



Retrofitting works now at full throttle

If you live on Barnsbury Mews it won't have escaped you that the energy efficiency works to 81 homes on the estate are now well advanced. So what's going on?

There have been a few hiccups and patience has at times been tested but come autumn more than half of the estate's homes will be more energy efficient and less costly to heat.

Retrofitting net widened

Contractors Purdy started on site last September, at first targeting 63 homes known to be our least energy efficient. Since then we have added another 18 homes to this target, also securing extra funding to help towards the added costs.

Project manager Avis Venning tells us the work will make a real difference to living conditions.

'Along with fitting much better modern insulation,' Avis says, 'we're improving ventilation to prevent damp and mould and improve air quality indoors.'

'We are also testing homes with new ventilation systems. You need good airflow to stop moisture building up and to bring in fresh air.'

continued on page 2...

INSIDE THIS ISSUE YOU WILL FIND...

2 Don't just take our word for it. If you're in a pickle call Nicky, says a happy Angel

3 Islington charity to put food on the table for those of you in serious need over the next 12 months

Home improvements survey: book your appointment now!

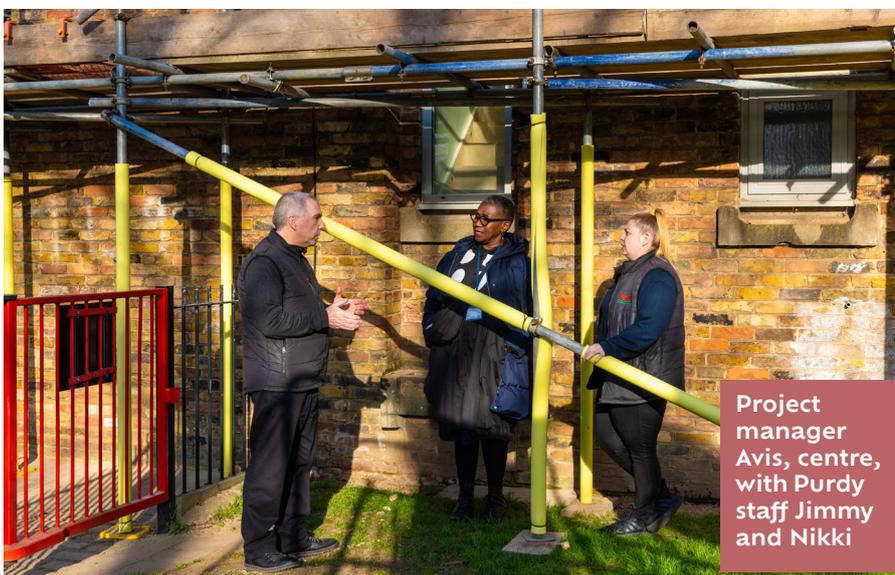
4 You said, we did! Marius sweeps away an eyesore and it's new bins all round

5 Barnsbury Past: exhibition opening in April for living history project

6 Need an answer to a repairs query? Sorted! Lorraine joins Nicky's twice-weekly advice sessions

7 Climate change and your safety are top priorities for planned works to our buildings this year

8 Home swaps: some great new exchanges now on offer as more of you choose to 'downsize'



Project manager Avis, centre, with Purdy staff Jimmy and Nikki

RETROFITTING WORKS NOW AT FULL THROTTLE

... continued from page 1

Doors inside may have to be trimmed by 10mm, a vital measure but one, Avis allows, that may raise some eyebrows.

Sealing and insulating cavity walls is one of the main tasks now in hand, alongside new loft hatches so lofts can be insulated or, in some cases, to allow roof checks before new solar panels are attached.

Fitting the solar panels is next on the agenda. These will provide free electricity to run air source heat pumps for five Pugin Court homes.

Also scheduled is thermal ceiling insulation in some garages and sheds below Morland Mews and Gissing Walk homes. Empty sheds and garages have been prepared so cars or any items stored in the garages can be moved there temporarily.

If you live nearby we appreciate your patience through the noisier, dirtier work. This should finish soon, with the project as a whole scheduled to finish in autumn.

We will soon post on our website a more detailed account by Avis of the energy efficiency works.



If you have any questions about the works please get in touch with project manager Avis or Purdy resident liaison officer Nikki.

**Avis Venning | 07958 403 052
avis@barnsbury.org**

**Nikki Hobbs, Purdy resident liaison officer | 07841 996 301
nikki.hobbs@purdycontracts.co.uk**

Don't miss out on help, support and advice from our in-house experts

You will now have a letter from us setting out your **rent and service charges** for the next 12 months, from 1 April 2025. If you are worried about paying these or other household bills please get in touch with the housing and communities team. One of you is so pleased with Nicky's support she has even offered to tell you all about it (see *Angel's story* below).

See page six for more about our advice and support sessions.

Dear friends and neighbours



I have lived on Barnsbury Mews since 2015. I had to flee my country as being a transgender is not accepted.

I was homeless living in London and fortunate enough to be offered the home I am happy in now.

Unfortunately in 2023 I became gravely ill and was admitted to hospital and it was touch and go if I would survive. I eventually was discharged in February 2024.

My life completely changed as I was not able to work or do things I used to do. I have struggled financially since coming home from hospital.

Last March my neighbour was telling me how good the new housing officer Nicky was and to go to see her for assistance.

Since then I have met with Nicky several times. She is absolutely amazing! Supporting me all the time and I never wait to see her. She always fits me in even when she is really busy! She makes me relaxed and happy.

Nicky has helped me maximise my income, completed and submitted a PIP application, referred me to the food bank from which I receive weekly deliveries.

BHA paid my utility bill when I came out of hospital. Nicky also obtained a new fridge/freezer and 2-seater sofa from Islington Council's RSS scheme.

She referred me to occupational therapy for a wet room assessment as I can no longer use the bath. She has also helped me liaise with my GP for my health needs.

Thank you so much that we have Nicky working for BHA. Again, she is amazing. I suggest everyone at BHA go to see her as she will help you!

Angel

Islington Faiths Forum grant will help those of you in food poverty

Over the next 12 months we will be using a very welcome £8,000 grant to help those of you struggling with the cost of **healthy food and other essential household items**

The £8,000 grant from Islington Council's poverty board came about thanks to teamwork by housing and communities manager Asif with Islington Faiths Forum.

Felix Project food markets

Last year on several occasions we were able to give away for free good quality fresh food supplied

by The Felix Project for our Barnsbury Mews food markets.

After word of the markets was picked up by Islington Faiths Forum research we were added to its list of organisations eligible for funding.

We will only be using the money to help those of you in food poverty or unable to pay for an essential household item.

Home improvements: surveys and inspections underway to pinpoint investment priorities

You should now have seen our poster asking you to contact surveyors MLCS3 to set up an appointment so we can assess the condition of your home.

We have asked surveyor Gareth Tingle to inspect every one of our homes. What he finds will be used to draw up a programme of works to be done to our buildings and your homes for the next 30 years.

Our asset team plans most of its building works and improvements well in advance, covering lots of properties under the same project to make the work cost-efficient.

How you can help: Get in touch with MLCS3 today to agree a time that suits you for your home survey. Email surveys@mlcs3.com or call freephone ☎ 0800 8620 904.

NEWS IN BRIEF

THE BIG SURVEY

It will soon be time for you to be brutally honest again about how well we are serving you.

The survey, now done once every two years, will in a few months time be sent by post and/or email and you may also get a phone call.

We should get your feedback in time for the annual report we send you in early November.

We will also compare it with the ratings you gave us in 2023 so we can see where and how we still need to do better. Please do take the time to fill out and return the survey.

FUNDAY ON SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER: PUT THE DATE IN YOUR DIARY!



This year's funday will be held in the usual spot on Saturday 20 September, starting midday.

We got lovely feedback from those of you who came along last year and hope this year will be even better. The tug of war and the egg and spoon and bean bag races will definitely be back.

Get in touch with Chelsey if you'd like to chip in with ideas or suggestions, run your own stall or activity, or help out in any other way.

To contact Chelsey email chelsea@barnsbury.org or phone ☎ 020 7704 2324.

EASTER CLOSING HOURS FROM 17 to 22 APRIL

Happy Easter



We will close for Easter at 5.30pm on Thursday 17 April and reopen on Tuesday 22 April at 9.30am.

If you need an emergency repair when we are closed, night or day, please call our emergency service* on **0300 131 7300**. *Only call if your repair is an emergency.*

If you have a medical or other emergency use your pullcord/pendant to call Linkline.

* this service is run for us by Islington & Shoreditch HA.

NEWS IN BRIEF

FRESH LOOK AT OUR SERVICE STANDARDS

Later this year we and your Resident Voice will be reviewing all the service standards we published for the first time last July. Also coming under scrutiny will be our standard for **estate services**, added in January.

Our standards can be read or downloaded from our website. If you would like a paper copy email us on info@barnsbury.org or call ☎ 020 7704 2324.

NEW SIGNAGE AT HIGHBURY VIEW

New signs at Highbury View have made getting out of the building in an emergency easier and safer. We did a fire drill with residents in February to test them.

Other new signs now also show residents the most direct way to the garden and to the front gate.

BARNSBURY MEWS PARKING PROBLEMS

Parking problems are causing mayhem on Barnsbury Mews, in part caused by demand for broadband. **If you have made an appointment with BT to get broadband installed please tell us before BT turns up so we can coordinate parking for vehicles.**

Weekend visitors have also been parking on the estate. There is very little space so parking is for **residents only**.

This has been reported to the parking enforcement team.

If you notice non-residents parking you can report it direct to CUP on ☎ 020 7293 0862



YOU SAID, WE DID!

Those of you at 60-62 Barnsbury Street told us your rubbish bins were an eyesore. We saw them for ourselves on our January walkabout and we agreed. Marius leapt into action and the results of his hard work can be seen here.

'The old bins were cracked and no longer fit for purpose,' Marius tells us. 'I hope the new ones will help keep the courtyard clean and tidy and mean an end to foxes and squirrels scattering the rubbish.'

Each tenant now has a brand new (labelled) general waste bin and use of one of six new recycling bins. A reminder that all materials for recycling should go in the bags provided. If you need more bags they can be picked up free from council offices and local libraries.



RESIDENT VOICE

Call out for new members



We really want to hear from more of you.

If you are interested in getting involved, but maybe only for specific aspects of our work, please get in touch.

ABOUT RESIDENT VOICE

The Resident Voice meets with our senior staff five times a year to take a critical look at:

- how well we are serving you
- any new or substantially changed policies or initiatives
- our financial position.

Meetings are held in the early evening and are chaired independently by former board member Nancy Korman.

BONUS FOR ATTENDING

You can claim a £25 shopping voucher for every meeting you come along to.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

If you are interested in joining Resident Voice or want to know more about it first please email Chelsea at chelsea@barnsbury.org or call ☎ 020 7704 2324.

My Barnsbury Past, Present & Future

Thornhill and St Andrews primary history project exhibition: 7-12 April

In the last issue of *Barnsbury News* we reported a **history project** being run by St Andrew's church with Thornhill and St Andrew's primary school pupils

Some of you at Highbury View have been closely involved in the project, sharing your memories and photos of life in Barnsbury for posterity.

Treasure trove

Clare Mason, who helped run the project, says interviews 'uncovered a treasure trove of stories from bomb-site playgrounds and washing lines in Cloudsley Square to growing roses, music in pubs and lockdown walks'.

These stories and talks about local heritage have inspired a new community artwork created by pupils of the two schools with artist Kremena Dimitrova.



'It will be unveiled at the official opening at St Andrews Church on 5 April from 3pm,' Clare says. 'All are welcome.'

It will be exhibited there then at Islington Museum & Archive at 245 St John Street before going back to St Andrew's for permanent display.

EXHIBITION DATES

St Andrew's Church,
Thornhill Square: 7-12 April

Islington Museum, St John
Street: 22 April - 11 July

Islington Archive, St John
Street: 14 July - 31 August

On your doorstep: Cally Tower

Have you climbed the 178 steps to the top of 47.5m high Cally Tower?

Did you know its bell was, until Big Ben rolled in, the biggest in London?

The tower was built in 1853 as the centrepiece for a new market to replace the cramped and smelly Smithfield. This one, it was said, had enough space for 8,000 cattle and calves, 350,000 sheep and 900 pigs.

The site was Copenhagen Fields, where a 17th century manor house sat in grounds now popular with Londoners for fresh air, sports and less savoury 'fun' like bear baiting.

The new Caledonian Market, as it became known, gradually found new uses as advances in railway transport took the gruesome meat trade further away from London.

First horses then cars replaced the livestock. By the 1920s market traders were selling anything from human skeletons to silverware.

Today the grade two-listed tower sits in a large public park restored and improved by Islington Council using a Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Well worth a visit!

Walking tour: Friday 27 June at 11am: If you'd like to join a tour of the old market area with a local expert sign up here: <https://tinyurl.com/mtbud5ca>

Sources: livinglondonhistory.com and Islington Council www.islington.gov.uk

CALL OUT TO JOIN VICTORY IN EUROPE DAY CELEBRATION AT HIGHBURY VIEW

THURSDAY 8 MAY

On 8 May we will be celebrating the **80th anniversary of VE Day** which for eight decades marked the official surrender of Germany to the World War II allies in 1945.

Day to remember

We have discussed ways to make the day memorable with tenant board member Janice Walsh and would love to chat to more of you.

Suggestions so far are a memory wall or photo display using personal or family stories, with music and food from 1pm to 4pm.

Janice has reminded us that very few of those who saw active service during WWII are still with us so this may be our last chance to pay tribute to them.

If you have a story or memory of VE Day you'd like to share do please get in touch with us. Call us on ☎ 020 7704 2324, email colette@barnsbury.org or write to Colette Lyons at the Highbury View bungalow: 89 Ronalds Road, London N1 1XQ.

DOMESTIC ABUSE IS A CRIMINAL ACT

SOLACE IN ISLINGTON

☎ 0808 802 5565

advocacy@solacewomensaid.org

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

Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm.

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

AROUND THE HOUSES

Welcome drop in rent arrears but worrying rise in late rent payments for sheds and garages

Rent arrears continue to drop as more of you get payments up to date. But we're not there yet. We are also seeing a rise in missed payments for garages and sheds.

ON FRIDAY 14 MARCH

overall arrears (homes) **were at 3.6%**

arrears (more than four weeks rent owed) **in the last four weeks 3.4%**

arrears this time last year 6%

£46,631: the total owed by 10 tenants with the worst arrears

We are taking legal action against all tenants not paying their rent, for their home or for a shed or garage.

Staying Connected visits carry on giving excellent value for money

If you have not had a Staying Connected visit from us yet we will be contacting you to arrange one. The visits let you and us connect and talk about your home, our services or your neighbourhood.

Growing list of benefits

We are also picking up vital information, like how you prefer us to contact you. This is mainly a choice of email or post but we can also check for sight or hearing issues that we need to know about, especially if there is an emergency.

Another plus has been picking up unreported problems. One tenant who was hoarding is now on the path to a clutter-free home. We have been able to get safeguarding in place for some vulnerable tenants. We also found, and have now stopped, a case of illegal subletting in one home.

IN NUMBERS: THE FIRST THREE MONTHS OF 2025



Our housing and communities team has run 24 support and advice sessions already this year. These are some of the ways they've been able to make life a little easier

- 4** more getting benefits they didn't know they could claim, including carers allowance, attendance allowance and pension credit
- 3** have had an income boost, two of them by personal independence payments, and one after we helped them appeal a decision to refuse them a benefit
- 1** has a much needed washing machine secured through Islington Council's resident support scheme
- 1** now waiting on the Blue Badge that allows disabled drivers more and better parking rights
- 3** helped through the move from housing benefit to universal credit, with one helped to make a claim a joint arrangement with a partner
- 1** referred for specialist aid which they can get from Help on Your Doorstep, the Citizens Advice Bureau or Islington Law Centre
- 2** given a one-off payment from the Barnsbury Housing Association hardship fund
- 3** who could not afford to top-up a pre-payment meter given a HACT energy voucher.
- 4** given a referral to a local food bank

Help with repairs now on offer at twice weekly support and advice sessions

Assistant property manager Lorraine is now offering help with repairs matters at our twice weekly support and advice sessions.

Sessions now in second year

Lorraine joins Nicky, who began the sessions shortly after joining us a year ago. Nicky's expertise is rent and tenancy matters but a lot of you also had queries about repairs.

You can also get help at the sessions with other matters like household finances, or we can refer you to a local specialist service. The sessions are held Wednesday and Friday mornings from 10am to 12 noon at 60 Morland Mews.

To book time with Nicky or Lorraine, or with independent living officer Colette if you live at Highbury View, call ☎ 020 7704 2324, email info@barnsbury.org



Left to right: assistant property manager Lorraine Sindry, housing officer Nicky Anderson and independent living officer Colette Lyons



Safety and climate change drive building works programme

Every year the largest slice of our budget goes on works to make your homes safer and better protected against the elements or to upgrade buildings and shared spaces

The works planned for this year follow careful consideration of our priorities, namely health and safety, keeping buildings structurally stable and complying with regulations.

Fire safety

Protection against fire is always a priority. Fire doors were inspected in February and March to identify any repairs needed to entrances. Tougher protection against fire in garages above some Morland Mews townhouses, that began last year, will be completed in coming weeks.

Making sure roofs can stand up to the challenges of climate change, including much more intense rainfall, is also high on list. Our new stock condition survey will decide where work is needed most.

Heavier rainfall has been a factor in leaking gutters across Barnsbury Mews. These will be upgraded to stop leaks down outer walls on Morland Mews, Lofting Road, Gissing Walk and Pugin Court.

At Milner Square we will be doing repairs to the drainage system. Milner Square will also be getting new paving in the shared garden.

Paving is due to be replaced over the next 12 months at Ronalds Road too, thanks to independent living officer Colette who noticed some uneven paving on walkabout.

It will also be replaced at Eden Grove where fairly new paving has sunk in places, creating a drainage problem and a risk of trips or falls.



We will be repairing damaged brickwork around some of the windows at Highbury View this year

This isn't the full list. The stock condition survey now underway will help us identify other works needed and help us decide who goes first on the list for new boilers kitchens and bathrooms this year and our priorities for new doors, windows and door entry systems.



SAFE AS HOUSES

SHARE YOUR BUILDING SAFETY CONCERNS

We often tell you what we're doing to make your home and building safe. But what are we missing?

The answer is your input. When it comes to building and fire safety we want to know your thoughts.

If something makes you feel uneasy or unsafe what is it and what do you think should be done about it? Maybe it's an insecure door or window? Could you cope if a fire broke out?

Send us your thoughts using:

- one of our suggestion boxes
- our online comments form at <https://tinyurl.com/3kcsfbr8>
- email info@barnsbury.org

ASSESSING FIRE RISK IN INDOOR SHARED SPACES

We have this month started assessing fire risk in blocks of flats with shared areas.

The work will mainly involve looking at the systems now in place to keep you safe from fire, such as doors designed to stop fire and smoke spreading and fire alarms.

For most of you the risk assessments should cause very little, if any, disturbance.

The inspector will also be looking for ways for us to improve fire safety and for hazards. We will act promptly on all recommendations.

SUSPECT A GAS LEAK?

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY!

Call the National Gas Emergency Service **NOW** on ☎ 0800 111 999.

If the service thinks it necessary they will send out a Cadent engineer.

SMOKE, HEAT AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTOR ALARMS

Please test your alarms monthly by following the manufacturer's instructions. If there is a fault or an alarm is missing we will replace it or fit a new one for free.

NOT SURE IF YOUR HOME HAS WORKING DETECTOR ALARMS?

Please let us know if you are not sure whether or not there is a working smoke or carbon monoxide alarm in your home. Call ☎ 020 7704 2324 or email info@barnsbury.org

FLYTIPPERS ON NOTICE

Staff are keeping an eye out for flytipping at all properties but a second problem, at Barnsbury Mews especially, is some of you still misusing the bins.



Rubbish dumped on the ground at Barnsbury Mews, top left, and wrong items in the packing area

If the first is full, instead of moving to an empty bin, bags are being dumped on the ground or on a full one, so fall off. It is an open invitation to foxes and rats.

Others are wrongly dumping furniture or other bulky items in the bins. If the bin men had found these cupboard doors when they emptied the bins the council would have fined us. That cost is passed onto all of you through your service charges.

PRIZE DRAW FOR REPAIRS SURVEY: WIN A £50 SHOPPING VOUCHER

Use our **online survey** to tell us what we did well and what could improve after we have organised a repair for you and you could win a £50 Love to Shop voucher in our regular cash draw.

To fill in the online survey go to <https://tinyurl.com/yc8ybhh>



You can also send feedback to: info@barnsbury.org

4-6 Colebrooke Place, N1 8HZ

Colette's office if you live at Highbury View or Ronalds Road or call us on ☎ 020 7704 2324.

BARNSBURY HA HOMES ON OFFER FOR A SWAP

Now on offer	Size/style of home	Tenant wants...
Lofting Road three-storeys with shared entrance	one bed, first floor flat in block 13-23, own balcony	one bed ground floor home for health reasons
Morland Mews (in three-storey blocks with shared main entrance)	one bed flat in block 9-21, first floor with own balcony	one bed garden flat because of health needs
	one bed flat on first floor	one bed garden flat because of health needs
Claringbull Court 	two bedroom adapted ground floor flat with own entrance	one bedroom ground floor flat with wet room for health needs
	two bed ground floor flat with small private garden and shared front entrance	three bed home because in need of more rooms
Gissing Walk	three bed house with own entrance	four bedroom house
	two bedroom with own entrance	three bedroom home
	studio with own entrance	one bedroom flat
Barnsbury Street 	two bed house with own entrance and shared garden	one bed ground or first floor flat for health needs
	two bed house with own entrance, shared garden	one bed flat as downsizing
	two bed second floor flat with shared entrance/garden	one bed flat as downsizing
	large five bed house with shared entrance	two bed ground floor flat with garden for health
Milner Square	two bed ground floor flat with garden/ shared entrance	three bed home for extra bedroom
Pugin Court	Ground floor studio flat with shared entrance	one bed flat
	Ground floor studio flat with shared entrance	one bed flat

We keep a list of tenants wanting a home swap, with another of our tenants or elsewhere in the UK, so get in touch if you want a swap. If you want to move to a smaller home we have an excellent package of incentives and more ways to help with the move and settling in. For more details, email Asif on info@barnsbury.org or call ☎ 020 7704 2324.

DO YOU HAVE A STORY, PICTURE OR LETTER FOR US?

If you have a story, letter or picture for *Barnsbury News* email Lisa Thompson at Lisa@barnsbury.org or call ☎ 020 7704 2324. We edit contributions to fit a tight space. We do not publish personal attacks.