

Funday bounces back

BACK IN BUSINESS AFTER TWO-YEAR BREAK

More than 200 of you, and other familiar faces, turned up for the **44th Barnsbury funday** in early September. These great pics are proof a grand time was had by all. *More on page two*



© CHARLIE ROUND-TURNER

INSIDE THIS ISSUE YOU'LL FIND ...

2 Call for changes to Morland Mews top site * more funday pics!

3 Cost of living crisis: who can help *you* and aid the government has promised

4 TRA chair Liam O'Dowd resigns * report on the resident panel's discussions * making your homes cheaper to heat



5 Lots of ways to keep fit or get fit, free in Islington. And book now for Xmas panto!

6 Flytipping neighbours now getting fined * new recycling bins * reporting gas leaks

7 Meet the team: Chelsey Simner * help with rising costs, now on offer to any Barnsbury HA tenant

8 Some of the perks we can offer if you move to a smaller home



And a spot of serious business as guests get their say on Morland Mews upgrades

While younger tenants buckled down to the hard work of having fun, older residents gave their views on how bits of the estate could be improved



Plans are underway to improve the topsite for everyone. The latest proposals were on show at the funday. Earlier versions of these have also been scrutinised by the resident panel and by guests at the Jubilee Big Lunch.

Call for new activity space

Feedback from these efforts and from the July focus group showed strong support among locals for a new 'space' at the topsite for community activities.

Copies of the consultation along with a survey will be going out to all Morland Mews tenants this month.



Along with giant inflatables, the Tea Cup Ride, Rodeo Bull and Hackney Massage, fish and chips and crêpes were dished up by professional caterers. Housing manager Asif says he has had great feedback, with special praise especially for the fish and chips, therapeutic massage and organisation.

How to get help during the cost of living crisis

Many of you were **struggling with bills** even before costs began spiralling late last year. We know the situation is worse if you are disabled or living with chronic ill health

If you are in hardship and need help, please ask us. If we cannot help you we will find someone who can.

The government has also offered some support (see *below*) and we hope more will be forthcoming as the colder winter months approach.

At Barnsbury HA we have set aside a pot of money to help **any of you** going through a rough patch (see also page 7). We also work closely with Islington Council and with specialist agencies so please talk to us. **We can help.**

TURN TO PAGE 7 FOR MORE ON HOW WE CAN HELP YOU

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS PROMISED

New cap on power charges

We expect you will have heard new prime minister Liz Truss' price cap pledge on energy bills. But the £2500 upper limit reported by most news outlets is more soundbite than cap.

What the government is doing is capping how much power suppliers can raise their standing charges and unit prices, for this year and the next.

There is no upper cap so the more gas and electricity you use the more you will pay. That is not capped.

You do not need to do anything to get the lower prices. Your supplier will do the calculations for you.

If you are locked into a **fixed rate deal** it is expected that these too will be made cheaper.

What we're doing to make your homes cheaper to heat, see page 4

Find out more at moneysavingexpert.com

Money off power bills

Each UK household will get a **£400 grant** to help cover your energy costs (power bills). You do not need to do anything to claim this grant.

How it will be paid

If you have a **pre-paid meter** you will most likely be sent a voucher.

If you are billed monthly or quarterly your energy supplier will apply it to your bills in monthly chunks. So £66 will be cut from your bill in October and November and £67 each month from December to March next year.

If you get disability benefits, you will get an extra £150 on top.

One-off cost-of-living payment for poorest

Some households will also get a **£650 one-off payment**.

This payment will go to people getting means-tested benefits.

- * If you are eligible you should have had a payment of **£326** in July. This month you should get a second payment of **£324**.
- * If you get **child tax credit** or **working tax credit** only, you will get your first payment in autumn.

Do you qualify for this payment?

You should if you get one of these means-tested benefits: universal credit, income-based jobseekers allowance, income-related employment and support allowance, income support, working tax credit, child tax credit and pension credit.

SMALL GESTURES CAN MAKE A BIG IMPACT

Poverty is frightening - being unable to support yourself or your family can feel shameful. And it is isolating. So if you think someone is struggling why not ask: 'How are you really doing?'

Of course there are many causes for distress but your small gesture could make a big difference to someone else.

As one of you wisely commented last year: *Just a friendly nod and a "hello!"*. It could be a life-saver.

Do you have a power bill you can't pay?

Have you asked us for help?

We may be able to give you an energy voucher to help cover your costs. The vouchers can be used whether you have a pre-paid meter or you pay your power supplier direct.

Can your power supplier help?

Most of the big energy companies offer help with bills. This help is open to anyone, even if you aren't a customer of that company. For example, British Gas has its **energy support fund**.

For a list of energy companies that offer grants or schemes, and how to apply, go to <https://tinyurl.com/energygrants2022>



IF YOU HAVE INFORMATION OR A GREAT NEW IDEA THAT MIGHT HELP OTHERS PLEASE SHARE IT WITH US!

patrick@barnsbury.org



TENANTS & RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Distinguished service: Liam O'Dowd resigns after five years as TRA chair

After three years of Covid, I feel it's time to raise the Tenants & Residents Association from its sleep, writes **Liam O'Dowd**

* edited version *

Prior to the pandemic our focus was on the Morland Mews garages redevelopment. But the planning application, passed by the LBI Planning Committee, left many of us feeling it was now out of our control.

Communication gap

BHA has tried to keep a dialogue going with us but the BHA-installed residents panel and garages steering committee have lacked numbers at times and have had neither clear direction nor a timetable.

Restrictively wide-ranging agendas leave little time for discussion, particularly on policies which may have a more wide-ranging effect on all of us. I've been to meetings of

both, and they are fairly sterile and BHA has only sporadically reported on either.

I have decided to stand down as TRA chair so will be calling a general meeting so a new chair and officers can be elected. Please give thought to putting your name forward for the committee, putting some of your spare time to good use representing residents.

Thank you for your support during my time as chair. I apologise for any short-comings on my part but hope you agree I have always had your best interests at heart. I hope one of you can take us further in the future.

Liam O'Dowd
Morland Mews

Climate change, garages project and changing policies: residents panel call for updates, rethinks and more clarity

Liam's letter (*above*) is a timely prod for us to do better at reporting on the residents panel and garages steering committee. These are matters raised at recent panel meetings. Minutes of these meetings are on our website.

Action on our carbon footprint

Susan French reported to both meetings. 'The focus will first be on making buildings well-insulated to prevent heat loss,' she said. At the April meeting Liam and Rachel asked if solar panels were an option. Susan said moving onto 'renewables' would follow once the buildings had been made more energy efficient.

Morland Mews garages redevelopment and top site

Patrick reported on consultation with tenants and a survey (see page 2).

At the resident's panel Janice queried the loss of play space on the top site. Rachel noted that the 5-a-side pitch is already bigger than most and Barnard Park has extra pitches.



Independent chair for residents panel

In July the panel agreed to former board member Nancy Korman becoming independent panel chair.

New and updated policies

The panel made observations on new and updated policies presented by Viv Astall on pets, adult and child safeguarding, tenant compensation, and hoarding. The policies are still to be decided so we will tell you more once the details have been finalised.

Making homes cheaper to heat is a win-win

In June our board approved a new strategy that will cut the cost to many of you of keeping your home warm.

Strategy is a win-win

Better insulated homes will mean a big cut in fuel used to heat and power your homes, which now generates 97% of our total carbon footprint.

'We are preparing a bid for funding from the government to pay for this,' said chief executive Susan French. 'It won't be cheap but it's a problem we can't ignore. Already some of you tell us the choice is heating or eating.'

High on our list will be the hardest homes to heat. But we also hope to add energy efficiency measures when doing planned works like fitting a new boiler or kitchen.

A lot of work will be needed, much of it dirty and noisy. In some homes the work will be very disruptive. So you and we need to agree how best to get it done. We'll be holding a public meeting in October. See details bottom right.

Can you put pennies aside for a rainy day

We are getting calls from growing numbers of you needing help to pay an unexpected bill. And some now regret not having put a bit aside before the cost of living crisis hit.

If you are one of the luckier ones still able to save even £10 a month why not open an account with London Capital Credit Union?

Credit unions are small local banks and are ideal if you have a modest income. If the unexpected happens, they offer secure, low interest loans.

Any savings worth up to £85,000 are fully protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Open a new account with London Capital Credit Union and we'll team up with them to top up your account by £20. What's not to like? <https://credit-union.coop/>

MIND AND BODY: COMING UP!

ARSENAL'S GET FIT MISSION

TOTAL BODY WORKOUT *online, running now*

- * Stay fit from your own home or garden
- * Run by qualified fitness instructors using MS Teams
- * Follow along at your own pace
- * No entry criteria - anybody is welcome.

WALKING FOOTBALL *for 40years and over*

- * Three sessions each week
- * **Mixed session** at Arsenal Hub, *Wednesday am*
- * **Women's session** at Arsenal Hub, *Wednesday am*
- * **Mixed session** at Talacre Community Centre, *Friday am*
- * All sessions free, all ability levels welcome
- * Two of our qualified football coaches will look after and coach you while you learn the game
- * Started again in September.



STRENGTH & BALANCE CLASSES

for over 60s, in partnership with Islington Council

- * Help maintain your strength for independence
- * Chair support can be used if wanted
- * Coaching by qualified fitness instructors
- * All sessions free
- * Started September at Mildmay Community Centre.

Contact Rhys Ratcliffe at rratcliffe@arsenal.co.uk to find out more or register for any of these sessions.

ARSENAL FOOTBALL COACHING FOR KIDS



TUES 25, WEDS 26 OCTOBER. LUNCH PROVIDED.
Places for half-term sessions must be booked ahead.
Email patrick@barnsbury.org or ☎ 020 7704 2324

OCTOBER * PUBLIC MEETING

MAKING YOUR HOMES COLD-PROOF

Come along to talk with us about:

- * insulating your homes against heat-loss
- * agreeing a plan for doing the work.

The benefits, we promise, will be worth it.

DATE AND VENUE TO FOLLOW

Find out more at www.barnsbury.org

Arsenal COMMUNITY
STARTS SEPTEMBER 2022
FREE 12 WEEK WEIGHT LOSS COURSE
SHAPE UP

Entry Criteria
Camden/Islington Resident
Male aged 18-65
Body Mass Index of 27.5+

Further Information
Rhys Ratcliffe
P: 07548 107576
E: rratcliffe@arsenal.co.uk

Location: Islington - Arsenal Hub

Camden ISLINGTON

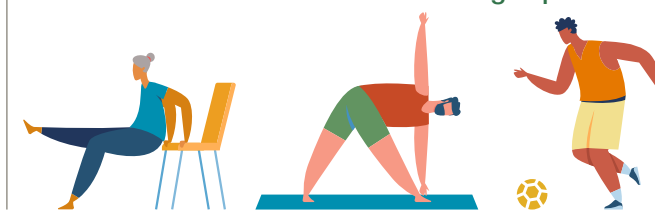
SHAPE UP, SLIM DOWN FOR MEN

EVENING SESSIONS WITH ARSENAL'S EXPERTS



Shape Up is Arsenal in the Community's new FREE 12-week course for men, offering fun group exercise and advice on nutrition. Register now for one 90-minute session a week, in the evening, with Arsenal's qualified health and wellbeing team. You will not be judged. Most of those taking part typically haven't exercised for a long time. You'll get to do a mix of circuit training, boxing (pad work) and low-impact sports.

Courses start this month so enrol now. Email Rhys Ratcliffe at rratcliffe@arsenal.co.uk to sign up.



Christmas specials



*The Snowman * Peacock Theatre*
*Mother Goose * Hackney Empire*

COMING UP: FAMILY CHRISTMAS SHOWS
LIMITED NO OF CUT-PRICE TICKETS • DATES COMING SOON

Email patrick@barnsbury.org to go on the waiting list

AROUND THE HOUSES

Stiff fines being dished out to Barnsbury HA flytippers

Flytipping Barnsbury HA tenants are now being charged **clean-up costs** and run the risk of a fine of up to £1000 by Islington Council

Sky-high clean-up bill

The problem is so bad there are now fears the selfish behaviour of a few could push up service charges, with more than £1000 spent on clearances already this year.

Estate services staff are working hard to identify flytippers and others who misuse amenities like the recycling bins. Too often, they say, they have to call the council to ask it to take away dumped furniture, to move items blocking access to the bins or to clear bins someone has wrongly used for their bulky waste.

The mess attracts rats and other vermin and is a fire risk. And it means estate services staff are left with less time for their other duties.

Can you help?

If you see anyone dumping rubbish or furniture on our land please tell us. By helping us identify the people who cause the problem we can make sure only they pay for clean-up costs.

If you need to get rid of large or multiple items call Islington's bulky waste service on ☎020 7527 2000 or contact London Energy's reuse and recycling collection service at www.vanbookings.co.uk

You can download Islington Council's *Love Clean Streets* app to report flytipping or dog mess on any public space in Islington at <https://tinyurl.com/mrkej4y>



Morland Mews tenants told us you wanted better facilities for rubbish and recycling. So first we put bigger bins and new doors in one of the garages. Now there are another three new bins up by the top site. So that should mean no more excuses for dumping, but oh dear...

Just one day after the council emptied the bins, more furniture was dumped in the garage and a recycling bin filled to the brim with boxes from an Amazon delivery, by just one person. No space was left for neighbours' recycling for the rest of the week.

The tenant who did this has been identified and will be contacted by our staff.



SMELL GAS?

ACT FAST AND CALL THE NATIONAL GAS EMERGENCY SERVICE ☎0800 111 999

Suspect a gas leak? Report it at once to the gas emergency service

Twice recently calls have come to us or to estate handyman Steve from residents who have smelt gas.

This is an emergency. Call the 24/7 National Gas Emergency Service at once on ☎0800 111 999.

You will be given safety advice and, if the service judges it needed, they will send out a Cadent engineer.

Do not call us. It only delays action and time matters with a gas leak.

Scheduled works to your homes over the next 12 months

Planned improvement works have been underway since April. By next March our plan is to:

- * give 13 of you a new kitchen
- * give nine a new bathroom
- * fit new boilers in 11 homes
- * where needed, upgrade the electrical systems.

At the following you can expect:

- * Highbury Terrace: roof upgrades and the restoration of Georgian windows
- * Belitha Villas: exterior restoration of the roof, gutters, windows and building structure
- * Milner Square: lead flashing on the roof replaced.

If your home will be affected by any of these plans we will write to you before the works start so you know what will happen and when.

meet the team

CHELSEY SIMNER
BUSINESS SUPPORT OFFICER



In-house IT and customer service support expert Chelsey Simner joined us as a temp in September 2020 but by July 2021 she'd proved her worth so much we asked her to be part of the staff team

I started helping out during the pandemic, says Chelsey, but quickly found an unexpected love for social housing and the people in it.

I grew up in social housing so understand the value of having a good landlord and a safe home.

I love working here and have grown both professionally and personally. I've done any training course put my way and even have a certificate in reporting repairs thanks to BHA.

What do you bring to your work?

I am an animal-loving, artistic perfectionist who will always aim to get you the best BHA has to offer.

What does your job involve?

My role is very varied, ranging from housing management, repairs, IT solutions, minute-taking and admin.

What values drive you?

A desire to help provide a safe home for every BHA tenant, to talk to people and hear them, to treat everyone the same and give each person my best.

Cats or dogs?

I love all animals from dogs to insects, but I'll always be a cat person at heart!

Name your top three favourite podcasts/books?

The Book Thief by Markus Zusak, *The Confession* by Jessie Burton and *The Silence of the Girls* by Pat Barker.

What do you enjoy outside work?

Working out at the gym, watching documentaries, and gardening.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3/...

Struggling with rising household bills? Just ask and we'll find a way to help

On page three we explain the help on offer from the government and utility companies. But we too can help and know some of you are struggling with costs for the first time. **Times are tough so please ask us if you could do with support. We will find a way.**

BHA hardship fund

We may be able to give you a one-off grant. Any of our tenants can apply and you do not have to pay it back. The grant can be used to pay a power bill, buy food, children's clothes, or essential household goods or to buy digital devices so you can use online services.

BHA tenant bursary

We can also help with the cost of activities that teach you new skills to improve your chance of getting a job.

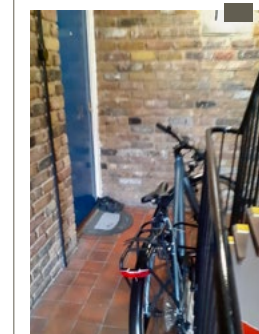
Our bursary award scheme helps pay for school, college or university fees, digital devices, books, and trips. <https://barnsbury.org/resident-information/support/>

Get in touch with rent income and team administrator Paul Alderson to find out more. See right for other ways Paul can help make sure you are getting any financial aid you qualify for. Email paul@barnsbury.org or call ☎020 7704 2324.

Fire safety risks still a problem in shared parts

In almost all our properties some of you are still ignoring warnings not to leave your belongings in shared areas.

For fire safety, reasons hallways, stairs and landings must *always* be kept clear. Any obstacle, even this bike chained to the handrail, can turn into a deadly hazard if a fire was to break out in the building.



Please tell estate services officer Marius if there is a problem in your building or call ☎020 7704 2324 or email info@barnsbury.org

Mystery callers

Please remember if you email us or leave a voice message to give your address and a number we can call you on. This applies too if you fill out a form online. Please don't leave it to our guesswork!

New faces, new duties

Older people's support

Welcome to Colette Lyons who has taken over as our housing support officer for older people, based at Highbury View.

Admin and money matters

Paul Alderson, who joined us earlier this year as rent income officer, is now also our team administrator.

Paul's varied role includes advising any of you making a claim for welfare benefits and helping you apply for our support fund or bursary scheme.

Paul also gives support to our housing management team and will this year will be making sure all the annual gas safety checks are carried out on time. **See left for Paul's contact details.**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Making it worth your while: move to a smaller home

We can help pay removal costs and might help with other expenses if you move to one of our smaller homes. We can also help out if you swap home with another BHA tenant who needs a larger home. Depending on the size of the home you are giving up, you could get up to £500 for your moving costs.

To find out more about our incentives and support call us on ☎ 020 7704 2324.

Testing alarms fitted to detect smoke, heat and carbon monoxide

A reminder for your own safety and that of others to please check all the alarms and detectors in your home every four weeks.

To do this press and hold down the test button.

The alarm should sound loudly. A green light should show continually on the device you are testing and a red light should flash every 40 seconds.

If there is a fault with any of these devices please ring us on ☎ 020 7704 2324 and we will send someone out to repair it. You will not be charged for this service. It is free. If your smoke detector starts bleeping do not take the head off! Call us and we will replace it.

Have you fallen into debt. Here's where to get help and advice

If you have fallen into debt and need help please call charity StepChange. They can give you free, expert and confidential advice.

☎ 0900 138 111
www.stepchange.org

Highbury View coffee morning



EVERY TUESDAY IN THE BUNGALOW, STARTS 11AM

Life & Progress:

free tenant support & wellbeing service



Life & Progress gives free confidential help with many types of problem, from isolation to grieving or depression, being a parent, caring for a relative, coping with disability, legal or money matters and more.

Freephone ☎ 0330 094 8845 or www.tsws-assist.co.uk
Username: barnsburytenant Password: support.

Free, expert confidential help * 24 hours/7 days

BARNSBURY HA SUPPORT FUND

IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING, WE CAN HELP

Any of you can apply for a one-off grant to pay for food, an energy bill, children's clothes, for essential household items like a table or white goods or a digital device so you can use online services.

YOU DO NOT HAVE TO PAY BACK THIS GRANT.



☎ 020 7704 2324 * ✉ info@barnsbury.org

DID WE MISS SOMETHING?

☒ Is there something you'd really like to read about in the next newsletter/s?

☒ Would you like to write something for Barnsbury News yourself?

☒ Do you know any local community projects or events of interest to other Barnsbury HA tenants?

If you've answered yes to any of these please get in touch with engagement & comms manager Patrick on patrick@barnsbury.org or call ☎ 020 7704 2324.

R U FIT

Get back into shape
1hr TUESDAY SESSIONS
10am * 60 Morland Mews
MIND & BODY

FREE

For further info
ring/text Jane
07443 903 237

DOMESTIC ABUSE

SOLACE IN ISLINGTON

CALL THE LONDON FREEPHONE

☎ 0808 802 5565

IF YOU ARE IN DANGER
NOW CALL THE POLICE ☎ 999

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

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