



BETRA News

Issue 6, April 2016



T&P - Guaranteed to get the party going!

"We are absolutely delighted. The music was fantastic! The dance floor was packed, and all our guests were raving about Tyber & Pete"

"A huge thank you for the totally fantastic performance you gave, we loved the way you made it totally personal. All our guests thought you were amazing and you certainly made the day!"



Don't forget the picnic!

Happy Birthday!

BETRA plans a street party for the Queen's 90th birthday on Sunday 12 June, on the green between 12 and 4pm.

This is great excuse for a knees-up, and BETRA doesn't intend to waste it! Lindsey and co are already busy preparing for the big day. With the success of our family fun days last year still fresh in the memory, we know it needs to be good, and it will be.

Live music

Fabulous music will be provided by Tyber and Pete - a duo known locally for their brilliant busking in Romford. The boys are founding members of the famous Duelers, a nine piece reggae band with fans across the country. As a duo or a nine-piece, these fellas are guaranteed to have you up and dancing in no time.

We're also lining up a Pearly King and Queen to wander around doing, well, whatever Pearly Kings and Queens do. And you won't be surprised to hear that our Chairman Ken has nabbed one of these parts.

There will be lots to enjoy on the day, including a children's entertainer, Tombola, bouncy castle and face-painting. Plus the RSPCA and Dogs Trust have promised to be with us, to promote animal welfare.

Liz!



Bring a picnic

Why not bring a picnic along and make a day of it? If you bring the sandwiches, we'll provide the tea, coffee and cake stall. How's that? And no doubt an enterprising ice cream vendor on hand, too.

Wonders like Wendy

As always, we would be happy to hear from anyone able and willing to help out on the day. Special mention here should be made to Wendy Thomas, our social events organiser. Wendy has been unwell recently, but still managed to organise our wonderful Easter Bunny do. Thanks for all you do for us, Wendy. We wish you a speedy recovery.



**Estate Manager
Lindsey Taylor**

DNA testing of dog faeces - yes please!

I recently read an article from Barking and Dagenham Council, where they wish to implement DNA testing on dogs, I think, if all goes well, it is something that Havering Council should adopt. The pure brass of people coming onto the estate - once the BETRA team have gone home, of course! - and allowing their dogs to foul all over the estate is just shocking.

These people show a complete disregard for our children and our community. The children love to play out on the green space during the warmer months. Those living and playing here shouldn't have to dodge this filth.

I do care about the children and the families who live on this estate, and you may have seen me out and about with my 'poo bucket'. Regardless of how busy my day is, I ensure I find time to pick up this dirt. It's not part of my job, and I don't enjoy it, but until all dog walkers accept their responsibilities, what can I do?

The proposal is that the DNA testing of dogs should be tied to people's tenancies. It's a start, but I'd go further and apply this rule to all dog owners, not only those who rent properties. All dog owners need a dog licence, and it could be tied in with this. With all dogs' DNA on a database, we could ensure our streets, pavements, verges and parks were free of this vile substance. Until then, it's just me and my bucket!

Lindsey

Our survey said...

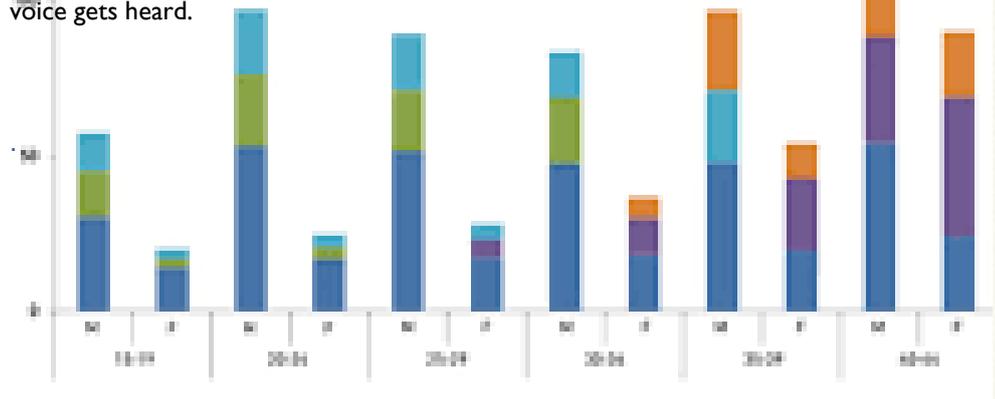
Every year, we ask residents to complete a survey. The results help us gain a better understanding of your views and wishes, and the more residents complete the survey, the clearer that picture is.

It was a poor response this year with less than 30% of households responding. A big thank you to those who did bother. Perhaps this poor response rate means most residents are satisfied with everything BETRA does? Certainly of those who did respond we can say:

- 83% were very satisfied by the service delivered by BETRA
- 83% were very satisfied with grounds and flowerbeds
- 87% noticed improvements on the estate in the last year
- 100% were satisfied with BETRA office opening hours

That's encouraging. But while 52% said they were very satisfied with the estate as a place to live, 9% said they were not. And while 52% were satisfied with the block cleaning (currently a council responsibility), 17% were not. Other problems mentioned included dogs, fly-tipping, litter and noise nuisance.

In short, all is not perfect. Of course we knew that, but hearing about these specific issues directly from you will help us plan and prioritise our work in the year ahead. So remember, when we send round next year's survey, please make sure *your* voice gets heard.



Committee news

'Left in the dark'

BETRA is still waiting to hear from the council what our budget will be for the next three years. As reported last time, we expect there to be a cut, but we don't know the extent of it. Havering officials have not met with us since September. Two recent meetings were postponed - one at the very last minute! The uncertainty this creates makes it very difficult for us to know what we can and cannot afford to do in the year ahead.

For example, we still don't know if we are going to be able to take on the block cleaning, and it is difficult to manage our budget without the correct figures we are budgeting!

'It's extremely frustrating,' says Lindsey. 'We're being left in the dark. We want to do what's best for residents, and we are being driven towards

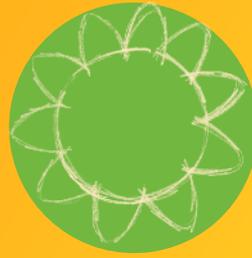
looking at paying for certain things, out of our reserves, that previously the council would have paid for. So for example, we are thinking of buying a secondhand cherry picker, so that we can paint balconies and clear guttering. The painting of balconies is on a cyclical repair and is not due for years. This leaves Oundle House bearing the brunt and looking like an eyesore. A cherry picker could resolve this.

As for guttering, we had to wait over a year to have some of them cleared. These delays damage the guttering and makes their eventual clearing all the more difficult and expensive. A cherry picker would resolve these problems and make us more self-contained than we are now.

Anyway, to help resolve this and other dilemmas, the BETRA board recently welcomed Jill Horsham aboard the good ship BETRA. Jill, a teaching assistant and local resident, will be a real asset to the team. Welcome, Jill.

What's new?

As always, the team has been busy maintaining the estate and making improvements where possible.



1. In preparation for bringing a splash of colour to the area, Mark and Brian recently dug two flower beds on the green near Radstock House. The flowers are currently being germinated and once ready, will be planted.

2. The new lock-up has been built. The team has a lot of equipment and tools to house, so it's a very welcome development - the boardroom is beginning to look less like a store cupboard.

3. Most grown-ups forget how much fun queuing at the lights can be! But not our guys. They had the brilliant idea of painting road markings and constructing traffic lights at some of our pavement junctions, especially for the kids.

4. The guys have also been busy repainting the estate's doors, lamp posts, railings and decking boards in a new shade of green. Unfortunately, some of this paint appears to have been faulty, leaving an unsatisfactory finish to many of the 34 entrance doors that have been painted. These are being repainted, and we are seeking compensation from Leyland Paints for the inconvenience and expense caused.

Events



Easter fun!

Just prior to the Easter weekend, the Easter Bunny came to BETRA and a fabulous time was had by all. At turns scary and friendly, our mystery bunny (Guess who? He's not chairman for nothing, you know!) distributed Easter eggs and hot cross buns liberally, much to everyone's delight.



Remembering Miss Pattinson

We are saddened to report the death of a lady known to us only as Miss Pattinson, a longtime and highly regarded resident of Kirkham House. Miss Pattinson loved wild flowers. She refused to have cut flowers in her flat. In her memory, we plan to plant some wild flowers and erect a small plaque.



Darts get together
Second Wednesday of each month, in the boardroom, from 6-8pm.

Throw some arrows and enjoy a takeaway supper and drink with friends and neighbours. Chinese? Pizza? We decide on the night. All residents welcome.

BETRA Bingo
Last Wednesday of each month, in the boardroom, from 6-8pm.

Meet friends and neighbours for an easy-going chat over a few games of bingo, followed by an end of game buffet on the house. All residents welcome.

Street Party
Sunday 12 June, between 12 and 4pm on the green.

To celebrate the Queen's 90th birthday. Remember to bring a picnic!

Next Board meeting
5 Thursday 5 May at 4pm

BETRA

Tenant Management Organisation

Lindsey Taylor, Estate Manager
Mark Richardson, Senior Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Steven Richardson, Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Michael Hughes, Part-Time Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Brian Pratt, Caretaking and Grounds Maintenance Officer
Lloyd Edwards, Housing Officer

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