



# Your Tenants Magazine

Produced by tenants and officers for you

SPRING 2019



**SUPPORT  
WITH YOUR  
UNIVERSAL  
CREDIT CLAIM**

Page 8

**£50 PRIZE  
WORD SEARCH**

Page 10



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**EASTSUFFOLK**  
COUNCIL

## The Editor's point of view



Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone, prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone, Waveney Tenants' Magazine has been consigned to history, is defunct and sadly doesn't exist anymore!

We hope you like 'Your Tenants Magazine' every bit as much, new and improved I'd hope! As ever we aim to bring you the most current, helpful, quality information we can, in the same warm manner you have come to expect. Waveney District Council may no longer exist, but here at the magazine the show will go on, and we will always have your best interests at the heart of our practice.

There is an article on page 11 which tells you about the unification of the former Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District councils and how this affects you as a tenant. You may already have seen the new livery on our vehicles and spotted staff sporting their new grey uniforms.

It's fair to say that there have been many changes here at the Housing Department of late, we have appointed a new Head of Housing and sadly there are retirements to announce: see page 4. There will be a new Portfolio Holder for Housing and other new Councillors and staff to meet and work with in the coming months. So expect to see some fresh faces appearing in our next edition, as ever we will do our best to keep you in the loop.

With the cloud of Brexit brooding over our heads we know uncertain times lay ahead; oh for a crystal ball! People are at their best when they support one another and pull together as a community! Whatever your viewpoint on Brexit, it may well cause shortages and fresh challenges to many people, so take care; and please look out for each other.

Regards, Ali Smith, Editor

## Meet the humans at the heart of housing Introducing Kirsty Ayers



**“Describe yourself in three words, or thereabouts?”**

*“Cheerful, enthusiastic, honest and direct.”*

**“What do you find most rewarding about your job?”**

*“I enjoy the fact that my job is varied, and I feel that I've done something worthwhile at the end of the day.”*

**“What did you want to be when you grew up?”**

*“I wanted to teach English, I love to read and language is fascinating.”*

**“What's your favourite album or tune at the moment?”**

*“Rod Stewart! He reminds me of my folks.”*

**“Do you have any pets?”**

*“No.”*

**“If you could have a super power what would it be and why?”**

*“Being invisible would be good fun, but being able to fly would be really useful.”*

**“If you could put one thing into room 101 what would it be?”**

*“Coconuts, I hate the taste.”*

**“What's your favourite film?”**

*“The Goonies, it takes me straight back to my teens!”*

**“What was the last book you read?”**

*“The Cottage on Lilly Pond Lane.”*

**“I know you work hard Kirsty, but what do you like to do in your spare time?”**

*“I love baking with my kids, spending time with family and friends and loads of reading.”*

Editor Ali Smith was talking to Kirsty Ayers, Housing Officer

# HMRC Phone Scam Update/Alert!

You may recall we have previously warned you about nasty phone scammers that claim they are calling on behalf of Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs. These scams often but not always, start with a recorded message and pass you on to an operative who will try to gain your trust and your bank details! They sound very official and can be unnerving, I received one myself recently and out of interest I listened to the message, now I can understand why some people fall victim to this intimidating scam.

These calls, mostly to landline phones, prey on the elderly and vulnerable. What is sadly very alarming is that there has been a 360% increase in the incidence of these scams since October last year.

**HMRC want you to be aware that they will never ask their customers for their bank details or pin numbers over the telephone.**

It is never a good idea to give out your pin number or bank details to strangers, hang up the phone and stay safe from fraud.

**Ali Smith, Editor**



## Mental Health, the GREEN WAY...



Welcome to my little story, my name is Rosalyn Boyce; I'm a very proud council tenant, lucky enough to have survived manic depression. My recovery has been a long hard struggle, but with the power of nature I've managed to turn my life around. I'd love to be able to pass on a few little

tips over the next few issues about gardening and the power of positive thinking.

In today's society mental health is a subject we are starting to hear more about. Changes in awareness, understanding and ways of coping are much more widely spoken about nowadays. I'm a bipolar sufferer, but due to my passion for all things green I've been able to keep my mental health on a firm and stable platform for many years now. It all started with a six week prescription from my Doctors to attend a Care Farm. So six weeks later and my head full of very useful skills learnt down on the farm in the company of others who sang from the same hymn sheet as me, there I was with a new found passion

for the outdoors and all things green. Over the next few years I progressed from voluntary work at Woottens of Wenhaston, under the wing of an amazing plantsman Mr Michael Loftus, to working at the nursery for over five years.

I'm still bipolar, I always will be, but with the power of nature and a positive attitude and a little faith from those around me, I've managed to overcome a lot of demons which had haunted me for years. I'm now a self-employed gardener, working in and around the local area loving every minute I spend at work. I also help run a mental health support group in Lowestoft, where we raise awareness, offer friendship and peer to peer support at The Whitton Life Centre on a Thursday evening.

I'm totally in my element right now with spring blooming all around us, so much new fresh life to breathe in after the cold and dark of winter. I no longer chase butterflies, because now my garden is in order, the butterflies seem to come to me.

I hope to bring you all a few positive words, and a few tips for the garden as I go doing my best to spread a little love around in this very Brexit world we have right now!

**Rosalyn Boyce, Tenant Contributor**

# New Beginning's and Endings

I would have to say the last couple of years have often made me think of the film Four Weddings and a Funeral, you may have noticed the poem by W H Auden I borrowed for my Editorial.

There have been many staff changes to get used to, Sam Shimmon taking over from David Howson, staff and tenant retirements, and the sad and sudden death last year of Cllr Sue Allen; whom I still miss. Yes it's fair to say that there has been a lot to get used to of late, so it is happy news that we have appointed a new Head of Housing, Cairistine Foster-Cannan, who is now in post, but sad to have to announce yet two more retirements: Chris Punt our former Cabinet

*"This is not a Good Bye  
it's a Thank you"*

*After 17 1/2 years as a District Councillor the time is right for me to hang up whatever District Councillors hang up and turn over the next page of my book.*



*During that time I have been fortunate and committed to serving the people of Waveney and Beccles as a local councillor and worked in the community with residents, the Town Council, local charities, emergency services and sports organisations.*

*The District Council work has been varied and interesting from resident's cases, to the Development Control Committee, Audit Committee, Overview and Scrutiny, Pensions Committee, Finance and Resources Cabinet Member and two goes at Housing Cabinet Member and I have listened, learned and served.*

*As Waveney evolves with Suffolk Coastal into East Suffolk I leave the Housing Portfolio with sound finances in the business plan, development and operating strategies and a good professional team of staff to serve its tenants'. I have been but a guardian at a point in time.*

*If I can leave you with one wish it's to keep talking to one another and keep treating each other with respect.*

*Best Wishes  
Chris Punt*

Member for Housing and Cllr Mike Barnard, who was a long standing member of Hobits and heavily involved in housing issues.

I asked Chris and Mike for a quote or a little bit about themselves for this edition and below are their replies; I'd have to say I was amazed to note that Mike had served the people of Waveney for the equivalent of my entire lifetime. I hope both gentlemen enjoy their new found spare time, they have definitely earned it.

**Ali Smith, Editor**

*I was first involved in the local community when I was elected a councillor on the Lowestoft Borough Council in 1967.*



*I became a District Councillor on the formation of Waveney District Council in 1974 and continued on the Council without a break for over 20 years.*

*When I sold my business I became a County Councillor for four years before being re-elected on Waveney District Council in 2011 for eight years.*

*Throughout my years as a Councillor I have always been involved in Housing.*

*I had many years as vice Chairman of the Housing Committee before becoming Chairman of the new joint Health and Housing committee for ten years before being elected group leader.*

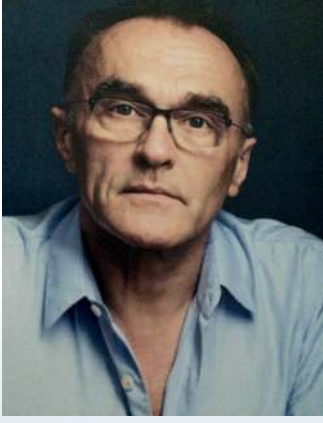
*On my return to the Council in more recent years I have been a member of HoBTS since it began about nine years ago.*

*I am retiring this year so I can devote more time to visiting my growing family of daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren in Italy and southern England.*

*It will be good to book a holiday without worrying if it affect an important council meeting or election. I have enjoyed serving the people of Waveney and wish everybody well.*

*Mike Barnard*

**BEST WISHES ON YOUR RETIREMENTS WE ALL THANK YOU  
FOR YOUR SUPPORT: THE TENANTS FORUM**



*Danny Boyle*

First Light is a brand new festival for Lowestoft taking place on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June. With free access and dozens of free events for everyone, all of us involved in putting it on are really excited about the programme which will be jam-packed with music, dance, film, art, science, talks, walks, sports, workshops, food and drink.



*Wayne Hemmingway and Genevieve Christie, Festival Director*

First Light is a festival with a difference and is all about celebrating the first light of midsummer's weekend at Britain's most easterly point – Lowestoft! - and with an exciting non-stop 24 hour concept. This means that the festival starts at noon on the 22<sup>nd</sup> June and ends at noon on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, with sunrise as a central part of the programme.

Events will take place on South Beach, Kensington Gardens and on the promenade. There are some big names coming including academy award-winning film director Danny Boyle, who will introduce the late night beach screening of his sci-fi epic 'Sunshine', Gilles Peterson, BBC

# SEE YOU ON THE BEACH?

6Music presenter and international club DJ, who will bring the best worldwide vibes to the beach for a sundown session, and radio presenter and author Simon Mayo, who will talk about the importance of the spirit of a place in his writing.

Local musical talent will include The John Ward Band, Leaone and Little Big Mouth. There will be a Cosmic Pirate zone for children with storytelling and events with children's authors Jonny Duddle and Gareth P Jones, plus lots to make and do with our partners Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk Artlink, East Coast College, Lowestoft Library and the Knit, Stitch and Yarn Group from the Yard.

There will be a programme of talks informed by the sea, sky and beach on nautical fashion with Amber Butchart - who was born and brought up in Lowestoft, the moon with space expert Dr Kevin Fong and the cosmos with public astronomer Professor Carolin Crawford, plus sun and moon-gazing on the beach with the Norwich Astronomical Society.



*The John Ward Band*

Eight local artists are taking over a beach hut each to make their art and Lowestoft Arts Centre

will be showcasing their work in the Gardens where there will be a Maker's Market. First Light also has lots of dance – to watch and to take part in, including a Tea Dance in the Moon Dance zone



and for the night owls, a Silent Disco. There will also be a 24-hour well-being area with yoga and relaxing therapies and if you're feeling energetic, take part in the Speed of Light 5K run on Sunday morning being organised by the Lowestoft Road Runners. Plus there will be volleyball, Ultimate Frisbee, clubbercise and Zumba.

At First Light Festival, the beach will be the star – so we hope you'll come along, bring a picnic settle down on the sand and enjoy it! Have a look at the full programme on [www.firstlightlowestoft.com](http://www.firstlightlowestoft.com) and follow us on Facebook First Light Lowestoft and Instagram @firstlightlowestoft.

**Genevieve Christie,**  
Festival Director

## **FIRM** *but Fair*

The council is often asked by tenants to carry out repairs to their property which are required as a result of an accident, negligence or even wilful damage. These types of repairs can be expensive and if carried out at no charge would use funds already earmarked for normal 'wear and tear' repairs and programmed works, such as kitchen and bathroom upgrading etc.

It is only fair then that these types of repairs are paid for by the tenant of the property involved and do not disadvantage other tenants who are waiting for normal repairs. These bills are known as 'recharges' and can be expensive. There is a minimum cost to the council for sending an operative to a property which is £30 + vat. This may cover some smaller jobs such as replacing a lock in an unlocked door due to lost keys, or replacing an electrical socket cover damaged whilst moving furniture but the majority of recharges are more expensive.

Broken windows are a typical example as these require at least two property visits and potentially

some form of scaffolding if the window is above ground floor level.

Should you lose your keys and need the lock drilling out and replaced because the door is locked, then at the moment the recharge would be £50 + vat.

We will ask for a deposit to be paid when the repair request is made with the remainder paid after the repair. If you are suffering financial hardship we can spread the cost over a number of months to make this more affordable. Of course if you prefer, you can use any local qualified tradesperson to carry out a repair at your property.

If the repair is required as a result of criminal damage the police will supply you with a crime reference number, which if provided will enable us to waive the charge and pursue payment in court should the perpetrator be brought to justice.

We want everyone to have access to a first class repairs service and by recharging for these types of repairs we feel we are being fair to all of our tenants.

**Martin Swan**, Support Services Manager

## **DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS** *the Housing Benefit top up*

East Suffolk Council is given a pot of money each year by the Department for Work and Pensions. This pot of money is called Discretionary Housing Payments, often referred to as DHP.

DHP is a discretionary award of money to help top up your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Element component, if your award does not cover your full rent. You need to apply for DHP and each case is assessed based on its own individual set of circumstances. Lots of things are considered when assessing whether an award should be made, but generally speaking we look to see if there is a need for further financial support, and whether it will help you keep your home, or move to more affordable accommodation. DHP can be paid as a

top up to your benefit award, but also as a lump sum to help with rent in advance, rent deposit, removal costs and in some cases we can help with rent arrears if they are putting you at risk of losing your home.

If you are struggling to pay your rent, and your Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Element does not meet your full rent, consider applying for a DHP award.



An application should be made online, visit: [angliarevenues.gov.uk](http://angliarevenues.gov.uk) and look for Discretionary Payments for further information and to apply.

**Sarah Hyman**,  
Benefits Liaison Officer

# Celebration of Waveney District Council

Waveney District Council was created on 1st April 1974, and replaced a number of other councils, the largest of which was Lowestoft Borough Council. Waveney District Council went on to have a population of 117,000 people and cover 143 square miles.

As a District Council, Waveney owned and managed 4,479 affordable homes with a dedicated team, ensuring a high quality of homes for our tenants. An ambitious promise was made to tenants by the Council in 1997 which raised the overall standard for decades to come. The Council assured that every single council house or flat should have central heating installed by the millennium – and the promise was fulfilled. This resulted in an upgrade for a large number of properties which struggled with less reliable forms of heating.

Housing always remains a key issue for Councils - Waveney was no different and the same challenges will face East Suffolk. The 2017-2023 Housing Strategy seeks to address these challenges one of which is availability. East Suffolk intends to increase the amount of Council owned affordable housing from 4,479 homes to 5,100 over the next few years.

We are also very proud of our close working relationship with our tenants. We are looking forward to a bright future for the whole of East Suffolk from Lowestoft in the North to Felixstowe in the South.

**Sam Shimmon**, Tenant Services Manager



# Universal Support *a weight lifted*

East Suffolk Council has been working with leading consultancy firm, Collaborative Change, to highlight the fantastic Universal Support package that is available in Waveney. You may start seeing new leaflets, posters and banners popping up at the job centre, letting you know you can make the most of this helpful advice and support.

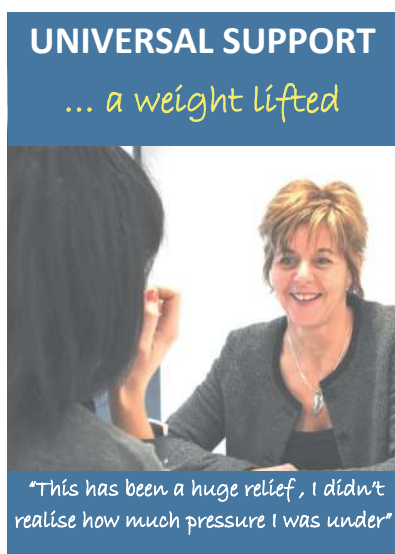
Most customers leave their appointments with their Universal Support champion feeling like a weight has been lifted, with one customer saying "this has been a huge relief, I didn't realise how much pressure I was under."

One of the Universal Support champions in the Waveney area is Tina Winney, who works for North East Suffolk Citizens Advice. If you are claiming Universal Credit, or need to make a new claim for

Universal Credit, Tina can help you to:

- **Make a claim & navigate the system**
- **Maximise your income**
- **Manage your debts & repayments**
- **Introduce you to further support available**

It's easy to make an appointment with Tina, talk to your work coach at the job centre, who can make the appointment for you, or contact North East Suffolk Citizens Advice directly on 01 502 525850.



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## Universal Credit *the changes*

Universal Credit, which is assessed and awarded by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), is a benefit for people who have not yet reached pension age, which brings together six of the existing 'heritage benefits' - Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit. It aims to simplify the benefits system and help ensure people are better off in work. It is claimed online and paid as a single monthly payment, direct to you, similar to a wage.

Universal Credit has been fully rolled-out nationally; at present it only needs to be claimed by those that have had a change in their circumstances which would have previously resulted in a new claim being made for one of the six heritage benefits listed above.

Changes have been made to Universal Credit, which affect whether some groups of people need to make a new claim.

On 16th January 2019, changes were made that mean if you are in receipt of a Severe Disability Premium within your current heritage benefit claim, you will not need to claim Universal Credit, until such time as the

DWP invite you to. This means that if you are in receipt of the Severe Disability Premium, and you need to make a new claim for one of the heritage benefits listed above, you should continue to claim the original heritage benefits rather than Universal Credit, at this time. To find out more, visit [www.gov.uk/universal-credit/eligibility](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit/eligibility) or our Universal Credit Frequently Asked Questions available on the East Suffolk website.

On 1st February 2019, changes were made that mean if you have three or more children, and need to make a new claim for one of the heritage benefits listed above, you will now need to claim Universal Credit. Prior to 1st February 2019, you would have been able to continue receive heritage benefits.



We have put together lots of useful information for people that are claiming, or need to claim Universal Credit – please visit our dedicated Universal Credit page on [eastsuffolk.gov.uk](http://eastsuffolk.gov.uk)

**Sarah Hyman,**  
Benefits Liaison Officer





# CARE AND REAL LOVIN'

Care and Real Lovin' Charitable Foundation (C.A.R.L) was founded by Dean "Carl" Lawson in March 2012 after he was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer in 2009. Following a gruelling few years of chemotherapy and surgery he was told he had between a few weeks and a few months to live. Rather than dwell on the situation, Carl threw himself into raising as much money as possible to help people in need in and around the Lowestoft and Waveney area.

Carl wanted to help those who were struggling financially due to poor health, to give them a break and help them forget about their illness for even a few hours, this included carers, people with illnesses, children looking after parents and anyone whose life revolved around illness just as Carl's had.



**Jamos & the Sir Matthew Band on the indoors stage 2018.**  
*Photo courtesy of Inallhonesty Media.*

and also co-trustee's including Darren Steger-Lewis who is heavily involved in organising CARLfest.

CARLfest is a music and family entertainment event held annually over the August Bank holiday weekend at the Mariners Public House, Rotterdam Road in Lowestoft. There are upwards of twenty music acts performing over the weekend on two stages along with a BBQ, magician, face painter, hair & beard braider, raffle, tombola, fun

and more. There is also a charity beer tent in the garden and all of its takings go directly to the charity.

It takes a lot of effort to make CARLfest happen and there are many people involved including other trustees, fund raisers and an army of helpers on the day all giving their time for free. There is also support from some local businesses including I.N.K House Studios, Waveney Ales and Ciders and Harmonica Tees.

To date over £30,000 has been raised and donated, with each CARLfest generating around £5,000. Volunteers and donations are always required as whilst these events are free to attend, they are not cheap to put together.

£500 has recently been given to the family of a local toddler who has been diagnosed with a brain tumour to assist with the costs that come with lots of trips to Addenbrooke's hospital and other expenses. £200 has been given towards the cost of an electric wheelchair for a local stroke victim after friends and family had already raised £750. Each year presents are donated to a Suffolk Children's home providing joy and smiles to its residents.

Whilst I am only a three year veteran of CARLfest, 2019 will be its 8<sup>th</sup> year and no doubt bigger and better than ever before and personally I can't wait. Hopefully the weather will be kind and the patrons generous to make 2019 another great fundraising year. There are also smaller but no less enjoyable events held throughout the year, Easter, Halloween and Christmas offer up some fun and great music.

To volunteer support or to enquire if you are eligible for financial assistance form the charity please email Darren at [darrenstegerlewis@gmail.com](mailto:darrenstegerlewis@gmail.com) or call him on 07469 767061 for more information.

Hope to see some of you at the main event in August.

**Martin Swan**, Support Services Manager



# Sewing

## WORD SEARCH

Enjoy hunting out all the bits and bobbins hidden in our word search, happy hunting!

**WIN £50**  
**Jewsons Voucher**

Kindly donated by Jewsons

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SAMPLERS  
SCISSORS  
SEQUINS  
STITCH  
TAPESTRY  
THIMBLE  
WEAVING  
YARN  
ZIGZAG

Find the words and when you have completed it send to:

Your Tenants Magazine,  
c/o Charlotte Read, East Suffolk Council,  
Rotterdam Road, Lowestoft, NR32 2EF.

Entries should arrive no later than  
30<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

The winner, who will be picked at random,  
will receive a £50 Jewsons Voucher

*Employees of the Council and members of the  
Editorial Board are not eligible to enter.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_



**Winter Word Search  
Competition Winner**

Winner of the Winter Word Search competition is  
Mr J Sims from Southwold. He wins a £50 Jewsons voucher.

# New Landlord Same Great Service

Waveney District and Suffolk Coastal councils have now officially merged and are now the largest super council in the country. The newly formed East Suffolk Council became formally active on 1st April 2019. This has been the final step in a ten year journey which started when Stephen Baker was hired as joint Chief Executive Officer for Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils.

But what does this mean for you as tenants? The new name of your landlord is East Suffolk Council, we have new signs on the vans and new uniforms and ID cards, so you will notice a new look and logo.

All the services you received when you were a Waveney District Council tenant will continue to be dealt with as normal. Any formal applications such as 'Right to Buy' or mutual exchange will also continue as before.



Our previously existing workforce has all transferred across to the new council, so your Housing Officer and Rent Officer will remain the same. The team answering our phones and logging your repairs will remain unchanged and all our supervisors, inspectors and operatives who repair your homes will remain the same familiar faces.

We will endeavour to work hard to deliver the high standards that you have come to expect from Waveney District Council, now that we are East Suffolk Council.

**Samantha Shimmon**, Tenant Services Manager

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## Gateway to Homechoice explained

If you wish to register for housing you will need to make an application to Gateway to Homechoice, which you can do on our website [www.gatewaytohomechoice.gov.uk](http://www.gatewaytohomechoice.gov.uk). If you do not have access to a computer you can come into The Marina Customer Services in Lowestoft or Beccles Library where you can use a computer and be assisted if required.

Once you have registered and provided all the information we have asked you for, your application will be given a banding of A-E based on your housing need. You will only be eligible for properties that are suitable for the size of your family.

Available properties are advertised every Thursday morning, and the advert runs for one week until midnight Wednesday. All applicants can place two bids per week on the properties they are interested in either online or by phone.

As people place their bids the system automatically compiles a shortlist of applicants. The order of the

applicants is from Band A down to Band E. If two or more applicants have the same band, then the system will usually place the applicant with longest date first however, shortlists will also take into account other aspects such as whether the property is adapted or whether an applicant has served in the armed forces. If you can see that you are very low down on the shortlist, you may wish to consider removing your bid and placing it on another property that week which you may be higher for, this will make the best use of the two bids per week you have if there are more than two properties that you are interested in.

If you are in Band D or E, it is unlikely that we will be able to offer you a Council or Housing Association home (unless you required retired living accommodation). If you need any further information on Gateway to Homechoice or need assistance with completing an application please call us on 01502 523524.

**Lisa Irvine**, Senior Housing Needs Officer

**CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR PRIZE WINNING WORKFORCE  
WE APPRECIATE ALL YOUR HARD WORK, WELL DONE!**

# PHONE SUPPORT for over fifty fives



I know that in later age it is easy to become isolated, lonely and have problems knowing where to turn for help at times. I also know that help is just an internet click away if only you can access it, which must be very frustrating.

That's why I'd like to tell you about Silver Line: 0800 470 8096, you can call them twenty four hours a day every day of the year. They provide free confidential advice, information and friendship that can go a long way to help combat life's niggling problems and help ease loneliness and social isolation.

They started five years ago and are a member of the Loneliness Strategy Group PM Theresa May started in 2018. They can also give extra support to vulnerable individuals who need help to access local services. Sixty eight percent of their calls are received at night and weekends, so no matter what day of the year it is, or time, you've no need worrying or be alone because they are just a call away 24-7 to help you with:

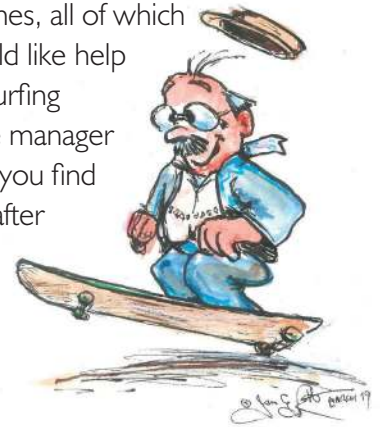
- INFORMATION, FRIENDSHIP AND ADVICE
- LINK CALLERS TO LOCAL GROUPS AND SERVICES
- OFFER REGULAR FRIENDSHIP CALLS
- PROTECT AND SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE SUFFERING ABUSE AND NEGLECT

This sounds like a great service to me, I almost wish I was older and could make use of it! If you try them out and are impressed enough why not drop us a line and share your experience. Also if you know of other useful services and support groups please write in to us so we can promote them.

Who needs the internet when we have Your Tenants Magazine? Well I do; or I couldn't look this stuff up for you.

If you live in one of our schemes, all of which have internet access and would like help popping your internet silver surfing cherry, please ask the scheme manager and we will be happy to help you find your sea legs and get online, after all, man is mightier than machine! What are you waiting for?

Ali Smith, Editor



## Our lovely Leslie retires

Leslie Riley has been a Tenant Representative for the past fifteen years and was one of the first people I met when I became involved with the Housing Department ten years ago.

Leslie and I have been good friends ever since and she has been very supportive over the years to both her fellow tenants and myself. She has held many significant positions, including Vice Chair of the Tenants Forum, a stint on the magazine and was one of our original Hobits, a consultation group advising on all things housing related.

Proudly approaching a "significant birthday" and with bones "that are now starting to creak" she has decided that the time is right to "hang up her Tenant Rep hat!"

Sam Shimmon, Tenant Services Manager presented Leslie with a bouquet of flowers and thanked her personally for all her hard work and dedication over the years. We will all miss Leslie and her laugh a lot, things won't be the same without her. We all wish Leslie well and are grateful for all the years of support and friendship she has given to each of us, she will most definitely be missed.

Ali Smith, Editor



**LESLIE LAUGHING!**



# Empty Property Case Study



Officers from the Private Sector Housing team have recently secured the purchase of an empty property in Lowestoft which has previously sat empty since 1995.

Following years of complaints from neighbours regarding the neglected state of the premises, coupled with reports of the property being a dangerous structure to building control, and complaints to the Police in relation to attempted break-ins, officers successfully applied to Cabinet members to carry out a compulsory purchase of the property – a process which took over a year to complete, however once armed with this consent, a solicitor was appointed by the owners

of the property to deal with the sale of the mid-terrace home.

During visits to the premises, officers discovered that a buddleia growing at the rear of the property has actually grown up through the rear façade of the property – with a trunk as thick as a lamp-post!

Empty homes can cause many problems, not least by attracting vandalism and anti-social behaviour, but with a national shortage of homes, these properties are sorely needed to be brought back into use for accommodation.

This property will be refurbished by the council's project team, and has been taken into the council's housing stock to provide a four-bedroom property for a family on the Housing Register.

With more empty homes still being brought to the council's attention each week, the team are actively prioritising this group of properties with a view to taking similar action, if required.

**Vicky Cotterill**, Private Sector Housing Officer

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## New Head of Housing Appointed



Cairistine has joined East Suffolk from the London Borough of Newham, and has 16 years of experience in Housing mostly from a Housing Options and Homelessness background. Cairistine moved to Suffolk in 2009. We will catch up with her properly in our next edition, she has given us the mission statement below to tide us over and introduce herself.

“As East Suffolk Council replaces Waveney and Suffolk Coastal, I am delighted to be joining the organisation and I'm looking forward to working with a great team to deliver the best possible housing services. Our tenants are incredibly important to us and I am determined to ensure that the high standards you have come to expect from us are maintained and, where possible, improved”.

**Cairistine Foster-Cannan**

**WE ALL EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO CAIRISTINE  
AND LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH HER : ALI EDITOR**

## APSE Service Awards 2018



Waveney District Council's housing maintenance team monitors service levels to our tenants by undertaking performance measure comparisons nationally through the APSE (association of public sector excellence) benchmarking group.

Each year we are required to submit a wide range of statistical data to be compared and verified which looks at specific areas of the service such as our value for money, tenants satisfaction, Jobs completed on time, health and safety compliance, and staff investment to name just a few.

In December 2018, Waveney were notified that their levels of performance during the 2017-18 year was within the top six nationally in the Building Maintenance category and were invited to attend the prestigious awards ceremony in Blackpool. Whilst we were unsuccessful in winning the top award, to simply be nominated in a year which had been particularly challenging for the team was appreciated.

Waveney (now East Suffolk Council as of 1st April) had been comparing performance data as members of APSE since 2008, and have been nominated for awards on seven separate occasions, actually winning the top award in 2011.

As a team it is extremely rewarding to know that the services we provide for our tenants are up there with the very best throughout the UK, and we will strive to maintain these service levels in future.

**John Brown**,  
Principal Service Manager



# Meet Jed our new team member

My name is Jed and I joined the council in September 2018 where I started off my apprenticeship with the Housing Needs Team. I was then given the opportunity to transfer over to Tenancy Services in February which would allow me to complete my coursework and training.

I have worked within the youth work sector and also the public sector since leaving education in 2015, which I have thoroughly enjoyed but I wanted a

change of career. I was looking on the East Suffolk Council website where I saw that the council were recruiting for apprentices, as I had a bit of experience of housing I applied and following an interview, I was offered the position.

I am hoping that when my apprenticeship has finished I will be able to move to a full time position with Tenancy Services or elsewhere in the public sector. I have really enjoyed my time with the council so far and I am excited at what the future holds for me.

**Jed Levett**, Housing Support Apprentice

## New Homes for East Suffolk

We have recently taken delivery of thirty four new homes in East Suffolk. DCH Construction built eighteen new flats in Albany Road, Lowestoft, twelve one bedroom flats and six two bedroom flats. This has brought what was an under used car park into use as more affordable housing for the town. It also provides much needed one bedroom accommodation, as we have a large number of people on our Housing Register who need this size of home.



built for some time to come. There are six two bedroom houses, and ten one bedroom flats

as part of the properties built for East Suffolk Council.

These homes were all advertised and allocated via the Council's Housing Register Gateway to Homechoice. Please visit [www.gatewaytohomechoice.gov.uk](http://www.gatewaytohomechoice.gov.uk) if you or anyone else you know would like to register for housing in East Suffolk.

We are looking to continue to build more homes every year, and you can help. If you know of any land near you that is vacant or up for sale, please send us the details of where it is and who to contact about it by email to [housing.development.team@eastsoffolk.gov.uk](mailto:housing.development.team@eastsoffolk.gov.uk)

**Sam Shimmon**, Tenant Services Manager



Badger Building has built sixteen new homes in Blundeston, on the old prison site which was allocated for development when it was

closed and earmarked for demolition. These are some of the first homes to be built on what will be a large new development of housing which will continue to be

### IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBER CHANGES: PLEASE READ ON:

Opposite is our contacts page, we keep it updated regularly. It is useful and worth cutting out and keeping, it could come in handy. We now have a new number for Central Control run by Norse, who provide both the Home Alarm Service and our Out of Hours Repairs Service.

We are also asking you to contact GASWAY, our gas contractor, directly for all your gas central heating, air source heat pump and solid fuel issues, as we believe this will provide you with a better service. Please check out the contacts page and update your records.

Ali Smith, Editor

# TENANT SERVICES CONTACTS

An update of useful names and contact numbers

Housing Management	Email	Phone
<b>Senior Housing Officer</b>		
Peter Fitzpatrick	Peter.Fitzpatrick@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523424
<b>Housing Officers</b>		
Angie Woodrow	Angie.Woodrow@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523121
John Barber	John.Barber@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523128
Kirsty Ayers	Kirsty.Ayers@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523169
Gary Mortishire	Gary.Mortishire@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523166
<b>Tenant Involvement &amp; Support Officer</b>		
Charlotte Read	Charlotte.Read@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523173
<b>Rent Officers</b>		
Tracey Fitchett	Tracey.Fitchett@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523122
Myles O'Connor	Myles.OConnor@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523126
Elizabeth Allen	Elizabeth.Allen@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523120
Jo Barber	Jo.Barber@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523516
<b>Financial Inclusion Officer</b>		
Tracey Pike	Tracey.Pike@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523578
<b>Nuisance Enforcement</b>		
Mike Hill	Michael.Hill@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523127
<b>Report a Repair</b>		
Tenant Services	Repairs@eastsoffolk.gov.uk	(01502) 523593
Out of Hours Emergencies/Home Alarm Service		0800 440 2516
GASWAY		0800 047 0121
<b>Useful Numbers</b>		
24hr Rent/ Council Tax Payments	www.angliarevenues.gov.uk	0300 790 0509
Police – non emergency		101
Marina Customer Service Centre		0333 016 2000
Norse		(01502) 527100
<b>Tenant &amp; Residents Associations</b>		
East Suffolk Tenants Forum Chair		(01502) 451466
<b>Editor</b> , Beeches Estate		(01502) 574802
Gunton Estate		(01502) 564601
Beccles		(01502) 219100
Whitton Estate		(01502) 584973
Halesworth & Holton Tenants Representative		07526 274776

**THINK YOU SMELL GAS?  
GAS EMERGENCY 0800 111 999**

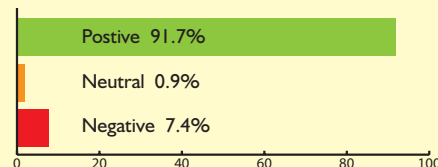
## Satisfaction Survey

1<sup>st</sup> January to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019

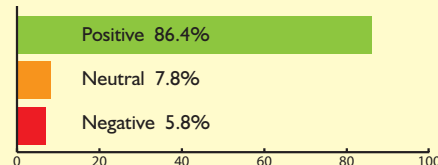
As an ongoing commitment to ensure we provide a quality service to you our customers, we employ an independent company to carry out a monthly survey on our behalf.

If you receive our postal survey, please fill it in and return it to us, we value your feedback and your views are important. 100 households were asked:

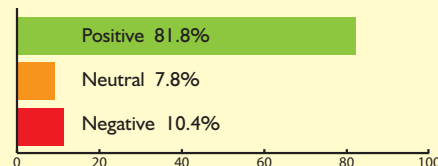
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by East Suffolk Council?



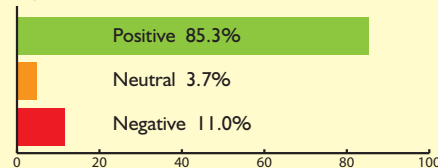
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your rent provides value for money?



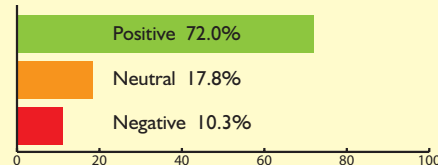
How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that your service charges provide value for money?



Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way East Suffolk Council deals with repairs and maintenance?



How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that East Suffolk Council listens to your views and acts upon them?

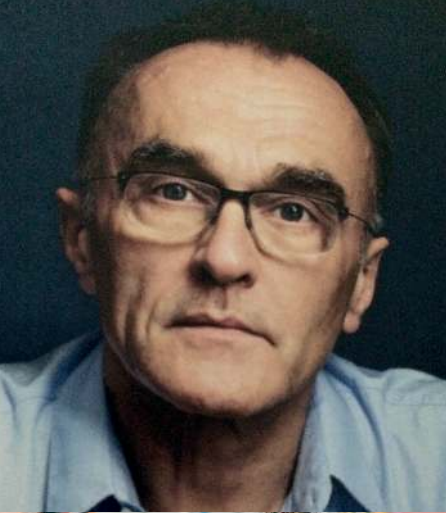
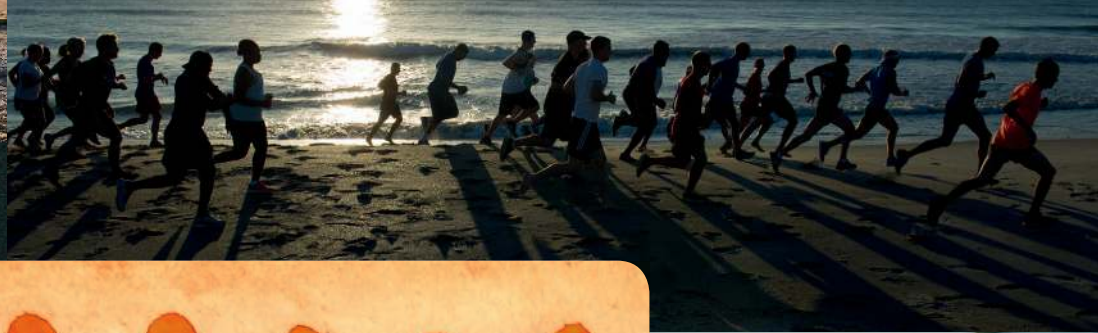


Published by East Suffolk Council Housing on behalf of East Suffolk Tenants Forum.



Housing Services,  
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Lowestoft, NR33 0EQ

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www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk



**Be part of  
the Sunrise**  
**See you on  
the beach?**  
**See page 5**

