunteers to become digital champions to help support the work.

The Digital Champion's role will be to help tenants across BHT Sussex to improve their confidence and motivation around basic digital skills. This may be, for example, helping someone get to grips with making a video call, sending emails or how to search the internet.

You may already be an informal Digital Champion, helping your family and friends with getting to grips with digital devices and tools. This is an opportunity to recognise your skills and support role a little more formally. Note that you are not expected to be a whizz at computers – if you can show someone else how to shop online, or set up an email account, or online banking, then that is all that may well be required.

Training will be provided for all Digital Champions. We would love to reach a point where BHT Sussex Digital Champions are the main points of digital contact for BHT Sussex tenants ongoing guidance and support around their digital issues. If you are interested in becoming a Digital Champion, contact Alasdair Tenquist, on **07825 425084**, or **a.tenguist@bht.org.uk**.

3	General News
45	Tenant Involveme

- 6 Community News
- 7,8,9 BHT Housing Services Updates
- 10, 11 Crossword & What's On
- **12** Contact Us/ Crossword Answers

Front Cover:

A beautiful scene of the seafront in the snow. Just off Madeira Drive, Brighton.

New BHT Sussex Staff introductions

Toyah Thomas: Housing Services Officer

'Hi, my name is Toyah Thomas and I have been working in social housing for 13 years. I have worked in various roles including customer service and repairs maintenance.

However, I finally found my passion as a Housing Officer and really enjoy what I do. I love the variety of my role and no two days are the same. I always come across new challenges that keep me on my toes!

What is it like to part of the LGBTQ+ Community locally?

BHT Sussex Housing Officer Kiri Black, is part of Brighton's vibrant LGBTQ+ community. She married recently, managing to honeymoon in lovely St Lucia. Here she answers a few questions for Lighthouse readers.

What it's like as an LGBT+ staff member working at BHTS?

I'm treated the same as everyone else and I have a lot of LGBTQ+ colleagues which helps. We get really involved in Pride which is a brilliant event – it's such a shame that it didn't go ahead this or last year.

How would you like to see us promote information for our LGBTQ+ community?

Maybe to offer more information about LGBTQ+ resources, help groups etc. that may be available in local areas, particularly for the trans and non-binary community as I know we have some trans/non-binary tenants. An LGBTQ+

www.bht.org.uk/services/housing-services



I am enjoying getting to grips with my new patch and although I have spoken to quite a few residents, if I haven't spoken to you yet I hope to speak to you soon!

Outside of work I enjoy travelling, eating out and going for walks with my two French bulldogs.'



page in *Lighthouse* would help, with information and useful resources.

What kind of support or community groups have you found helpful?

I don't use any support groups myself, though I go to events such as Pride. There's the Clare Project for the trans community, they have a great Facebook group. The Gay Men's Chorus is also brilliant fun if you can sing a little.

Do you have any Christmas wishes for our readers?

I'd just like to wish all the *Lighthouse* readers, LGBTQ+ or otherwise, a really happy Christmas period and a wonderful New Year.

If anybody is interested in these groups, Kiri is more than happy to help you find ways to connect with the local LGBTQ+ community.

You can call her on **07826874849**, or email <u>kiri.black@bht.org.uk</u>

Interview with Paul Foster

Paul Foster heads up the BHT Sussex maintenance crew who are on constant call to help maintain all the properties owned by BHT Sussex across the county.

What is it like to work for BHT Sussex?

I've been here 5 years now, and I have good days and bad days, and the good days far outweigh the bad. Solving tenants' problems is what I enjoy most. I am, if anything, a problem solver.

What does a typical day look like?

We are still doing quite a lot of working from home. When out, my work is quite varied though, doing things like checking out the spec requirements on voids, to completing Energy Performance Certificates, pumping out basements or climbing rooves, to doing inspections.

What are your greatest bugbears at work?

Tenants not showing up for appointments is the most difficult, and also managing tenant expectations about what we are able to replace. Some people's ideas of a worn out kitchen is not the same as we are instructed to deliver.

How could tenants make life easier for you?

Please be on time for appointments! It wastes time and makes life difficult for everyone.

What are your hobbies?

I am an Astro photographer, i.e. I photograph the night sky using telescopes. I use an astrophotography camera, attached to a telescope inside a an observatory in my back garden. It's a hobby I started when I was 9 when I had my first telescope from my dad, and have never looked back. Looked up a lot, never back! I also do 3D printing. I print with filament or resin, and make loads of things, for example all the COVID safety visors for work, and all my Christmas decs!





A Christmas Update from Brighton Choir With No Name

It's been wonderful to have been reunited in real life spaces over recent months.

The BHT Sussex Tenant Policy Review Panels

We at BHT Sussex know that it is important to include our tenants in as many decisions as possible in the areas that directly affect them.

Without this, our policies rapidly grow unworkable and counterproductive, and lead to bad feeling and mistrust from our service users. It is important therefore that where 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.

Tenant panels have reviewed and revised several policies

After a great stint in our Open Market in Brighton, we've now returned to St. Paul's Church, where the well-attended weekly choir sessions have been full of fun, singing and laughter.

After a year out due to COVID-19, our much loved annual show at Brighton Dome went ahead on December 9th to a packed and loudly appreciative audience. It was a spectacular evening full of festive cheer and wonderful music, and the money raised will go to continuing the wonderful work of the Brighton Choir amongst those with experience of homelessness in the area.

We held another event on the 13th December, where the choir sang with the Hullabaloo Community Quire which was also a highly entertaining and fun evening. We've also been busy working on a project – a video and recording of us singing our version of *Run* by Snow Patrol. We were able to work with a sound technician from Brighton Dome and a local filmmaker to capture some epic, high-definition footage and sounds of our singing. We first sang this in lockdown on Zoom and we feel that the words really capture something:

"Even if you cannot hear my voice, I'll be right beside you dear", which sort of describes our journey through this time! The video will be out in the New Year – look out for more news on this!

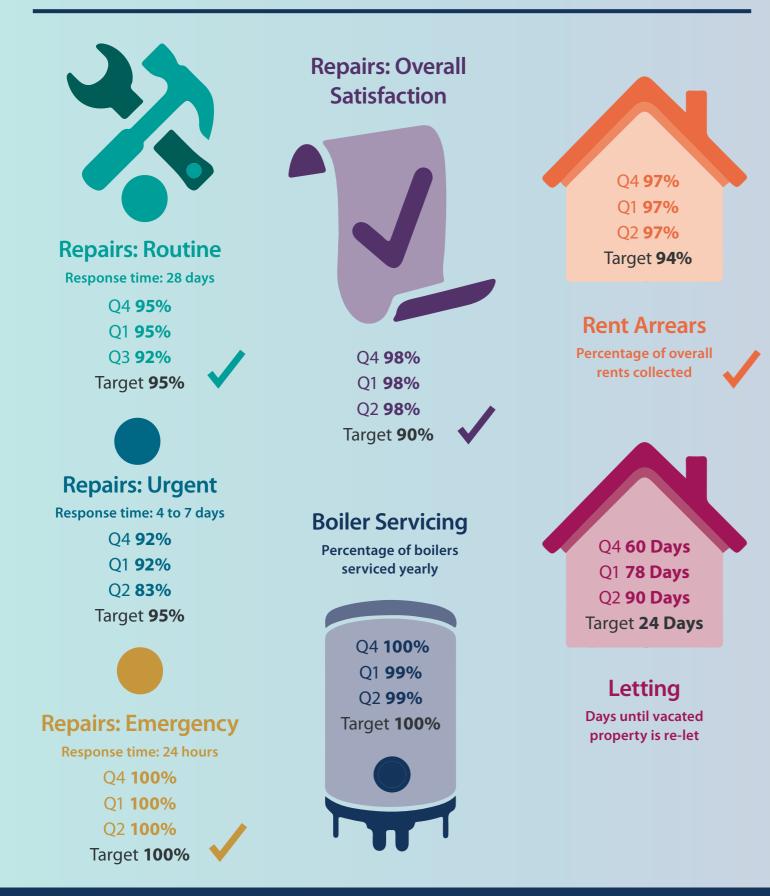
with tenants over the last year or so, for example, the Pet, Lettable Standards and Complaints Policies. In each case, the policies and procedures were examined by the tenant group. Suggestions were made to improve them. These were sent to Housing Services Management who responded to each of the suggestions. Unless there are very good reasons for not doing so, management will ratify tenant suggestions, or give very good reasons why they cannot do so. The agreed changes are then monitored to ensure that they are delivered in line with the Panel's requests.

Brighton tenant Samantha, said of her experience on the Pet Policy Tenants' Panel: 'I'm delighted that BHT are taking such an interest in involving our community rather than simply creating policy in house.'

Policies due to be reviewed over the next year or so include our starter tenancy, Evictions and Mutual Exchange Policies. If you are interested in joining one of these groups, look out for promotion of the next panel by email and by text. If you want any information on this, please call Alasdair on 07825425084 or e mail on a.tenquist@bht.org.uk

BHT Housing Services: How Well Are We Performing?

Q4 Jan-Mar 2021, Q1 Apr-Jul 2021, Q2 Aug-Sep 2021



Charlie's Delicious Xmas Recipes

Tenant Charlie, a regular contributor to *Lighthouse*, offers you two simple but delicious canapés for the Festive Season.

Sweet and Sour Sticky Meatballs

Ingredients:

- 14 oz. Jellied cranberry sauce
- 12oz Tomato ketchup or sweet and sour chilli sauce
- Cocktail Meatballs cooked

Method

- All you need to do is add the two sauces into a pan and stir and heat until the consistency is to your liking.
- Add the meatballs, heat them up and then serve in a bowl with toothpicks.
- For the meatball glaze, you can swap the ingredients based on your favourites or what you have in hand you just need one sweet item and one zesty.

Reading your electricity meter

You may be paying too much

Winter is on our doorstep and paying the correct amount for your energy consumption is very important at this expensive time of year.

First, learn to read your meter: <u>www.citizensadvice.org.</u> <u>uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/your-energy-meter/</u> <u>how-to-read-your-energy-meter/</u>, then take a reading every month and record it. In 2019, several major energy companies overcharged their customers and were told to refund the overpayments. One company overcharged 40,000 of its prepayment customers.

Puff pastry twists with sun-dried tomato pesto

Ingredients

- 100g grated parmesan
- 2 tbsp fresh pesto
- 320g puff pastry sheet
- Flour, for dusting
- 1 egg, beaten



Method

- Preheat oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Tip the cheese and pesto into a bowl and mix well.
- You can use any cheese you fancy, but I have gone with parmesan. Unroll the pastry on a lightly floured surface and cut in half lengthways.
- Spread the pesto mix over one half, pop the other piece of pastry on top to create a sandwich. Cut in half lengthways to create 2 long rectangles. Divide each rectangle into short strips, about 1cm thick. Twist each pastry strip and place on a baking tray lined with parchment.
- Brush with egg and bake for 20-25 mins until risen and golden brown.

It is advised to maintain a record of monthly readings. Look at this website to find out if you should be refunded any overpayment <u>www.ofgem.gov.uk/information-consumers/</u> <u>energy-advice-households/check-if-you-are-owed-money-</u> <u>your-energy-bill</u>.

Energy firms overcharged one million switching customers www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-56250956. If you can read your electricity meter, you will be able to contact your energy supplier and contest the overcharge.

For an easier way to keep tabs on your home energy consumption you can switch to a smart meter. The key benefits are an in-home display on a portable device and the readings are sent directly to your energy provider. The smart meter communicates through a national network and will be free from requirement of a Wi-Fi connection.

7

BHT Lighthouse magazine

Environmental Corner

Advice from Mary Stevens, BHT Sussex Environmental Officer

Staying Warm and Staying Green! We're now moving into the coldest months of the year and energy bills can be high. Here are some suggestions for reducing energy use and carbon emissions from heating, while still keeping warm:

 Open blinds/curtains during the day – sunlight alone can warm a room, closing them when it's dark helps keep heat in at night. • Only heat/have lights on in rooms you are using.

- Make sure you understand how your heating works. If you need help ask.
- Get outside if you can. Going for a brisk walk will help you warm up. Don't forget to turn heating and lights off when you go out.
- If you feel the cold indoors, a hot water bottle is a great way to keep cosy.

More tips on energy saving can be found here: <u>Quick</u> tips to save energy at home - Energy Saving Trust. We circulated a survey in November looking at energy use in your homes – thank you to everyone who responded – we'll update you on the outcome in your next Lighthouse.

Feasting Without Food Waste

Christmas is costly enough without wasting food, but in all the excitement many of us get carried away and buy too much.

In the UK a massive 74,000 tonnes of food is wasted at Christmas. Top items thrown away are gravy, potatoes, parsnips, carrots and sprouts. That's 3 of your five a day! Avoid wasting festive food and money by:

- Planning your meals.
- Avoid buying too much. Don't be tempted by special bulk buy offers or packets larger than you need. If you can, buy loose veg rather than a large pack. It's less likely to go to waste and you'll save on packaging waste.
- Don't buy food no-one likes just because it's traditional. However, sprouts cut in half and roasted are delicious honest!
- Using up left over food is a chance for some creative cooking. There are plenty of recipes online for yummy soups, stews and risottos you can make from your surplus celebration meat or veg.

And last but not least, enjoy your festive feasting!

Resolutions for a Green New Year

In January we're often looking to make savings and healthy lifestyle changes. Why not make New Year Resolutions that are good for you and good for the planet?

Food

Make meat a treat – intensively farmed meat is bad for our planet, using land for livestock and growing feed, and 40% of methane pollution comes from agriculture – much of this from cow burps. Meat free meals are healthier for you and the environment.

Travel

Get active when you travel – walking or cycling short distances saves money and pollution, and you burn off some calories too. If you're planning a longer trip – train travel can be an affordable option if you book tickets in advance.

Waste

Reduce your rubbish – more supermarkets are looking at ways to reduce single use packaging, so show them you support this by choosing foods with less packaging where you can.

Water

Make your shower short – reducing your daily shower time by 1 minute could save up to £17 a year! Let us know your green resolutions and how they're going and we can share it in the next Lighthouse.

Charges for missed repairs appointments and lock changes

If you lose your key or lock yourself out you should call a local locksmith to change your lock. Please let your Housing Officer know you have a new key. If BHT change your locks because you've lost or left your key in your home we'll recharge you for the callout.

If you have contents insurance with Thistle Insurance (provided through the National Housing Federation) you can claim for a lost key. Check your insurance policy to see if you're covered.

Funds low this Christmas? There is help out there

Finances can often be pushed to the limit over the Christmas period, and food can often be the necessity

Brighton	
Bevendean Food Bank	07449 464695
Brighton Food Bank	01273 695330
Brighton Women's Centre Food Bank	01273 698036
Mutual Aid Vegan Food Bank	Email:
Roundabout Children's Centre Food Bank	01273 290300
Salvation Army Hove Food Bank	07551572205 / 01273 323072
Shoreham Food Bank	07708 384906
The Vale Community Centre Food Bank	01273 571573
Voices in Exile	01273 328598
Eastbourne	
Eastbourne Foodbank	01323 409925
Hastings	
Hastings Foodbank	01424 753322
The Pantry	01424 444691
Hastings Temple	01424 443022

www.bht.org.uk/services/housing-services

Out when our contractor called?

The contractor will have let you know the approximate time for your appointment. If you're out or refuse to let them in you will be recharged for a missed callout.

If you cannot make the appointment or change your mind about the repair please call **01323 340018**, email **repairs@bht.org.uk** or text the contractor back.

Where BHT receives notification beforehand, no charge will be made for rescheduled appointments.

which is hardest hit. If this is the case for you, why not consider one of the options below as potential sources for food over the coming winter months. Please contact the relevant food banks to find opening hours and how to access the free food.

https://www.trustdevcom.org.uk/what-we-do/communitydevelopment/bevendean/

http://www.bhcm.org.uk/teams/brighton-food-bank

https://womenscentre.org.uk/

https://en-gb.facebook.com/mutualaidveganfoodbank/

https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-andeducation/childrens-services/roundabout-childrens-centreand-deans-cc

https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/hove

https://shoreham.foodbank.org.uk/

https://www.mylifebh.org.uk/crisis-support/the-valecommunity-centre-food-bank/

https://www.voicesinexile.org/

https://eastbourne.foodbank.org.uk/

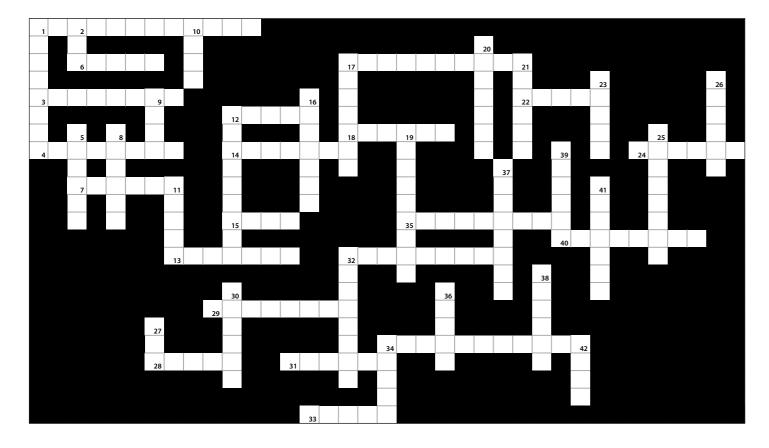
https://hastings.foodbank.org.uk

https://etcsussex.weebly.com/the-pantry.html

https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/hastings-temple

Christmas Crossword

(Answers on the back page)



Across

1. Alternative name for 24th December (9, 3) 3. School play performed before Christmas (8) 4. Animal that draws Santa's transport (8) 6. There are 24 of these on an Advent Calendar (5) 7. Type of sledge drawn by animals (6) 12. Fragrant oil supposedly gifted by Three Wise Men (5) 13. Chocolate cake eaten at Christmas (4, 3) 14. White sculpture that is made in freezing weather (7) 15. Items of play gifted to children

at Christmas (4) 17. Man with white beard who

delivers presents (5, 5) 18. Hanging piece of ice formed

from freezing water (6)

22. Festive song often sung by group of singers (5)
24. The coldest season of the year (6)
28. White slippery substance found on ground when cold (5)
29. The patron saint of children (8)
31. Small indoor surrounding

where children visit Santa (6)
32. Bird found in a pear tree (9)
33. Mythical being found at top of a Christmas tree (5)
34. Enduringly popular Christmas song (6, 5)
35. Northernmost of point on planet Earth (5, 4)
40. Thick garment hung up for

putting presents in (8)

Down

1. Item opened up in 24 days before Christmas (8) Colour of Santa's outfit (3)
 Shiny material used for decoration (6)
 Festival that begins 4 weeks before Christmas (6)
 Real or imitation shrub decorated at Christmas (4)
 Frozen rain (4)
 Shrub used as a Christmas decoration (5)

 Plant traditionally kissed under at Christmas (9)
 Roof structure that Santa uses

to enter houses (7) 17. Fast moving activity performed

on ice (7) 19. Edible items roasted on an

open fire (9) 20. Region of Scandinavia where

Santa lives (7) 21. _____ Santa, an anonymous

exchange of gifts (6)

23. Band led by Noddy Holder (5)
25. Christmas dessert snack that can be served hot or cold (5, 3)
26. Item of clothing that has Christmas designs on it (6)
27. One of Santa's team of helpers (3)

30. Used to illuminate Christmas trees (6)

34. Suitably cheerful for the season (5)

36. Gaspar, Melchior and Balthasar collectively, the 3 _____ (5)37. A person who is employed to rear and herd sheep (8)

38. Santa's reindeer with a red nose (6) 39. Garments worn on hands in

cold weather (6) 41. Miserly character created by

Charles Dickens (7) 42. Hot liquid food eaten with a

spoon (4)

Top picks of books, films, shows and podcasts

In this selection, some members of the BHT Sussex Executive Management Team and the Chair of Trustees offer their top entertainment choices for you to savour over the festive period.

David Chaffey Recommends:

Grace & Frankie, TV series on Netflix – Funny and irreverent.

Curious Under the Stars, BBC Radio 4 – Set in a mysterious Welsh village – back to my roots.

Paris Echo by Sebastian Faulks, Book (check your local Library) – A great story with some history thrown in.

Kevin MacDonald, Chair of Trustees

The Queen's Gambit, Call My Agent, Spiral, Modern Family, Endeavour, TV Series – These kept me and my wife going during lockdown.

60s, 70s pop and rock classics – My playlist when I'm running – Beatles, Stones, The Who, Rod Stewart, with a bit of Snow Patrol thrown in.

Classical Music, Classic FM and Radio 3 – I listen to classical music while I work – Beethoven as aural wallpaper works for me.

I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue, Radio 4 – It's hard to make me laugh out loud – but this invariably does the trick.

The Remains of the Day, by Kazuo Ishiguru – I'm currently reading this, like my music, I'm clearly not up-to-date, or fashionable!

Daniel O'Connell, Head of Human Resources and Learning & Development

The 12th Man, Netflix – Gripping tale of survival based on true story. Who needs Covid?

Godless, TV Series, Netflix – Not just for men!

Just One Thing, BBC Radio 4, Michael Mosley – Short bite size wellbeing tips you can do every day.

Cerys Matthews, BBC Radio 6 – An eclectic mix of great stories and songs across the music spectrum.

The Huey Show, BBC Radio 6 – Huey Morgan of Fun Lovin' Criminal fame. When not doing football training on Saturday or a match Sunday I am always surprised by their choices as they keep it fresh and don't play just the hits...

The Salt Path by Raynor Winn, Library – Massive Sunday times bestseller. Homelessness can come to anybody. It's about the healing power of the natural world as an older couple take a 630-mile journey on the South West Coast Path.

PS. If buying books I recommend *World of Books* – they recycle, help charities and reuse – great value/condition and prices.

Jo Berry, Head of Business Development, Fundraising & Publicity

I May Destroy You, BBC iPlayer – Great characters, interesting subjects covered.

Serial (True Crime Series), Free Download, Podcast – American true crime drama. Follows very different crime cases, some trivial some not so. The case develops with each episode.

BBC Sounds App, free – Good mix of music, documentaries and dramas.

BBC 6 Music, Digital radio – Very mixed music, interesting DJs.

All books by Lisa Jewell, Check your local Library – Fastpaced, well written, great stories.

Contact

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

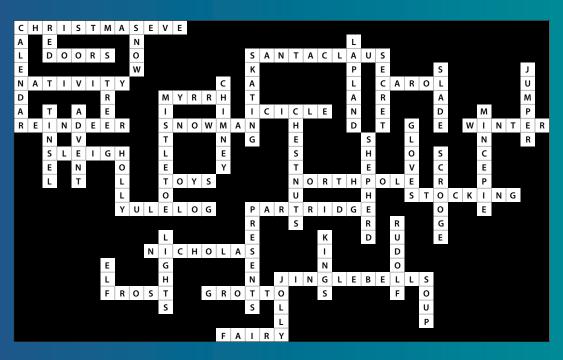
Hastings, Eastbourne & Saltdean Toyah Thomas 07824306591 Tenant Involvement Alasdair Tenquist 01273 645443 / 07825 425084

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs Redman Howard 07493223016

Gas emergencies 0800 030 4435

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 Charlie from Brighton who won a £20 shopping voucher in the direct debit prize bi-monthly draw simply for setting up a Direct Debit with BHT Sussex. Your Housing Officer can guide you through the process step-by-step.

Congratulations to Nicholas 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.