

Farewell to a legend: Dickie Bull hangs up toolkit after 43 years

In late March senior caretaker Dickie Bull will get a warm send off into retirement after more than four decades of dedicated service for Barnsbury Housing Association tenants since he joined us in 1977



Above: Dickie and Jean get a 'civic duty' award from mayor Cllr Ismael (left), watched by reporter Lucas Cumiskey from award sponsor the *Islington Gazette*

Dickie will be a familiar face to most of you. He and Jean moved to Morland Mews when it was just two years old and he has long been active on the estate as a volunteer, going well beyond his daily work responsibilities.

For the past 20 years Dickie has led our caretaking team, whose service got a massive 97% approval rating in the last survey of all your views.

And, of course, each year Dickie has famously given his golden tonsils a workout at the summer fun day (and given Tom Jones a run for his money).

'We hope Dickie isn't planning to hang up his microphone yet,' said chief executive Susan French. 'We'll miss his phenomenal memory of all things Morland Mews so we're glad he and Jean aren't moving off the estate.'

Coronavirus: new safety measures for all our safety

On the centre pages we have reproduced some of the sensible advice from the NHS to try to help stop coronavirus spreading.

On page 4 you'll find a new competition for younger tenants that we hope will be a useful (non-scary) reminder to them too.

Preventive safety moves

We are not aware of any of you so far affected personally by the virus but numbers in the UK are rising steeply. So we are stepping up preventive measures.

- * For the time being we are **closing the shared rooms at Highbury View and Morland Mews**, suspending regular events like bingo and keep fit.
- * Bookings of the **Highbury View guest room** are cancelled.
- * We are bringing forward the yearly **gas safety checks** so if we are not able to do them to the usual timetable all your homes will still be certified safe.
- * We **have closed our office** and the **Morland Mews caretakers' office** to visitors. You can still contact staff by phone or email.
- * We are, with our contractors, planning an **emergency repairs service** in case the situation gets much worse.

For the latest news on the coronavirus, see our website at barnsbury.org

Coronavirus:

CATCH IT, BIN IT, AND TOGETHER WE'LL STOP IT

The virus is passed on easily via tiny droplets so the short advice is to catch coughs and sneezes with a tissue, bin the used tissue and wash your hands as often as you can.

* Never touch your mouth, nose or eyes without first washing your hands properly with soap and warm water or, if you're out and about, by using sanitising gel.

* Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds after you touch any surface, when you get to work, school or home, and before handling food.

* Always have tissues on you. If you feel a sneeze or cough coming on, block your nose or mouth with a clean tissue or use your sleeve. Don't try to block it with your hands.

* Put your used tissues in the bin. Don't leave them lying about in your house, at work or school or any place where someone else might have to touch them.



MORE ADVICE AT
www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/
barnsbury.org

* If you think you may have picked up the virus, even if you have no symptoms, the smart advice is to keep away from other people for at least 14 days.

Council planners give the go-ahead for Morland Mews garage conversions

We will shortly start consulting those of you who live on Morland Mews over how best to plan the work of converting 35 garages to make sure it causes the least inconvenience to those of you living close by

Islington's planning committee in January unanimously approved our application to convert more of the garages at Morland Mews into ground-level access flats.

Existing estate tenants will be first in the queue for the new flats once they are complete.

We will also be building a new community room and a new office for our caretakers and we'll be investing £35,000 in estate-wide improvements agreed with residents.

Divided views

'We know there are very strong feelings about the garage conversions, both for and against,' said chief executive Susan French.

'It is a tribute to all of you that you feel so passionately about your neighbourhood. We hope you will continue to hold us accountable and call us out if you think we get things wrong.'

'Equally, we hope we can put to rest fears about these plans and hope you will all take a front seat in discussions about how

best to plan the work.

'We'll be asking, for example, do we go for speed - getting it all done in one swoop - or should we phase the works?'

What comes next

Our plan is to start the building works in spring 2021. In the run-up we have begun upgrading rubbish and recycling facilities (see right). We are also trying to improve the estate's biodiversity.

Other ideas for improvements we want to make at Morland Mews will include:

- * better lighting and security
- * upgrading the play and sports areas and the park
- * more bee-friendly plants and new planters, hanging baskets and green walls, plus two new trees and bat boxes
- * new charging points for electric buggies and scooters and, for the first time, some bicycle racks
- * better and fairer parking, garage and storage policies.

No excuses for litter bugs: new bins and recycling for Morland Mews

We're pleased to report that residents agree with our plans for new rubbish and recycling facilities at Morland Mews.

No more abandoned bags

As part of our wider plans for the estate we'll be turning four garages at the centre of the estate into new recycling, bulk refuse and bin stores.



Above: a mock-up of some of the new bins by the BHA TRA

We'll also upgrade and shift the bins that now block the path by the play and sports areas and give them a shrubby surround (above) to leave the path clear and make the bins look nicer.

Morland Mews has long had a problem with dumped furniture, rubbish and recycling bags. We hope this is the answer.

For more on the new facilities see barnsbury.org

Report on latest discussions with the residents' panel

Mutual repair responsibilities, changes to the caretaking service, fire safety, antisocial behaviour, power bills and domestic abuse were all on the agenda at our latest meeting with your residents' panel.

Up for discussion

The main talking points included:

caretaking: Dickie Bull's retirement and other changes have prompted a review of the service, with the panel given a range of options to consider. Lots of you have commented lately on better estate services at Morland Mews and we want to make sure these get even better.

fire safety: Recent fires in some new and refurbished buildings are grim reminders of what can happen when corners are cut

and expertise ignored. The panel discussed the expert advice of our health and safety adviser who has called for zero-tolerance of items left in shared areas.

antisocial behaviour: We all want a sensible response to a problem on the rise. It was agreed young people and older family members should take part in our future talks on solutions.

Full minutes of the meeting can be downloaded from our website at barnsbury.org

The residents panel was set up last year in response to comments made to staff and board members on a doorstep 'meet and greet'. You wanted more influence over services and policies. The panel now does that.

Your welfare: service brought in-house

From the end of March you'll be able to get welfare advice from us direct, through housing assistant Priscilla Adjei-Asante. Priscilla has for several months been working with Clare from St Mungos, helping those of you with benefits issues.

She'll be able to deal with most matters, from making a claim to supporting a review. If you'd prefer independent advice or have a very complex query we can refer you to **Help on Your Doorstep** or the CAB.

St Mungos are having to divert all their advice services to help their own clients. It is sad for us as Clare Hughes-Cross has helped so many of you and will be sorely missed.

To make an appointment to see Priscilla, email info@barnsbury.org or call Priscilla or Felicity on 020 7704 2324

New style newsletter brings news more often

Congratulations to John Gooding, who came up with *Barnsbury News*, the top choice for title of your new bi-monthly newsletter in a poll of *News of the Mews* readers.

Barnsbury News is not here to be our 'mouthpiece'. We want your opinions and letters in it too and will be offering a regular spot to tenants and tenant groups.

We may use our right to reply on some topics but we have no intention of closing down debate.

See top of page four for how to contribute to *Barnsbury Mews*.

ABOUT BARNSBURY *News*

Editor

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To contact us or contribute

Write to 16b Cloudesley Street,
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or call ☎ 020 7704 2324.

Editorial rules

If you or a group of you would like to write an opinion piece or share good news (or bad!) or just ask what others think, send it in. We'd also love photos or pictures. Please send as large jpg files.

Will we edit your contributions or print them word for word?

With only four pages we may have to do light-touch editing but will run the edited piece past the author/s before going to print. *We will not print anything cruel, libellous or defamatory.*



Barnsbury News has replaced *News of the Mews* but we haven't completely done away with NotM. NotM was born on Morland Mews, where many of you still have very fond memories of the older paper. So future issues of *Barnsbury News* will run a column for news that's just for Morland Mews residents.

Temporary caretaker to stay in post over April



Spencer Benoit, pictured, who works for our main contractor, Westbourne, has been helping us as a temporary caretaker since December.

Many of you have praised Spencer's hard work and his personable approach and we've had many other compliments about his work on the estate. Spencer will now be staying in post at least until the end of April.

We are working on a new set up for the caretaking service in light of the retirement of senior caretaker Dickie Bull later this month. Our aim is a seamless handover and to keep your caretaking standards to the same very high level.

Breaking: Steve Woodgates taking on new role as our estate handyman

As we went to press, news came that gas safety engineer **Steve Woodgates** has been appointed as successor to Dickie Bull.

Already in post

Steve will have started work with us already, having first signed in on Monday 16 March to make sure of a smooth handover of duties from Dickie.

He will be a familiar face to many of you, being one of the few people who can rightly claim to have been in every Barnsbury HA home over the past two years to do the annual gas safety inspection.



BoilerCare, the firm owned by Steve, and his father before him, has done our heating and gas safety works for many years.

Steve is held in very high regard for both his high work standards and courteous, friendly manner.

Steve will continue to do our gas safety checks, which must be done every year by law. (See also coronavirus news, page 1).

JUNIOR CORNER

POSTER COMPETITION

for children only



We know a lot of you are very talented artists. The cards you made for our birthday a couple of years ago were lovely.

But can any of you design a poster that explains some very important information? **Coronavirus is a new virus making some people very ill and it spreads easily.** On pages 3 and 4 we have printed advice experts are giving out to help people avoid catching this bug.

Could you draw a poster that illustrates the best ways to not pass on bugs to other people? Do your own research then decide how you'd explain this to other people, on a poster.

We'll put our favourite posters up in all our buildings, and we'll send the designer of the best a £20 voucher to spend at Amazon. Ask your parent or carer to find out more from Dean at dean@barnsbury.org