

# Chatterbox



## Good News Story

### *Positive Anti-Social Behaviour Outcome*

*Our Housing Officer (Eleanor) recently assisted residents with some ongoing Anti-Social Behaviour, which was having a negative impact on the whole estate.*

Eleanor worked closely with the Police, the RSPCA, and social services to reach the best possible solution for all. Tenants on the estate are very happy with the outcome and can now move forwards.

*Thanks to everyone who worked with Eleanor to achieve this.*

If you are experiencing Anti-Social Behaviour, please contact the office on **01730 263589** or email [admin@phahomes.co.uk](mailto:admin@phahomes.co.uk) so we can explain our processes and assist you accordingly.



## Summer Newsletter Winner

The winner of the summer newsletter was **Mrs M from Liss** who won a £25.00 Tesco voucher.

**Congratulations!**

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**Important!**

## 2024 has 53 Weeks

*The end of the year is upon us and for many this is a time when budgeting priorities change. Christmas is an expensive time of year that can cause financial pressure.*

We'd like to make you aware that next year has 53 chargeable weeks. This means that if you pay your rent monthly you will need to calculate your monthly payment amount in the following way:

**Multiply your weekly rent by 53 and then divide by 12.**

You will be notified of your weekly rent amount in November 2023. To confirm your monthly payment amount by phone, please call the office on **01730 263589**.

## Rent Increase Cap

*We are increasing our general needs rents by 7% in accordance with the government rent standard.*

Government capped social rent increases to a maximum of 7% in response to the rising cost of living. We know all cost increases are difficult right now but this is below the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the period.

If you pay by direct debit, PHA Homes will adjust your payments accordingly from January 2024. If you pay your rent via another method then it is your responsibility to amend this and update any necessary third party, such as Housing Benefit or Universal Credit.

Unlike many businesses, the financial year for PHA runs from January to December. We would ask that you have a clear rent account by 31st December 2023. You can pay your rent via Direct Debit, Bank Transfer, Allpay, cash or cheque in the office or by debit card over the telephone.

If you are struggling to make payments please contact us on 01730 263589 to discuss payment arrangements and any additional support we can offer.

You can also seek advice from National Debt Helpline or Citizens Advice to help with debt, budgeting and coping financially.

## Could You Be Our New Board Member?

PHA Homes is looking to recruit a new resident member to join our Board of Management.

As a small local housing association, PHA Homes likes to engage with tenants & residents when making decisions that affect their homes. The Board of Management provides the ideal platform for voices to be heard at board level.

If you would like to get involved and become a PHA Homes Board Member then please contact us on **01730 263589** or email **admin@phahomes.co.uk** and our Chief Executive would be happy to discuss this further with you.



# Estate Walkabouts

*Our Chief Executive, Operations Director and Head of Services completed estate walkabouts over the Summer, together with our resident Board Member, Graham. Overall, they were very pleased with the condition of these estates, and it was evident that they are well looked after.*

*As a result of the walkabouts we have actioned the following:*

- Washing lines were installed in some communal gardens.
- Some sites were looking a bit untidy so weed maintenance was arranged.
- Some tenants were asked to tidy up their front gardens and arrange collection of larger items left outside.
- The Town Council have been contacted regarding their responsibility for some overhanging trees at one site. We await confirmation on their next steps following a meeting on 16th November 2023.
- The housing department at EHDC has been contacted to assist in finding one household more suitable accommodation due to long-term overcrowding.
- We will be continuing to monitor some parking issues on one estate.
- Retrospective permission has been given for a private works request for a shed.

We thank everyone that came out to speak to us on our walkabouts. Thank you to our tenants, staff and contractors who help keep our estates looking tidy and usable.

If you have any concerns about your estate, please let us know as soon as possible.



# Four Million Homes



*The Four Million Homes initiative aims to empower those living in social housing through comprehensive training on their rights as tenants. It helps those who are battling challenges such as security, health and safety concerns and slow response times.*

The campaign can be found online and gives detailed guidance on social housing residents rights and the services landlords are required to provide.

You'll find information on a wide range of issues including repairs and maintenance for your home and communal areas, anti-social behaviour, and how to tackle your landlord.

Visit [www.fourmillionhomes.org.uk](http://www.fourmillionhomes.org.uk) to read more about your rights as a tenant and more.



## Gas Servicing Programme

*PHA Homes are pleased to announce we remain 100% compliant in our gas servicing programme, ensuring all servicing is completed before its annual due date.*

The servicing of all gas appliances on an annual basis is critical to the health and safety of our tenants. PHA Homes will take all steps necessary to complete the service in time, including taking legal action to gain access to the property if required.

We are pleased to report that in 2023, access into the properties has been permitted to Diamond Gas without the need for PHA Homes to intervene with no legal action required this year. This frees up valuable resources giving our staff more time to focus on other areas that require our attention.

We have worked hard to get additional items including carbon monoxide alarms and unvented cylinders checked in the same visit to minimise disruption to the tenants.

If you have any queries regarding your gas installation please contact Diamond Gas on 01329 234111, who will be providing their services for another 12 months.

### Smell Gas?

- **Contact SGN on 0800 111999**
- **Open all windows to vent the property**
- **Notify PHA Homes on 01730 263589**

Thank you for your cooperation with the gas servicing program this year.





## Electrical Safety

*PHA Homes carries out 5 yearly electrical inspections for rented homes to ensure that all installations and fixed wiring are safe for use.*

Our electrical contractors will be in touch with tenants whose homes are due to be inspected to arrange a mutually convenient appointment for this to be carried out. Inspections are also carried out every time a property becomes vacant, or a mutual exchange is being completed. Following the inspection, an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) is submitted to PHA Homes, which enables us to maintain appropriate safety records.

### IMPORTANT!

Tenants and residents are not permitted to make any alterations to the fixed electrical installations or wiring in their homes without written permission from PHA Homes. This includes changing power socket face plates or installing additional lights or sockets.

If permission is given for such work, then the work must be carried out by a suitably qualified electrician who is registered with a recognised governing body such as NICEIC, NAPPIT or ELECSA, and an electrical certificate must be provided to PHA Homes to prove that the changes have been carried out to the required standards.

If you have any concerns with the electrics in your home please report these to PHA Homes as soon as possible so we can get rectify potential issues immediately.

## Common Electrical Issues

- Broken power socket face plates.
- Power sockets that spark when used or do not work.
- Exposed wires.
- Dark yellow or brown marks around power sockets or light switches.
- Fuseboard tripping.
- Lights that blink frequently (light bulbs are the responsibility of the tenant and should be checked prior to reporting).

## Tenant Engagement

*In our latest Tenant Engagement meeting we had an open discussion around the newly proposed Consumer Standards (currently in the consultation period), which was distributed to panel members prior to the meeting.*

*The document has 4 standards:*

- *Good and safe homes*
- *Good relationships with tenants*
- *Safe and well-kept neighbourhoods*
- *Renting homes to tenants.*

*Below is a summary of feedback from panel members on the Consumer Standards document:*

- The document is clear and easy to read, and the language was open and honest.
- It is simple but contains all relevant information.
- All standards were agreed with in principal and should be mandatory for landlords.
- The regulator needs to ensure a set of standards that are agreed by all so the landlord's performance can be measured.

*This feedback has led to initial conversations about what PHA Homes service commitments might look like in the future.*

*We also sadly said goodbye to a panel member as they are no longer going to be a tenant, but welcomed a new addition to the group.*

*If you are interested in contributing to this group, or have any ideas about how to achieve wider tenant engagement, then please let the office know by calling us on **01730 263589**, or by emailing **admin@phahomes.co.uk***

# Top Tips: Condensation and Mould

**Keeping condensation to a minimum in the winter months will help reduce the risk of dampness and mould growth within your home.**

## What is condensation?

*When moist air hits a cold surface, such as a wall, mirror, tile, window, or clothes, it condenses.*

*Look out for mould growth, damp patches or water droplets in corners, near windows, behind wardrobes, inside cupboards, on the ceiling, or in places where there is little movement of air.*

## What causes condensation?

*There are several causes of excess moisture within your home including:*

- *Showering or bathing*
- *Cooking*
- *Drying clothes*
- *Even people breathing causes moisture*
- *Condensation commonly occurs at night or early in the morning when temperatures outside are at their coldest.*

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## Preventing Condensation

*Follow these top tips to alleviate excess moisture within your home that leads to condensation:*

- Cover pots and pans when cooking.
- Dry washing outdoors, if possible.
- If drying wet washing indoors put it in the bathroom with the door closed and windows left open, or the extractor fan running.
- Do not dry wet clothes on the radiators.
- Vent tumble driers outside.
- When condensation has formed on windows or walls, dry the affected area with a towel.
- Keep trickle vents to windows open.
- Ventilate your kitchen and bathroom when in use by opening the windows or making sure the extractor fan is on.
- Avoid putting furniture up against an external wall if possible or leave a gap to allow air to circulate behind.
- Keep the heating on low throughout the day.

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## Dealing with Condensation

*If you spot mould growth it is crucial that it is cleaned down as soon as possible to avoid it releasing spores and spreading further around your home.*

To clean mould simply dilute household bleach with water and wipe it away. This will kill the mould spores and prevent it from returning.

If you have any queries or concerns on damp, mould, and condensation, then please contact us on **01730 263589** or via [admin@phahomes.co.uk](mailto:admin@phahomes.co.uk) and we will arrange a visit with Maintenance Officer and/or appropriate works to rectify the matter.



# Energy Efficiency Works

*PHA Homes continues to primarily use Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) to gather necessary data and information on the energy efficiency of all of our homes.*

So we can meet the minimum target EPC rating of C by 2035 we will continue to gather information throughout 2023 and 2024. This will enable us to focus on improving homes with lower energy efficiency.

PHA Homes have secured further funding from South Downs National Park (SDNP) this year to enable us to install Solar/PV panels and battery storage units on 4 properties in East Meon. This work has now been completed meaning stored energy can be converted by the solar panels and utilised by the homes.

Air Source Heat Pumps (ASHPs) are another energy efficiency measure that we are considering and these work well in certain circumstances.

High Heat Retention Storage Heaters (HHRSH) are an option for some properties and are considered suitably energy efficient under the new standards.

Insulation is key to these systems working to their best ability and we have been busy installing additional loft insulation to many of our homes during 2023.

This work will form part of our planned works programme for many years to come.

PHA Homes continues to work with contractors that are able to utilise different funding streams in our pursuit to provide energy efficient homes in a cost-effective way.

This process is often time consuming and involves the completion of surveys and reports that detail various measures suitable for different properties.

Properties rating below an EPC C are likely to require alternative measures to help improve energy efficiency. What works for one home may not work the same for another. Where different solutions are required they will need to be identified, designed and agreed, before any installation can progress meaning the process can take some time to complete. However, once measures are installed there should be an energy saving benefit for you.

PHA Homes or a contractor working with our authorisation will contact you when energy efficiency measures have been identified that would be beneficial and suitable for your home.

If an energy efficiency company contacts you, but you have not heard from PHA Homes, it is unlikely that this is connected to any works that we are considering.





## Fire Safety

*The Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022 made it a legal requirement from 23 January 2023 for landlords of all multi-occupied residential buildings in England to write to all tenants to advise:*

- *How to report a fire*
- *A reminder of what the evacuation strategy is for that building.*
- *Any other instruction that tells residents what they must do once a fire has occurred, based on the building's evacuation strategy.*

Following on from our recent Fire Risk Assessments, PHA Homes have now written to all of our tenants in blocks that require the above safety information. We have also updated our signs in communal areas. Please ensure you take the time to read this information and contact the office if you have any queries. This information could save yours, your families, or your neighbours lives!

In the meantime, you may be contacted by our contractors in relation to completing remedial fire safety works identified by our Fire Risk Assessor.



## Top Tips

- Check your Christmas tree lights carry the British Safety Standard sign.
- Check your fire door closes properly.
- Never place candles near your Christmas tree or materials that can catch light easily.
- Test your smoke alarms at least monthly and only remove batteries when replacing them.
- Most fires start in the kitchen.
- Avoid leaving a cooker unattended.
- Make sure your family and visitors know how to escape in an emergency – read the fire safety evacuation letter sent to you.
- Make sure cigarettes are put out properly.
- Decorations can burn easily – so don't attach them to lights or heaters.
- Keep candles, lighters, and matches out of children's reach.
- Never leave burning candles unattended.
- Never overload electrical sockets.
- Always switch Christmas lights off and unplug them before you go to bed.
- Store fireworks safely.
- Never go back to a lit firework and keep a bucket of water nearby.
- Take care around open fireplaces as clothes may catch fire.
- Take time to check on older relatives and neighbours this Christmas as they are at greater risk from fire.



## Christmas & New Year Opening Times

PHA Homes will close for Christmas break on Friday 22nd December at 1pm and will re-open on Tuesday 2nd January at 9am with normal opening hours.

Should you have an emergency repair during the period of office closure, for which the association is responsible, please use the contact details below.

## Out of Hours Contractors

### Electrical

Soal Solutions: 07920 867 274

### Gas

Diamond Gas and Heating: 01329 234 111

National Grid: 0800 111 999

(If you can smell gas, or notice a gas leak)

### Plumbing

Lee Newman Plumbing & Heating: 07985 212 401

### Other

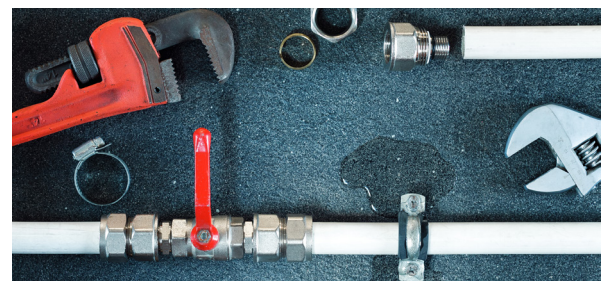
Andy's Toolbox: 07733 038 945

## Emergency Repairs

Emergency repairs are things that are unsafe or make your home very difficult to live in, such as:

- Total loss of electrical power
- Unsafe electrical work
- Blocked drains (external)
- Major plumbing repairs (e.g., burst pipes)
- Dangerous structures
- Loss of heating and hot water involving health risk, for example elderly persons, people with special needs, families with babies or those with medical conditions
- Flooding
- Fire Damage (ring 999 if there is a fire)

Out of Hours contractors will always try to help but we reserve the right to recharge if you use this service for a non-emergency repair.





## Clear Voice

*PHA Homes has recently registered with Clear Voice Translation Services who work with vulnerable adults and children to help them communicate and get the support they need.*

Clear Voice can tailor bespoke solutions to meet individual needs. With access to over 200 languages their services include:

- **Telephone Interpreting** available 24/7.
- **Video Interpreting** can be pre-booked.
- **Face-to-Face** fast response times across the UK.
- **Translation, Transcription, Transcreation**

Please let us know if you or a neighbour needs some assistance.

## Meet Violet



*Violet is our new Housing Assistant (Apprentice) who will be assisting our Housing Officer and Services Team.*

Violet achieved a distinction in business at college this year and has been with PHA Homes for nearly 2 months now.

PHA Homes advertised for an apprentice to complete the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Level 2. These qualifications are becoming more sought after within the sector, and this will set Violet up with a good base in housing.

You might speak to Violet if you call the office, or Violet may be phoning you or writing to you to arrange a home visit or to discuss your payments.

**PHA Homes are pleased to have Violet on board.**

# Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm Testing

*PHA Homes hold records of replacement dates for all smoke and carbon monoxide alarms within our properties. When these come close to the expiration date, we will arrange for them to be replaced for new. It is vital to allow our contractors access when this is required.*

Please remember to test your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms on a regular basis to ensure that they are working correctly.

To do this, press the test button on either alarm, which is normally located in the centre of the unit, for a few seconds. The alarm should sound for a few seconds and then stop.

If the alarm does not sound or it sounds but does not stop, please contact us straight away so that we can arrange for the unit to be checked.



# Winter Warmer Recipe

## Sausage, Squash and Apple Traybake

An easy sausage traybake that will be popular with the whole family. Honey and mustard are the perfect partners for sticky sausages and sweet squash.



### Ingredients

- 1 x Small Butternut Squash (about 750g/1lb 10oz)
- 2 x Red Onions (sliced into rings)
- 2 x Apples (unpeeled, cored and sliced)
- 12 x Pork Sausages
- 3 tablespoons of Olive Oil
- 1 tablespoon of Runny Honey
- 1 teaspoon of English Mustard
- Add Salt and freshly ground pepper.
- 15 grams of Fresh Flatleaf Parsley (finely chopped, to garnish, optional)

### Method

1. Preheat the oven to 220C/200C Fan/Gas7
2. Cut the squash into quarters and leave it unpeeled. Remove the seeds then cut each quarter into 5mm/¼inch slices.
3. Place the squash in a very large baking tray with the onion, apple, and sausages.
4. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon oil. Season well with salt and pepper. Roast for 20 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, whisk together the honey, mustard, and remaining oil in a small bowl. Drizzle over the sausages and vegetables and turn to coat everything in the dressing.
6. Return to the oven for 10 minutes until the sausages are browned and cooked through and the vegetables are tender. Sprinkle over the parsley, if using, and serve.

If you don't have a large enough baking tray, spread the ingredients out on two trays so they have space to roast and don't end up steaming.

Serve with extra greens on the side to bulk this out further.



# Winter Wordsearch

For your chance to win a £25 voucher of your choice complete the wordsearch and return it to us at 32 Dragon Street, Petersfield, or by email to [admin@phahomes.co.uk](mailto:admin@phahomes.co.uk) by **Friday 5th January 2024**

Name .....

Address .....

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