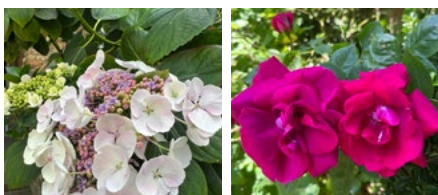
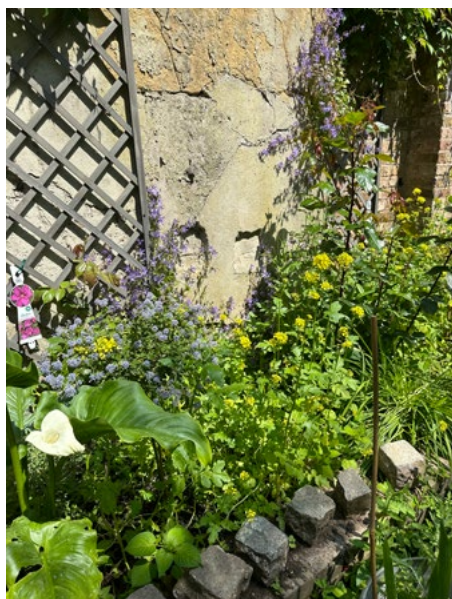


NEIGHBOURHOOD SNAPSHOTS

Barnsbury in bloom

Back in June engagement manager Patrick undertook a one-man tour of some of the **most glorious displays** in your gardens, on your balconies or perched on window cills. Pictured below is a selection, from the lushly edible to the fragrant and colourful



It has been weather to make even the most sturdy sun-seeker wilt but many of you have made excellent use of the extended heat and occasional downpour, from Milner Square, *top left* and *above*, to Franck's garden, *left*, packed with edibles. See page four for more pics and some gardening tips.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE YOU WILL FIND ...

- 2** Full steam ahead: surveys in hand for chilliest flats on Morland Mews
- 3** Waiting on the green light for GLA funding: autumn start likely for garages project
- 4** Green-fingered tenants offer tips for low cost gardening
* Young footie fans get guided tour of Arsenal Stadium
- 5** Boost your brain over summer break with free courses at CityLit
* View open air films from the canal bank
- 6** Disrepair claims: please don't fall for marketing tricks
- 7** Meet new rent income officer Sandra
* Watersure was a winner for one tenant. Could you be next?
- 8** Fire safety rules being dangerously flouted
* No room to put up family or friends? Highbury View guest room for hire.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Energy-saving retrofit works for coldest homes around Morland Mews

The hardest homes to **keep warm on Morland Mews estate**, close to half of them, are getting professionally assessed so we can plan work that will make them more energy efficient

As *BHA News* went to press in April there came the good news that the government had agreed to pay for badly needed upgrades to our coldest Morland Mews homes.

If your home is one of those we already know to be an energy waster you should by now have had a letter from us telling you your home will be one of those getting an upgrade.

Coldest homes first

The government grant pays for works to homes rated D, E or F for energy efficiency - the three lowest ratings.

Energy assessments we had carried out were used to decide which of our homes should qualify when we put in our funding bid back in 2022.

We have homes in this category in Morland Mews, Gissing Walk, Lofting Road and Pugin Court.

No letter from us?

If you haven't had a letter from us your home won't be among those getting energy efficiency works this time. But it is still on our list for works at a later stage. We have promised to make all your homes less costly to heat and that is what we will do.

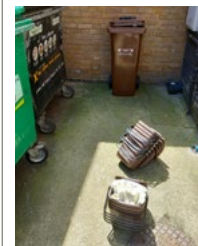
Some Morland Mews homes are better at keeping in heat than others



Council's new food waste caddies delivered to Claringbull Court

Our estates team has been out delivering food waste caddies, *pictured*, to tenants at Claringbull Court as Islington Council steps up its food waste collection.

The free bins come with liners that will compost and a leaflet on what to put (or not put) in your bin. Residents of suitable blocks on estates of seven or more homes can now use the service, which turns waste food into compost or electricity.



Find out more at www.islington.gov.uk/recycling-and-rubbish/recycling/food-waste-recycling

Run out of bags for your household recycling?

If you have run out of bags for recycling household waste you can get more from 60 Morland Mews during office hours. Supplies are limited so please use the bags only for the purpose intended.



TELL US HOW OUR LAST REPAIR FOR YOU WENT AND YOU COULD WIN £50!

If we sent someone out to do a repair to your home recently please tell us how it went. Your details will go into a prize draw that could win you £50 and your reply will help us identify and fix any flaws in our services.

<https://tinyurl.com/kxsvsh62>



Green light expected from GLA for funding bid for six new homes

It's been a while since we last reported on the work being done to convert **Morland Mews garages** into new flats, says Patrick Penny-Annang. So here's the news on these new homes and a chance to peek inside them

We are now waiting on the Greater London Authority to tell us officially that our bid for funding for the works has been approved. Once that happens it will be all systems go, with building works starting this October or maybe even sooner.

The project will create six new ground-floor homes on Morland Mews from what used to be garages on Morland Mews or below Pugin Court. We expect the building works to take 18 months, completing in March 2025.

When the works are finished Morland Mews tenants will go on top of the waiting list for the new flats.

Older and disabled tenants first

We have very few homes suitable for older or disabled residents so we went to great effort to get Islington Council to agree to let us give you first refusal on these ground floor homes.

If any of the new flats are not first snapped up by one of you they will go to the council to be let through its lettings scheme.



Above: how the mews will look once work is complete. Right: fittings and layouts in the kitchen and bathroom.



Questions about the works

We are sure those of you living nearby will have many questions about the building works. We will give updates as and when we have more to tell you. For now, thank you for your patience.

What's new: stand-out features of the six new flats

The new flats will be very energy efficient. **Keeping them warm** in cold weather will cost less thanks to high quality insulation.

They will use a heat recovery system to **keep dampness at bay**. This sucks out moisture from kitchens and bathrooms, filters the air then circulates it as clean air through the rest of the flat.

The ground-floor flats will be a boon for **older or disabled Morland Mews residents** now needing an easier-access home. There will be no awkward steps or stairs to climb and indoor layouts have been designed for access.

Going up: number crunching

- 1 three-bedroom flat (was 60 Morland Mews)
- 2 two-bedroom flats
- 1 wheelchair-friendly two bedroom flat
- 1 one bedroom flat
- 1 studio flat

What next for those of you on the list for energy efficiency works to your home

What works will you do?

We have teamed up with specialists Ambue to assess each of the homes that now qualify. Ambue will send out a qualified retrofit assessor from partner company Countrywide to find out how each property is losing heat and/or letting in cold.

How will my home be assessed?

It will be surveyed and scanned, inside and out, using a 360° camera. The assessor will take photos, measure rooms and map extras like radiators and window trickle vents.

Any personal photos will be blurred, automatically, but you might want to cover up any personal items you don't want caught on camera.

I've had a letter. Now what?

Keep an eye out for more letters. They will explain the next steps. If you have any questions or concerns, please tell us. We are here to help you right through the process. Call ☎ 020 7704 2324 or email us at ✉ info@barnsbury.org



BARNSBURY HA DROP-IN HELP & ADVICE SURGERY AT 60 MORLAND MEWS, N1 1HN

For information and advice on issues affecting you, come along to our drop-in advice surgery at **60 Morland Mews**. You'll have plenty of time to ask us questions. If there is something you want to discuss in confidence private space is available.

NEXT SURGERY: **WEDNESDAY 2 AUGUST 11AM TO 1PM**

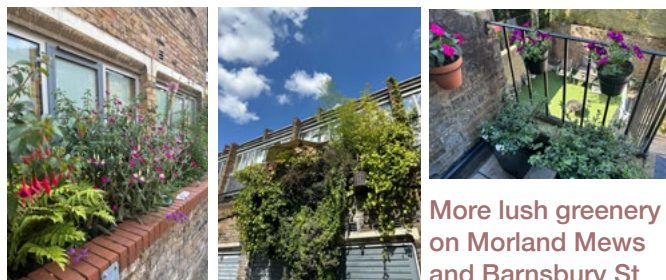
Curry, company and a coronation: Highbury View celebrates in high style!

Highbury View Tenants Association organised its own party to mark **King Charles' coronation**. Housing support officer Colette Lyons reports

'The party was a blast! More than 40 residents turned up with family and friends of all ages. I prepared two delicious curries, one vegetarian, and the residents really enjoyed the food, drink, and company. A big thank you to Islington Council for funding the event.'

Community celebration

'I was so pleased to be part of the celebration and residents and visitors have all been talking about how much fun they had celebrating the King's Coronation. I'm looking forward to the next event. See you there!'



More lush greenery on Morland Mews and Barnsbury St

Sunny or shady? Can you eat it? And don't get angsty! Top tips from Pat and Franck

Does your outdoor space get sun or shade?

Pat says: 'If you have a south-facing garden that gets really hot, plant geraniums and petunias. These hardy plants can withstand anything. Also lovely geraniums, lobelia, and fuchsias. Fuchsias love different conditions and don't mind whether it's shady or sunny.'

Can you eat it and what do the bees think?

Franck says: 'Gardening should be fun. I'm an amateur and I'd rather enjoy my garden than work it. I grow plants that suit my space and are good for bees, not just what's trendy or popular, and I do like fresh herbs in the kitchen.'



Home-grown delight

Franck says: You can easily make more plants from one pot of basil. Cut a stem about 4 inches long, just below a leaf node. Remove the lower leaves and put the stem (or stems) in a jar of water on a sunny window sill. Change the water every few days and in a few weeks you'll see roots growing on the stem. Plant each one in a pot of soil and enjoy fresh basil with your food.



Barnsbury under-12s on tour... of Arsenal Emirates stadium

Youngsters who signed up for **Arsenal's Easter training sessions** were also treated to a tour of the enormous stadium later that month



The guided tour took our visitors through the stadium history, from its completion in 2006 to the present day. Highlights included the players' tunnel, the home and away dressing rooms, the press conference room and, of course, the pitch.

Arsenal in the Community is again offering two days of coaching in the summer

holidays for youngsters from Barnsbury HA and the wider Islington community.

The two sessions, led by Arsenal in the Community's coaching staff, are designed to improve each player's technique, give a better understanding of the game and a confidence boost out on the field.

See below for details.

**ARSENAL IN THE COMMUNITY
FOOTBALL COACHING FOR KIDS
25 & 26 JULY 10AM TO 3PM
FOR BOYS AND GIRLS, AGE 8-11**

Arsenal in the Community is again offering **two free coaching sessions** for kids. Sessions start 10am and end 3pm, with one hour for lunch, provided free. To register call Patrick on ☎ 07926 130 067 or email patrick@barnsbury.org

SPACES LIMITED. CONTACT PATRICK TO BOOK A SPACE.



SUMMERVARSITY



ISLINGTON **SUMMERVARSITY** IS OFFERING A FANTASTIC PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES AND ALL COMPLETELY FREE

24 JULY TO 25 AUGUST, MON TO FRI 9AM TO 3PM

Islington Council has lined up activities from arts and crafts to sports, music, dance, drama, cooking, science, technology, and much more. Something for everyone!

All activities are led by instructors who make learning fun. You'll have a great time but you'll also pick up lots of new skills and discover some new interests.

To secure a spot register at www.summervarsity.co.uk

FOOTBALL SPORTS CAMP
OUTDOOR CATERING & PROSTHETICS
SPECIAL EFFECTS USING MAKE-UP
CARNIVAL PROJECT
SECURITY GUARD
TEACH SWIMMING
INDUSTRY MENTORING
MUSIC
KAYAKING
CYCLE CONFIDENTLY
UPCYCLING FASHION & TEXTILES
ROLLER SKATING
ANIMAL CARE

60 MORLAND MEWS Wellness Course



Staying fit is a great way to improve your mood and health

Many people struggle to stay fit in troublesome times but with a little commitment and some fun motivation you can improve and maintain your fitness for years to come!

Come join us for free sessions and reviving refreshments.



**07443 903 237
Tuesdays 10-11am**

AGEUK STAYING WELL
THURSDAY 20 JULY @ Highbury Roundhouse, 71 RONALDS RD, N5

STAY ACTIVE & INDEPENDENT

One-day seminar covering everything from help at home and giving tai chi a try-out to Arsenal Health MOTs. Hear how Age UK Islington can help with your finances and staying independent, your housing choices, how to get help with sight and hearing loss or using transport services. Oh, and lunch is free!

Booking essential. To book your place call 020 7281 6018 or email gethelp@ageukislington.org.uk

GET A*HEAD FOR NUMBERS

GET BETTER AT MATHS AND NUMBERS FOR FREE WITH CITY LIT'S NEW COURSES FOR ADULTS OVER 19

Learn to use every day maths for

- * managing your money
- * calculating measurements
- * helping children with homework
- * understanding savings and interest rates
- * getting a new job
- * improving your workplace skills
- * working towards a qualification
- * getting into college or university

Other Skills for Live and Work courses available:

- * English skills for work
- * English for speakers of other languages
- * digital and ICT skills
- * data literacy

For details ☎ universal.skills@citylit.ac.uk

☎ 020 4582 0423 ● citylit.ac.uk/multiply

Multiply courses are for Londoners over 19 without a level 2 maths qualification or maths GCSE Grade C/4 or higher. Courses run at City Lit or in the community.

★★★★★★★★

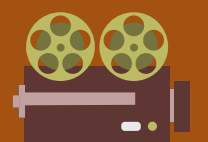
**EVERYMAN
SCREEN ON THE CANAL
AT KINGS CROSS**

FREE OPEN-AIR CINEMA



Watch films for free all day from the canal-side steps at **Granary Square**. Line up includes cult classics, feel-good favourites and blockbusters.

For details of what's showing and when, go to www.kingscross.co.uk/media/SC-2023-hub-programme.jpg



ROUND THE HOUSES

Tenants left in debt by firms offering 'help' with disrepair

Growing numbers of you are being targeted by firms offering to help you make a **claim for disrepair**. It is highly unlikely these people have your best interests at heart, says director Viv Astall

Some of you have ended up deep in debt after making a claim for disrepair, backed by a repair claims firm. These firms target housing association and council tenants because they make money from it. Tenants rarely do. Many end up with a huge legal bill after a long and stressful process.

A faster, less stressful option

There is an easier way. If your home needs a repair or is damaged, tell us. We will investigate. We are responsible for keeping your home maintained to a good standard. It is our job to:

- * get your repairs done promptly and to a reasonable standard
- * keep the structure of the building, including the roof, walls, floors and stairs, sturdy and weather-proof
- * make sure everything we've fitted in your home is safe, efficient and working as it should.

Making a claim for disrepair

If we have failed to uphold any of these three standards and that has damaged your home or belongings, you may have a case against us for disrepair. You have a right to take your claim to court but please bear in mind the very real risks of using a predatory repairs claims firm.

Get independent advice

We strongly suggest you first get independent advice and information from a reliable source. Organisations like Citizens Advice, Shelter, and the Housing Ombudsman Service all give guidance and support you can trust.

Defending any disrepair case, no matter how weak it is, is costly and it drains the budgets funded by your rents for home repairs, improving homes, personal support and neighbourhood services.

Disturbing rise in abuse and threats towards estate staff and managers

We are distressed to report that over the past year four of our staff have been shouted or screamed at by Barnsbury HA tenants.

Threats and abuse

Managers Michael and Asif and estates officer Marius have all been threatened or verbally abused. Spencer has also been spoken to very unpleasantly. Asset manager Michael tells us he has had several tenants be verbally aggressive.

Staff sometimes have to pass on unwelcome news. We also step in if one person's behaviour is wasting scarce resources or puts other people's health and safety at risk.

Does shouting or screaming work? You may be angry or frustrated but abuse and intimidation don't work. It is however a clear breach of your tenancy agreement.

Our staff serve all of you with respect and courtesy and find most of you courteous in return. For the minority who are not, we kindly ask you to show our hardworking staff the same respect they show you.

Heavy bricks dumped in bins risked safety and a hefty fine from the council

Estates officer Marius had a narrow escape from injury at Morland Mews last month after a bin filled with large heavy bricks nearly fell on his foot.

Despite his shock, Marius cleared the bin to avoid our being landed with a hefty fine of £500-1000 from the council or the bin men refusing to empty the bin. Heavy, potentially dangerous waste like this should have been taken by the tenant to the dump.



SUPPORT IN HARD TIMES TELL US IF YOU NEED HELP

IF YOU'RE STRUGGLING WITH ESSENTIAL HOUSEHOLD EXPENSES, WE CAN HELP

Times are tough, especially with high interest rates and inflation. If you find yourself struggling to pay food or energy bills, buy clothing or replace an essential item like a fridge or washing machine, the tenant support fund can help. Just ask our housing management team for help. It is a grant and not a loan so you don't have to pay it back.

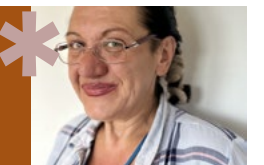
☎ 020 7704 2324 *
✉ info@barnsbury.org

SUSPECT A GAS LEAK?

This is an emergency. Call the National Gas Emergency Service NOW on ☎ 0800 111 999.

meet the team

SANDRA SOKOLOVIC
RENT INCOME OFFICER



What is your new role here?

I'm your new rent income officer which means I make sure all our rent income is paid and work with any you having a problem paying your rent. I know my way around the benefits system but am also often able to find discounts or other payments you could have claimed but haven't and maybe didn't know existed. If you owe us rent, I can also help by agreeing with you a sensible plan for paying off your arrears.

What have you liked most about the job so far?

My job is not just about the numbers. I'm here to help you keep a roof over your head by keeping to your tenancy rules. I genuinely care about all our tenants and love helping people. In just these first few months I've visited some of you at home and each time I've been made so welcome.

What did you do before you joined the Barnsbury Housing team?

I had a similar job at a London council. I dealt there with lots of different aspects of housing services. I also gained various diplomas and certificates but what I found is it's the

practical work you do and building strong relationships with other people that really matters.

During lockdown, for example, I took on extra tasks like preparing and packing PPE kits for the West London NHS services. And because many shops and food outlets were closed I also cooked meals for some of the frontline key workers.

Books or technology?

I enjoy reading. Classic literature is always a go-to for me. One of my favourites is *Anna Karenina* by Leo Tolstoy. It's timeless. I'm also drawn to books that make me think, like *Broken by War* by Anthony Lock, which explores the impact of war on individuals. When I need a break and some light-hearted fun I like to dive into books like *Legend-born* so I can simply enjoy a good story.

How are you settling in so far?

I've had lots of support from the rest of the team here and I am thrilled to be a part of Barnsbury Housing, serving you and all the other people in this wonderful community. Please do feel free to say hello if you see me out and about.

What we do when a tenant makes a claim

If a tenant makes a disrepair claim, whether or not they use a claims management company, we:

- * first send out a surveyor to identify all the repairs needed to their home
- * organise the work needed for any of the repairs identified that are our responsibility
- * check all of our records to see if they had reported a problem (or problems) to us or not. Under your tenancy agreement you have to report to us all repair problems that are our responsibility.
- * vigorously challenge any claim that is dishonest or unfounded.

Risky: using a claims management company

What these firms do

They target tenants, social housing tenants especially, using marketing tactics to encourage disrepair claims. **They are not legal firms.** What they do is 'sell your claim' to a solicitor who will then handle your claim and be your representative between you and us, for a cost.

The risks to you

Hidden costs: Many claim 'no win, no fee'. But the upfront fees, like insurance policy premiums, can be substantial. Even when a claim does succeed, solicitor's fees and legal costs will take a big chunk from any compensation payment.

You have to pay fees even if you change your mind: Once you sign up to a solicitor, it can be hard to pull out without being billed for any surveys done or insurance policies you were advised to take out.

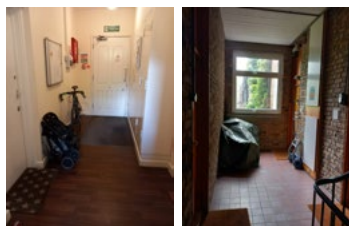
Slow and stressful process: Some claims drag on for years and you may have to appear in court, which can be distressing.

Possible breach of your tenancy agreement: If they advise you not to let us into your home to do repairs that is a violation of your tenancy agreement. Your home's safety and maintenance is our responsibility. If there are health and safety risks we might have to ask for a court injunction to get access.

SAFETY AT HOME

Stay safe: tenants ignoring fire safety rules are putting lives at real risk

A small number of you are putting lives at risk by leaving items in shared areas of buildings despite warnings from us and our fire safety experts.



These two pictures were both taken last month. One shows a bicycle and pram left by the front door that is the main, for some only, way out of this house. The second shows a huge object under a tarp and a trolley.

Obstacles can cost a life

All these items could in an emergency cost a life. If a fire broke out in either building what will likely spread first is thick, stinking and choking smoke, full of poisonous gases.

You and your neighbours need to get out fast. If smoke has spread you will have to crawl at floor level, very likely unsure which way to go, using the walls to guide you. Anything in your way that slows you down can be

fatal. Heat might also melt some or all parts of the obstacle or make it dangerously hot or it could catch fire.

No one who has been in or seen close up a building on fire forgets it. Every fire can turn life-threatening. This is why we police very strictly our rule on keeping your shared indoor areas clear at all times. **Please be vigilant and report anything in your building that might affect fire safety.**

Smoke, heat and carbon monoxide detector checks

Smoke, heat, and carbon monoxide detectors save lives! **Please test yours every month.** Tell us if you don't have a working smoke, heat or CO detector. **This is an emergency. We will replace it within 24 hours.**

Contractors need access to your home for safety checks

Every year our contractors need to get into your home to do important maintenance checks. The checks cover electricals, gas, smoke and fire alarms and fire door inspections. They are routine inspections but crucial to identifying and addressing promptly any potential fire hazards.

Your safety is our biggest priority. By letting our contractors into your home you are upholding the highest fire safety standards in your building. Contact us if you have any safety concerns or questions.

BHA NEWS BY EMAIL?

Would you rather get *Barnsbury News* by email? You'll get your news faster and it's one item less for the recycling bin. Call us if you want to join the list on ☎ 020 7704 2324 or email info@barnsbury.org

Is there an article or news story you want to write for *Barnsbury News*? Or do you know of something that may be of interest to other tenants? If you have answered yes please contact Patrick on patrick@barnsbury.org or call ☎ 020 7704 2324.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

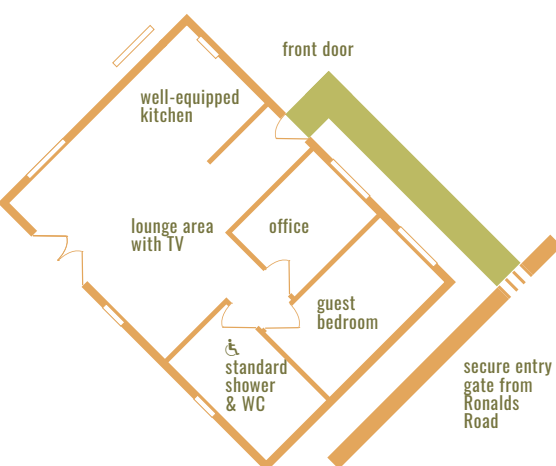
SOLACE IN ISLINGTON CALL THE LONDON FREEPHONE

☎ 0808 802 5565

For free, confidential support because of domestic abuse, call Solace in Islington. Solace helps women and men. Call Solace on ☎ 020 3795 5070, email advocacy@solacewomensaid.org, Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm.

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

Do you have friends or family coming to visit but no room for an overnight stay?



Highbury View has a guest room for rent in the bungalow that sits in the corner of its large walled garden.

Guest facilities

The room has two beds, with a pull-out third mattress if needed. Guests usually have sole use at night of the open plan kitchen and lounge, a walk-in shower and toilet, and free use of our high speed broadband.

You will get a key giving you secure entry to the garden and bungalow.



On weekdays staff use the office next to the guest room. The kitchen and lounge are sometimes used by tenants for meetings or social events.

The location is very central, with Highbury & Islington Station an easy stroll away through Highbury Fields.

Nightly rental charge

For your friends or relatives: £40 per night plus £12 cleaning fee per stay.

Hirers with no BHA connection:

£60 per night plus £12 cleaning fee.

