

HEXAGON'S QUARTERLY RESIDENTS MAGAZINE

# HOME NEWS

AUTUMN 2015

Hexagon

## HEXAGON'S ANNUAL RESIDENTS DAY

*See page 03 →*

### THE REPAIRS GROUP

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### MONEY MATTERS

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**NEW LOOK  
NEXT GEN  
PULLOUT!**

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# WELCOME...

## ...to another edition of Home News.

This past summer, the Government announced the new and revised Summer Budget and I thought it might be helpful if I outlined some of the major implications on social housing and on Hexagon in particular.

Much of what was in the Budget had previously been announced, including a proposal to extend the Right to Buy to housing association tenants and to reducing the overall Benefit Cap in London to £23,000.

At the time of writing, we don't yet have any further details on the Right to Buy, but as soon as we do we will ensure that we publicise the scheme and explain how it will work.

Just before the Summer Budget announcement the Chancellor, George Osborne, announced that 'high earners' in housing

association and council housing would have to pay a 'market rent' or a 'near market rent' if their family income was greater than £40,000. The Government has yet to announce any further details on this and here again, once it is clear, we will communicate on this.

One of the surprise announcements in the Budget was a reduction of housing association rents. From 2016, housing association and council tenants' rents will be reduced by 1% every year for four years. As some of the announcements in the Budget will impact negatively on some of our residents, (e.g. reductions in tax credits, freezing of other benefits) this will provide welcome relief for many.

At the same time, rental income is the main source of income for Hexagon and it is what funds services to residents including stock improvement works and repairs. It is, therefore, likely that we will have to revise our plans to take into consideration the reductions in income.

Hexagon is financially strong and we will be able to weather the four-year storm better than many other housing associations and I am therefore confident that Hexagon can respond to the change as well as most. We have long had a strong emphasis on value for money and our operating surplus has been healthy in recent years.

However, it is also clear that we need to make some changes. At the time of writing this piece, we are at the beginning of this process and will be discussing it in more detail with our Board.

We will carefully consider our options and be driven by our values. Perhaps most importantly in the context of this introduction, we will ensure that we consult and communicate carefully with our residents in a honest and straightforward way if there are to be any significant changes that will impact on the services we provide.



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## WOULD YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE THIS MAGAZINE BY EMAIL?



You can stop receiving Home News by post if you prefer simply by letting us know. For those of you who receive your rent statement with the magazine, this would mean that only your statement would be sent out in the post while the magazine would be emailed to you.

If you would like to take up this option, simply send your email address to [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk) and we will arrange to email you the magazine every three months.

# CELEBRATING HEXAGON'S 25<sup>TH</sup> AT RESIDENTS DAY

**The Hallmark Hotel in Croydon provided the perfect backdrop for 75 Hexagon residents and 35 children to enjoy the 9th successive Residents Day event. The general feedback was very positive with nearly all residents who attended stating that they would attend the next one.**

Laurie Saunders, a Hexagon resident, was invited back to chair the proceedings and opened the event by highlighting the opportunities offered on the day. Residents then had a choice of interactive workshops to attend on the latest on welfare reform, digital engagement and tips and advice for keeping our homes warm and energy efficient.

Hexagon services were put under the spotlight during the ever popular and lively 'Question Time' where senior managers addressed issues raised by residents and replied to some

very interesting service related questions.

Tom McCormack, the Chief Executive, delivered the closing address by highlighting some of the up and coming challenges that Hexagon faces as a result of the government's changes to the social housing sector.

The event was rounded off with residents celebrating Hexagon's 25th anniversary by enjoying a two-course lunch and a slice of birthday cake supplied by a Hexagon contractor, the Bell Group.

No Residents Day would be complete without the prize draw, and this year was no exception. Hexagon contractors had donated a total of six prizes which meant that six lucky residents had the added excitement of winning a prize, with the first prize of having one room decorated by a contractor.

An informative, engaging and rewarding day was had by all, and all agreed that it was fitting to mark 25 years of Hexagon in such an enjoyable way.

**"Thank you  
for providing  
us with a  
good day."**





# IMPROVING THE CLEANING AND GARDENING SERVICES

If you live in a block of flats or on an estate, you probably see what we call 'estate services' going on around you. This is the term we use for cleaning to the common areas and gardening work to any gardens or planted areas.

It is important that the area around where you live is well looked-after, and we are working to improve our estate services. Late last year we began the process of reviewing the contracts and putting the main contracts out to tender. This will ensure that we get the best possible service and the best possible value for money.

Earlier this year we asked for the views of all residents who get estate services, by a postal questionnaire, and we had a more in depth conversation with some residents at a special focus group.

Your views have been taken into account and lots of improvements have been built into the new contract, these include things like:

- More frequent visits to some blocks
- Making sure the 'out of the way' areas get better looked after
- Making sure glass canopies/roofs get cleaned

Before we can implement the new contracts, we have to go out to tender to make sure that we are getting the most competitive price. This is very important as residents pay for estate services as part of the service charge. Preparing all the documents for the tender process has been a little bit delayed, but by the time you are reading this we hope that the re-tender process will be well under way. The new contracts will be in place in Spring 2016.

Because the service to residents is at the heart of what we do, we will be involving residents in the contractor selection process to make sure that we choose contractors who can demonstrate a real commitment to residents. We already have a small group of residents signed up to this, but if you are keen to be involved we would be pleased to hear from you – please email us at [getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk)

# REPAIRS GROUP

**There has been a massive change in the repairs service during the last 25 years both with the highs and the extreme lows. It is promising to see that the recent steps taken are beginning to show a rapid change in the way Hexagon repairs are dealt with.**

The Repairs Group was created due to the dissatisfaction of Hexagon residents over the service level of repairs they were receiving; in short they were extremely unhappy. We decided the best way to help to improve the service would be to get involved and to make our voices heard. We believe that since we are 'on the receiving end' so to speak, in order for repairs issues to improve, we needed to see what was going on and how we could help change things.

There are nine residents in the group who meet every three months. We have taken on the responsibility of scrutinizing all areas of repair, from the performance of the gas contractors BSW to the every day repairs by all contractors. We also assess the way repairs managers are dealing with the work of the contractors by asking lots of sometimes difficult questions, not simply to receive the answers we want to hear, but to ensure that they are being held accountable for the day to day running of the contractors and their work.

I think for me, the original trouble began when we had

our previous contractor MHS. The standard of service was extremely poor, customers were not happy with the outcome of

repairs which were either not completed or completed in a poor way. Appointments were not kept

nor explanations given for why they were not kept. Generally there was poor communication between the contractor and the tenants, and indeed the contractors with Hexagon.

Both the introduction of the interim manager at Hexagon and the procedures that were put in place have contributed greatly to some of the improvements we are seeing so far. We now have temporary surveyors who are much more aware of the new

procedures that have been set up in order to deal with repairs and how to address complaints in a timely manner.

Each quarter we look at the statistics detailing all areas of complaints from open and closed cases. We look at jobs which have been completed and what went well, to jobs which are still open and ask questions relating to why this may be the case, offering suggestions as to how this can be improved. Although there have been some improvements and some targets are being met, there is still some way to go - so we press on.

The Repairs Group now feels we are being listened to and that our views are not just taken into consideration, but that we are working together as part of, and not separate from, the Repairs department. This is important; if Hexagon want to improve their services then there is a need for them to listen to their tenants views.

*by Pam Daley  
(Hexagon resident and  
Chair of the Repairs Group)*





# TACKLING TENANCY FRAUD – LET'S GIVE IT THE RED CARD!

**Did you know that in England an estimated 50,000 housing association and council properties are occupied by people who shouldn't live there or have obtained the tenancy fraudulently? This equates to 1 in every 100 properties!**

There isn't enough social housing to meet the needs of people who genuinely need it. Some of us are waiting to move ourselves or have friends and family who are waiting to be housed. This wait will be even longer if homes are occupied by people who have no right to be there. Consequently, Hexagon is committed to making the best use of its properties and ensuring that they are occupied by those legally entitled to do so.

## Examples of tenancy fraud

- **Unlawful subletting** – this is letting out a property without Hexagon's knowledge or permission. The tenant will often continue paying us the rent but will charge the person they are subletting to a much higher rent.
- **Obtaining housing by deception** – this is getting a property by giving false information on a housing application. The tenant may have lied about who lives with them or failed to declare an existing housing association or council tenancy.
- **Wrongly claimed succession** – this is when a tenant dies and someone, who is not entitled to, applies to take over the tenancy. They might pretend that they lived with the tenant before they died, when in fact they lived elsewhere.
- **Key selling** – this is when a tenant is paid to pass on their keys in return for a one-off payment.

## What does Hexagon do to tackle tenancy fraud?

Hexagon takes legal action to evict tenants when evidence of tenancy fraud is obtained. We may also seek to recover money that they gained unlawfully as well as legal costs and damages. The law has recently changed to make tenancy fraud a criminal offence so criminal prosecutions may also follow in cases that we investigate.

## We need your help

Please continue to help and support Hexagon to tackle tenancy fraud. If you think that a Hexagon property is occupied by someone who shouldn't be there, contact us in the strictest confidence on **0208 778 6699** or email us on **[customer\\_desk@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:customer_desk@hexagon.org.uk)**

Together we can tackle tenancy fraud and ensure fairness for all!

# TENANT BOARD MEMBER

## ELECTION RESULT

**Over the summer all tenants were invited to cast their votes for two places for residents to sit on the Hexagon Board.**

Eight residents, Rosann Ayton, Pam Daley, Dermot Finn, Ray Hill, Steven Hodges, Kae Prendergast, Tayo Tijani and Gaius Vincent were all candidates to sit on the Board. Ballot papers were then sent out to all Hexagon residents along with each of the candidate's election statements.

A total of 189 residents cast their votes for up to two candidates with the result being that Dermot Finn and Gaius Vincent received the highest number of votes. This means that Dermot and Gaius have both been re-elected on to the Board.

Congratulations also to Oluseyi Oduwole (SE22) who won the ballot prize draw of £50 in shopping vouchers.

*"I am delighted to be re-elected along with Dermot to another term. It was great to see the overall turn out more than treble since last year's elections with a good variety of candidates, all of whom received a vote they can be proud of."*

*Dermot and I share a focus on developing tenant-leadership of Hexagon and making it a truly open and accountable organisation. I feel optimistic that the combination of this Board, Forum and tenants can and will work together to make this a reality. I will do all I can to ensure that all our tenants can have real reason to feel that Hexagon belongs to us all; not just involving residents but empowering us too."*

*Gaius Vincent*



*"I would like to thank everyone who voted for me in the recent Board member elections. I am thrilled to have won and look forward to serving Hexagon for another three years. Board member elections help to ensure that tenant views are voiced amid the formulation of Hexagon's corporate strategy. Though elections are an important and democratic function of tenant empowerment, there are other methods of empowering tenants that I will be encouraging Hexagon to pursue. I believe that only tenants can truly understand their own needs, and the needs and desires of the community that they reside in.*

*Therefore it would be prudent for Hexagon to lend the necessary support and resources for resident led management groups such as Housing co-operatives to flourish."*

*Dermot Finn*

# BE YOUR OWN BOSS

**In the last edition of Home News we profiled four businesses started by Hexagon residents who had completed the Business Start Up programme. Here are another five businesses, just to give you a flavour of the range of exciting new enterprises being undertaken by Hexagon residents.**

**Home Gifts** is a customer-centric special gifts and Nappy Cakes business. The business primarily focuses on creating customised Nappy Cakes for Birthdays, Christenings and other special occasions. The business is currently developing its product offer to include handmade jewellery, photo frames and handmade soap cupcakes.

**BG Rouge** is a customer-driven fashion design business focusing on affordable quality childrens clothing, Holy Communion outfits and bridal wear pattern cutting.

The primary focus means that BG Rouge is in the business of providing lifestyles to help customers achieve a taste of desire and become more confident in their fashion-led outlook.

**HABITS** is a voluntary organisation that supports people in understanding the habit-forming process.

HABITS offers motivational workshops, training and 1:1 and group therapy to combat the impact of addiction and mental health issues through empowering people to exchange unhealthy, destructive habits for healthy ones.

**Little Legs (Stay & Play) Centre** is planning to work primarily with parents and carers to provide essential facilities to help local children develop. The overriding focus means that Little Legs (Stay & Play) Centre is in the business of working with people to build a sustainable local community whereby parents, carers and children can socialise and build support networks for mutual benefit. Little Legs (Stay & Play) Centre is also planning to provide a wide range of other activities for children and service users including a drop-in service for children with disabilities, and offering mixed ability siblings an opportunity to play in a safe and welcoming environment.

**Key Fitness** – After completing the Hexagon Business Start Up programme Blaine has now established his business ‘Key Fitness’ and has been delivering personal training sessions to Hexagon residents at the Newstead Road nursing home. They have been put through their paces and have been given sessions that are designed to be challenging but enjoyable. They also have individual diet and nutritional advice on request. Blaine has successfully managed to secure an extension that will enable him to continue delivering sessions to our residents. To book a FREE taster session, contact Blaine from Key Fitness on 07534 297 352.

**Here is a personal story from Helen Raphael who completed the Business Start Up programme a short while ago.**



### HELEN RAPHAEL

#### HABITS: The journey so far...

It's been 9 months since I last featured in Home News following my completion of the Business Start Up Programme, one of the many inspiring initiatives run by the Hexagon Community Investment Team.

I have since completed an 8-week free business course run by a social enterprise called Tree Shepherd. It was enriching and helped amalgamate the knowledge I received from Hexagon. Through meeting other zealous 'entrepreneurs' on the course I realised how incredibly important networking is in business, especially for start-ups. Tree Shepherd also offers a follow-up mentoring and coaching service, as well as

business surgeries and regular networking events.

I now have a mentor who is supporting me to secure funding to deliver a free 8-session programme to the local community. Over the 8-week period the programme, called 'Building Minds..... Breaking Habits', will enlighten attendees on topics including: Introduction to Depression, Anxiety & Mindfulness, How to Combat Worry & Stress, Enhancing Self-esteem, Building Emotional Boundaries, Effective Communication and a Food & The Brain Cookery session. Though HABITS has a particular focus on targeting the black and minority ethnic population this programme is not exclusive to this group. All Hexagon residents will also be very welcomed.

I've been booked to deliver a lecture at the London South Bank University. I consider it an honour to return there in a professional capacity, as it's where I studied for my Masters degree. What is particularly thrilling is that 124 students have already registered to attend my lecture on 'Breaking Habits' as part of their series on promoting effective emotional management - wow!

I recently delivered two "Introduction to Mindfulness & Motivation" workshops to Hexagon staff. The feedback was brilliant and was such a wonderful endorsement of my services. As a result we're organising dates for me to deliver a full 6-session programme.

Hexagon's Business Start Up has, without doubt, been the best kick-start I could have hoped for; it has been non-stop and my impetus to flourish continues to be fuelled by the fantastic opportunities I've received.

I'm on a truly extraordinary life-changing journey mixed with excitement and uncertainty. I rely predominantly on my Faith but I'm incredibly grateful for the support and faith Hexagon have in my ability to deliver a highly professional, skilled, passionate and dedicated service.

You can find out more about me and what I do by visiting my redesigned website at [www.habits.org.uk](http://www.habits.org.uk)



Hexagon has been overwhelmed by the demand from residents for support in starting their own business. We are hoping to run another course in the New Year, so if this is something you are interested in, please get in touch.

Contact Nicky Gelder on 020 8768 7913 or at [ngelder@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:ngelder@hexagon.org.uk)

# ATHENA

## YEAR 1 UPDATE

**The Athena Project began in October 2014 and is a project which trains people with lived experience of mental health issues to become paid mentors to people leaving care homes in Southwark.**

There are currently four mentors, who completed their training in March 2015, working with one or two clients each. They meet with the client for an hour or two every week, helping the person get out and about and become familiar with their community.

Eleven people finished the second round of training in August 2015, achieving a qualification called Baseline Recognition in Community Development (see the picture below).

If you are interested in The Athena Project and would like some more information, please contact the Project Coordinator, John, using the details below.

To find out more contact **John Lake**  
Tel: 07961 108588 | Email: [jlake@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:jlake@hexagon.org.uk)



### What next?

The project is funded by an Innovation Grant and the longer term plan is to deliver our own training around mentoring. The next steps for Athena are:

- 1) To offer a Train the Trainer course from October 2015
- 2) To train more mentors in Baseline Recognition from January 2016
- 3) To develop a specialist qualification in mentoring to be offered later in 2016



# THE NEXT GENERATION

MOMENTUM 2015

## YOUTH EVENT



MOMENTUM 2015

Momentum is an annual event that is held especially for young people aged 11-19 years old. The event aims to give anyone who attends information on how to achieve their true potential in education, employment and life. There will be a wide range of workshops and live stage acts, FREE lunch provided, competitions and give-aways.

Date: 29th October 2015

Time: 10am - 4pm

Venue: Croydon Fairfield Halls

Online: [www.momentum2015.co.uk](http://www.momentum2015.co.uk)

Download the  
Momentum  
2015 App!



Don't miss out - book your ticket today! Call 020 7993 8411



# SELF DEFENCE

Don't forget if you would like to sign up for Self Defence sessions taking place at Deptford Lounge. Please call me for more details or to register:

Sessions are for an hour and a half and are designed for families to have fun and learn to protect themselves and each other.

We have a martial arts expert called Israel from Fitness BKS.

Please feel free to look at his Facebook to see what he can do!

Facebook: Fitness BKS



## NEW LOOK NEXT GEN!

Hi everyone, and welcome to the latest edition of The Next Generation. My name is André Peters and I write all the articles in this magazine. I hope you enjoy the new look and feel we've created for you. Let us know your thoughts and suggestions of what you'd like to see included in your magazine - we'd love to hear from you.

- Do you like the new design?
- Are the articles any good?
- What would you like to see in the magazine?

To book for any of the activities or projects please contact me on:

Tel: 0208 768 7910

Email: [apeters@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:apeters@hexagon.org.uk)

Text: 07903 342 9071



# LOOKING FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP?



Look no further, as Hexagon has a variety of Apprenticeships and traineeships on offer such as:

- Construction
- Admin
- Customer Services
- I.T

And many more

Please call up to find out what is currently available.

## HEXAGON HASTINGS COACH TRIP

There were 5 coach trips in the month of August that were available for all residents from each of the boroughs to attend.

Everyone who attended said that they had fun and look forward to the next trip. On at least 2 of the trips there was crazy heavy rain - yet no one complained and enjoyed themselves just the

same. Because of the rain Hexagon paid for residents to go to the cinema and for the younger kiddies to go to a local soft play centre.

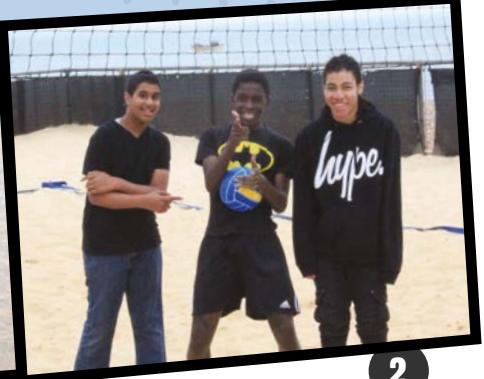
I had good reports back on how funny the Minions film was - wish I'd gone in and watched it now! Lol :)

The weather soon changed and we were all on the beach playing volleyball and football.

There are some pictures below and on the Facebook page for you to see. I really recommend watching the video - this really made me laugh.

All the families were out for a good day on all the trips and that's exactly what they had.

Thank you for making my working day so fun. There were quite a few young people that signed up for Apprenticeships so watch this space for the next feature.



# KING'S STAIRS GARDENS FOOTBALL ACADEMY & COMMUNITY FOOTBALL CLUB



## Who are we & what do we do?

We are a group of qualified football coaches who are inspired by people who have an ambition to play football. Our aim is to get young people and adults playing towards their highest possible level, as well as bringing the community together. We want to be able to help anyone achieve and accomplish their dreams of being a professional footballer, or provide training for people who would like to improve their football techniques and skills.

To help our community build positive relationships, we are going to have

COMMUNITY DAYS which will be Tuesdays and Fridays (4.00pm - 8.00pm). As well, we have multi-sports Fridays, where we play a variety of sports and have a sports day every three months which will be coming at a later date.

## How does it work?

The academy runs separate days to the community football club and is for anyone who would like to improve their football skills, learn new techniques, embrace new challenges, participate in football drills as well as working towards their overall goal of being a better footballer. The academy will also be affiliated to the London FA. Each session will be one hour long and it works as a drop in session. Our running hours, age group and price information are on the right.

The community football club provides an opportunity to play in Saturday league games (appropriate to your age group) which are AFA affiliated. To take part in our Football club, all we need is a monthly fee of £15.00 to cover any grounds costs which works out to be £2 a session.

## Where:

Evelyn Street: Deptford Park

## General info

### Academy days

- Mondays: 4.00pm - 8.00pm
- Wednesdays: 4.00pm - 8.00pm
- Saturday: 4.00pm - 8.00pm
- Sign up fee: £45.00
- Training fee: £15.00

### Community Days

- Tuesday: 4.00pm - 8.00pm
- Fridays: 4.00pm - 8.00pm
- Training fee: £15.00

## CLASSES AVAILABLE FOR 2 - 16+

Call now to book your space or for further information:  
Glenroy 07507709044 or Robert 07909673335



# LIGHTING CHOICES SAVES YOU MONEY

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF LED LIGHT BULBS?

A 3 watt LED Light Bulb can considerably reduce the cost of your electricity bills. The saving compared to a single 40 watt bulb can be up to £2.25 per year.

The common incandescent bulbs are unreliable, expensive and over 20 years you will need 21 incandescent light bulbs compared to just 1 LED bulb. Other benefits:

- LEDs produce less heat which reduces the fire risk
- Different types of lighting are available
- No need for a transformer to lower wattage
- Easy to fit to original fittings

### **Hexagon resident Sarah wrote and told us how using LED made a difference for her.**

*"I had normal bulbs in the lounge and hallway, which I always had to replace.*

*I have now installed LED bulbs which give fantastic light and only burn 42 watts of electricity.*

*Not only have I halved the consumption of electric that I used to use, I have also lit an extra space and reduced the amount I spend on electricity.*

*On average I spent £10 on electric per week on my two bedroom flat before installing LED bulbs. I now spend £7 per week which means on average my weekly spend on electricity has reduced by £3."*

## WHICH BULB?



**Common 60W  
Incandescent  
Bulb**

60W per bulb for 800 lumens

1 bulb lasts  
1,200 hrs

20 years = 21 bulbs



**Common 14W  
CFL Bulb**

12.5W per bulb for 800 lumens

1 bulb lasts  
10,000 hrs

20 years = 3 bulbs



**Phillips  
12.5W  
Ambient LED  
Bulb**

12.5W per bulb for 800 lumens

1 bulb lasts  
25,000 hrs

20 years = 1 bulb

**Installing LED bulbs has certainly made a difference for Sarah. Why not see if these can make a difference for you too?**

# LEARN SOMETHING NEW

We are working in partnership with WEA (Workers Educational Association) to offer these and other exciting courses FREE for Hexagon residents.

## ME TIME

### Healthy Lifestyles – Introduction

Do you want the power and confidence to change your lifestyle for the better? 'Me Time' is designed with you at its heart. Over three weeks you will explore:

- What health is
- What things impact on your health and wellbeing
- How to detoxify your life
- Spend time focusing on you, your body, mind, surroundings and relationships – especially the one you have with yourself
- Healthy eating

### Healthy Lifestyles - Next steps

Continuing on from the Introduction to Healthy Lifestyles course, you will further explore positive ways you can change your lifestyle for the better. However small a change, the impact on you and your family has the potential to improve the way you approach diet, exercise and relationships.



## PHOTOGRAPHY – AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUR DIGITAL CAMERA

These classes are for beginners who want to know how to use the main functions of a digital camera and what the various buttons and functions do. The course also teaches you the basic principles of how to take better photographs.

## JEWELLERY MAKING

This creative course will teach you a range of specialist jewellery making techniques. You will learn how to make unique jewellery items from beads (recycled and new, craft wires and jewellery findings). You can have fun being creative and making items for you, your family and friends to wear.

## IMPROVE YOUR MATHS

The course will help the learner to develop their understanding of basic practical mathematics, and practical quantitative problems expressed verbally and visually. It will build on their existing elementary knowledge to increase their ability to cope with numbers, measurements and data.

## IMPROVE YOUR ENGLISH

You will learn how to read English in different ways depending on your purpose and depending on what you are reading. You will also develop your skills and knowledge of writing – putting pen to paper, getting your message across, choosing which words to use, punctuation, spelling and grammar.

**Interested in any of these courses? If so, contact Nicky using the details below:**  
**Nicky Gelder | Phone: 020 8768 7913 | Email: [ngelder@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:ngelder@hexagon.org.uk)**

# FUN DAY AT SLADE GREEN

**A Fun Day was held in Slade Green to celebrate the launch of Slade Green Community Hub.**

Hexagon Housing has been working in partnership with Bell Group UK, (a cyclical decorations contractor) and Slade Green Big Local (a lottery funded, resident led community organisation) to bring a disused office in Rodeo Close, Slade Green back in to use as a Community Hub. The Community Hub offers a shared space where Hexagon and Slade Green Big Local can organise and provide various activities and courses for residents living in the area.

As part of Bell Group's commitment to involve the local community and provide individuals with an opportunity to upskill, Bell Group's Resident Liaison Officer, Victoria Adamson, helped organise a DIY masterclass and invited local residents to come along and brush up on their DIY and painting skills. Those involved had the opportunity to receive DIY tips from the qualified tradesmen attending the workshop, whilst also helping to give the Community Hub a new lease of life. After a coat of paint, The Rodeo Close Hub was looking better than ever. Bell Group returned to touch up some minor areas and the makeover was complete in time for the community Fun Day relaunch.

Bell Group also arranged for a skip to be located outside the Community Hub. Staff from Hexagon, Slade Green Big Local and Bell Group were on hand to help residents clear away any rubbish and unwanted large items from their homes and gardens.

Craig Bell, Operations Director of Bell Group UK quoted: "Being a family owned and operated business, supporting the communities where we work is very much a part of our core values and company culture. Our team has enjoyed playing an active role in the make-over and opening of this Community Hub at Slade Green and we hope the local residents can benefit hugely from its facilities. We are thankful to the volunteers who made a difference and hopefully have enjoyed the chance to build on their own skills."

Hexagon celebrated the completion of the works by organising a Community Fun Day, celebrating the launch of this exciting new facility and to encourage local residents to come along and see what the Community Hub has to offer. The Fun Day was packed with activities including face painting, football, sumo wrestling, bouncy castle and balloon modelling. Over 100 people attended the event, which was also supported by two Local Councillors and Charlton Football Academy.



*Big local event*



*Fun for all ages*





## RECRUITING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO BE PART OF A COMMUNITY GARDENING GROUP

**I'd like to introduce you to a new community gardening peer initiative called London Grows, running from Frendsbury Gardens on Wednesdays from 4 – 6pm. We'd like to recruit some volunteers who would like to get out of their homes and do a bit of easy gardening and socialising at the beautiful Frendsbury Gardens in Brockley.**

London Grows is an entirely new voluntary organisation which started our activities about a month ago, with the aim of supporting people who have histories of mental health or who are simply lonely and want to get out and make new friends and develop their own gardening skills further.

The idea started from hearing that people who have schizophrenia tend to die earlier than the rest of the population due to inactive lifestyles. Ultimately London Grows is a project to help prevent that.

We are calling on volunteers to come on board to use their time to do a bit of gardening, for

example, to help build a runner bean teepee, maybe harvest some potatoes, nurture seedlings, and take home some fruits which we have grown.

This is also a great opportunity to chat to other people. We would simply like to have some enthusiastic people to join us, who want to get out and socialise while doing some really gentle gardening.

Our core team is made up of three highly motivated individuals, two of whom are very experienced gardeners who have been gardening professionally for many years. They are very warm and empathetic, and really do know about everything green. I am the third team member and have experience in the health and social care field for over ten years, working with mental health, homelessness, substance mismanagement, learning disability and social enterprise.

London Grows is also in partnership with Lewisham's NHS and we will be working in

collaboration with them to run *in situ* workshops about increasing our own health outcomes, like smoking cessation and other sessions.

We are a very warm and welcoming service and would love to have anyone regardless of their age, fitness levels and/or gardening experience.

Our activities could also be part of someone's education, as in gaining practical experience if they are completing an NVQ in gardening or horticulture; or if this is a field which they would like to develop as a career.

We would love to have more people on board to enjoy this unique experience which can offer skills which can last a lifetime.

If you would like any more information, please contact Mark at [markbanham@inbox.com](mailto:markbanham@inbox.com) or phone 020 8285 1550.

by Mark Banham  
(Hexagon resident and London Grows)



## HELPING YOU TO LEARN NEW SKILLS AND FIND WORK

**The Hexagon Academy is a dedicated Work and Learning service that can help you get back into employment or training.**

The service is designed to make people aware of their choices so they can make informed decisions about their future.

We offer:

- One-to-one personalised support
- Help with your CV, cover letters and applications
- Preparation for getting ready for interview
- Support with job searching
- Funding support (e.g. travel and other related expenses)
- Access to training courses and qualifications
- Work experience placements
- Business start-up advice for individuals wishing to explore self-employment opportunities
- Access to Apprenticeships through our work with other organisations

## TO BE EMPLOYABLE YOU NEED HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE AND WORK-READY SKILLS

**That's exactly what our work experience opportunities will give you.**

We offer a range of work experience opportunities from one day through to one year.

Completing a work experience placement shows potential employers you have some recent experience working in your chosen industry. A successful placement demonstrates your ambition and can really make your CV shine.

By completing a work experience placement you will:

- Enhance your employability and be more likely to secure a job (over 60% of individuals who complete a work placement secure employment)
- Test out your career options to make sure the work area you are pursuing is really the one you want
- Have an impressive CV with real experience and skills
- Gain new contacts, friends and referees who can help you with future job hunting
- Improve important transferable skills such as teamwork

**Interested? Would like to find out more? Then simply contact Andre Peters:  
Phone: 020 8768 7910 | Email: [apeters@hexagon.org.uk](mailto:apeters@hexagon.org.uk)**



# UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPDATE

Over the past year or two we have kept you informed about the introduction of the new “Universal Credit” benefit. This will eventually replace the following benefits:

- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income based Job Seekers Allowance (JSA)
- Working Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit

Universal Credit is gradually being introduced around the country, with different areas moving to the new system at different times. The first stage in the process is for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to arrange for some new claims (for what would have been for the benefits above) to be made to Universal Credit instead. This will happen in all of the areas Hexagon has properties between November this year and February 2016.

In most cases, this will not impact on you for now if you have an existing claim. But if you need to make a new claim for benefits or have a significant change of circumstances after November this year,

you may be placed on to Universal Credit. This will work in quite a different way to the existing benefits, and there are two particularly important changes.

Firstly, all of your money for the month will be paid in one monthly payment. This means that you will need to budget on a monthly basis.

The second important change is that the money that would, under the old system be paid as Housing Benefit, (usually to Hexagon) will under Universal Credit be paid directly to you as part of your Universal Credit award. This means that if you claim Universal Credit, you will need to make arrangements with us to make your rent payments. Not doing this will put your home at risk.

If you are placed on to Universal Credit you should discuss this as soon as possible with your Work Coach at the Job Centre. Tell them your landlord is Hexagon, and also let us know about going on to Universal Credit. We can help you arrange a way of paying your rent that works for you, and can also offer lots of other help around things like money management and getting into work.

If you need any more information about Universal Credit, please visit [www.gov.uk/universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/universal-credit) or call our financial inclusion adviser, Jason Herbert on **020 8778 6699**.

## MAKE MORE OF YOUR MONEY WITH MONEYOPOLY

We know that lots of people sometimes find it difficult to make the most of their money. Indeed “more month than money” can be a problem for many of us regardless of how much money is coming in. Most of us know that we could do more to make the most of our money, but dealing with money issues can be... well, let's be honest... a bit boring!

That's why we're trying to change that with “Moneyopoly”. Taking its inspiration from the popular board game monopoly, Moneyopoly is an interactive money workshop that takes a light hearted but still informative approach to money issues. Whether you want to know about saving money for a rainy day, getting cheaper energy, or understanding the benefits system (and these are just a few of the topics covered) Moneyopoly has something for you.

We'll be running Moneyopoly sessions over the next few months, with final dates still to be confirmed. If you would like to “play” Moneyopoly, contact our Customer Services Centre on **0208 778 6699** to register your interest. We will then contact you nearer the time of the workshop to confirm your attendance.

## DON'T BE SHARK BAIT THIS CHRISTMAS

**It's now coming up to Christmas, and inevitably, thoughts turn to how to pay for the upcoming festivities. Many people choose to use credit to cover some of these costs, and while this is best avoided if possible (after all, buying things on credit is nearly always more expensive in the long run), if you do decide to borrow, it's really important that you choose somewhere that isn't going to lead you into problem debt.**

Companies who enable you to make payments to an agent who collects from your home might seem attractive, as can companies offering short term “payday” loans, but the interest charges for these types of loans can be eye watering. For example, the typical interest rate (APR) for one leading home credit company is 272.2%! This means that £500 borrowed over a year would cost a whopping £410 in interest. For “payday loans”, things are even worse, with interest rates higher than 1000% APR being very common. Because of the very high interest charges these kind of loans are best avoided.

It's because of the high cost of some of these loans, that we have made sure that our residents have an alternative. Our partnership with London Plus Credit Union is now well established, and all of our residents can join, regardless of where they live. London Plus offer affordable loans to residents (subject to

underwriting and acceptance), with a maximum interest rate of 42.6% APR. This means that a £500 loan for a year would cost £107.59 in interest, a saving of over £300 compared to a “home credit” loan. They also encourage you to save, making it less likely that you will need to borrow again in the future, and saving while you pay off a loan can sometimes help you access a lower interest rate.

If you want to find out more about what London Plus can offer you, please call **0207 471 2620**, or visit [www.londonpluscu.co.uk](http://www.londonpluscu.co.uk) Alternatively, if you wish to discuss money matters more generally, please call our financial inclusion adviser Jason Herbert on **020 8778 6699**.

The content of this article is for information purposes only. It should not be considered as advice, and you are responsible for any decisions that you take around your money. If in doubt, seek independent advice before making any financial decision.



# PAINTING A ROOM

**The key to successfully painting a room is all in the preparation - the more time you spend prepping the room and woodwork the better your results will be.**

## Let the painting start!

Firstly use a paint brush at least three inches wide to paint all the edges of the room.

Secondly pour your paint into a paint tray and paint the large areas of the room. As you work wipe away any drips before they dry.

Finally allow the paint to dry. In some cases you may need to apply a second coat of paint to the walls.

Once you have painted the walls remove any masking or painters tape and paint your woodwork. The same principles apply in that the woodwork must be sound and well prepared in the same way you prepared your walls.

You can either use gloss or eggshell paint dependent on the finish you wish to achieve to paint your woodwork. Use a good quality brush, which will help ensure that one coat should be enough. The woodwork will take slightly longer to dry so allow at least 48 hours.

**Don't forget!** If you are painting the ceiling of the room, do this first using a roller with an extension pole. This is the quickest and easiest way to cover a large and difficult area to paint.

When you've finished you will have a fantastic looking room ready to move your furniture back in to and re-hang your pictures. Good work!

## Top tips:

- Fill any holes, cracks or imperfections with filler and wait for it to dry, and then lightly sand the patches
- Clean the walls if they are dirty (especially in a kitchen or bathroom)
- Stir your paint before you begin, and don't paint straight from the can
- If you want to use tape, buy masking or painter's tape (it's usually blue, white or green)
- Cover your belongings and furniture with a dust sheet to avoid damage



## HEALTHY RECIPES

Continuing with the series of affordable and healthy recipes, Hexagon resident Jacqui Fergus gives us her recipe ideas for making smoothies, popular at any time of the year.

Jacqui says "Here are three smoothie recipes for you to enjoy. Place all ingredients from the smoothie recipe of your choice into the blender with ice and blend for 1 minute or until smooth. Simply pour into a glass, serve and enjoy."

### Strawberry, Banana and Mango Smoothie

- 2 bananas
- 1 mango sliced
- 5 strawberries
- 3 tablespoons low fat natural yogurt
- Orange or apple juice



### Apple and Berry Smoothie

- 1 Kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced
- 1 cup of mixed fresh berries
- 1 banana
- 1½ cups of apple juice



### Peaches and Cream Smoothie

- 1 banana
- 4 slices of tinned peaches, drained
- 4 tablespoons low fat natural yogurt
- 1 cup of orange juice



# KIDS CORNER

## SPOOKY JOKES

Who won the skeleton beauty contest?

No body

What do skeletons say before they begin dining?

Bone appetit!

Who did Frankenstein take to the party?

His ghoul friend

What's a monster's favourite play?

Romeo and Ghoulet



### KIDS CORNER WINNERS

Congratulations to **Becky Adams** (DA8) and **Jonathan Shahin** (SE22) who both won the last Kids Corner competition

## HALLOWEEN PEPPERMINT CREAMS



### Ingredients

- 1 free-range egg white
- ½ lemon, juice only
- 1 tsp peppermint flavouring
- 425g/15 oz icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
- 175g/6¼oz dark chocolate

## HALLOWEEN SEARCH

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | S | I | N | S | T | A | B | O | R | C | J |
| O | E | E | E | I | N | G | A | O | R | A | F |
| F | M | R | P | N | K | U | H | B | I | N | V |
| Q | U | I | A | D | H | P | R | O | P | D | J |
| S | T | P | R | Q | I | A | M | H | S | Y | J |
| E | S | M | T | S | D | O | U | U | M | T | O |
| K | O | A | Y | H | P | M | T | N | P | C | S |
| C | C | V | F | L | I | O | N | R | T | L | C |
| I | Y | D | H | A | L | L | O | W | E | E | N |
| R | H | G | B | C | A | X | A | K | S | A | D |
| T | A | C | B | U | X | V | M | O | Y | Q | T |
| M | A | S | K | S | W | K | W | I | T | C | H |

HALLOWEEN

HAUNTED

SPOOKY

BATS

PUMPKIN

COSTUMES

WITCH

VAMPIRE

TRICK

MASKS

CANDY

TREAT

PARTY

BOO

GHOSTS

Find the words in the puzzle grid above. Words may go forwards and backwards or across and down. If you think you have found all the correct words in the wordsearch, please send in the details by **Friday 6th November**.

Send your word search entry to: Resident Involvement Admin, Hexagon Housing Association, 130-136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY.

**Three correct entries will be drawn at random. Each will receive a £10 Love2Shop voucher.**



### Preparation method

- 1) Whisk the egg white in a bowl until stiff peaks form when the whisk is removed. Slowly whisk in the lemon juice, peppermint and icing sugar to a stiff paste.
- 2) Tip the peppermint mixture onto a work surface dusted liberally with icing sugar and roll out thinly.
- 3) Use a 5cm/2in cutter to cut out circles or Halloween shapes and place them onto a baking tray. Chill in the fridge for 1-2 hours, or until the mixture has set.
- 4) Meanwhile, melt the chocolate in a bowl set over a pan of simmering water. (Do not let the base of the bowl touch the water.)
- 5) Dip each peppermint cream into the melted chocolate and set aside on a baking tray. Chill the peppermint creams until set.

## GET IN TOUCH

### Repairs Freephone

0800 393 338

If you need to report a repair (except gas central heating and hot water) please call the Repairs line. This number is staffed from 8am – 5pm, Mon – Fri. When phoning outside of office hours you will be forwarded to the Emergency Out-of-hours Repairs number (shown below).

### General Enquiries

020 8778 6699

If you have any general enquiries, including rent or estate services, please call the General Enquiries line. This number is staffed from 9am – 5pm, Mon – Fri.

### Gas Central Heating/Hot Water problems

0800 206 1367

### Emergency Out-of-hours Repairs

020 3701 3518

### Other ways to contact us

@ Customer\_desk@hexagon.org.uk

www.hexagon.org.uk

Text: 07537 400 5287

130-136 Sydenham Road,  
London SE26 5JY, United Kingdom

## TRANSLATIONS

Always happy to translate!

Chinese

永遠樂於翻譯！

Eritrean

"ገኘነት ተመልከም ካለንበት አገልግሎት እና!"

French

Toujours heureux de traduire!

Portuguese

Sempre feliz a traduzir!

Vietnamese

Luôn luôn vui lòng phiên dịch!

Urdu

ترجمے کے لیے ہر دم تیار

## LARGE PRINT OR BRAILLE

If you would like this edition of Home News in **large print or braille**, please contact Hexagon, giving your full contact details.

## COMPETITION TIME

**Congratulations to Beatrice Githendu (SE1), Millicent Davis (SE15) and Christine Matthews (SE26) whose correct entries were drawn for the last Competition Time and who each receive a £20 voucher.**

**The answers to the last Competition Time were:**

1. Raj Kumar
2. Hallmark Hotel
3. Tony Stacey
4. Almost 300
5. 18

**To enter this edition's Competition Time, simply answer the following:**

1. What is the name of the credit union which is in partnership with Hexagon?
2. Rents will be going down by how much over the next 4 years?
3. On average how much did Sarah save in her weekly electricity bill?
4. How many residents are on the Repairs Group?

Please send your entries, by post, to:

Resident Involvement Admin, Hexagon Housing Association, 130-136 Sydenham Road, London, SE26 5JY  
Or by email to: getinvolved@hexagon.org.uk

Three correct entries received by **Friday 6th November** will be drawn at random and will each receive a £20 shopping voucher.

The competition is open to all Hexagon residents. The editor's decision is final.

WIN £20

Hexagon

130-136 Sydenham Road,  
London SE26 5JY, United Kingdom  
Tel: 020 8778 6699

f /HexagonHA  
Web: www.hexagon.org.uk



INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE | Gold