

# BETRA News

Issue 18 January 2020

BETRA Tenant Management Organisation  
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## Police contact sessions

A contact session is a chance to meet local police officers, report crime, get crime prevention and other advice, seek help, offer support and submit information.

It's your chance to highlight issues of concern on the estate and in the greater Harold Hill area.

These meetings take place in the BETRA office every two weeks. Contact the office for details of the next meeting.

## Home swap

The mutual exchange scheme allows social housing tenants to advertise their property with a view to swapping homes with another social housing tenancy.

If you would like to advertise your flat for a mutual exchange, let us know.

Three local properties currently available for a swap:

- A) 3 bed top floor looking to downsize
- B) 1 bed top floor looking to up-size
- C) 2 Bed looking to Up-size (with particular requirements)

If these are of interest, or you have friends in the area looking to swap, please get in touch. For a more direct approach to swapping homes you can register with [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://www.homeswapper.co.uk)



*...in BETRA?*

**“Did you know you can become a BETRA shareholder? Our shares won't make you rich,” says Lloyd Edwards, “but they do show you care.”**

BETRA belongs to you: we are your tenant management organisation. Getting that message across to everyone on the estate is a challenge, but it remains important because without your interest and involvement BETRA will wither and die.

For that reason, tenant management organisations like ours often issue shares to their residents, both tenants and leaseholders. It's not something we've promoted much here at BETRA, but we're changing that now.

Board members and elected officials must be shareholders, but now we want you all to become BETRA shareholders. It won't cost you anything as we only charge a nominal 10p per share. The value of each share stays the same, but of course its real value is in what it symbolizes – your support for BETRA.

It should be said, BETRA delivers the same service to residents whether or not they are shareholders. However, if you would like your very own BETRA share, to hang on the

wall perhaps or on the fridge door, please visit the office today. And don't forget your 10p!

## Our AGM

**Late last year we had our annual general meeting. All went well and officers were put in place as below for the coming year.**

The AGM is an open event to all residents, so do come along next time if you want to find out more about how we work. The same is true for our regular Board meetings, which residents can attend as observers.

### BETRA officials 2020:

**Wendy Thomas**  
Chair

**Jill Horsham**  
Treasurer

**Keith Mercury**  
Secretary





## Trash talk



**A belated Happy New Year to all our residents. We hope you have all fully recovered from the festivities and are perhaps even beginning to look forward to the onset of spring. Will we avoid snow completely this year, I wonder? I doubt it!**

With services back to normal now, the refuse collection service visits continue on Tuesdays. If you feel either of the bins in your compound have been missed on a Tuesday it has to be reported to Havering council by 4pm Wednesday to enable them collect ASAP. You can report missed waste via the Havering website by completing a short form. The website address is:

[www.havering.gov.uk/info/20003/rubbish\\_and\\_recycling/519/report\\_a\\_missed\\_collection](http://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20003/rubbish_and_recycling/519/report_a_missed_collection)

### Trashing our estate

Again with rubbish in mind, I'm disappointed to have to report that some residents have been throwing rubbish out of their windows.

When Jennie and I walk around the estate, we find litter at the foot of buildings, on the bark areas, on entrance paths and underneath balconies.

The items range from cigarette butts through to make up wipes and tampons. This behaviour is completely unacceptable. If you see anyone disposing of their rubbish in this way, please tell us.

### Stranger danger

Finally, there seems to have been an upsurge in the area of unknown people knocking at doors. Please be vigilant, both for yourself and your neighbours.

There have been reports around Harold Hill regarding bogus callers ranging from people posing as meter readers to council workers.



Always check who is knocking, and ask for proof of ID before letting them in. If you are unsure, take a note of their name and badge, ask them to come back when it's a more convenient time for you, and check with me or the organisation concerned to make sure they who they say they are.

If you have any concerns or have seen something that doesn't look right tell someone - The police can always be contacted on their 101 number or even our local Neighbourhood Team.

### Wet, wet, wet

**It's been a wet winter, and no doubt there's more to come. So if you spot damp exterior walls, or guttering that is failing to contain the flow of water, please let us know.**

These and other repairs can be reported either to the office, or directly to the Council via 'Report a Repair' page on its website.

### Talking of repairs

**When it comes to repairs the Council has a wide range of responsibilities, some of which they delegate to BETRA.**

**In theory, Havering can investigate, survey and potentially repair the following:**

## Jenny's world

**We asked BETRA's Jennie Goddard for the top tips she most often gives residents**

**I would always advise tenants to keep up with their payments for rent / charges and to not fall behind.**

If they do find themselves having difficulties making payments, or their circumstance have changed, it is of the utmost importance to inform Havering of any changes.

The importance of not spending outside of your budget and to regularly check / make a list of your outgoings and money coming in.

Not all tenants have access to PCs, so we are able to assist them with whatever they need when they come to the office and we can carry out searches for them.

Some of our tenants struggle to cope with changes to their day-to-day lives, finding even slight changes unsettling. Sometimes all they need is a little guidance, and it's great when we are able to provide this.

### **The structure and exterior of your home including:**

Drains, gutters and external pipes.  
The roof, outside walls, outside doors, window sills, window catches, sash cords and window frames including necessary external painting and decorating.  
Internal walls, floors excluding floor coverings, ceilings, doors, door frames, door hinges and skirting boards.  
Chimneys, chimney stacks and flues.  
Main entrance path, plaster work, integral garages and stores

### **The heating, water heating and sanitation installations and the supply of water, gas and electricity.**

This includes:  
Basins, sinks, baths, toilets, flushing systems and waste pipes - but not other fixtures, fittings and appliances for the supply of water, gas or electricity.  
Electric wiring including sockets, switches and light fittings excluding bulbs.  
Gas pipes, water pipes, water heaters, fitted fires and central heating installations.



# Better safe than sorry

**Having Council strongly advises all council tenants - including BETRA tenants - to take out household contents insurance, as these items are not covered by the Council's own insurance.**

That means, the Council does not insure your furniture, belongings or decorations against theft, fire, vandalism and burst pipes.

However, through an arrangement with Aviva, Havering does offer a home contents insurance scheme.

## **Havering's insurance scheme**

This scheme, exclusively available to Havering tenants, can be paid weekly with your rent as a council tenants. (Please note that the council content insurance is not available to Leaseholders.)

BETRA recommends that our tenants either take up this special offer, or make their own insurance arrangements. Estate manager Lloyd Edwards, says: We have known instances where tenants

whose flats have been flood-damaged due to problems above, have not been able to recover the costs of the damage suffered from the Council. Carpets, flooring and cupboards had been damaged. Home content insurance would cover such accidents.

For more information on how the scheme works, and the cost involved, either visit the BETRA office for a chat with Jennie or Lloyd, or visit the Council website, at:

**[www.havering.gov.uk/info/20001/housing/299/insuring\\_your\\_home](http://www.havering.gov.uk/info/20001/housing/299/insuring_your_home)**



## Help with travel

**If you're unemployed and looking for work, you may get discounted travel in London.**

The Jobcentre Plus Travel Discount entitles you to 50% off pay-as-you-go adult fares to travel on bus, Tube, tram, DLR, London Overground and most of TfL Rail and National Rail services in London.

### You can also:

- Buy and use a child rate 7 Day, monthly or longer period Travelcard or Bus and Tram Pass
- Buy discounted paper single or return tickets from National Rail.

### To apply, you must be claiming:

- Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit, be aged between 18-24 and unemployed for 13-39 weeks.
- Jobseekers Allowance or Universal Credit, be aged 25 or over and unemployed for 13-52 weeks.
- Incapacity Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance or Income Support and actively engaged with an adviser in returning to employment.

In the first few months of commuting to your new job, you may also be eligible for help with your fares. Contact your local Jobcentre Plus office for more information.

**How to apply:** visit your local Jobcentre Plus office.

### For more information, visit:

[www.tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/jobcentre-plus-traveldiscount](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/fares/free-and-discounted-travel/jobcentre-plus-traveldiscount)

## Christmas cheer

**Congratulations to everyone who helped to organise and run this successful event, which was held on the green on 27th November.**

High winds and rain couldn't spoil our fun thanks to the marquee, which kindly held firm and didn't blow away!

The event kick-started the festive season for everyone and brought the community together.

BETRA's Chair Wendy played a key role in pulling it all together. Santa Claus sent the missus, and there were craft stalls, a picture framer, a tombola, Christmas cards, a raffle, oh, and lots of chocolate. In short, it was great!



## Children's Easter Egg Hunt

We'll be posting details on the notice boards shortly, so keep an eye out for them.

## Summer ideas

It's never too early to be thinking about the summer, so we want to hear from you what kind of events, activities and trips you would like BETRA to organise in the months ahead.

We can't promise to agree to every suggestion, but for now we are 'all ears'. Our Events team will be meeting in February, so let us have your ideas ASAP.



**Join us on the last Wednesday of each month, in the boardroom, from 5-7pm.**

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.

## Next Board meeting

To be confirmed – check notice boards.

# 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**

**8 Angmering House**  
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**Romford**