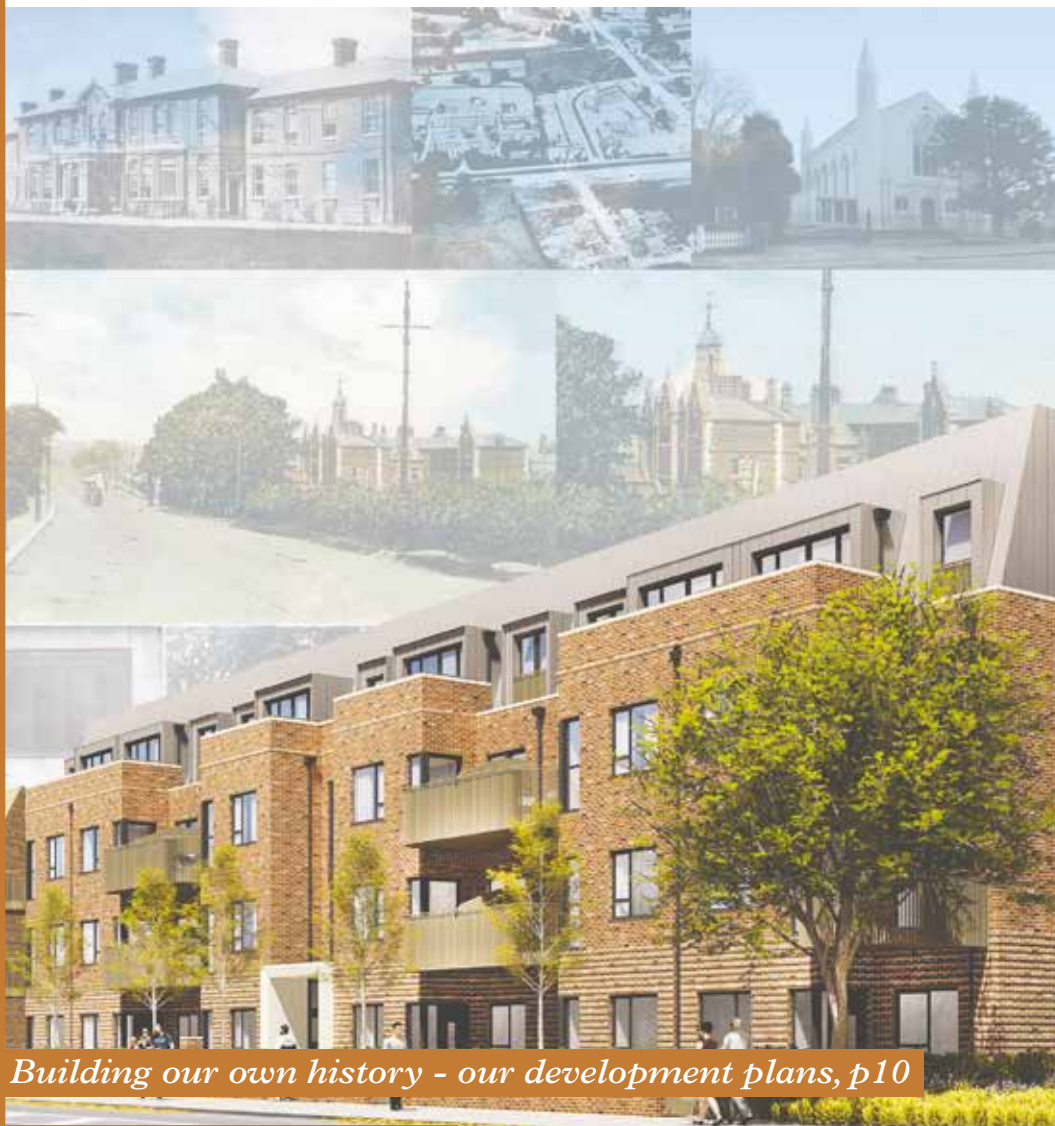


Barnet Homes Residents' Magazine

Issue 58 | Spring 2018



# atHome



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## How to contact us

**Freephone 0800 389 5225 (24 hours, translators available)**

<b>Email</b>	xxxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxg
<b>Online</b>	barnethomes.org
<b>Repairs</b>	0800 389 5225
<b>Leaseholder repairs service</b>	020 8361 6171
<b>Leaseholder Services Team</b>	020 8359 6020
<b>Right to Buy applications and enquiries</b>	020 8359 6020
<b>Pay your rent or service charges</b>	0845 356 3456 (24 hours) or barnet.gov.uk
<b>Our offices</b>	Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, N20 0EJ
	Grahame Park Office, 17 The Concourse, Grahame Park Estate, Colindale, NW9 5XA
<b>Assist service</b>	020 8359 4841 or xxxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxx.xxg
<b>Complaints</b>	Feedback can be given to us by email, in writing, by telephone, and in person. Please visit <b>barnethomes.org/complaints</b> or use the main information above to contact the Complaints Team

# Welcome from our new CEO, Tim Mulvenna



**Customers** – Delivering a good, value for money service to you. I enjoyed meeting John Davies, the Chair of our Performance Advisory Group (PAG). This group is as close as it gets to ensuring that tenants and leaseholders feedback is addressed. It's brilliant to hear more of you are joining PAG. Turn to page 16 for an update from them.

**People** – Internally I want to ensure our staff feel supported and engaged – which is all part of improving customer satisfaction, too.

**Growth** – Barnet needs more affordable housing, so we were delighted to get the news that our registered provider, Opendoor Homes was given planning permission to build 33 new affordable homes for rent in Burnt Oak. Building work for the new extra care scheme at Moreton Close is also making progress – visit page 11 to learn about the history behind the new name.

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new Chief Executive of The Barnet Group and give you an idea of my priorities. Hello! I have worked in housing for the past 13 years and been in customer services all my working life, so my main focus has always been on providing great services. I have learnt that the best way to do this is to listen to what customers are saying.

In my first few weeks I have spent my time visiting our properties and meeting our staff and customers because I want to understand what works and where we can improve.

Here are some of my major priorities:

**Safety** – First and foremost my focus will be on our residents' safety. This has always got to be our top priority. Please make sure you read the Fire Safety section on pages 20-21.

Over the coming weeks and months I will be spending a lot of time visiting our properties and schemes, so if you see me out and about then please come and say hello!

All the best,

Tim

## About atHome

If you have any comments or questions about atHome, please write to: **Communications Team, 4th Floor, Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, London N20 0EJ**, or email [axxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxx.xgx](mailto:axxxxx@xxxxxxxxxxxx.xgx). You can also find an electronic copy at [barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org).

Editors: Tamara Wright and Rebecca Savory | Design: Andrzej Perkins

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary for Domestic Violence support services



Need advice about domestic violence? The One Stop Shop is open every Thursday from 9:30am-12:30pm at Barnet House. You can also call **020 8359 4797** for more information.

Barnet Homes' Domestic Violence Services; the One Stop Shop and Minerva House recently celebrated their second anniversaries.

The One Stop Shop is a free multi-agency drop-in service for women and men. It provides DV victims and those at risk with advice, information and support from partner organisations.

Clients receive help with housing, health, legal services, Women's Aid, children's services and more. 325 people received support from the One Stop Shop last year.

Minerva House is Barnet Homes' six-bed domestic violence refuge. The refuge underwent a mini-face lift with the help of volunteers, including staff from Hamersons, last summer.

Finally, the Minerva House project was recently shortlisted for a 'True Honour' award by the Iranian Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation, IKWRO, for its work in supporting women from those communities.

# Citizens Advice Bureau at BOOST Burnt Oak

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) has been giving people free, confidential and independent advice since 1939.

You can now access their services locally in the Burnt Oak area.

As of Tuesday 23 January, CAB has been operating a drop-in session every other Tuesday at Burnt Oak Library from 10am to 12 midday. The next session is Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> April.



## BOOST@184

BOOST@184 opened its doors at its new permanent location in Childs Hill in December 2017.

The BOOST Childs Hill project now has a fixed home called BOOST@184. It's aimed at helping residents from the Child's Hill Ward and the Whitefields area near Brent Cross find work.

If you need help with employment and training issues, you can contact BOOST@184 the following ways:

**Office:** 184 Cricklewood Lane, NW2 2DX  
**Opening times:** 9am - 5pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
**Call:** 020 8359 7200  
**Email:** [BoostChildsHill@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:BoostChildsHill@barnet.gov.uk)  
**Facebook/Twitter:** @BoostChildsHill

# A FRESH START FOR MR AND MRS G

You may recall the bedroom tax was introduced by the Government in the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and effective from 1 April 2013. The tax means a cut in housing benefit if you live in a council or housing association home with one or more 'spare bedrooms'.

Barnet Homes' Fresh Start scheme aims to help tenants who are affected by the bedroom tax to move to a new home that suits their existing housing needs.

Mr and Mrs G lived in a four-bedroom council property, but mobility issues made the property medically unsuitable for them. The couple were also affected by the bedroom tax, so there were good reasons for them to consider moving to a smaller, more affordable property.

Due to Mrs G's medical issues, the couple had to move within the same area so that her doctors could continue to make necessary home visits. When a bungalow became available in the area, they were happy to accept it. The bungalow has now

been fitted with a level access shower room, and Mr G says this has had a huge impact on Mrs G's quality of life, allowing her to utilise the whole property.

In the old property, Mrs G had not stepped outside for 10 years because she suffers from agoraphobia (anxiety). However, the new property has a back garden, and Mrs G has recently found the courage to stand in the garden and enjoy the fresh air - a huge feat for her! Mr G is planning a small patio area and is hopeful that Mrs G will be able to use this in the coming summer months.

## Is your property too large?

We can help you move to a smaller one and can offer you money to move. Please contact Denise Bracken for a chat about this scheme on **020 8359 4695**.



# Thinking of moving?

Barnet Homes has a number of partners who can help you move to more suitable accommodation. Below are six of the best options for you if you want to move to a more manageable property, another part of London or to the seaside or countryside.

For more information about any of our schemes, use the contact details on the right-hand side or visit [barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org).



Want to move out of London and keep your secure tenancy? Homefinder UK is affordable and self-registered

Please contact  
Leanne Evans  
for a chat about  
these schemes on  
**020 8359 6010**  
or email her on  
**Leanne.Evans@barnethomes.org**



Want to move to another London Borough and keep your secure tenancy? Try Housing Moves



Are you over 60?  
Want to live by the seaside?  
This scheme has bungalows in many locations.

Please contact  
Denise Bracken  
for a chat about  
these schemes on  
**020 8359 4695**  
or email her on  
**Denise.Bracken@barnethomes.org**



Is your property too large?  
We can help you move to a smaller one and can offer you money to move.



Use HomeSwapper or Swap and Move to swap with another council or Housing Association tenant.

Please contact  
Nd Eboka for a chat  
about these  
schemes on  
**020 8359 7152**  
or email him  
on **Nd.Eboka@barnethomes.org**



# Changes to legislation relating to service charge debt

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2017, the Debt Pre-Action Protocol was introduced. The aim of the protocol is to encourage communication between both parties so that any issues can be resolved before matters are escalated to court.

## New collection procedure

If you have difficulty meeting your service charge payments, and you have not discussed this with us, you will receive two reminder letters to confirm the amount still outstanding. If you are still not able to make

payment or make suitable arrangements for payment within the time stated on the reminder letter, you will then be sent a letter of claim.

## The letter of claim

The letter of claim will confirm the amount outstanding as at the date of the letter. The protocol then gives you 30 days to provide a response and/or make full payment of the debt. You will receive:

- Your letter of claim
- An information sheet
- A reply form
- A financial information form,
- A copy of form EX50 (which details some of the additional costs which

you may incur, if we have to issue court proceedings against you).

You **must** complete and return a copy of the reply form and financial information within 30 days of receiving the letter of claim. If we do not receive your response to the letter of claim within this time, or any contact from you to discuss the matter, we may then issue court proceedings against you.

## The reply form

You may use the reply form to request copies of any relevant documents in relation to the charges. You can also enclose copies of any documents you feel support the case that you do not owe the amount we are demanding, such as details of payments made.

You may wish to seek debt advice prior to returning the reply form. If this cannot be

obtained within the 30 day period from the letter of claim, you must provide us with details, as specified in the reply form.

Should you indicate that you require further time to pay, your proposal for payment will be reviewed. If your proposal is not acceptable to the council, you will receive a written response with our reasons for declining your offer of payment.





## Next steps

If we have been unable to resolve the issues which have prevented you from maintaining your account (in accordance with your lease) and the council decides to take the matter further, you will receive a notice of our intention to issue legal proceedings against you and within 14 days you may receive a claim form from the courts.

Should you wish to view a copy of the Debt Pre-Action Protocol, you can see it online by visiting: [bit.ly/2FmLD31](https://bit.ly/2FmLD31)

If you are experiencing financial difficulty please contact Barnet Homes Leaseholder Services at your earliest opportunity.

Tel: **020 8359 6020**

Email: [LHS@barnethomes.org](mailto:LHS@barnethomes.org).

## Get involved

The Leaseholder Services Team will be holding focus groups throughout the year to discuss with leaseholders and freeholders issues that affect our service. This will include a review of management and administration fees.

If you would like to take part, please send your name, property address and phone number to [LHS@barnethomes.org](mailto:LHS@barnethomes.org).

If you are not able to email please call us on **020 8359 6020** and a member of the team will take your details.

# The past and future of our development sites

Barnet Homes' registered provider, Opendoor Homes, is well underway with its new build development plans for 320 affordable homes for rent in Barnet by 2020. On behalf of Barnet Council, Barnet Homes is also on schedule with Ansell Court, a much needed dementia friendly

extra care scheme, comprising 53 units, in Mill Hill.

Behind every development there's a fascinating story for history enthusiasts – read the story about Ansell Court and Burnt Oak Registry Office below.

## The varied history of the Burnt Oak Registry Office

Historical analysis of the Burnt Oak Registry Office site, set to become 30 new affordable homes for rent, has revealed that transformation is not a new concept for the area.

The former Registry Office is on a section of the Edgware Road which has been found to have originally been a Roman road, proving there has been a settlement in the area for millennia.

In the 1880s, Burnt Oak was provided with a tin hut for use as a church and an elementary school and with a few more shops a small thriving community began. The area remained predominantly rural until the 1920s when the London Underground station opened and the London County Council bought land to build 4,000 homes.

By the 1930s, the population of the Burnt Oak ward had grown to 21,545 people.

In more recent times, the site was passed into the control of the Middlesex County Council, and was rebuilt as Edgware Community Hospital, later the Redhill Public

Assistance Institution and then Redhill Hospital. The former Redhill Hospital buildings have now been demolished and replaced with housing, and the former Barnet Register Office stands at the front of the site.

### **Burnt Oak Registry Office**

30 affordable homes for rent  
4 two-bedroom accessible flats  
18 two-bedroom flats  
8 one-bedroom flats  
Due to be completed  
Spring 2020





## Thirty-three new affordable homes for Burnt Oak

The plan to develop 33 new affordable homes for rent will go ahead in Burnt Oak after the proposal was granted planning consent last month.

Opendoor Homes' development site at The Croft in Burnt Oak was granted approval by the Planning Committee at their meeting on 8 February.

### The Croft

33 affordable homes  
for rent

Due to be completed  
by Winter 2019

This scheme will include five wheelchair-accessible properties with associated parking and communal spaces.

The new homes at The Croft make up 10% of the overall new build development plans of the Opendoor Homes programme.

## Ansell Court namesake for Mill Hill soldier

Barnet Homes' newest housing development will be named after a fallen Mill Hill soldier and Medal for Bravery recipient, who served in the First World War almost from day one, and lost his young life only months before the end.

William Ansell, who was born in Hendon and grew up in Mill Hill, will be remembered by the newly developed namesake Ansell Court, which will provide 53 dementia friendly extra care homes for Barnet residents.

Mr Ansell would have been amongst the first to serve his country when the Great War broke out, having already been in the army for nine years.

He joined as a regular in July 1905 at Mill Hill barracks and when the war broke out on 28 July 1914 he was serving within weeks, mobilising at Mill Hill on 5 August 1914.

He also married in 1914 and his only child was born later the same year, by which time he was already posted in France or Belgium.

Among his war accolades, Mr Ansell was promoted to Corporal in August 1916 and in June 1917 was awarded the Military Medal for Bravery in the field, after being part of the London Battalion's successful Battle of Arras in April.

On 19 May 1918, aged just 29 and only six months shy of the end of the war, William Ansell was killed in action by an air raid. He was buried at Etaples.

### Ansell Court extra care scheme

53 one and  
two-bedroom flats  
Due to be completed  
Winter 2018





# Universal Credit is coming!

## Everything you need to know

## What is Universal Credit (UC) full service?

UC is part of the Government's wider welfare reform plans. It replaces the following six working-age benefits with a single household benefit payment:

1. **Jobseeker's Allowance**  
(income based)
2. **Employment & Support Allowance**  
(income based)
3. **Working Tax Credit**
4. **Housing Benefit**
5. **Income Support**
6. **Child Tax Credit**

### Waiting for your first payment?

If your claim is successful, you will likely have to wait at least 6 weeks for your first payment. So if you're making a Universal Credit application soon, start putting some money aside now whilst you wait for your first payment.

### Your payment

You might receive more money under Universal Credit than when you were on Housing Benefit and other legacy benefits. This is because the Housing Element of Universal Credit is included in the payment you have received. So it's your responsibility to pay your Housing Element to Barnet Homes to cover your rent, as Housing Benefit used to.

# Who will it affect?

- Those at least 16 years old but less than the qualifying age for Pension Credit (different for men and women)
- Those who are not in full time education
- Those who have capital under £16,000
- This is not an exhaustive list. Please see **gov.uk/state-pension-age** to use the eligibility checker.

## Are you in Temporary Accommodation?

From April 2018 you will need to claim Universal Credit from the DWP for your personal and child elements and Housing Benefit from Barnet Council for your rent.

# How can you claim UC?



1. Access **signin.service.gov.uk/start** and use Verify Online to verify your identity.
2. Create or use an existing email account
3. Set up or use an existing bank account or credit union account
4. Visit **gov.uk/apply-universal-credit** to apply for and maintain your UC claim online.

## Recently applied for UC?

Please call the Rental Income Team on **020 8359 3102** as soon as possible to let us know you've claimed. If you have received a rent and service charge variation letter, please take the letter to your Job Centre work coach so they can update your Housing Costs element.

# When will it affect me?

UC will become active across the Borough of Barnet from May 2018 onwards.

# Support

If you need help with your UC application or applying for an advance payment, contact the Welfare Reform Task Force on **020 8359 2442**.

You can use a computer for free, get help with your UC application, and get advice on getting into employment by contacting Burnt Oak BOOST on **020 8359 5600** and visiting the team at Burnt Oak library

For IT classes in Barnet: contact Nick Black on 020 8275 5053 for courses at East Barnet and Hendon library or Nicola Borthwick on 020 8266 4211 for courses at Grahame Park library.

For additional courses, including English languages classes, contact Jacqui Jones on **020 8359 4777**.

# Sign up to pay your rent by direct debit

Sign up to pay your rent by Direct Debit and you'll be entered into our prize draw twice a year!

**First prize:** A month's free rent

**Second prize:** A week's free rent

**Third prize:** £25 high street shopping vouchers

## How to pay

Payments by rent card must now only be made at PayPoint outlets. You can no longer make payments at Post Offices.

For more information, or to find the nearest one to you, please visit [paypoint.com](http://paypoint.com)

## 1% rent decrease



In 2015 the Government announced a 1% rent decrease from April 2016 for social housing tenants.

This means that until 2019 your rent will decrease by 1% instead of increasing it as it has in previous years.

You should have already received a rent update letter explaining what your new rent will be and how it was calculated.

The Government is reviewing social rent at the moment, and we will keep you updated with any changes.

### Increase in the maximum Right to Buy discount

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have announced an increase in the maximum Right to Buy discount from £104,900 to £108,000 which will come into effect on the 6th April 2018.

# STAYING SAFE

## Message from the Borough Commander Simon Rose

I wanted to update you on some changes you might not have noticed, some you will and some that I would like to help you avoid. Firstly, you may be aware from the Commissioner's recent announcement the Met police will soon be moving to a new structure with one Borough Commander for three Boroughs.

For us it will be Barnet, Brent and Harrow that will be brigaded. Local policing will however remain very largely unchanged. There will still be two dedicated ward officers and one PCSO

(Police Community Safety Officer) per ward and these officers will remain the day-to-day point of contact for local issues. There will administrative changes behind the scenes but you should notice very little change.

Where I hope you are starting to see the changes will be if

you live, work in or travel to Burnt Oak. We have been working with Barnet Council to get the alley gating around the steps to Watling Market authorised and securing Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs) against persistent offenders.

The Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) is now in force and the Council has done a lot of work to reduce littering and proactively direct problem street drinkers into treatment. There is still more to do, but I hope residents have already started to notice the difference in the community as a result of these actions.

Finally, an area we want to help people avoid becoming a victim of is cybercrime. There has been a sustained increase in this area - from various types of online fraud, to online hate crime and various types of 'phishing' or email scams.

As with all crime, prevention is always easier than the cure. Here are a few things to help keep you safe:

- Ensure your virus protection is up to date
- Be aware of the latest scams by regularly checking **actionfraud.police.uk** or speaking to your local Safer Neighbourhood team who you can contact via **met.police.uk**.





# FROM PAG TO YOU

Dear residents,

As the Resident Service Champion for the gas services contract, I was involved in the appointment and mobilisation of the new domestic gas contractor Mears, who will be active from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April. PAG has been working with Barnet Homes' Gas Contract Team to ensure that everything is in place for a seamless transition from one contractor to another.

I have seen staff at Barnet Homes working really hard with Mears to ensure that everything is in order for them to deliver an improved service for us all. You can be assured that PAG will be keeping a close eye on the progress of Mears and ensuring that we continue to be involved in monitoring their performance.

Back in December, I attended the Customer Awards and Thank You Party at Hendon Town Hall. It was a great evening with the Mayor, Cllr Brian Salinger, and our sponsor contractors handing out awards to well-deserving winners from Barnet Homes and Your Choice Barnet. You can see a full write up on page 20.

Remember, if you come across a resident who goes the extra mile either by being a good neighbour or working hard to improve their community, you can now nominate them for a resident award by visiting **[barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org)**.

Spring is upon us and although summer may seem a long way off it's never too soon to start getting your garden ready for Barnet Homes' annual Finest Flower competition. Please keep an eye out on our website to find out when the entry window is open.

I am also delighted to welcome two new members to PAG - Carol and Eleanor. Don't forget you can also contact PAG by emailing **[getinvolved@Barnethomes.org](mailto:getinvolved@Barnethomes.org)**.

John Davies  
Chair of PAG

# WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS ELEANOR AND CAROL

## ELEANOR BEYER

"I am keen to get involved, so was delighted when I found out I could join PAG. I think everyone who is a resident, regardless of ownership, should have a voice both to praise and indicate issues so that they can be resolved. I think that PAG will give me a chance to provide some objective input and bring some of my experience to help improve work undertaken by Barnet Homes. As a leaseholder and relatively new resident, I think this will give me the chance to learn a lot about resident issues and how things work here. I am interested in the arts and previously worked in museums and property management."

## CAROL DOUET

"I welcome learning more about the ethos of Barnet Homes as a PAG member.

I am willing to put in the time required to be an active participant of the group and will hopefully provide a new and respectful view and perspective"



ELEANOR



CAROL

# KEEN GARDENERS, GET GROWING!



We would like to remind all our gardening enthusiasts out there that our Finest Flowers gardening competition will take place again this summer.

Spring has sprung, so there's no better time to prepare your gardens and balconies to ensure your displays are blooming just in time for judging in July.

Please keep an eye out for information on how to enter the Finest Flowers competition in the summer edition of atHome and our website, **[barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org)**. Happy gardening!

# Start nominating for our 2018 Customer Awards!

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do. To recognise those who go the extra mile to improve their communities and support fellow residents, we hold a Customer Awards ceremony every year.

Last year, our awards ceremony was followed by a Thank You party for everyone involved – always a special way to cap off a busy year for The Barnet Group and our customers.

We greatly appreciate the sponsorship of the event by Armstrong York, Mears, R. Benson, Morgan Sindall, Pellings,

Vallectric and W.G. Wigginton. Without their generous contributions, it would be difficult to hold important community events like this.

We would like to whole-heartedly thank all the residents who were nominated, shortlisted and won awards last year – our communities wouldn't be the same without your efforts.

Finally, we'd like to encourage you to get nominating for our 2018 Customer Awards, by visiting **[barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org)**, where you can also view photos of the 2017 awards.

## Congratulations Customer Award Winners 2017!

### Barnet Homes

#### **Good Neighbour Award**

Michelle Tye

#### **Residents' Association or Community Group Award**

The Residents of Drummond House

#### **Volunteer of the Year (aged 25 and over)**

Carl Godfrey

#### **Volunteer of the Year (aged under 25)**

Elias Abreu

#### **Staff Choice**

Derrick Chung

### Your Choice Barnet

#### **Making Progress Award**

Sarah Jane Parkinson

#### **Striving for Independence Award**

Danny Kirkham

#### **Carer Contribution**

Jane Glear

#### **Volunteer of the Year**

Michael Barfoot

#### **Staff Choice Award**

Penny McDonald

# Free WheeliO bike loans for Barnet Homes residents in Childs Hill

The Hope of Childs Hill (THOCH) were delighted to be the recipients of a £13,000 award from Transport for London to kick-start their bike hire project for residents living in Childs Hill.

The three-year funding will allow the community-run organisation to purchase 20 bikes for adults, children and three electric bikes for Barnet Homes residents to hire for free!

Working in partnership with BOOST Childs Hill, THOCH aims to enrich the lives of residents in Childs Hill by creating a healthier and happier community.

Access to bikes will initially only be open to Barnet Homes residents. The project

aims to start running in Spring from Basing Hill Park. Working with Barnet Council, Re Services will also be offering free cycling lessons in the community, with a range of bicycle maintenance classes and workshops for residents planned.

THOCH is a community initiative creating transformational change, to provide programmes, offer services and engage in other activities that promote well-being and support community development in Childs Hill.

Barnet Homes residents living in the Childs Hill can register their interest at the BOOST@184 office:

**184 Cricklewood Lane, Childs Hill, NW2 2DX.**



# Fire safety update: Granville Estate to be re-clad in A1 non-combustible system

A fully fire tested and A1 rated non-combustible aluminium cladding system will be installed on three tower blocks at Barnet Homes' Granville Estate starting in Spring, with the aim of having the work completed by the end of the year.

Barnet Council has committed an initial sum of £17.5million towards a range of high-priority fire safety works across 26 tower blocks, which includes the removal and re-cladding of the three blocks at Granville Estate.

The chosen replacement system is solid aluminium with stonewool insulation, has undergone a full BR135 fire test and, with a subsequent fire safety rating of A1 non-combustible, exceeds the requirements of the current building regulations for fire resistance.

Barnet Homes understands it has been a challenging and stressful time for the residents affected, and is very pleased to now be providing a safe and high-quality solution.

Other high-priority fire safety works are continuing in the other 23 tower blocks across the borough, such as upgrading fire doors, improving compartmentation between flats and floors, upgrading ventilation systems and improving access in and out of blocks for emergency situations.

Stay up to date on the latest fire safety news across the borough at **[barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org)**, or by following us on Facebook, **[facebook.com/BarnetHomes](https://facebook.com/BarnetHomes)**.



## Follow us on Facebook

Did you know Barnet Homes is on Facebook?

We will be posting a lot of fire safety information over the coming months, and giving our page a 'like' is a quick and easy way for you to stay up-to-date with our latest news, see our photos and watch our videos.  
**[facebook.com/barnethomes](https://facebook.com/barnethomes)**

# Fire Safety top tips:

## Spring cleaning



Scrub down your oven, hob, cooker hood and grill to avoid a build-up of fat and grease which could ignite and cause a fire.



Clean out your toaster to clear a build-up of crumbs which can catch alight.



Make sure your escape routes are clear of obstacles that could slow you down or trip you over.



Ensure all communal areas and hallways are clear of personal items. This is essential for residents and emergency services getting in and out of the building safely in an emergency.

# Mears are our new gas contractors



As of 28 March, as well as already delivering our repairs contract, Mears will now be delivering the gas contract to you on behalf of Barnet Homes.

We worked closely with resident representatives from our Performance

Advisory Group (PAG) to make sure your views were represented in the selection and mobilisation of our new gas contractor. The tendering process started in September 2017 and involved several interviews and site visits.

## 30 years of Mears

- Mears started off in 1988 as a small responsive repairs and maintenance company. Thirty years later it is a national market leader.
- Mears repairs and maintains around 15% - over 700,000 - of the social homes in the UK, from remote rural villages to large inner city estates.
- Mears holds the Customer Service Excellence standard, a Government accreditation which recognises their continued commitment to customer-focused service.
- Based on the performance of Mears' repairs contract, we were also delighted to award Mears in two areas (Responding to individuals and One Team, One Outcome) at the Barnet Homes' Contractors 2017 awards.

## Mears in the community

Mears has always been committed to contributing to the needs of our wider society.

As part of this commitment to the community, Mears' staff will also be volunteering at various resident-focused initiatives and events.

## Community events

Last year, we held a fantastic Customer Awards event to recognise our residents who go the extra mile and work hard to improve their community. We are able to hold these events thanks in part to Mears' valuable contribution and commitment to social value.

Every time you allow Mears first time access to carry out the annual gas safety

check, they will donate £1 towards local groups and charities. It is anticipated that this £1 donation will raise approximately £6,000 towards community projects in this financial year. They also contributed a luxury hamper as a first prize at our ever popular Sheltered Housing Christmas party - which went down a treat!



## Learn and earn with Mears

As part of their contract with Barnet Homes, Mears has committed to providing local opportunities through work experience and an apprenticeship programme. With their apprenticeships, you earn a salary and get day release from work to attend college.

Mears is currently seeking to recruit two apprentices to train in gas services. If you are interested in finding out more about work experience and the gas apprenticeships with Mears, please email [gary.fox@mearsgroup.co.uk](mailto:gary.fox@mearsgroup.co.uk).



## Gas safety

As your landlord, we are legally obliged to ensure that all our properties with a gas supply have an annual gas safety check on gas appliances in the home. From 28<sup>th</sup> March, this will be conducted by Mears.

We need to do this not only to meet the legal requirement, but also to ensure that

the gas appliances are safe for you to use.

If Robert Heath Heating have informed you of an appointment for your gas safety check after this date, this will be honoured as originally arranged, but now attended by Mears. Mears will be contacting you to confirm details about these appointments.

- 🐾 **FREE microchipping & nail clipping**
- 🐾 **FREE basic health & weight check**
- 🐾 **FREE health & training advice**
- 🐾 **£35 Neutering vouchers available**

For selected breeds of dog – for eligibility and more information please visit [www.dogstrust.org.uk](http://www.dogstrust.org.uk)

The law has  
changed! You **MUST**  
have your dog  
microchipped.

# Dogs Trust Community Event

## Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018

The Concourse, Grahame Park estate,  
NW9 5XA

11am – 3pm

In partnership with



Microchipping offer open to dog owners aged 18 or over regardless of benefit status, subject to availability and resources of the charity. All breeds of dogs are welcome; however Dogs Trust will not chip active hunting hounds or litters of puppies. We ask that puppies under 6 months old are fully vaccinated and proof of vaccinations are brought along to the event. If your puppy has recently been vaccinated, they must be carried for the 10 days following their final vaccination. Dogs over 6 months old do not require proof of vaccination. Where offered, the basic health check is for ears, teeth, coat condition and general fitness only. No other veterinary treatment will be available. If your dog requires treatment for any problems found during the basic health check you will be advised to see a Veterinary Surgeon. The Promoter: Dogs Trust, 17 Wakley Street, London, EC1V 7RQ Reg. Charity Number 227523 and SCO37843

[dogstrust.org.uk/communityevents](http://dogstrust.org.uk/communityevents)

