

Phoenix *Flyer*

A newsletter by residents for residents



All information correct at time of printing. Please visit www.phoenixch.org.uk for up-to-date information.

Gavin Wallen – my experience as a new Board Member

Grove Park resident Gavin Wallen joined the Board in December 2023 as one of six resident members. He outlines why he wanted to join the Board and what he hopes to achieve.



I decided to join the Board to gain a more in-depth understanding of how the Phoenix model works, and to serve my local community.

In 2012 I had a mental breakdown due to a disrepair involving damp and mould in my property. Over the years I have been on a recovery journey to find myself and continue raising my family.

We recently changed landlords to Phoenix and it all began when me and my wife applied to join the Phoenix Academy.

I enjoyed Level 1 learning about housing through the years, and then proceeded to go onto Level 2. You get to sit alongside staff, and they bring along a wealth of experience and knowledge. It was nice that residents get to engage with staff and share stories.

I became an involved resident by attending various events Phoenix hosted, and meeting staff at Community Links events. While going through this process I started to feel much better, and it was at this point I found my passion.

The same problem that has taken years off my life is why I have taken up a position within the housing sector. I now have the full understanding of what disrepair can do to someone's mental health, and I have a wealth of empathy when it comes to this subject.

Getting into the sector is very rewarding for me as one day my story can help someone going through the same or similar situation. I am currently on Level 3 and I am enjoying the process. The teachers are great and the Phoenix Academy is a great place to learn and get a view of how the actual housing system works.

Being an involved resident and taking part in the Phoenix Academy allows you to meet with staff and people

from our community, to discuss important issues they and the wider community are facing. It's also a good opportunity to let Phoenix know and acknowledge when they are getting things right and when things may not be going so right.

The Phoenix vision inspires me because it incorporates togetherness between residents and staff, and Phoenix is resident-led, which is a very unique model and it gives us residents a voice. I would like to see the Phoenix model adapted into the housing sector as a whole, as I see the partnership which Phoenix has with its residents as a link that has been missing within the housing sector.

I will leave with a message to fellow residents, and it is that Phoenix Community Housing's doors are open and they are inviting all residents to come through the doors and engage with them to help the company grow and aid them with service delivery, with the key word being 'together'.



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www.phoenixch.org.uk



0800 0285 700

Melfield Topping Out



We were delighted to be joined by the Deputy Mayor of Lewisham (acting as Mayor) Brenda Dacres to celebrate reaching a major milestone at Melfield Gardens. Due to complete this autumn, the intergenerational scheme will provide 30 homes for people over 55, and two four-bedroom flats for students. Working in partnership with Goldsmiths, University of London, we will offer students lower cost accommodation in return for the students' volunteering time to support their older neighbours.

You can keep up to date with plans on our website.

Community Links Winter Chat & Chips

In February we held our Winter Chat & Chips events in each of our Community Link areas: North Downham & Whitefoot, South Downham, Bellingham and Grove Park. More than 150 residents came along to find out more about projects being put forward for a £50,000 Community Links Fund for each area, as well as chat to Phoenix staff.

Using information from your feedback and local knowledge, we have shortlisted the following potential projects: refuse improvements, planting to protect green areas, improving play areas, traffic calming and refurbishment works.

More information on the Community Links Fund is available on the website, online voting form, and via the postcard that you can find enclosed within this edition.

We were also joined by partner organisations; Family Thrive, Thames21 and Sevenfields Primary Care Network.

"I'm really, really glad I came. I've had so many interesting people to talk to who've listened to me and what I said and what I wanted."

Phoenix resident Lynn Edwards

Keep an eye out on our website for more events in your Community Links area.



Remembering Peter Lewis

We are saddened to learn of the passing of one of our former resident Board Members, Peter Lewis.

Peter was heavily involved in Phoenix from our creation back in 2007. He was a member of the Phoenix Residents Group before serving as a resident Board Member on two occasions.

A regular at our annual general meetings and a member of our Residents Communications Group, Peter was a huge gardening enthusiast and helped to judge our annual gardening competition Phoenix in Bloom.

Our thoughts and condolences are with Peter's family and all who knew him.

Your Phoenix Gateway roundup

Our Phoenix Gateway is made up of residents who oversee all resident involvement activities at Phoenix and offer advice to our Board and committees.

At the latest meeting residents discussed key topics including the upcoming rent increase, Community Links Fund, new parking scheme and our new Scrutiny Panel. You can find out more information about the topics that were discussed below.

Changes to your rent

The Phoenix Gateway heard that the Board's priorities for this year were to focus on the quality and safety of homes and quality of services, along with ensuring Phoenix has the right skills and resources.

Members acknowledged that rents needed to increase to deliver these priorities, and were reassured there would be ongoing financial support to support residents through the cost of living crisis.

Taking into account the Phoenix Gateway discussions, our Board has agreed a 7.7% rent increase for tenants for 2024-25.

We have written to all of our tenants with information about changes to rent and service charges from 6 April 2024. Please look out for your letter, which also includes information about how we set rent, how to pay and the support we offer to our residents to pay their rent.

Carmen Simpson, tenant and Chair of Phoenix Community Housing said: "Raising our rents this year has been a tough decision for our board.

"Our priority is not only to provide high-quality services and invest in our homes but also to ensure Phoenix, our residents, and our community thrive now and in the future.

"If you are having trouble or are worried about how you will pay your rent, please talk to us. We may be able to help you apply for additional support or can help you by agreeing a payment plan."

If you have any questions about your rent and service charges or benefits or are worried about how you will pay your rent, please contact us. We are here to help.

New parking scheme – what you decided

Following resident consultation at Chat & Chips events, December's Phoenix flyer and with the Phoenix Gateway, we are reinstating the parking scheme on some of our estates.

We received positive feedback on the scheme for some estates, while residents in other areas were happy to continue without a scheme.

The first phase of the scheme will be rolled out to Langthorne Court, Falklands House and Randisbourne Gardens by early March.

We will continue to consult with residents at Community Links events.



Financial Wellbeing Team

Our Financial Wellbeing advisors are on hand to provide free benefits and energy advice drop-in sessions for all residents!


Join us for free hot drinks, snacks and to chat with our friendly advisors about:

- Phoenix's hardship fund
- Money and energy saving tips
- Benefits and pension advice
- Energy transfer information
- Tips for "spring cleaning" your finances
- Advice for residents who receive benefit letters from Lewisham Council

Dates and Locations:


Grovehill Court residents

Monday 11 March 2024:

 Grovehill Court,
Hildenborough
Gardens, BR1 4JP

Hazelhurst Court residents

Tuesday 26 March 2024:

 Hazelhurst Court,
Beckenham Hill Road,
SE6 3AG

All drop-in sessions will run from 10:00 - 11:15am.

Free transport is available for those with mobility issues.
To enquire, please call us at **0800 0285 700** or email
financial.wellbeing@phoenixch.org.uk.

We hope to see you there!

Resident Scrutiny Panel

We are reviewing how residents can get involved to improve our services, which includes relaunching our Scrutiny Panel. We want to work with a group of residents who will help the new Scrutiny and Improvement Manager to review different aspects of our service and report to the Board.

Their first area of focus will be damp and mould and residents who have experienced damp and mould in their homes will be invited to take part in the review. Training will be provided.

If you are interested in joining the Scrutiny Panel, please contact us.

Our Energy Café returns



Looking for energy advice?

The energy café has returned to The Green Man and is now delivered by the South East London Community Energy (SELCE). The café will operate on a drop-in, first come first served basis, every other **Tuesday 10am-12noon from 19 March to 30 April 2024**.

For the best advice, please bring a recent bill with you. All services are free of cost.

To find out more:
www.selce.org.uk/energy-advice
energy.advice@selce.org.uk
020 4566 5764



Are you struggling with purchasing or replacing essential household items?

Phoenix can help you.

For residents in need who are suffering financial hardship, we offer grants & purchase essential household items on your behalf.

To find out more & check if you're eligible, please contact our Financial Wellbeing Team at:

 **0800 0285 700**  **financial.wellbeing@phoenixch.org.uk**

 **Phoenix**
South East London Community Energy

Upcoming Events

Digital Drop-in



Our Digital Champions are on hand at The Green Man every **Wednesday from 10am-12noon** to help you with your digital needs. Whether you need help to use your mobile, tablet or laptop, support to surf the internet, do online banking, emailing, using Microsoft Word, whatever it is, our Digital Champions can help.


There's no need to book, just pop in on the day.

International Women's Day

Come and join us for International Women's Day and get some **#InspiredInspiration** through performances, speakers, activities, information and more.

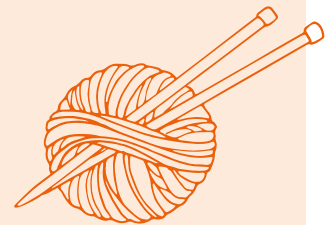
Date: Tuesday 12 March 2023

Time: 5pm -7pm

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



Threads in common: sewing and knitting club



Join Threads in Common every **Thursday from 10.30am to 12.30pm** at The Green Man for embroidery, knitting, crochet and sewing.

It's a great way to meet new people over a hot drink and a project of your choice. Bring along something you're working on or start something new.

There's no need to book, just turn up on the day.



Community

Resident satisfaction

Our resident satisfaction results are discussed at each meeting of the Phoenix Gateway and Resident Experience Committee, and views from these meetings are shared with our Board.

At their latest meeting Gateway members were asked for their views on our approach to dealing with antisocial behaviour, following a drop in satisfaction in this area last summer. We're now changing some of our procedures following this feedback.

These are the main headlines from the latest results:

- **76% of residents are satisfied** with Phoenix overall (+4%)
- **81% of residents agree** that Phoenix makes a positive contribution to the neighbourhood (+3%)
- **82% of residents agree** that Phoenix treats them fairly and with respect (+0%)
- **74% of residents are satisfied** with the time taken to complete their most recent repair (+3%)
- **41% were satisfied** with Phoenix's approach to complaints handling (+4%)

The latest results show we're performing better in areas including completing repairs, improving the neighbourhood and complaint handling. Satisfaction with our approach to maintaining homes and treating our residents fairly and with respect has remained steady.

The full results are available on our website.

Fire Safety Reminder



We take your safety and the safety of your home seriously, so we'd like to remind residents to keep communal areas clear and free of obstruction. Items in communal areas can be fuel for a fire and cause trip hazards for you and fire fighters in an emergency. If you have a loft in your block, please keep it clear at all times. We have arranged to check and clear these spaces and reminded residents that they should not access them for any reason.

This has been highlighted in fire risk assessments and from London Fire Brigade block visits.

Making a complaint

You can register a complaint by telephone, in writing, in person or by email at complaints@phoenixch.org.uk. Visit our website or contact us for more information on our complaints process.

If you are unhappy with how we've handled your complaint, you can discuss your complaint with the Housing Ombudsman at any point during the complaints process.

The Housing Ombudsman can formally investigate your complaint when the Phoenix complaints process has ended.

To contact the Housing Ombudsman, call them directly on **0300 111 3000**, visit **www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk** or write to: Housing Ombudsman Service, PO Box 152, Liverpool, L33 7WQ.

For updates, visit our website.



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE™
We invest in people Gold



Phoenix Community Housing, The Green Man, 355 Bromley Road, London, SE6 2RP