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SPRING NEWSLETTER



March 2025

What has the Management Committee achieved in 2024

The early part of 2024 was taken up with organising the big 50th party. Management Committee members looked at various venues and we secured St Mary Magdalene. Once we had a venue in place then we knew how much space we needed to fill up and that helped us plan the playground activities. We held several stand-alone meetings to plan the day, and this encouraged some new members to attend meetings and increased members involvement.



All our Meetings consider reports from staff that cover maintenance, rent arrears, finance and operational issues so that members can scrutinise day to day performance. All our Management Committee Meetings are open to all Members to attend, we occasionally hold a closed meeting after the main meeting if there are stage two complaints to hear or confidential items to discuss. Members are required to attend the three General Meetings we hold each year by their Tenancy Agreements. We generally have a larger attendance at these meetings although this year all meetings have been well attended and we have not had any non-quorate meetings.



At our January meeting the committee agreed to pursue the idea of building on a long back garden in Ashmead Road. The meeting also discussed our 50th anniversary celebrations.

In the February meeting we discussed the Draft Budget for 2024/25. Some changes were suggested. Members voted on the rent rise figures for the coming year and discussed the information they wanted to see on our website.

St Peters Social Supermarket

Is open to those in need who can join the group, pay £3 a week and once a week on Wednesday between 12 and 1 pm members can choose a weeks' worth of food. To join the supermarket, click the link on St Peters website stpetersbrockley.org.uk/foodbank

In our General Meeting in April, we formally approved the 2024/25 budget.

At our Management Committee Meeting in May a staff pay increase was agreed to be backdated to April. The following new policies were approved – Confidentiality Policy, Privacy Policy and the updated Complaints Policy. A separate meeting in March with a small group of members had looked at the Application Procedure for Prospective members in line with one of the actions from our away day that was to try to recruit more members that would continue their involvement following being housed – this meeting approved changes to the Interview Form and Guidelines for Visiting Prospective Members.



Our AGM on the 27th of July was a brilliant event, was well attended and reflected the work that had been put in by members and staff to ensure the day was a success. The feedback from attendees all agreed it was a memorable occasion .

Following a welcome summer break our September Meeting elected the officers and a new role of Committee Member with Responsibility for Complaints, introduced following Ombudsman guidance issued earlier in the year. (This role does not investigate complaints it has oversight of how complaints have been dealt with by staff) The draft minutes from the AGM were agreed. We held a closed management committee meeting for members to consider in depth an Ombudsman report following a complaint from a member being upheld.

The October 2024 meeting approved updates to the Application Criteria, approved an Equality and Diversity Policy and a new Compensation Policy.

The General Meeting in December approved an updated Nomination Form, introduced a New Gas Safety Procedure and a Damp and Mould Policy. Following this meeting members shared some festive drinks and snacks and enjoyed a jolly gathering.

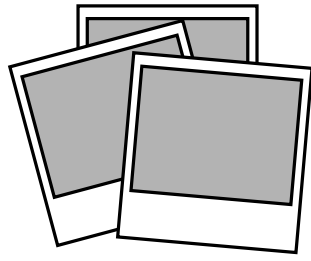
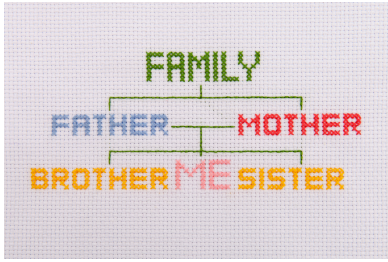
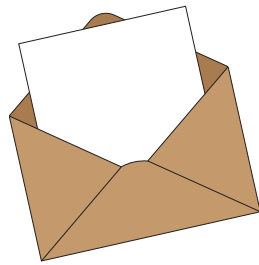


We are always keen to welcome members to our meetings. Some members have said they have had poor experience of meetings in the past. Please attend the General Meetings at the very least, you promised to do this when you were housed, and you may find the atmosphere much changed. The next General Meeting is on Tuesday 15th April and our last one of the year – our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 26th July 2025. We look forward to seeing you there!

Save the date!

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 26th July 2025. Join us for a meal and some drinks. We look forward to seeing you there!

The fire brigade carry out free home safety visits, if you would like to arrange this with them, they can be contacted by calling 0800 028 4428, emailing smokealarms@london-fire-gov.uk or text SMS 07860 021319



Time capsule

We are still asking for contributions to our time capsule that we want to make an event of entombing in the office garden in the spring. I have found lots of documents from the Coop throughout the ages to include and have a couple of newspapers from the week of our celebration AGM and lots of photographs from the day. It would be great if we could include some information about our members and their daily lives. We would love to have some family tree's, information about your family or drawings. From younger residents a letter to their 'future self' or some predictions about the future would be fun. If you have any interesting documents or photographs from past events that would also be welcome.

ARE YOU AN UNPAID CARER?

IMAGO is a Lewisham service that seeks to maximise the wellbeing of Unpaid Carers and to support careers with their own health and wellbeing. They can offer support in a number of different ways from information, training, advice and crisis support. IMAGO have a Carers Hub at Glassmill Leisure Centre at 41 Loampit Vale, SE13 7FT you can drop in from 9am until 5pm from Monday to Friday. To find out more call the team on 0300 373 5769 or email ucwellbeing@imago.community.



CONTACT AND NEXT OF KIN DETAILS

Please make sure you keep your contact details especially your email address up to date so that you don't miss out on offers and news from the Coop and the BTC Voice group. BTC Voice has created many great offers such as discounted theatre tickets, trips and other opportunities that it would be a shame to miss out on.

Some tenants have queried why we ask for details of a next of kin on our audit form. While you are not obliged to supply this information it may assist you if for instance you go on holiday and we need to gain access to your flat to stop a leak, if we can have access to someone with a set of keys we will not need to force entry and carry out a lock change and you arrive home to find you can't get into your property and have to collect keys from our offices that are only open from 9-5 Monday to Friday. We would never contact a next of kin unless it was an emergency.

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CO-OPERATIVES



The UN has officially designated 2025 as the international year of Co-operatives. A global initiative aimed at recognising and promoting the invaluable contribution of Co-ops to sustainable development, economic inclusion and community resilience.



If things don't feel right, they usually aren't right. if you need to talk to someone you can call the national domestic abuse helpline 0808 2000 247 or call the Samaritans (24/7) 116 123.



KEEP WARM - CUT COSTS

Tips to help save energy and cut the rising costs of energy bills.

- Switching appliances off at the plug and not leaving on standby can save up to £55 a year.
- Washing clothes on a 30 or 40 degree wash and only washing with a full load will save £25 a year.
- Avoid using a tumble dryer, dry on racks rather than radiators in the most ventilated area of the home to avoid damp, save £58 a year.
- Only run a dishwasher when full, save £21 a year.
- Don't fill the kettle only boil what you will use, save £11 a year.
- Only shower for four minutes, save £78 a year.
- Swap one bath a week with a short shower save £14 a year.

Let us know if you are struggling with mould and damp – we may be able to help.

BENEFITS ARE CHANGING

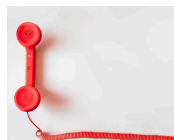
All residents under pension credit age and in receipt of housing benefit (HB) will need to move onto Universal Credit (UC) between now and December 2025.

The DWP is writing to HB claimants to ensure they make a claim for UC. This letter is called a 'migration notice' and will be sent by post. On receipt of this letter HB claimants need to start their migration process within three months of the date of the notice. You don't need to do anything before you get your migration notice. You will not be moved onto UC automatically so its essential to follow the instructions in the migration notice letter otherwise your benefits will stop.

The DWP will send reminder notices and if you make a claim within the deadline date you will receive two weeks extra HB.

If you need help with making this claim you can call the free UC helpline on 0800 328 5644 or call Help to claim on 0800 144 8444.

If you are a Hexagon Managed tenant you can also call Hexagons money support team on 020 8778 6699 or email uc@hexagon.org.uk otherwise contact Lenesa if you are having difficulties and she can assist.



ADULT LEARNING IN LEWISHAM (ALL)

ALL offers a range of advice and activities for adults across several sites. As well as offering fitness classes, crafting courses and courses in various arts they also offer Careers Information, advice and guidance. You can book a one hour free appointment to explore more about their courses, gain careers advice, 1-2-1 support to develop a personalised action plan, find financial support information and help overcome any barriers to learning. Many courses are offered free or at reduced fees to those on a low income. So if you feel a bit stuck and not sure where to turn or what career path to take or just want to get out and learn a new skill or craft why not give them a call?

To book an appointment please call:
020 8314 9196
or email adultlearningiag@lewisham.gov.uk

ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE

Attendance Allowance (AA) is a benefit for older people who need extra help due to an illness or disability. AA is not means tested and does not depend on any benefits you are already in receipt of or savings. You don't have to be receiving any help to claim AA and it doesn't have to be spent on a carer - you can use it in any way you like. If you are entitled to AA you might also be paid extra money with Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. Call the AA helpline on 080 731 0122 to get a claim form or download one at

www.gov.uk/attendance-allowance



Find Energy Saving Top Tips on the Energy Saving Trust website – they offer some really good advice on how to keep warm and save money on fuel costs.

www.energysavingtrust.co.uk