

# BETRA News

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**STAY  
ALERT**



**CONTROL  
THE VIRUS**



**SAVE  
LIVES**

**This pandemic has taught us all kinds of lessons, not least the importance of working together to overcome the biggest challenges.**

Thank you to all those of you who have played your part, whether that's been working in one of those many essential services, or simply observing the guidelines and looking out for one another.

Gradually things are getting back to normal - or something like it. But there is no room for complacency. The virus is still around, and we must all continue to follow the guidelines.

### **Advice from Havering**

The Havering Council website continues to host a comprehensive range of information and advice on all aspects of life during this coronavirus pandemic. So for all the latest information and advice locally, please visit their website: [www.havering.gov.uk](http://www.havering.gov.uk)

### **Havering 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: **Tel: 0800 368 5201.**

Lines open Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 6pm.  
Saturday and Sunday 11am to 4pm.

Email: [covid19support@havering.gov.uk](mailto:covid19support@havering.gov.uk)

*Somewhere over  
the rainbow*

*...lies the  
'new normal'*



**The grass grew** during lockdown, and we had some unexpected visitors! Order has since been restored, but if residents have ideas regarding new shrubbery and other features that we might look to develop around the estate, do please let us know.



## Lloyd's view



### Stay alert for Covid-19

On the face of it it seems as if Covid-19 is coming to an end. With pubs, restaurants and shops all opening up it could be easy to think we are through the worst of the situation. I'm still a little sceptical, fearing the chances of a 'second wave' leading us right back to full-on lockdown again. I hope I'm wrong.

If I may, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all residents for their attention to detail in trying to fight this disease and keeping their families safe. Please continue to take precautions, cleaning hands and shared surfaces, sticking to safe social distances, and following the guidelines for social gatherings guidelines as they evolve. Mass gatherings and parties remain forbidden for now. We have come this far together, let's see it through properly.

Finally, let me remind you that if you or any of your household do feel unwell, show symptoms or need advice about Covid-19, the Havering hotline remains open. They will go through in detail everything you need to do to keep yourselves safe. Telephone: 0800 368 5201.

Regards,  
Lloyd

## News in brief

### The BETRA office

As all residents know, the BETRA office is working normal hours now, from 9-4 Monday to Friday.

However, we are still not allowed to have visitors enter the office. Please contact us by phone or, if you do drop by, be prepared to talk with us at a distance in the front driveway.

### Safe delivery

We have heard of issues with delivery companies leaving parcels outside blocks or front doors, and classing them as delivered. These items have gone missing, in other words been nicked.

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

### Bag it, bin it!

The grounds have become somewhat wild over the lockdown, but this is no excuse for residents becoming lazy with regard to clearing up their dog's mess. In fact, quite the opposite. Dog faeces in long grass is more dangerous, not less.

Summer is here and many families will be out on the green, the children playing. We want them to do so safely. Dog owners, please take your responsibilities seriously - take your poo bags with you.

If you see anyone failing to clear up after their animals, please report it to the office or through the Havering council website contact form - offenders can receive up to £80 fines.

### Blockages

We have also recently noticed an upsurge of balcony drains being blocked. We get reports back from

Havering saying that the reason for the majority of blockages is animal waste or products (such as animal hay etc).

The smells produced are revolting, especially during the warm weather, so let us remind our residents that if you have pets, large or small, please refrain from letting them go to the toilet on the balconies as the drainage systems are only built for water and liquids.

### Clutter

No roundup of recurring problems is complete without a mention of landing clutter! And once again lockdown has helped make this problem worse.

During the pandemic, much has had to be put on hold, including the Council's war on clutter - its policy to clear all fire hazards and household items from communal areas such as lobbies, landings and hallways.

However, we hear that Havering now has a dedicated enforcement team, given the ability to impose fines on residents across the borough if they have clutter stored outside their front doors. Clutter is deemed to be anything from black rubbish sacks all the way through to bikes and buggies.

Please be aware: if you fail to remove such items you are liable to be fined. If you have items outside your front door we would ask you to either take them inside, store them where possible (inside, on the balcony, a garden if you have one) or dispose of them.

For some time now BETRA has been asking Havering to consider additional storage solutions, and we will keep you posted if there are any developments. If you have a particular concern or issue you wish to discuss, please contact us.

### Spare cupboards

If any residents have cupboards on the ground floor that they do not use, and feel someone else could benefit from using them - say by storing push chairs etc there, please let us know and we will >

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**CATCH IT.**

**BIN IT.**

**KILL IT.**



> be happy to allocate its use to another resident in your block.

### **Parking permits**

During the isolation period of the lockdown, we decided to ask for the patrols of the car parks to be suspended, as there was little vehicle movement.

These patrols have now started again. If you have a car and are either parking in our car parks or wish to use our car parks, please check that your green badges are still on display. The silver hologram should be visible at all times when parking in the car parks, to avoid any unwarranted tickets for our residents.

If you need a new or replacement permit please do not hesitate to contact our office as soon as possible and we will get one sent out to you.

### **Security doors**

We have seen an increase in security doors being blocked open with paper, rocks, cans, etc. We would like to remind residents that the security doors are there for exactly that purpose - security.

If the door is left open the whole lobby area is compromised including the front doors to flats. This could result in animals entering blocks and going to the toilet. We have seen parcels going missing when left in the lobby. During the colder weather, open doors attract people loitering - hanging about for no particular reason.

If residents do not have enough keys for their family for the security door, please ring the office. We have spares for some of the blocks and will be happy to give them out. If we do not have a key for your block then we can explain the process around getting a new one.



### **The best of neighbours**

One of our residents, shielding from the pandemic, was delighted when some of her neighbours offered to revamp her garden for her. She was thrilled by the results, and wants to thank all involved.



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# The cost of heating

# Events

**This may seem like a strange time of year to be bringing this up, but there are three major schemes residents should know about ahead of the autumn. You may be eligible for one of more of these grants, but in all cases you will need to apply, and early applications are advisable.**

## Winter Fuel Payment

A Winter Fuel payment is a one-off, tax-free payment of between £100 and £300 made during the winter to help with heating costs, it is made to households with someone over Pension Credit age.

Most people born on or before 5 April 1955 will usually qualify for a payment in 2020/21. For details on how to apply go to: [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)

## Cold Weather Payment

You may get a Cold Weather Payment if you're getting certain benefits or support for mortgage interest.

Cold Weather Payments are different to Winter Fuel Payments. You'll get a payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees celsius or below for 7 consecutive days. You'll get something in the region of £25 for each 7 day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March.

This year's scheme is due to start in November 2020. You'll be able to check if your area is due a payment in November 2020. For more details, visit: [www.gov.uk/coldweather-payment/what-youll-get](http://www.gov.uk/coldweather-payment/what-youll-get)

## Warm home discount scheme

Did you know you might be eligible for a saving of up to £140 off your electricity bill for winter 2020/21 under the Government's Warm Home Discount Scheme?

The money is not paid to you - it's a one-off discount on your electricity bill, between September and March. You may be able to get the discount on your gas bill instead if your supplier provides

you with both gas and electricity. Contact your supplier to find out. The discount will not affect your Cold Weather Payment or Winter Fuel Payment.

## Eligibility

There are two ways to qualify for the Warm Home Discount Scheme:

- You get the Guarantee Credit element of Pension Credit - known as the 'core group'.
- You're on a low income and meet your energy supplier's criteria for the scheme - known as the 'broader group'.

How you apply for the Warm Home Discount Scheme depends on how you qualify for the discount. For more details, including how to apply, go to:

[www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)

Alternatively, for help in applying for any of the above, drop into the BETRA office where Lloyd or Jenny can advise you.



**Cancelled until further notice.**  
We normally get together on the last Wednesday of each month, in the boardroom, from 5-7pm. We hope to resume before too long.

**Next Board meeting**  
Our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** is due shortly. We will be contacting committee members to make suitable arrangements in due course.

## 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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Homes and Housing  
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Email: [homes@havering.gov.uk](mailto:homes@havering.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.havering.gov.uk](http://www.havering.gov.uk)

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



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