



## Services to keep you safe during social distancing

The world has changed dramatically since we last got in contact with you. We want to assure you that we are doing all we can to help keep you and our staff safe as the world battles Coronavirus.

Our Contact Centre is open for your calls and emails and we are keeping

in touch with our vulnerable residents so they have the support they need.

We are offering money advice to those whose jobs have been affected, please see our FAQs.

All mandatory health and safety checks are continuing, with

our officers protected with the appropriate clothing.

We are currently operating an emergency repairs and only carrying out essential grounds maintenance. Cleaning of communal areas has been adjusted to include more hygienic measures.

### Colne Coronavirus Hotline

If you are self-isolating or have non-urgent concerns about a vulnerable Colne resident please call our Coronavirus hotline on 0800 038 5776.

It's free from landlines or mobiles.

For urgent medical advice call 111 or 999.

Colne's hotline is monitored 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

### Keeping you up to date

For service changes keep an eye on our website, we are also sharing useful information on our Facebook and Instagram pages.

# Money advice FAQs

**Will Colne take legal action to end my tenancy?**

**No.** We understand how difficult the situation is. Colne has suspended taking court action to recover debt or seek possession of a home.

**Do I need to pay rent and service charges over the next three months?**

**Yes.** Rent and service charges are still due each week or month.

**How can I arrange to pay my rent debt by instalments?**

**Contact our Income Advisors on 01206 244700 to discuss a three month repayment plan.**

**Will Colne evict me from my home?**

**No.** Colne will not take action to re-possess your home during the crisis.

## Did you know?

This year Colne helped residents claim **£596,000** in benefits they were entitled to. Our Welfare Advice Officer Chris James is available to help you apply for benefits.



# Putting a stop to anti-social behaviour

With more of us at home there could be more complaints about nuisance neighbours. Get in touch with our Anti-Social Behaviour Team if you need support and check out our 'report-it' toolkit on our website.

The team works closely with police, residents and communities to stop anti-social behaviour. We believe it is everyone's right to live in a safe and peaceful place.



## Case study

A tenant suspected of being involved with drugs has been barred from living in their Colne home. It comes after reports of lots of visitors to the home and loud music.

One of our specialist Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Officers gained a Partial Closure Order to stop the tenant, but this did not make them change their behaviour.

Colne was left with no alternative than to go through the courts to get a possession order so the tenant cannot return to the property.

## Did you know?

**You can report noise nuisance using our noise app?**

**Visit our website to find out how.**



# What does Colne's merger mean to you?

We hope you have had a chance to read the enclosed letter which confirms Colne's proposed merger with Greenfields Community Housing is to go ahead. We think this is exciting news, we really want to ensure the new organisation does more to improve the things that matter to you.

You do not need to do anything. Your rights, rent and home are not affected by the merger. We will give you more information in the coming months.

## Residents' response to consultation

Colne's consultation on our merger with Greenfields Community Housing was welcomed by residents.

We received more than 50 responses from our tenants and leaseholders and had some great questions.

Some of you quite rightly asked if services would suffer or if your current tenancy or lease would change.

We answered all queries and were keen to point out that becoming a bigger organisation would mean we could do more to improve the things that matter to you.

We welcomed a really engaging meeting with leaseholders in our Housing for Older People in Manningtree. They wanted clarification that their existing

agreement and services would continue and were interested in what a Community Gateway is – see our factfile.

We would like to say a huge thank you to those of you who took the time out to have your say.



## FACTFILE

### What will a Community Gateway do for me?

Give you a stronger voice.

The new organisation will be a Community Gateway Association, like Greenfields is currently.

That means all residents of the new organisation can have a stake (or share but it does not involve money) and vote at Annual General Meetings.

You could decide how much you get involved.

There would be plenty of exciting and meaningful opportunities to influence decisions about your services and what improvements should be made in your communities.

There will also be a formal group which will work with the new Board, residents will be paid a small sum and recruited based on skills, knowledge and experience. So watch this space!

### Why Eastlight Community Homes?

The proposed name of the new organisation which will be created by the merger is **Eastlight Community Homes**.

Residents, partners, Board members and staff helped shape the name.

**Eastlight Community Homes** was selected because:

- It stands for us being a shining light, taking us forward to a brighter future and an aspiration to be a positive force for our communities.
- East represents the region we live in. We are committed to our core area of North Essex and Suffolk and in years to come we hope to influence others to help solve the regional housing crisis.
- Homes was chosen rather than housing because our new organisation will aim to do far more than simply offer a roof over your head.

# Thanking our residents' group

Throughout the merger process – which started last year – a group of six residents have been working hard to ensure your views are represented.

Three residents from Greenfields and three from Colne have been feeding back to our Boards with questions and concerns.

They have supported the merger and are really positive about the benefits it will bring. Thank you to the group for your commitment and hard work.



# Rest in peace

Sadly, one of our involved residents passed away recently.



Clara Sycamore/Flatman's sudden death has been a shock for everyone who knew her,

Colne has been supporting her family and a condolences card was sent to her partner on behalf of us all.

Her fellow scrutineers paid tribute to Clara's passion for representing the residents of Greenstead, Colchester, where she lived in Sullivan Close.

Colne's CEO Sara Thakkar spoke about Clara's contribution and commitment at a meeting with Board members of Greenfields and Colne.

# Award on the way?



Another of the group – Colne resident Marlene Carter – has been shortlisted for an award.

Marlene, who lives in Tiptree, is up for the Tenant of the Year award.

Marlene is also a resident champion at our Housing for Older people scheme Ironside Walk in Manningtree, where she used to live.

The awards, run by TPAS, the Tenant Engagement Experts, are due to be announced later this year.

Colne has also been shortlisted for the 'Outstanding tenant engagement – under 10,000 homes' award.

# Thanks for your memories!

We will be saying a fond farewell to Colne before we embark on the next chapter of our journey later this year.

## And we want to hear from you!

Colne was formed in 1973 and has a really proud history of supporting residents and communities. We know we don't always get it right but we would love to hear your stories celebrating Colne. Have you been with us since the beginning, did we really help you change your life, is there a member of staff that stands out? Have you any nostalgic photos to share?

Please contact Emily Norman on [emily.norman@colnehousing.co.uk](mailto:emily.norman@colnehousing.co.uk) or call 01206 244700.

