

# BETRA News

Issue 13, July 2018

## The work goes on

Here are examples of recent work carried out by our maintenance team.

Entrance pathways and alleyways are being revamped across the estate over the next few months, with concrete plinths used to keep bark beds in place and tidy, so watch out for that.

We are also going to start having regular walks around with Havering's surveyor for our patch, Neil Bugden. He deals with the organising of Capitol Works (major / bulky works). If any residents know of a particular area that needs addressing, such as a wall that has become damaged, etc, then let Lloyd Edwards know and he will put it on the list for inspection.



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## Make a difference

**BETRA is a Tenant Management Organisation. This means we are managed by a committee or board of residents, led by Chairman Ken Howson, and run day-to-day by a small staff team led by Estate Manager Lloyd Edwards.**

The BETRA Board, then, plays an important part in everything we do, and there are many advantages to this kind of set-up.

First, it gives residents the chance to have a meaningful say in how the estate is run. Secondly, it ensures accountability, and third, it means there is no danger of us losing touch with the concerns and interests of our residents.

It also benefits those involved. Residents who play an active part in their TMO develop confidence and learn and practise skills that look great on a CV, and are bound to come across well in any job interview.

You might also be interested to know that, because of their voluntary work, active residents are looked upon favourably by Havering Council if they ever happen to bid for a Council move.

That's why we wanted to alert you to the following opportunity.

Several long-standing BETRA Board members will shortly be standing down. So we urgently need to recruit some new members to the Board. **Can you help?**

### Why bother?

Well, for a start, if BETRA were to fold, our neighbourhood office would close. In the process we believe much more would be lost,

including the sense of community that has been built up over the last decade or so, and, of course, our dedicated, on-site caretaking and grounds maintenance team.

Residents would then have to report repairs needed and their other problems and concerns directly to the Council. All the personal help and advice provided by our estate manager and his team on a daily basis would be gone.

### Why you?

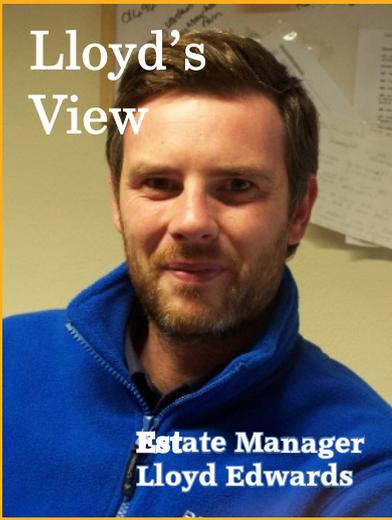
Why not you? All residents have a right to stand for election to our Board, and with it the chance to help in the management and running of the estate. Appropriate training is available for new members of the Board, and our chairman Ken and Estate Manager Lloyd are always on hand to support and guide you where necessary.

### Supporting one another

The Board meets once a month, works as a team, and draws on all the different skills and experiences of its members. Members support one another and you don't need any special skills to join. Whatever your background, you could have something to offer us.

The most important quality we are looking for is commitment, and a desire to help make a difference to our community. Does that sound like you? If so, and you would like to find out more (with no obligation) then please pop into the office for a chat with Lloyd - today!





Estate Manager  
Lloyd Edwards

## Rent matters

We include news in this newsletter of Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Joshua Chapman's housing surgeries (see 'Housing Troubles?'), but even those who have a place to live sometimes have difficulties, and these can often be around paying the rent.

Tenants should pay their rent on time throughout the year. If you allow rent arrears to build up then you will face the eviction process. And if you are then evicted due to rent arrears you may be deemed to have made yourself intentionally homeless which means three things:

- you will not be rehoused by Havering Council
- you will not be rehoused by any other local authority in the country
- and you will have court costs added to the money you owe the Council.

So, if you are having trouble paying your rent on time you need to do something about it.

Please make sure to either come into the office and talk to me, or contact the the Housing Services Financial Inclusion and Welfare Benefits Team *before the problem escalates*.

For more information go to [www.havering.gov.uk/MoneyAdvice](http://www.havering.gov.uk/MoneyAdvice)

Meanwhile, I hope you all enjoy the rest of the summer.

Regards,  
Lloyd Edwards

# When the rain comes

We had to wait so long for a bit of rain that it seems a bit mean to moan about it when it does come. But the fact is that when the weather turns, the colder temperature brings moister which means damp.

So, prepare your home for winter with a few handy tips while the flats are being well ventilated.

- Move all items away from walls so that air can flow behind them (especially beds, sofas, wardrobes and larger items).
- Avoid clutter in your homes - we know storage can be an issue in some properties, If you don't need things look at charities that may make use of them, Speak to our office for suggestions.
- When the time comes to use your heating again use it wisely. Not only could you save money by having heating on a constant temperature (recommended 15 - 20 degrees) you will also reduce moisture in your flats. Don't go from one extreme to another try to keep your whole flat the same temperature all the way through the day and night.
- The coldest rooms in your homes should be the kitchen and bathrooms. More advice there are leaflets in our office.
- Your boilers should have timers on them - use those while you aren't in the property. This is the perfect chance to test your timers, if they do not work please let our office know and we will get them repaired as soon as possible.
- Drying your clothes in any other room in your home apart from your

toilet and kitchen will increase the chances of damp and mould in your homes.

- Pre-empt issues with ventilation. Let BETRA know about any faulty extractor fans now so we can get them repaired for the winter periods.
- When using equipment in kitchens or bathrooms, make sure the doors are closed. Open windows and encourage all the moisture to escape via the windows and not into the rest of your home.
- Lastly - windows and window sills are prone to gathering moisture due to being hotter inside than outside. Moisture will always go from a hot place to the coldest places in the rooms in your home. So try to keep your window sills and frames as dry possible, and every now and then wipe them down as this will prevent water / condensation drops from building up .

## Safer Neighbourhoods

Do you know your local police team? Have you got a concern you think they should know about?

Would you like a Neighbourhood Watch in your street? If you're interested in finding out more then go along to one of their regular drop-in surgeries at Harold Hill Library, East Arcade, Farnham Road.

### August

- Thursday 2 August, 2-3pm
- Tuesday 7 August, 2-3pm
- Saturday 18 August, 2-3pm
- Friday 24 August, 3-4pm

### September

- Tuesday 4 September, 2-3pm
- Monday 10 September, 2-3pm
- Saturday 15 September, 2-3pm
- Friday 28 September, 3-4pm



## News in brief

### Housing troubles?

Did you know that Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Joshua Chapman, holds regular surgeries across the Borough so that Council tenants and leaseholders can call in and discuss housing issues with him. These surgeries operate on a 'first come, first served' basis. Here are the dates and venues.

- Monday 6 August, 10am-1pm, at HASWA, 39 Wood Lane, Hornchurch, RM12 5NB.
- Monday 20 August, 2pm-5pm at Town Hall, Main Road, Romford RM1 3BD. committee Rooms 1 & 2.
- Monday 3 September, 2pm-5pm, at Macon Way Housing Office. Macon Way, Cranham RM14 1HY.
- Monday 17 September, 9am-12 noon at Sapphire Jubilee Centre, Bolberry Rd, Collier Row RM5 2FG.
- Monday 8 October, 10am-1.30pm at Hornchurch Library, 44 North Street, Hornchurch, RM11 1TB.

### Fire alarms

**Fact: those most at risk from fire own their homes are 1) those with no working smoke alarm in their home, 2) people who smoke, and 3) those who could not escape from their home in the event of a fire unaided.**

The London Fire Brigade carries out home fire safety visits in Havering as part of which they can fit a free smoke alarm in your home.

Do you have a smoke alarm in your home? If so, is it working properly? If the answer to either of these questions is no, the Fire Brigade can help. For a free fire safety visit, call 08000 284428

### Keep clear

Please can all residents make sure to keep landings and stairwells clear at all times. This includes such things as wheelchairs, bikes and rubbish bags. The Council views all such items as health and safety hazards, and are in the habit of sending inspectors around from time to time to check that this rule is being abided by.

It is BETRA's understanding that these inspectors have the right to remove, without notice, any such items. What's more, they will charge the owners a fee for holding them. This fee is taken from the person's rent account.

### Last chance to win shopping vouchers!



**BETRA's annual survey of residents is your chance to tell us what we are doing well, what we are doing not so well, and how we can improve the estate for all those living here.**

So far, only a few of you have completed the survey, so complete it now and your chances of winning one of those vouchers - worth £50, £30 and £20 - could be high! It couldn't be easier to have your say. It will take you ten minutes. Go online to complete the survey today at [www.betratmo.org](http://www.betratmo.org)



# Events



That summer football *almost* came home, the grass turned to straw, and all but the most dedicated forgot about the tennis.



## *Just do it*

**Feeling jaded? Out of shape? Short of things to do? So why not visit Central Park Leisure Centre?**

**After all, it's just down the road. The place had a major refurbishment not so long ago, and offers a fabulous assortment of sports and leisure activities.**

**Physical activity is great for mind and body. And no, in case you're wondering, this isn't a sponsored article. It's just striking how often, when thinking about things to do, we overlook the good things on our doorstep.**

**Down the road we have a state of the art gym, two swimming pools, sauna, steam room and spa, badminton and table tennis courts, a creche for the little ones, trampolining and various group exercise sessions. Who would have thought it!**

**According to the website, they currently have a £5 introductory offer which entitles you to the use of most of the above for five consecutive days. That's £1 a day! What are you waiting for? Like the saying goes, just do it.**



## **BETRA Bingo**

**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**  
September - Date to be confirmed.

## **BETRA**

**Lloyd Edwards, Estate Manager**  
**Mark Richardson, Senior Care-taking and Repairs Maintenance Officer**  
**Steven Richardson, Caretaking and Repairs Maintenance Officer**  
**Brian Pratt, Caretaking and Grounds Maintenance Officer**

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