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Issue Twenty Eight | April 2022

Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change

Some feedback from BHT's Focus Groups

Environmental Corner: Some tips on saving energy in your home from Mary Stevens

Find out when your Housing Officer is inspecting your block

Top entertainment picks from BHT tenants in Brighton

Our brand new LGBTQ+ column

Find out about the upcoming annual Snapshot Survey



As we emerge blinking from what seems a very long, COVID-darkened tunnel, we begin to look to a future where the virus is not the first topic of conversation on everybody's lips.

That said, we at BHT Sussex continue to practice a 'safety-first' approach regarding how we work. 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.

I'm delighted to say that the Tenant Scrutiny Panel is up and running again after a long-enforced absence. Charlie Green, the Panel Chair, gives us his take on the next steps of this very important tenant body.

There's great news inside on the outcomes of the tenant Focus groups, which looked at a range of areas from BHT Sussex's environment awareness, to our response to hate crime and the quality of the homes we offer. You can also find out when our Housing Officers will be visiting your property and Mary's Environmental Corner offers some excellent garden advice for Spring.

We are very pleased to welcome a new tenant to the *Lighthouse* editorial panel – Kerry. Kerry has taken ownership of matters LGBT+ within the newsletter, and in her spot tells us a little about herself, as well as signposting some really important local services, including the Ledward Foundation.

We do have some sad farewells though. Matt McDonald, our brilliant Intern, is moving on, as is Alex Procter, gifted manager of BHT Sussex partners Brighton Choir With No Name. And of course, we've got all the regular features, like Joe Ashdown's legendary crossword, and the *Lighthouse* What's On page with picks to watch, read or listen to, this time collated by Brighton tenant Kerry.

All the best, Alasdair

BHT Sussex Involvement Officer





Matt, our fantastic Involvement Intern, bids us a fond farewell

Matthew McDonald joined BHT Sussex as an Involvement Intern back in August 2021, working alongside Alasdair Tenquist, BHT Sussex Involvement Officer. As he moves on to pastures new, he tells us something of his experience working in the Involvement Department.

I've really enjoyed my spell at BHT Sussex, and feel it has been an outstanding success. I have been welcomed into the team like I've worked here for many years and with effective management I have been able to meet my personal goals and enjoy myself along the way!

When I first arrived, Alasdair involved me immediately with a trip to a wonderful garden in Bevendean, Brighton for the BHT Sussex in Bloom competition. This was a great introduction, with all the healthy and colourful plants and vegetables ripe for the picking.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with BHT Sussex and I've met lots of friendly and helpful people. I am leaving with a spring in my step and with gratitude in my heart for allowing me to make my internship an outstanding success.

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Front Cover:

The cover photo is from the winning garden in the 2021 In-Bloom competition in St Leonards on Sea.

Alex Procter, Brighton Choir With No Name Manager, is moving to pastures new!

After three and a half years in her role as Choir Manager for *Brighton Choir With No Name* (a BHT Sussex partner), Alex Procter is leaving the Choir for pastures new. Alex has enjoyed a hugely successful career with BCWNN.

From humble beginnings, she and Freya, the Choir Director, have created a vibrant and successful choir, with around 20 volunteers and 50 choir members with experience of homelessness.

Welcome to the new LGBTQ+ column

Each quarter we will be featuring a local LGBTQ+ service, sharing news, events and useful LGBTQ+ services in our local community.

The Ledward Centre is a new LGBTQ+ centre situated next to the Jubilee Library in central Brighton. The fully wheelchair accessible centre is a tribute to James Ledward, a prominent supporter of LGBTQ+ rights and the LGBTQ+ community, and expects to be fully functional later this year.

Plans include a community café (alcohol free), an LGBTQ+ bookshop, exhibition spaces, meeting rooms and a cinema, classrooms, offices for GScene Magazine and Gaydar Radio and a community radio station. It will also offer advice and signposting to relevant services.

Please find more relevant information about the centre on ledcen.org.uk

Support and Advice in Brighton and Hove and the East Sussex Area

Switchboard – Listens to, supports and informs the LGBTQ+ Community in Brighton and Hove and beyond. Originally a helpline, they now offer many additional services <u>switchboard.org.uk</u>

Alex said she would really miss the rehearsals (prelockdown): 'They had a real party feel, with the singing followed by cooked meals, a chit-chat, and regular birthday celebrations'.

Though she will be sad to leave the choir, Alex said she is really excited about her new role as Research and Policy Coordinator with Justlife, a charity advocating for those living in temporary accommodation. 'It's something I feel passionate about', she said, 'and while I will be dealing with matters even up to parliamentary level, I will still be working with those experiencing hardship at the ground level.'

Interested in joining the choir? See their website, at choirwithnoname.org/choirs/brighton-choir

The Rainbow Hub – Now located in The Ledward Centre, the Hub offers help, information or guidance for LGBTQ+ people. <u>therainbowhubbrighton.com</u>

MindOut – A Brighton based mental health service for lesbians, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people. Out-ofhours online support service opens daily. Offers advocacy services, peer support and affordable counselling <u>mindout</u>. <u>org.uk</u>

Hastings and Rother Rainbow Alliance – Supporting LGBT+ people in Hastings and Rother – <u>hrra.org.uk</u>

Allsorts Youth Project – Supporting children and young people under 26 who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or unsure (LGBTU). <u>allsortsyouth.org.uk</u>

The Clare Project – Supports transgender, non-binary, intersex and gender variant adults in East Sussex. <u>clareproject.org.uk</u>

Terrence Higgins Trust – for those living with HIV in Brighton & Hove and West Sussex. Offer a range of sexual health services for anyone who is LGBTQ, BME, or sex working. – <u>tht.org.uk/centres-and-services/brighton</u>

Brighton & Hove LGBT Community Safety Forum – working to address and improve safety and access issues in the Brighton and Hove LGBT Community – <u>Igbt-help.com</u>

Lunch Positive – Weekly lunch club for people living with HIV – Community, food, friendship and peer support – luchpositive.org

Trans Addiction Recovery – Addiction support group for transgender and gender non-conforming people. Email transaddictionrecovery@gmail.com

BHT Sussex Tenant Focus Groups 2021 Update

BHT Sussex Focus Groups arise from concerns you raised during the Annual Snapshot Survey in the previous year. They provide a chance to share your views and suggestions for improvements to the services we offer you.

In this round, three key areas of concern were identified:

- 1. The BHT Sussex Complaints Process might this process be better managed
- 2. BHT Sussex's response to Hate Crime
- 3. BHT Sussex's Quality of Home provision

The sessions were a great success, and the resulting raft of suggestions for improvements were presented to Katherine Pope (Housing Manager) and Bonnie Bird (Repairs Manager) for their consideration and response. Almost invariably improvements were accepted. Here are some examples:

In the Complaints Group, management agreed to make it easier to make a complaint, including an online option, and to make a significant overhaul of the processing of complaints data, to ensure lessons are properly learned. In the 'response to hate crime' suggestions, management agreed to more methodical and inclusive reporting, monitoring of cases of hate crime, and detailed follow up to cases of HC to ensure all possible lessons are learned. In the 'quality of home' group, management agreed to provide an improved maintenance communication system and more regular checks on properties to ensure more major maintenance issues are nipped in the bud.

The agreed changes are set to be implemented over the coming months. In the meantime, if you are interested in joining the next round of Focus Groups please email Alasdair on 07825425084 or <u>a.tenquist@bht.org.uk</u>, and look out for emails announcing the next round of Focus Groups.

Now that BHT Sussex has an Environmental Strategy, Environmental Awareness Focus Groups were also held, giving clients and tenants the opportunity to share their views on actions we should be taking to reduce our environmental impact. The seven attendees discussed energy and water saving measures and how BHT support these. They also considered how green spaces can be made more wildlife friendly. Other issues raised were a request for secure cycle parking and assistance for tenants who need help putting out recycling and waste bags.

The BHT Sussex Annual Snapshot Survey is changing its cycle.

You will probably be aware that BHT Sussex undertakes a survey of its tenants and clients annually in order to gather your feedback on our services.

Historically, surveys cover the period 1st January to December 31st each year. However, we have made the decision to change the cycle to match the financial year, i.e. for this year it will cover the period 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2022. There were a number of reasons for this, including the fact that most other activity is measured and reported on in terms of the financial year. Most importantly, any outcomes of the survey that require additional funding can be factored into the budget process in the autumn. This year's survey will be coming out in April 2022 and we hope to have initial results by the end of the summer to report back to you and the Board.

We really value your feedback, so please look out for more information coming your way soon. Please do take the opportunity to let us know what you think.

Brighton Housing Trust Sussex Tenant Scrutiny Panel (TSP) update

The TSP's first report was on Universal Credit and its impact on tenants.

This was a big ask as a first challenge, but the results have been well received and the Secretary of State who oversees Universal Credit was sent a report by one of BHT Sussex's Board members – we did receive a positive reply.

We are now starting our next challenge, BHT Sussex's Repairs process. The Panel had our first meeting in February face-to-face after a long absence mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It was really nice to see everyone again and we are looking forward to the task.

As always we would like to have more tenants involved with the TSP, so please contact Alasdair Tenquist at BHT Sussex if you'd like to join us.

We shall be sending out surveys and carrying out interviews with tenants later this year to help us compile data. If you are willing to take part in our phone survey there is a shopping voucher as a thank you for your time and help.

Charlie Green (TSP Chairman)



Energy Saving Project

We successfully bid for £15k to UK Power Networks to support an energy resilience project during 2022.

The funds will help us develop capacity to support clients and tenants in managing energy use as costs rise and reduce the impact of energy use on the environment.

Some frontline staff are already undertaking energy awareness training and we aim to help supported clients understand impacts of energy use on their bills. For tenants, we'll be providing information on energy saving and sources of in-depth advice and financial support available.

We are also looking at how we can help tenants save energy by providing items like radiator foil and low

Get growing to support life this spring

The days are getting longer so it's time to turn attention to sprucing up green space outdoors – but do remember it is home to wildlife too.

Bees and other pollinating insects, birds and small mammals are essential in making sure plants, including the flowers we love and food we eat, can reproduce. Make room for more plants, minimise hard surfaces and avoid artificial grass (which is, essentially, plastic which energy light bulbs. In addition, the estates team are identifying sites where installing washing lines will enable tenants to dry laundry at no cost (reducing the likelihood of condensation and mould indoors).

Here are some tips to help you save energy:

- Electric showers use 3 4 times the power of a kettle, so shorter showers save money
- Keeping lids on pans when cooking reduces heat loss and condensation
- Turn the output off on storage heaters when you are not using a room – see cse.org.uk/downloads/file/ night-storage-easy-read.pdf
- Room heaters can be cheaper for heating one room for a short while. Used over a long time they likely to cost more than heating.
- See cse.org.uk/downloads/advice-leaflets/energyadvice/advice_leaflet_room_heaters.pdf

Find out more: bht.org.uk/housing-services/energy-advice-and-support/

can pollute soil and water). A lawn on the other hand will reduce risk of flooding, cool the air, increase insect and bird numbers – even more so if you let daisies and dandelions grow (dandelions supply food to butterflies, bumblebees and hoverflies as well as brightening up early summer days – so let them grow!)

If you want to use outside space, for example for access or seating, add a stepping stone path and a few slabs for you and leave the rest for the plants and wildlife.

You will be rewarded with a space bursting with colour and buzzing with life.

BHT Housing Services: How Well Are We Performing?

Q1 Apr-Jun 2021, Q2 Jul-Sep 2021, Q3 Oct-Dec 2021



Block Inspections

Dates and times your Housing Officers will be visiting your properties

Block Inspections are a key part of our fight to ensure that any risks to our tenants are kept to a minimum. Therefore we would like to invite our tenants to join their Housing Officers on our block inspections for their area on the following dates- you will be able to get an understanding of the process and ask any questions relating to block inspections.

TOYAH THOMAS

4 St Margaret's Road	12 noon	07.04.22	02.06.22	04.08.22
3-4 Wellington Square	1pm	07.04.22	02.06.22	04.08.22
201 London Road	10am	27.04.22	22.06.22	24.08.22
203 London Road	10am	27.04.22	22.06.22	24.08.22
65 Southwater Road	11am	27.04.22	22.06.22	24.08.22
71 Southwater Road	11am	27.04.22	22.06.22	24.08.22
152-154 Marine Parade	12.30pm	05.05.22	07.07.22	01.09.22
Southdowns Court	10am	05.05.22	07.07.22	01.09.22
7-9 Cambridge Road	11am	17.05.22	19.07.22	20.09.22
3-5 Cavendish House	12 noon	17.05.22	19.07.22	20.09.22
32 Cavendish Place	1pm	17.05.22	19.07.22	20.09.22
26 Albany Road	10am	25.05.22	27.07.22	28.09.22
45-47 Chapel Park Road	11am	25.05.22	27.07.22	28.09.22

KIRI BLACK

Blake Court	9:30	07.06.22	02.08.22	04.10.22
Albion Street	10:30	07.06.22	02.08.22	04.10.22
High Street	11:30	07.06.22	02.08.22	04.10.22
College Road	12:30	07.06.22	02.08.22	04.10.22
Elmore Court	14:00	07.06.22	02.08.22	04.10.22
Olivier Close	13:00	07.06.22	02.08.22	04.10.22
The Causeway	14:00	07.06.22	02.08.22	04.10.22

Elm Grove	15:15	07.06.22	02.08.22	04.10.22
Cashman Lodge	9:30	08.06.22	03.08.22	05.10.22
Grantham Road	11:00	08.06.22	03.08.22	05.10.22
Egremont Place	12:00	08.06.22	03.08.22	05.10.22
Western Street	13:30	08.06.22	03.08.22	05.10.22
Waterloo Street	14:30 -	08.06.22	03.08.22	05.10.22
Portland Road	16:00	08.06.22	03.08.22	05.10.22
22 Terminus Road	9:30	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
23 Terminus Road	9:30	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
Richardson's Yard	10:30	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
65 Springfield Road	12:00-	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
67 Springfield Road	12:00	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
Shanklin Court	13:30	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
Richard Allen Court	15:00	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
Golf Drive	16:00	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
Old Golf House	16:00	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22
Brentwood Road	17:30	29.06.22	31.08.22	26.10.22

Tree Planting Ceremony for Penny

Former Housing Services Manager

On Wednesday 9th February 2022, 8 years of fine service by Penny Laycock, former BHT Sussex Housing Services Manager, was recognised by the planting of a cherry tree in the grounds of BHT Sussex property Baird House in St Leonards On Sea.

The tree was kindly donated by Groundscapes, BHT Sussex Gardening Contractors, who were represented by regional manager Michael Steel. David Chaffey (Director of Housing Services) made the official presentation to Penny. In a short speech David thanked Michael for the tree on behalf of BHT Sussex, and noted the excellent record of Penny during her time with BHT Sussex.

Replying Penny said, 'It's really lovely that BHT Sussex have invited me back, and really kind of Groundscapes to offer this tree.'



Barry Smith (Maintenance Operative), David Reid (Facilities and Health and Safety Manager) and Alasdair Tenquist (Involvement Officer) were also present.

Planning to be away from your property for two weeks or more?

You may be unaware that it's a requirement of your tenancy that you let us know when you will be absent from your property for a long period, say 3 weeks or more. This is because we might need direct access, for example, to carry out legal annual health and safety checks, or we may need to gain access in an emergency.

Given this, we ask that you notify your Housing Officer in these instances so that we can put a note on our system recording your absence. We also ask that you provide us with next of kin details.

We also ask that you leave a key with a relative or friend (giving us their contact details), or leave a copy with us at the office, leaving your written permission for us to enter your property in the event of an emergency.

Planning ahead and informing us of longer absences will help avoid a lot of unnecessary bother all round.

Washing lines for tenants

Would tenants like washing line in their garden?

Would you like to use an outdoor washing line? Having installed retractable washing lines at some BHT Sussex properties, they were received so well we thought we could offer them to other properties.

If you think your property could benefit from a washing line, please get in contact with Katherine Pope, Housing Manager, email <u>Katherine.Pope@bht.org.uk</u>.

Communal cupboards

BHT Sussex engages fire safety contractors to carry out an annual fire risk assessment of all its properties to comply with health and safety legislation and to keep you safe.

Their report includes a list of recommended actions to minimise the risk of fire at its properties.

One item flagged by both our fire risk assessors, and East Sussex Fire and Rescue, is the use of communal cupboards as a storage space. It's their view that any items inside are potentially combustible and are therefore hazardous. At the very least, they should be locked at all times. BHT have therefore written to tenants with communal cupboards asking them to remove items before the end of March 2022.

This decision was not taken lightly. However your safety and the safety of others, has to be paramount. Should you require any assistance clearing items, or if you have any other queries/comments relating to this matter, please speak to your Housing Officer.

We hope you understand the reasons for this difficult decision, however the health and safety of our tenants has to be the priority.

Safety in your home

BHT Sussex is committed to the safety and security of its tenants.

To help achieve this, we commission specialist companies to carry out checks on gas, water, asbestos, fire and electrical systems in all our properties. If faults or issues are identified, we endeavour to resolve them as quickly as possible.

Housing Officers also carry out regular inspections at all our properties to identify any Health and Safety issues.

However, you as a tenant also have a role to play. We ask that if you spot a potential health and safety hazard, that you advise your Housing Officer. No definitive list of these hazards exists, but the sort of thing you should look out for includes:

- Damaged railings loose or missing spindles
- Loose, damaged or missing paving stones
- Missing fence panels or damaged walls
- Fly tipping
- Unsecured doors
- Non-functioning door entry system
- Items stored/dumped in corridors
- Fault indication on fire alarm panel
- Fire doors wedged open (other than by magnetic hold open devices)
- Fire action notice signs by call points missing
- Missing smoke/ heat detectors
- Damaged carpets creating a trip hazard
- Missing stair nosings

Please help us keep you safe.

Green Crossword (Answers on the back page)



Across

1. Vegetable with a green stalk and flowering head (8)

2. Small circular green vegetable usually served as part of a roast dinner (6)

4. Vegetable with red or green varieties, often served spicy (6)

7. Leaf vegetable that forms part of a salad (7)

10. An area of open land, often used for growing crops (5)

11. Small fruits served as an appetiser in Mediterranean countries (6)

13. Reptile similar to a crocodile that is native to North America (9)14. Shrub commonly used for decoration at Christmas time (5)16. Green insect with a triangular head (6)

17. Flowerless green plant that grows in damp conditions (4)19. Small, edible herb that sometimes forms part of a salad (5)21. Green mineral sometimes used in jewellery making (4) 22. Small round fruits typically served in a bunch (6)
24. Alternative name for a pickled cucumber that gives its name to a tall London building (7)
26. A piece of low grassland near a river (6)

28. The larva of a butterfly or moth (11)29. Vegetable that typically has thick, green leaves (7)

31. Spiny, leafless plant with prickly stems (6)

34. Floating leaf found in ponds which frogs use to hide from prey (4, 3)

35. Sports playing area typically used by 22 players at a time (8, 5)

37. Mollusc that lacks a shell that is considered a plant pest (4)39. The spring variety of this vegetable has a white head and hollow green leaves (5)

40. Frog who serves as the compere on "The Muppet Show" (6)41. Yellowish-green fruit that grows on a bush (10)

Down

 Green pigment found in plants that absorbs light (11)
 Very small green round vegetables

6. Reptile with a shell that commonly dwells in water (6)

8. Organisms that grow in water but

lack roots, stems or leaves (5) 9. Green citrus fruit that is a rich

source of Vitamin C (4) 10. Common amphibian that is often found in ponds (4)

12. Green precious gemstone that is birthstone for May (7)

15. Single-seeded berry fruit native to the Americas (7)18. Ogre who is the star of four

animated films, narrated by Mike Myers (5)

20. The green areas of a plant that grow above the ground (6)23. The collective foliage found on trees or plants (6)24. Green vegetation found on a

garden lawn (5)

25. Cylindrical vegetable that is a principal salad ingredient (8)27. Herbivorous lizard that is native to Mexico (6)

30. A shrub that is grown a row to mark a boundary (5)

32. Percussion instrument that was green according to a hit by the Lemon Pipers (10)

33. Vegetable with a long, fibrous stalk (6)

36. Land dwelling amphibian with a Natterjack variety (4)

38. Sporting location that features fairways, bunkers and rough (4, 6) 42. Vessel that provides the casing for peas that splits open when ripe (3)

43. Large fern plant with high, dividing leaves (7)

Top picks of books, films, shows and podcasts

Delve into some recommended favourites from tenants at Golf Drive Brighton, and from Murray Begg, Intern Co-Ordinator at BHT Sussex

ΤV

Kerry (Golf Drive): Extraordinary Escapes (Channel 4) Sandi Toksvig takes a female celebrity away to an unusual British location for a weekend. More escapism... it's a theme.

Kerry (Golf Drive): Killing Eve (BBC iPlayer) for some surreal, murderous escapism!

Film

Stacey (Golf Drive): Just Go With It (Netflix) Easy to watch. Silly yet funny and a "feel good" film with a lovely ending as the family is reunited.

Harry (Golf Drive, aged 8): *Spider-Man* (Netflix) I like Spider-Man because he saves people and stops bad guys. I like that no-one knows who he is and he's always there to help!

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

Murray (Intern Co-ordinator): *The Dancer* (Netflix) This documentary film blew me away. I don't follow ballet/modern dance, but with pure, God-given talent on display it's hard not to be moved by it. Like many people with extraordinary talents, this dancer had a troubled soul which makes the story even more compelling. (www.netflix.com/gb/title/80105465)

Podcasts and Music

Amber (Golf Drive, aged 11): *Take 20* with Maddie and Mckenzie Ziegler (Apple Podcasts). I've watched all of their dance videos when they were in Dance Moms. They're really good dancers, and they're funny.

Rachel (Golf Drive): The All or Nothing Podcast with Billy Moore (YouTube)

Billy Moore interviewing John Burton on YouTube, a man who turned his life around from criminality to go on to set up his own company called Inside Connections in Liverpool to help others in the prison system get jobs and training.

Murray (BHT): *Night Creature* by Maya Jane Coles Electronic, big basslines, atmospheric, with nice female vocals. Here is a link to one of my favourite tracks – youtube.com/watch?v=Wwmu1qO_OzA.

Books

Murray (BHT): The Book Thief by Markus Zusak I loved the story, the writing, the characters, and the way it's narrated by Death itself! Easy to read.

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 bimonthly 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.