

Member Spotlight

March 2021

Soha





Soha

We asked **Jackie Logan, Resident Engagement and Communities Manager** to share what they are up to.

If you'd like to contact Jackie about any of the below click [here](#).

Give us a little known fact about your organisation

Soha Housing is built on the site of a row of shops, one of which was owned by the family of someone who, after travelling the world as a missionary, came back to Didcot to become our tenant. We became a mutual housing association in 2017

Tell us about a time that engagement has made a difference to your services or communities?

Our Scrutiny and Auditors did a joint review of housing management and visited several other housing associations to look at their models. The Scrutiny group also did a review of the lettings service. Using their findings and suggested changes Soha has now looked at three separate models to change the way that neighbourhoods and lettings work. Soha will pilot this year, as we had to postpone the plans to do this in 2020, due to the pandemic. We will go back to Scrutiny and Auditors once the pilot has been completed, so they can review the new service.

Joint Scrutiny & Auditors review of housing management

- March 2019 – Scrutiny & Audit Report to Board on alternative Housing Management Models:
- working together as empowered equals
- celebrating Soha's open culture
- make better use of Soha's customer insight and data to provide a focused management service
- mutualisation a springboard to change
- November 2019 – Scrutiny Report to Board on Lettings Service
- Local Authority process felt depersonalised
- Soha Lettings service builds good rapport with new tenants
- Tenants express a wish to know their housing officer, and to be known by their housing officer.
- A continuation of rapport
- Placemakers – building a positive, enabling relationship with tenant and communities

What will the ideal Neighbourhoods service look like in 2021?

- Soha and residents working together as empowered equals
- A tailored and more personalised service, enabled by technology and data
- Neighbourhoods role as a positive role, enabling positive changes in our communities
- Placemaking - mutually agreed Action Plans that fosters a positive relationship
- Build sustainable communities through appropriate lettings
- Guiding not enforcing – nip neighbourhood issues in the bud
- Legal action as a last resort – Enforcement role for true ASB
- A new tone to match our new brand – less legal language
- Increasing wellbeing, tenancy sustainment, a positive role in their community
- A team of visible problem solvers - stewards and champions of their neighbourhoods



What are you currently working on when it comes to engagement?

Communities Strategy – Loneliness and Social Connection

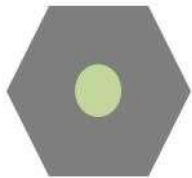
Soha's vision for communities. We believe that local communities are not simply places that need to be changed, but are themselves capable of bringing about change. If we want to see long-term, sustainable change in our communities, that change has to come from and be led by communities themselves. Our vision is that with our support, local communities would be able to: have power to take action, hold others to account, be connected, and trust, in us and others.

Soha's approach to community engagement. Our approach is to facilitate a process that is led by Soha members and that will aim to bring about long-term, community-led change.

Using the process described in the diagram below, the most recent involvement from members was a project that will help address the issue of loneliness and social connection.

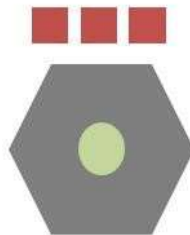
This was highlighted as an issue that members wanted to address through an 18 month consultation period prior to the COVID 19 outbreak and was timely in the delivery this year. The process needed to change due to COVID and the workshops were all done online. Members chose to develop a community connector's project, with many of them becoming community connectors in their own communities. They will continue to roll out this project to other communities. The community connectors are still working on this initiative and are recruiting more volunteers.

Step 1: identify the community



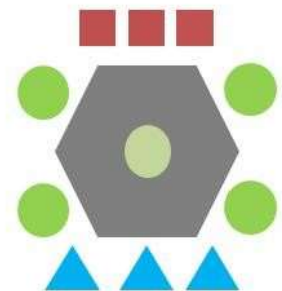
Soha will identify the community it wants to work with and the group of Soha members who belong to that community and want to lead the community engagement process.

Step 2: run a consultation



Soha staff will support Soha members to run a community consultation to identify the three issues that people think are most important and want to take action on.

Step 3: co-design solutions



Soha (or a partner) will run an event, bringing together a wide range of people and organisations to co-design new solutions to community issues. Soha will match fund the best ideas, where appropriate.



Why did you decide to join Tpas?

Being a member gives staff and residents an excellent platform to keep up to date on best practice, the opportunity to network and access great relevant training.

What is your top engagement tip?

Support residents to lead on projects and initiatives that are important to them.

What's the one thing you are really proud of when it comes to engagement?

Our involved tenants and residents. They give up so much time, not afraid to challenge and ask for change. More recently their commitment to continue running the Members Forum, Scrutiny and Audit via Zoom!

