

BETRA News

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Home sweet home

As part of the refurbishment of the BETRA office, we have put some photos of the estate on show in the board room.

These pictures highlight what a green and pleasant estate this is. Were it being built today, we would not have the wide open green, nor as many trees, or even parking spaces. All the more reason for us all to take good care of the place.

Safe as houses



Following strict new fire safety regulations, the Council is installing new front doors across the estate.

The replacement programme is scheduled to take four years to complete. Residents will be given notice when it is their turn to have a new door installed.

Also, once you have a new door installed, please make sure to have a spare key cut key cut to hand in to the BETRA office for safe keeping. These spare keys are kept in a safe place and used only in an emergency.





I would like to talk about a variety of issues we are experiencing on the estate.

Lobbies

If you see anybody coming into the lobby area that you are not familiar with, or you hear or smell any form of drugs being used in your block, please immediately report to the police. I will also be informed, and action will be taken immediately with the tenant involved as they will be in breach of their tenancy.

Globe lights

As described elsewhere in this edition, we have 19 globe lights out on the estate which I noticed when I started my role. After a constant battle I have been able to increase the lighting around the estate and had bulbs replaced. There are several works required due to faulty cables underground, which will take a little longer to rectify.

Lobby checks

I am very concerned that some lobby areas need more attention cleaning than others. Please be mindful that every tenant in your block uses the lobby area, and that it is everyone's responsibility to make sure security doors are always shut behind them. Also, that rubbish is not brought in and dropped, or mud walked in and deposited in the lobby area.

Clutter

Havering clean the lobby areas once a fortnight. I will continue to carry out lobby checks fortnightly along with Havering. Any clutter left outside will be removed within 24 hours and you will be charged.

Any items left out in the lobby areas can cause a trip hazard for emergency services when trying to reach your property.

Remember, if your clutter is in fact rubbish, BETRA staff can help you dispose of it properly. Any white goods, sofas or other items for disposal, please put outside your building, to the side of the lobby entrance. Our staff will remove them.

Fire risks

Just a reminder to please be mindful of any items in your flat which may overheat, or using too many plugs in one socket, and any chemical bottles laying around, which are a hazard if they catch fire.

New financial year

Approaching the end of the financial year (31st March), councils like to have everybody's accounts up to date in time for the new financial year, and for that reasons, you may notice more letters arriving regarding outstanding balances with rent, council tax and repairs.

Also, if you are currently bidding for a property, it really helps if you are not in arrears with your rent.

If you receive a letter which worries or concerns you, please feel free to pop over or call the office. We are here to help.

Rest in peace

We were sorry to hear recently of the deaths of two of our tenants, John Dunn of Angmering House, and Brian Thwaites of Oundle House. We send heartfelt condolences to their families and friends at this sad time.

News in brief

Globe lights



Following a recent inspection, BETRA's Estate Manger Nicola recorded some 19 street lights not working.

These globe lights illuminate the estate at night, and are therefore important for everyone's safety and security. They are the responsibility of the Council and Fire Service, and they are now being fixed.

Still on the subject of lighting, the Upton House and Devizes House lobby lights had been causing problems, but that issue has now been resolved. Elsewhere, lights have been tripping out due to a cable under the ground being faulty. We apologise for the time this is taking to get fixed, but again getting works of this kind addressed can be a long process. We will continue to chase the relevant agencies.

Repairing the bins

Also on her walkabout, Nicola noted damage to six of the communal dustbins. These need to be sturdy if they are to do their job, so they are to be repaired in the coming weeks.



Gradually the temperature increases and while that's a jolly good thing, it does mean it's all the more important we dispose of rubbish properly.

Please remember to put all your rubbish inside the bins provided, not on the floor next to them.

Rubbish attracts vermin, flies and maggots, especially in warmer weather. If you leave bags of rubbish on the floor, rather than using the bins, this will make matters worse, attracting them close to your home. Something we wish to avoid!

Damp and mould
Havering Council now has a way that you can report and have diagnosed problems of this kind in your home.

Depending on your answers to questions, the Council may send a surveyor out to inspect the problem area.

- Go to the Havering website
- Click on Council housing damp and mould form
- Click on Online form to report your damp and mould issues
- Fill out necessary fields and answer questions truthfully on the next page

This will identify the cause of your problem, and the solution. If you need help reporting these issues, please contact us at the office. We are happy to help.

Room for our truck

Two posts have been installed to prevent parking in the area where the BETRA van has to turn.

Previously, parked cars in that area would often prevent BETRA's maintenance team, Steven and Mark (Right), from coming and going with their truck.

The situation would sometimes cause delays, for example when illegally dumped rubbish needed clearing, or emergencies needed attending to.

Tackling anti-social behaviour

We continue to have trouble with anti-social behaviour.

As with all acts of vandalism and anti-social behaviour, it is up to all of us to remain vigilant, and to report any such behaviour to the BETRA office, or via the out-of-hours emergency number. Or indeed directly to the Police, at the earliest opportunity.

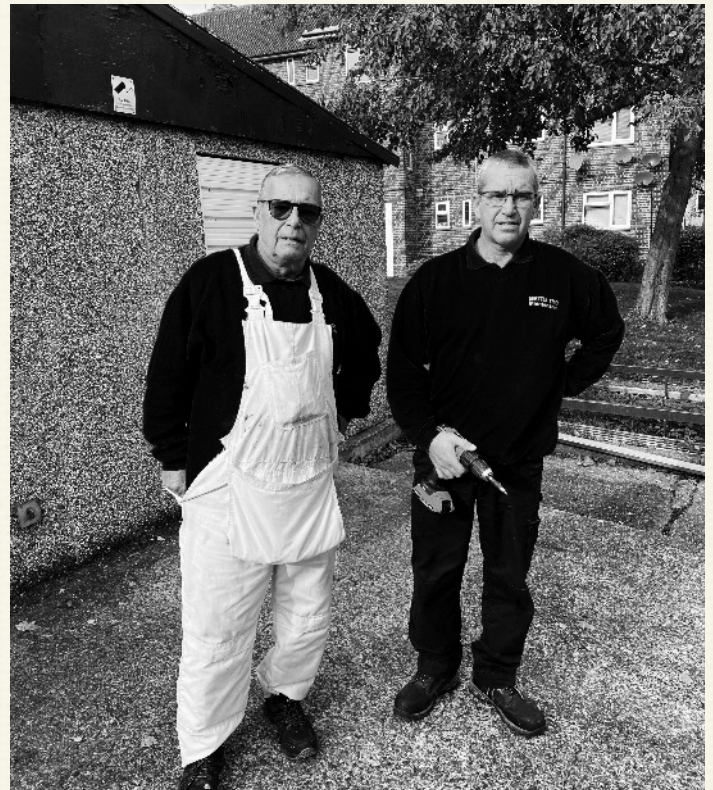


Vaccines

The Covid-19 winter vaccination programme has now ended, but eligible people will soon be able to get another dose.

Flu vaccines are still available, and you may be eligible for a free one at your local pharmacy or from your GP.

For the full list of those eligible for a free flu vaccine, visit the Havering website and search 'Vaccinations'.



Parents, you have a special responsibility here. Please help ensure the next generation know better than to behave in this way.

The Council defines anti-social behaviour as any act that causes, or is likely to cause, alarm, harassment or distress to anyone living in a different household to the person responsible, including:

- noise nuisance
- drug taking and dealing
- threatening or rowdy behaviour
- violence and disorder
- vandalism

Visit the Havering website for details of how to record and report anti-social behaviour to the Council.

Home Swap

Are you looking to move? Perhaps from a two-bedroomed flat to a one-bed flat. Or from a two-bed flat to a three-bed house with a garden.

If so, there are several ways to research the idea of a home swap. You can contact people on specially dedicated Facebook groups, and there is also the website: www.homeswapper.co.uk

For more information on home swaps, visit the office.



Havering's Cost of Living page



With the cost of living pressures continuing, it's worth checking the Cost of Living Support page on Havering's website.

It contains the up-to-date advice and information that will help ensure your household gets the support it needs.

Pension Credit is one example. If you are over State Pension age and on a low income you could be entitled to Pension Credit. You might also get extra help if you're a caregiver, disabled, or looking after a child.

Remember, Pension Credit is different from your State Pension. You can get it without it affecting your other income, savings, or home ownership. Check if you are eligible and claim today.



Caring for our pets

Here's a reminder of the rules governing the keeping of pets on all council estates including BETRA.

"If you live in a flat with direct access to an individual garden you may keep up to two pets such as a dog or cat but you must obtain prior permission from the London Borough of Havering first. Dogs will be required to have an 'identification' chip inserted. If you live in a flat or your home is in a building where there is a shared access/shared lobby you are allowed to keep one pet. You still need to obtain permission from Havering first." Havering Council

Please be aware that if you live in a flat you are not allowed to keep reptiles (including lizards or snakes) requiring live food, farm animals (including ferrets, hens and chickens), pigeons or dogs as defined under the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991.

You and anyone living with you or your visitors must not allow your pets to frighten anybody or cause a nuisance.

This includes:

- Letting your dog bark loudly and continuously
- Failing to clean up after your pet both inside and outside the property
- Failing to keep your pet under control
- Not keeping dogs on a lead
- You must keep any pet in proper and humane conditions.
- You must not leave any dog alone for more than six hours.

Please abide by these simple rules, and if you have any questions or concerns for an animal's welfare here on the estate, please visit the BETRA office for a confidential chat.

Next BETRA Board Meetings

The Board meets quarterly. Next meeting TBC.

Scared of your partner or ex?

Talk to us any time, day or night.



BETRA

Jill, Chair
Nicola, Estate Manager
Jennie, Housing Officer
Mark, Senior Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer,
Steven, Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Naomi, Bookkeeper

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Residents, please note the manager's new email above, Also, let the office have your email address if you have one, and update us if you change your mobile number. You can do this by emailing the manager at the address above. Thank you

Homes and Housing
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