

May 2018 • Issue 43

A newsletter by residents for residents



# Phoenix

Our community in our hands

community news



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Welcome...

Have you got a story that you would like to include? We'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch or send your story to [info@phoenixch.org.uk](mailto:info@phoenixch.org.uk)

# Welcome to Community News

Our Chair and Vice-Chair, Anne McGurk and Carmen Simpson, have now sent their first tweets on Twitter. Like them, we want to make the most of all the clever (if sometimes noisy and confusing) things that digital technology can offer. Starting in the next few months, we'll be sending regular news updates about what is happening at Phoenix by email.

If you would like to receive news or updates related to your tenancy or lease by email, please contact us. But before you do, have a look at the opposite page and at the booklet that's been sent out with Community

News, explaining how we protect your data, and what your rights are.

Not got an email address yet? Or perhaps you want to master Twitter or learn how to research your ancestry online? Keen to make the most of your smartphone? Then pop along to our friendly Digital Drop-in, which resident Deirdre Kennedy has been writing about (see right).

But if you feel more comfortable in the world of paper and stamps, then don't worry – Phoenix will keep you up to date in the way that suits you.

### From the Residents Communications Group

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## WIN! 'Spot The Difference!'

Can you spot the eight differences in this picture of our new estate services team? If you think you've spotted them all, please contact us by Friday 18 May for your chance to win a £25 prize.

Cover image - Ian and Chris from our estates services team, which we brought in-house at the end of last year.

Phoenix Community Housing Association (Bellingham and Downham Limited) is a Community Benefit Society, number 30057R. VAT number 162 4926 03. The Regulator of Social Housing number L4505.



## Taking to tech

by Deirdre Kennedy

**The Digital Drop-in, at The Green Man, is where Amy Jeffrey and an army of volunteers help Phoenix tenants get to grips with the 21st century.**

Held on a Wednesday morning between 10am-12noon, the atmosphere is relaxed and enjoyable. Filling in benefit forms and talking to authority can be a daunting prospect, but here in the hub, you can relax and take your time to reach the government offices that you need to. As a Phoenix tenant, it is an enjoyable way to be part of our wider community and meet new people.

I have learnt so much in the year that I have been dropping in to the techy club. I have a project myself this year which I had no idea how to approach. With the skills I have learnt at the drop-in, I only needed the minimum of help to sort out labels, and re-raise the poster for our poetry circle so that I can



Resident Deirdre at the Digital Drop-in

change the details of each monthly meeting.

The important thing is that at the drop-in seeing familiar faces and fellow tenants all in the same situation as yourself, takes the fear out of meeting new technology head on. If you have an iPad or a smartphone that you would perhaps like to throw across the room, or in the bin, why not come to the club and find out how to have fun with today's technology?

## Keeping you and your data safe

New rules will come into effect across the UK and Europe on 25 May this year to better protect our personal data and information.

These new rules – the General Data Protection Regulation (or GDPR) – are designed to give all of us better control and protection of our personal data. And it means that organisations, like Phoenix, must review how they manage and protect the information they hold about their residents, customers and staff.

As a housing association we hold lots of personal information about our residents and other people who use our services. We use this information to manage tenancies and leases as well as other services that benefit our wider community.

We want everyone to understand what information we collect, how we use it and what you can do if you have any questions.

We've included a 'Privacy Notice' booklet with this issue of Community News to provide an overview of the type of information that we hold. More information is also available on our website or by calling 0800 0285 700.



Contact:  
**info@phoenixch.org.uk**

Do you ever look at our Phoenix website, social accounts or posters and think, "That's not getting the message across"?

If you have strong opinions on how Phoenix talks to you and your neighbours, we'd love you to join the Residents Communications Group – you can come to meetings, share your thoughts by email or both. All new members are welcome, but we'd really like to hear from you if you're interested in digital communications such as Twitter, Instagram or video.



## Round the houses



Andrea with last year's winner Asharne

### Big win for our apprentice Andrea

Phoenix resident Andrea Scantlebury has won the Apprentice of the Year at the Chartered Institute of Housing London awards.

Andrea, who joined our Community Regeneration team as an apprentice in October 2017, has been a Phoenix tenant for the last eight years.

If you've been to the recent Community Links events, you will have probably seen her. She's made a big impression on both residents and staff.

The judging panel at the CIH awards were equally taken. They said: "Andrea has shown outstanding calibre in her role. She has made significant impacts, both financially and socially, on Phoenix's community engagement programme. She has clearly demonstrated her enthusiasm and passion and is a rare combination of "doer" and "thinker" - an inspiration."

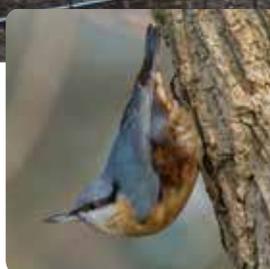
She's the second straight Phoenix winner in the category, following Asharne Litchmore last year. Well done, Andrea!

### What is Nuthatch House?

Nuthatch House is Phoenix's latest new development — we're building 22 one and two bedroom homes at affordable rent. The site is next to our existing homes at Forster House on Whitefoot Lane.

Preliminary works started at the end of last year and if you walk past the site, you'll see our contractors, Saltash, hard at work. The new homes are due to be ready in 2019.

A question we've been asked is: "Why Nuthatch?" Residents chose to the name because of the birds (right) that can often be seen (and heard!) in Forster Memorial Park, just across the road.



A nuthatch



### Dropping by to ask how you're doing

On Wednesday 14 March, we shut our offices at The Green Man for the day so that our staff could go out to talk to residents.

We were collecting vital contact and disability information for residents, along with spreading the word about our free Gold Club membership rewards scheme. But just as importantly, we wanted to ask whether there was anything you wanted to tell us.

We knocked on 992 doors, updated our disability information for 163 residents and signed up 90 new members to our Gold Club. We were also on the phones, which helped us collect disability information for 73 leaseholders and 242 tenants.

Thanks to everyone we spoke to on the day – it was great getting a chance to say hello!

### Podium position

An impressive 300 Phoenix residents gathered for the Community Links Winter Games.

Highlights included a skating rink outside The Green Man and some very competitive curling in the boardroom! For those who liked things a bit quieter, there was a lacemaking demonstration. It was also a chance for staff to tell residents what's been going on, and for residents to have their say on our services.



## Round the houses



### Peter Lewis stands down

Peter Lewis, one of Phoenix's most involved residents, has stood down from our Board.

Peter has been active in Phoenix since we were first set up in 2007. It was his love for gardening and green spaces that made him want to contribute, as he explained in our 10 Years Together exhibition, which you can see on our website. Alongside his judging at Phoenix in Bloom and two stints on the Board, Peter is a member of the Residents Communications Group.

At a lunch to celebrate Peter's contribution, Chief Executive Jim Ripley said: "To anyone who says, 'why would you have residents on your Board?', I say look at Peter, he has a fantastic combination of skills after his work at the Post Office."

Peter said: "Phoenix is my big family and I've enjoyed everything I've done with you".

**Are you interested in getting involved with Phoenix, like Peter? Visit our website or get in touch to find out how you can help to influence and improve services.**

### Magnifying glasses at the ready

Our Scrutiny Panel has completed its latest report, examining the volume of repairs. You can read both the summary and full versions of the report on our website.

#### Key information

- The Phoenix Repairs Service is a wholly-owned subsidiary that went live on 1 April 2015
- Repairs performance is monitored monthly and reported to Board on a quarterly basis
- Telephone surveys are carried out by a specialist company to monitor tenant satisfaction with the service
- Repairs are logged by a separate team to the main general enquiries team.

#### Top 5 recommendations:

- Consider repair planners shadowing operatives on site to increase their knowledge of the service
- Review and record value for money savings on major works programmes to ensure streamlined processes and service improvements
- Explore options for managing tenant expectations of repairs
- Check, at year end, that the number of repairs is comparable with other housing associations
- Continue to pilot properties on major works programmes.

**If you want to join the panel, please email: [info@phoenixch.org.uk](mailto:info@phoenixch.org.uk)**



### The residents with the Midas touch...

Members of our Gold Club gathered for an exclusive Masquerade Ball at The Green Man.

More than 50 residents made masks, played casino games and generally had a fine time.

The Gold Club is our rewards scheme that is open to residents who pay their rent or service charges on time, or have an agreement in place for any arrears. The exclusive annual members' event is just one of the benefits of joining, along with shopping vouchers and entry into a prize draw. Contact us to find out more.

## How are we doing?

We explore a different area of our work and performance in each issue of Community News. This time we look at the work of our housing officers.



### What's happening?

Our team of housing officers are here to help all Phoenix tenants with a range of tenancy and neighbourhood issues.

We have nine housing officers, each with a responsibility for a patch, or area, of between 600 and 700 properties.

Every area is different with distinct needs and demands. Part of the role of our housing officers is to get to know these areas and the needs of the communities they serve. The team also works closely with

the local authority, social services, police and other agencies to deliver the best possible service to Phoenix residents and the broader community.

### Here are some of the things our housing officers can help you with:

- Your tenancy
- Neighbour disputes
- Rehousing (transfer and mutual exchange - swapping homes)
- Small community projects
- Antisocial behaviour (ASB)
- Estate inspections
- Supporting residents at risk
- Viewings and sign ups
- Domestic abuse
- Harassment
- Legal casework (including injunctions , possession and eviction)
- Safeguarding concerns
- Hate crimes



## Get to know your housing officer

Many of our residents quietly enjoy their homes without the services of their housing officer. Your housing officer is always keen to meet with residents and happy to answer any questions or concerns that you may have.

To contact your housing officer, or to find out who yours is, please call 0800 0285 700. And look out for updates from your housing officer soon.

# IN 2017–18...

## 201

Housing officers re-let 201 properties as well as new homes in our extra care scheme. Homes were re-let in an average of 24 days.

## 138

Received 138 new cases of ASB and closed 126 cases.

## 11

Received 11 cases of domestic abuse.

## 80

Investigated over 80 cases of suspected tenancy fraud, and closed 53. We took legal action to get three properties back.

## 17

Managed 17 mutual exchanges (swapping homes).

## 12

Served 12 notices of legal action for ASB and eight for other tenancy matters.

## 8

Evicted 8 tenants for ASB or other reasons.

## 245

Carried out over 245 viewings.

## 157

Rehoused 157 homeless households.

## 40

Supported 40 tenants who were hoarding and 26 who were at risk.

## 44

Rehoused 44 transfer applicants.

## 16

Made 16 safeguarding referrals to social services.

## 16

Processed 16 succession cases.

Carine joined Phoenix as a housing officer in December 2017. She says: “A highlight for me is meeting new residents when we offer them a home and help them to settle into their new property. On a day to day basis, my time is spent dealing with general housing enquiries – this can include anything from responding to reports of antisocial behaviour and responding to tenant enquiries.”

All new for 2018

**FREE**  
TO ATTEND

# PHOENIX FESTIVAL

**SUNDAY**  
**22**  
**JULY**  
**12NOON - 5PM**

**LIVE MUSIC**  
**ENTERTAINMENT**  
**STALLS**  
**ACTIVITIES**  
**FOOD AND DRINK**

And lots  
more to be  
announced  
soon!

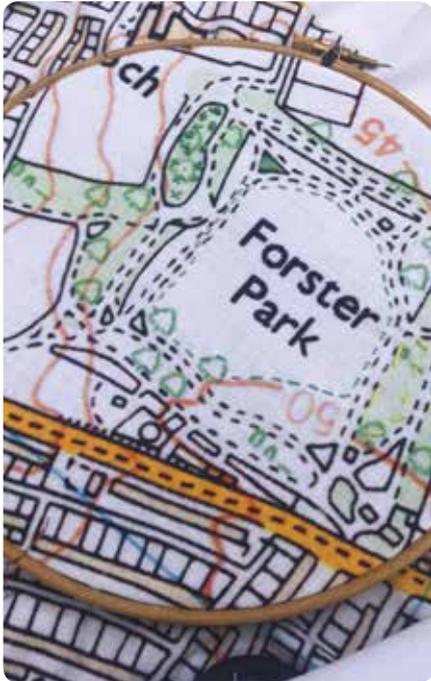
Join us  
to celebrate  
our **10th**  
**birthday**

Forster Memorial Park,  
off Whitefoot Lane, BR1 5SD

-  [www.phoenixch.org.uk](http://www.phoenixch.org.uk)
-  @phoenixtogether
-  @phoenixtogether
-  0800 0285 700

  
**Phoenix**  
Our community in our hands

**10**  
YEARS  
TOGETHER



### The Fellowship – get involved!

As works progress on our Lottery-funded restoration of the Fellowship Inn, there are more ways for you to contribute to its future.

If you're a crafty type, then there is still a chance to work on the tapestry capturing the history of Bellingham and The Fellowship Inn. Stitches in Time are guiding the project and would love for you to take part. Everyone is welcome, no matter what your level of sewing skills is.

Or are you more of a movie fan? Then take part in a focus group and give your views to help shape the new community cinema that will be at the Fellowship. Be part of this exciting community-led project and make a difference.

**To get involved in either the tapestry or the cinema focus group, contact:**  
**info@phoenixch.org.uk**  
**or call 0800 028 5700 to register your interest.**

### High on hope

If you've been wondering what's happening at the Meadow's community centre, near Beckenham Hill Road, it's recently reopened as the home of the Building Hope Skills Academy.

Run by Barnardo's, the academy teaches care leavers aged 16 to 25 the construction skill of dry lining, which is in high demand. It also helps these young people with their numeracy and literacy skills, as well as giving them assistance with their CVs and interview training.

One Phoenix resident is already taking part in the scheme.

If you or anyone you know is eligible and could benefit from this programme, please contact [BuildingHopeAcademy@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:BuildingHopeAcademy@barnardos.org.uk) or call 020 8698 1151.

### Free money saving sessions

When benefit changes – such as universal credit – come along, they could have an impact on your household budget. Universal credit replaces several benefits paid more frequently with one monthly payment. And it's important to adjust your budget to work with this new arrangement.

You may want some support to save money on your current budget or to prepare for changes in the future.

We're planning some lunchtime budgeting sessions, run by Phoenix, to help you prepare for these changes. To register your interest for these budgeting sessions, or if you have any other questions about benefits or universal credit, please contact us.

We can help you to:

- check you are receiving everything you are entitled to
- challenge decisions which may be wrong
- make new claims for benefits
- refer you to partners who can help if we can't.

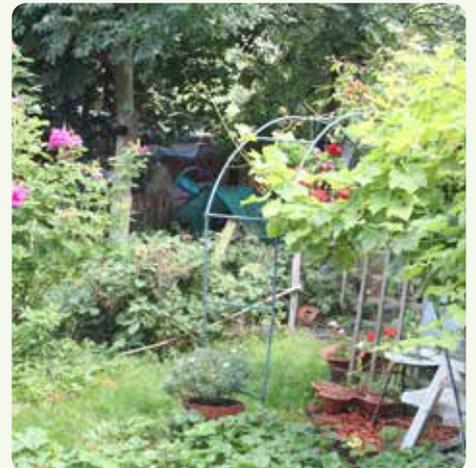
For more information about benefits and universal credit, visit our website.

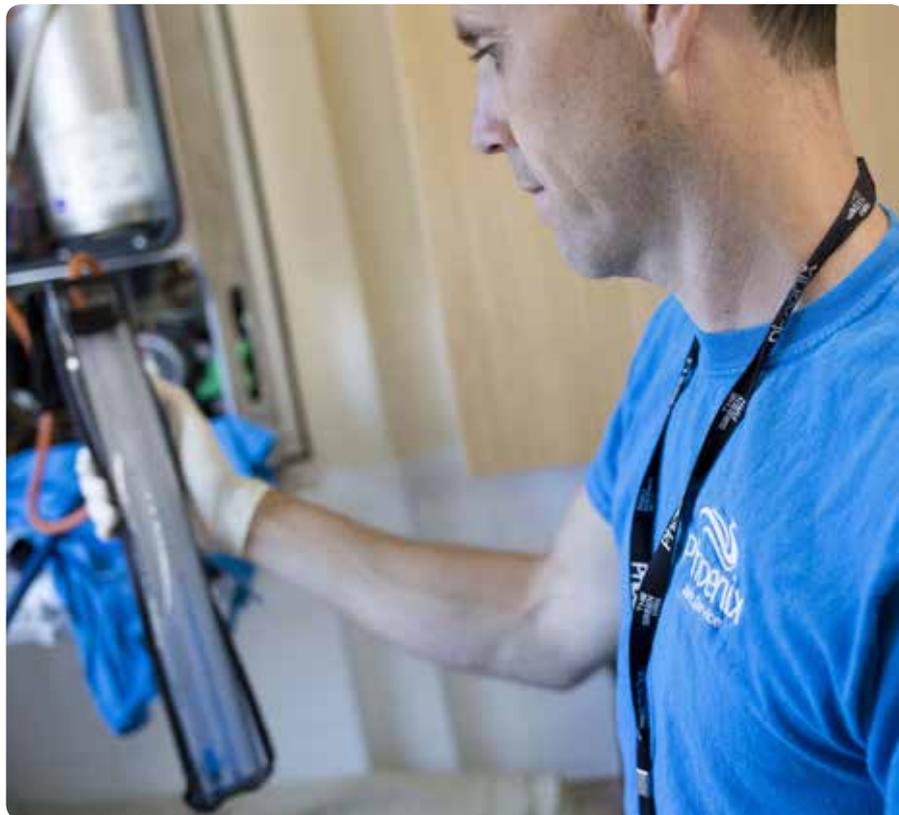
### Calling all keen gardeners!

Phoenix in Bloom, our annual contest to find the area's greenest fingers, will be back this summer.

Previous years have seen a dazzling selection of residential gardens, balconies, allotments and fruit and vegetables.

Keep an eye on our website or for posters around the area with details of 2018's competition, or contact us to receive updates.





### Caretaking – how are we doing?

We recently asked tenants and leaseholders living in a sample of our blocks to tell us how they feel about the caretaking services in our estates and blocks. Fifty-one percent responded.

When it comes to our caretakers' overall performance in terms of their attitude, treatment and care of the communal areas within their block, 84% of tenants and leaseholders who responded said they were fairly or very satisfied.

And 81% of leaseholders who responded were very or fairly satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

The results from the survey did highlight some confusion between what Phoenix is responsible for and what the local council looks after.

The collection of bulky rubbish from homes and the clearing up of flytipping on pavements and streets is the responsibility of your local council.

If you have a parking problem that is happening on a public highway rather than on a Phoenix estate, please contact your local council: Lewisham 020 8314 600, Bromley 0300 303 8672.

### Stay gas safe

Gas checks are a vital part of our work to keep your homes safe. Here, we answer some frequent questions about them.

#### Why do I need a gas safety check?

The gas safety check helps us ensure the safety of all gas appliances, gas flues and gas pipework within your home. It helps to ensure your appliances are safe to use and not putting you at risk of exposure to carbon monoxide or gas leaks that could arise from faulty appliances.

#### Why do I have to have a gas safety check completed so often?

As your landlord, we have a legal duty to ensure all our properties have a gas safety check at least once every 12 months.

#### Why do you try to access my home after 10 months?

To ensure we can complete the gas safety check before the current certificate expires we begin the process of accessing your home early to give us plenty of time to do the check even if we have problems getting in.

#### What happens if I do not allow access?

If we are unable to access your home after three attempts we will begin legal proceedings to gain entry to your home through the courts.

#### I have missed my third appointment but want to avoid legal action.

If you have missed a third appointment for your gas safety check, and have received notice of court action that you wish to avoid, contact Phoenix Repairs Service on 0800 0285 700 to make an urgent appointment.



# Sharon O'Connor

**Sharon is a Phoenix leaseholder and has been our Phoenix Energy Champion since November 2017, thanks to a grant from The Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS).**

After a long and seemingly colder than normal winter, spring is in the air, and we can all look forward to longer and warmer days, and using and paying a lot less to heat our homes.

As well as looking forward to warmer days ahead, I'm reflecting on my time spent this winter as the Phoenix Energy Champion, where I've been running a drop-in energy café at The Green Man every Wednesday.

The idea is for fellow residents to come and chat to me about how they can save energy in their homes. I've also been out and about in the community and as well as visiting residents at home, I've run Phoenix advice sessions at Goldsmiths Community Centre, South Lewisham GP surgery and held sessions at Phoenix's extra care scheme at Hazelhurst Court.

***"I've spoken to 113 different people and helped them to save over £10,000."***

In total, I've spoken to 113 different people and helped them to save over £10,000 by encouraging them to make use of the Warm Home Discount, Thames Water SurePlus scheme and changing energy supplier.

I've also helped people to make significant savings on their fuel bills, by switching energy supplier or tariff, or changing the way they pay for their energy.

Often people aren't convinced that there is any way to make savings on fuel bills, and think that whoever your supplier is, it will work out at the same cost. This isn't the case, but sometimes people need some encouragement and persuading!

At the energy café we offer "freebies" such as low energy lightbulbs, room temperature thermometers and reflective radiator panels, and this really helps! They're all useful things to help save on your bills, and along with a voucher for a coffee and cake from The Green Man café it really encourages people to take the time to sit down with me and engage!



Sharon O'Connor

I delivered a training session to over 40 Phoenix staff, so that they are aware of the savings that we can all benefit from, and have taken part in roundtable discussions with other energy champions in Lewisham, Greenwich and Southwark, helping to share ideas and knowledge.

I've really enjoyed my time as the Phoenix Energy Champion – it's been fantastic to get out and about to meet people and help them save money. My biggest surprise has been how many people were unaware that they could benefit from the Warm Homes Discount – worth £140!

I'll be back to deliver a session at the Phoenix Academy later this year and hope to deliver another round of energy cafés in the autumn.

In the meantime, if you'd like advice on how to save energy and money, visit the Phoenix website or call them to arrange a free energy advice visit.

### **Could you get a replacement boiler for free?**

**Are you a Phoenix leaseholder like Sharon? If so, you might be eligible to get your old or broken boiler replaced at no cost to you.**

**Find out more by visiting [selce.org.uk/warmth/](http://selce.org.uk/warmth/)**



## Noticeboard



### Community Chest Funday

Have fun – Vote for local projects – Meet your local community

- Make your mark on The Fellowship Inn community tapestry
- Win a FIFA game in our PS4 football tournament
- Bump into your neighbours on the dodgems
- Learn more about the community projects that you can vote to receive funding
- Free ice cream when you vote

**Saturday 12 May, 12-3pm – Outside at St John’s (next door to The Green Man).**



**The Young Makers’ Agency (YMA) is a 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**

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

**Paint a picture**

- Keen to meet new people and learn a new skill? Why not take part in our free community art workshops?
- Every Friday, from 3-6pm at Hazelhurst Court, Melfield Gardens, SE6 3DT.
- All welcome, no experience necessary!

### Stop press

Our new homes at Hazelhurst Court have been shortlisted for a top architectural prize! We’re in the running for an award from the Royal Institute of British Architects.



### 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:** [info@phoenixch.org.uk](mailto:info@phoenixch.org.uk)



**Web:** [www.phoenixch.org.uk](http://www.phoenixch.org.uk)



**Twitter:** @phoenixtogether @greenmanhub

**YouTube:** [www.youtube.com/phoenixtogether](http://www.youtube.com/phoenixtogether)

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

**We will be closed on Monday 7 May and Monday 28 May for the bank holidays. Our out of hours emergency service will be in operation at these times.**