

SUMMER 2018



**BARNSBURY**  
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

# NEWS OF THE MEWS



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# Hello and welcome to the Summer 2018 News of the Mews!



Over the coming months, we will be putting a real focus on modernising and improving our service to residents.

We're already working on a number of exciting projects including:

- **Reviewing the needs of our older residents.**  
About 30% of our residents are over 65, and this is set to increase significantly over the next 10 years. We know that many older people don't want to move, and we are committed to providing support for people to live comfortably in their own home for as long as they can. Other people would welcome moving to a smaller, more manageable home while others might consider a move to our beautiful sheltered scheme at Highbury View, where help is at hand. For other people, it might be more activities or a bit of company to combat loneliness.  
  
We will be talking to older residents to see what they would like us to be doing, with the aim of agreeing a new approach for older residents over the summer.
- Looking at **how residents can have more of a say** in what we do. We are lucky to have some very involved and committed residents, particularly those involved in our two Tenants' Association. Many residents though don't want to come out to regular meetings and we need to find ways of hearing their views as well. We are hoping to work with TPAS (the Tenant Participation Advisory Service) over the summer to help us shape a new way of listening to residents.
- **Launching our new website.** This has got lots of useful information about your tenancy and repairs, lets you report a repair and will soon let you make payments. It works just as well on a mobile phone so you can do things on the move.
- **More ways to pay,** making it easier for you to make payments. Residents are now able to pay your rent by debit or credit card, in the office and soon you will also be able to pay your rent online.

**Susan French**, Chief Executive Officer

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## Eden Grove

BHA's Eden Grove development, in partnership with Islington Council, is nearing completion and is due to be handed over in September.

The former derelict school caretaker's house has been replaced with purpose-built 2 & 3-bedroom properties. BHA look forward to officially opening these properties in the coming months and welcoming some brand-new residents!





## BHA Board Update

The BHA board are delighted to add Chyrel Brown to the board. Chyrel joins BHA with a wealth of experience in the housing sector and we look forward to adding her skills and expertise to the organisation. Chyrel will attend BHA board meetings leading – hopefully – to her formal appointment at the AGM later this year.

**For more information regarding the board and board members, please visit [barnsbury.org](http://barnsbury.org)**

## New Website

BHA are delighted to have launched a brand-new website. We would like to thank all of those who provided input, including staff, residents and board members. This allowed us to build a website that best reflects the needs of BHA residents.

The new website offers ways to report repairs, report anti-social behaviour and also find out about our latest news and events. It will also act as a source of information for residents to answer any questions or queries you have regarding your tenancy.



**Please visit [barnsbury.org](http://barnsbury.org) and have a look. Let us know what you think or would like to see added to the website by contacting Dean ([dean@barnsbury.org](mailto:dean@barnsbury.org)).**

## Exercise & Relaxation Classes

Exercise & Relaxation Classes take place at the community room in 60 Morland Mews every Tuesday at 10:30am.

These classes can aid your mobility & balance and also offers breathing exercises to help relax afterwards. Staff and residents have both attended and have thoroughly enjoyed it. It's also a good chance to get to know your neighbours and fellow BHA residents.

**All BHA residents are welcome to take part.**



## BHA: The Movie

We are celebrating the 50th anniversary since BHA was founded. To celebrate such an important milestone for BHA, a short film has been produced to chart the proud history and successes of the organisation.

There will be a special screening of this film held for BHA residents on Monday 16th June at Islington's own Screen on the Green, Upper Street. All residents are welcome to attend this screening with some light snacks and refreshments provided.

Following the screening you will be able watch this film at any time on our brand-new website – you might even recognise a face or two!

**Please visit [barnsbury.org/50thanniversary](http://barnsbury.org/50thanniversary) to watch a preview.**

BHA will also be publishing **50th anniversary booklet** to accompany the film which will be distributed to all residents where you can find out even more about the first fifty years of BHA.



## We Have Moved!

BHA have recently moved to a new office at **16b Cloudesley Street (N1 0HU)**. This is just a few minutes' walk away from our previous office at Upper Street.

This office offers us much more room to manoeuvre and also provides private space where residents can meet staff members to discuss things in confidence.

**Please feel free to come visit. Residents can also book an appointment at the office with a member of staff by getting in touch at [info@barnsbury.org](mailto:info@barnsbury.org) or on 020 7704 2324 – you might even get a tour of the place!**





## Free Football Coaching for Boys and Girls

Arsenal in the Community visited the football pitch again in April to provide some kids football coaching. This time even Gunnersaurus came along to join the fun!

Arsenal will be visiting Morland Mews again over two days Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> July & Friday 27<sup>th</sup> July.

**If you are interested in your child coming along to these sessions, please register your interest by contacting the office or emailing [dean@barnsbury.org](mailto:dean@barnsbury.org). We are also keen to have more girls come along and join in.**

## Alfie Goes To Uganda!

BHA's latest bursary recipient, Alfie, used his award to fund a trip to Uganda and continue his development as a coach by working with young people on behalf of Arsenal FC.



## Are You Interested In a Bursary From BHA?

The BHA Bursary Scheme Award's purpose is to help ease the costs of an apprenticeship, school, college or university course fees, equipment or class trips for residents.

**If you would like more information on applying for a bursary from BHA, please contact us or visit [barnsbury.org/bursary-scheme](http://barnsbury.org/bursary-scheme)**



## Welcome, Highbury View

Following the successful stock transfer in November, BHA are pleased to welcome the residents of Highbury View to the family!

**We look forward to providing Highbury View with the same high-quality service with a community focus that we have delivered in Islington for the last 50 years.**

## Guest Room

Our newest addition, Highbury View, has a guest room on site and this facility is now open to all BHA residents.

Highbury View is conveniently located just a short walk from Highbury & Islington station and could provide a comfortable and convenient place for relatives to stay.

### Guest room facilities include:

- Fully accessible property
- Twin room (with pull-out third mattress)
- Shower & bathroom facilities
- Use of a communal lounge, including a TV & free Wi-fi
- Use of the kitchen, including laundry facilities

The cost of staying for one night is £25 for one person & £30 for two people. Advance booking is recommended.



## Writing Opportunity!

We want to have more residents involved in creating our newsletters. If you have any ideas for articles, news you'd like to share or would like to be involved in the creation or editing of the newsletter then please get in touch.



Also, if you know anyone with experience in writing or planning a future career in journalism, BHA would be glad to offer a chance to gain some valuable experience.

**Please get in touch with dean (dean@barnsbury.org) to get involved.**



## Southend Trip

BHA residents are off to the seaside!

BHA and the Tenants' Association have put together the return of the trip to Southend that BHA residents enjoyed so much in the past.

The trip will take place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July with the bus leaving Morland Mews at 9:00am and returning by approx. 7:15pm that evening.

This trip is free to BHA residents but non-residents aged over 10 must pay £5 for the bus.

**If you are interested in securing your place, please contact dean@barnsbury.org and let us know as soon as possible as places are limited.**

## Looking To Move Home?

Fancy down-sizing to a smaller home? Need an extra bedroom? If you are interested in a mutual exchange with another BHA resident or a tenant or another social landlord, please visit Homeswapper ([www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)).

Homeswapper is made specifically for social housing tenants to find potential mutual exchanges. You can register and then browse through any potential properties that might fit your needs.

**To register, please visit [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk). For help and advice with mutual exchanges, please contact Felicity Singh, ([felicity@barnsbury.org](mailto:felicity@barnsbury.org)).**



## Meet Our Team

### Mary Mura, Administrator



**How long have you worked for BHA?**

I have worked for BHA since March 2014

**Describe your role in 3 words:**

Receptionist, administrator & counsellor!

**What is your proudest achievement?**

My proudest achievements are my 3 children Kerry, Philip and Frankie with the added bonus of my 4 delightful grandchildren, Eddie, Poppy, Scarlett & Megan.

**Where's your favourite place in the world?**

County Cavan, Ireland. Throughout my childhood we spent the whole summer holidays there with my grandparents. We used to earn ourselves extra pocket money picking blackberries...happy memories!

**If you could eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?**

Sunday lunch with all the trimmings!

**Lastly, what's the best thing about working for Barnsbury HA?**

Working with such a lovely and small team – we are like a family.

## Morland Mews Knitting Group

Some of our residents have started a new knitting group to make items for premature babies in support of The Royal London Neonatal Unit, UCH Neonatal Unit & Tiny Lives RVI.

This is a friendly group open to beginners and advanced knitters.

**They take place every Thursday from 5:00pm - 7:00pm at the Community Room at 60 Morland Mews. Come along and help out for a good cause.**





# Fun Day 2018

Make a note in your diary – BHA's annual Fun day will take place on **Saturday 8th September 2018** at the top site at **Morland Mews**.

As ever the event will be free with plenty of food, drink, rides and plenty more. Look out for more information closer to the time and we hope to see many BHA residents and their families there.



## Rent First

We have taken a number of tenants to Court recently for non-payment of rent, including five over the last three months. In one case, we are awaiting a Bailiff's Warrant and the tenant is facing eviction.

If we have to take you to court for non-payment of rent, the minimum cost for applying for court is £325.00 – which you will have to pay. There may be additional charges if we require a solicitor to attend.

Please ensure that you pay your rent at the beginning of each week in advance or each month in advance if you pay monthly.

If you have a Housing Benefit Overpayment deduction of over £11.10 per week, you may be able to get this reduced by obtaining an Income and Expenditure form from Islington Council at 222 Upper Street.

## Behind In Your Rent?

We can help! BHA will always work with residents that are having genuine financial difficulties. We work in partnership with St. Mungo's to provide money, welfare and debt advice. Clare from St Mungo's is a welfare rights expert and offers free & confidential money and debt advice. **Over the years, St. Mungo's have helped secure over £200,000 of income for our residents.**

### St Mungo's can offer advice on:

- Housing Benefit problems. Please don't delay as new backdating rules mean that you only have 4 weeks to get the problem sorted.
- ESA stoppages after a medical assessment, or if you think you are in the wrong ESA group
- Being sanctioned
- Moving from Disability Living Allowance (DLA) to Personal Independence Payments (PIP), or if your DLA stops or you want to make a new PIP claim
- Starting work or the impact of a new job on your benefits

**Please contact Felicity Singh, Housing Manager (felicity@barnsbury.org) to arrange an appointment with St Mungo's.**



## Do You Have Contents Insurance?

If not then you may be liable to pay for damages to furniture, belongings & decorations in the event of fire, theft vandalism or water damage. Unfortunately, some customers only realise this after the damage has been done.

BHA recommend to all households that they have household contents insurance. BHA have arranged a special contents insurance scheme with Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance. It offers very good value for money and has no excess. They offer "Simple" cover or "Simple+" cover, which includes accidental damage cover.

**For information on the types of cover available and how to apply, please contact 0345 671 8172 or visit their website: <https://www.rsagroup.com/>**



Household Contents Insurance  
Application Form

OUR NEW PAYMENT CARD APP...  
...ALLOWS YOU TO PAY ANYTIME,  
ANYWHERE  
Available for Apple, Android and Windows smartphones  
Download for FREE from the Apple App Store, Google Play or Windows Phone Store  
No 2 year contract or payment card as your method of payment in order to use the app

RSA

## New Phone Number or Email Address?

We rely on residents keeping us up to date with their details in order to contact them with important information or in emergencies. If you have changed your landline or mobile number, or would like us to be able to contact you by email, please let us know.

If your household circumstances have changed and a someone has moved in or out of your property, please also notify us. BHA need to be aware of who is living in each property to ensure they are safe, not over-crowded and comply with health and safety regulations.

**If your contact details or household details have changed, please contact [felicity@barnsbury.org](mailto:felicity@barnsbury.org) or call 020 7704 2324.**

## Tenancy Fraud & Sub-letting

BHA take tenancy fraud and unauthorised sub-letting very seriously.

A recent investigation into sub-letting and tenancy fraud in our homes has resulted in the ending of a tenancy on one of our estates.

As a tenant, you must use your BHA property as your main place of residence and not have a tenancy elsewhere. This is something all tenants have agreed to in their tenancy agreement, which is a legally binding document.

You cannot sub-let your home without BHA's permission. Tenants doing so are risking their homes and tenancies with BHA.

**If you suspect someone is sub-letting or not occupying their home, please contact BHA and let us know.**

## How BHA Deals With Your Personal Information

In order to be an effective landlord, we must collect your personal data and sometimes the personal data of your fellow householders and emergency contacts. For instance, this information could be used so that our contractors can contact you to organise a repair appointment or so we can trace a leak we've been made aware of. We've recently updated our Privacy Notice which sets out what information we collect and why we hold it, how we look after that information and how long we will retain it for, and your rights in relation to this information.

**The Privacy Notice can be found on our website <https://barnsbury.org/about/privacy>**

## Maintenance Matters



### Quarterly Prize Draw

Our first quarterly draw winner of this year was Janice! Thank you to Janice and all residents who returned their feedback forms this quarter.

#### How to win:

Following a repair being carried out at your property, you should be given a feedback form for you to complete and return to BHA. This is to ensure we are providing residents with a good service.

All returned forms are then put into a quarterly draw – the winner is then chosen at random to receive a £25 gift voucher for Sainsburys, Waitrose or Marks & Spencer.

**Forms can be submitted to any BHA member of staff, or at our offices at 60 Morland Mews and 16B Cloudesley Street.**

### Boilercare

Late last year we appointed Boilercare to carry out heating & gas works in our homes. Boilercare is operated by Steve Woodgates, the son of our former gas engineer (also named Steve) who sadly passed away last year.

Steve already knows our properties well and has enjoyed his time since taking over the contract. Thank you to all of BHA residents for making Steve feel welcome since starting with us.

**We also want to remind residents that BHA is legally-bound to carrying out yearly gas safety/boiler checks and periodic electrical checks in all properties. This is to ensure your gas and electrical supplies are up to standard and offer no risk to your safety, or the safety of others.**



Maintenance Matters continues on next page >>





## Improving Pugin Court

BHA are committed to providing residents with quality housing and as such have set about changing the layout in a couple of vacant studio flats in Pugin Court in order to make them lighter and brighter.

We hope to keep noise & disruption to a minimum by carrying out work during reasonable hours of the day.

## Property Alterations

You must have written permission from BHA before carrying out an alteration to your property – if you do not have this you may be asked to revert the property to its original condition at your own expense.

Alterations must meet a specific standard in order to comply with health & safety regulations. If they do not meet these specific requirements, and you do not have permission to alter your property, then you will be liable for the costs to return your property to a safe condition.

**If you would like to make BHA aware of any alterations you have carried out or would like permission for an alteration, please contact Helen (Helen@Barnsbury.org) or call 020 7704 2324.**

## Condensation/Dampness

Condensation is produced to some degree in all homes as a result of common domestic activities. When you cook, shower and breathe, moisture is produced, as well as when

drying clothes. To keep humidity to acceptable levels within your home you need good air circulation, effective heating and good ventilation.

As a landlord, we have a number of ways to manage the level of humidity in your homes and to avoid mould growth. We generally put extractors fans and also make use of passive vents (vents in external walls which allow for more air circulation and escape of moisture). Keeping your heating on is also a good way to avoid condensation.

If you report condensation, we will visit your property and provide advice.

### How to avoid excessive condensation:

- Keep extractor fans running as much as possible
- Dry clothes outside as much as possible
- Don't use unvented tumble driers
- Don't having large volumes of possessions up against walls, meaning that air can't circulate.

**If you have any problems with mould growth, please contact our Maintenance Manager (Helen McCormack) who will be happy to inspect the problem and help you find the most effective solution.**

## Carbon Monoxide Alarms

Along with the ongoing gas safety checks, BHA have now managed to install Carbon Monoxide (CO) meters in over 90% of our properties. CO meters are used to detect this gas in properties – which is highly poisonous and potentially lethal – and alert residents if it is present within their property.

Carbon Monoxide can leak into your property due to faulty gas appliances – this is why yearly gas checks are so important for residents' safety.

**If you are having any issues with your gas then please do not tamper with the equipment yourself. Report these issues to BHA on 020 7704 2324.**

**If it is out of office hours, or an emergency, you can also call the free Gas Emergency Services phone line on 0800 111 999.**

# Tenants' Association

## Board Minutes

Following consultation with the Tenants' Association, summary minutes of BHA board meetings will now be published online. This is so residents can keep informed of the latest BHA news and developments.

Minutes will be published on the BHA website (barnsbury.org/publications) and also distributed via our email newsletter.

**To join the mailing list, please contact Dean (dean@barnsbury.org).**



## TA Facebook/Email

If you would like to receive e-mail updates for the latest news, meetings and events from the TA, please contact ta4bha@gmail.com

**If you use Facebook, go to [www.facebook.com/TA4BHA](https://www.facebook.com/TA4BHA) and "Like" the page. You will then see the latest news and events for the TA – it's a great way to directly contact the TA.**

