



Hear my song!

Innovative music project at EastendHomes

Musical Beacons is a creative project open to everyone in Tower Hamlets and Greenwich. It is a chance for you to sing, play and experiment with music, regardless of your age or ability. See page 2 for more...



Our mission:

EastendHomes will provide a local housing service which is efficient, gives value for money and meets the needs, priorities and aspirations of all residents.

Our vision:

To achieve the comprehensive regeneration of our estates and to bring about a sustained improvement in the homes and quality of life for residents.

Our core values:

The core values which support, inform and guide our work at all levels in the organisation are:

We value and support resident involvement

We recognise and value the commitment and hard work by our staff

We always strive to provide the best possible service

We welcome and support diversity and we are committed to equality

We want to improve and succeed in all aspects of our work

In this issue...

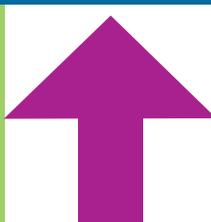


EastendHomes passes resident involvement test



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FREE Computer for grabs - Commercial St Office Relocates**



Hear My Song

Innovative music project at EastendHomes community centre



Musical Beacons is a creative project open to everyone in Tower Hamlets and Greenwich. It is a chance for you to sing, play and experiment with music, regardless of your age or ability.

Musical Beacons will take place at **The Centre, Merchant Street, Tower Hamlets** and at **St Richards, Greenwich**.

If you already play or are learning to play an instrument, you are encouraged to bring it along to the workshop. **A range of drums, hand and tuned percussion, string and wind instruments** will be provided giving the opportunity for everyone to learn something new if they wish to. Meeting once a week in a musically relaxed environment is a great way not only to make music but to make new friends in your local community.

The workshops run from February to June 2012 with the aim of public performances to share your new musical creations in both local and central London locations in June – give it a go, you have nothing to lose!

You do not have to be an international opera singer or a virtuoso violinist – in fact if you are, this is NOT the place for you! It is for everyone else regardless of musical ability or no ability at all!

One important reminder though; all children under the age of 10 years must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

There will be two workshops on **Friday afternoons - either from 4pm to 5.15pm, or from 5.30pm to 6.30pm** – the choice is yours!

Interested in joining us? Have you been persuaded? Then please contact:

Hannah Dunster at hannah@soundcastle.co.uk
or **The Centre, 32 Merchant Street, Bow, E3 4PZ**

Look forward to seeing you there!





We're all better off when everyone's online



Around 8.2million Britons have never used the internet. This means they are missing out on cheaper goods and services, as well as knowledge and information. Race Online 2012 is the national campaign set up by UK Digital Champion Martha Lane Fox to help millions more people benefit from access to the internet by the end of the Olympic year 2012.

According to Race Online, average household savings of £560 a year can be made by shopping and paying bills online. Getting online helps unemployed adults find work faster and could reduce benefit expenditure.

Approximately seven million job adverts were placed online last



year, with some advertised solely online and only accepting internet applications.

Free Computer available

Research suggests that around half of families without internet access are worried about the cost of getting online. If your household lacks a computer and can't afford one but wants to get online, please call into your local office and let the staff there know (before 1st May). We've a basic computer system to give away which will get you started on the internet.

Race Online 2012 are looking for digital volunteers to help get more people online. See <http://champions.go-on.co.uk/signup> for more. EastendHomes would like to speak to any resident who is willing to help us get more residents online. So if you'd like to join the Race Online 2012 campaign please get in touch with us at letmeknow@eastendhomes.net

Come Dine with me

Ever watched Channel 4's *Come Dine with Me* and fancied trying your hand at hosting a dinner party for strangers? Well, a 'mystery' resident is willing to host a Come Dine with Me for four other EastendHomes residents. We think this could be a hoot so EastendHomes are sponsoring the evening (no lobster & champagne!). So if you fancy this please email letmeknow@eastendhomes.net





Extra help 1

East End Energy Fit

With rising fuel prices, many residents are worried about meeting the costs of heating their homes. But, help may be available from the **EAST END ENERGY FIT** project – a joint initiative between the **Bromley by Bow Centre and Toynbee Hall** – designed to help people clear their fuel debts and benefit from sound advice for the future.



Get help to:

- Clear priority household debts: water, sewerage, council tax and rent
- Get money towards buying essential household items such as beds, cookers, washing machines, refrigerators.
- Get money to pay other bills and costs such as telephone debts, funeral payments, boiler repairs/replacement, debt relief order fee and bankruptcy deposit
- Provide home energy efficiency advice to save you those precious pounds

Jointly funded by the British Gas Energy Trust and the EDF Energy Trust.

If you are interested in finding out more, why not contact the Energy Fit advisors? They will be glad to speak to you and advise if and how they may be able to assist you.

Name	Address	Telephone	Email
Toynbee Hall	28 Commercial Street City of London, E1 6LS	020 7392 2952	Advice@toynbeehall.org.uk
Bromley by Bow Centre	St Leonard's Street London, E3 3BT	020 8709 9737	eastendenergyfit@bbbc.org.uk



Successful grant!

With help from EastendHomes' Peter Griffiths, **Calder's Wharf Community Centre** became a **Toy Library**, securing a grant to get started. Congratulations to Isle of Dogs tenant Kathy McTasney for making this happen.

Case Study

Mr B came into the Bromley-by-Bow advice office about his debts. He had a British Gas debt of £94.50, which he was unable to pay on his limited budget of Income Support and Disability Living Allowance. He has multiple illnesses including schizophrenia. Mr B attended a booked appointment for an application to the British Gas Trust Fund to be made. An energy advisor carried out a home visit and it was recommended that Mr B call British Gas for a 'Warm Home' request. This entitled Mr B to a £120 rebate towards his electricity account. Mr B also received the happy news that his gas debt had been cleared.

Extra help 2

Grants for young people

The **Lawrence Atwell Charity** offers grants to young people aged between 16 and 26 towards the cost of training or equipment/tools needed for work. Ring **020 7517 0409** for more details.



EastendHomes passes resident involvement test

EastendHomes commissioned the Tenants Participation Advisory Service (TPAS) in November 2010 to independently assess the quality of our Resident Involvement arrangements. The process included:

- ✓ A self assessment and the provision of supporting information
- ✓ Independent desktop analysis of the assessment and documentary evidence
- ✓ A programme of reality checking by TPAS to ensure that we do what we say we do

Following the review, TPAS have confirmed that EastendHomes has passed their inspection and we have now been awarded the Resident Involvement Quality Standard.

TPAS would like to thank all of the tenants, residents and Board members at EastendHomes who took part. Without their support the assessment could not have been undertaken so thoroughly.

What do you think? Like to comment? Please get in touch any way you choose with your feedback or by email at editor@eastendhomes.net



Paul Bloss, Chief Executive, said:

"Involving residents makes EastendHomes more accountable and helps drive our services forward. The TPAS accreditation helps re-affirm our commitment to working with our residents to improve their neighbourhoods."



Major changes in Housing Benefit rules

FREE advice available for EastendHomes tenants

When a tenant has non-dependants living with them Housing Benefit can be affected. Non-dependants are working age adults able to work, living in the home. It doesn't matter how well off or otherwise you may be, Housing Benefit calculations assume that non-dependants will contribute to household running costs including rent. This deduction (Non-Dependant Charge) is applied for each individual living in the household.

Non-deductions charges taken from Housing Benefit payments are going up. Such deductions have not been increased since 2001 and the government is now catching up with three substantial staged increases. The first was last year and there are two more increases due this year and 2013.

EastendHomes was concerned about the impact these changes would have on those claiming Housing Benefit so

we contacted households due to be affected by the 2011 increase. We asked whether the tenant felt they could meet the increases and whether the Benefit cut was in fact being borne by their resident non-dependant(s). One half of the tenants surveyed said they had not passed on the increase to their non-dependant. To provide extra help to those affected, we arranged specialist advice for them on claiming Benefit entitlements and financial management via our friends at the Bromley by Bow Centre.

More non-dependant increases will be applied in April 2012. For some households, the maximum deduction will have increased from £47.75 to £73.85 per week in the space of just over a year.

Are you worried about Benefit changes? Would you like some free advice from money experts? Contact EastendHomes for help.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Big jump in satisfaction levels seen in latest survey of tenants

The 2011 Survey results have shown a rise of 10% with overall tenant satisfaction with EastendHomes, now up to 79%. Paul Bloss, Chief Executive, had this to say about the latest survey results: *"Step by step, year on year, our mission to improve estates that had been neglected for years is paying off. There's still much to do, but it is good to see that our services to residents are recognised as good and improving."*

82% say staff helpful

With 82% stating that EastendHomes staff are helpful, 75% content with our repairs and maintenance service and 78% either very satisfied or satisfied with how we clean and take care of their estate, our survey responses are encouraging. The trend across nearly all questions was positive but by our standards, one result stood out as not good enough.

Does EastendHomes listen?

EastendHomes was set up to be different. To be a genuine partnership between residents and staff. To listen, whenever possible, and to respond to local priorities and preferences. Just over half of respondents (57%) felt that EastendHomes takes their views into account. We work hard with residents to listen and respond but clearly, we're not doing well enough on this front. So rather than highlight all the good and improved scores, we're highlighting this, as it is something we need to work on.

Now there are things we can do and things that we can't do, but there's something important and significant in the fact that with survey scores better in nearly all categories, it seems that we're struggling to get our message across.

If you were one of those dissatisfied with us in this area, we'd like you to tell us what we need to do to get a better result this year. Please email letmeknow@eastendhomes.net or ring **020 7517 0409**.

At Holland, 64% stated that their neighbourhood has improved in the last 3 years

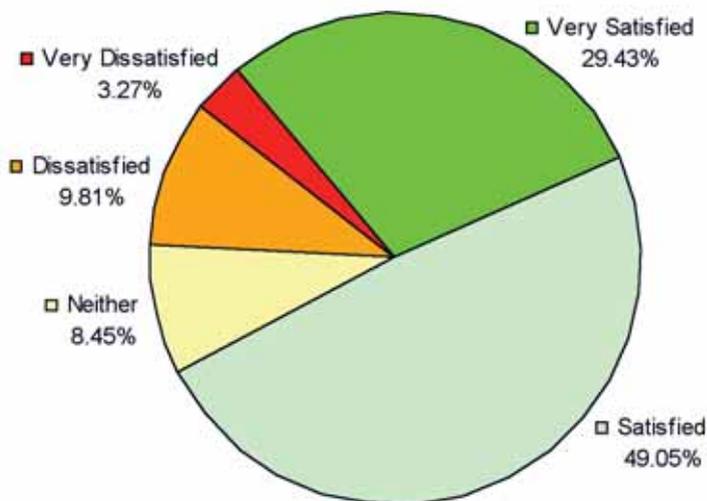
Perhaps the 'bottom line' can be best seen in whether we are improving neighbourhoods. And as the table beneath suggests, we are doing well on making estates better places to live.

Q20. In the last three years, would you say your neighbourhood has improved or declined?

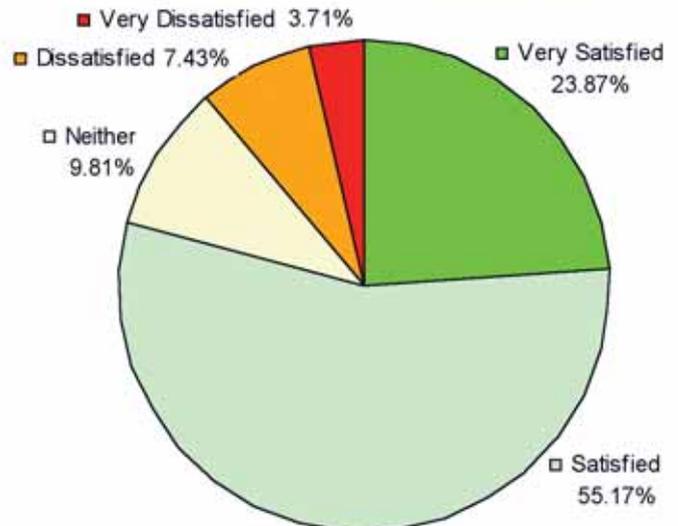
	Improved	Stayed the Same	Declined	Number of Responses
Overall	57.7%	27.7%	14.5%	357
Glamis	59.5%	35.1%	5.4%	37
Holland	64.3%	17.9%	17.9%	28
Island Gdns	51.3%	34.6%	14.1%	78
Mile End	61.9%	25.6%	12.5%	168
St George's	47.8%	23.9%	28.3%	46

The survey was comprehensive and if you're one of those in life that love the detail, please get in touch so that we can share more survey data.

Tenants - How satisfied with cleaning and upkeep of communal areas



Tenants - How satisfied with the service provided by EastendHomes



Performance Counts!



Here at EastendHomes we keep tabs on our work through a set of performance indicators. Facts and figures may not always tell a complete picture but do indicate trends and can help spot areas for improvement.

If you'd like to comment on our current top of the pops please let us know by emailing letmeknow@eastendhomes.net or get in touch any way you choose, by post - FREEPOST EASTENDHOMES, in person at our neighbourhood offices or over the phone ☎ **020 7517 4700**.

No	Performance Indicator	Perf. 2007/8	Perf 2008/9	Perf 2009/10	Perf 2010/11	Target 2011/12	Perf Q1 2011/12	Perf Q2 2011/12	Perf Q3 2011/12
Voids									
1	Short term Void Turnaround Times (days)	25	19.6	17.9	12.9	20	19.9	15.3	18.3
Lettings									
2	New tenant satisfaction with condition of home	53%	53%	76%	84%	85%	66%	87%	90.1%
Repairs									
3	Repairs completion in target overall	93%	94%	97%	97%	98%	96%	96%	95%
4	Appointments kept	92%	94%	96%	97%	98%	96%	95%	95%
5	Repairs satisfaction	93%	93%	84%	76%	96%	93%	91%	91%
Rents									
6	Rent collection (Calculation method revised 4/2009)	Not applicable	97.53%	95.87%	99.43%	98.00%	98.37%	97.53%	98.77%
Anti-social behaviour									
7	Satisfaction with outcome of ASB complaint	Not available	84%	68%	75%	80%	91%	88%	95%
Gas servicing									
8	% Properties with valid CP12	99.00%	99.20%	99.75%	98.45%	100%	99.60%	99.70%	99.76%
Estate cleaning									
9	External areas grade B or above	Not available	97%	99.8%	99.8%	100%	100%	99.8%	99.6%
Complaints									
10	Satisfaction with case outcome	Not available	36%	53%	18%	53%	20%	20%	20%



Speak out!

It seems like there's been a lot of housing-related stories in the press recently, with some thought-provoking matters being raised. Not everyone thinks the same, but we'd like to hear your views on a previous 'hot topic' - unauthorised sub-letting.

You may have seen stories last year calling for unauthorised sub-letting to be made a criminal offence, with those caught potentially being sent to prison for up to two years or a fine of up to £50,000.

As reported by the BBC, Government Housing Minister Grant Shapps said that those tenants abusing the system could have their homes taken from them and face imprisonment. With 1.8million families waiting on housing lists, is it about time for stiffer punishments for those breaking the rules? It is believed that some sub-letters

earn up to £20,000 per year renting out a Council or housing association home that they don't live in.

Estimates of the number of homes that may be sub-let nationally range from 50,000 to 160,000. If you would like to report your concerns about an EastendHomes property that you think may be sub-let, please speak to us, in confidence. What do you think? Please send your comments to editor@eastendhomes.net. Or text to **07961 941 584** - 'OTT' if you think prison sentences too heavy a response or 'JAIL' if you think it a good thing.

Resident Scrutiny Panel



The Resident Scrutiny Panel has identified three key fire safety messages. **Stay Put**, unless the fire is inside your home, don't evacuate unless told to do so by the Fire Brigade. **Rubbish is fuel for fires** so keep balconies and communal areas tidy and **Front Door 1st** – your front door is the first line of defence stopping fires spreading so make sure your door is fire-rated.

If you'd like to know more about the work of the Panel, please contact Peter Griffiths at peter.griffiths@eastendhomes.net or by ringing **020 7517 4728**.

The Feeling's Mutual!

Tenants throughout the UK have exchanged their homes through HomeSwapper.co.uk, 25,000 in the past year alone. And the good news is that EastendHomes pays to be a member of HomeSwapper, so that you don't have to. To provide even more extra help to those keen to move, EastendHomes has now set up an exchange list covering our properties. This list is available to EastendHomes tenants, so if you want to exchange with another EastendHomes tenant, it is quick and easy to set what is on offer locally.

New family homes

More positive news: two overcrowded households have recently secured new family-sized homes through the EastendHomes Overcrowding Reduction Initiative, a pioneering scheme to help our overcrowded residents. And with eight brand new five bedroom homes built by EastendHomes in Brokesley Street overcrowded tenants can be sure that we are pulling out all the stops to help.

Please ring **020 8880 7836** for more details on how we're helping tenants move homes.



The screenshot shows the HomeSwapper website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'HomeSwapper' logo, 'Welcome', 'Search', 'Join', 'Landlords', 'Help', and 'Our Service'. On the right, there's a 'Log in to HomeSwapper' section with fields for 'Email/Username' and 'Password', and buttons for 'Forgot Password?' and 'Sign up right now'. Below the navigation, there's a 'Welcome...' section with a cartoon house character and text: 'Join HomeSwapper and we AUTOMATICALLY MATCH you to suitable Council house exchanges and home swaps - for 25 members get 100's more great options in seconds!'. To the right, a banner says 'Live in rented social housing? Sign up now and swap your home!' with a 'Sign Up Online Now & Get Moving!' button. Below the banner, there's a 'Welcome to HomeSwapper - The national home swap service!' section. On the left, it says 'SAVE 100'S AT MORE THAN 2,300 OF YOUR FAVOURITE BRANDS' with a 'SEE WHAT YOU COULD SAVE' button. On the right, there are two boxes: 'Join HomeSwapper today' with a 'Join today!' button, and 'Look where you could be living!' with a 'Search for swaps' button. The 'Look where you could be living!' box also lists benefits: 'Search for swaps in your area', 'Over 252,000 homes available', and '4/25 members get house exchange matches within 24 hours!'.



Getting ready for the Olympics



No-one really knows just how much the London Olympics this summer will disrupt everyday life in the capital. Especially here in the East End, preparations are under way to ensure that regular services continue as best they can, given the expected road and public transport disruption during the Games.

The Olympic period is from 27th July to 12th August followed by the Paralympics between 29th August and 9th September.

to reporting, please report it now rather than during the Games period as our repairs service will inevitably be impacted upon with delays expected, given the major disruption. It is worth looking around the home to check that all is well now. Do you know how to turn your water off in the event of a leak? Getting around East London and beyond will be even harder and slower than usual. The Highway, for instance, will be one road where only one lane will be for public use. If you had water pouring inside your home from a leak, would you know how to turn

the water off? If not, then it is time to find out where the stopcocks, valves and other basic household essentials are in your home to minimise any unnecessary damage. We urge you to speak to your local Technical Officer NOW so that you are prepared for all eventualities!

Are you getting into the Olympic spirit?

Excited by the Games? Please share your thoughts with us at editor@eastendhomes.net.

The Early Bird...

The refuse collectors are proposing to work from as early as 5am and also some evenings so they can work around any expected traffic disruption. Your EastendHomes bulky refuse van may also pick up earlier than 8am. Please be aware that there may be noise during these times, somewhat earlier than we are used to!

The Olympic routes to the Games venues will also hinder tradespeople and deliveries getting around London so it seems to make sense to get ready now as best we can. If you have a minor repair outstanding that you haven't got around



Homeowners Forum

A new forum for Homeowners is on its way. The new forum will comprise of homeowners and EastendHomes Board members. We are now looking for volunteers to join the forum and would love to here from you. The forum will provide a constructive platform for discussion of services, charges and policy issues relating to homeownership. More on this in our summer issue. If you'd like to know more, please email letmeknow@eastendhomes.net.

More on this in our summer issue!





Noticeboard

Prize Draw winner

The lucky winner of our 2011 Survey incentive was Mrs Begum of the Holland Estate.



Latest rehousing statistics available

The latest low-down on how many people are waiting to move and how many people have moved is available at your local office or at www.eastendhomes.net in the 'tenants' pages.

Rents Prize Draw

The winner of our latest rents prize draw is a lucky tenant of Windermere House on the Eric Estate in Mile End. All accounts without arrear are entered automatically for a chance to win. For many people, the easiest way to remember to pay on time is paying by Direct Debit. For more details please call **020 8880 7816**.

E-Book reader prize

Congratulations to our lucky winner who can now choose a Kindle or Kobo and look forward to their newsletter arriving in their email inbox in future, saving paper and postage. Surprisingly few EastendHomes residents registered an interest in having this newsletter sent to them electronically. Good job we still offer it by post then!

Greener Glamis!

Our friends at **Trees for Cities** are working with residents from the Glamis Estate to makeover their communal gardens. New trees and more than one thousand perennial plants were planted by **Trees for Cities**, local residents and volunteers.

Olympic hopeful helped

A young Islander with an Olympic dream has been helped by EastendHomes and Telford Homes. More on this in our summer issue.

Hate Crime perpetrator jailed

A man who sprayed homophobic graffiti more than seventy times in Gordon House has been jailed, after EastendHomes worked to identify and prosecute him. More on this at www.eastendhomes.net.

Jellied Eel

The Bede Estate Fruit & Veg scheme featured in the 'Jellied Eel' food magazine. The 'Eel' wrote "It is a place for people to meet, chat, and swap recipes with friends and neighbours, or try out new vegetables."

Please visit www.sustainweb.org/jelliedeel/ for more on this, or call Paul (he prefers pies to eels) on **020 7517 0409**.



Local History films

Local history films are shown regularly at the Glamis Estate Hall in Cable Street. For more details please call **020 7680 8640**.

Food Growing Network

The Tower Hamlets Food Growing Network Winter event was held at Calder's Wharf on the Isle of Dogs last month, hosted by EastendHomes. The well-attended gathering of food growers and enthusiasts also saw lots of kids attend to enjoy the family-friendly activities. If you'd like to know when the next event is please visit www.wen.org.uk

Estate regeneration nears start date



Commercial Street office closes

Holland Team on the move

With exciting changes on their way, your Housing team at Holland Housing Centre will be moving to their temporary office in Toynbee Street, to allow works to start in Commercial St.

Regeneration Team relocates

Our Tayside House office welcomes the Regeneration Team, again moving due to the Holland Estate transformation.

If you'd like to know more about the big changes at Holland, please call **020 7517 0413**.



11

Estate Advice Surgeries

Advice surgeries are held at local Housing Centres. If you are unable to make one of our daytime appointments, we are able to offer you early morning or early evening home visits. **Please phone to make an appointment.**

Rents **020 8880 7811**

Leasehold Services **020 7517 4711**

Lettings **020 8880 7817**

Mile End **020 8880 7055**

Mile End Housing Centre, 38 Wager Street, London E3 4JE

- **Rents Service** – fortnightly on a Wednesday 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm
- **Right to Buy and Leasehold Service Charges** – 1st Tuesday of each month 2pm to 4.30pm
- **Lettings Service** – 3rd Friday of each month 10am to 4pm (some surgeries are also held at The Centre on the British Estate – phone for details)

St George's and Glamis **020 7680 8640**

St George's Housing Regeneration Project Office and Area Housing Centre, 61A Swedenborg Gardens, London E1 8HT

- **Rents Service** – fortnightly on a Tuesday 9.30 am to 11.30am at Glamis and 2pm to 4pm at St George's
- **Right to Buy and Leasehold Service Charges** – 3rd Friday of every month 2pm to 4.30pm St George's and 3rd Thursday of every month 9.30am to 11:30am at Glamis
- **Lettings Service** – 2nd Tuesday of each month 10am to 12 noon at Glamis and 2pm to 4pm at St George's
- **Housing management (Glamis)** – every Tuesday and Thursday 9.30am to 11:30am a drop-in is held.

Holland **020 7456 6700**

26-28 Toynbee Street
London, E1 7NE

Moved from
Commercial Street

- **Rents Service** – fortnightly on a Thursday 10am to 4pm
- **Right to Buy and Leasehold Service Charges** – 4th Tuesday of each month 2pm to 4.30pm
- **Lettings Service** – 4th Thursday of each month 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm

Island Gardens **020 7538 2340**

Island Gardens Neighbourhood Centre, 137 Manchester Road,
London E14 3DN

- **Rents Service** – fortnightly on a Wednesday 10am to 12 noon and 2pm to 4pm
- **Right to Buy and Leasehold Service Charges** – 2nd Monday of each month 2pm to 4.30pm
- **Lettings Service** – 1st Wednesday of each month 10am to 4pm



Grow your own!

For a chance to win a window sill herb planter, please send your name and address to editor@eastendhomes.net or by post to **FREEPOST EastendHomes.** Good luck!



At your service

You can contact us by Text Phone 07961 941584

Contacts

EastendHomes Head Office

Tayside House, 1st Floor,
31 Pepper Street, London E14 9RP
Email: enquiries@eastendhomes.net
Phone: 020 7517 4700
Fax: 020 7515 0218

Island Gardens Neighbourhood Centre

137 Manchester Road,
Isle of Dogs, London E14 3DN
Email: islandgardens@eastendhomes.net
Phone: 020 7538 2340
Fax: 020 7537 0512

Mile End Housing Centre

38 Wager Street,
London E3 4JE
Email: mileend@eastendhomes.net
Phone: 020 8880 7055
Fax: 020 8880 7810

St George's & Glamis Housing Centre

61a Swedenborg Gardens,
London E1 8HP
Email: stgeorges&glamis@eastendhomes.net
Phone: 020 7680 8640
Fax: 020 7680 8641
Freephone: 0800 0281587

Holland Housing Centre

26-28 Toynbee Street,
London, E1 7NE
Email: holland@eastendhomes.net
Phone: 020 7456 6700
Fax: 020 7456 6737

Moved from
Commercial Street

All our housing centres are now open from 9am to 4.30pm.

Out of Hours Emergency Repairs

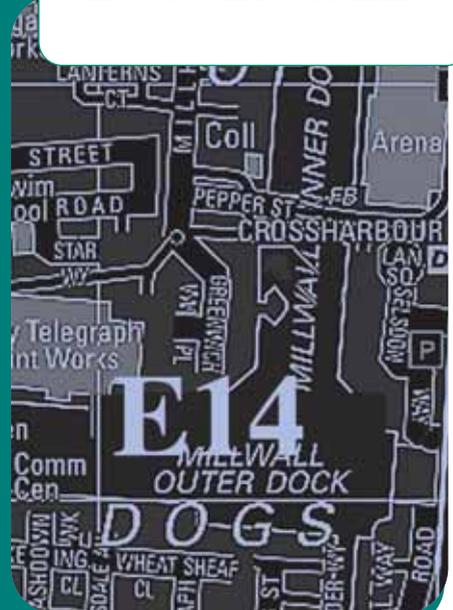
0300 123 0728

Rents

020 8880 7811

Right to Buy and Home Ownership

020 7517 4711



Other languages and formats that this newsletter is available in

If you ask, we can provide copies of this newsletter in a range of languages and formats, including:

- in languages such as Bengali and Somali;
- in Braille;
- in large print;
- on audio tape.

To ask for a different format, please contact your local housing centre.

