



## The waiting game

### Advice from Havering

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

### 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 call the free-to-use helpline: 0800 368 5201. Monday to Friday 8.30am to 6pm. Saturday and Sunday 11am to 4pm. Email: [covid19support@havering.gov.uk](mailto:covid19support@havering.gov.uk)

### Local test centre

Jennie Goddard writes: Should you have symptoms of coronavirus - a high temperature, a new, continuous cough, or a loss or change to sense or taste - there is now a testing centre open in Harold Hill.

The centre is called Dagnam Park Drive and is on the multi-use sports pitches behind Central Park Leisure Centre. People must enter through a pedestrian entrance on Dagnam Park Drive and there will be no access from the Central Park Leisure Centre car park.

It is a walk-through site and should not be reached by car. Nor should residents take public transport to reach these sites, whilst having Coronavirus symptoms. Testing is only available for those who have booked an appointment. Do not turn up without one. To book a test, go to: [nhs.uk/coronavirus](http://nhs.uk/coronavirus) or call 119.

**In this edition we were hoping to say things were back to normal now that Covid19 has been seen off. So much for that!**

Instead, it seems we are in for a difficult autumn and winter. No one knows how things will pan out, but we are likely to be living with restrictions for some time yet.

Here, below, are a reminder of the social events and activities we are having to do without this autumn and in the run-up to Christmas.

### The work goes on

For all the ongoing problems, we have still managed to achieve a degree of normality. Our grounds maintenance team are fully operational, and the office is busy dealing with many of the usual issues that arise.

We're not quite ready to have an open door policy at the office, but we're getting there. Remember, you can always give us a call if you're in need of help, information or advice. We are working our normal hours, from 9-4 Monday to Friday, and if need be, can make an appointment for you to come to the office.



HM Government

WASH HANDS

COVER FACE

NHS

MAKE SPACE



## Lloyd's view



As always, our British summer seems too short. Autumn hits, the temperature drops, our summer clothes go back in the wardrobe for another year and the leaves start falling.

Our guys will begin the yearly battle of clearing the pathways, car parks and alleyways of as many leaves that fall as we can.

We will also be cutting back a lot of the bushes (weather permitting) This will give some of the gardens that back onto the streets a freshen up - if you feel you have a shrub that overhangs from your garden and you would like our help to get on top of it please do ask as we will do what we can.

By focusing on the bushes and shrubs we're hoping we can cut them back drastically so they have time in the winter to recover and grow leaves back in time for the spring. We will be aiming to give the alleyways a bit more light, especially in the darker months of the year when it's nice for them to have a more open feel. This cutting back also makes the bushes easier to maintain in the coming year.

Finally, it is sad to reflect on seasonal community events that we will miss this autumn and winter, such as our Christmas Market and Halloween spook fest. The pandemic makes them impossible, sadly, but we hope to be back with a bang next year.

Stay well,  
**Lloyd**

## Home comforts

While Coronavirus continues to interfere with the rest of our lives, let's make sure our homes are in good shape to see off the winter.

### Your boiler

Let us know sooner rather than later if there are any problems. As Christmas approaches, the Council's plumbing service becomes stretched and delays are more likely, so you are advised to report boiler problems sooner rather later.

### Blocked sinks

Same again, let us know sooner rather than later. As winter draws on, sink blockages become more frequent, so the Council's plumbing service becomes stretched resulting in delays.

### Lobby lights

At the end of October the clocks go back, so the lobbies get darker sooner. The recently installed new lobby lights should all be working well and will be adjusted accordingly, but do let us know if any communal lights in your block are not working, or if they need adjusting.

### Damp and mould

Havering offers to do a survey of properties affected by damp and mould. To register for this, you need to go online and complete a short questionnaire. Depending on what you say, Havering officials will decide if action is needed. Go to [havering.gov.uk](http://havering.gov.uk) and search 'Problems with damp and mould'. Dampness, condensation and mould growth in the home is a common

problem, especially in older buildings. It can cause mould on walls and furniture and lead to rot in timber window frames and floors. It can encourage the growth of house dust mites and increase the risk of respiratory illness.

Dampness can be caused by **condensation**, **penetrating damp** - when rainwater gets in due to leaks in pipes, roofs, walls and windows - and **rising damp**, when moisture enters from the ground through the walls and floor.

If you have **penetrating** or **rising damp**, you may need the services of one of Havering's contractors. If the dampness is not caused by penetrating or rising damp, then it is most probably due to condensation.

You can prevent **condensation** in your home by producing less moisture (for example do not dry clothes on radiators, do not leave kettles boiling), by ventilate your home (for example keep your windows slightly open, close kitchen and bathroom doors when they are in use), by good insulation (for example insulating your loft, draft proofing around external doors and windows), and by having your house at a constant temperature rather than high temperatures for short periods.

To kill and remove **mould** you should wipe down walls and window frames with either a weak bleach solution or a fungicidal wash, which is available from most DIY shops. After treatment, redecorate using a good quality fungicidal paint. This helps prevent mould re-occurring.



have noticed a few things as we walk round the estate and we are keen to get them right, including getting more signage installed around the estate for the parking areas to ensure that it is only our residents who park in them.

We also noted that not everyone's permit is in good shape. Some damaged, or faded by the sun, slipped down the side of dashboards or blown away.

To help our residents avoid unnecessary fines we are offering all residents the chance to swap their permits for brand new ones, so avoiding confusion for the parking company.

If you would like a new replacement permit please return your old one to our office and we will issue you with a new one. Likewise, if you have lost your permit or would like to request a permit please do not hesitate to contact us and we can get one sent out to your address.

In addition to this we have also purchased a small number of permit holders. These ensure the permit is held in place. If you wish to have one of these they are free of charge and also available from our office.

## Firework night

Fireworks season is upon us and come the 5th November and the days around it you will hear many fireworks being let off.

We would urge everyone who has pets to be home and around them as much as possible at this time. It's been proven that pets get very scared during Firework season and having their owners there to comfort them will always help relieve some of the stress they may be under.

## Safe deliveries

A reminder that if you are worried about delivery companies leaving parcels outside blocks, or leaving parcels outside your front door when you are out, 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.

## Parking permits

We have been reviewing the parking on our estate and have been in discussion with the parking company for BETRA's car parks. We

## Having your say

**We are about to produce a questionnaire for our residents to complete, delivered to your door.**

It's a chance to update our office with your up-to-date phone numbers and contact details - important in an emergency. And for you to tell us what you think, and how we can improve our services.

Expect this questionnaire shortly. Thanks for your support with this - the more completed forms we have, the better informed we will be. There will be a prize draw for all who complete the questionnaire.



**BETRA's AGM is due in November, but we are not going to be able to meet in the normal way.**

Instead, this will be a paper exercise, and we would like as many of you as possible to take part in it. There will be three parts to this process, hence the forms enclosed with this newsletter.

These forms will help us identify which members of the current committee wish to continue, and which residents show an interest in joining the committee for the first time.

**These forms need to be returned by the 16th November 2020**

We will then issue, to those who have expressed an interest in joining the committee, the next form, which details to us what they would like to do within the committee - either run for a position on the board, run for a significant position, or, if they have thought about it and no longer wish to be considered, their withdrawal from the process.

**This form will need to be handed back by 24th November 2020.**

The official date of the AGM will be **Wednesday 25 November 2020**. We will send the final form and all relevant AGM papers out to all those who have shown an interest, to vote on who you would like to be appointed to the committee

Once these names have been identified, they will in turn elect their officers - Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.

These votes will be delivered by post, and the outcome announced soon after, on our notice boards, the website, and in the next newsletter.

We apologise for the inconvenience of this process, but the pandemic has made these arrangements necessary. Please take part - your views matter, and our committee needs to represent the views of all of you.



## Winter warmers

A reminder of the grants some of you may be able to apply for this winter.

### 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

Up to £140 off your electricity bill this winter. 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.

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.

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)



### 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.

### Christmas arrangements

Arrangements for the opening times of the BETRA office and delivery of Council services over the Christmas season will be published soon, on our notice boards and website.

## 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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