



Lewes District Churches **HOMELINK** NEWSLETTER No 23: AUTUMN 2019

UPDATE FROM PIPPA, HOMELINK'S SERVICE MANAGER

The year has been an exceptionally positive and productive one so far in the office. Working in partnership with organisations such as East Sussex Childrens Services, the Newhaven Foyer, Citizens Advice, Homeworks and local women's refuges, as well as the combined Lewes & Eastbourne Housing Teams, we have been interviewing at full capacity. Even better news is the very high number of applicants who have converted an offer of HOMELINK's support into finding a tenancy. Of the 53 individuals and couples we saw in the first quarter, 62% of them were in new homes with our help within three months.

Arranging so many new tenancies by the end of July (70) has put pressure on our remaining annual loans budget (currently we can make 100 loans per year); the need to reach out to new sources of funding has never been greater. Our Anniversary Gala in November at Glyndebourne has significantly raised our profile and attracted several new business sponsors. We hope many of those attending the event, learning about our work for the first time, will want to help by adding to our loans fund, as well as our local supporter and volunteer base.

The office is working hard to improve loan repayment levels - up 12% from September 2018. Nearly 3/4 of new tenancies this year will be met by recycled income; HOMELINK'S model is undoubtedly so successful due to its sustainability.

"I love knowing that every repayment I make helps the next people going through what I experienced" (SHR)

"Homelink stands out from other organisations as they really do work with you personally" (CH)

"You brought warmth and compassion to our stressful situation from beginning to end" (BFM)

RECENT EVENTS

HOMELINK'S ANNUAL MEETING and 20th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

After refreshments, the story of HOMELINK was told, as representatives of the many roles undertaken in furthering the work of the charity came forward to light candles around the cake. Seventy people sat down to hear reports from the HOMELINK team, including filmed snippets from tenants. Reflections from outside speakers and patrons closed the meeting.



Open Garden in Bishopstone



The sun came out, the garden was captivating, as was the music provided by the Seaford Handbell Ringers and the Lewes Ukulele Band. Then there were home-made cakes and tea to enjoy and books to peruse. Children had a special trail to

follow and everyone enjoyed themselves. Over £2,000 was raised for HOMELINK funds. Thanks are due to David and Karen Allam for opening their garden.

20 YEARS OF HELPING INTO HOUSING

After our Annual Meeting and our Open Garden, we look forward to the final celebration at Glyndebourne on 17th November. See overleaf for details of the once-in-a-lifetime programme, with Sussex celebrities alongside amazing local talent.

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A Message from our Chair

Dear Friends,

This is HOMELINK'S 20th Anniversary year - we hope you have been able to celebrate with us – if not, there is still the Glyndebourne Gala Concert and the Christmas Concert by the Ashdown Singers!

I would like to say a big thank you, on behalf of the HOMELINK team, for the financial and/or practical help and support that you are giving to the work of HOMELINK this year. The team find this very encouraging.

This has been another year of rapid growth and development. We have, therefore, decided to strengthen our office team in order to ensure our sustainability. We are very pleased to have received grants from Nationwide and EKCT for part-time staff - an Assistant for Pippa (Fran), a Financial Assistant, and a Development Officer.



Summer Concert at St Mary's, Ringmer

Local fundraising has included a quiz and cake sale organised by a group from the National Citizens Service (NCS) and a Summer Concert. Looking forward to seeing you soon; very best wishes, Joan.

A Message from our Treasurer

Many of our supporters will know that HOMELINK has a new identity this year; and not just a new logo and website! As a result of our rapid growth over the last few years we have strengthened our legal status and are now operating as Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and registered with the Fundraising Regulator.

We are still providing the same essential services for people needing a home. Our finance team are currently writing to regular subscribers to let you know how the change will affect your giving. Thank you for helping us to make the transition as smooth as possible.

John

News from our Gala Organiser

We are privileged to be holding our Gala Concert at the beautiful Glyndebourne venue. Katie Derham and other local celebrities will introduce an extraordinary programme of local talent, including classical greats, upcoming young performers, and community choirs. Busking musicians will entertain concert-goers before the concert and during the interval. Refreshments will be available and the raffle will be drawn during the concert. Tickets for the concert are (almost) SOLD OUT!!

Jane (Vice Chair of Management Committee)



HOMELINK needs people to: tell everyone about the work of HOMELINK and encourage their support. See our website for downloadable resources.

leweshomelink.org.uk

Thank you!!

HOMELINK needs Prayer.



We thank God that we have been able to support so many and have had so much positive feedback from those helped. We give thanks for Fran who was able to look after business in Pippa's absence. We ask for God's blessing on our future finance and strategy, and for His help in the problems we may face. We pray for those who face the stresses of life, especially homelessness and poverty, and for all who, in Jesus's name, seek to help them.



**Glyndebourne Gala
17th November at 3 pm**

**Ashdown Singers
Christmas Concert**

The annual concert is at the church of **St Thomas More in Seaford** on **Sunday 8th December at 3 pm.** It is one of the best ways to prepare for Christmas. Retiring collection, coffee and mince pies afterwards.

**2020
Thursday 18th June at 7.30 pm
Annual Meeting**

**Friday 12th June
Open Garden in Brighton**