Residents rewarded for their commitment to their housing communities...

Housing Heroes Lifetime Achievement Award Winner Albert Willey tells us all about his Southwark...

Terry Buttery, a gardener at Burgess Park tells us about his role and more about what our parks have to offer...

WHAT'S IN THIS ISSUE?

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20 My Southwark
Welcome to the spring issue of Southwark Life Housing News. This issue is a really special one; it’s a chance to shout about the amazing things the winners and nominees of our Housing Heroes awards are doing.

From the residents who go out of their way to help their neighbours, to the tenants and residents’ associations making a big difference to the individuals whose entire lives have been devoted to making our borough an even better place to live, I am in awe of them all. Turn to page 6 to find out more and don’t forget to read the interview with inspirational Lifetime Achievement award winner Albert Willey on page 18.

Plus, don’t miss our article on what to do if you’ve got a leak and our suggestions for how to flex those green fingers this spring, even if you live in a flat.

We hope you enjoy this issue and as always, please do get in touch with any comments or ideas.

Best wishes

Cllr. Ian Wingfield
Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Housing Management

GET IN TOUCH
Do you have something to say about Southwark Life Housing News? Write to: Letters, Southwark Life Housing News, Communications, Southwark Council, 160 Tooley Street, Second floor, Hub 5, SE1 2QH or email SLHN@southwark.gov.uk

TWEET TWEET
We’re online – come and say hi.
@LB_southwark
www.facebook.com/southwarkcouncil
www.southwark.gov.uk

#keepingsouthwarkclean

NO EXCUSES LITTERING = £75 FINE

RENATA’S KEEPING OUR ESTATES CLEAN

Give her a hand
Help keep our estates clean by picking up after your dog and making sure you pop your rubbish in the bins provided
If you spot rubbish or graffiti, call 020 7525 2000

#keepingsouthwarkclean
Telecare provides a range of state of the art technology like personal pendant alarms, movement sensors or automatic gas sensors, all monitored by our 24 hour a day service, to help keep older and disabled people safer and provide reassurance for family members and carers. The expanded service will be available from April 2014.

If you, or a loved one, has been classed as having ‘moderate’ social care needs, have a dementia diagnosis or are simply over the age of 85, you are now able to apply for the council’s extended telecare service to provide an extra sense of security in your home – and all for free.

Residents are invited to draw, sing, watch and walk with two free family events.

A special event at Kingswood on Thursday 17 April will bring colour and life to the estate, with activities for all ages. On Saturday 17 May, experience the underground river Effra as you’ve never heard before featuring musical performances along the route of the river, with music generated by its flow.

London Fire Brigade (LFB) is asking all Southwark tenants who live in purpose-built blocks of flats and maisonettes whether they know what to do in the event of a fire, and encouraging them to ask for advice.

The new ‘Do you know your fire plan?’ campaign has been developed to address recommendations made to the fire brigade from the inquest into the Lakanal fire in Camberwell in 2009.

Want to know how to make your own fire plan and who is responsible for keeping your building safe? To find out more speak to your resident officer and from mid-March you can go to LFB’s dedicated website www.knowtheplan.co.uk

You will soon be seeing the new communal repairs technical team as they start carrying out inspections on your estate.

Set up to take the lead on getting repairs in communal areas completed quickly, the team will follow up on issues identified as part of estate inspections including:

- Repairs in communal areas
- Grounds maintenance
- Cleanliness
- Antisocial behaviour

Most importantly they will inspect the work once it has been completed. This will help us to hold contractors to account for the work they do.

Are you aged seven to 17 and up for taking part in a writing challenge to get your work published?

Become a young peacemaker and commemorate the First World War centenary with your own story about peace. Create a poem, story or letter and submit it by 15 June. The top 40 peacemakers, as judged by a panel including author and former Children’s Laureate Michael Morpurgo, will be announced in the summer and have their entries published in a book that will become available at all Southwark libraries.

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Southwark residents awarded for their dedicated community spirit and hard work within their housing communities.

LET’S HEAR IT FOR THE HOUSING HEROES

Southwark Council set up a competition in September 2013 to find the people who have dedicated their lives to helping others on our housing estates and in our communities.

Chief executive Eleanor Kelly and Councillor Ian Wingfield presented winners with their awards at a ceremony on Thursday 23 January 2014. Guests included councillors, nominators and nominees, chief officers, tenant and resident associations and tenant management organisation chairs. The winners received a plaque and £100 each.

The competition was open to all tenants and leaseholders and could include fellow residents, those who work in housing for the council, have an active role in their local tenants and residents association or simply get involved and help their neighbours.

 custoMER Service oF The Year 2013 Janeth Aguilera

Janeth is a customer relationship officer for major works, housing and community services. Janeth worked with several contractors to support residents while the major refurbishment works took place, to make it less stressful and disruptive for residents.

GOOD LAndlOULD 2013 United St Saviour’s Charity

United St. Saviour’s took over the Hopton’s Almshouse in 2011 and since then have modernised it by championing gender equality, electing a resident to its housing committee and improving the terms of housing for residents. St. Saviour’s also spent £250,000 modernising Hopton’s by installing new showers, adding secondary glazing and making repairs.

tEnant And Resident Association 2013 Ledbury T&RA

The Ledbury T&RA agreed for a free school to rent the T&RA during the day, and in exchange the school have completely renovated the T&RA hall by installing a new kitchen, new floors and other facilities. The rent from the school has also funded fun days out for children on the estate and fish and chip lunches for senior residents.

NEIGHBOU(R)S oF The Year 2013 Patrick Duerden and Cordula Zeidler

Patrick and Cordula have coordinated feedback for a major works programme for their tenant and resident Association, whilst making their meetings fun, which has helped residents through a stressful process. They were particularly commended for the energy they devote to getting the best for their neighbours and to making everyone’s homes a better place to live.

BEST COMMUNITY INITIATIVE 2013 Bankside Open Spaces Trust (BOST)

BOST has been helping Webber and Quentin Tenants and Residents Association since spring 2011 with edible food growing projects on two of the housing estates in SE1.

lIfeTIme ACHIEVEmENt 2013 Albert Willey

Albert Willey has been a community champion for 50 years. He played an active role in the Delawyk Resident Management Organisation and its predecessor the Delawyk Residents Association. Albert is always ready with a joke and over the years has been a firm friend to neighbours young and old.

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OVERALL WINNER Albert Willey

Albert has devoted his life to the welfare of the estate and the community. He made headlines on the front page of the South London Press in 1997 at the age of 79, when, with the help of his trusty walking stick, he saw off two muggers who had attacked a man on Half Moon Lane. Until his recent retirement from the residents’ management organisation, he regularly took part in inspections of the estate, identifying faults and repairs and would keenly review the work to ensure it was of the highest quality. Read more about Albert on page 18.

“ This shows the breadth of appreciation that our residents have for each other, the power of friendship and loyalty to their neighbours. I am moved to hear so many positive stories. The winners are exceptional and I want to thank all winners and nominees for their tireless dedication to improving housing and to each other.”

Councillor Ian Wingfield, cabinet member for housing management

To find out more about the winners, highly commended and nominations visit www.southwark.gov.uk/housingheroes

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We will make every effort to set a time that is convenient for you but in serious cases we will force entry.

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Gaining Access

We rely on the cooperation of residents to gain access so that we can carry out proper inspections to find the source of the leak and get it fixed as quickly as possible.

Sometimes we find that residents don’t realise how urgent it is to get the leak sorted, especially if it’s not actually affecting them. So, sometimes they ignore notices requesting access to their home; it’s been known to take days to get inside to do the work and in that time lots of damage is done to the home below.

There are legal measures that the council can take to gain access to properties in these situations including forced entry and injunctions but it would be better for everyone involved if we worked together to fix the problem.

Need to Know

If you’ve noticed a leak, take action quickly. Call 0800 952 4444 or www.southwark.gov.uk/repairs

Water, Water Everywhere...

You said we need to work harder to tackle leaks from above so we’ve set up a new taskforce to get things resolved quickly.

Leaks from above can be very difficult to identify. Quite often they are intermittent and sometimes the source of the leak is not from the flat immediately above. It could be from the flat above that.

A new taskforce has been set up to tackle this issue. It is made up of resident officers, council staff with technical expertise and representatives from our contractors Southwark Building Services and Mears.

“We set up this taskforce in response to feedback from residents. I’m committed to improving the repairs service for our residents. Every month we measure customer satisfaction and we have found that leaks from above have been identified as a real concern. Although customer satisfaction is improving in general, where residents are not satisfied, quite often the problem relates to a leak from above.

I can imagine how distressing it must be to suffer loss and damage because of a leak from above. And that’s why the new taskforce will focus their efforts on addressing this and I will be reviewing their performance.”

Councillor Ian Wingfield, cabinet member for housing management.

“I had water leaking in my kitchen for about a week. It happened in the morning but not every day. When it was leaking the water was coming down pretty heavy. I was scared it would ruin my electrical appliances if it happened when I wasn’t at home.

I know the council tried to get in touch with the people upstairs but it took a while. I was so relieved when they finally went into the flat and were able to fix the leak.”

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Gardening isn’t just a really enjoyable, creative activity - it’s also great for your health. It’s brilliant exercise and lots of people say that spending time in green spaces is really good for their mental wellbeing.

If you don’t have access to a garden, don’t worry. Southwark has some of the most beautiful parks in London (17 green flags and counting) and there are lots of opportunities for you to help out with them, as well as the chance to get things blooming where you live. So if you’re looking to make the most of spring, flex those green fingers, meet new people and get involved. Here are just a few great projects who’d love to meet you.

**A DAY IN THE LIFE...**

**TERRY BUTTERY**
Burgess Park Gardener

“Once you’re here you don’t even feel like you’re at work” says Terry Buttery, who has been a gardener at Burgess Park for the last two years. “The team makes the job; if you have a good team behind you, it’s enjoyable to come to work.”

Terry also credits gardening with prompting a much healthier lifestyle. “I’ve lost all the weight I gained when I was unemployed. It’s a very physical job; you keep fit and are always moving.” For Terry, who has the gift of the gab as well as green fingers, it’s also perfect as “you get to chat with everyone, old and young, and you get to know the regulars.” He’s stumped for downsides until he remembers industrial scale weeding, “In a park as large as Burgess, weeding is a never-ending job. No matter how much you dig, you can never get the roots out.”

A typical day for Terry and the Burgess Park gardening team starts at 7.30am with litter picking until at least 10am. “It takes up a lot of the team’s time, especially in the summertime. As Burgess is one of the few parks with a barbecue area, we can be litter picking all day.” Dog fouling is such a problem one of the few parks with a barbecue area, we can be litter picking all day.” Dog fouling is such a problem, as Terry’s group is focusing on landscaping, for which he is the tractor driver responsible for transporting 600 tonnes of sand to make a Victorian bedding area. Quadron, the company responsible for the park’s maintenance, sponsored his tractor training. “The range of training opportunities available is unbelievable and looks great on your CV, it’s also handy when it’s raining and you’re in a nice warm tractor” he says enthusiastically.

Terry particularly values Burgess Park for its rich heritage and appreciates being part of the park’s continuing evolution. “There was the old Surrey Canal that used to run through the park and the buildings around Chumleigh Gardens used to be an almshouse for impoverished elderly women. History is an important thing.”

The team also frequently welcomes job seekers at Burgess Park for the last two years. “The team makes the job; if you have a good team behind you, it’s enjoyable to come to work.”

**COMMUNITY GARDEN**
Time and Talents have a beautiful community garden between Rotherhithe and Bermondsey and are getting ready to harvest the autumn’s planting of broadbeans and onions. Why not think about volunteering with them? Or if you’re looking to make more of a communal area on your estate, get in touch.

www.timeandtalents.org.uk
katosborn@timeandtalents.org.uk

**DING THE PARK**
Come along to Dulwich Park on the first Saturday of every month between 10am and 1pm to make a real difference at this lovely park. From planting bulbs to looking after the perennials to even cleaning the lake, you’ll learn new skills and are sure of a warm welcome.

www.dulwichparkfriends.org.uk

**WOODLAND WANDERS**
Sydenham Hill Wood is an old and really lovely local nature reserve, mixing Victorian planting with ancient woodland. Think wild garlic, violets and bluebells, elusive woodpeckers and woodland creatures, with a dash of lost Victorian folly waiting to be discovered at the centre of the wood. They run conservation sessions every Wednesday, Thursday and the second and fourth Sunday of every month.

www.wildlondon.org.uk/reserves/sydenham-hill-wood-and-coxs-walk

**GREEN UP WHERE YOU LIVE**
Bankside Open Spaces Trust (HOST) works with residents in the north of the borough to help them make attractive green spaces, get window boxes blooming in their area and grow food in their estates. They have worked with residents groups on different estates in Southwark including Tabard Estate, Redman House, and Sumner Street. You’ll be amazed at how projects like this can bring neighbours together – plus creating green areas and seeing things bloom can be really fun. Speak to BOST to find out more.

www.host.org.uk/open-places
Call 020 7403 3393

**WANT TO FLEX THOSE GREEN FINGERS?**

**Call Daniel Greenwood on 020 7252 9186 or email d.greenwood@wildlondon.org.uk**

**Call 020 7403 3393**

**To find out more. Visit** www.southwark.gov.uk/getgreen

**www.timeandtalents.org.uk**

**www.dulwichparkfriends.org.uk**

These are just a taste of the different opportunities in the borough. From volunteering at your local park, activities to get the kids enjoying nature or support to green up where you live, there are tons of different activities and groups.

**To find out more. Visit** www.southwark.gov.uk/getgreen
As you’ve probably heard already (especially if you’re a regular reader of Southwark Life Housing News) we’re involved in a big project to make all council homes warm, dry and safe by 2016. We are also delivering other major works such as work to hostels and tenant and resident halls across the whole borough.

We’re right in the middle of it, so over the next year more residents will see works undertaken at their properties. So how does it work and where are some of the areas we’ll be improving over the coming months?

Our contractors

The majority of the work is delivered by our partner contractors. They work in a particular area in Southwark. In Camberwell and Peckham, we’re working with Keepmoat, in Nunhead and Peckham, and Dulwich, we work with A E Elkins, while Saltash carry out work on street properties, hostels and tenants and residents halls across the whole borough.

Some contractors are employed to work on specific projects not covered by the partnering contractors.

Over the coming months, our contractors are going to be carrying out work at estates all over Southwark.

Our contractors work with residents to try to make the process as easy and comfortable as possible for them. Partnering allows us to build up strong relationships with residents on the estates, funding days out, job training and Christmas events. We’ll work with a residents group on the estate to make sure residents are having their say on how things are going.

You’ve got mail

If your estate is due to have work carried out this year, we will send you a letter letting you know. It will tell you who will be doing the work and who your key contacts are.

So what work needs to be done?

If the major works are coming to your estate, then our contractors will do a survey to see exactly what needs upgrading. Some estates get work done inside homes; things like replacing toilets or electrical work. Many get work just done on the outsides such as new or repaired roofs and windows. Some of our projects are large due to the amount of investment needed. At Four Squares, they’re finishing the work inside flats and this year will be carrying out major work to the outside of the estate. We know it can be hard for residents having work done where they live, especially if the project is quite long, so we’ll do everything we can to reduce the inconvenience to you.

For more information
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/majorworks

Listening to leaseholders

If you’re a leaseholder on one of the properties major works are coming to, we won’t take work forward until you’ve been fully consulted. As well as carrying out a formal consultation, we arrange a series of meetings before and through the project where you can talk to our staff as well as the contractors.

Promise 3

Warm, dry, safe homes

On the streets

Our work to improve our street properties will be carrying on this year. Lots of council properties aren’t part of big estates but we still want to make sure they receive work too.

Works that often need to be done to make these homes warm, day and safe are:

• structural repairs
• windows repairs
• front doors repairs
• electrical installations

Tenants’ and resident associations (T&RA) halls

With contractors Saltash, we’re working to make our T&RA halls places that our residents can use as real community hubs.

As part of the works to the Crawford Estate, our contractor Keepmoat also carried out works to the T&RA hall on the estate:

“I am the Chair of the T&RA at Crawford Estate. The new double kitchens at the T&RA Hall Keepmoat look so lovely. The kitchen designer and the workmen were very polite and always seemed to put our needs first.”

Let’s talk about your local high street

The New Southwark Plan will influence how the borough looks and is developed over the next 15 to 20 years. We are really keen to understand what you think is important about the places where you live, work and visit, so the council has launched a three year consultation process to make sure we get it right. High streets are a specific focus of the New Southwark Plan so let us know what you think about our high streets.

Please fill in our short survey at www.southwark.gov.uk/communityconversation or call Jessica on 020 7525 5853.

For more information
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/majorworks
IN THE DOCK...

Southwark Council uncovered one of the largest fraud cases the UK has seen in recent memory.

Over three years, Ibrahim Bundu, his mother Marie, his ex-wife Ada Kamara, his estranged wife Fatmata Koroma, and Koroma’s aunt, Haja Sesay, along with fellow defendants Aminata Lassayo, and Rebecca Quartey, fraudulently obtained council houses for themselves and others, conning the council and those in genuine need of council housing.

The seven eventually pleaded guilty at Woolwich Crown Court and are due to be sentenced on 20 March. The court heard that in 2003, Bundu, who was working in the council’s homeless department, came up with an audacious scheme to process bogus housing applications. Using fake identities and personal data, he gave false applicants characteristics that would make them ‘high priority’ for housing.

The fraud came to light in 2011 as part of the council’s concerted campaign to tackle fraud, when we discovered that one of the tenants involved in the case had used fake documents. Further investigations uncovered a pattern of such documents that led back to Bundu.

The council has since recovered 15 and following the court case will be able to ensure the final eight properties are reclaimed and given to those in genuine need.

In total, Bundu allocated 23 properties fraudulently; the council has since recovered 15 and the remaining seven fraudsters brought to justice.

SALLY SAYS...

If your energy prices have shot up, you can find out if you can get a cheaper deal elsewhere by switching supplier. You can use a price comparison site approved by Ofgem, or get help from your local Citizens Advice Bureau.

Energy suppliers must give you at least 30 days’ notice of any price increases, so act fast to make changes before the increases come in. If you decide to switch suppliers, you need start the switching process within 20 days of being told about a price increase, that way your existing supplier can’t enforce the price rise.

Under new rules, if you’re on a fixed term contract and it’s coming to an end, your supplier must tell you between 42 and 49 days beforehand so that, if you want to, you can switch suppliers during this time without any penalties.

And if you are on a fixed term contract signed on or after 15 July 2013, suppliers can’t increase prices, unless the price increase was agreed in advance, for example with a tracker tariff. If your supplier breaks these rules you can complain, first to the energy supplier, then to the Energy Ombudsman.

Email slhn@southwark.gov.uk.
Sally can’t answer all letters personally but if you need help with money issues contact Southwark Citizens Advice Bureau on 0844 4994 134.
Future dates for meetings are listed below and are held at 160 Tooley Street SE1. The dates and venue may change and we advise that you check before attending.

- 26 March 2014 at 7pm
- 23 April 2014 at 7pm
- 28 May – Annual General meeting at 7pm

The Home Owners Council (HOC) is pleased to welcome six new elected members who will represent non-resident leaseholders and street property leaseholders on the board.

They are Brenden O’Brien and Jacqueline Evans as the non-resident leaseholder delegates and Liz Eriingon, John Claridge, Bill Mullins and James Antican as the street property delegates. The ballots were successfully held throughout December and January. The newly elected delegates will remain in post for three years.

As one of the main forums for homeowner participation with Southwark Council, HOC has been successfully working with the council for a number of years, on matters and queries that affect homeowners.

For more information or to contact any of the delegates from HOC, email southwarkhoc@gmail.com

Planning to go to university in 2014 but worried about getting into debt?

The Southwark Scholarship Scheme could pay a contribution towards the cost of university fees.

To be eligible for this scheme you must
- be resident in Southwark for a minimum of three years
- have a household income of less than £21,000
- have a good academic record
- have made a positive contribution to the community of Southwark

Here’s what some of our current scholarship students had to say about the scheme.

Daniella, studying advertising
“I was nervous about being able to afford a degree, especially as I have a one year old son depending on me and I didn’t want to come out with a massive debt. It’s a relief from that stress. I would say to anyone who meets the criteria to go for it.”

Mohammed, studying economics
“It makes all the difference not having to worry about debt. I can focus on my studies and getting good results. There are so many other things to worry about now. You have to work harder and keep up with the deadlines.”

For more details and to apply online go to www.southwark.gov.uk/scholarship

Applications must be received by 4 April 2014
He was born and grew up in Bow. My late wife was from Camberwell and we met prior to World War II. I went off to war when I was 21 but we kept in touch. Then in 1946, when I came out of the forces, we got married and lived at Colls Road in Peckham.

We moved to Delawyk Crescent in 1963 when it was first built. We were one of the first families on the estate.

The people are great and there is a real community spirit. The children used to call me Mr. Tidy because when I took my dog for a walk, I’d pick up any rubbish I came across. I was involved in the residents management organisation until three years ago.

We had a tailor, a butcher, baker and a greengrocer. We used to have a milkman deliver the milk every morning and years ago we even had coal delivered. Now there are big supermarkets and a lot more cars.

There are lots of open spaces. I love the outdoors. I’m close to Ruskin Park and Dulwich Park. I really enjoyed taking my dogs for a walk in the park.

I always did lots of walking and cycling. We’re quite close to the Herne Hill velodrome but I didn’t do much cycling.

When you were younger what did you like to do in Southwark?

Tell us what you love about living in Southwark?

Tell us about changes you’ve seen over the years.

How long have you been living in Delawyk Crescent?

What do you love most about where you live?

What’s your connection to the borough?

Where’s the one place in Southwark you’d recommend a tourist should visit?

If you were leader of the council for the day what would you change?

So if I were leader I’d make sure work was done properly. From 1946 to the time I retired I was an asphalt worker. When road works were done on the estate I used to inspect it and if it wasn’t up to standard I used to complain to the council.

I didn’t expect to get anything for the work I did in the community. I didn’t think anyone took any notice. When I heard my name announced as the winner I had a tear in my eye. I didn’t expect it.

How did you feel when you found out that you had won the lifetime achievement award?

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I’d say Dulwich Picture Gallery and Dulwich Park. Dulwich Park in the spring is beautiful.

Where’s the one place in Southwark you’d recommend a tourist should visit?

Dulwich Picture gallery and Dulwich Park. Dulwich Park in the spring is beautiful.

Tell us about changes you’ve seen over the years.

We had a tailor, a butcher, baker and a greengrocer. We used to have a milkman deliver the milk every morning and years ago we even had coal delivered. Now there are big supermarkets and a lot more cars.

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When you were younger what did you like to do in Southwark?

I always did lots of walking and cycling. We’re quite close to the Herne Hill velodrome but I didn’t do much cycling.
Flaviana Galvez from Walworth was the lucky winner last issue.

Tell us what you would like to see in the next issue of Southwark Life Housing News

1
2
3

Name:
Tel:
Address:
Age:

Comments about the magazine:

SOLVE BOTH PUZZLES FOR YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A £50 SHOPPING VOUCHER

There are five slight differences in the two pictures of All About the Band’s participants performing with X-factor star Zoe Devlin. Can you spot them?

All About the Band is an innovative project to support young people to produce, record, and perform their own music professionally. If you are 13 to 18 years old you can get involved.

#allabouttheband

For more information
Visit www.southwark.gov.uk/allabouttheband

Send your completed competition entries to Southwark Council, Southwark Life Housing News, Communications team, PO BOX 64529 by 31 March 2014. Winners will be notified by letter and announced in the next edition of Southwark Life Housing News.

The information you provide will be used fairly and lawfully. Southwark Council will not knowingly do anything which may lead to the breach of the Data Protection Act 1998.