



BARNSBURY
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

AUTUMN 2019



COMPETITION! RENAME OUR NEWSLETTER

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BHA PANTO TRIP - OH YES IT IS!

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Hello and welcome to our Autumn 2019 newsletter!



We are delighted to welcome Sean McLaughlin as our new chair, as well as the three new tenants joining our Board and Committees – Janice, Chris and Fenan. They attended our Board Strategy Day in October and are already making their mark!

Our Board decided at the annual Strategy Day that BHA must respond to the climate emergency and set ambitious targets to cut our carbon emissions. We are starting to develop a plan and will talk to residents about what measures they would like us to take. We know that many of our tenants struggle with heating costs, so improving the energy efficiency of our homes is a must but there will be lots of ways we can do our bit. If you have any suggestions, please let us know.

Finally, this will be the last edition of News of the Mews! Following feedback from tenants, we are running a competition to rename the newsletter and we've whittled down the suggestions to the last few. Let Dean know your favourite!

Susan French, Chief Executive Officer

Following feedback from residents about the newsletter reflecting all of our estates and schemes, BHA are changing the name of our newsletter and need help from you!

**COMPETITION!
RENAME OUR
NEWSLETTER**

News of the Mews isn't ending but will still be a section of our newsletter dedicated to the latest news from the Morland Mews estate. If any tenants would like to contribute to the newsletter please get in touch.

In our previous Newsletter we asked for suggestions for its new name with the winning entry be awarded £25 in vouchers for a store of their choice.

We have narrowed the list down to the following suggestions: Nominees:

- BHA Today
- BHA News n' Views
- BHA More than News
- Barnsbury Bugle
- Barnsbury News

Let us know which name you prefer by contacting Dean at the office 020 7704 2324 (dean@barnsbury.org). The name with the most votes wins!

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NEW HOMES MATTERS



Before



After

New Homes for Morland Mews

Last year BHA submitted plans to build seven new homes on the Morland Mews estate, along with other works and improvements.

Following feedback from Islington Council it was decided to withdraw the application to make some changes and then resubmit an application in 2019.

BHA have now made several changes to the plans and have resubmitted the application for 6 new homes following feedback from the Tenants' Association and local councillors.

If BHA gets permission, we will work closely with residents to make sure the works, which are unlikely to start before 2021, are carried out with residents' safety & wellbeing in mind.

To view more information about this development please visit Barnsbury.org/development.



BOARD MATTERS



Sean Joins BHA

Former Islington housing director, Sean McLaughlin, took over as chair of BHA's board in September, replacing Martyn Waring who stepped down after six years as chair.

Sean was selected through a rigorous recruitment process that included board members, staff and residents. He brings a wealth of strategic and practical knowledge that will help BHA to improve the quality of its homes and to increase the amount of affordable accommodation in this expensive area of London.

He is now Managing Director of Homes for Haringey, the council-owned company that manages the north London borough's council housing services.

'BHA has been making a unique contribution to residents and neighbourhoods in Islington for over 50 years. It's a real privilege to join a team that is making such a success of social housing in an area I love.'

Sean McLaughlin, BHA Chair



Thank you, Martyn!

At BHA's AGM in September, Martyn Waring stepped down as chair of BHA's board having reached his term limit as a board member. Under the rules that govern BHA, Board members cannot serve more than 3 consecutive 3-year terms.

Martyn's association with BHA goes back almost twenty years having worked as a consultant around the year 2000 for BHA's Board at the time. Martyn then went on to become a Board member in 2011 and subsequently became chair in 2013. During this time Martyn has been present for great changes and projects at BHA which have included new housing at Claringbull Court, Belitha Villas and Eden Grove but also BHA's 50th anniversary and annual Fun Days.

"Martyn and BHA go back a long way and we are tremendously grateful to him for his many years of dedicated voluntary service. He has been a great support to me personally and to the organisation and we wish him a very happy retirement."

Susan French, BHA Chief Executive

New Resident Board Members

BHA prides itself of being a small, local, community-based landlord where residents' views are at the heart of our service.

Over the summer BHA recruited for two residents to join our board and help oversee the management of BHA and ensure that our services continue to deliver for our residents.

BHA are delighted to appoint two new resident board members in Chris Bell and Janice Walsh. They bring a great amount of experience and insight to the role and BHA look forward to working with them to ensure BHA maintain our high standards of service to residents.

Despite only initially aiming to appoint two residents, BHA are also delighted to appoint BHA resident, Fenan Emmanuel, to join our Audit & Risk Committee. Fenan impressed with his drive and enthusiasm and the panel knew he'd be a great asset to the team.



Janice Walsh



Fenan Emmanuel



Resident Panel Update

In October BHA held our 3rd resident panel meeting. This is a meeting for residents that want to be involved in helping shape and create BHA's policies and procedures. Tenants from across BHA's homes are represented on this panel along with both the Morland Mews and Highbury View Tenants and Residents Associations.

In this last meeting BHA and residents discussed repairs responsibilities, lettable standards and a domestic violence policy.

It was a lively meeting with a good debate on all topics discussed. Minutes of resident panel meetings are available to view on our website and in the window of 60 Morland Mews.



Board Summary Minutes

BHA publish summary minutes of board meetings to keep residents informed of BHA's latest news and developments.

You can view these documents on our website, with September's board meeting minutes now available to view. Minutes are also posted on the window at the Community Room at 60 Morland Mews.

If you have any questions about this or anything included in the minutes please contact us.

SERVICE MATTERS

BHA Survey Results

In spring BHA carried out a STAR survey to find out from residents how we are performing as a landlord.

Thank you to those who took the time to respond to this and provide their feedback. Almost exactly 50% of residents responded to the survey, with many being online responses.

Overall, BHA were pleased with the results, with some great scores around our staff and caretakers, repairs and listening to residents.

We also did well compared to similar organisations, coming out in the top half of the league table for most aspects of our service.

However, there were some areas that BHA will look to improve on, such as the overall quality of homes and other actions identified.

BHA have put together a list of actions to be taken from these survey results that we will be working over the upcoming months to improve our service to residents.

We sent out a summary of our survey results to all residents over the summer. If you did not receive a copy please let us know.

What we're going to do

1 Ensure appointments are kept or communicate with residents as far in advance as possible if they change.

2 Improve how we communicate with residents when repairs take longer than expected.

3 Find ways to tackle loneliness and isolation among residents and offer them ways to get involved in the community.

4 Continue to offer welfare and debt advice but expand this to address fuel poverty among residents.

SERVICE MATTERS

Meet the Team –



Priscilla and Ewelina

Priscilla, Housing Assistant **How long have you worked for BHA?**

4 months now

Describe your role:

As Housing Assistant I support the Housing Manager and Maintenance team to help deliver a great service to residents.

I will also be spending time at Highbury View while Graham is on sabbatical.

What is your proudest achievement?

My proudest achievement would be transitioning careers to housing. It's something I aimed to do within a year and I'm proud that I achieved it.

Where's your favourite place in the world?

Ghana. I've been there twice. It has beautiful scenery, great food and amazing people.

If could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Anything but steak! I'd have Jollof Rice. It's like an African version of paella!

Lastly, what's the best thing about working for BHA?

BHA's versatility – no day is the same!

Ewelina, Finance Officer

How long have you worked for BHA?

I started working for BHA in April 2019

Describe your role:

Assisting the Head of Finance with all aspects of the accounting function within the business.

What is your proudest achievement?

My proudest achievement on a personal level is having my 2-year-old daughter. Watching her grow and shaping her into young and intelligent lady is also the biggest challenge so far.

Where's your favourite place in the world?

I have loved visiting Greece with its ancient monuments to breath-taking landscapes and delicious food. Greece has it all with exotic, pristine beaches with crystal-clear waters, marine life to gawk at as you snorkel, green valleys, quiet lakes and lovely food.

If could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

I have to admit that would be chocolate.

Lastly, what's the best thing about working for BHA?

There are so many wonderful things about working for BHA. My favourite is the company culture and being a part of this great team.

Bon voyage, Graham!

Graham, our Specialist Housing Officer based at Highbury View, is taking a sabbatical in November to go traveling in the Far East and will return in April 2020. Have fun, Graham!



BHA staff, Priscilla and Mary, will spend time at Highbury View during the week to look after the scheme and residents there.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact us.

Eviction & Rent Arrears Update

In June BHA carried out our first eviction in 6 years. This eviction took place due to the resident not paying rent.

BHA take rent arrears very seriously. As a charitable Housing Association, your rent allows us to function as an organisation. Without this we could not provide housing or repairs to residents. If you do not pay your rent, BHA must take action.

If you are struggling to pay your rent then BHA can help. We have a dedicated partnership with St. Mungo's, who can provide a welfare and debt advice to residents. If you would like to make an appointment with this service please get in touch.

Rent Arrears

Over the last year, BHA have made it easier to pay rent, offering card payments and online payments via our website. BHA have also given residents more up to date information on their rent account by sending out statements to residents once every quarter so you are better informed on your rent balance and to allow you to take any action necessary before any arrears build up.

BHA are happy to say that this work has paid off and rent arrears have begun falling.

BHA hope to continue this downward trend while supporting any residents struggling to pay their rent or bills. If you are struggling then please let us know as soon as you can. The sooner we know, the more we can help.



Making a Universal Credit Claim?

In order for us to verify your claim please let BHA know as soon as possible if you intend to make a claim for Universal Credit.

Otherwise this may result in a long assessment period and result in rent arrears.

If you are struggling to pay your rent please let BHA know as soon as you can. BHA have a debt and welfare advice service provided by St Mungos, who provide free impartial advice to residents.

To make an appointment please contact our Housing Manager, Felicity (Felicity@barnsbury.org).

Whirlpool Product Recall

BHA have been informed about a product recall affecting Whirlpool tumble dryers.

The recall covers tumble dryers manufactured under the Whirlpool brands of Hotpoint, Indesit, Creda, Swan and Proline, made between 2004 and 2015.

Any residents who are concerned about their tumble dryers can check whether their model is affected on the Whirlpool website.

If their product is affected, they will have the option to:

- have it replaced free of charge
- opt for an upgrade
- have it fixed by an engineer
- choose a refund (depending on the age of their product).

More information about the recall can be found online at dryerrecall.whirlpool.co.uk/.

The Government has estimated that the fault affecting these tumble dryers has caused up to 750 fires in the last 11 years.

It's essential that anyone with one of the affected products follows the steps above.



BHA Staff Shortlisted for Awards

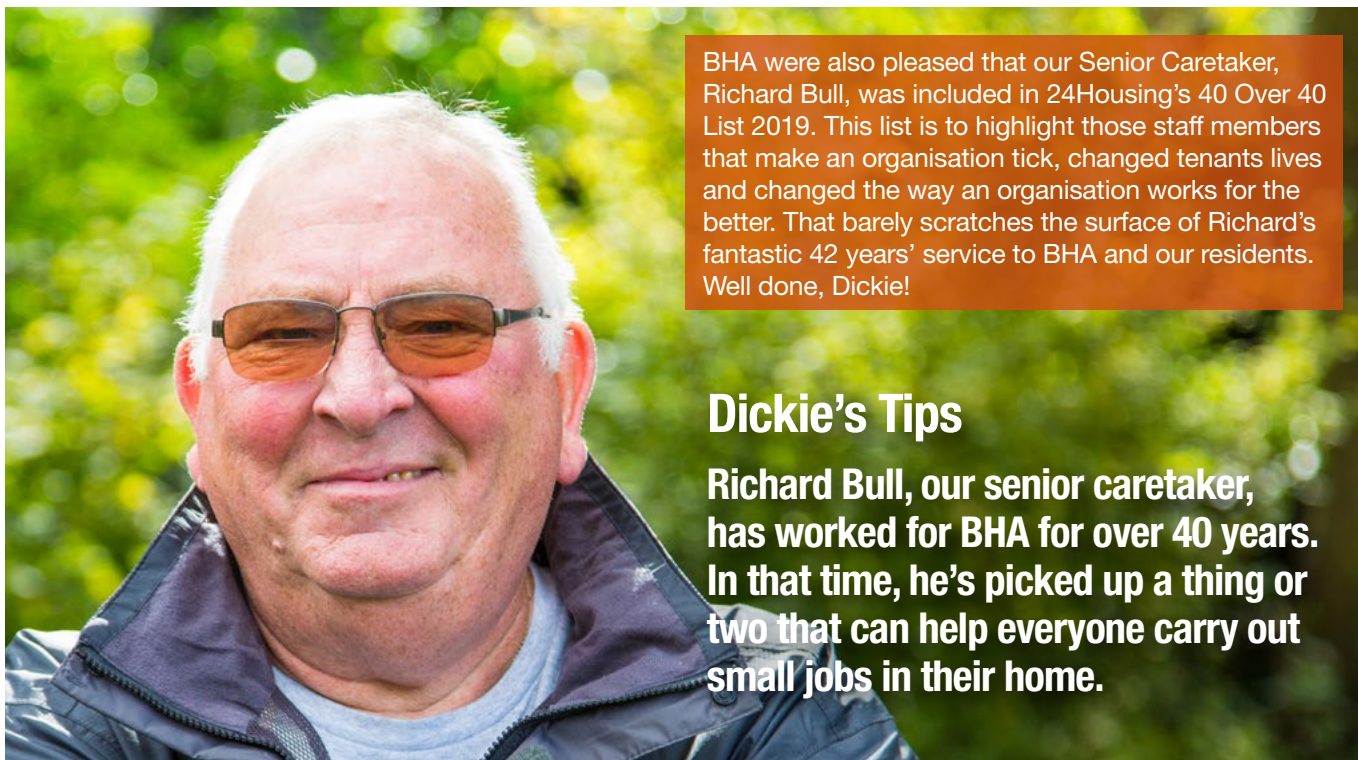
BHA are delighted that our very own Jean Bull & Felicity Singh were both shortlisted for 24housing Awards.

Felicity was shortlisted for "Housing Professional of the Year" and Jean, who retired earlier this year, has been shortlisted for "Tenant Champion".

Although neither Felicity nor Jean won on the night, it was a great honour to be shortlisted for national awards.

BHA would like to congratulate and thank Jean and Felicity for their hard work and the great service they have both given to BHA and residents.

MAINTENANCE MATTERS



BHA were also pleased that our Senior Caretaker, Richard Bull, was included in 24Housing's 40 Over 40 List 2019. This list is to highlight those staff members that make an organisation tick, changed tenants lives and changed the way an organisation works for the better. That barely scratches the surface of Richard's fantastic 42 years' service to BHA and our residents. Well done, Dickie!

Dickie's Tips

Richard Bull, our senior caretaker, has worked for BHA for over 40 years. In that time, he's picked up a thing or two that can help everyone carry out small jobs in their home.

Dealing with Mice

There are a variety of pests that can come into your home. You'll want to get rid of them fast and importantly, stop them coming back. Most pests are looking for warm, dry, dark, quiet places, a source of food, and a place to make a nest.

Step 1: Find out where they are coming from

This could be via a hole or cracks somewhere in your home. Then fill or repair them to block their entry point. Mice can fit through a gap the size of a pen, so it's important to identify even the smallest of holes.

Mice particularly don't like steel wool and can't chew through it. You can buy this from any DIY store and fill any holes with it.

Step 2: Keep things clean

Don't leave food out. Place food in sealed glass or plastic containers and make sure your rubbish is secured to stop it attracting mice or other pests.

Step 3: Buy Repellent

Most common brands of mice repellent are effective alongside sensible food management. These are available in supermarkets and other outlets.

Step 4: Call the Council

Islington Council can offer help in baiting your home for mice and also offer further advice on dealing with the problem. **Call them on 020 7527 3190**

If you have mice or other pests in a communal area, BHA will treat this as part of our Pest Control policy.

False Alarms

BHA have recently had a handful of emergency call outs to residents' homes where they have reported that they have lost gas or electric supply to their home. When BHA got there, it was found that tenants had simply run out of money on their meter.

If you do seem to have run out of gas or electricity, please check your meters or with your supplier before reporting this issue to us. If this 'false alarm' happens more than once, we will recharge for the visit.

BHA must also remind residents not to obstruct gas taps, water stop cocks and electricity boards, by keeping the area around them clear in case emergency access is needed.

Mould & Damp

Since last year, BHA have worked with a surveyor who specialises in Mould & Damp. They have carried out several surveys throughout BHA's estates. This specialist works with BHA and residents to establish the causes of moisture in a flat and how to best solve the problem.

Since carrying out these visits, BHA have carried out several works in our homes to ensure they have better ventilation. Residents have also told BHA that they have found the visits useful and informative, helping them understand damp and moisture better and how to stop it becoming a problem in their home.

If you are experiencing any issues with mould or damp please contact BHA so we can visit and work with you to fix it.

Patrick Lynch 1959 - 2019

BHA was saddened by the passing of our former board member and resident, Patrick Lynch on 2nd June 2019.

Patrick was always looking to take on voluntary roles where he could make a positive difference to people's lives. He became a resident Board member in 2013 and, until he stepped down earlier this year, brought to our proceedings a keen awareness and understanding of disadvantage and a desire to ensure all residents were treated fairly and with respect. He was also active in supporting other voluntary groups in Islington, most notably Citizens Advice Bureau and Disability Action in Islington.

His advice and willingness to stand up for people facing difficulties will be sorely missed, as will his presence on the Morland Mews estate.



Bid Now! Estate Improvement Fund

BHA tries its best to ensure our homes and estates are safe, secure and good quality. However, BHA want to continue to improve our communities, estates and blocks.

This is why BHA has set aside up to **£20,000** in our budget for tenants to bid for estate improvements.

These might be improvements to planting, lighting, shared areas, bin stores or other areas. We're happy to hear all suggestions from a groups of tenants who agree on a potential improvement to their block or estate.

If you and your neighbours in a block or estate feel that you would benefit from an improvement, please let us know and we will come and talk to you.

Please contact Dean (dean@barnsbury.org) for more information.



Apply for the BHA Bursary!

BHA offer funding of up to £500 for residents to help with pay for the costs of activities that help you to gain new skills and improve your chances of getting a new or better job. Our bursary award scheme can provide money towards paying for school, college or university fees, books or other learning materials, and trips.

BHA would also like to extend our congratulations to Serene, a past recipient of the BHA bursary, who achieved some fantastic results in her A levels and is now off to University to study Economics with Hispanic studies!

If you could like more information on applying for a bursary from BHA, please contact us or visit www.barnsbury.org/bursary-scheme

COMMUNITY MATTERS



BHA Panto Trip 2019

BHA's Annual Pantomime Trip to Hackney Empire will take place on 29th November 2019.

This year's show is Dick Whittington and His Cat and as usual BHA have secured a discounted rate for tickets for our residents.

Instead of £28.50, tickets are available at just £10 each available on a first come first served basis from our Tenants Association. Please contact them TA4BHA@gmail.com or Joe at 56 Morland Mews to find out more.



BHA Fun Day 2019

BHA's Annual Fun Day returned to Morland Mews on Saturday 7th September.

BHA's luck with the weather continued as the sun shone and residents and their families enjoyed a day filled with fun for all the family.

BHA would like to wish a special thanks to all of the volunteers who gave their time to help set up and clean up on the day of the event. It couldn't be done without you all!

COMMUNITY ROOM @ 60 MORLAND MEWS



Free Exercise Classes

Tuesday mornings at 10:30am



Bingo

Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm



Knitting Club

Thursday evenings at 5:00pm

NEWS OF THE MEWS

Morland Mews ASB

BHA are aware of ongoing issues of anti-social behaviour on the Morland Mews estate. Our recent reports suggest that the issue has decreased but BHA are continuing to monitor this and work with the police, council and other local agencies to ensure the estate remains a safe and secure place to live.

If you see or hear any anti-social behaviour please don't hesitate to report this to BHA. Alternatively, residents can report any incidents to Islington Council's 24-hour ASB reporting line on 0207 527 7272

Remember, if you witness a crime don't hesitate to call the police on 999.



Dumped Rubbish

Recently BHA sent a reminder to Morland Mews residents not to dump rubbish on the estate or leave recycling bags out for days before they are collected.

BHA are disappointed that rubbish is still being left along with shopping trolleys. This means that the estate looks unclean and costs staff in time cleaning up instead of dealing with more urgent jobs.

In the last few months BHA staff have also had to investigate dumped items on the estate with the view to recharging the costs for disposal of them to the resident responsible.

Please remember that recycling is collected on Tuesdays and Fridays and bags should not be left out longer than the night before a collection.

Morland Mews Barrier

Recently a vehicle was captured on CCTV trying to enter the estate without success. This, however, resulted in damage to the barrier entry system and has been reported to the police. BHA have since fixed the barrier and it should be in full working order now.

If you witness anyone trying to damage the barrier system please contact BHA or the police immediately.



New Bins for Morland Mews

BHA and the Morland Mews Tenants & Residents Association have discussed proposals to add new recycling facilities and upgrade general waste facilities on the Morland Mews estate.

Currently there are no recycling facilities on the estate, leading to bags and rubbish being left out and exposed to the elements along with the foxes. In order to improve things BHA and the TRA hope to add in recycling facilities across the estate to help reduce items left on the estate and encourage recycling.

Morland Mews residents should have received a letter and leaflet explaining the proposals and asking for their feedback. These include proposals for:

- A new 4-bin enclosure beside the football pitch
- An additional garage in the middle of the estate for recycling
- A bulk waste garage and service

Please have a read through the proposals and complete the feedback form and return it to BHA as soon as you can.

If you have any questions about these proposals please contact Dean (dean@barnsbury.org)

NEWS OF THE MEWS



Netball Community Sessions

Back to Netball run sessions for women on Friday mornings during term time on the Morland Mews football pitch from 9.15-10.30 am, for £5. Since launching in 2012 they've had hundreds of women from the local community turn up and get involved.

The session is run by England Netball with a passionate and enthusiastic coach. Sessions cover the basics of the game including passing, footwork and shooting. They finish with a friendly game to put the skills you have learnt into practice.

The group welcomes new people, it doesn't matter if they are seasoned players, haven't played since school, or are totally new to the game. A few residents from Morland Mews have already joined in, and they would love to welcome more to come along and try it out.



Club Local Come to Morland Mews

After an appeal for space to train and play football in the Islington Gazette, BHA are pleased to host Club Local at the Morland Mews football pitch.

As Islington has the second lowest amount of open space of any borough in England, BHA are please to provide Club Local with space on the Morland Mews football pitch to train and play football.

Club Local are a young Women's football club based in Islington who encourage young women to come along and play football, make friends and socialise.

The sessions will take place on Tuesday evenings from 6:30pm - 8:30pm on Morland Mews football pitch.

For more information please contact Dean (dean@barnsbury.org).



Next Morland Mews Coffee Mornings

**Wednesday 13th November @ 10:30am
&
Wednesday 11th December @ 10:30am**

All Residents welcome.

Drinks and snacks provided.

