

“SEAL was introduced to maintain landlords and agencies. How is the scheme going and what is the next step in the scheme to ensure both tenants and landlords are treated fairly and equally?”

Firstly, to remind Councillors that the South East Alliance of Landlords, Agents and Residents (SEAL) was **actually** put together to use their combined expertise, working with the Council, to resolve complex issues regarding Anti-Social Behaviour, Property Condition and Street scene (refuse). SEAL now has over half the rental properties in the Borough voluntarily under their influence.

SEAL now has in place a structure and techniques, robust procedures to check that members are compliant with the SEAL Code of Conduct (Stage 1). We have had great success resolving complaints relating to Property Conditions and Anti- Social Behaviour, and reducing evictions, and now work with the Groups regarding the street scene. The many volunteers, SEAL Members, Residents and Councillors, offer their expert knowledge and resources free of charge, alongside the Multi-Agencies, who greatly appreciate this new network. This benefits the whole Borough, not just a few streets, acknowledged by all to be a very useful responsive resource, guiding all to better management of complex issues impossible to list in this short report.

Complaints to the Council regarding SEAL Member properties have declined due to more planned management. SEAL has worked with several so called “Rogue Landlords” to bring their properties up to required standards, with a view to becoming full SEAL members, thus retaining critically needed housing .

Following research for the Streetblitz earlier this year, Community/Street Groups are being set up to work on improving and sustaining improvement in those streets (Stage 2). This survey resulted in a clear list of residents’ requirements, which SEAL (including Council Officers and Multi Agencies) is now working out how to better fulfil.

The very clear next step, Stage 3, for SEAL, is to continue working on the original 3 Aims listed initially, also focusing on Resident’s requirements:-

- ❑ We plan to be self- funding through a Volunteer Business Development Officer,
- ❑ Provide regular training for Members and Residents managed by that BDO,
- ❑ Continue to achieve funding for Community Action, and start and support the new groups,
- ❑ Launch the Community website to inform, connect and encourage active residents and landlords.

Obviously, SEAL will continue to grow membership, and educate Landlords, as well as continuing to work with tenants to educate them on how to conduct their tenancies successfully, thus reducing evictions. The Steering Group will continue to look for common sense ways for the Council to operate more effectively to achieve the now 4 aims, reducing ASB, improving property condition and the street scene, and in addition, supporting the residents through the street groups, to achieve and sustain improvement.

The Steering Group has reported regularly to the Landlords Forum, and would be pleased to hold a public meeting, to properly report on the progress, findings and to help develop plans for the future.

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