

Southway Stories

The magazine for Southway Housing customers
Spring 2018

SPRING IS HERE



2
Our 2018 Events
Calendar



10
Launching soon!
Better web services



2018

Things to do and places to go in your local area...

FEBRUARY

Winter Wildlife Walk

Wednesday 21st February

10am - 12pm

Fletcher Moss Gardens, RSPB event



MAY

International Dawn Chorus Day

Sunday 6th May

4am - 7am

Chorlton Water Park, RSPB event

Spring Wild Challenge

Wednesday 30th May

Drop in 10am - 3pm

Chorlton Water Park, RSPB event

AUGUST

Fun Day

Thursday 9th August

Drop in 11am - 3pm

Westcroft Community Centre

Summer Wild Challenge

Wednesday 15th August

Drop in 10am - 3pm

Fletcher Moss Gardens, RSPB event

Summer Wild Challenge

Wednesday 22nd August

Drop in 10am - 3pm

Chorlton Water Park, RSPB event

SEPTEMBER

Fun and Feedback

Saturday 1st September

Drop in 11am - 3pm

Old Moat Lane Green Space

OCTOBER

World Mental Health Day Walk

Wednesday 10th October

10am - 12pm

St Christopher's Church, Old Moat

Apple Day

Saturday 20th October

Drop in 12pm - 3pm

Westcroft Community Centre



Autumn Wild Challenge

Wednesday 24th October

Drop in 10am - 3pm

Fletcher Moss Gardens, RSPB event

Halloween

Wednesday 30th October

Drop in 4pm - 6pm

Westcroft Community Centre

Spooky Halloween Event

Tuesday 31st October

Drop in 3.30pm - 5.30pm

Arrowfield Estate Play Area

DECEMBER

Tree Dressing Day

Monday 3rd December

1.30pm - 3.30pm

(Switch on at 2pm)

Kingsway Crescent Green Space

MARCH

Spring Walk around Old Moat Trail

Thursday 15th March

9.30am - 12pm

Dennison Avenue, Green Space

APRIL

Spring Wild Challenge

Wednesday 4th April

Drop in 10am - 3pm

Fletcher Moss Gardens, RSPB event

Fun Day

Friday 13th April

Drop in 11am - 3pm

Green End Road, Green Space

Hanging Basket Workshop

Thursday 19th April

12.30pm - 3pm

St Christopher's Church, Old Moat



REGULAR ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT 2018

Over 50s Coffee Morning

Every other Thursday
10.30am - 12pm
St Christopher's Church

Quids In Food Club

Every Wednesday
10am - 3pm
Westcroft Community Centre

Quids In Food Club

Every Wednesday
9.30pm - 12.30pm
Burnage Community Centre

Quids In Food Club

Every Thursday
10.30am - 1.30pm
Brookfield House, Chorlton Park

Quids In Food Club

Every Friday
12pm - 3pm
Old Moat Sure Start Centre

Quids In Food Club

Every Friday
12pm - 4pm
Pop Up Shop Merseybank Parade



To be referred for Quids In, contact Southway's Advice Team. You must be claiming at least some Housing Benefit.

SPRING QUIZ



How well do you read the newsletter?

If you can answer these three simple questions you will be in with a chance to win a computer tablet. The answers can all be found in this issue!

1. What is the name of Southway's development arm (currently building Shared Ownership homes in Gorton)?

_____ Homes

2. We do not treat which of these pests? (Choose two)

- Cockroaches
- Ants
- Mats/rats inside the property
- Slugs

3. Tim is leaving a vacancy on which Southway committee?

_____ Committee

Send your answers to us by email to communications@southwayhousing.co.uk, or via Facebook www.southwayhousing.co.uk/southwayhousing or Twitter @southwayhousing - take a photo of the page or just type out your answers.

You can also drop your newsletter into Reception – don't forget to write your name.

Competition closes Friday 30th March and winner will be drawn in April. Good luck!



GETTING YOU INTO WORK

Do you need help to find work or to get yourself, 'job ready'?

We can support you with:

- **Searching for suitable jobs;**
- **Making job applications;**
- **Preparing CVs;**
- **Interview preparation and confidence-building;**
- **Finding training courses, apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities;**
- **Signposting to specialist support.**

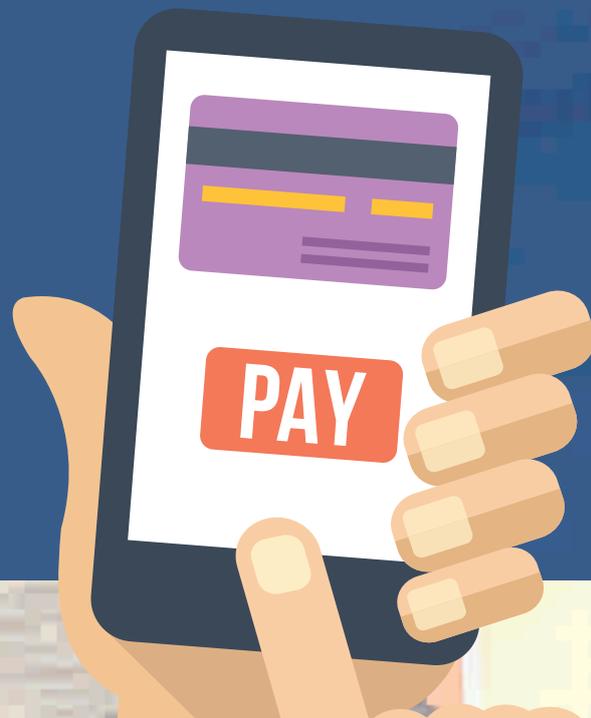
Contact our Employment and Money Coordinator for an appointment.



HELP WITH BANK ACCOUNTS

Having a bank account is an important part of managing your money and allows opportunities such as being able to make payments and purchases online. If you are moving onto Universal Credit or starting work, having a personal bank account is essential to receive Benefit payments or wages.

If you need help to open an account we can advise you on the documents you will need, can arrange an appointment at the bank and, in some cases, we can attend with you to provide additional support.



IMPROVE YOUR CV

Are you looking for volunteer experience?

There's lots of ways to get involved at Southway. These range from attending meetings and events to giving feedback online. We currently have the following opportunities:

Helping at a Quids In Food Club – each Quids In club serves between 20 and 60 local residents each week and you could help Southway staff to provide this service. Depending on how involved you would like to be, some training may be required.

Be a Digital Champion – help other tenants to learn computer skills – we will match volunteers with individuals or we will ask you to attend training sessions or events to help in a group setting.

If there is any other way in which you would like to get involved or volunteer, please let us know. We're waiting to hear from you!

Want your say on our services?

Another way to get involved is to join our **Tenant Scrutiny Panel** which is a group of tenants who take an in-depth look at what we do. One of the key aims is to consider whether services are providing good value for money and benefitting tenants.

The Panel has already carried out reviews on several service areas and is now in the process of looking at how we manage our void (empty) properties.

Want to contribute to the Void Review?

If you have moved into your Southway home within the last 12 months you can help the Scrutiny Panel, which is made up of tenants wanting to improve services for everyone by sharing their experiences.

Please email or call Maureen Ward for more

information and she can then put you in touch with the Panel.

**Maureen Ward – 0161 448 4200 or
m.ward@southwayhousing.co.uk**



SPARE TIME?

Want to meet others and get active?

We are launching an Indoor Bowling Club and everyone is welcome. All equipment is provided for free and refreshments are available at no charge.

Pop in to Christ Church at the crossroad of Fog Lane and Parrswood Road on Tuesdays 1.30pm-3.30pm beginning on 13th March 2018. Please contact Rob Lock on 07766 664161 or Devon Poyser on 07885 449250 for more details. This project is sponsored by Burnage Ambition for Ageing.



MEN IN SHEDS

A group of men in the Chorlton Park area have set up a Men's Shed project to tackle isolation and loneliness in men over the age of 50.

Supported by Southway Housing Trust and Chorlton Good Neighbours, the project stems from the national Men in Sheds project and operates in a former shop unit at Merseybank Parade, owned by Southway, to provide hands-on activities for people, in a space (that is actually bigger than a shed!) where men (and women, everybody's welcome) over 50 can meet, socialise, learn and share skills.

Attendees can choose to do their own projects or work to benefit the community. The work typically involves making, mending or renovating items, but can also include tool renovation, upholstery, metal-working, bike repair and gardening.

Outcomes of other Men's Sheds projects nationally include creating community spaces for people to connect, converse and create. They help reduce

loneliness and isolation, but most importantly they are fun (menssheds.org.uk)

Please come along to 38 Merseybank Avenue, Chorlton M21 7NN and register your interest - all genders are welcome. If you need to know more, please contact Devon Poyser on 0161 448 4200 or 07885 449250.



AGE-FRIENDLY



Would you like to develop an age-friendly project in Burnage?

We can support people who have good ideas about how to make their community more age-friendly, even if they have never done anything like that before. The Age-Friendly Burnage Partnership has a fund to support a variety of small (under £2,000) community projects.



- Activities to provide older people with new skills
- New equipment for existing community groups
- Hosting a one-off event to launch a broader project, group or collaboration
- Alterations to a community venue to make it more accessible to older people

However, we are open to all ideas, even if they don't fit into the categories above.

Come to our weekly drop-in at Burnage Community Centre (347 Burnage Lane) or Westcroft Community Centre (26 Westcroft Road). All day Tuesdays and every other Thursday morning. Call Devon on 07885 449250 for details of the next one.

OR

Email a summary of your project and your contact details to d.poyser@southwayhousing.co.uk

Who can apply?

Anyone who has a good idea!

Most projects funded so far fall into one of the following categories:

- Setting up a new social club/activity
- Expanding a current social club/activity





UC *Universal
Credit*

**digital drop-in
sessions**

**UNIVERSAL
CREDIT**
LIVE SINCE
OCT 2017

Universal Credit (UC) is claimed online via www.gov.uk.

Do you need help with this claim?

We're holding drop-in sessions to assist Southway tenants applying for Universal Credit. Our Digital Officers/Champions will be on hand to help you with filling in the online form, and our Advice Services team can provide guidance on your claim or signpost you to further help.

The drop-in sessions will be on Wednesdays 10am-1pm at:

DIDSBURY

Aspen House,
Wilmslow Road M20 2SN on:

March 14th 2018

April 4th 2018

OLD MOAT/WITHINGTON

Old Moat Sure Start Centre,
Old Moat Ln M20 1DE on:

February 28th 2018

March 21st 2018

April 11th 2018

BURNAGE

Westcroft Community Centre,
Burnage M20 6EF on:

March 7th 2018

March 28th 2018

April 18th 2018

To discuss an individual claim now, call the UC helpline on 0800 328 9344 or textphone: 0800 328 1344. All Universal Credit telephone lines are now Freephone numbers (all numbers are available Monday to Friday between 8am and 6pm).

For further information on UC check our website guide:
www.southwayhousing.co.uk/uc



FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS



Looking to own a home (or know someone who is?)

Shared ownership is a really cost-effective way to buy a home and Southway's development arm (Gecko Homes) is developing two and three-bedroom houses, available to buy with shared ownership, at the prestigious Park View development in Gorton.

Starting from a £2,600 deposit, you can own your own home. Find out more at www.geckohomes.co.uk or call the Gecko Homes team on 03309 951333 or email sales@geckohomes.co.uk



Developing South Manchester and beyond

Southway has really ambitious plans, developing new homes for market rent or sale – with all profits going directly back into social housing and your community. Our idea is to provide a home for everyone, with lots of options,

particularly for those who don't quite qualify for a social home. Here are some of our current plans.

Arrowfield, Chorlton

A development of 24 apartments for shared ownership at Buckthorn Close, Chorlton. The first properties are expected to be ready from January 2019.

- Planning permission granted
- Enabling low-cost home ownership in a popular residential area and a desirable neighbourhood

Minehead, Withington

An age-friendly development of 64 units of shared ownership and affordable rent homes.

- A mixture of 31 two-bedroom houses and apartments for shared ownership
- 33 one and two-bed apartments for affordable rent
- Community café and treatment room

This was formerly the site of the Minehead Centre, a vital resource relied upon by older and disabled people in Old Moat for its services and support. In 2015 a fire devastated the building. Though many of the activities were

relocated to nearby St Christopher's Church, a gap was left for the provision of services in the area. This formed the basis of Southway's Old Moat Age-Friendly pilot.

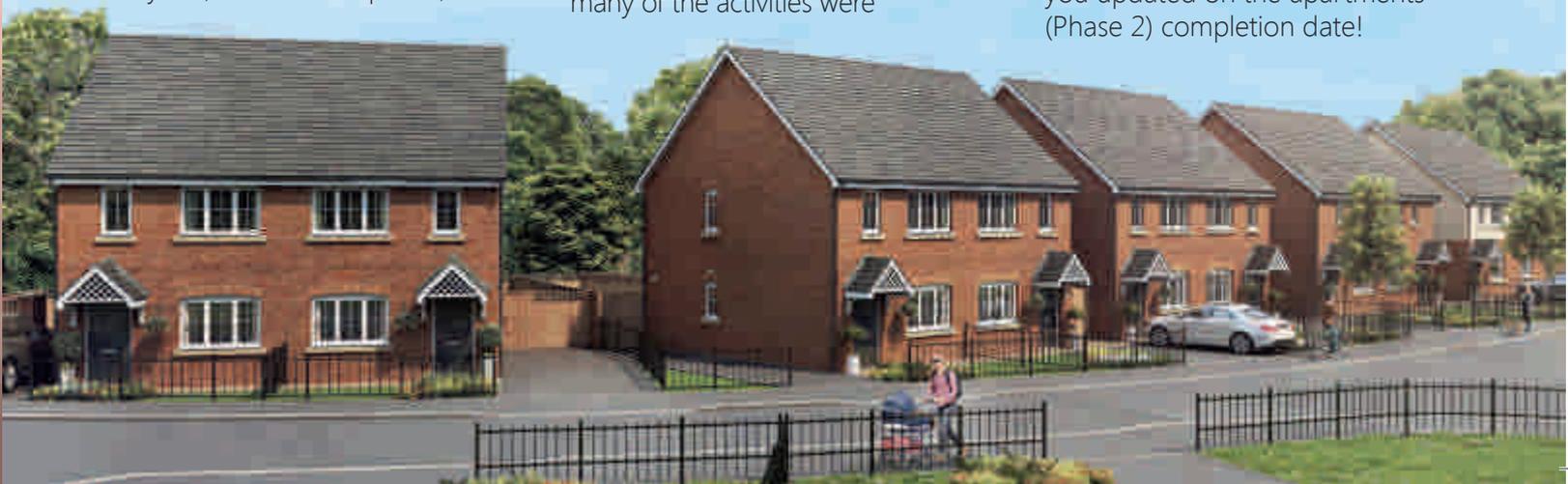
The future plan for the space is to build much-needed new housing – a mixture of shared ownership and affordable rented homes – as well as to provide a community café and treatment room. Though to be confirmed, the decision will be made soon with a proposed completion date for the project of mid-2019.

Regent Road, Altrincham

The site is in Altrincham town centre, alongside the old hospital site which is currently under redevelopment as an NHS hub

- We are building an apartment block of 14 units for shared ownership
- An apartment block of five units will be built for market rent
- Seven cottage-style two-bed houses fronting Regent Road will be built to be sold on the open market

The cottages (Phase 1) are expected to be ready from November 2018. We will keep you updated on the apartments' (Phase 2) completion date!





Southway Website

In 2015/16, our contact centre was taking 8,500 calls each month, with about 5,700 of them being “transactional”– things like booking a repair or paying rent to us. Only **0.4%** of our transactions were being carried out online which suggested our website was not working well for tenants.

With this in mind we set about creating a new website. We carried out EXTENSIVE tenant consultation, inviting tenants to sessions with our supplier Prodo to identify online “journeys”. We made sure we involved each tenant group.

We also carried out surveys and questionnaires, including inviting customers to provide direct feedback about their online Southway experiences.

They told us our website was “**extremely cluttered**” “**confusing**” and “**not clear how to carry out booking repairs or pay rent.**”

A more in-depth look at the website revealed there were over 1000 pages, many out-dated; the search function did not work very

well and getting to where you wanted took up to eight clicks.

The need for a new website was clear!

During each stage of our website project, we involved tenants and carried out testing on each and every function.

We have designed the site so tenants can do what they said they wanted - to contact us and carry out transactional functions quickly and easily. We have invested heavily in a state-of-the-art “Portal” area to make this possible.

Key features of the new Portal:

- **It has a clean and clear, personalised dashboard;**
- **Our new REPAIR booking system has a new search function and is much simplified. It has a unique basket system, where you can easily book multiple jobs;**
- **You can TRACK progress, and see what stage your repair is at;**

- **You can edit and amend live repairs;**
- **The system is linked to a text message service to let you know, for example, that the operative is on the way.**

Portal rent

As rent was a high priority for tenants, we have ensured this section is very clear. It has colour coded indicators showing account status and allows you to make payments or view statements quickly and easily, all in one place.

Website design

Our new website has a far cleaner look, with clear “Transaction” buttons which scroll down the page as the user does, so they are always readily available.

Using analytical data, we saw that many people were leaving the old site without looking at pages or simply after getting our number, so the new one is designed so any information on the site is no more than three clicks away.

Mobile first

Analysis also showed us that over 60% of our website users were visiting from a mobile phone or tablet, so we have taken a “mobile first” design approach. Every element of the new site scales perfectly and presents very clearly on mobile devices.

There are LOTS more features we’ve developed based on tenant feedback, we’re really excited! Keep an eye out for the new website, it will be launching very soon!!



HOME SWAP SOLUTION

Need a larger property or want to downsize? Have you thought about home swap?



If your circumstances have changed and you would like to move, the easiest and quickest way is often through a mutual exchange (home swap). Maybe your family has grown and you need another bedroom, or a family member has moved out and you don't need so much space.

The easiest way to find someone to do a swap with is through the website Homeswapper.co.uk

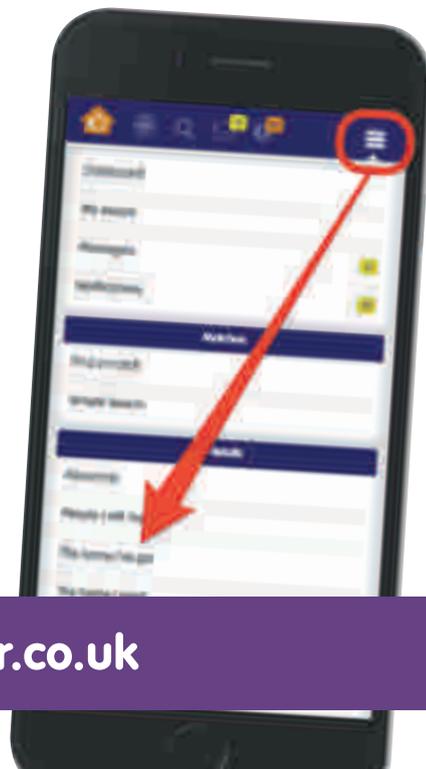
You can swap with any tenant within social housing (not just Southway) and it's a national database, so you could move anywhere in the UK. Once registered on Homeswapper.co.uk (it's free for Southway tenants) you can state what kind of home you have, and what kind of home you are looking for. It's important to upload photographs – people are much more likely to be interested if they can see pictures of where you live.

Southway has assisted lots of people moving this way over the last 12 months, our most recent being



a move to a three-bed house in Wythenshawe so a tenant could be closer to family. This also helped a tenant downsize from a three-bed house to a two-bed property.

It really is a very quick and simple process, (social landlords have 42 days to process your application and make a decision about whether you can exchange with another party, so you will soon find out if you can move).



www.homeswapper.co.uk

DISPUTE SOLVED WITH MEDIATION

Southway recently dealt with a noise nuisance case between two neighbours. A Southway tenant had complained on several occasions about parties and loud music from their neighbour.

The neighbour denied making a noise, feeling the person complaining was being over-sensitive. The problem carried on for over six months, having a huge impact on the neighbour's health as they were losing sleep.

Southway recommended mediation (a full professional process encouraging discussion) but there was reluctance agreeing to it, even though the person making the complaint was aware Southway could not take any further formal action unless they considered this option. We explained the process in depth and that 8 out of 10 cases are resolved through mediation; both parties eventually agreed.

The mediators visited each neighbour, listening to their concerns, and both agreed to meet each other face-to-face to see if a solution could be found.

Each neighbour was given uninterrupted time to describe the situation from their point of view. Having

heard each other explain how the issues were affecting them, the neighbours were able to identify the main concerns and work out a solution that was acceptable for both. An agreement was made and a situation that had been going on for six months was resolved in 12 weeks by using this method.

A few weeks later we spoke to the neighbours; things were still settled between them and had positively improved their health and wellbeing. One of them told us:

"I hadn't thought about the other person's point of view, but the meeting helped me to see that. I am sleeping better and my health has improved. I want to thank the mediators and everyone involved for helping us."

If you have a dispute or issue with a neighbour, please get in touch, we may be able to help.



smile
mediation

BECOME PEST FREE

A pest is any animal which has a harmful effect on humans, their food or their living conditions.

Pests can cause harm to humans when there is an infestation. Rats, mice, bedbugs, and cockroaches are examples of pests that present health risks when occupying premises. Other pests simply cause a nuisance.

We do treat:

- Mice/rats (inside the property)
- Cockroaches
- Bedbugs
- Wasps (ONLY if the nest is directly preventing safe

entrance to or exit from the property – i.e. we will NOT attend if the nest is in the garden)

We DO NOT treat

- Ants (in your property or garden)
- Beetles
- Silverfish
- Slugs
- Foxes or pigeons
- Fleas
- Mice/rats (must be inside the property in order for us to attend)

WITH A
LITTLE HELP
FROM US



- Squirrels – we do not send pest control to squirrels (if you contact us we may be able to block the area where squirrels are entering the property).

GARDENS

THE GOOD AND THE BAD!

Many of our tenants have well-maintained gardens that help our neighbourhoods to look great. As summer approaches, now is a great time to start work on your garden in preparation for the growing season.

For residents who qualify, we also have our concessionary gardening services. Southway's aim is to offer a subsidised gardening service to older and disabled tenants. This will be provided throughout the growing season and will consist of a straightforward monthly maintenance visit. Tenants will need to demonstrate that they meet the criteria for eligibility through an annual process of application to receive this service.

More information is on the Help with your garden page on our website.

Overgrown or untidy garden?

Southway wants to remind all residents of their responsibility to maintain their garden. Allowing your garden to become overgrown and not maintaining it is a breach of your tenancy.

Our officers have been busy inspecting overgrown gardens and have carried out a number of enforcement actions. In some cases, we have had to apply to the courts to obtain injunctions and undertakings.

There are also instances where we have employed our garden contractors to carry out the work and recharged the costs back to the tenant. Enforcement action will follow should the tenant then not maintain their garden.



THE GOOD



THE BAD

This also applies to rubbish and unused vehicles dumped in gardens. At no point should un-roadworthy vehicles be stored in your garden.

SAFE WATER

Looking after your hot and cold water supply is important and can help keep you fit and healthy.

The trick is avoiding what experts call 'dead legs' which happen when water stays undisturbed for long periods of time at temperatures that encourage bacteria growth.

Here are some simple steps to take to keep your water safe:

- **Taps** - Make sure you turn every tap on at least once a week.
 - **Showers** – Completely flush the hose through once a week and disinfect the shower head at least once every three months.
 - **Toilets** – Flush on a regular basis, at least once a week.
 - **Appliances** – Again these should be used once a week. If you discard an appliance that had a water supply to it, then the supply needs removing. Some washing machine spaces still have a hot water supply tap that's not needed. If you have a tap like this let us know so we can 'cut it back'.
 - **Hose pipes & external taps** – Hose pipes spray
- water so ensure that they are used on a regular basis and fully emptied after use. Taps should have 'double check valves' fitted in the supply pipework, just before the tap itself.
 - **Combi boilers** – As part of our annual gas service our engineers will check that the hot water temperature is set at a minimum of 50 degrees C. Do not alter this and have a look now to see that it is set correctly.
 - **Hot water cylinders** – If you still have an older system with a cylinder, our engineers will check that the cylinder thermostat is set at a minimum of 60 degrees C as part of our annual gas service. Do not alter this and have a look now to see that it already is.
 - **Cold water tanks** – Older systems can still have metal, or plastic, cold water tanks, usually situated in your loft space. These should always be insulated with secure lids on. We need to check the condition of these each year.



VEHICLE PARKING

If we find vehicles parked on our green spaces, we usually leave a note on the windscreen asking not to park on the grass, to park on the road or find an alternative parking space.

99% of the time this works. Where people continue to park on the green space we inform them in writing that we will take one the following actions:

1. Legal action in the form of a Claim for Damages; and/or
2. An application for an Injunction to prevent the individual parking any vehicle on the green space(s).

Cars also park on footpaths that belong to Southway Housing.

We carry out the same actions in these cases; first leaving notices but if this doesn't work we inform them in writing that we will take one the following actions:

1. Make an application for an Injunction to prevent the individual parking any vehicle on the footpath(s).
2. Police may take punitive action.

Please think about your actions when you are parking your vehicles and how this can affect other people living in your community.



SAFER IN SECONDS

WWW.REGISTERMYAPPLIANCE.ORG.UK

We have around 93 million large appliances in our homes, helping us to handle the daily chores. We try to keep our fridges, freezers and washing machines for as long as we can. But it is vital that we use these machines safely.

Register now

Supported by the Government, the Association of Manufacturers of Domestic Appliances (AMDEA) has created Register my appliance - a web portal designed to make registering both new and older appliances quick and easy. By simply clicking on one of the 60 brand logos, you reach a registration form linked directly to the relevant manufacturer, where most accept details of products up to 12 years old.

It is all too easy to take these machines for granted. But in case there is a recall or if a safety repair is ever needed, it is essential that manufacturers can contact users quickly.

Visit www.registermyappliance.org.uk today to carry out this simple task. You can even register from a smart phone. Help your friends and family to do the same.

Be appliance safe

These handy hints about checks of appliances should be carried out in every home:

- Read and follow the instructions in the user booklet, particularly regarding installation.
- Don't use extension leads to plug in major appliances.
- Check that plugs and power leads are in good condition; these critical items should only be replaced by qualified, manufacturer-approved service technicians.

- Don't store newspapers or carrier bags at the side or back of your fridge or freezer.
- Fit a smoke alarm near your kitchen and test it regularly.
- Don't forget to register those machines you've had for years at www.registermyappliance.org.uk

If you are in contact with older and vulnerable people, please give them a hand with completing the tasks above. Store user booklets in one place and write on them the serial number and date of purchase of the appliance to which they relate.



COULD YOU REPLACE TIM?

Tim, who has been a valued member of Southway's People and Places Committee for almost two years, is sadly leaving us to go to University. He explains the benefits of being involved.

"It's easy to feel as though you have very little impact on your environment and on making your community the sort of place you want to live in, particularly as a young person.

"Becoming a Committee member completely changed this for me. You have a voice and you use it to shape issues and policies that affect yourself and others. Everyone brings their own unique perspective to the group; I was passionate about increasing opportunities for young people and holding Southway to account for their customer service.

"The experience teaches you to be analytical and you learn to ask difficult questions no one might be asking. It's been a personally rewarding and professionally valuable opportunity – one which made a huge difference on my university applications. I'm really proud of my time on the Committee and am sad to go. I recommend it to anyone!"

Tim's departure means we have a vacancy on the Committee. We are particularly interested in

appointing another young member of our community to bring their skills and perspective to the group.

Power to shape

The People and Places Committee has real power to shape the future direction of the organisation and is responsible for:

- Approving tenant-focused policies;
- Making sure Southway achieves excellent performance in the delivery of landlord services;
- Ensuring Southway delivers Value for Money and high levels of customer satisfaction.

We'd love to hear from you if you:

- Have an interest in the local community
- Want to see housing services continuously improve
- Understand the needs and aspirations of local people



- Can work well as part of a team

No previous experience is required as full training will be given.

To request an application pack, email governance@southwayhousing.co.uk

For further information about the role please email or phone us and ask to speak to Matthew Maouati or Kaitlin De Luca.

Please note that this is a voluntary position, but all reasonable expenses incurred while engaged in Committee duties will be paid.

If you would like this information in another language or style please contact us.

Tel: 0161 448 4200 Fax: 0161 448 4334

Textphone: 0161 448 4349

Email: connect2southway@southwayhousing.co.uk

Web: www.southwayhousing.co.uk

SMS: 07554 400781

