

# Phoenix *Flyer*

A newsletter by residents for residents



All information correct at time of printing. Please visit [www.phoenixch.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.phoenixch.org.uk/coronavirus) for up-to-date information.

## As a community we will get through this together

This is an unprecedented time for all of us - but it's been reassuring, though not at all surprising, to see how well our community has supported each other.

We hear about residents volunteering to create PPE for NHS staff, including one knitting group crocheting ear protectors. We hear about neighbourly acts of kindness, with residents volunteering to deliver food and essential groceries to older and more vulnerable residents.

We're also proud of our staff, all of whom are working to deliver services to you, our residents in as close-to-normal a way as possible. Many are volunteering their time and expertise to make sure vulnerable people in our community are safe and supported - more on that later in this very unusual issue of our resident newsletter.



In the coming months, there will be more brilliant stories to share of how your acts of kindness have made a big difference to people's lives - perhaps even saved them.

For now, we thank you. We ask you continue to show kindness and care to everyone, but especially the key workers in our community. We beg you to take care and stay safe.

**Anne McGurk**  
Tenant and Chair  
of the Board

**Jim Ripley**  
Chief  
Executive

## Important safety checks in your home

Our top priority is to keep you safe. We're following Public Health England guidelines to keep you and our staff safe during the coronavirus pandemic. We're also required as your landlord to carry out compliance checks in your home to ensure the safety of your property.

These include gas safety checks which must be completed every 12 months and electrical testing. We also complete fire safety checks and essential property safety inspections regularly.

It's really important you allow our operatives access to your home to complete these checks.

Visit [www.phoenixch.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.phoenixch.org.uk/coronavirus) or call us for more information about what we're doing to protect your health and safety.

## A little goes a long way

We loved this from Patrice Newman-Sheaf, who is a member of our Policy Working Group. Patrice and others in her knitting group are using crochet techniques to make ear comforters for NHS staff.

Patrice told us: "I saw a post asking if anyone can help make these ear comforters and I thought that's something I can do. I've been in a knitting club for eight years, working out of Phoenix's

community centre at Marton Close, so while we're stuck indoors this is the least we could do. We've made 40 so far in just a couple of weeks."

The ear comforters are designed to make the elastic strap of NHS workers' masks more comfortable. So while they're putting their lives at risk to look after us - including wearing essential but uncomfortable protective clothing - Patrice and her friends are helping make it slightly easier.



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



0800 0285 700

## What we're doing to support residents

### Our services

Our office-based staff are working from home and following Public Health England guidelines just like you. Our caretaking and estates teams are working across our area to keep high contact areas clean and sanitary, for example door entry systems and door handles.

We are offering an emergency repairs only service at present and are also completing essential safety checks.

Our website is the best place to go to find out the most up-to-date information on our services. Our website explains what services:

- are running as normal
- are running in a different way and how you can use these
- we have had to take the difficult decision to scale back.

Our staff are equipped with personal protective equipment (PPE), and this includes face masks, gloves and suits. It is not necessary for staff to wear this PPE for all jobs. When they arrive at your home or block and dependent on the nature of the works, they will assess the situation and use their judgement to decide if PPE is necessary.



“Elderly residents and those with additional needs have told me how thrilled they were to get calls from Phoenix checking in. They feel more part of the community than ever.”

Pat Fordham MBE,  
founding Chair  
of Phoenix

## What we're doing to support residents

**Our priority is to support all residents through this pandemic. We're focusing on ensuring that our older and more vulnerable residents have the support they need.**

We have contacted all of our older residents and residents who may be more vulnerable at this difficult time.

We're referring residents to Citizens Advice and ensuring those in need have access to food and grocery deliveries from Lewisham Local. Our caretakers are cleaning and disinfecting communal areas and we are continuing to deliver emergency repairs and gas servicing and repairs that keep you safe at home.

We're also working to support the wider community. Phoenix Repairs Service staff are using their vans to deliver food parcels and support foodbanks. We've opened up The Green Man to support the community response and it's now the Lewisham hub for FareShare, a charity delivering groceries to those in need across the borough.

We're working hard to respond to all of the queries and questions we're receiving. Please bear with us if our response is not as quick as usual - we are prioritising the most urgent calls and cases. **Thank you for your understanding.**

### Useful information

[www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

The UK Government's website on coronavirus includes links to advice to stay safe and what you can do if you need help claiming benefits or other support.

[www.lewisham.gov.uk](http://www.lewisham.gov.uk) or [www.bromley.gov.uk](http://www.bromley.gov.uk)

The websites for Lewisham and Bromley Councils will be updated with useful information, such as support available during the pandemic and any changes to council services, such as bin collections.

### Advice and support

[www.bit.ly/PIPcoronavirus](http://www.bit.ly/PIPcoronavirus)

This website sets out your rights and what support you may be entitled to, including advice on what to do if you're struggling to pay bills.

[www.bit.ly/MAScoronavirus](http://www.bit.ly/MAScoronavirus)

The Money Advice Service has specific advice on what to do to make sure you stay on top of your bills and claim any additional income you might be entitled to.

# The Phoenix Repairs Service supporting those in need

**When the pandemic began, Jason a team leader in our Phoenix Repairs Service asked: what can we do to support the elderly and vulnerable?**

“I knew many of our team would be up for helping and supporting those most in need. We had a real opportunity to show how Phoenix, as a resident-led organisation, was properly community-based. And as a housing association where most homes were within a few miles of each other, it’s something Phoenix could do easily.

“It’s been really inspiring to volunteer. The operatives who have volunteered so far, whether with deliveries or on the phone, have been brilliant.”

The team has gone above and beyond. Their generosity has seen them volunteering on Good Friday and the May bank holiday to deliver 11 pallets of food to the Hope Centre foodbank in Forest Hill to support individuals in the community, including Mrs Sutherland.

Mrs Sutherland, in her mid-eighties, told Jason that “Phoenix is the best ever!” just for checking in.

Within two weeks of their first drop, the PRS volunteers delivered more than 100 food parcels, picked up 30 crates of food from Tesco, and dropped off two fridges from The Green Man to Lewisham Local, which is coordinating Lewisham volunteering efforts, to help keep food fresh.

**If you need support - whether grocery deliveries or a friendly phone call - visit [www.lewishamlocal.com](http://www.lewishamlocal.com).**



## Welfare benefits support

Our team is working from home to continue supporting residents as normal with questions about welfare benefits.

We can offer you advice and support by phone or email on changing your existing benefits and on making a new claim. It’s important you speak to us as soon as your circumstances change so we can advise you on the best thing to do as quickly as possible.

We can also help you get foodbank vouchers. Just email or call us with your name, address and number of adults and children in your home, and we’ll let you know what to do next.



## Paying your bills

If you’re worried about how you’ll pay your rent or service charges, please let us know as soon as possible. We can help and support you to apply for additional support from the government or agree a payment plan.

We have suspended all eviction proceedings. No one will lose their home as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. We want to help our residents at this difficult time. If your circumstances change, please let us know as soon as possible so we can work with you to find a solution.

We have specific advice - on paying your rent and service charges, energy and water bills, and more - on our website. Visit [www.phoenixch.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.phoenixch.org.uk/coronavirus) or contact us.





“My housing officer and Phoenix as a landlord have been very supportive. I think we’re pulling together as a community and it shows we shouldn’t take each other for granted.”

**Kim Canagasabey, Resident Communications Group member**

# Help for home owners

**We understand that many residents will have financial concerns or challenges as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. We are here to help.**

It’s really important you keep paying your service charges. If you can’t, there is support available to help. We can help you claim additional income and put payment plans in place - please contact us for help.

Any home owner affected by coronavirus can apply for a three-month “mortgage holiday.”

This means you can delay making payments for three months and missed payments can be added onto future payments or the mortgage term lengthened. Please remember that you will have to pay this money eventually.

You need to contact your mortgage provider as soon as possible to set this up.

# Your views make a difference

We’ve conducted satisfaction surveys by telephone for years and have received valuable feedback from a representative group of residents.

Since April, a new company called Kwest is now carrying out our satisfaction surveys.

Your feedback on our services is very important to us, so we can make sure we’re providing you with the best possible customer service and can make improvements where we are falling short.

Telephone satisfaction surveys are currently completed for the following service areas:

- Repairs
- Antisocial behaviour
- Complaints
- Moving in (lettings)
- Caretaking

**More information is available on our website.**



## Housekeeping: The parking scheme is suspended

If a parking management scheme is in place on your estate, you do not need to display parking permits at present.

While lockdown is in place and many of us are at home, we want



to make things as easy as possible for you. That’s why we’ve suspended our parking scheme.

Until further notice, we will not be enforcing our parking management schemes. We’ll update you when this changes.

Please be considerate to your neighbours and make sure you are parking responsibly - this will ensure emergency vehicles like ambulances or fire engines can continue to access our estates.

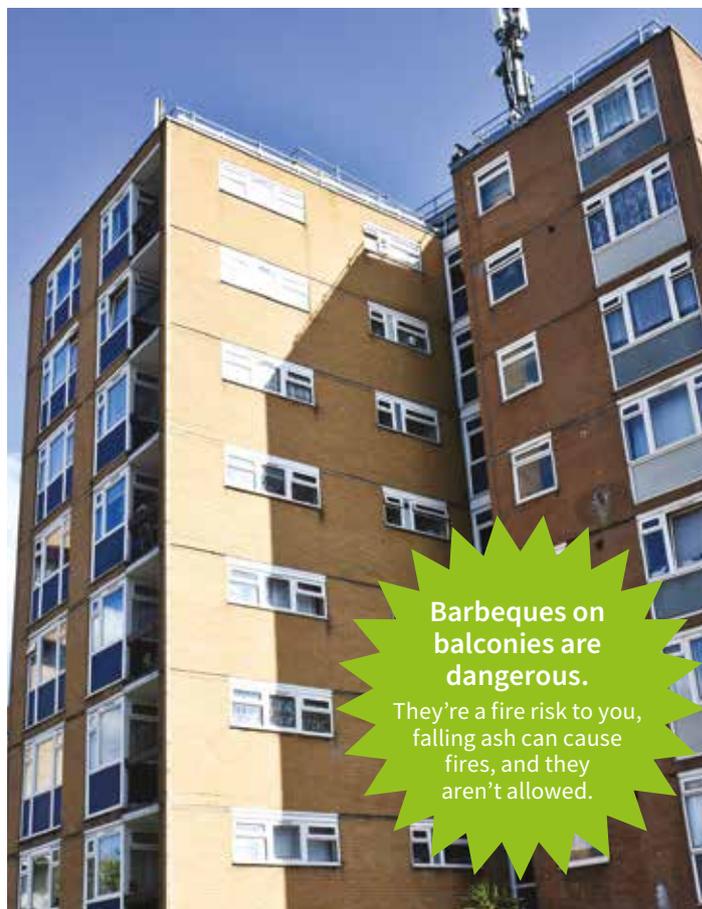
# Fire safety

**With more of us at home all day and therefore a greater risk of fire, it's more important than ever that we all take responsibility for staying safe.**

Our caretakers continue to carry out weekly fire safety checks in our blocks and our teams will spot items that are blocking communal areas and escape routes. Please keep these clear, for your safety, your family and friends, and your neighbours.

If you live in a flat, a fire door plays a big part in keeping yourself and others safe in an emergency. It will stop smoke and flames from spreading, giving the fire brigade more time to tackle the fire before it spreads outside a flat.

Please check your fire door closes by itself as it should and contact us if you have any concerns. If you're a home owner, you are responsible for ensuring your door is compliant with building regulations and is certified. For more information, please contact us.



**Barbeques on balconies are dangerous.**

They're a fire risk to you, falling ash can cause fires, and they aren't allowed.

## Let's look out for each other

**While many of us are home all day, it's important we try to be as considerate of each other as possible.**

Keep music volumes low, especially after 11pm and before 8am, use your washing machine during the day (then you'll also get more sunlight to dry items) and please do stay 2 metres or 6 foot away from people when you see them in communal areas.

Please do not light bonfires. The smoke from these can make it difficult for those with lung problems, including from coronavirus, to breathe properly.



Please also remember that you are not alone. Our team are working remotely but we will continue to deal with and tackle antisocial behaviour cases and domestic abuse whenever you report it to us. Please always call 999 if you're worried about yours or a neighbour's safety, or call us if you're worried about someone and it's not an emergency.

### #YouAreNotAlone

If you're a victim of domestic abuse in whatever form it takes, help is available.

Visit [gov.uk/domestic-abuse](https://www.gov.uk/domestic-abuse) or call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline on 0808 2000 247. We can also offer advice or direct you to help if you contact us.



# Get involved

Sadly, we've had to cancel the Phoenix Festival and this year's Phoenix Academy.

While we can't run some of our community events as planned, you can still get involved. Phoenix is a resident-led organisation and there are still lots of ways you can get involved and influence our services. We can offer advice and support on everything from finding a new job to claiming welfare benefits, help to set up community projects, and even opportunities to get more involved in the running of Phoenix. **Contact us to find out more.**

## Staying up-to-date

We will always write to residents with any important updates during this crisis.

But if you're on social media or have an email address, consider following us for the most up-to-date information, advice and other tips on how we can support and work with you.

- **@phoenixtogether** on Twitter
- **@phoenixtogether** on Instagram
- **www.phoenixch.org.uk/register** for email updates



"I've seen the caretakers hard at work each day, as well as food being delivered by Phoenix staff to vulnerable people. It fills me with great comfort knowing how active Phoenix are being and I'm extremely proud to be a part of the Phoenix community."

**Simone George, resident Board member**

# £100,000 to bring new opportunities and experiences to residents

**Once this is over and it's safe, we can't wait to come back together as a community.**

One way in which we'll be doing that is through our annual Community Chest. Every year we award £100,000 of funding to projects that offer everything from holiday clubs for young carers to trips out for older people.

With applications received in January and February, we're delighted to announce the winners of small grants, selected by our resident panel. They are:

- Haskins Seniors Day Trips
- Jelly Babies Baby Massage
- Parent Partnerships
- Phoenix Senior Super Singers
- Thrive in the Allotment
- Wuntanara - Community African Drumming

## Have your say

Eleven projects have been shortlisted for a large grant. Worth up to £20,000 each, these are decided by a tenant vote. You'll be able to vote online, by telephone or by post. Voting will open later this month, look out for more information on our website soon and don't miss your chance to have your say on funding that will make a real difference in our community.

Note: all projects supported by the Community Chest will only start when it is safe to do so. They will follow government advice to keep anyone taking part safe.

Visit: [www.phoenixch.org.uk/community](http://www.phoenixch.org.uk/community) for more.

### Important notice

All of the information in this newsletter was accurate and up to date when we went to print on 6 May 2020. We are following Public Health England guidelines in relation to the ongoing coronavirus situation and our services and response may change if the guidance does. Visit our website for the latest updates on our services and support available to residents.



www.carbonbalancedpaper.com  
Resource Reg. No. 2110



**The Green Man is closed until further notice.  
Phoenix office staff are working remotely.  
Stay safe. Take care. Be kind.**



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