

BETRA News

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There's a new 12-week programme run by Everyone Active on behalf of Havering Council.

The programme is aimed at helping people to lose weight, increase their energy levels and feel better, whilst reducing their risk of diseases such as coronary heart disease, diabetes and strokes.



Residents who are overweight, according to the NHS definition, are welcome to join the programme. If in doubt, speak to your GP or practice nurse.

Search 'Live Healthier Havering' on the Havering Council website for more details.



STAY
ALERT

CONTROL
THE VIRUS

SAVE
LIVES

Near & deer

They may have become a rather familiar sight, but it's worth stopping occasionally to marvel at the fallow deer who roam around the estate.

Handsome, rather shy creatures, they are more usually associated with posh country estates, so it is, to say the least, unusual to see herds of them wondering around suburban London.

Around this time of year, they drift over our way from Dagnam Park, or The Manor as it is more commonly known, in search of warmer shelter and, of course, food.

Regarding the latter, they have become, just like city foxes, noticeably bolder recently. Perhaps this is because there have been fewer people out and about during the pandemic. Whatever the reason, they don't seem bothered by passersby, or even traffic, and occasionally can be seen accepting food from residents' hands.

With Spring not too far away now, these visitors are a reminder to us of the wonderful nature reserve on our doorstep. The Manor, with its wildlife meadows, woodland and ponds is a gem of a place that we're lucky to have on our doorstep. We would all do well to pay our deer friends a return visit every once in a while.





Feeling the pinch?

In this edition, I'd like to talk about the months ahead - in particular March and April.

I know it's still a few months away, but it's always a funny time of year. Things seem to happen quickly over the next few months and before you know it we start to think about Easter, the days start to become longer and warmer, the grass starts to grow more quickly, and all manner of things are getting started.

It's also around this time of year that councils and companies work towards the end of their financial year - around the end of March and into April. Havering Council is no different and they like to have everybody's accounts up-to-date, to start the new financial year on an even keel. This is why at this time of year residents will notice they may receive more letters regarding outstanding balances for rent, council tax, repairs etc.

This is never ideal, especially so soon after Christmas, which can prove expensive as it is. So if any of our residents receive letters like this and have concerns please remember we are here. If you want to bring us in a letter to discuss, talk about issues with your finances, the building up of worry or anxiety, or even if you just want to know the position you are in with regard to your rent payments or tax accounts, please come in and see us. If we cannot help you, we can try to put you in touch with someone who hopefully can.

It's normally this next few months when you hear of about any impending rent or tax increases - for example, leaseholders will usually get your leasehold charges for the year around this time. Again, we

are here for you if you have any queries or need some advice.

By the next edition of this newsletter we will be well and truly into the spring and hopefully looking forward to a better summer than last year, not least with the weather.

In the meantime, with the threat of Covid still around, I would urge everyone to remain cautious over the next few months knowing that, a little further down the road, the outlook is beginning to appear ...brighter!

Regards, Lloyd

Fire risks

You may be aware of recent events in Harold Hill, where a fire ripped through a property unfortunately claiming a life. This plus a few other recent incidents, notably around fireworks night last year, serve to remind us how destructive fire, or even just smoke, can be.

We continue to work with Havering Council to keep you safe and minimise the risk of fire on the estate. Please play your part by regularly testing your fire alarms within the property. If you have any queries regarding your fire alarm just call us we will be here to answer any questions where we can.

If your fire alarm bleeps every half hour or so for no apparent reason, it's likely your batteries in the unit are running out. Please keep them regularly operational. If a smoke alarm is hard-wired in, then call our office and we will make the necessary arrangements to get a new unit installed ASAP.

Lobby checks

We will continue to complete lobby checks along with Havering.

Where items are stored in the lobby this could potentially cause a trip hazard for any emergency services when trying to reach your property. Remember the lobby areas are to be as clear as possible so do not store items out in the lobbies or you will receive warning or removal letter. If you wish to report large items left in lobby areas, please contact us. Likewise, if you have any issues regarding storage, we are here to help where we can.

Coronavirus

Latest Government advice

Covid remains a serious health risk. You should stay cautious to help protect yourself and others.

- Let fresh air in if you meet indoors. Meeting outdoors is safer.
- Wear a face covering in crowded and enclosed spaces where you come into contact with people you do not normally meet.
- Get tested and self-isolate if required.
- If you haven't already, get vaccinated. And boosted!

Havering residents 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.
covid19support@haverling.gov.uk

Jennie writes:

May I remind everyone that now the cold weather is upon us, it is vital we keep warm both inside and outdoors.

Keeping warm over the winter months not only helps prevent colds and flu but will also help protect you from more serious problems such as heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia and depression. Heat your home to at least 18C (65F) and keep your bedroom window closed on winter nights.

You may be eligible to get help with heating your home through the Winter Fuel Payment and can find information on making your home warmer online on the Havering website.

Finally, remember to stay active - even when staying indoors for long periods. Sitting still for hours on end is not good for your overall health and wellbeing.





Parking for heroes



Havering Council has extended the Havering Hero parking permit scheme until 31 May 2022.

This means if you are a key worker who currently has a Havering Hero parking permit which was due to expire 31 December, you can renew it now.

Renewals and new applications should be made online using the MiPermit scheme as parking permits are now virtual which means you do not get a paper permit to display on your vehicle.

The Havering Hero permit enables critical key workers to park for free for up to three hours in resident parking bays or Council car parks, when carrying out their duties. These workers include those working for the emergency services, domestic carers, social care key workers and volunteers working for Havering Council's community hub or for voluntary sector partners.

Time to apply for school?

Are you a parent of a child aged three or four? If so, your child is due to start at an infant or primary school in September 2022 and you should apply now for your child's place.

If you live in Havering, you can apply online. If you live outside of the borough you should apply to whichever local authority you pay your Council Tax to.

If your child attends a school nursery then please remember that you must still apply online for a place in the Reception year.

Free childcare



Are you missing out on free childcare for your 2 year old? You may be entitled to claim a maximum of 11 hours free childcare per week throughout the year, or a maximum of 15 hours per week during term time.

You may qualify if you have a child aged two years (funding will be available from the term after their second birthday), or your family is living on a low income or claiming income based benefits.

For more information and to apply please visit www.havering.gov.uk/earlyyears



Following the cold, damp winter months, and before spring arrives, it's worth checking that all window frames, doors and built-in fans in your property are in good working order.

If damage is apparent, please report it so that we can schedule any necessary repairs.

Scared of your partner or ex?
Talk to us any time, day or night.

Freephone 24 hour National Domestic Abuse Helpline

0808 2000 247

Confidential non-judgmental support

Or reach us online:
www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Refuge

For women and children,
Against domestic violence.

University of the Third Age (u3a) Havering



u3a is a UK-wide collection of locally-run interest groups that provide opportunities for those no longer in full-time work to come together and learn for fun.

Havering U3A next plan to meet at 2.30pm on Wednesday 9 February at St. Michael's Church Hall, Main Road, Gidea Park. Doors open at 2.15pm. John Gordon will be speaking on the subject, "My time as a Professional Photographer."

Other forthcoming local events include:

- Wed Mar 9th Charlie Haylock on "The Origins of Surnames"
- Wed Apr 13th Joan Luck on "Seventy Years a Musician"
- Wed May 11th Andrew Baker on "Making Sense of Today's World"

For more information go to the Havering u3a website at:

www.u3asites.org.uk/havering/home

Home Swap

Circumstances change and growing families and children 'leaving the nest' are often the reason people look to move on from their present home.

We often find the quickest way to move into a property is to complete a mutual exchange via the home swap system. A suitable property might be on this estate or elsewhere across the borough, but we as a TMO can only deal with exchanges on our estate, though we may be able to advise you on properties elsewhere.

Currently there are two properties on offer on the estate:

- 2 Bed top floor flat
- 3 bed Middle floor property

Although it's never nice seeing some of our treasured residents leaving the community, we wish them all the best when they do move on, and similarly welcome all newcomers.

If you are interested in a possible home swap, there are several ways in which you can research the possibility.

You can contact people on specially dedicated Facebook groups, and there is also the website www.homeswapper.co.uk

You can log all your details onto this website and search for your ideal swap before waiting to see if your offer attracts interest.

If you would like more information on the 'Homeswapper' website, or help with advertising your tenancy on it, book an appointment with Lloyd and he will get you on there and talk you through the process.

It must be remembered there are no guarantees that you will find your ideal swap, or that it will be agreed by both sides.

Safe deliveries



If you are worried about deliveries being left outside your home, remember that 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.

Social update

In light of the recent Covid cases, we are still holding off on organising large-scale community events on the estate.

We feel this is the best course of action for now, but watch this space as there may see the chance to start organising get-togethers again before too long.

In the meantime, activities and events may become available through the local council, so do keep checking its website for updates, and sign up for their email newsletters.

BETRA Board Meetings



The Board's next meeting will be held in the BETRA boardroom either in late January or early February. Date to be confirmed. See notice boards for details.

BETRA

Jill Horsham, Acting Chair
Lloyd Edwards, Estate Manager
Jennie Goddard, Housing Officer
Mark Richardson, Senior Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer
Steven Richardson, Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer

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