

August 2016 • Issue 36
A newsletter by residents for residents


Phoenix
Our community in our hands

community news



Summer Fun! Free activities for kids all summer
Vote! Come to our AGM and use your vote
Focus on... Resident leadership



Welcome...

Have you joined our Gold Club?

We now have over 3,000 members, don't miss out! Contact us and join today.

Welcome to Community News

Use your vote at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday 6 September and have your say!

It's just over a month until our Phoenix AGM and we want to encourage you to come along and use your vote.

The AGM is where all Phoenix shareholders can elect new Board members and have their say. If you're not yet a shareholder, it's easy to become one. Just get in touch and ask to join.

You can find out more about our resident leadership on page 6.

As members of the Resident Communications Group we are all involved in the work Phoenix does. At the moment, we're busy creating our Residents Annual Report, which will explore the history of our homes and residents, as well as report on what we've achieved in the last year. Look out for your copy in early September.

We are always looking for new people to take part in our many residents groups. Please do get in touch if you are interested in joining. There are lots of different opportunities available.

Finally, there's lots on this summer with Summer Fun and Chat & Chips out and about in our community. We hope to see you at some of these events!

Best wishes, from the Resident Communications Group



WIN! 'Spot yourself!'

If this is you, pictured at the Phoenix Festival in May, please get in touch to claim your £25 shopping voucher.

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Your photos

Send in your photos of our community by post, on Twitter (@phoenixtogether) or by email and you could win a £5 shopping voucher if we print it!

We love hearing from you and especially enjoyed seeing all your photos of the Phoenix Festival. Congratulations to our Twitter competition winner Jeanne, who took it a step further and sent us a fantastic video of Odyssey's performance.

The festival is always a highlight for us as it means we get to speak to so many residents, and also have a great day out. Here are some of our favourite photos...



Cover image - Having a great time at the Phoenix Festival 2016.

Phoenix Community Housing Association (Bellingham and Downham Limited) is a Community Benefit Society, number IP30057R. VAT number 162 4926 03. Homes and Communities Agency number L4505.



Summer Fun

FREE!

SUMMER FUN



SUMMER FUN is back! This year it will be at the following sites (12 to 4pm):

- The Dumps Adventure Playground – Friday 5 August
- Reigate Road Green – Friday 12 August
- Shroffold Road / Woodbank Road Green – Friday 19 August
- Bellingham Green – Friday 26 August
- Scarlet Road / Battersby Road Green – Friday 2 September

ARE YOU READY FOR A FIESTA?
 Because we've (un)officially claimed Fridays for Summer Fun and we've got exciting plans!

Bring the kids, meet your neighbours and get stuck in to all the free activities taking place. Whether you can make all of the dates or just the one, we can't wait to see you!

This year the lineup on each day includes: performances, arty crafty messy zones, a climbing wall, animal displays, face painting and much, much more!

So pack a picnic and let's make some memories and hopefully a new friend or two.



CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION
 or visit our website



Round the houses



We're launching a new service for leaseholders who sublet their properties.

Home Makers is a private lettings service that will offer a range of services to leaseholders who choose to rent out their properties, including property management, rent collection and tenant finding.

Home Makers has been developed following feedback and focus groups with some of our non-residential leaseholders. Leaseholders told us that they would like the new service to be personal, professional and competitively priced.

For more information about Home Makers, please visit www.home-makers.co.uk or contact us.



Live your own way

We're building 60 brand new homes at Hazelhurst Court, specially designed for older people and right next door to Beckenham Hill station.

The new homes are bright and spacious, and will enable older residents to live independently in comfortable surroundings.

Building works began last year, and we're looking forward to welcoming our first residents in summer 2017.

If you'd like to learn more, please come along to one of our information days. You'll be able to view our plans and find out more about what the new homes will be like.

**The Green Man –
Wednesday 13, Thursday 14 and
Friday 15 September • 10am-4pm**

Contact us to book your place!



Make your vote count!

We're counting down to our Annual General Meeting (AGM) on **Tuesday 6 September, 4.30 – 7.30pm at The Green Man**, and you're invited.

As a resident-led housing association, the Phoenix AGM is an opportunity for shareholders to have their say. There will be a guest speaker followed by votes for the election of any new Board members, our Annual Report and our finances.

We're proud to be a resident-led housing association that supports tenants and leaseholders to have a real say in how we are run.

The AGM will begin at 4.30pm with light refreshments and a chance to meet with fellow residents, staff and partners. The formal AGM will begin at 6pm and finish at 7.30pm with a buffet afterwards.

The AGM is open to all residents but only shareholders are able to vote. If you would like to become a shareholder, please get in touch and we can sign you up.

If you would like to come along, please contact us to book your place.

Warm welcome to Phoenix

New leaseholders were invited to a welcome evening at The Green Man to find out more about Phoenix.

The event was a chance for leaseholders to find out more about the services available, and how they can get involved with Phoenix.

The next welcome event will be on Tuesday 2 August. If you are a new leaseholder and would like to join us, please book your place by Friday 29 July.



Round the houses

Taking a closer look

Our Resident Scrutiny Panel have been busy finding out about our new tenant sign-up and induction process, and the information offered to tenants during the first year in their new home.

The panel put our work under the microscope and presented their report to the Board in May.

Their recommendations included reviewing the information we provide to new tenants, considering different ways of working and using the Gold Club scheme to better reward members.

To find out more and read the report, please contact us or visit our website.

If you're a new tenant and have feedback about the sign-up process, please let us know.

Festival fever!



More than 5,000 residents enjoyed the fun-packed Phoenix Festival this year.

Headliners Odyssey and Kele le Roc had the crowds dancing, and some very talented pooches took centre stage in our new dog show.

Other activities included a circus, funfair, BMX track, stilt walkers, and petting zoo. Residents also had the opportunity to vote for their favourite Community Chest projects, learn more about what's on offer in south Lewisham, and have their say on our services and projects.

This year the Phoenix Festival was also joined by a community parade organised by local Whitefoot and Downham councillors to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the construction of the Downham Estate.

Thank you to everyone who joined us this year! We're already looking forward to seeing you at the festival in 2017.



Our Class of 2016!

New social housing experts!

The Phoenix Academy, our unique 'school of social housing', has seen 11 residents graduate as housing experts after completing the 10-week course.

Being resident-led, we're always on the lookout for residents who want to play more active roles in how Phoenix is run. The Academy is a great way for residents to understand our governance and why Phoenix was created, as well as the history of social housing.

The course, now in its third year, is the only one of its kind in the country. It's delivered by staff who are able to give their insight into the housing world and our day to day operations.

"We had an amazing course. I'm delighted and excited. I want to be able to give back to the community and give back to Phoenix." Florence Bili Ogunbona, 2016 graduate.

Fancy signing up to next year's Academy? Get in touch!

How are we doing?

In each edition of Community News we look at a different area of work. This time we look at our ongoing resident leadership.

Being led by our residents is what sets us apart from almost every other social landlord.

As a community gateway, our Chair and Vice Chair must both be tenants. Residents are the largest group on our Board and we offer everyone the chance to get involved and make a difference.

We now have over 3,000 resident shareholders who can stand for election to the Board, vote for residents who stand for elections, and vote at our Annual General Meeting (AGM).

We're very proud of that and we are fully committed to our model of resident leadership, but it does present some challenges too.

What's happening?

It's nearly nine years since Phoenix was created. Some of our original Board Members are now reaching the end of the period when they can remain on the Board.

That includes our Chair Pat Fordham MBE. Pat will step down as Chair at the September Board meeting and the Board will elect a new tenant Chair and Vice Chair. Pat will remain on the Board to hand over to the new Chair.

Meanwhile, our former Vice Chair David Cummins resigned from the Board earlier this year due to ill health. We all wish him well with his recovery.

But we've been pleased to welcome some new residents – Mike Boniface and Carmen Simpson – who have



joined the Board in the period running up to this year's AGM.

We will update you about our Board in the November edition of Community News.

What we're doing

Being a Board Member not only takes time and commitment, it also requires detailed knowledge of Phoenix, finance and the wider housing sector.

We want to ensure that, if they wish to, tenants and leaseholders can build this knowledge and become our next generation of resident leaders.

Both Mike and Carmen have joined the Board from the Phoenix Gateway Committee.

This is a group set up last year to look at some of Phoenix's challenges in detail and act as a sounding board for Board Members. It's been an opportunity for some residents to develop expertise and build new skills.

We're also pleased to have seen our third wave of graduates from the Phoenix Academy. The academy is unique to us – a ten

week programme covering a wide range of housing issues. Last year, ten graduates progressed to formal housing qualifications and will volunteer with Phoenix as part of the course. We hope everyone who takes part in the Phoenix Academy will get further involved.

We're also setting up the Young Makers Agency (see page 11), to give young people in our area a stronger voice on what happens and we hope they'll continue to be involved in our community.

Find out more

We think resident leadership and involvement is our biggest strength.

If you have any questions or would like to get more involved at Phoenix, then we would love to hear from you.

New involvement opportunity!

Want to have a say about who completes our specialist work? Join our Resident Procurement Panel! This new group will help select the companies who carry out work for our Specialist Services team, including asbestos, fire and water safety works.

You don't need any previous experience as guidance and training will be provided. You will need to be available for up to two hours a month until February 2017.

Please contact us to find out more.



Housing benefit has changed. Claims can now only be backdated for one month so it's important to claim on time!



SAVE

Savvy savings

We understand that sometimes money matters can be overwhelming, or you may just not know where to look for help. We have been doing lots of work to help tenants and leaseholders get ahead with their finances.

Kevin, a leaseholder, retired early due to ill health. He was concerned about how he would be able to pay his bills so he got in touch with our financial inclusion team.

Jessica Strode, our Financial Inclusion Advisor, helped him to apply for reductions in his bills, put in new benefits claims and maximise his income.

Kevin said: "Just the other week, I heard that I've also received help to pay my major works bill and service charges from welfare benefits.

"That's a bill of over £4,000 and all I had to do was apply for support. It's such a weight off my mind and Jessica's been invaluable."

If you would also like some support, please get in touch - we are here to help.



Changes to your benefits needn't be a 'scary thing'

Did you know that the amount of benefits you can claim is being lowered by the government to £23,000 per year (£442 per week) for families, and £15,410 (£296 per week) for single claimants?

This reduction may come off your housing benefit, which means you may have to contribute more to your rent.

We're here to help. Last year (April 2015 - March 2016), we helped our tenants and leaseholders to increase their income by £248,440 just by supporting residents with benefit claims.

We can also:

- look into applying for Discretionary Housing Payments
- help you get back into work
- help you get online.

Easy does it!

The easiest way to pay your rent or service charges is by Direct Debit. Plus, if you're a Gold Club member this will earn you 1000 points (£10)!

It's easy to set up. Just get in touch for more information and we can get you started.

Exciting training opportunities!

We are partnering with fellow housing association, Affinity Sutton to run two training courses. **Register your interest for either course by Wednesday 3 August to guarantee your place.**

Want to work in the private security sector? This three week course will get you started. You will receive your Security Industry Association (SIA) badge and you could go on to work in door supervision, CCTV or as a security guard. Previous trainees have worked for Securitas and Big Brother.

Sign up for a one day course to take your first steps towards a CSCS labourers card (Green Card). This interactive course could be start of your new career in construction.



Don't throw your money down the drain!

We've teamed up with Thames Water to help reduce your water bills and we've saved residents over £22,500 since the scheme was introduced in 2014.

Contact us to find out more.



Top marks for health and safety



Congratulations to the Phoenix Repairs Service. At just one year old, they have already been awarded the OHSAS 18001 Accreditation. This is an internationally recognised standard that acknowledges high standards of health and safety management.

It demonstrates that Phoenix and the Phoenix Repairs Service take the health and safety of our residents and employees very seriously and that we have good health and safety management systems in place.

Surveying your home

We want to keep all our homes to the Decent Homes standard.

To do this we are surveying the condition of every rented property over the next five years. These surveys allow us to keep the information we have about your home up to date, which means we can plan our major works programme effectively and efficiently.

We are surveying our first homes now, so if you receive a letter with an appointment please make sure you are available. If you can't make the appointment please call or email us to rearrange! If you don't get in touch, or you miss your appointment, your home may not be included in our future major works programmes.

If you have any questions about this process please get in touch.

Did you know?

Our out of hours repairs service is only there to 'make safe' until our team are able to visit you during working hours.

In 2015-16 10,068 calls were made to the out of hours service, which cost us just over £83,000.

Here are some examples of when we would be able to make safe:

- boarding up broken windows
- flooding
- total loss of power
- upsurging toilet (if it is the only one in the property).

The following are examples when we wouldn't be able to make safe:

- blocked wash hand basin/sink
- leaking trap
- shower not working

Our out of hours service is available on weekends, bank holidays or between 5pm-8am weekdays.

Sound the alarm

Do you check your smoke alarms regularly? We check and clean all our alarms once a year, and we recommend that you check them weekly too.

Get your gas checked

Our gas safety checks and servicing protect you from carbon monoxide, a dangerous gas that you can't see, taste or smell.

Every year we carry out a gas safety check on all of our rented properties. We will also check that all carbon monoxide detectors placed in your home are working correctly.

We're proud that we've achieved 100% gas safety compliance for over five years!

Please help us by letting us into your home on the first arranged appointment. (Gold Club members will also earn £10 for this!). If you can't make the appointment, please contact us so that we rearrange it.

Leaseholder...

If you are a leaseholder and you sublet your home you must supply a copy of the gas safety certificate to your tenants within 28 days of the annual gas safety inspection.

Please also send us a copy so we can keep our records up to date.



If you would like to share your memories with us, or you know someone with a story to tell, please get in touch.

My Phoenix – Mark Burgess

For each edition of Community News we meet a resident and find out more about them. This time we caught up with Mark Burgess, a resident who has been involved with Phoenix in many ways, most recently in a leading film role!

How long have you been a Phoenix resident?

I've been living in this area, in the same house, for 26 years. I voted to become part of Phoenix in 2007 and I've been to every AGM since.

What changes have you seen?

Personally, Phoenix has helped me get back into work and it's changed my life. I feel like I'm finally putting something back into the community. My confidence has grown and I even took part in a national film to tell people about my employment story.

What's the best thing about living in the Phoenix area?

There is always so much to get involved with here and I like feeling part of the community.

I'm a trustee for Heart 'n' Soul, a charity for people with learning difficulties. I'm also part of the welcome team at Hope Church in Downham, and I volunteer at the Gateway Club for people with mental health difficulties too.

I enjoy meeting lots of new people. My new job, my voluntary work and being involved with Phoenix has helped me to do this.

What would you change?

I would like to have a better relationship with some of my neighbours because I can get a bit lonely sometimes.



Mark at the launch of the We Work film



A natural in front of the camera

What are your hopes for the future?

When I retire I would like to move to Southend. I have friends who live there and I love being near the sea.

Read more about Mark's employment story by scanning this code, or visit our website.





Bellingham cleans up!



Thank you to all of the residents who took part in the Bellingham clean-up day in June, and helped to collect more than 50 bags of rubbish!

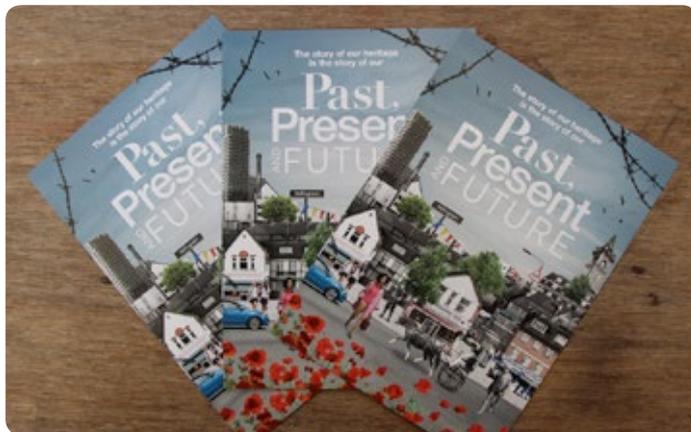


Community Chest projects up and running

Places are often on a first come, first served basis, so don't miss out! Our Community Chest offers grants of up to £20,000 for projects that will make a difference to the lives of Phoenix residents. After tenants voted for their favourites at the Phoenix Festival, larger grants were awarded to the following projects:

- **Young Carers Holiday Club:** Activities for carers aged 5-16 . 9.30am - 6pm during the school holidays. Tel: 020 8699 8686 | Email: Philip@carerslewisham.org.uk
- **Chit Chat Change:** Brings together the community through camping, day trips and activities to help improve the local area. Day trips will be on 4, 11 and 17-19 August. Tel: 07513 055 631 | Email: info@impactmatters.org.uk
- **ABC Under 5's:** An educational play session for under 5's. Every Tues and Thurs, 1 - 4pm at Bellingham Green. Tel: 07958 583 353 or 07852 237 308 | Email: abcunder5@gmail.com
- **Get Out & Go Wild:** An adventure holiday scheme for 11-15 year olds. 22 - 26 August and October half term. Tel: 020 8294 8160 | Email: events@widehorizons.org.uk
- **Whitefoot & Downham Community Food + Project:** Helping to reduce hunger and poverty. Every Thursday evening. Tel: 07745 258 841 | Email: info@wdcfplus.org.uk

To find out more about all of our projects please visit our website.



Go back in time

We need your help! We're partnering with the Working Party Theatre Company to run, 'Past, Present and Future'. This six month project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and will uncover the hidden World War One heritage of our community.

We are recruiting a team of heritage volunteers who will find real stories from the war, and the impact it had on our area and residents, and we need your help to do it!

The research will help to record this fast disappearing part of our heritage. It will also be used to create a workshop for school children to create their own works of fiction based on their community's heritage.

The project will be turned into a piece of community-owned sound art that will be launched at a Tea Dance at The Green Man in early 2017.

To get involved please contact us, or get in touch with Matt by email at matthew@theworkingpartyuk.org or call 07922 758 164.

Phoenix in Bloom, enter now!

Our annual gardening competition celebrates residents who help make our community a brighter, greener space. The closing date for entries is Friday 29 July. Prizes are up for grabs, so what are you waiting for? Get growing!

Tea parties in full swing!

Our Techy Tea Parties are helping lots of people get to grips with technology. Whether it's a phone, laptop or camera, our friendly volunteers have been showing people how to get the most out of their gadgets, all over a cup of tea and some cake.

Resident Maggie Little said: "It's such a help to have someone to sit and have the time to show us how to use these things that make our life just a little bit easier."

We think it's important that everyone has the opportunity to improve their digital skills. We are working with Lewisham Council as part of the Go ON Lewisham project to help everyone get online. If you'd like to come along to a Techy Tea party please get in touch.



The next Techy Tea parties will be at the Green Man on:
Thurs 28 July
Thurs 18 Aug
Thurs 15 Sept

Join our Techy Team! Contact us to become a volunteer.

Residents learning how to make the most of their technology at our first Techy Tea party

Chat & Chips

You may have noticed the sound of chatting and a fish and chip van driving around our community over the past couple of months.

This is thanks to Chat & Chips, our new project that will see teams from across Phoenix getting out into our community and running nine mini-roadshows. It's an opportunity for you to find out about our plans, meet your neighbours and enjoy a fish and chips supper.

To join us, and enjoy free fish and chips, you need to book your place in advance. Contact us for details of the nearest event to you.



The Young Makers' Agency (YMA) is a new group for young people aged 13-19. Get involved and let's make things happen in south Lewisham.

**MAKE A STAND
MAKE A DIFFERENCE
MAKE YOURSELF HEARD**

 youngmakers.org.uk  [YMALONDON](https://www.instagram.com/YMALONDON)  [@YMALONDON](https://twitter.com/YMALONDON)

Major works update

Last year we carried out major works on 554 homes.

This spring residents helped select the contractors for our next major works.

The successful contractors, AD Construction and United Living, will each be working on 200 properties. The works could include improvements to the roof, drainage and guttering or the brickwork.

We have written to everyone who is due to be included in these major works with more information. If you have any questions please get in touch.



Noticeboard

What's on at The Green Man?

Monday

10am - 2pm

Green Man Monday market

12pm - 1pm

60+ exercise class. Contact Christina at 60UP on 020 3667 3704

4pm - 7pm

GLYPA drama sessions (term-time from Mon 19 Sept). Contact Louise on 020 8854 1316

Tuesday

10am - 2pm

Phoenix Job Club

12pm - 2pm

Free drop-in session to improve your digital skills

Wednesday

10am - 12pm

Conversation Club to help you speak English with confidence

10am - 12pm

Free drop-in session to improve your digital skills

4pm - 6.30pm

Short drama course (7 - 28 September) Contact Delanie Forbes on 07968 002 629

6pm - 8pm

The Lewisham LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Officers hold a drop in session the second Wednesday of every month. Contact Lewisham LGBT Officers on 07872 667 974

Thursday

12pm - 1pm

Cheshires health, fitness and nutrition classes. Call 07917 528 444 for more info

Friday

10am - 12pm

Conversation Club

12pm - 1pm

Fab Fridays – 60+ social group. Contact Christina at 60UP on 020 3667 3704



Tying the knot?

To celebrate The Green Man becoming a licensed wedding venue we will be holding a wedding exhibition in the Hub on 8-10 August.

Come and find out how this unique space can be tailored for your special day.

PLUS win VIP tickets to the National Wedding Show at Olympia in September!

Do you need help with small jobs around your home?

If you're older, have a disability or you cannot manage these jobs around your house, please contact us. We can help with anything from small painting jobs to plumbing in washing machines.

The service is free but you must supply your own materials. Please get in touch to find out if you're eligible for this service.

Heard about our plans to turn the Fellowship Inn, a semi-derelict 1920's pub, into a leading cinema and community venue?

Visit our website to see the architectural plans for the new spaces in the Fellowship Inn. You can also sign up for the latest news and updates!

Stay in touch



By phone: 0800 0285 700 from 8am-5pm, Monday to Friday (and for emergency calls at all other times)

Please note: every other Tuesday, 2-3pm, we have an emergency phone service only as a result of staff training.



Email: correspondence@phoenixch.org.uk



Web: www.phoenixch.org.uk



Twitter: @phoenixtogether @greenmanhub



YouTube: www.youtube.com/phoenixtogether



Visit: The Green Man, 355 Bromley Road, SE6 2RP

The Green Man will be closed on Monday 29 August for the bank holiday. It will also close early for the AGM on Tuesday 6 September. Our out of hours emergency phone service will operate on both days.