

Despite the virus: snowfall and then spring blooms!



Snowfall transformed Lockdown Islington last month.
Dot Gibson writes from her flat in Highbury View

It is Saturday and I am looking out of my window at Highbury Fields. It is lit by a watery, wintry sun and there are dozens of well-wrapped-up 'masked' people of all ages.

Winter scenery

They walk alone or with their 'bubble' or the dog, or push a pram. They run, cycle, play football with children or work out with their trainer. Some send the muzzled sound of their boxing gloves across the fields.

The scene reminds me of a Lowry painting – figures moving this way and that across the landscape, going about their own business but also united in time and place.

I have never been more pleased that I chose this flat 12 years ago. It was the window looking over Highbury Fields that decided me and I am never disappointed. The scene is constantly changing.

The trees are bare today and I can see the shape of the boughs. Later with the setting sun the branches take on a beautiful fairytale glow.

But what a difference a day makes! On Sunday it is snowing. The Fields are a playground for families snowballing and building snowmen. It is great to see the joy and to know that, despite the virus, soon the budding new season's green leaves will reveal themselves and the golden daffodils will brighten up everything.

A smiling face appears at the window. I am not only John's Mum, but his 'bubble'. He has cycled over from south London.

Maurice arrives with my biscuits from his shopping trip. I am so lucky – it is not just the scene through my window that keeps me happy, it is my family and my friends and neighbours here at Highbury View.

'ONE FOR THE BIRDS' DRAWING COMPETITION:

DEADLINE: 11 MARCH

We have a big pile of Amazon vouchers worth £10 each waiting for the best drawings of a bird (or birds) sent in by any of you talented artists aged 3-16.



Pick your own drawing materials (paint, pencil, crayon, pastel, chalks or even make a mosaic). We'll print the best pics in the next issue of *Barnsbury News* and display them in the window at 60 Morland Mews.

Email a photo or scan of your artwork, together with your name and phone number by **Thursday 11 March**. All emails to editor Dean McGlynn at dean@barnsbury.org

HOW TO CONTACT US

All our offices are staying closed until the Covid-19 risk is properly under control and the London vaccine roll-out is much more advanced.

Our staff remain hard at work, using online systems to run your services almost as normal.

To get in touch email us on info@barnsbury.org or call 020 7704 2324 between 9.30am-12pm and 2-5.30pm.

GET THE COVID JAB!

Getting the Covid-19 vaccine will help protect you and other people who come into contact with you. It may not stop you catching the virus, or getting it a second time, but should make you far less likely to be very ill or suffer for months, as many have. The vaccine is given in two doses, with the first making you better protected within two to three weeks.



The vaccine is free
and is your passport
to a safer world.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination

Mother-in-law's covid jab was a walk in the park, reports housing officer Graham Vine

Yesterday I took my 80-year-old mother in law to be vaccinated at Brimfield Street Health Centre in Caledonian road.

There was a safely distanced queue to reception. Inside within minutes, we were given a squirt of hand sanitiser and sent to a freshly sanitised seat. After a few minutes we went to another room for a short wait then onto a private area.

Here a very calm and patient woman checked June's medical history and told her she'd be getting the Oxford Astra vaccine. 'That's fine,' we said. It was over in a flash.

We next moved to another freshly sanitised area with a stopwatch set to go off in 15 minutes – and a card for June to return in 12 weeks.

We could have stayed longer but June was fine so we left. June has had no symptoms other than a slightly numb arm. Please do get your vaccine when it is offered. It's the only way out for all of us.

Holding the fort: caretakers and cleaners stay on duty



Spencer and Steve remain on duty

Steve and Spencer are keeping the caretaking service going so shared areas in and around our properties stay tidy and safe. Our cleaners are also on duty and disinfecting door handles and buzzers. Please do your bit too by making sure no one from your household makes a mess outside and that your rubbish and recycling are bagged or binned and only put out shortly before the council collects household waste.

EMERGENCY REPAIRS SERVICE ONLY

We are for now only able to carry out emergency repairs or work, like gas appliance checks, that is vital for your health and safety.

Please let us know if:

- + you or anyone else in your home is self-isolating
- + anyone in your home is showing symptoms of Covid-19 or has recently tested positive.

To report an emergency repair during normal office hours, please call us on ☎ **020 7704 2324**.

Outside office hours please report emergency repairs to the service run for us by ISHA on:

Mon-Thurs 5:30pm to 9:30am

☎ **0772 530 2389**

Weekends, 5:30pm on Friday to 9:30am on Monday

☎ **0300 131 7300**.

Smart safety for you and our emergency workers



In the ongoing effort we're all making to stop the virus spreading anyone working for us who needs to come into your home to sort out a repair problem will wear full protective gear. We expect you to make sure they can work safely while they're in your home by:

- *Keeping all the windows open to increase ventilation. This helps lower the risk of any virus levels present building up in the air.
- *Leaving all doors open to avoid their having to touch your door handles (exception: see below)
- *Send anyone not needed to help with or explain the problem outside or, if that is not safe or reasonable, into a different room. They should shut the door behind them and stay there until the workers have left.
- *Making sure anyone in the same room as our workers wears a mask unless they are aged under 5 or exempt for a medical or other good reason.
- *Keeping, as far as possible, two metres between yourself and our workers inside your home and outside.
- *Don't share with our workers any pens, pencils, or any other object, no matter how useful.

Thank you for helping out!

Find out more * barnsbury.org

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Tips for keeping warm without breaking into the piggy bank



- * Set the timer on your boiler so it starts heating your home at a lower temperature 30 minutes before you get up. This uses less gas than turning it on at a higher temperature when you get up.
- * Lag (wrap in a suitable material) your water pipes. Pre-cut foam lagging from DIY stores costs very little and keeps hot water pipes warm for longer. You'll use less gas and protect the pipes from freezing in very cold weather.
- * Cut out draughts by putting adhesive backed fabric or rubber strips around the edges of your doors and windows.
- * Close the doors to any rooms you are not heating.
- * Thermal blinds do a fine job of cutting out heat lost through windows. You can buy reasonably priced blinds online from a wide range of retailers, including Ikea.
- * Curtains lined with insulating material will make rooms warmer. Leave the curtains open when the sun is shining, but close them as soon as the sun goes.
- * Covering your window panes with cling film may cut out some heat loss. A sceptical *Barnsbury News* tried this and it seemed to make a little bit of difference.
- * Don't put your sofa (or curtains or a clothes airer) directly in front of a radiator. It stops the warm air circulating around the room.

Warm your home for less: free expert help from Green Doctors

Have you tried calling Green Doctors? This service, free to all our tenants, gives free expert help and advice on warming your home without costing the earth. Green Doctors can also tell you if you qualify for the warmer homes discount, which could save you £140 a year, and can help you apply for this government discount.

To book your free chat (by phone) with a Green Doctor call ☎ 0300 365003 or ✉ EgreendocorsLDN@groundwork.org.uk

Antisocial behaviour: what you said about how we've been handling your reports

In November we surveyed all of you who over the past year reported a problem with antisocial activities in your neighbourhood.

We wanted to know how you rated our response to your report. Most of you have told us you thought we dealt with the problem in a good or satisfactory way. But you also said we need to do a better job of keeping you updated

while we investigate a problem.

We have set up a focus group with the survey respondents to see how we can improve our handling of your reports of antisocial behaviour, making it more likely you will get a helpful outcome.

If you are interested in joining the focus group let us know. Email ✉ info@barnsbury.org or call us on ☎ 020 7704 2324.

CASH STRAPPED? HOW WE CAN HELP

We know many of you are worried about losing your job and, if it happens, how you'll pay the rent and other costs. If you do lose your job put in your claim for universal credit at once. Let us know too. We will back your claim and can help you apply.

Call our debt and welfare advice service to make an appointment with Priscilla for help and advice on welfare support, grants and other ways to cope with financial hardship.

☎ info@barnsbury.org or call Priscilla on ☎ 020 7704 2324

Are you on our call list? Regular wellbeing calls to check on residents

We are again calling some of you to check on your wellbeing and ask if you need any practical help or support during this lockdown.

If you would like to be added to our 'call list' please email us at ✉ info@barnsbury.org or call us on ☎ 020 7704 2324.

Helping hand if you are lonely or troubled

Help is at hand if you are lonely or troubled by stress, anxiety, grief or depression. **We Are Islington**, run by the council with local charities, may be able to help or it will direct you to an agency it thinks suitable. If you are 50 or older, Age UK may also be able to offer support.

WE ARE ISLINGTON ☎ 020 7527 8222

AGE UK ISLINGTON ☎ 020 7281 6018

Find out more * barnsbury.org

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PC: CHARLIE ROUND-TURNER



PC: DOT GIBSON



Dot Gibson took this lovely shot of the oak tree in the garden at Highbury View after the first snowfall in January

LOCAL HISTORY:

Highbury Terrace

Once more into Islington's archives with **Janice Walsh** from Barnsbury Street

Highbury Terrace is on the corner of Ronalds Road, bordering Highbury Fields. Highbury View straddles the corner of the two roads.

Seven Highbury parks

In 1874 the Metropolitan Board of Works complained to the Postmaster General about the inconvenience of there being 'no less than seven places called Highbury Park in the parish'.

Highbury appears on the 1735 map and the rate books of 1780. It had been part of the manor connecting it to Stoke Newington.

A Highbury manor house is recorded there as early as 1338. The terrace we now know was built by various builders between 1774 and 1829. By 1841 the terrace population was 171.

A lot of notable persons lived there including pioneer of the electric telegraph Sir Francis Ronalds, who gave his name to Ronalds Road.

MEET THE BOARD

Chris Bell

Chris is one of the two tenants on our board of management. We asked Chris to tell you a little bit about himself

How long have you been a BHA resident? Around 15 years.

Tell us one thing people don't know about you? I love swimming and am missing it due to this new lockdown.

What makes you proudest?

Being a father and having a great relationship with my children.

What is your favourite place?

I am going to be cheeky and name two: Canada and Thailand.

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be? Steamed fish with vegetables.

Why did you want to join the board?

I'd considered applying for a while and I went to a couple of meetings about the garages development. After those I felt I could contribute to the decision-making processes that affect all residents.



PC: CHARLIE ROUND-TURNER

How important is having residents on BHA's board? It is extremely important because BHA exists to provide services to residents at affordable costs. With us on board it helps bring a different perspective and can help make sure decisions are made with residents in mind.

How have you found it so far?

Good to date. I've found board members supportive and they have treated me as an equal. I get the feeling they do want to improve residents' homes and provide efficient effective services.

What do you hope to achieve as a board member?

I hope I'll help the board fulfil its purpose, ensuring residents play a key role in shaping services we get from BHA, that the voices of residents is listened to and we influence how BHA operates.

London Capital Credit Union: free, safe banking

Living in Islington gives you the right to open an account with Archway-based London Capital Credit Union. With so many high street banks now charging you to bank, credit unions offer free services if you want to save, take out a loan, budget for next Christmas, or get a credit card.

Find out more at www.credit-union.coop

Resident panel keeps our work under scrutiny

A new policy for letting garages and storage space on Morland Mews has been debated by the residents panel. This will also be discussed by the Morland Mews garages steering committee (see page 6).

The panel is also considering work we are doing on a new vision and set of values for Barnsbury HA and members attended a workshop run by Take Stock Exchange, the agency advising us on this work.

You can find notes from resident panel meetings in the window of 60 Morland Mews and on our website at www.barnsbury.org

Find out more * barnsbury.org

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Auld lang syne: into a new year with hopeful hearts

Into another year we warily venture, treading with hopeful heart, writes **Robin Don**. Though many have lost friends or family, the immortal words of Robert Burns once more give renewed hope to our troubled world

From Sydney to Stamford Hill, in tongues of many hues and through multi-coloured masks, as the first moments of 2021 rang out, Mother Earth became united once more.

Time travel

If only he could hear it now, I'd love to see the look on the face of that penniless poet who wrote those words. A farmhand in his 20s, it was a cold December day in 1788 when Burns sent a copy of his new song to the Scots Musical Museum.

Changes in hand: how we deal with service complaints

At the last board meeting our members formally adopted a new code for dealing with any complaints drawn up by the Independent Housing Ombudsman service.

We will now be expected to, among other things, deal with a complaint in just two stages.

We must tell the person who made a complaint what we are doing about it (even if little has changed) regularly and clearly.

We will also put one of our staff in charge of all complaints so there will be no confusion on your part about who to contact.

A lot of work is needed to get this right so we will be asking the residents panel, tenant board members and your tenants association to offer advice and a helpful 'critical eye'.

With his lyrics, he had added a modest note: 'The following song, an old song, of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript until I took it down from an old, old man.'

Some of the lyrics certainly seem to have been 'collected' from much earlier folk songs, rather than wholly composed by the poet.

Auld lang syne is a Scottish phrase that roughly translates as 'days gone by'. In this song we're saying how wrong it should be to forget old friends from days past.

Another important word is acquaintance. It's not a word we hear often even if we know the general meaning. An acquaintance is someone you know. Someone you don't know is a stranger.

When you get to know more about a stranger they become an acquaintance. If you learn more and

like them, they become a friend. Stranger ➡ acquaintance ➡ friend.

Taking just a minute to understand this rare word helps expand our vocabulary and gives us more ownership of the song. We're not just singing a word or phrase, it also has an important part in the song. It reminds and encourages us to approach all our fellow neighbours with a renewed hand of friendship.

Auld Lang Syne

First verse:

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
and auld lang syne*?

Chorus:

For auld lang syne, my jo,
for auld lang syne,
we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

Second verse:

And surely ye'll be your pint-stoup!
and surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,
for auld lang syne.

Fifth verse:

And there's a hand, my trusty fere!
and gie's a hand o' thine!
And we'll tak' a right gude-willie
waught, for auld lang syne.

HOUSING SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Temporary manager Asif steps in to provide vital housing support services



Asif Mahmood has since late December been covering the post of housing manager in place of Felicity Singh, who left us late last year.

Asif is handling all queries on tenancy matters until we appoint a successor to Felicity. He is working remotely but has been in touch with many of you by phone or email.

Along with advice and support on issues like debt and hardship, Asif is responsible for letting any empty homes and for dealing with reports of antisocial behaviour.

We are sure many of you will join us in wishing Felicity well in her new ventures. Felicity worked for Barnsbury HA for 16 years. Her role as our housing manager became absolutely critical over the past year, helping those of you hit hardest by the pandemic. We are grateful too to Asif, for stepping in to help out.

For tenancy-related queries, you can call Asif on ☎ 020 7704 2324 or email ✉ info@barnsbury.org

SAFE AS HOUSES: LEGIONELLA WARNING

Legionella is a bacteria that can cause the sometimes deadly **Legionnaire's Disease**. It thrives in warm water.

To make sure legionella doesn't affect your home:

- * **do not change the settings on your boiler or hot water system.** This should be set so the water heats to at least 60°C
- * **tell us if the water coming out of your hot water taps is not piping hot** after it has been running long enough to push out any cold water still in the pipes
- * **tell us if warm water is coming out of your cold water taps** instead of cold
- * **let us know if your tap water is discoloured or contains debris.**

If you have a shower:

- * **remove limescale from the showerhead at least every six months and disinfect it.** Soaking it in vinegar for up to 20 minutes should get rid of limescale.
- * **If you don't use the shower very often, flush water through it once a week.** Go out of the room after turning it on and wait two minutes before going back in to turn it off.



DOMESTIC ABUSE: NEED HELP NOW?

SOLACE IN ISLINGTON

LONDON FREEPHONE

☎ 0808 802 5565

If you need help because of domestic abuse, contact Solace in Islington for free, confidential support.

Solace helps men and women affected by domestic abuse.

Call ☎ 020 3795 5070
or email ✉ advocacy@solacewomensaid.org,
Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm.

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

DOWN ON MORLAND MEWS



All set and ready to go

Your new recycling bins are now all set up and hungry for bags full of materials to be recycled.

We hope this will lead to less waste being left around the estate.

A reminder that the council will empty the bins on Tuesday and Friday mornings.

NEWS OF
THE MEWS

Garages project: tenant steering committee

The tenant steering group overseeing the garage conversion works met for the first time in January. Their main priorities will be your safety during the building works, and minimising disruption to you and to our services for you.

Members of the group so far are Liam O'Dowd, Dean Holdsworth, Richard Bull, Daniel Gooding, Janice Walsh, Chris Bell and Martin Peck.

If you would like to get involved please email Dean (McGlynn) on dean@barnsbury.org

Pitch closed again

With the return to lockdown following the rapid rise in Covid infections, we have had no choice but to close the pitch again. Thornhill Primary is using the site occasionally for school sports but otherwise the gates will remain locked until it is safe to reopen.

Barnsbury
news



A huge thank you to Diane, Martin and Franck for your splendid suggestions for news and features for future issues of *Barnsbury News*. They've been a big help with this issue and our planning for the next ones.

If you would like to get involved with planning the newsletter, want to write a story for it, take photos or just share an opinion with other Barnsbury HA residents, please phone or email Dean.

Editor: Dean McGlynn

Send your contributions to email info@barnsbury.org,
16b Cloudesley Street, N1 0HU or call 020 7704 2324.

Find out more * barnsbury.org

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