

BARNSBURY NEWS

DECEMBER 2025



FREE | IN-HOUSE NEWS & EVENTS | ISSUE No 22

Sporting mews

EGG & SPOON AND OTHER CHAMPS!

For more official pics of the sporting triumphs (and Cola the wonder dog) at this year's **funday** turn to page two...



The proud winners (mostly) of the egg and spoon races!

FESTIVE SEASON AND NEW YEAR SERVICES

Wishing you all a peaceful and happy holiday and new year



We will be closing for the break at **12 noon on Wednesday 24 December** and will reopen as usual on **Friday 2 January at 9.30am**.

If you need an emergency repair during the break, day or night, please call our out-of-hours emergency service* on **0300 131 7300**. Please only call if your repair is an emergency.

If you have a medical emergency and have a pullcord/pendant please use it to call Linkline.

* This service is run for us by Islington & Shoreditch HA.

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COULD AN EARLY CLEAR-OUT MAKE THEIR DAY?

If you are planning a clear-out of clothes or toys your children have outgrown then donating them to a local charity before Christmas might bring some real festive cheer to hard-up families elsewhere in Islington.



SOME SAFETY TIPS FOR YOUR FESTIVE SEASON

Please take extra care with candles, Christmas lights and cooking over the festive season.

Battery powered candles are



the safest!

Put all in a stable, fire-proof holder.

Put out the flame if you leave the room. Keep any

candles far away from anything that can burn, including shelves.

Check lights for damaged wiring or plugs. Only use if they are marked CE or British Standard. Always turn them off at night and if you leave the house.

If you've gone for a fake tree, make sure it is fire-retardant. If real, keep it watered. Keep it away from candles, radiators and other heat sources and far from any safe exit routes.

If you have children staying with you practise the fire escape route with them.

For more safety tips from the London Fire Brigade go to <https://www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/christmas-fire-safety>

More scenes from the funday

This year's funday, in September, was a scaled down version due to an unavoidable shortage of staff able to help on the day.

We're delighted to say there was no shortage of contestants for the highlights of the day – the egg and spoon and bean bag races.

Our congratulations to Michelle Lovejoy who 'never wins anything' so, er... won first prize in the raffle.

Our grateful thanks to members of your Resident Voice (Franck and Janice especially) who turned out to help us set up everything and clear it away afterwards.



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Five-year plan: sparkling new kitchen for 94 of you and new bathroom for 36

Your annual report this year includes excellent news from surveyors MLCS3 who have calculated that we can now afford to give 94 of you a new kitchen and 36 of you a new bathroom over the next five years

Earlier this year MLCS3 inspected all your homes, inside and out, for the first comprehensive survey of all our properties since 2021.

They found conditions better than expected. They also worked out the cost of upgrading fittings like kitchens and bathrooms.

The news is timely, coming as compliments continue to roll in for some of our new contractors.

On Barnsbury Mews, Ongar have wowed two of you. One tenant says Ongar 'transformed' her downstairs utility room.

'Alan and his team were polite, trustworthy, and incredibly understanding,' she said, 'even when I changed my mind a few times.'

'Their work was of a very high standard,' she adds. 'It felt like they treated my home with the same care and attention they would their own. I'm looking forward to them hopefully fitting my new kitchen!'

She is not alone. With perfect timing, a delighted neighbour has sent in a picture of her brand new kitchen, also installed by Ongar. Keep those pics coming!



Barnsbury Mews improvements: pictured left, a downstairs WC has been transformed into a stylish utility room and, on the right, we have just been sent this photo of a fabulous new kitchen.

New contractors for day-to-day repairs

We're pleased to say we have **new contractors for your day-to-day repairs service**. Hackney-based twins Stephen and Rodney Ryan run a multi-trade building firm called (of course) **Twin Peaks**.

Twin Peaks and handyman Steve Woodgates will be working on fast call for us on 13 and 14 January during our two-day blitz of outstanding or unfinished repairs (see advert, page 5).

STANDARD RULES FOR STAFF AND CONTRACTORS

A reminder that all contractors working for us should wear a **BHA high-vis** or a **contractor badge** showing our logo.

They will not come into your home if any **children aged 18 or under** are at home on their own, without a responsible adult.

CRAFTY WAYS TO KEEP THE NIPPERS BUSY

CREATE YOUR UNIQUE CHRISTMAS PARTY HAT

Saturday 20 Dec ✨ 2.30pm-4pm

South Library,
115-117 Essex Rd, N1 2SL

Design a fun party hat with tissue paper and pompoms.



MAKE A STANDING ANGEL

Monday 22 Dec ✨ 2.30-4pm

Central Library,
2 Fieldway Crescent, N5 1PF

Create an angel decoration to brighten up your home.

SANTA AND REINDEER PUPPET CRAFT

Monday 22 Dec ✨ 2.30-4pm

Finsbury Library,
245 St John Street, EC1V 4NB

Archway Library, Hamlyn House,
Highgate Hill, N19 5PH

Bring Santa and his reindeer to life with fun puppet-making.

REINDEER HAND AND FOOTPRINT CRAFT

Monday 22 Dec ✨ 2.30-4pm

N4 Library,
26 Blackstock Road, N4 2DW

Turn your handprints and footprints into reindeer art.

SNOWFLAKE ACTIVITY

Tuesday 23 Dec ✨ 2.30-4.00pm

Cat and Mouse Library,
277 Camden Road, N7 0JN

Fold and cut paper to make snowflake window decorations.

For more creative fun for children over the festive season see
Islington Life's full line-up at
<https://tinyurl.com/npn55p4y>

MEET THE TEAM

Liz Meneghello and Rikki Burt



LIZ MENEGHELLO HEAD OF GOVERNANCE

Tell us what your job is

Helping to make sure BHA is run in line with all our legal and regulatory duties so the leadership team can focus more on strategic matters.

Where did you work before?

I had many roles at the Bank of England, all for the Prudential Regulation Authority, which regulates banks and insurers.

The last was supervising a large UK bank before I moved on to work in the charitable sector.

What was your job?

At the Bank of England I managed a team scrutinising governance and risk management to make sure the supervised bank was run in a safe and sound way.

The more recent job involved setting up a charity, running its finances and external communications, and putting in place governance systems.

Name two things from your last job that you're finding useful here

Good governance and managing risk. Coming here via a very small, mostly volunteer-run charity was a useful reminder that good governance needs to fit the size and operation of an organisation.

Why did you apply to work for a tiny housing association?

I used to live in Islington and I love BHA's vision and values. I was looking for a non-profit role where I could use my skills to make a positive impact and the team here is committed to doing just that.

Any regrets so far?

It's early days(!). No, none.



RIKKI BURT HEAD OF CONTRACTS AND COMPLIANCE

Tell us what your job is

Making sure we comply with all regulations, that residents are safe in their homes and we get the best from our contractors.

Where did you work before?

Eastlight Community Homes, which has 14,000 homes.

What was your job?

I oversaw planned investment in properties, like heating upgrades, improving residents' shared spaces, replacing roofs, windows and doors, and rewiring homes.

I also dealt with all the work needed after a fire, flood or storm and the weird and wonderful jobs that didn't fit anywhere else like demolishing old garage plots or creating new parking areas.

Name two things from your last job that you're finding useful here

Managing contracts and reviewing services.

Why did you apply to work for a tiny housing association?

After 17 years with a big company I wanted the challenge of working for an organisation with a closer bond to the community it serves.

Any regrets so far?

Only the London traffic on my days in the office.

If we repaired a fault for you recently tell us how it went to go in our quarterly prize draw

Use our online survey to tell us what we did well and what we could have done better and you could win a **£50 Love to Shop voucher** in our prize draw.

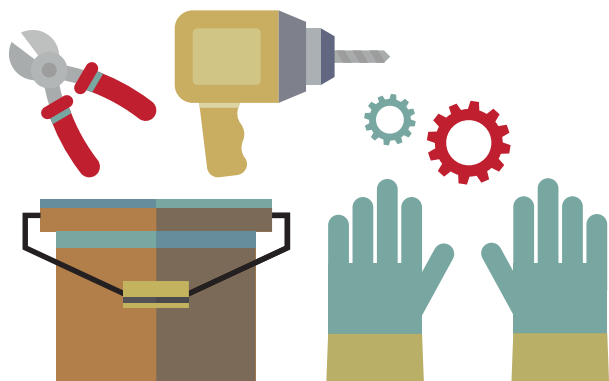
To fill in the online survey go to <https://tinyurl.com/yc8ybhhs>



You can also send feedback about your repair to us direct by email at repairs@barnsbury.org or write to us at 4-6 Colebrooke Place, N1 8HZ. Or why not pop a note in a suggestion box telling us what you thought of your repair?

WE'LL GET IT FIXED

JANUARY REPAIRS BLITZ!



**AND THAT'S
NOT ALL ...**

70 OR OVER?

Need help with some home DIY? Just give us a call on either day.

★ From 9.30am to 8pm
★ TUESDAY 13th JANUARY,
WEDNESDAY 14th JANUARY
★ at 60 MORLAND MEWS
★ repairs@barnsbury.org
★ 020 7704 2324

Staff will be out in force to help, with handyman Steve Woodgates and new contractor Twin Peaks on call to do your repairs on both days. The goal is to finish on the day, unless parts or materials need to be ordered.

FREE BULKY WASTE COLLECTION

For these two days ONLY, drop off your bulky waste at storage space 83 on Morland Mews and we'll get it taken away for free.

Stop tampering with your fire doors and frames: urgent health and safety warning

We have been extremely alarmed to learn that some residents have been making changes to fire doors, leaving even brand new doors far less safe in a fire

Please do not make ANY changes to any fire door or door frame we have fitted in or to your home.

Fire protection lost

Fire doors and their frames are specially built to hold back flames, heat and smoke should a fire break out. Any change to it will cut the protection your door gives.

Your doors are designed to give you at least 30 minutes of added protection until the emergency services arrive.

Even a small change means your door can't protect you for as long. And we do mean small: even a drawing pin stuck in your door can make it a little less fit for purpose.

We have found worse changes. Some of you have drilled or nailed things to fire doors, like a name plate or an ornamental wreath.

This has caused serious damage to the doors. It has also made the warranty invalid and that means a costly repair job for doors fitted just weeks ago.

OFFICIAL WARNING

This is a reminder to all of you not to change in any way your fire door or its frame. If we now find any fire door or its frame tampered with (*see list right*) the tenant will be billed the full cost of repairing the door or, if needed, replacing it.

DO NOT:

- * attach any decorations
- * take off or try to adapt the door closer
- * add a doorbell (*see below*)
- * change the colour with paint, ink, stains or any other coating
- * put up any kind of door plaque.

DOOR BELLS/NUMBERS

These can be fitted to the wall to the side of the frame. Do not drill into the door or its frame.

REPORTING A FAULT

If your door becomes faulty for any reason please report it to us promptly. We will send out an accredited engineer to fix it.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT FIRE DOORS



The five-step fire door check:
<https://tinyurl.com/mvr9ah3r>



TENANCY SERVICES

POWER STRUGGLE: GET HELP WITH A FUEL BILL

If you are struggling with the cost of gas or electricity please get in touch with Nicky or (for Highbury View or Ronalds Road) Colette.

We may be able to get help for you from charity HACT, which is now offering aid to residents who do not have a prepayment meter as well as those who do.

Depending on your situation, you might get cash help to pay some or even all of an outstanding debt to your power supplier.

CASH BOOST FOR ISLINGTON'S PENSION-AGE RESIDENTS

If you get pension credit, are 66 or older and are having trouble with household costs, Islington Council might be able to help you.

The council has a pot of money it is giving out in **one-off grants of £200**. The money is for Islington residents only and you must be already getting **pension credit**.

You have to apply to the council direct but we can help you put together an application.

Call us if you need help or go to <https://tinyurl.com/59tx6srz>

HELP WITH THE COST OF FOOD OR OTHER ESSENTIALS

If you are struggling with the cost of food, basic toiletries or clothes we still have money given to us by Islington Food Aid Forum to pay for items like these. We can give food vouchers for local supermarkets and small amounts for clothing, shoes or toiletries.

Call in at 60 Morland Mews, call us on ☎ 020 7704 2324 or email info@barnsbury.org

FIND OUT MORE | barnsbury.org

New year drive to complete energy efficiency works on Barnsbury Mews

Retrofitting works to make 81 Barnsbury Mews homes warmer and cheaper to heat are now due to complete in spring, reports project manager Avis Venning

Progress slowed down in July after contractor Purdy was bought by SureServe but works are now back on track after some changes to Purdy's staffing and systems.

Purdy's has also appointed a new retrofit administrator to keep those of you affected by the works up to speed and supported until all the work is done.

The next stage will see Pugin Court get the most dramatic improvements, with new solar photovoltaic panels installed on the roof of this four-storey block.

Residents of 14 homes in Pugin Court will be the first to benefit from free energy the panels will generate, even on fairly dull days.

As the works progress, residents of the remaining 10 homes will

also get low cost energy from the new solar panels.

Five homes in Pugin Court, most of them bedsits, will also be getting low cost heating and (for your warmer months) cooling from newly installed air-to-air source heat pumps.

Safety comes first

This last phase is complex so work has to be carefully planned and carried out to keep all parts of the building safe during the works and to make sure standards will at all times meet government safety regulations.

But the good news is the end goal is now in sight with warmer homes and lower energy bills for residents of all 81 homes.



PURDY APPOINTS A NEW ADMINISTRATOR

New Purdy's administrator **Ntombi Nkosi** is now at 60 Morland Mews, Monday to Friday, from 8.30am to 4pm. Ntombi will:

- * answer queries about the retrofit works
- * arrange appointments and access to homes
- * give updates on progress and key dates for installation works
- * take your reports of any defects or concerns.

Email Ntombi with any queries at Ntombi.nkosi@purdycontracts.co.uk

eBIKE SAFETY



The London Fire Brigade has issued a stark warning over the risk of fire caused by e-bikes or e-scooters, blaming them for 18 fires a month in the last year.

Fatal fire warning

'Fires linked to these lithium-ion batteries are ferocious, spread quickly, create toxic smoke and have catastrophic consequences,' warns the brigade. 'Five people have died since 2023.'

The risk of fire is highest with adapted or converted batteries, e-bikes/scooters bought online and any pedal bike turned into an e-bike using a 'conversion kit'.

The brigade also warns never to leave an e-bike or e-scooter in a shared part of your building or on a balcony and to never leave a charging battery unattended.

BICYCLE STORAGE ON BARNSBURY MEWS

Next year we will be pushing the boat out to find safe and suitable options for storing pedal bikes and e-bikes. We will consult those of you with bicycles and will be taking this up with your Resident Voice.

TWICE A WEEK: HELP WITH RENT AND TENANCY MATTERS

Drop in on a **Wednesday or Friday morning** from 10am to 12 noon at 60 Morland Mews for advice on a rent or tenancy matter. If we can't sort your query quickly we can agree a follow-up appointment.

Drop in or book a session with Nicky at a time that suits you. Contact Colette if you live at Highbury View or Ronalds Road.
☎ 020 7704 2324 or
email info@barnsbury.org

FIND OUT MORE | barnsbury.org

Ordering a repair

You can now report repairs that are our responsibility to any of the four coordinators on our customer-facing team.

TO ORDER A REPAIR

Call into **60 Morland Mews, Barnsbury Mews, N1 1HN** or to Colette in the **bungalow** if you live at Highbury View or on Ronalds Road.

Email repairs@barnsbury.org

Phone **020 7704 2324**

If you aren't sure if a repair is our responsibility or yours check our handy guide *Taking good care of your BHA home*.
<https://tinyurl.com/3szxy4cx>



Don't forget to tell us:

- your name and address
- your phone number and/or email address so we can get in touch with you
- as much as you can about the problem
- if we will need to get into your home, when you (or another responsible adult) will be at home to let us in
- if you have a disability or are frail due to your age or ill health.

Cleaning up dog mess on Barnsbury Mews

A reminder to all dog owners to never let your dog go out without a responsible adult to bag and bin any mess it might make.

None of our staff are employed to pick up dog poo. We call out Doves to clean up any mess we find or you report but there is a delay before they can get here.

If you know of any resident who is not cleaning up after a dog or who is letting their dog out on its own please tell us so we can investigate.



SMOKE, HEAT AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR ALARMS

Please test all alarms we have fitted in your home monthly, following the manufacturer's instructions. If an alarm is faulty we will replace it. If you do not have all these alarms tell us and we will fit any that are missing.

SUSPECT A GAS LEAK?

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY!

Call the National Gas Emergency Service **NOW** on ☎ **0800 111 999**.

If the service thinks the situation warrants an urgent investigation they will quickly send out a Cadent engineer.



Having a real Christmas tree this year? Don't forget to get it recycled

If you get a traditional tree this year please use one of these council services after Christmas:

- * take it to the enclosed and signposted area at Barnard Park between 2 and 17 January. There is no collection this year from Highbury Fields.
- * the collection service if you live in a street-facing property. Leave your tree on the edge of your property on recycling day.
- * the Hornsey Street Household Reuse and Recycling Centre accepts Christmas trees and green waste all year round.

Please remove all decorations. Do not dump trees on pavements, roads or by the bins on Barnsbury Mews. Find out more at www.islington.gov.uk/christmas/

DOMESTIC ABUSE IS A CRIMINAL ACT



SOLACE IN ISLINGTON

0808 802 5565

advocacy@solacewomensaid.org

If you need free, confidential support because of domestic abuse call Solace in Islington. Solace helps women and men.

Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.

IF YOU ARE IN DANGER RIGHT NOW CALL THE POLICE ON 999

Meet your neighbour: board member Janice Walsh

Veteran tenant activist Janice will be a familiar face to many of you. *Barnsbury News* asked Janice to tell us what it is like being one of our resident board members



Janice catches up with old school friend Janette at this year's funday

Janice tells us she and a neighbour first took up cudgels when living at Milner Square over 50 years ago.

Security risk

The problem was a plan to leave the garden gates open at night. 'My neighbour Pam and I were concerned because it was dark with places where folks could hide. Anyway, that idea was scotched after we complained.'

Janice later moved to Barnsbury Street where she still lives. Five years ago she and Chris Bell joined the board as resident members.

Their role, Janice says, is bringing the tenant point of view to the forefront of all discussions.

'I can ask probing questions and I will always speak up if I want the tenant voice heard or a discussion made clearer,' she says.

'The professional members bring their knowledge and practical experience. They are really focused on making our community thrive

and BHA being well run for us. We're there to say how everything they discuss affects us as tenants.

'None of us want rent rises or neighbour problems but they know complex matters like these also have to meet state and local regulations and there are financial considerations.'

Janice makes clear that board meetings are not the place for individual grievances. 'We can talk about concerning issues and we challenge policy and practice when needed, though we also praise good stuff when it happens.'

Being a resident board member does need real commitment, she adds. 'You have to set aside time to read and absorb board papers before a meeting to have an understanding of issues.'

'But the board really does listen to us and it discusses matters in a balanced way. Time spent in the meetings is always interesting and rewarding.'

DO YOU HAVE A STORY, PICTURE OR LETTER FOR US?

If you have a story, letter or picture for *Barnsbury News* email Lisa Thompson at Lisa@barnsbury.org or call 020 7704 2324. We edit contributions to fit a tight space. We do not publish personal attacks.