

WINTER 2018



BARNSBURY
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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Hello and welcome to our Winter 2018 newsletter!



BHA recently welcomed our new member of Staff, Pam, and hope to introduce her to residents over the coming months.

Pam is bringing a new focus to our service to residents and will be arranging meetings to talk about this over the coming months.

BHA also wants to hear from you - our board members and staff members have been visiting estates and meeting residents to let us know what it's like being a BHA resident. We have visited over 40 homes so far and plan to do more in the near future. If you want to give us your feedback then please get in touch.

I would like to wish all of our residents a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Susan French, Chief Executive Officer

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Meet the Team: Pam joins BHA



BHA welcomed a new member of staff in September. Pam joins us as Operations Director and comes with lots of experience working in other housing associations. Pam is responsible for overseeing our operations of BHA and ensuring that residents continue to receive a great service.

How long have you worked for BHA?

Just over 3 months!

Describe your role in 3 words:

I can't do three words but "sorting out systems and building partnerships" is my best offer.

What is your proudest achievement?

I don't really think like that about my life but the best thing in it is my 19-year-old daughter Grace.

Where's your favourite place in the world?

Watnish on the Isle of Skye

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

Fish and chips. Though I love food and being limited to one thing doesn't sound like fun!

Lastly, what's the best thing about working for BHA?

BHA is small but beautifully formed. It has a great reputation and, for the most part, delivers great services.

The Board and Susan have the ambition to do better and do more for the BHA community so that is an opportunity to use some of my background in housing and charity leadership to help make a difference.

And I'm cheating again - the other best thing is the committed team who have made me very welcome.

NEW HOMES MATTER



Eden Grove Opening

Islington Council housing chair Diarmard Ward has called a smart new block of flats for social rent, built by Barnsbury Housing Association to replace a derelict school caretaker's house, a 'dream realised'.

'Now Barnsbury HA has given us four homes in the place of one. You can't ask for more than that.'

All four flats have been let to local families needing to move to a more suitable home locally, with the homes they vacate

going to other people on Islington Council's waiting list. The Eden Grove flats were built by Barnsbury HA, Islington's smallest non-specialist housing association, helped by development partner Islington & Shoreditch HA (ISHA), which project managed the scheme and acted as a channel for Greater London Authority funding.

'Barnsbury HA and ISHA are how housing associations should be run,' said Cllr Ward. 'Local and rooted in their community'.

The Eden Grove scheme also turned out better than Barnsbury HA had hoped.

"We put in a hefty subsidy from our own reserves but the support we got from others really clinched it," Ms French said. "It has turned out so well given a difficult site in a Conservation area and our working to a very tight building budget."

Barnsbury HA bought the derelict caretaker's house from the Diocese of Westminster and Islington Council. The council contributed £218,000 to the overall scheme costs, topped up by a £300,000 GLA grant and £280,000 from Barnsbury HA.

Complications that looked at times set to scupper the project included an inherited, mis-drawn boundary map and a squatter, whose choice of household furnishings were later found to include multiple lengths of stolen copper piping and lagging.

If you are interested in finding out more about BHA's Eden Grove development please visit [Barnsbury.org/development](https://barnsbury.org/development).

Morland Mews Garages

Barnsbury Housing Association is committed to providing good quality and affordable housing in Islington.

As an organisation founded in the time of a housing crisis in the 1960s, BHA see it as our responsibility to continue to provide high quality, affordable new homes for residents in an area with so many people in desperate need of housing. Because BHA only work in Islington, where land and property is so expensive, our options for finding sites are very limited.

This is why we are hoping to convert a number of garages on Morland Mews into new homes for social rent.



Before



After

The homes - all ground floor and level access - would be offered first to people living on and around the estate who need to move to a ground floor accessible home.

To find out more about this proposed development please visit barnsbury.org/development

COMMUNITY MATTERS



Arsenal Coaching

Arsenal in the Community returned in October to deliver free kids football coaching. Both sessions were greatly enjoyed by those that attended. More sessions will be planned for next year during school holidays.

If you are interested in finding out about the next sessions please contact Dean (dean@barnsbury.org).



Islington Pensioners Forum

In September over 70 members of Islington Pensioners Forum, families and friends enjoyed a happy afternoon at Highbury View. It started raining at 11 a.m. and continued all day! Half took shelter in the bungalow, and the rest, plus Ikko and Co jazz band were in the gazebos.

Everyone was warmed by the beef and vegetarian hot-pots cooked by Graham, BHA's Specialist Housing Officer,

Mencap Football Sessions

BHA are delighted that, following consultation with residents, the learning disability charity, Mencap will be holding football sessions for their service users on the football pitch at Morland Mews beginning in the New Year.



Sessions will take place on Saturday afternoons between 2pm-4pm. This is open to all and residents are encouraged to come along and take part.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact Dean (dean@barnsbury.org). To learn more about Mencap and the work they do please visit www.mencap.org.uk.

Community Computers

With more and more services moving online, BHA have added community computers at the community rooms at 60 Morland Mews and Highbury View.

Both computers are free for residents to use and can be accessed during BHA office hours.

If you would like help or support with using or learning to use computers for things like accessing the internet and email please get in touch and we will be more than happy to help!

followed by apple pie and cream, plus of course, various alcoholic beverages.

Islington Pensioners Forum was founded in 1986. Our aims are to reduce isolation and loneliness and to champion the rights and dignity of pensioners, locally, London-wide and nationally.

Our Forum meeting takes place at 10.30 a.m. on the third Thursday of the month at Islington Town Hall. We have a monthly newsletter sent by post or email to every member. We also have other activities, e.g. outings and a garden party as well as IT classes; we also take part in the annual Pensioners' Parliament in Blackpool in June.

You can join for an annual subscription of £5 (cheques payable to IPF). Our office is at 1a Providence Court, Providence Place, London, N1 0RN. Telephone: 0207 226 7687, Email: ipf@islingtonpensionersforum.org.

Dot Gibson, Highbury View Residents' Association and Islington Pensioners Forum Secretary

COMMUNITY ROOM @ 60 MORLAND MEWS



Free Exercise Class

Tuesday mornings at 10:30am

These classes can aid your mobility & balance and also offers breathing exercises to help relax afterwards.

Come for the exercise and stay for the tea and biscuits afterwards!



Bingo Nights

Tuesday evenings at 6:30pm

Feeling Lucky?

Bingo nights are run by residents and remain as popular as ever.

All BHA residents and friends are welcome to come along and join in.



Knitting Club

Thursday evenings at 5:00pm

Some of our residents have started a new knitting group to make items in support of charitable causes. This is a friendly group open to beginners and advanced knitters.

Come along and help out for a good cause.

Universal Credit Update



On 20th June 2018 Universal Credit was fully rolled out in Islington with every new working-age claimant now being moved on to Universal Credit.

Those on Universal Credit will now receive single monthly payment which will replace payments such as Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credits, Working Tax Credits, Jobseeker's Allowance and others. Universal Credit will not affect those who are retired and receiving a pension.

In order to receive Universal Credit, you must have a bank, building society or credit union account and access to the internet in order to make your claim.

Universal Credit is very different to Housing Benefit, which is paid directly to BHA. Instead the full amount - including the rent element of your payment - will be paid to your account and it will be your responsibility to then pay your rent to BHA.

Already the delays of payment of Universal Credit have caused over £9,000 in rent arrears to BHA. It is very important you inform BHA that you will be receiving Universal Credit as soon as possible in order for us to manage your rent account and provide you with any help and support you need.

To make an appointment with BHA's Welfare Rights Advisor, Clare please contact our office or Felicity Singh, Housing Manager (felicity@barnsbury.org).

**For help with Universal Credit claims you can also attend Barnsbury Jobcentre+ that is based at 1 Barnsbury Road, London, N1 0EX
Tel: 0345 604 3719.**

MAINTENANCE MATTERS



BHA take gas safety very seriously. This year we have carried out 100% of gas safety checks in our homes and have partnered with GasTag to continue to improve our annual Gas Safety Checks.

Annual Gas Safety Checks are a legal requirement for all landlords and GasTag offers a streamlined digital service that makes the administration behind annual gas safety checks less paper-based and less time consuming. It also means that Gas Safety Certificates can be emailed directly to residents following their gas check.

Residents should not experience any change to their services or to their Gas Safety Check while GasTag is being rolled out to our homes. For more information please don't hesitate to contact BHA's office.

Can you smell gas or do you think there's a gas leak?

To make sure that you stay safe, so please:

- don't smoke
- don't light matches or cigarette lighters
- don't turn light switches or anything electrical on or off
- put out any naked flames such as candles
- open all the doors and windows
- turn off your gas supply at the meter (and leave it switched off until you're sure it's safe to turn it back on again)

Call the National Gas Service Emergency Line on 0800 111 999 to report a suspected gas leak.

Keeping Shared Areas Clear

It is our duty to ensure that our estates are as safe as possible for all residents. Following Fire Risk Assessments across all of our estates, BHA will be putting all of the most urgent recommended actions into effect over the next few months. BHA carries out Fire Risk Assessments of our estates to ensure they meet Fire Safety standards.

One of the main findings of these assessments was the gathering of clutter in some of the communal areas and landings. We must remind residents to please keep landings and communal areas clear of objects and clutter. As well as this being a fire risk in itself, it also blocks communal stairs and fire exits.

If you have items in communal areas, BHA will ask you to remove them and take appropriate action to ensure this is carried out.

Damp & Mould

Following reports of damp in properties, we are now working with a damp and mould specialist, Tanya Eldridge.

Tanya has carried out a number of surveys and tutorials with residents, these are very practical sessions about how you can reduce the levels of condensation in your homes that leads to mould. There has been some really good feedback on these so far, with tenants describing it as useful and informative.

If you are experiencing damp or mould in your home then please contact us and we will see if Tanya may be able to help.

Hoarding

BHA staff and contractors recently received training in dealing with and support cases of hoarding. This training has helped our staff and contractors understand this complex problem and the level of support needed in order to overcome this challenge.

Extreme hoarding cases can be very complex and can require the input of many agencies and workers in order to come to a satisfactory conclusion. This can often take a very long time and many hours of work to slowly improve things.

If you or anyone you know are struggling with this issue please contact BHA so help and support can be provided.

SERVICE MATTERS

Senior Tenants Services Review

BHA is unusual in that more of our tenants are in their 50s or older than is typical for Islington, where over half of residents are 35 or younger.

Over half of our tenants are over 50, and 37% are over retirement age. A lot have been with us for 40 years and though their needs may be changing, they don't want to leave their home or neighbourhood. BHA want our tenants to stay living independently as long as that is practical for them, which means seeing how we can adapt our service and homes, as well as providing more level access homes.

Instead, we've been working with a group of tenants in older age groups to identify the types of support they say they will value as their needs change. So far, the list includes:

- quick and easy adaptations
- a handyman service
- assessing ahead risks and needs for all tenants when they reach a certain age to offset avoidable risks
- making some of our homes easier to live in for tenants with deteriorating mobility.

In-House Specialist Support

BHA also have our own in-house specialist support. Housing officer, Graham, who is based at our Highbury View sheltered scheme.

He now supports vulnerable older tenants in some of our other BHA homes too.

If you are interested in getting involved in shaping this service and giving us feedback on the services BHA offer senior tenants then please contact us.



Meet the Team



In November Barnsbury HA Staff and board members visited estates and homes of our residents in order to get to know schemes and the people living in them better. They also wanted to find out how Barnsbury HA are performing as a landlord.

After visiting over 40 residents across many of BHA's estates we received some great feedback and also picked up on issues and improvements.

- So far 92.5% of residents have said that they find BHA staff helpful and approachable.
- BHA's repairs and maintenance service satisfaction scored on average 8.3 out of 10.
- Residents rated their overall satisfaction with BHA on average 8.9 out of 10.
- BHA scored on average 9.3 out of 10 for residents to recommend us as a landlord to family and friends.

A special thanks to the residents that took the time to invite us into their home and speak to us and give us feedback on what it's like having BHA as a landlord. BHA plan to visit some more estates in early 2019.

One issue that arose from the feedback was the need to change the name of the newsletter to better reflect all of BHA's residents. We will look to speak to residents and review this in 2019.

Rent Collection Review

BHA have launched a review in to how rent is collected from residents. This is because BHA's rent arrears are higher compared similar-sized organisations in London.

The services BHA provide rely on residents paying their rent on time and in advance – more so at a time when funding to Housing Association's has decreased significantly and the impact Universal Credit will have on our ability to collect rent.

BHA have launched this review to make it's processes clearer and more effective but also to better support residents in managing their rent account. If you require support please let us know – we provide free impartial and confidential welfare rights advice in partnership with St Mungos.

BHA hope to consult with resident in early 2019 about the outcomes of this review. Please look out for an invite to give your feedback to us.

If you have any questions about this review please contact Dean (dean@barnsbury.org).

Prize Draw!

Feeling the pinch after an expensive Christmas and New Year?

BHA are offering residents the chance to win a £100 gift voucher!

To enter is easy – all residents that have a clear rent account on Friday 1st February 2019 will be entered into the prize draw to win!

Look out for news of the winner and the next draw in the next newsletter!



Tenants' Association

Email: TA4BHA@gmail.com

 /TA4BHA



It's the time of year when many fruits and vegetables are in abundance and can be brought cheaply from the local markets.

Vegetables and fruits, such as Sweetcorn, carrots, pumpkin, butternut squash, beetroot, plums and apples are all in season right now. These supply us with lots of vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients which are great for keeping us healthy through the colder months.

Why not try making a quick hearty soup packed full of seasonal vegetables and goodness? All you'll need is:

- 1kg pumpkin or butternut squash
 - 2 chopped onions
 - 2 sticks of celery
 - 2 crushed garlic cloves
 - 1 chopped carrot
 - 2 tbsp olive oil or butter
 - 700ml of stock
 - 2 tsp cumin
 - Salt and pepper to season
1. Heat olive oil gently and fry chopped onions and garlic on a low heat for 5 minutes, then add cumin and stir in
 2. Peel and remove seeds from squash or pumpkin and chop in pieces, with the celery and carrot. Add to the pan
 3. Cook for another 10 minutes, stirring to prevent burning
 4. Add salt and pepper and vegetable stock, bring to the boil and simmer for 10 -15 minutes until vegetables are soft
 5. Allow to cool slightly and then puree in a blender, serve with crusty bread or freeze for later.

Look out for our next Nutrition update where we'll look at kids' healthy lunch box tips.

Christmas Opening Hours

The office will be closed from 1:30pm on Monday 24th December until 9:30am on Wednesday 2nd January.

Monday 24th December	- Office closed from 1:30pm
Tuesday 25th December	- Office closed
Wednesday 26th December	- Office closed
Thursday 27th December	- Office closed
Friday 28th December	- Office closed
Monday 31st December	- Office closed
Tuesday 1st January	- Office closed
Wednesday 2nd January	- Office opens at 9:30am and normal hours resume

During the time the office is closed, genuine emergency repairs should be reported to our out-of-hours repairs service on 020 7704 7300.

With best wishes for a great Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year, from all the team at BHA.



BARNSBURY
HOUSING ASSOCIATION

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