

Lighthouse

Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change



Welcome to new members
of Housing Services Team

Community Day at
Deepdene Gardens

Benefits and work advice

The Great Big Green Week

Environmental tips on
coping with mould and
condensation

Xmas Card Competition

And much more.

Dear tenant,

We are pleased to offer you once again an edition packed with interesting and informative articles which we know you'll enjoy.

The first news is to bid a fond farewell to your editor since 2019, Alasdair Tenquist, our former Involvement Officer. Alasdair is heading across the seas to Iraq to teach, his old profession from his younger years. We would like to thank Alasdair for his editorial work on the newsletter, and we wish him the very best of luck in his new adventure.

We are also welcoming new members of the Housing Services team with Paul Fagan as the new Manager and Katherine Masters in her new role as Director of Housing and Property Services. Your new editor and Involvement Officer is Anna Kuzan who has joined the housing team in April. Anna has been with BHT Sussex for 6 years and was based at Whitehawk Inn community centre, working closely with clients and creating involvement opportunities, namely in form of adult education and social clubs.

With Spring all around us, we are inviting you to take part in BHT's In Bloom competition. There's some interesting environmental information from Mary Stevens, BHT Sussex Environmental Officer, things to look out for in your garden and some useful spring cleaning tips. Traci Brooks, Income Recovery Officer, has some great money saving tips, including a range of benefits you may be able to claim, and some great news about cost of living payments that will be coming later this spring.

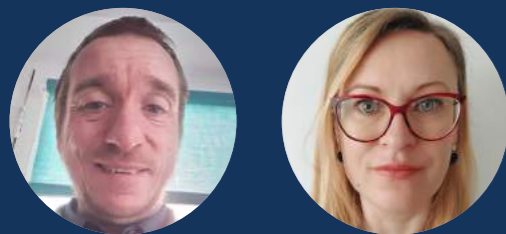
You will also read about a Community day in Deepdene Gardens.

We hope you all have as much fun reading this newsletter as we have had putting it together.

All the best,
Joe Ashdown and Anna Kuzan

Joe Ashdown
BHT Sussex Housing and Performance Administrator

Anna Kuzan
Involvement Officer



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Front cover photo:
Preston Park, Brighton

Please welcome the new manager of Housing Services – Paul Fagan

I was born in Brighton but moved to Hastings as a child where I have lived ever since.

I joined BHT Sussex in February 2023 bringing with me more than 20 years' experience. This is split almost equally between Local Government and the Social Housing sector in larger Housing Associations. I have previously led teams in Regeneration & Community Development, Community Safety as well as a Housing Service for another well known Housing Association. Prior to taking on leadership positions I have been a Street Warden, Housing Officer, Community Safety Officer and was even once a dog warden for a few months!

I am a father of three and family is always my main priority. In fact, my eldest has recently moved to Brighton and is enjoying getting know the local area and all it has to offer. Particularly the night life!...

Aside from work my real passion is to travel. My wife and I enjoy nothing more than a holiday to a part of the world that we have not too been before. I am also a huge fan of sport. Whilst my football playing days may be over following a serious injury in 2021, I still enjoy playing as much cricket as possible for my local village team throughout the summer.



Please welcome our new Director of Housing Services – Katherine Masters

'I was very fortunate to join BHT Sussex in January 2021 as Housing Services Manager, I subsequently had the opportunity to become Director of Housing and Property Services.

I feel very privileged to work within an organisation where our vision and aim is clear and underpins all that we do.

I have worked within Housing Associations for over thirteen years, in various roles within housing management - focusing on areas such as - Anti-social Behaviour, Safeguarding, Tenancy Fraud, Voids and Lettings, Resident Involvement and general Tenancy Management, I am also a member of CIH and Diploma in Housing.

The team and I remain committed to providing safe, secure and desirables homes for our tenants. I am looking forward to working alongside my colleagues, including the Executive Management team, the board, Tenants and Clients to help shape the future of the organisation.



Benefits and Work

Valuable advice from our Income Recovery Officer

Depending on your circumstances you may be financially better off if you do some work.

Universal Credit and Work

If you have limited capacity for work or responsibility for a child, you are entitled to a work allowance. This means you can earn £344 a month before your Universal Credit is reduced.

If you earn any more than £344 your Universal Credit will reduce by 55p for every additional £1 you earn.

For example, if you earn £500 a month, £344 is ignored, and then for every £1 of the remaining £156 you get, 55p is taken from your Universal Credit payment so your Universal Credit would reduce by £85.80; this means you would be £412.20 a month better off.

Please note: Earnings could slightly affect the amount of council tax reduction you receive.

Employment Support Allowance (ESA) and Permitted Work

If you are claiming ESA (both Work-Related Activity Group and Support Group) you can work up to 16 hours a week and earn up to £152.00 a week. This amount is the equivalent to 16 hours paid at the National Minimum Wage. This is £608 every four weeks.

Please note: Earnings under permitted work do not reduce your housing benefit or council tax reduction.

These same permitted rules also apply if you receive, Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance.

Carers Allowance

As long as you still care for someone for 35 hours a week, you can earn up to £132 a week (after taxes, care costs while you're at work and 50% of what you pay into your pension is deducted). This is £528 every four weeks.

Please note: Earnings could reduce the amount received in council tax reduction.

Depending on your circumstances you may also be able to do a small amount of work if you receive Job seekers allowance or income support.

There are also several schemes to assist people get back into work. For more information about these or if you would like a benefit calculation to find out if you would be better off doing some work please email Traci Brooks, Income recovery Officer at traci.brooks@ht.org.uk

Service Charges Explained

If you live in one of our properties where you receive a service to any part of your building, you will need to pay a service charge. Service charges for example cover the costs of providing the maintenance and upkeep to communal areas such as lighting, cleaning, lifts, gardening, tv systems, door entry systems and utility costs.

If you are in receipt of Housing Benefit or housing costs under Universal Credit most of your service charge is eligible for Housing Benefit and housing costs under Universal Credit. There are some exceptions, including water, gas and electricity supplied directly to your home which you must pay yourself.

If you do not receive Housing Benefit or housing costs under Universal Credit you will have to pay all of your service charge yourself.

You can pay your service charges the same way as you pay your rent, by setting up a direct debit, standing order, via a bank transfer (BACS payment) or using your ALLPAY card.

What your service charges cover are set out in your tenancy agreement. It is very important you pay your service charges; if you do not pay your service charges you will be breaking the terms of your tenancy agreement and your rent account will be in arrears and you could lose your home.

To set up a direct debit or to get a new ALLPAY card, call **07834979019** or **07826868957**.





Combating Homelessness, Creating Opportunities, Promoting Change

www.bht.org.uk



Sponsored by Southern Land Services

BHT Sussex In Bloom

Your green fingers could win a £30 B&Q voucher

Or a £10 B&Q voucher for runners up



There are three categories in the competition:

- **Best communal garden**
- **Most environmentally friendly garden**
- **Best individual garden/indoor plants**

The closing date for entries is **Friday 7th July**.

Judges will be visiting the entrants on **Friday 14th July** to pick our winners.

To join the competition, please contact Anna Kuzan (Mob **07500 972 509** /email anna.kuzan@bht.org.uk) or speak to your support worker or housing officer.

If you would like some **free seeds** to get you started just contact Anna [BHT Sussex Involvement Officer] using the contact details across page.



Community Day at Deepdene Gardens in Hastings

Colleagues from various departments attended a **Community Day at Deepdene Gardens in Hastings**. This event was in partnership with **Hastings Borough Council, Councillor Glen Haffenden and Orbit Housing**. Although the weather was awful and we were all soaked through to our feet, our thick skin and smiles made up for the lack of sunshine!

We spent the day engaging with both residents and partnership agencies. The following things were achieved and all in all, it was a very productive and successful day!

- Clearing rubbish and bulky items from the front of properties, from back gardens and from resident's homes
- Reporting external repairs such as missing drain covers and broken meter cupboard doors
- Fixing door handles and windows
- Listening to residents and following up on-going repair issues

- Actioning for a new boiler to be installed in a residents home
- Discussing a plan to combat an on-going mould issue
- Updating residents contact details including NOK
- Offering support with debts
- Checking the well-being of residents in the difficult times that we are currently living in
- Making good local connections with services from Oasis and being able to tap into local knowledge from our partners home.
- To set up a direct debit or to get a new ALLPAY card, call **07834979019** or **07826868957**.

Dates for your diary

Upcoming Community Days

We can now confirm the upcoming dates for another three Community Days at these sites:

Wednesday 21st June
Shanklin Court Brighton, 1pm – 3pm

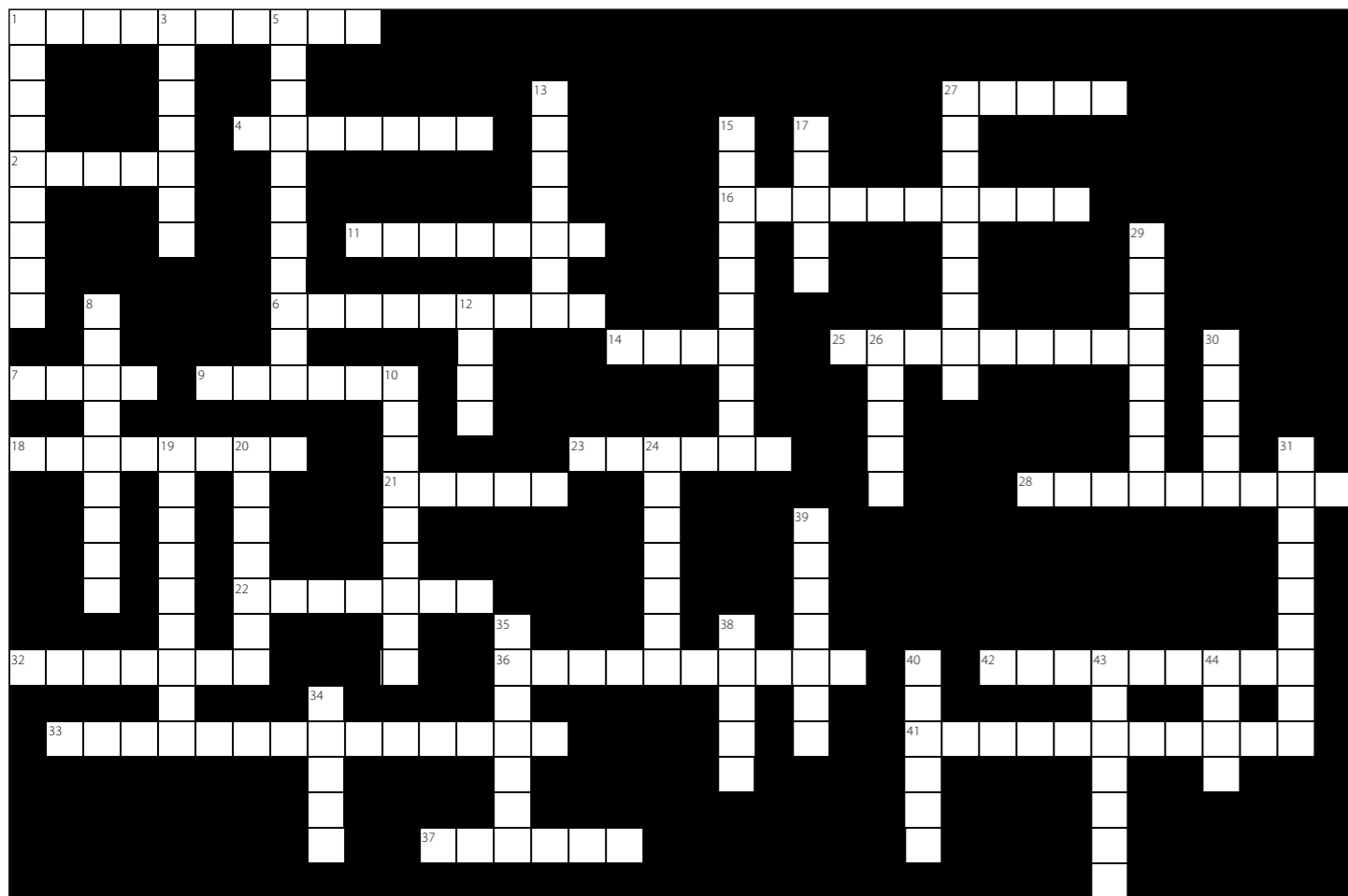
Wednesday 5th July
Baird House St Leonards On Sea, 11am – 2pm

Wednesday 6th September
Southdowns Court Brighton, 11am – 2pm

The Housing Services team are looking to spend the day engaging with both residents and partnership agencies, here's hoping the weather will allow for productive engagement and information flow.

See you all there!

Environmental Crossword (Answers on the back page)



Across

- 1. An area of tall, evergreen trees that is exposed to moisture (10)
- 2. Discarded material (5)
- 4. Renewable energy made from recently living organisms (7)
- 6. A community of interacting organisms in a physical environment (9)
- 7. A tall plant with leaves, bark and a trunk (4)
- 9. The physical world, including animals, plants and landscape (6)
- 11. The natural home of an animal or plant (7)
- 14. Net ____, a target to completely negate greenhouse gases (4)
- 16. A form of travel for leisure using sustainable transport (10)
- 18. A group of turbines in the same location used to generate power (4, 4)
- 21. Renewable energy source that converts sunlight into electricity (5)
- 22. Decayed organic material used as fertiliser when growing plants (7)

- 23. Electronic components found in energy saving light bulbs (6)
- 25. The distances that produce we eat travels before consumption (4, 5)
- 27. Fleshy product of a tree or plant that contains seeds (5)
- 28. The process of giving away an unwanted item instead of selling it (9)
- 32. A rotary mechanical device used for generating wind power (7)
- 33. Meeting present needs without compromising future generations' needs (14)
- 36. The ability to avoid wasting materials or energy in completing a task (10)
- 37. Solid chemical element whose compounds regulate Earth's temperature (6)
- 41. The surroundings in which a plant or creature lives (11)
- 42. Edible plant matter that is used as source of food (9)

Down

- 1. Resources that can be naturally replenished (9)
- 3. Seed-bearing parts of a plant with colourful petals (7)
- 5. The natural world as a whole (11)
- 8. An area of open land around a town where building is restricted (5, 4)
- 10. The collective acts of sending gas or heat into the air (9)
- 12. The upper layer of earth in which plants grow (4)
- 13. The long-term weather pattern in a region (7)
- 15. Types of gas that trap heat in Earth's atmosphere (10)
- 17. Plants cultivated on a plot of land which are sold to supply food (5)
- 19. Carbon _____, the measurement of gaseous emissions released in Earth's atmosphere (9)
- 20. To convert waste products into reusable material (7)
- 24. Farming or food cultivation methods that do not use chemicals (7)
- 26. Colourless gas found in a layer of the Earth's stratosphere (5)
- 27. A trading partnership designed to conform with ethical standards (9)
- 29. To protect species or habitats from extinction (8)
- 30. Sweet food product made by bees (5)
- 31. A plot of land used to grow vegetables (9)
- 34. The planet in the Solar System that is third nearest the Sun (5)
- 35. The state of the atmosphere in a particular place at a particular time (7)
- 38. A diet that does not consist of any products derived from animals (5)
- 39. High standards of moral principles and conduct (7)
- 40. Power derived from physical resources (6)
- 43. The study of organisms and their relations with each other and their environment (7)
- 44. Winged insects that collect nectar and pollen (4)44. Passerine bird with red or orange plumage seen at Christmas (5)



SAVE THE DATE FOR

THE GREAT BIG GREEN WEEK

10th - 18th June 2023

Great Big Green Week

June 10th – 18th

Show us Your Green Home Photo Competition

June 10th to the 18th is the Great Big Green Week, and across BHT Sussex we will be encouraging staff, tenants and clients to take care of our environment. We're inviting everyone to show some extra love for our home planet during the week. We're encouraging staff to go meat free for a day (if not already veggie/vegan), tidy up with a litter pick around our offices and homes, and make the most of the benefits of our beautiful natural world with walks in nature and looking out for wildlife in parks and gardens. We want you all to show us how you are caring for the world around us with a photo competition.

Our theme is 'My Green Home'. Use your imagination to show us how you are making your home more sustainable – this could be an item of clothing you have mended to avoid throwing it away, something you've made from reused items, a meal created from leftovers, an outdoor space you've filled with plants, local wildlife or a picture of a natural space in your hometown or city that you love – we'll leave it to your imagination!

Three winning images will be chosen by our Environmental Strategy Working Group. Deadline is June 30th. Each winner will receive a £25 voucher towards an eco-friendly dining experience in their area.

Environmental tips from our Environment Officer

Managing Mould

Mould and damp are common problems in homes, especially when it is cold. Mould growth is most often the result of condensation, especially on cold surfaces like external walls. Sometimes it is caused by damp.

Condensation

The air always contains some moisture, and as air gets colder, it cannot hold all the moisture so tiny drops of water appear on cold surfaces – this is condensation. You can see it when a window or mirror mists over when you have a shower or are cooking. Less obvious condensation forms on cold surfaces where there is little air movement – for example behind furniture or home appliances – especially if they are against an outside wall.

Reduce condensation

Reducing condensation reduces the likelihood of mould forming in your home. To avoid condensation reduce the amount of moisture you produce.

- Close kitchen and bathroom doors when using them to reduce moisture in the rest of your home,
- Put lids on pans when cooking,
- Don't leave the kettle boiling,
- Dry washing outdoors on an airer or line if you can or in the bathroom, with the door closed and window open or fan or in another room, with door closed and window open,
- If you use a tumble dryer, vent it on the outside,
- Keeping your home warm reduces the likelihood of condensation forming.

Ventilation

Ventilate your home without making draughts.

- Keep a window slightly open or a trickle ventilator open when someone is in the room – we produce moisture when we breathe,

- Ventilate kitchens and bathrooms when in use by opening a window, or if you have an extractor fan, make sure it is running,
- Where possible, position wardrobes and furniture against internal walls,
- Leave space between the back of the wardrobes/ cupboards and the wall,
- Ventilate cupboards and wardrobes,
- Avoid putting too many things in cupboards and wardrobes as this stops the air circulating.

Draught proofing

Draughtproofing will help keep your home warmer and also help reduce energy use.

- Windows and doors can be draughtproofed using stick on strips available from DIY stores,
- Do not draughtproof bathroom and kitchen windows, where ventilation is needed to reduce condensation.

Tackling mould

If you find mould in your home remove it as soon as you see it to prevent it spreading:

- Wipe down the affected area with a mould remover – there are many products available which are bleach based, wear gloves and keep a window open when using them. You can also use a solution of half water, half white vinegar – leaving the vinegar to soak on the mould for about an hour before cleaning it off.
- The only way to prevent mould reoccurring is to prevent condensation.

Damp

Mould can also be the result of damp. There are a number of causes of damp including leaking pipes, blocked gutters, leaking roof, leaks round windows and rising damp due to a defective damp course.

If you think you have a damp issue in your home contact the repairs team: repairs@bht.org.uk See also BHT leaflet [BHT-Housing-Services-Condensation-and-mould-growth-4pp-DL-fold-RGB.pdf](#)

Power Partners project

We have now completed our Power Partners energy resilience project. The 15k funding supported us to train 18 BHT Sussex staff in energy awareness – and they are sharing this learning with colleagues to help reduce energy use, reducing environmental impacts and bills. We also distributed energy saving items to over 40 tenants who requested them – including draught excluders, radiator foil and low energy lightbulbs. We are working with Energy Champions in our projects to help clients in better understanding of energy use, and provided washing lines, radiator foil, LED light bulbs and draught excluders to help these projects reduce energy impacts and costs. The funding has supported us in working to embed energy saving across BHT Sussex, and we will continue to build on this work, looking at where we can introduce energy saving measures like low energy lighting and heating management.

Growing Wild

As we head into warm season it's time to turn attention to our outdoor spaces. Awareness is increasing of the value of outdoor space to our physical and mental health, and we also need to nurture it for nature. If you have a garden, or just a couple of pots, provide plants that support the insects that feed our birds. You don't have to splash out at a garden centre – encouraging daisies, dandelions and bluebells is much healthier for insects and birds than buying plants raised in a plastic pot in a greenhouse! Did you know that nettles are a fantastic source of food for the caterpillar of the Red Admiral butterfly, and are also good for soil – so reduce 'weeding' leaving some to grow. Dandelions benefit lawns as they bring nutrition up through the soil – and are a food source for bees and birds. Supporting No Mow May by letting wild flowers bloom in lawns and on verges makes for a more colourful spring, buzzing with life.

Clean up your spring clean.

In spring days are longer, light is brighter – and it's a good time to have a spring clean. If you're clearing out those dark corners you can't see in winter, you don't need to splash out on chemical cleaning products in yet more plastic bottles. The ingredients in many cleaning products are unhealthy for us and pollute water. For kitchen and bathroom surfaces, mixing lemon juice and bicarbonate of soda in a spray bottle can clean surfaces. For the

microwave, filling a bowl with water and adding lemon juice or white vinegar, then turning on for about two minutes will loosen any drips, that can easily be wiped off. Diluted white vinegar is also great for cleaning windows. You can find lots more tips here: [Home Spring Cleaning Tips, Checklist, And Chemical Free Homemade Cleaners \(anything4home.co.uk\)](#)

Here's an update from the Choir With No Name

March was a great month for us, with 2 showstopping Gigs!

Below:
CWNN performs during Andy Winter's farewell do at All Saint's Church in Hove

We headlined Jubilee Library's Global Music Community Celebration, which was just a lovely event - so welcoming and inclusive, bringing together lots of music and communities from around the world. We were 45 strong on stage – and totally rocked it! We then had a blinder of a fundraiser gig with community choir Hullabaloo and the amazing Alice Russell!

We are thrilled to have taken part in the Brighton Fringe this year – playing Wagner Hall on Sunday 14th May!! We sang and celebrated with tea and cake! – what better way to spend a Sunday afternoon?

And lastly – if you'd like to fundraise for us in a way that involves nothing more than SHOPPING and a £1 expense to you... read on! Co-op have chosen us as one of their community causes! How it works, every time you shop with Co-op and scan your membership card (there's the £1 cost) and Co-op will donate 2p from every £1 you spend to us! When it comes to fundraising, every little helps! Every penny helps to keep our choir running!



BHT Housing Services:

How Well Are We Performing?

The third and fourth quarters of 2022



Repairs: Routine

Response time: 28 days

Q3 92%

Q4 87%

Target 95%



Repairs: Urgent

Response time: 4 to 7 days

Q3 81%

Q4 71%

Target 95%



Repairs: Emergency

Response time: 24 hours

Q3 88%

Q4 72%

Target 100%

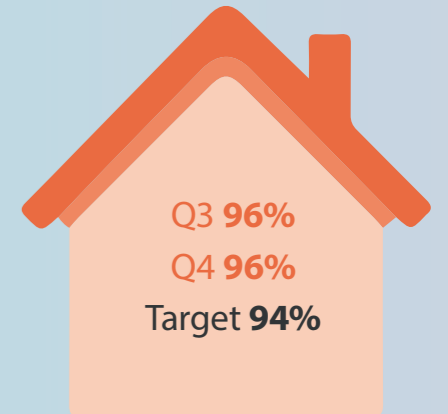
Overall Satisfaction



Q3 98%

Q4 93%

Target 90%



Rent Arrears

Percentage of overall rents collected

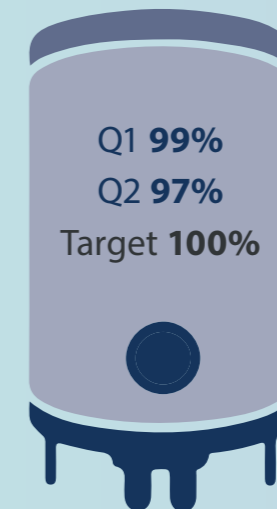
Boiler Servicing

Percentage of boilers serviced yearly

Q1 99%

Q2 97%

Target 100%



Letting

Days until vacated property is re-let

Emergencies

What are they and how to report them?

Please call the following number if you need emergency repair assistance during our out of office hours: 01323 340018

If your emergency out of hours repair relates to your gas boiler or central heating system please contact Robert Heath Heating on 0800 0304435

Please note this service is for emergency repairs only for example:

- No water (please check with your water supplier that there are no local issues)
- No electricity (please check with your supplier that there are no local issues)
- Bare / live electrical wires
- No gas or gas leak (If you smell gas you should call Transco on 0800 111 999)
- Burst water pipe or flooding
- Overflowing sewage in and around the property
- Blocked drains, pipes or WC (we will expect you to try and unblock them first and you may be recharged if the blockage was caused by lack of care)
- No heating for older people during freezing conditions
- Damage to doors and windows where property is insecure or is a health and safety risk (crime reference number may be required)

For all other repairs please wait and report within BHT Sussex office opening hours.

How to report a repair in my property?

Before reporting a repair make sure you have checked that the repair is not your responsibility and gather as much information about the repair as you can. You can do this by checking the online repairs leaflet (as attached)

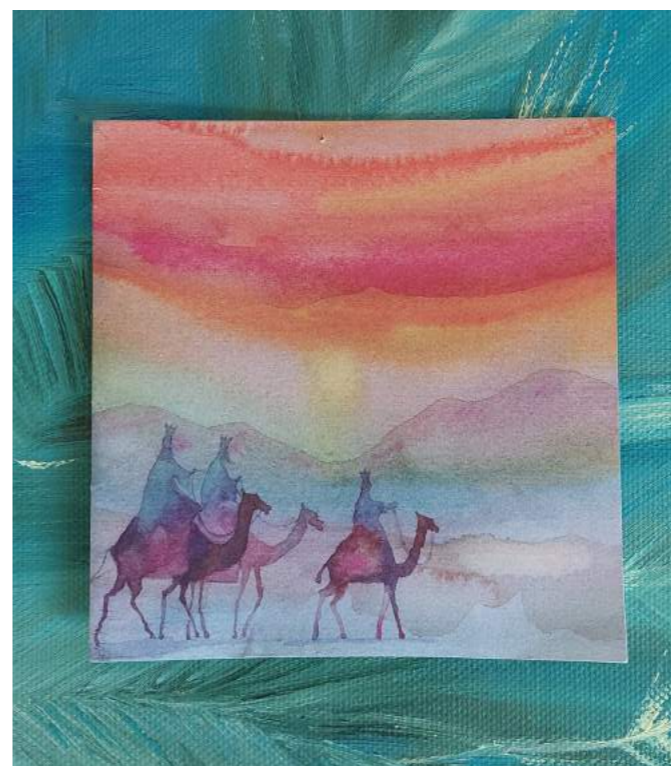
To report a repair please either call 01323 340018, email: repairs@bht.org.uk or report via My Tenancy.



Extension leads from communal areas



It has been brought to our attention that some residents have been using extension leads from communal areas into their flats to source the energy. We would like to remind everyone this practice is not allowed as it is in breach of tenancy agreement. Not only it causes potential Health and Safety risks like fire and a risk of tripping, but it is not fair towards other residents and constitutes a theft. We want to make sure everyone knows this kind of practice can put their tenancy at risk. We understand the cost of living has an impact on our lives. If you are struggling, please reach out to Jo Smith (Tenancy Sustainment Officer) for an advice.



Design BHT Sussex's Official 2023 Christmas card!

Please don't be shy and don't be modest – we know we have some amazingly talented artists within BHT Sussex...

Whether you are a client, staff member, volunteer, tenant, intern, or bank worker, we would love you to submit your own work to be considered for this year's cards.

You're welcome to submit as many entries as you want, using any media you want, such as paint, digital art, pen/pencil drawing, photography, print, collage, cartoon, or anything else that you can think of, as long as the image can be printed onto a card. Please make sure digital images are a high enough resolution to be printed at regular Christmas card size.

All entries will be judged by a small panel of Christmas enthusiasts and the 5 favourite designs will be professionally printed as BHT Sussex's official Christmas cards and sold throughout the festive period, with all profits going to First Base Day Centre.

Deadline for submissions is **Friday 30th June**

Online artwork submissions to brodie.hall@bht.org.uk

Paper/physical artwork submissions to Brodie Hall c/o 144 London Rd Brighton BN1 4PH

(You can collect your paper/physical artwork after it has been photographed.)

Good luck!

What's On

Eastbourne

Eastbourne Seafront Market

Come and sample the delights of the UK and further afield as Eastbourne seafront is transformed into a bustling Seafront market place.

Eastbourne Seafront

13 July - 16 July 2023

Hastings

An exhibition in LEGO®

The Brick by Brick exhibition gathers the work of 14 artists, designers and photographers from around the world who use LEGO® bricks as their medium or inspiration. Using this simple plastic construction block as their starting point, they have created stunning, thought provoking and often humorous artworks which will appeal to art enthusiasts and LEGO® fans alike.

Hastings Museum and Art Gallery

John's Place
Bohemia Road
Hastings TN34 1ET

Until June 2023 Open 10am - 4pm

- Free entry and parking

Brighton

Brighton's Makers Market

Held in a convenient and central location free to attend and full of talented local makers artists & local small businesses for a unique quaint shopping experience in a lovely friendly environment, with a grassed area where you can grab a cake/bite to eat and chill.

Brighthelm Church Gardens

Queens Road
Brighton
BN1 1YD

Next events: Sat 10th June, Sat 1st July,
Sat 5th August (Pride Special), Sat 2nd Sept.
11am - 4pm

- Free entry
- Dog friendly
- Disabled access via North Road/Church Street.

Contact Us

Head Office and General Enquiries

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

Rents and Repairs

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

MyTenancy

www.mytenancy.co.uk
Report a repair or check your rent
statement on-line

Housing Officers

Brighton Housing Officer:
Kiri Black 01273 645454 / 07826874849

Hastings, Eastbourne & Saltdean:
Toyah Thomas
07824306591

Tenant Involvement

Anna Kuzan
01273 645443 / 07500 972 509

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

Redman Howard
07493223016

Gas emergencies

Robert Heath Heating
0333 014 1000

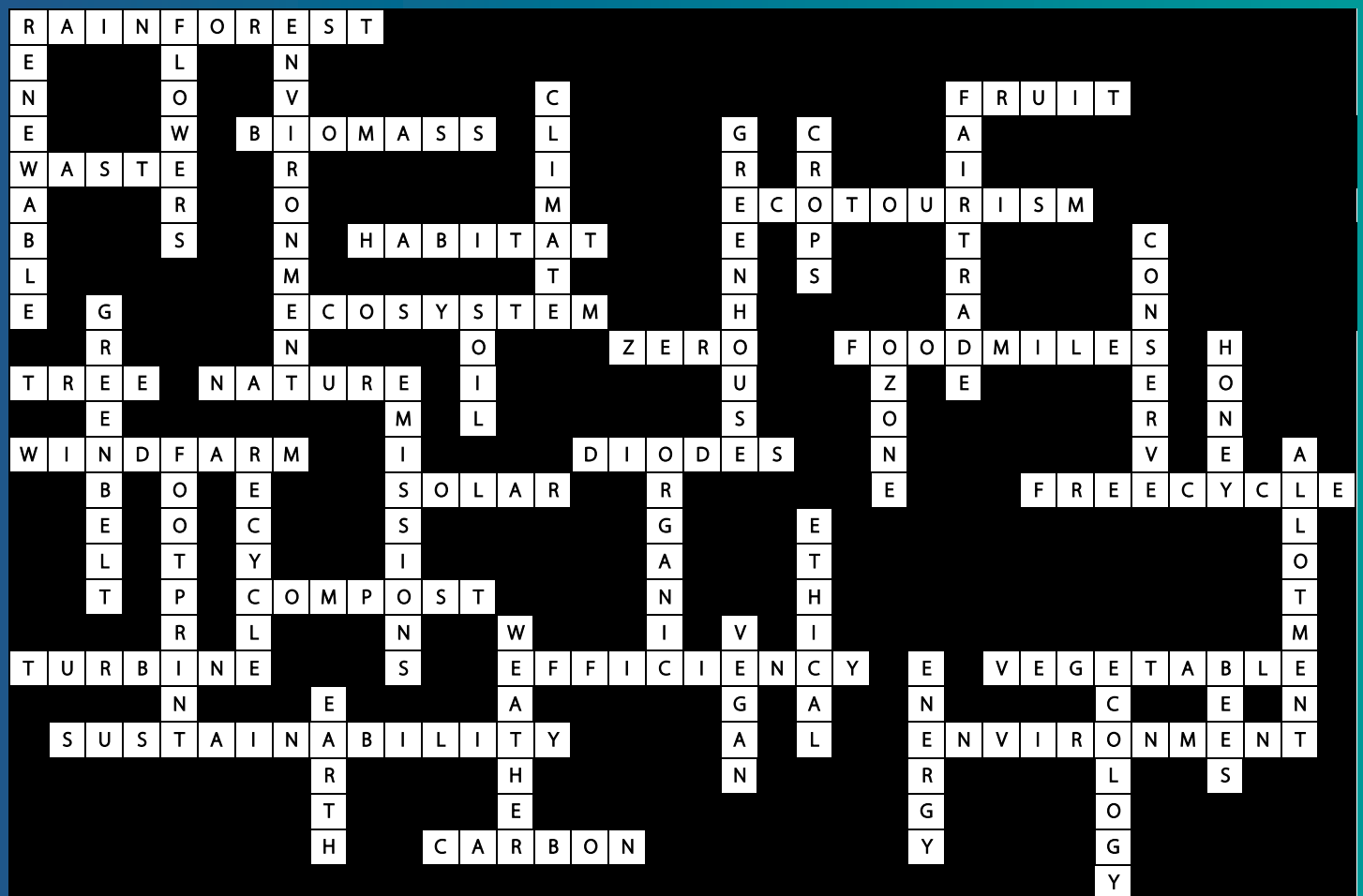
Issues with fire alarms and detectors

Eastbourne Alarms
01323 729420

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

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

Crossword Answers



Congratulations to our prize draw winners

Congratulations to Mariusz of Saltdean who won a £20 shopping voucher in the Direct Debit quarterly prize draw simply for setting up a Direct Debit with BHT Sussex. Your Housing Officer can guide you through the process step-by-step.draw.