

# BETRA News

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## Notes on fire safety

The hot weather is here, so this is just a reminder of the important part we all must play in minimising the dangers of fire around the estate

If you have a balcony, you cannot have an open fire, includes BBQs and the like. If you have a garden, please make sure your BBQ is at the far end of the garden

You must at all times reduce the risk of fire by not leaving cooking facilities unattended, and avoid leaving the property while using washing machines, dishwashers, tumble-dryers, etc.

Clutter is not permitted in the lobby areas or on the landings. Having in place a zero tolerance policy regarding clutter in communal areas, and regular checks are made to ensure this rule is followed. It is within their rights to remove items they find improperly stored, including push chairs, prams, rubbish bags, bikes and shoe racks, etc.

All of our properties have a 'stay put in case of fire' policy in place, hence the zero clutter rule - should a fire break out in another flat or in the lobby areas you should be safe in your property for enough time to allow emergency services to get to you. However if you feel a route out of the building is safe, then please do leave the building and assemble at the nearest external car park.

## Wendy's tree



### Jennie Goddard writes:

As you will know, Wendy Thomas, our former Chair, sadly passed away on 27th May 2021 and is dearly missed. Wendy began on our Board back in 2012, becoming Chair in 2016.

Wendy was always a big believer in the Harold Hill community and was the driving force behind our events, organising the Easter and Christmas events on our grounds. She was always willing to help any resident where she could, and is missed by all who knew her.

As a fitting tribute to Wendy, a tree has now been planted in her memory, on the green at the back of Kirkham House, where she lived. The tree will need time to become established, and we shall be installing a plaque shortly. We will let you know when this is in place.

## Covid latest

The government has removed remaining domestic restrictions in England. There are still steps you can take to reduce the risk of catching and spreading COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated
- Let fresh air in if meeting indoors, or meet outside
- Consider wearing a face covering in crowded, enclosed spaces

For further advice and information on Coronavirus, visit the government's website at [www.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)





## Support through hard times

**In this edition, I'd like to focus on the cost of living.**

As we all know the price of everything has risen dramatically over the past year, making life that little bit harder for everyone, especially those on low incomes. I fear there is worse to come as the winter hits and the cost of energy bills threaten to rise again.

On top of that, we have noticed an increase on the local government clamping down on those in arrears with their rents.

If anyone is struggling to come to terms with spiraling costs or understanding their rents, council tax, or other bills, then now on a Monday you can make an appointment with me to discuss your situation.

I will happily set aside some time to go through bills or debts, writing down budgets for you, who to pay and when to pay. It's always best to know your financial position - writing it all down can help keep get on top of the situation.

With this in mind, don't forget about the £150 energy rebate and the Winter Fuel Payment - details of both in this newsletter. Again, feel free to come into our office if you need help applying for either of these.

Regards,  
Lloyd

## Bin business

**Can we remind everyone about the correct use of the communal bins.**

In every compound you will find at least one recycling bin and one household waste bin. Please ensure you are using the correct bin when disposing of your rubbish. If the bin men see household waste (black bags) in an orange bin they will refuse to collect them.

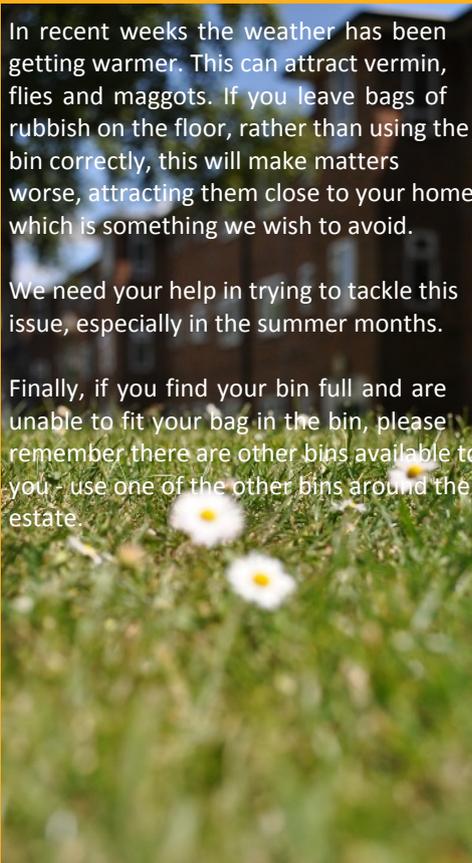
During Covid and after, we have also seen an increase in non-household rubbish being put in the bins or the compounds. This past month alone we have seen flooring, wardrobes and even a 3-piece sofa put into the bins. This not only means other residents cannot use the bin but again means the bin men will not collect them, leaving our guys to fish the items out of the bins to dispose of them properly.

If you have items to get rid of then please let us know and we will point you in the right direction for how and where to dispose of properly.

In recent weeks the weather has been getting warmer. This can attract vermin, flies and maggots. If you leave bags of rubbish on the floor, rather than using the bin correctly, this will make matters worse, attracting them close to your home, which is something we wish to avoid.

We need your help in trying to tackle this issue, especially in the summer months.

Finally, if you find your bin full and are unable to fit your bag in the bin, please remember there are other bins available to you - use one of the other bins around the estate.



## Would you trash your own neighbourhood?

**Can you imagine anything more foolish than vandalising the estate where you and your family live?**

In recent months, BETRA's maintenance guys have had to clear up the mess after such acts of vandalism.

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 to the Police, **at the earliest opportunity.**

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

### **Lloyd writes:**

*"You may have noticed this summer we are trying to take an active approach in improving the grounds, trees, car parks etc, including the rejuvenation of our barked areas around the grounds.*

*"While we are happy to keep making improvements, the disappointing thing is we have seen an increase in damage being caused to the improvements. We have had new boarding done to protect the bark and pathways - only for that boarding to be ripped away.*

*"We have also seen some of Havering's property being damaged including the park lights and manhole covers that protect your drainage systems in the flats from blockages. Over the past few weeks there has also been damage caused to the lobby doors, the viewing panels in them being broken and the doors themselves being forced open breaking the locking mechanisms - which also affects the block security.*

*"These damages have to be reported to Havering for immediate attention and every time Havering complete a repair it is noted on their system. Not only could this affect rents in the future it also is a chargeable repair to the leaseholders on the estate. This is criminal damage and anyone caught causing damage to public property could be reported accordingly."*



# Littering our lawns

We are fortunate to have green and spacious grounds here at BETRA, and keeping them tidy is not just the job of our maintenance guys. We must all share that responsibility.

Through the summer months, when picnics and general lazing around are on the agenda, please remember to dispose of all your rubbish in the bins provided.

## Energy rebate

As the cost of living crisis hits home, make sure to take the financial support on offer

If you are a Council Tax band A to D household who does not pay Council Tax by direct debit, there is now a form that you can complete on Havering Council's website to get the government's £150 energy rebate.

This will enable you to apply for your rebate to be paid into your bank account or your Council Tax account. The aim is that these households receive their payment within ten working days of making their online Application.

get the State Pension, or get another social security benefit (not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit)

If you do not get either of these, you may need to make a claim. You can make a claim for a Winter Fuel Payment from 1 August 2022.

If you've got a Winter Fuel Payment before, you do not need to claim again unless you've deferred your State Pension or moved abroad.

**For more information, go to [www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment](http://www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment)**

## New booklets

We are producing new editions of three BETRA publications:

- **Residents Handbook** - all new residents receive a copy of this booklet.
- **Guide to out-of-hours emergency procedures and other useful information** - all new residents receive a copy of this.
- **Board Members Handbook** - Board members each receive a copy of this.

**All three booklets will shortly be available to view and download from our website.**

For more information including how to apply, go to the Havering website - [haverling.gov.uk](http://haverling.gov.uk) - and search Energy Bills Rebate 2022. Alternatively, you can contact Havering's Council Tax customer services team on 01708 433997 and someone will help you complete it.

## Winter Fuel Payment

**If you were born on or before 25 September 1956 you could get between £250 and £600 to help you pay your heating bills. This is known as a 'Winter Fuel Payment'.**

You will get your Winter Fuel Payment automatically (you do not need to claim) if you're eligible and either

## Scared of your partner or ex?

**Talk to us any time, day or night.**





# Events



## Home Swap

**We have four properties that are currently looking for a mutual exchange.**

- 2 bed middle-floor property
- Ground floor bedsit
- 1 Bed middle-floor flat
- 1 bed ground-floor, with garden

If you know of anyone off the estate that could also be looking to move to the area, please do let us know as we are able to propose exchanges around other areas of Havering or even in other boroughs.

**However, please note:** Havering is about to change the way it manages its housing register. This means that from 11 July through to 1 August their systems will be down. Residents will not be able to register their interest in acquiring a new home or home swap during this time.

If you are interested in a possible home swap, there are several ways in which you can research the possibility, by contacting people on specially dedicated Facebook groups, or via the website [www.homeswapper.co.uk](http://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.

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



Harold Hill Library in Farnham Road runs Wiggle and Giggle sessions for children aged from two to four years old on Tuesday afternoons between 2pm and 2.30pm during school term times.

During these sessions the children sing nursery rhymes and this has been proven to help children develop their language and pre-literacy skills. Using actions with songs also improves hand-eye coordination.

These sessions can also be of value for families who have English as a second language. For more information call 01708 434973.



**For school-aged children through to the end of the summer.**

Sessions are available for booking at Sapphire Ice and Leisure, Central Park and Harrow Lodge Leisure Centres. You can book your kids' free sessions on the Havering website.

## Jubilee memories

Havering Council has released a commemorative film, highlighting many of the celebrations that took place across the borough for Her Majesty, the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. It's a lovely memento of a special day, which you can view on the 'London Borough of Havering' YouTube channel.

## BETRA Board Meetings



**The date of the next Board meeting, and the Annual General Meeting, are yet 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  
 Naomi Cooper, Bookkeeper

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