

WE CAN MAKE LIFE BETTER



Secure home, enough to get by, peace of mind - oh, and free ice cream

Can't lure you to a resident forum or meeting by dangling an agenda under your nose? Patrick Penny-Annang tried a novel tactic in August. And... result! A promise of **free ice cream** got the youth vote out in Morland Mews, Milner Square and Highbury View. Clearly one to roll out again.



PICT: PATRICK PENNY-ANNANG

Slushies and ice cream for one happy family. Mr Sher's van will be back in spring!



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8 New to the team: meet new engagement and communications manager Patrick Penny-Annang



Go online: we'll get you the equipment

At Gissing Walk, 10-year-old Charlie now has a refurbished laptop to do his school work.

Laptops and tablets have been a 'must-have' for home-learning over the past year so Charlie won't be stuck if home-learning is needed again.



All smiles: Charlie shows off his new laptop

Mum Sandra said: 'Charlie is so pleased and it will certainly make our life easier.'

With so many services now only available online we know how vital it is to have the right equipment. See right for who to contact at Barnsbury HA if you need a laptop or tablet for your home.

Fun day ruled out by Covid's Delta variant

Our hope of reviving the annual fun day this year was dashed by Covid's Delta variant. We have instead been out talking to those of you we meet about a Covid-safe alternative.

Safe alternative wanted

One suggestion so far has been staging an outdoor cinema, weather allowing. If any of you have a smart idea (or more) for a Covid-safe way to have some fun together please let us know. Email Patrick at patrick@barnsbury.org or call 07926 130 067 during normal office hours.

Hard times ahead: we're here to help you through the worst

Covid is showing no sign that it plans to go quietly but many of the measures that have helped us cope with the **economic impact** are coming to an end. Please let us know if you are struggling. We can help you

Furlough funding ends this month, and it seems likely some jobs will go. For anyone getting **universal credit**, the £20 temporary top-up also looks set to stop next month.

There's no point trying to put a gloss on it. Both will cause problems so contact Asif or Priscilla if you have money worries. We are here to help.

GRANTS FOR ESSENTIAL FURNITURE OR WHITE GOODS: OPEN TO ALL BHA RESIDENTS

Our hardship fund can pay to repair or replace essential household items like a broken **cooker** or **washing machine**. We may even be able to help with a **top-up fuel** payment. Asif or Priscilla can tell you if you qualify for a grant from our fund. To get in touch, call 020 7704 2324 or email info@barnsbury.org

FREE, CONFIDENTIAL EXPERT SUPPORT AND ADVICE

Any of you can get **free expert help and advice** from Life & Progress any time, day or night. The service covers a broad range including:

- * financial and debt advice
- * mental health support
- * relationships and family matters
- * workplace issues
- * consumer rights.

See the advert below for details.

LAPTOPS AND TABLETS:

More people than ever now bank and shop online and use the internet to work or study and stay in touch with friends and family. But you need the right tools. We can help. Email Patrick Penny-Annang at patrick@barnsbury.org or call Patrick during office hours on 07926 130 067.



Free help and advice
24/7

Life & Progress: free tenant support and wellbeing service

Life & Progress gives confidential help with a huge range of problems such as isolation, grieving, depression, being a parent or caring for an older relative, coping with a disability, legal or financial matters and more.

Free online or over the phone help for you 24-hours a day, seven days a week.



Call Life & Progress direct on freephone 0330 094 8845 or go to www.barnsbury.org and click on resident support. A link will give you the username and password you'll need to log in.

COMING UP LAVENDER, LILIES, HYDRANGEAS...

You're all winners!

Two months ago Janice from Barnsbury Street and new engagement and communications manager Patrick went out and about to decide the winners of our first gardening competition. Patrick reports below

Being new in the post I was eager to walk around to see all of our homes and Janice kindly showed me around. I was impressed by the lovely gardens, balconies and patio gardens. It's clear that many of you have green-fingers and have worked hard on your gardens.

Picking our competition winners was tough but we finally narrowed them down. See pictures below and right for the winners, and some runners-up, in each category.

Walking around Morland Mews I met Franck who told me about the work he has done there. It is nice to

hear about residents making their area look nicer for everyone. I asked what he needed to keep going, and he said topsoil. Franck also gets a one-year membership of the Royal Horticultural Society as his efforts benefit everyone on Morland Mews.

I will be giving out well-deserved garden vouchers so will be in touch with some of you directly by phone or email. The full list of winners will be on the website. If you are a keen gardener or are interested in getting into gardening, we would like to hear from you. Email patrick@barnsbury.org or call me on 07926 130 067.

Best in containers



Best window box



Most exotic plants



Most bee/bird friendly



Pictured anti-clockwise from left: 1 Best display of exotic plants ✿ 2 Most bird/bee friendly garden ✿ 3 Best small patio garden ✿ 4 Runner up for container garden ✿ 5, 6 Franck's hidden balcony garden ✿ 7 Best window box ✿ 8 Runner up for window box ✿ 9 Best container garden

Best small patio



Angel Shed: drama, dance and music from age 5 to 19

Angel Shed is just the ticket if you're aged five to 19 and keen on drama, dance or music - or all three. Joining the performing arts group is free to those who can't afford to pay. If you have siblings they'll get a discount.

If you're interested, or know a youngster who might be, go to the Angel Shed website at angelshedtheatre.org.uk/

CHILDREN'S THEATRE

YOUTH THEATRE

DANCE COMPANY

MUSIC COLLECTIVE

Tribute to a local star: a street cat named Bob



Tribute to handsome Bob

In August ward councillor Rowena Champion unveiled a statue of street cat Bob. Handsome Bob was found injured 14 years ago by *Big Issue* seller and busker James Bowan. With help from the Blue Cross, Bowan nursed him back to health and the pair became inseparable. Bowen wrote several books about their life, one of which was turned into a film. Don't forget to give Bob a gentle pat if you're passing Islington Green.

Get into dance: get your £3 tickets for Sadlers Wells shows!



Everyone gets to join in at the Fun Palace at Sadlers Wells

Get into Dance 'cut-price tickets' at Sadlers Wells Theatre are back, with audiences running at full capacity. If you are already a member just book direct from the ticket office. Tickets cost £3 each. As members you can book up to four for each performance, buying up to 16 tickets in any one year.

To join, you'll need to be referred. As an official partner we can do that for you. Just email patrick@barnsbury.org



Sign up for community story-telling: autumn meetings for all workshops

The summer issue of *Barnsbury News* led with a story about community 'storytellers' take stock exchange. We've delayed the timing of their workshops so we can get as many of you on board as possible.

New year, new start

Our hope is this will help us start the new year on a fresh foot, putting the last two years well behind us.

Community storytelling is a way of drawing on the lives of real people to write a vivid story about their neighbourhood, how and why people came to live there and what unites and divides the community.

take stock exchange is setting up small groups so you can share as little or as much as you want. All your stories count because the Barnsbury HA story is about all your lives.

The workshops will be clustered so you have something in common with the other people in your group, such as bringing up young kids, your age group, or maybe working in one of our vital local services.

If take stock exchange hasn't been in touch with you and you fancy taking part, please email patrick@barnsbury.org or call Anna at TSX on 07854 423 991.

WHAT WE ARE DOING ABOUT...

Keeping you safe from abuse in your own home

If you don't feel safe at home and the cause is a person living with or visiting you, invited or not, we can help

The new **Domestic Abuse Act** has for the first time defined in law the sort of behaviour now officially recognised as domestic abuse.

What counts as abuse

The law makes clear that domestic abuse isn't just physical violence. Also illegal is abusive or controlling behaviour like deciding when you go out and when, and emotional abuse.

Domestic violence is sadly not rare. In the UK one woman is killed every three days by a current or former partner. Some men too experience domestic abuse.

We can help. We have trained our staff and contractors to spot signs of domestic abuse. And we have a new policy to make sure we do our bit to have the new law enforced.

It is very hard for anyone to ask for help if they are being abused by someone they love or trusted. Too often they are made to believe it is their fault. It is not and saying it is qualifies as emotional abuse.

Please don't wait. Any of our staff or contractors will help if you are being abused. Our first priority is your safety. Anything you tell us will be kept confidential and shared only on a 'need to know' basis. We will be sensitive, we will be sympathetic and, above all, we will help.

IF YOU ARE IN DANGER NOW CALL THE POLICE

999

IN LOVING MEMORY OF PAMELA SEDGWICK

We are really sad to announce that **Pam Sedgwick**, our operations director until earlier this year, has passed away from cancer aged 58.

Barnsbury Housing Association chief executive Susan French said: 'Pam joined BHA in 2018 and made a big impact from the start.

'She helped professionalise how we work and was a strong advocate for tenants, making sure everyone was treated fairly and challenging us to always improve. She will be greatly missed.'

Pam was also a passionate advocate of safe spaces for women, informed by her years of working with vulnerable women in hostels and supported housing.



Pam: caring and principled

If you would like to donate to **Sarcoma UK** or leave a tribute to Pam, you can find a link at <https://www.funeralguide.co.uk/obituaries/91883>

WHICH WAY TO TURN

CONTACTING OUR STAFF

Contact housing manager Asif Mahmood at Asif@barnsbury.org or housing assistant Priscilla Adjei-Assante at Priscilla@barnsbury.org or call Asif or Priscilla on 020 7704 2324, option 2.

SPECIALIST SERVICES

If you do not want to tell us, there are other ways to get help.

National Domestic Abuse helpline 0808 2000 247

Solace (advocacy and support service) is based in Islington. 0808 802 5565.



DOWNLOAD THE APP

Bright Sky is an app for anyone going through domestic abuse. You can download the app for free, if you think it is safe for you to do so. The app works on a mobile or computer. It comes in several languages, lists support services across the UK and gives advice on how to stay safe.

DOMESTIC ABUSE: NEED HELP NOW?

SOLACE IN ISLINGTON
CALL THE LONDON FREEPHONE

0808 802 5565

If you need help call **Solace in Islington** for free, confidential support. Solace helps men and women. 020 3795 5070 or advocacy@solacewomensaid.org, Mon to Fri, 9am to 5pm.

AROUND THE HOUSES: ESTATE SERVICES

Estate walkabouts tackling problems large and niggling

We've now done our first few **estate walkabouts** at Lofting Road, Pugin Court, Barnsbury Street, Liverpool Road, Milner Square and Upper Street. And by the time *Barnsbury News* comes out Morland Mews and Gissing Walk will have been added to the list

Estate walkabouts are new to us, though tried and tested elsewhere.



Walkabout: Viv takes the lead

The idea is our staff go out and about your neighbourhoods, ideally with some of you to point out any things we might miss.

This way we see first hand what needs to be done or improved and we also get to meet many of you in person - the bit we like best!

We are posting dates of all coming walkabouts on our website and any of you are welcome to join us.

You can find on our website lists of all the things we spotted on the first walkabouts and there'll be more as the walkabouts continue.

Do get in touch if we missed anything on your road or estate or if you want to tell us about something new that's come up. See right for how to get in touch.

Rubbish mountain

Caretaker Spencer is spending far too many of his work hours picking up household items unlawfully dumped on your estates. And it is leaving him short of time to do the very job we employ Spencer to do.

Flytippers will be reported

This is a serious problem. Dumped items attract rats and other vermin, are a fire risk and an all-round safety hazard. If you spot someone dumping furniture or anything else please tell us. Fly-tipping is against the law. Anyone we catch fly-tipping will be reported to the council and may be fined.

To get bulky items taken away, please call Islington Council on 020 7527 2000 or go to www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/large-items/bulky-waste/ordering-a-collection-online



LOOK FAMILIAR? Whoever dumped these should have asked the council for a household bulky waste collection.

Estate services now have their own champion



New face: Marius

New estate services officer **Marius Gradinaru** started at Barnsbury HA on 1 September. Marius, pictured above, will now be making sure all your estate services like cleaning and repairs are done to the high standards you expect.

We'll let Marius tell you in the next issue of *Barnsbury News* what skills and know-how he brings to the job and how well he's settling in.

If you want to report a problem on your estate or discuss an idea for improving something, email us at info@barnsbury.org or leave a message on 020 7704 2324

Gas safety checks: two-month warning

We'll be making appointments for your annual gas safety check two months before we visit next year to make it easier for you to be at home when we call.

Please let us know as soon as you get the notification letter if you can't make the date we've given. That way we can agree a new date that suits you.

During the visit your boiler and all gas-fired appliances will be checked to make sure there is no risk of a gas leak or explosion. The inspection has to be done by law because a faulty gas appliance can kill.

Our contractors follow Covid-safe working practices. If you are worried about infection, let us know so we can organise the works in the safest possible way.

Money struggles: new way to pay rent, dealing with arrears, TV licence and help with fuel bills

New safe and easy way to pay your rent

We have an easy new way for you to pay your rent safely by phone. Just have your bank card to hand and call us during office hours on 020 7704 2324, option two.

You can also pay your rent online via our website or by standing order with your bank.

Keeping on top of the rent

All of you should recently have had your quarterly rent statement arrive through the post.

If you are one of those whose rent account is now in the red please call us. We can help and it is much easier to get to grips with a problem if you act early, before it gets badly out of hand.

A gentle reminder that if you are not paying your rent on time you are breaking your tenancy agreement.

TV licences no longer free for all people aged over 75

If you are 75 or over and neither you nor a partner living with you get pension credit you will now need to pay for your TV licence. If you already have a licence, please keep on top of your payments.

Facing higher fuel bills?

If you need extra support to help pay your fuel bills, energy regulator Ofgem has a new rule that says all energy suppliers must now offer their customers emergency credit or agree a repayment plan.

If you are having trouble affording your bills contact your supplier. Some of the bigger firms now also offer grants, even if you're not a customer. They include: British Gas Energy Trust, EDF Energy Trust and E.on Energy Fund.

Fire safety: checks, balances and the rules

No one who has witnessed a house fire or visited the burnt out shell of a home forgets it. Fire can spread at terrifying speed and sends out thick, choking smoke. So we take your safety seriously.

Inspecting buildings for fire safety risks



Over the past few weeks our surveyors have been out looking for even a small flaw in a building that could help smoke and flames to spread if a fire broke out.

The inspectors have looked to see that fire-safe doors are properly fitted and have checked for gaps or holes in the structure that could help feed a fire. They have also checked exit routes for anything that might slow down escape.

The inspections will be repeated every year in our homes at Morland Mews, Lofting Road, Gissing Walk, Pugin Court, Ronalds Road, Highbury View, Milner Square,

Barnsbury Street and Upper Street.

Checks will also be done on fire safety in our newer homes but as all have been built to a higher modern building standard the checks need not be quite as extensive.

Fire safety policy

A new policy on fire safety in your homes will be put before our board members for approval this month. It is one of a series of strong new policies we are working on to protect your health, safety and wellbeing.

We are also expecting new laws and regulations on fire safety once the Grenfell Tower inquiry completes. We believe our policy covers all likely changes but it will be updated as and when guidelines change.



GREEN DOCTORS CAN HELP CUT THE COST OF HEATING

Trees are starting to put on their autumn best and the mornings are getting chillier. For many of you, that means the dreaded prospect of higher heating bills.

So if you haven't already used our free **Green Doctors** service, call them now to avoid another winter worrying about costs.

Green Doctors could save you precious pennies, give advice on energy saving and maybe even secure you a grant or discount.

Green Doctors is free for all Barnsbury HA tenants. To book a chat with Green Doctors call 0300 365 00 03 or email greendocorsLDN@groundwork.org.uk

MEET THE BARNSBURY HA TEAM

NEW ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

PATRICK PENNY-ANNANG



Tell us about the new job Patrick!

A big part of it will be listening and talking to residents.

You should all have a say

in how your services are run and shaped. I am here to work with you and my colleagues to make this happen. I'll also be managing the Morland Mews garage project.

And a bit about yourself?

Aside from loving my work, I love food and consider myself a food and fitness enthusiast. In August I took part in a half-marathon supporting the charity Family Fund and later the 24 Peaks challenge with former BHA staffer Dean (see above!), climbing 24 of the Lake District peaks over two days to raise money for mental health charity Mind and Harry's Pals.

I hear you have a personal debt to social housing?

I was born and raised in Islington and without social housing could not afford to live in this lovely borough.

What made you want to work for Barnsbury Housing Association?

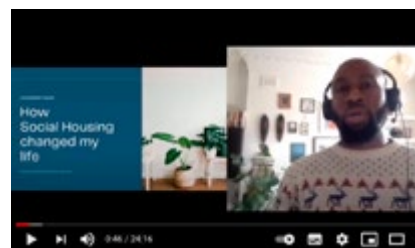
Volunteering for Age UK Islington opened my eyes to working with people. This job means working in the same community I live in. I'm keen to do my part to build up a relationship of trust with all of you. And I love that Barnsbury HA is finding innovative ways to build more affordable homes in Islington.

What are you most proud of?

Over the past four years I've helped share out £150,000 to households across north and east London. It has paid for essential household items and food during the pandemic and has meant people being able to live well and be their best.

I hear you are passionate about good mental health

I have spoken openly about my mental health at social housing events. Some are on YouTube. I never imagined I would share my experience of recovering from poor mental health but I'm really happy to do it. One in four of us will have a mental health problem at some point



in our life. It could be your family, a friend, a colleague or a neighbour. No one should feel alone when it happens and sharing our experience will help remove the stigma.

What is your hope for the future?

Through discussions with all of you I hope to channel our energy in the right direction and raise satisfaction with our services. It is so important that none of you feel ignored and that when and if you need support you get it. I'm looking forward to having a part to play in this.

HAVE YOUR SAY WITH THE BARNSBURY FORUM

WOULD YOU READ IT ☒

IS IT INTERESTING ☒

DOES IT MAKE SENSE ☒

Would you like to help plan and write *Barnsbury News*? How about taking part in **surveys**? If you have the time, could you read **our policy guides** to check they are clear and helpful? If you have other ideas for sharing news and views, we'd love to hear them.

Email us at info@barnsbury.org or call ☎ 020 7704 2324.

IS ANY PART OF YOUR HOME BROKEN OR FAULTY?

If your home needs a repair and you haven't reported it please get in touch with us.

To report any repair during normal office hours, you can call us on ☎ 020 7704 2324.

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

Mon-Thurs 5:30pm to 9:30am
☎ 0772 530 2389

Weekends, 5:30pm on Friday to 9:30am on Monday
☎ 0300 131 7300.

AGE UK: LET'S GET BACK TOGETHER!



MON 4 TO FRI 8 OCTOBER

Love a get-together?

Maybe enjoy the arts?

Had it with lockdown?

AgeUK has a week of fun, free activities coming up across Islington and even a three-course lunch for £1 at St Lukes on Thursday.

www.ageuk.org.uk/islington
Or call ☎ 020 7281 6018