

BETRA News

Issue 10, October 2017

Show that you care with a BETRA share

If joining the Board isn't for you, there is another way you can show your support for BETRA.

It is important that all residents feel they have a stake in BETRA. To encourage this feel of ownership we have, since 2006, signed up over 210 registered shareholder members who each hold a share to the value of 10 pence.

Yes, that's right, just 10p! This is a symbolic gesture that allows members to express their support for BETRA. It also gives them the opportunity to attend board meetings and speak at them, if they so wish. Voting rights at board meetings, however, are reserved for board members only.

Ideally we would like to see the vast majority of our residents sign up to be shareholders. So, if you haven't already, why not pop into the office to collect your share certificate today? Don't forget to bring 10p!

Please note: Regardless of whether or not you are a shareholder, BETRA strives to deliver the same level of service to all its residents.



With some of our present Board likely to step down in the not too distant future, BETRA will soon be looking for new recruits to our executive board. This is an opportunity for residents to become involved in the running of our organisation and this estate. Anyone living on the Barnstaple Estate is eligible to stand, and our new estate manager, Lloyd Edwards would be delighted to talk through the possibility with any interested residents.

What is a TMO?

Tenant management organisations (TMO) such as BETRA are legal bodies set up and run by tenant-led management committees. These committees, or boards, enter into a legal management agreement (contract) with the landlord – in our case Havering Council – and are paid annual management and maintenance allowances in order to

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carry out the management duties that are delegated to them.

Management of the Barnstaple Estate is a serious business. BETRA has some 216 properties on the estate. But these are more than just properties, these are our people's homes, and this estate is our community. So becoming a BETRA board member is a big deal. It's a chance to make a contribution to the development of our community, a chance to have your say when big decisions need to be made; a chance, in short, to make a difference.

Opportunity knocks

Being on the BETRA Board can be a great learning experience - and can also look great on a CV! Members receive training and learn a range of skills including team work, decision-making and planning. They also enjoy the satisfaction of knowing they are making a difference to their community.

BETRA is allowed a board of up to 15 residents, including both tenants and leaseholders on the estate. At the AGM, the board elects its officers: a chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer. The board goes on to authorise and set up sub-committees as and when required. Prior to an AGM, a resident can be co-opted onto the Board, prior to them submitting themselves for election at the next AGM. Please note: co-opted member do not have a vote until they become a fully elected member.

Find out more

If you think you might like to become involved, but want to know more before making a decision, please pop into the office for a chat with Lloyd Edwards. Lloyd will be delighted to talk through the possibilities with you..



Estate Manager Lloyd Edwards

Where to start?

Well, it's an honour to be asked to step up to manage BETRA and continue the fantastic work that Lindsey did during her time at the helm. The work that Lindsey was in the middle of when she left I have taken up and will continue to seek results on all of those. I hope you can join us on wishing Lindsey well in her next adventures and you may see her around at some of our events with any luck.

As always BETRA relies on its community and its residents. We have a board of members and we are always welcoming new members with fresh ideas and thoughts so we would love you to come join us at our board meetings and make a difference in your community. If you are interested please contact our office and we can talk you through the process and what you can expect from being part of your community's team seeking to make a difference.

Regards,
Lloyd Edwards



Thank you Lindsey

BETRA Chairman

Ken Howson writes:

Over the summer, BETRA TMO's manager Lindsey Taylor, left our community. Lindsey had been involved with BETRA for nearly 10 years, four of them as manager. Creating a sense of togetherness during her time as manager, she oversaw the regeneration of the parking facilities on the estate, introducing residents permits and new parking areas.

Lindsey also oversaw some amazing events, all of them fun days, from our Easter celebrations through to Halloween extravaganzas and even a visit from Father Christmas himself! We wish her all the best in her new ventures. She will be sadly missed in our little corner of Harold Hill, but I'm sure she will return to see the community and share in our events every once in a while.

News in brief

Liza Fagg

We are sorry to report that Liza Fagg, a former board member here at BETRA, has passed away. We remember Liza with fondness and gratitude for all she did for the community. If you would like to contribute to our collection towards the funeral, please visit the office today.

Where there's muck...

Dog walkers, did you know you can now be fined £80 if you do not carry at least two poo bags with you? And yes, enforcement officers have the power to check that owners have come out properly equipped. So please, respect our estate and its residents - carry the bags and use the bins provided. You could be saving yourself 80 quid.

Working with Breyer

BETRA's Lloyd Edwards recently met with colleagues from the Breyer Group company B-Line, who, on behalf of the council, are responsible for a large proportion of repairs and maintenance jobs undertaken on estates like ours.

We hope this meeting marks the beginning of ever greater cooperation between our organisations in support of residents. To highlight the work undertaken by a typical B-Line operative, we agreed to include this profile in our newsletter.



A Day in the life of B-Line Operative, James Best

When does your day start?

My day begins at 7:00am when I switch on my PDA, and then make a cup of tea whilst I wait for my first job for the day. My daily jobs automatically load one after the other and are scheduled by our Administrators at Head Office.

What time do you leave home?

By 7.45 I am on the road, as I am a Havering resident the commute is nice and short!

Do you need to go to your office every morning?

Because the system is automated and the jobs are received directly on the hand held device, I can arrive on site at my first appointment by 8.00am, without having to go to Head Office.

What do you do when you arrive at the resident's property?

On my arrival, of which the resident has been made aware via SMS, I knock or ring the door bell and greet the resident displaying my ID badge; this reassures them of who I am before they let me into their home.

How do you relate to the Residents?

I always explain to the resident what the work involves, so that they are aware of any disruption. I begin by carrying out a Risk Assessment via my PDA which is directly uploaded to our IT system. It is important to provide protective coverings when working in

residents' homes, so I prepare the work area making sure floors and furniture are well protected.

Do you complete the repair all the time?

The majority of my jobs are completed on the first visit; these are then signed off as completed on my PDA by the resident, followed by a simple Yes/No satisfaction survey to ensure they are happy with the works. However, should there be any unforeseen complications, I fully explain what this could be to the resident so that they are aware, and rebook a convenient appointment whilst on site: this allows the resident to factor in any personal commitments that they may have (doctor, shopping, etc.). When this occurs I have the back office support of my Supervisor and Customer Service Advisors (CSA) who help me determine the most efficient way forward. Like me, most my colleagues live and work in the borough, so we are part of and understand our local community.

Are you busy all day and do you get a break?

Each day is different and my lunch break tends to fall wherever the breaks in the service allow – but I enjoy being busy and wouldn't have it any other way.

Have you ever had any remarkable experience at work?

One day I arrived at a property to change the smoke alarm, but ended up calling the ambulance service for an elderly resident, followed by a trip to the local boarding kennel to ensure that her beloved dog was cared for while she was in hospital; we operatives are not averse to going above and beyond!

What time do you finish work?

Work finishes at 5.00pm – or when the last job has been completed.

Stay safe when selling your car

These days, instead of selling to, or exchanging our cars with, recognised car dealers, many of us simply put an advert online and sell to the first buyer who comes along. This may be quick and simple but it can also be risky, as nearby resident recently discovered.

The lady in question - with young children in tow - was showing a man her car. He asked her to start the engine. She did so. He then pushed her out of the way, jumped in the car and drove away. Neither he nor the car have been seen since.

Needless to say, this was a distressing experience for this lady and her children. Nor was it clear whether the loss of her car will be covered by her insurance.

There are lessons we can learn from our neighbour's unfortunate experience, the obvious one being be wary of people you don't know. But there are also specific precautions you should take, and these are



well explained on the Money Advice Service website - moneyadviceservice.org.uk - from which this advice is taken:

As the people coming to view your car will usually be complete strangers, it makes sense to take some basic precautions:

- When arranging a viewing, consider having a friend or family member present.
- Ask the buyer for proof of identity and check that they have a valid driver's licence.
- Always remove the keys from the ignition before leaving a potential buyer alone in your car.
- Go with potential buyers on test drives and don't hand over the keys until you're in the passenger seat.
- Be wary if a buyer brings some 'tag-a-long' friends – they might plan to break into your house while you're out on the test drive.
- Don't hand over the car keys or documents until your bank has confirmed it has cleared the full value of the vehicle into your account.
- Ask the potential buyer to check with their insurance company they're covered to drive your car. Even if they have a "driving other cars" policy it will probably only provide third party cover. Contact your insurance company – you might need to get temporary car insurance for the test drive.

Your cut-out-and-keep guide to BETRA's Christmas Dates

The BETRA office will be closed to walk-ins from 12.30pm on Friday 22 December.

The office will reopen at 9am on Tuesday 2 January.

There will, however, be a phone service throughout this period - 27/28/29 December

Our Maintenance Team will be working on emergency calls only on 27/28/29 December

If outside normal office hours (9am-4pm) or on Bank Holidays, then Havering's Out-Of-Hours Service should be called: 01708 756699.

Halloween Trick or Treat

Dare to knock on our trick or treat house? Only the brave are rewarded!! Best dressed competition / hot drinks, cakes and more...

Monday 30th October 2017, 5-6.30pm.

Christmas Market

The annual Christmas market comes back to BETRA this year. Stalls of Christmas goodies, fun and games to play, Food and drink and maybe even a visit from Mrs Claus, to hand out some Christmas cheer. **Date to be confirmed closer to the time.**

Darts get together

The second Wednesday of each month, in the boardroom, from 5-7pm.

Why not join 'One dart Ken' (as our boastful Chairman likes to be known), friends and neighbours for a get together, to throw some arrows and enjoy a takeaway supper and drink? Chinese? Pizza? We decide on the night. All residents welcome.

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.

BETRA

Lloyd Edwards, Estate Manager
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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