

BETRA News

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Spring awakening

Lockdown is coming to an end. It may be a slow process, but the indications are that the government intends the latest lockdown to be our last. Let's hope so!

The BETRA office has been out of bounds to visitors, except by appointment, with residents wishing to talk with Lloyd or Jennie having to call them, or tap on the door so as to have a socially distanced chat in the front garden.

We know these arrangements have been less than ideal, but the office and boardroom are quite small, enclosed spaces, so we needed to be extra careful.

Cautious reopening

In line with the Government's timetable, we are beginning a gradual return to more normal working arrangements. However, precautions will continue to be needed, especially with office visits.

We anticipate opening the boardroom for committee and staff meetings and lunch breaks from 17 May. By this date we hope to fully resume our normal working hours and conditions, allowing the team to begin catching up with the numerous smaller jobs around the estate that have had to be deferred during lockdown.

Later in the year

If all goes well, later in the year we should be able to start thinking about hosting some community events. If you have any good ideas as to what that they might be, and how you can help organise them, do please let us know.

Our first 'event' is likely to be our Annual General Meeting, which we plan to hold sometime in the summer.

You may recall that last year's AGM was delayed due to Covid, and was finally held in November as a paper exercise involving a lot of to-ing and fro-ing of papers between board members and the office, but with no actual meetings taking place. This year, it will be good for board members to see one another again!





We hope you all had a great Easter break and hopefully by the time you're receiving this edition of our newsletter the kids will have returned back to school.

We print the government's road map to getting back to some sort of normality opposite. While we are now allowed to meet in groups of six, outdoor hospitality and more importantly hairdressers are back open, while - work-wise - we will still approach the situation with caution.

Gradually we will get back to operating how we were way back in February 2020, and we have begun to tick off a few jobs that were not possible over the last year or so.

I'd like to thank all of our residents for their patience during this last year. Rest assured, we will get back to the new normal as soon as we can.

Regards,
Lloyd

Jennie Goddard adds:

During this difficult time we have only been able to undertake emergency works. Our aim, from 17th May, is to begin to complete some of the works we have outstanding on our job board. Over the course of the pandemic, we have kept a list of these jobs. We aim to tackle these as soon as we can.

Some repair jobs will have a higher priority than others, so watch this space and we will be in touch as soon as possible if this affects you. We will ring around to arrange these jobs in due course. Please feel free to chase us up if you don't hear from us first.

Stay safe, Jennie

No earlier than 12 April

- Reopening of non-essential retail, hair and nail salons, and public buildings such as libraries.
- Most outdoor venues open, including pubs and restaurants but only for outdoor tables and beer gardens, and with significant restrictions - see Government website for details
- Also reopening will be settings such as zoos and theme parks. However, social contact rules will apply here, so no indoor mixing between households and limits on outdoor mixing.
- Indoor leisure facilities such as gyms and pools can also open but again people can only go alone or with their own household.
- Reopening of holiday lets with no shared facilities, but only for one household.
- Weddings, receptions and wakes can have 15 people attending.

No earlier than 17 May

- Most mixing rules lifted outdoors, with a limit of 30 people meeting in parks or gardens.
- Indoor mixing will be allowed, up to six people or, if it is more people, two households.
- Indoor venues such as the inside of pubs and restaurants, hotels and B&Bs, play centres, cinemas, museums and group exercise classes will reopen. The new indoor and outdoor mixing limits will remain for pubs and other hospitality venues.
- This will be the earliest date at which international holidays could resume, subject to a review - see the list of reviews below.
- For sport, indoor venues can have up to 1,000 spectators or half capacity, whichever is lower; outdoors the limit will be 4,000 people or half capacity, whichever is lower.
- Weddings will be allowed a limit of 30 people, with other events such as christenings and barmitzvahs also permitted.

No earlier than 21 June

- All legal limits removed on mixing will be removed and the last sectors to remain closed, such as nightclubs, will reopen. Large events can take place.
- There are likely to be changes to wider social distancing measures but this will be decided in a separate review.

Having resident coronavirus helpline

If you, or someone you know, have concerns around care, urgent issues around health and wellbeing or lack of access to supplies including food and medicine please call our free to use helpline: 0800 368 5201 Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm. Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays 11am to 4pm for emergencies only. Email: covid19support@havering.gov.uk

Our survey said...

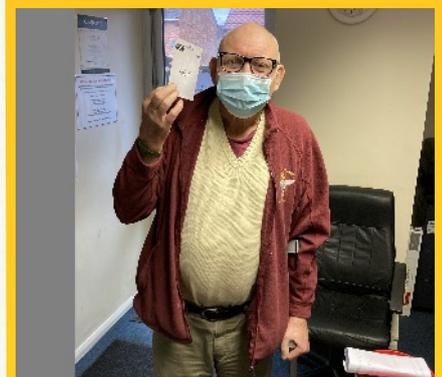
The survey of residents, included in our previous newsletter, has now been completed, the responses analysed.

Thank you all those who completed and returned the survey. Your views will help us draw up plans for work to be done, improvements to be made, around the estate in the months and years to come.

While we cannot promise to act on every suggestion - both our resources and the scope of our responsibilities are limited - please be assured all opinions have been noted and all practical suggestions will be followed up in collaboration with the Havering Estates team.

The main findings highlighted residents' preferences for improvements, with high scores in favour of improving car parking, guttering and the lobby doors.

As promised, a prize draw took place, and £20 shopping vouchers have been dispatched to our three winners, including Mr Ian Cook (below).





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News in brief

Lighting the way

The clocks went forward last month and so this may mean some of the lights around the estate are now out of sync with daylight hours. If you notice a light that is faulty or not going on/off at the appropriate time, either in communal indoor areas, or indeed outside around the estate, then please let us know and we will fix it.

Minor repairs

How are your windows? Are they working properly? We ask because, with summer on its way, many will soon be wanting to open their windows. Following the Government's timeline, the BETRA team hope soon to resume doing small repair jobs around the estate, mending window locks, fixing curtain rails, doing minor plaster work, etc. If you have any such jobs to report, please do so. We will tackle them as soon as we can.

Lobby checks

You may have recently seen Lloyd and/or someone in a hi-vis jacket going round and inspecting the lobbies and perhaps taking photos inside. They were completing fire safety checks. The council is in the process of checking, repairing and upgrading features in the lobbies. These include the store/shed doors in the buildings, even the store cupboards next to front doors. Sometimes this inspection may include looking inside your store/cupboard, so please be cooperative if Lloyd and/or a council officer come knocking. They will show you their ID, but if you have any concerns/suspicions, please contact the office.

Your stopcock - do you know where to find it?

In case of emergency, you need to know the whereabouts of your stopcock. And so does BETRA.

Why? Well, from time to time, a flooding incident occurs on the estate, usually caused by a burst pipe. When such an incident occurs, the water supply to the affected flat or house must be turned off. If this emergency happens 'out of hours', ie when the BETRA team is not on site, there may be a delay before help arrives, so it is important that residents know what to do.

Turning the stopcock off is usually easy to do - but only if the whereabouts of the stopcock is known!

What is it?

Your stopcock is the control tap for your mains water. Your internal stopcock turns off the water from the supply pipe as it enters your property. It's a brass valve with a water pipe on each side that looks like this:



Where is it?

In most properties the stopcock is located under the kitchen sink or in the bathroom. To turn off the stopcock simply turn the valve clockwise to turn off the water supply. In some houses there may also be a stopcock outside the house - look for a metal plate with the words "Water" or sometimes just a "W" on it.

How to turn it off/on

You shut off the cold water supply by turning off the stopcock. It's a brass valve with a water pipe on each side. Just turn the tap clockwise to close off the water. If you turn off the stopcock it is usually also a good idea to turn off your boiler to stop the boiler running dry and getting damaged (although most modern boilers will detect if there is a problem with their water supply). If you live in a house, rather than a flat, it may be a good idea to check if there are any other isolation valves on the pipework you are trying to turn off the water to. Using these valves means you don't have to turn off the water to the entire house.

If your stopcock is situated outside the house, lift the lid and turn the valve clockwise to turn off the water supply. You may need a special tool to do this. **Be careful turning off an external stopcock** since if this stopcock is not in your grounds it may also be serving other homes.

When turning stopcocks back on it is a good idea not to turn them on fully to prevent them from getting stuck in the future. When turning on, turn the valve anti-clockwise as far as it will go and then give them a 1/8th of a turn clockwise.

Need help locating your stopcock? Give us a call at the BETRA office and we will help you find it.

Found your stopcock? Please let us know its exact location. BETRA is compiling a record so that, in case of emergency, our team and others can respond without delay.

Events

Crimewatch

Sorry to say there has been a sharp rise in car theft, and in particular, the attempted theft of catalytic converters in and around Harold Hill. If you see any suspicious activity please report it, to the office or directly to the police on 101.

The more information the police get on these types of crimes the likelier it is they will be able to stop it. We need to work with them, make best use of our CCTV evidence, and direct the police to the crime hotspots in our area.

Help the high street



Fancy a shopping trip now that the high street is opening up again? Havering Council is providing free parking from Monday 12 April 2021 for four weeks, to help support our local high streets and town centre as they re-open again. Parking fees in all Council car parks and on-street parking bays will be suspended daily until and including 9 May 2021. This is in addition to the free parking on Sundays already in place, which will continue after that time.

The Council also provides a Havering Heroes parking permit for NHS and other key workers. This permit has been extended until 21 June 2021. This enables these workers to park in resident bays and Council car parks free, for up to three hours during the week and weekends.

Safe deliveries

A reminder that if you are worried about delivery companies leaving parcels outside blocks, or leaving parcels outside your front door when you are out, we may be able to help. While we cannot take responsibility for any parcels left with us, residents may, if they wish, put our office address down as a secondary delivery option. We will obviously

endeavour to keep such items safe and residents would be able to collect from us at their convenience, during our office hours.

Mobile numbers

Please ensure we have the most up to date telephone numbers for you or someone at your property. Raising and completing jobs around the estate - not to mention emergencies - requires us to have up-to-date contact details at all times. This saves time. On occasion, it may even save a life.

CENSUS 2021

Every household is required by law to complete the census. The official Census day was 21 March, but don't worry if you still haven't done it yet - it's not too late. By completing it now you can avoid a fine.

A few facts:

- Students need to be included.
- You only count yourself at the address you are present at on Census day.
- You don't have to be British - Everyone staying in England on Census Day needs to be counted.
- Your privacy will be respected - Personal Census data will be kept under lock and key for 100 years.
- The Census is important - the data provided helps in the future planning of every public service.

Visit www.census.gov.uk or call: 0800 141 2021



Next Board meeting



For now we have to continue getting by without board meeting, with Lloyd keeping in touch with members by phone and email. We hope to be able to host actual meetings in the not too distant future.

Scared of your partner or ex?

Talk to us any time, day or night.



BETRA

Wendy Thomas, Chair
Lloyd Edwards, Estate Manager
Jennie Goddard, Housing Officer
Mark Richardson, Senior Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Steven Richardson, Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Brian Pratt, Caretaking and Grounds Maintenance Officer

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