

LIFE ON THE RANGE!

Babergh's Estate Ranger is just one of many staff dedicated to helping the district's council tenants. Here we get an insight into some of the challenges faced as Babergh's 'man on the ground'

Working as Babergh's Estate Ranger is about as diverse a role as anyone could get. One man who, for the last six years, has tackled the wide variety of issues that come under this remit is Peter Swinney, (right and below), – and he says it is a role that is still constantly evolving. From greeting new tenants and looking after every aspect of Babergh's housing estates to getting tough with persistent troublemakers and even assisting with evictions – Peter tackles most issues involved with the upkeep and general running of Babergh's council homes. Residents rely on Peter's Estate Ranger service as a friendly face who will listen to problems and make sure they get to the relevant person for action, while Babergh uses Peter as an 'on-the-ground link' to its tenants and housing stock. Just some of Peter's daily duties include patrolling the Poplar Road shops in Great Cornard to make sure it is not being misused before a major redevelopment there gets underway, questioning residents if rubbish gets stacked up in gardens and listening to problems faced

by tenants. Peter also makes his presence known and makes sure the homes are running as they should be. "It is a varied role and one which can be very challenging," Peter said. "Babergh – and myself – can only do so much. Some of the onus has to be put back onto the residents too. If they want to live in a safe and clean communities, then people have to realise they can't just dump rubbish and cause anti-social nuisances. "The majority of people do realise this and take pride in their homes and where they live. Unfortunately there are a few bad apples that tend to spoil it for the rest." And one group of residents determined to make a difference in their community are turning their ideas into a reality – with Peter's help and support. Great Cornard mums Tina Whiting, Ann Ross, Nicola Herring and Kim Lillistone (pictured below) have formed residents' group TANK, aiming to improve life in their community – especially providing more activities for children around Minsmere Way, Hartest Way and Rede Avenue.



As individuals they have been meeting for the last two-and-a-half years, with Peter and local Police Community Support Officers, and organising events like litter picks, summer fun days and a Christmas party.

Peter said: "These residents are passionate about where they live and want to improve their community and environment in which they live.

"Being on the estate and talking with them face-to-face, I realised they were serious about this vision they had for their community and helped them to make their ideas more 'formal' and become a recognised residents' group. "That is one aspect of my role that I find the most satisfying – helping people to help themselves."

Recently the women have become a formal residents' group and have already planned a series of sporting sessions in the area throughout the summer holidays, supported by Babergh.

Now the group have decided to take on a formal role, they are always on the lookout for like-minded individuals who would like to join them – and help make their area a better place to live.

If you would like to join TANK or would like to talk to Peter about help in setting up a residents' group where you live, then you can email

peter.swinney@babbergh.gov.uk or call (01787) 825772 and leave a message and Peter will get back to you.

