

February 2016 • Issue 34

A newsletter by residents for residents



# Phoenix

Our community in our hands

# community news



**Universal credit's coming** How will it impact you? [Page 3](#)

**Community Chest** £100,000 funding up for grabs! [Page 9](#)

**Become a www whizz** We're here to help you get online [Page 10](#)



Welcome...

# Welcome to Community News

**Thank you for picking up the February issue of Community News. We hope you enjoy your read!**

2015 was a bumper year for the Residents Communication Group. Over the course of the year we have each volunteered more than 70 hours to ensure that communications to Phoenix residents are of the best possible standard.

This seems to have paid off. In October 2015 Phoenix was announced as Communications Team of the Year at the 24housing Awards.

We are very proud of what we have achieved as a group, especially our Annual Report. We urge all of you to have a look – it really is an interesting read! Contact us if you'd like a copy or visit [www.report.phoenixch.org.uk](http://www.report.phoenixch.org.uk) to see our digital version.

Anyhow, here's to 2016!

Best wishes, from the Residents Communication Group

## Contents

- 3 Welfare reforms**
- 4+5 Round the houses**
- 6 Focus on... Resident profiling**
- 7 My Phoenix**
- 8 My home**
- 9 My Community**
- 10 Getting online**
- 11 Money matters**
- 12 Noticeboard**



## WIN! 'Spot yourself!'

**If this is you pictured at our Community Links gathering in December, please contact us to claim your £25 shopping voucher!**

## How to keep in touch



**By phone:** from 8am-5pm, Monday to Friday (and for emergency calls at all other times) 0800 0285 700  
**Please note: it is now free to call 0800 numbers from both landlines and mobiles. Please do not use our old 0844 number as you may be charged.**



**Email:** [correspondence@phoenixch.org.uk](mailto:correspondence@phoenixch.org.uk)



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



**Twitter:** @phoenixtogether @greenmanhub for all the latest news and opportunities



**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/TheGreenManSE6](http://www.facebook.com/TheGreenManSE6)



[www.flickr.com/phoenixch](http://www.flickr.com/phoenixch)



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



**Visit:** by appointment from 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday at The Green Man, 355 Bromley Road, SE6 2RP

### Staff training:

emergency phone service only, 2-3pm every other Tuesday

Please note, we will be closed on Friday 25 March and Monday 28 March for the Easter bank holidays.



Cover: Residents enjoy a Winter Wonderland at our December Community Links gathering.

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.



## Welfare reform



The government is making changes to the benefit system that you need to know about. In early **February** a new single benefits payment called Universal Credit will start to come into effect in **Lewisham**.



We're here to help and want to make sure this change is as smooth as possible. Here's what you need to know about Universal Credit:



### What is Universal Credit?

These benefit changes only apply to people of working age.

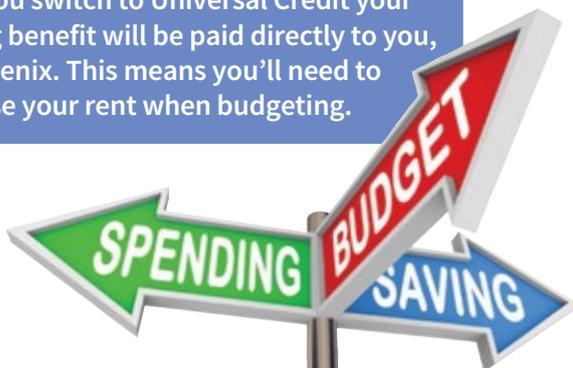
Universal Credit is a new monthly payment for people who are out of work or on a low income. It will eventually replace all of the following benefits and tax credits:

- jobseeker's allowance
- employment and support allowance
- income support
- child tax credit
- working tax credit
- housing benefit.

64% of all Phoenix tenants are on housing benefit.

The payment for housing benefit will go straight into your bank account, instead of being paid directly to us. Remember to prioritise your rent as it pays for vital services for you and others. If you have any questions or concerns about Universal Credit or anything else money related, please contact us.

When you switch to Universal Credit your housing benefit will be paid directly to you, not Phoenix. This means you'll need to prioritise your rent when budgeting.



### When does it start?



Universal Credit is starting now, but at the moment it's only for new benefit claimers. It is expected to be rolled out to everyone by the end of 2017.

Money can be a touchy subject and something some people don't like to talk about. But with these new changes to the benefit system anyone could be affected unexpectedly. If your circumstances do change please let us know.

### What else?

If at some point you do need to claim Universal Credit, we want to help by making the change as easy as possible. Here are some things that you'll need to know and do:

- Because this benefit payment will go directly to you, you will need to have a bank account. For more information see Money Matters on page 11.
- You'll be in charge of your own money. Making sure you know all your monthly in and outgoings is going to make things much easier for you. See our top tips for budgeting on page 11.
- Most people will need to make claims and manage their payments online. If you need help getting online then we can help. See page 10 for details.



## Round the houses

### Ce-le-brate new sites, c'mon!

A celebration event has taken place to thank all the young people who helped to design and build five green sites across the community. Guests were welcomed by a 10 foot stilt walker and a fire breather.

Space Invaders was a joint project between Phoenix and adventure learning charity, Wide Horizons. The project was awarded £50,000 funding from The People's Millions after a successful bid which included a televised vote on ITV.

A special map was launched at the event too. If you'd like to go on an adventure exploring all the sites, come to The Green Man and grab a map.

Shania, who helped with the project, said: "I'm really pleased to have been given a bursary, I'll be able to learn something new. It'll be really good for my CV."



Shania is awarded a bursary from Phoenix Chair, Pat Fordham MBE



Roundtable Road, one of the five Space Invaders sites

### Fellowship Inn update

Between May and October 2015 more than 1400 people took part in our Fellowship Inn consultation!

We wanted to hear people's views on how best to use the Fellowship Inn. The process took place at a pop-up shop in Bellingham, community events, local railway stations and online. Our plans include a cinema, live music venue, a theatre space and much more!

Here are some of the things that people said:

- 89% want good quality food to be served in the pub
- 50% said their favourite pub drinks are small brewery beers and ale
- 60% want to use the space for learning
- 79% want to see a variety of theatre performances
- People would be happy to pay for £10-£20 for a gig ticket or a theatre show.

One in three people who took part in the survey also signed up to volunteer. This is great news as it means the project will continue to be shaped by the local community. **But don't worry, it's not too late to get involved! If you'd like to volunteer, please get in touch.**

### A time for giving

Staff and residents of Phoenix donated over 500 products to the Whitefoot and Downham Community Food+ Project (wdcfplus) to help families in need over the Christmas period.

Wdcfplus was founded as a voluntary community based project to support local people and families who are experiencing hardship and issues relating to poverty. Thank you to everyone who contributed.

Councillor Janet Daby, Chair of the food project, said: "The food project relies on the support of local people and we are delighted to receive such a large donation, particularly given higher than usual demand for our services around Christmas."



Volunteers from the foodbank with donations from Phoenix





## Round the houses

Between April and November 2015 163 Phoenix leaseholders and tenants benefited from training.

### Building Lives takes off

The Building Lives Training Academy offers training and support to young people wanting to get into construction. It's the first training academy of its kind in Lewisham and was formally opened at a special event late last year by Sir Steve Bullock, Mayor of Lewisham.

The achievements of students and graduates were celebrated and they held practical demonstrations in dry-lining and painting and decorating to show what they had learnt.

Building Lives gives young people the opportunity to learn new skills through foundation courses and paid traineeships.

Marvey Emmanuel, a recent Building Lives graduate and now



Guests celebrate the official opening of the Lewisham Building Lives Academy



Building Lives graduate Marvey tells his story

Phoenix Repairs Service Apprentice, had this to say: "The name says it all – it builds lives. Before Building Lives I felt lost, but I now have a new and enjoyable future to look forward to."

The event also celebrated how Building Lives, Phoenix, Lewisham

Council and Barking and Dagenham College have been working in partnership to make the academy a reality for the community.

**16-24? New course starts 22 February. Contact Building Lives on 020 8695 6119 or visit [www.buildinglives.uk.com/recruitment](http://www.buildinglives.uk.com/recruitment)**

### Happy Birthday!



Involved residents joined us as we celebrated our eighth birthday in December and marked the occasion with our official Christmas lights switch on at The Green Man.

Our Chair, Pat Fordham MBE said, "Eight years, I can't believe it! I'm so proud of what we've achieved so far and look forward to working together and achieving even more in the future."

Many thanks to Libra Construction who donated the Christmas tree.

### Dressing up for Diversity Day

More than 160 residents, many wearing traditional dress, came to The Green Man to celebrate our diverse community. Guests got the chance to enjoy lots of activities including African drumming and dancing, belly dancing, crafts and dishes from around the world.

Phoenix resident Josephine Ihonor said: "It was lovely to see everyone enjoying themselves, to learn more about different cultures and to see so many beautiful national costumes. I've had a wonderful afternoon."



### Leaseholder? Let's talk!

We'll be extending our opening hours on the last Tuesday of the month, so you can book an appointment to meet with us.

If you have any questions on our services or your lease please come and talk to us. To book a session please call 0800 0285 700.

## How are we doing?

We explore a different area of our work and performance in each issue of Community News. Here we look at the resident profiling information we have and how we can improve on the services we offer.

### What's the issue?

**We want you to receive the best possible service from us. We think this is especially important as a resident-led housing association whose aim is to work together with residents to build a better Phoenix community.**

If we're to properly tailor our services to meet your personal needs, there is certain information that we need to know, about you and the other people in your household. At the moment we don't have all of these details.

We already ask new residents for this information and soon we'll be asking existing residents too.

All personal data we collect is inputted onto our secure database and will only be used to help us and those who work on our behalf to provide you with services.

By understanding your needs we can tailor our services to meet your needs more effectively.

For example:

- If we know that you're hard of hearing we can make sure that we knock on the door more loudly.
- If you have bad eyesight or dyslexia and would find things easier to read if we sent it to you in large print or by email, then let us know as we can get this sorted for you.

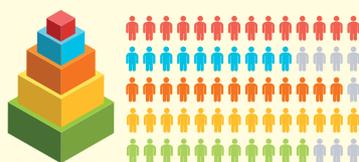
Please let us know if your circumstances change so that we can deliver services to meet your needs.

### Latest numbers

Based on a report of ALL residents here's what we know:



Age known for  
**96.7%**  
of all occupants



Ethnicity known for  
**99%**  
of all occupants



Marital status for  
**47.1%**  
of all occupants

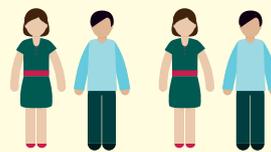


Sexual orientation for  
**38.9%**  
of all adult occupants



If we know that you're disabled we can anticipate where we can help you or your family.

Whether or not you have a disability is known for  
**22%**  
of all occupants



Gender known for  
**100%**  
of all occupants



Religion known for  
**39.5%**  
of all occupants



## My Phoenix – Kim Canagasabey

Kim Canagasabey has lived in south Lewisham for nearly 25 years. She likes to support Phoenix in lots of ways like volunteering at events and sitting on our Gateway Committee.

### How long have you been a Phoenix resident?

I've lived in my flat for nine years now. I moved in when I was 18, I remember getting my keys like it was yesterday!

As a young disabled person, my flat is more than just a home to me. It's my safe place and a symbol of my independence.

### What changes have you seen?

It's been good to get to know my neighbours, it's a great community and we all get on really well. We look out for each other, it's really nice.

In the past when people have seen me with my guide dog, Gemma, they've tried to intimidate me. This can be really scary, but Phoenix, especially Jeffrey, my Gateway Local Advisor, and the Police have always been a great support.

Last year, as part of the Decent Homes programme, new lighting was put in across my estate and it's made such a difference to me. I feel much safer now when I'm walking Gemma in the dark.

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

I'm a big fan of The Green Man café, it's my favourite spot for hot chocolate!

Gemma needs three 45 minute walks each day, so I like exploring the area. She loves going to



Kim (second, from the left) visiting the Houses of Parliament as part of the Phoenix Academy



Beckenham Place Park for her free runs. When she realises that's where we're going she starts picking up the pace because she's so excited!

In the past I've done voluntary work for Phoenix, working with the Customer Experience Team. It gave me a real insight into how housing associations work. I got to book repairs and take rent payments. I absolutely loved my time in the call centre – I really felt like part of the team.

### What would you change?

I'm partially sighted so would like to receive more things in large format print – seriously, it would help me out a lot! It's starting already, but it'll be great when everything comes to me via email instead of paper. I can then zoom into sections on my

phone and make sure I don't miss anything.

We do some great activities for children and young people – we should do more! It would be great to get more of them involved in the running of Phoenix too.

### What are your hopes for the future?

I like being involved in Phoenix, I think it's a really positive thing for residents to do. I took part in the Phoenix Academy last year and from that have enrolled in a housing course through Phoenix too. I'm also on the Gateway Committee.

I'm really interested in learning more about how housing associations function and how I can help other residents. Phoenix really is for the residents and with the residents.



## Are you a #proudentenant?

As part of Housing Day 2015 we joined residents to celebrate social housing and share tenant stories of why they are proud to live in their homes and the Phoenix community.



Jean: "I'm proud because it's a nice house, a nice area, I feel safe and I really don't want to live anywhere else."



Maria: "I'm very proud that Phoenix has worked with us to create Farmstead Road Community Gardens."

## Your patch

We have been working with residents to develop local plans for each of the patches that our Gateway Local Advisors cover. Each plan addresses local priorities and outlines the actions that we will take. In 2015, as part of these plans our Gateway Local Advisors delivered a range of community events that included family film screenings and an afternoon tea event for older residents. Look out for more in 2016!

For more information about your Gateway Local Advisor and to view the patch plan for where you live, visit our website or get in touch.

Remember, your Gateway Local Advisor is here to help. If you'd like to arrange a local walkabout or a visit from your advisor please contact us.

## Car parking trial



A three month car parking pilot started in January at five Phoenix sites:

- Falkland House
- Langthorne Court
- Melfield Gardens
- Randisbourne Gardens
- St Amunds Close

Following a car parking management survey that was sent to all residents in 2014, we found that 65% of respondents were concerned about vehicles parking in places they shouldn't be.

For the trial we've provided households with unique parking permits. We want to see if this trial makes parking easier for yourselves and your visitors. If it does we hope to roll the scheme out across the Phoenix area.

Are you taking part in the trial? How's it going? Let us know – we'd really appreciate your feedback.

## Quiz time!

Phoenix has a responsibility to ensure your home is safe and up to standard. But there are some health and safety bits that we need you to be aware of and take responsibility for too. **Test your knowledge and see how you do on our health and safety quiz!**

### 1. What can contribute to an electrical accident in your home?

- A: Worn or damaged wiring
- B: Overloaded adaptors and sockets
- C: Water in contact with electricity
- D: All of the above

**Contact us immediately if you notice any problems with your wiring.**

### 2. How often do I need to test my smoke or alarm?

- A: Weekly
- B: Monthly
- C: Annually
- D: Every 5 years

**Gas leaks can be fatal, that's why it's really important for you to keep to your gas servicing appointments first time around.**

### 3. Who is responsible for reporting upon discovering a gas leak?

- A: Anyone
- B: National Grid
- C: All gas operatives
- D: The Health and Safety Executive

### 4. What is required for a fire to start?

- A: Oxygen
- B: Combustible materials
- C: Heat source
- D: A combination of all (A,B, C)

### Answers are on page 12

For more information, please visit our website. We've got lots of helpful content, covering everything from fire safety to carbon monoxide.



## Community Chest funding now open!

Each year we offer up to £100,000 of Community Chest funding to projects that will make a difference to the lives of Phoenix residents.

Do you have an idea for a project that the Phoenix community will benefit from? Anyone can bid, residents, local businesses – you name it! The deadline for funding applications is Thursday 3 March. Phoenix residents will then vote for their favourite projects at the Phoenix Festival in May.

For more details visit our website or give us a call.



Our Community Chest fund was announced as the winner of the Community Achievement category at the national 24housing Awards late last year!

**Phoenix residents have so far voted to award £300,000 to over 30 projects that have benefited more than 5,000 local people.**

## More fun than a barrel of monkeys

Our next Community Links gathering will take place during half term on Wednesday 17 February, 5-7pm at The Green Man.

The event will have a Chinese New Year theme, so expect some monkey business and treats (it's the Year of the Monkey!). Residents will also get the chance to discuss our latest plans and speak to staff on a wide range of matters.

Look out for your invite to this event and reserve your spot by Friday 12 February.

YEAR OF THE

# MONKEY

# 2016

## HAPPY NEW YEAR



## Wondrous Winter Wonderland

More than 500 residents visited Santa and his reindeer at our Winter Wonderland Community Links gathering.

At the event we spoke to lots of residents about our latest satisfaction survey and future priorities. Thanks to everyone who came along and shared their views.

Thanks also go to our sponsors, who generously funded many of the activities on offer.

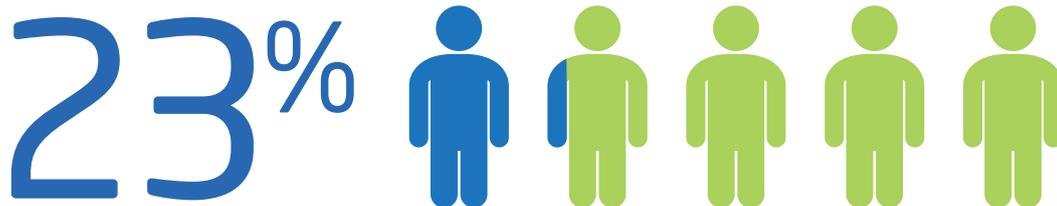
“The whole event has been fantastic. What an amazing atmosphere!” Kathy Auguste

“We came last year and loved it. There was no way we were going to miss this one. It's been fabulous. And to win a mini iPad too. Well, it's amazing!” Nicola Sheridan



With thanks to our sponsors:





OF UK ADULTS **DON'T POSSESS**  
**BASIC DIGITAL SKILLS.**

**Some people choose not to take part in the digital world. In lots of cases people want to get involved; it's just hard to know how to get started.**

We think it's really important that everyone has the opportunity to improve their digital skills and confidence.

Starting this February, we'll be working with Lewisham Council as part of the year-long Go ON Lewisham project to help everyone get online – look out for more information soon!

If you want to improve your digital skills, there are lots of ways that we can help!

**Would you like to get in touch with old friends on Facebook?**

**Would it make your life easier if you could check your bank account online?**

**How about paying bills from your phone?**

### **Bespoke digital training**

A free 12-week digital course will begin at The Green Man on Monday 22 February.

If you'd like to get the best from computers, get in touch to reserve your place. Laptops will be provided at the sessions.

### **Barclays Digital Driving License**

We've partnered with Barclays to offer our residents the Barclays Digital Driving License, a free online course. For information on how to get started, please contact us.

Get in the driving seat and steer your way to a more digitally confident you!

### **Meet with a Digital Champion**

If you don't know your USB from your wi-fi then book a free 1-2-1 session with our Digital Champion, David. Whether you've got a laptop, tablet or phone, you'll receive personalised advice on how to get the best from it. Call us to book a session.

### **Got what it takes to become a Digital Champion?**

### **Want to help other residents with their digital queries?**

**We're always on the lookout for more volunteers. If you'd like to get involved please get in touch!**

Our latest satisfaction survey showed that 70% of tenants and 84% of leaseholders use mobiles and tablets.





**MAXIMISE YOUR INCOME!**

**We've helped residents to obtain an additional £197,413 (April - Dec 2015)**

## Make the most of your money

We understand that money can be tight sometimes, especially in the new year. Managing your money can sound like a task, but we're here to offer free advice and tips on how to make the most of your money.

If you'd like further support and advice when it comes to money matters, contact us to book an appointment with Jessica, our Financial Inclusion Advisor.

Remember, both leaseholders and tenants can take advantage of our free financial inclusion services.

### TOP TIPS

#### Budget

Budgeting gives you control over your money and helps you to work out what money you have available to spend after bills and essentials. There are lots of free budget planners online – why not take advantage of the free internet at The Green Man?

#### Shop around

It's always worth shopping around to check you have the best deal, whether it's a bank account or a phone contract – why pay more if you don't need to?



#### credEcard

Changes to welfare and benefits mean that payments will be made directly to you. So if you don't already have a bank account, it's important that you get one.

If you've struggled to get a bank account in the past, a credEcard might be a good alternative. They are available to everyone, whatever your financial history and offer an online bank account. They are NOT credit cards.

They come with a Visa debit card, no overdraft charges, an online budgeting tool and lots more. If you'd like to set up a credEcard account or would like more information, please get in touch.

Please note we are not financial advisors, if you would like to receive financial advice we can refer you to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

## Gold Club rewards

If you've been a Gold Club member for over a year, you'll have received some high street vouchers around Christmas time for all the rewards points that you've been earning.

If you've not signed up yet, what are you waiting for? It's completely free and you'll earn rewards for everyday things like paying your rent on time and getting your gas service done first time. For more details visit our website.

### 3(000) is a magic number!

Phillip Duck has become our 3000th Gold Club member! As a thank you he won some vouchers and Champagne.

“Since joining the Gold Club, I've met lots of new people and I've found about lots of other things that Phoenix has to offer.”



# Noticeboard

Thank you to everyone who took part in our satisfaction survey. A summary of the findings will have been sent to you with this newsletter. The full report is now available on our website.

0800 & 0808 numbers are now free from a mobile phone! Please don't use our old 0844... number - you will be charged!

## What's on at The Green Man

Mondays	Tuesdays		Thursdays	Fridays
<p><b>10am – 1pm</b> Green Man Market.</p> <p><b>12 - 1pm</b> 60 Up exercise classes. Call Christina on 020 3667 3704 for more details.</p> <p><b>4 – 5.30pm</b> Youth Theatre for 8-11s. To Join call GLYPT on 020 8854 1316.</p> <p><b>5.45 – 7.15pm</b> Youth Theatre for 11-14s.</p>	<p><b>10am – 11am</b> Fitness class. Free for Phoenix residents. Call Kuzey on 07732 098 285.</p> <p><b>10am -2pm</b> Phoenix Job Club. Just drop in, no booking required.</p> <p><b>6 – 8pm</b> Youth Theatre for 14 – 19 year olds. To join call GLYPT on 020 8854 1316 or visit <a href="http://www.glypt.co.uk">www.glypt.co.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Hire The Green Man for birthdays, events, weddings and much more. Discounted rates for Phoenix residents! Call 020 3121 0221</b></p> <p><b>The Green Man Cafe is open Monday - Friday, 9am - 4pm</b></p>	<p><b>10 -11am</b> Jelly Babies Baby Massage. Free for Phoenix residents. To book call Laura on 07957 195 171.</p> <p><b>6.30 – 8pm</b> Tai Chi. Call Matt on 07989 209 558 for more details.</p>	<p>60 Up Fab Fridays. Call Christina on 020 3667 3704 for more details.</p>

Help us to improve our services and become a resident mystery shopper! Contact us for more details.

Green Man Café Pensioner's Special! Tea & toast £1

### Love social housing? Sign up to the Phoenix Academy

Want to learn more about Phoenix and social housing? The 2016 Phoenix Academy starts in April. If you want to become a social housing expert please get in touch!

### Easter Fun Day

There'll be an Easter Fun Day at Beckenham Place Park on Saturday 26 March as part of the Find Your London Festival.

The Mayor of London wants to celebrate and promote London's lesser known green spaces. Come and explore Beckenham Place Park, Lewisham's biggest park. Keep your eyes peeled as more details will be revealed soon!

### Energy bills higher than you expected?

Book an appointment with our energy guru, Adam, to see if you've got the best possible deal.

We could save you pounds!

### Home sweet home

Have you got a room or stairway in need of some TLC? If you're a pensioner or disabled we may be able to help you redecorate. For more information and to see if you qualify, please contact us.

### YOUR LETTERS

Dear Phoenix,

There's a stone monument across the road from The Green Man - Please can you tell us what it is and why it was put there?

Thank you for getting in touch!

If you have a question for the residents communication group, get in touch!

The statue that stands near the entrance to Peter Pan's Park is actually a water fountain. It was donated to Southend Village back in 1897 to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. So, it's been standing there for 119 years!