

## HFI DIRECT SERVICE CELEBRATES MILLIONTH CALL

Mary Meade, a Lyon Street resident for many years, became the millionth caller to HFI Direct's freephone number since call lines opened in 2000. Mary rang the service on the morning of the 30 September 2005 to request a repair to the thermostat on her boiler.

HFI Direct is Homes for Islington's dedicated contact centre for residents. In addition to reporting repairs by telephoning freephone 0800 694 3344, you can also ring to pay rent or service charges or arrange gas safety check appointments.

On Friday 4 November Mary visited the contact centre where her call was taken. There she met staff and was shown around the centre. Then Homes for Islington Chief Executive, Eamon McGoldrick, presented her with a bouquet and some vouchers.

Mrs Meade commented: "I was very happy with the service I received when I called HFI Direct. I really enjoyed meeting the staff and was delighted with my flowers and vouchers."

### **Eight out of ten happy with the service**

The most recent satisfaction survey found that eight out of ten people are pleased with the service they receive from HFI Direct.

Service improvements on the horizon include reviewing the current appointment system to make it more flexible and implementing a computerised notification system which automatically informs HFI Direct when lifts fail. These improvements should further raise satisfaction with the service. HFI Direct is always happy to hear your comments and opinions of the service they offer.

### **How and when to contact HFI**

HFI Direct is open Monday to Friday 8am until 8pm and Saturday 8am to 12 noon. Outside of these hours emergency repairs can be reported using the same number.



*Call agent  
Verona Monrose  
shows Mary Meade  
how HFI Direct  
handles calls and  
makes appointment.*



*Mary Meade  
receives a bouquet  
and vouchers from  
HFI Chief Executive  
Eamon McGoldrick.*

You can text repair requests on 07781 472 556, report them by email to [repairs@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:repairs@homesforislington.org.uk), or online via the website [www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk). Just click the blue Repairs & Improvements tab at the top of any web page and then click the green **Repairs Online** tab which you will see on the repairs page or home page.

## FEEDBACK

We hope that the news and information provided in this newsletter will be useful and of interest to you. Please feel free to contact any member of the editorial team with your comments or suggestions for future issues.

To contact any member of the editorial team, write to:

**Homes for Islington News Editorial Team,  
Highbury House,  
5 Highbury Crescent,  
London N5 1RN**

or email your comments and suggestions to  
[HFInews@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:HFInews@homesforislington.org.uk)

*This newsletter and the accompanying supplement and all back issues are available on the Homes for Islington website. Click the blue 'Publications' tab at the top of the web page and then click the green 'Newsletters' tab on the left.*

## Homes for Islington Editorial Team

<b>Victoria Keens</b>	Lead editor, HFI Communications
<b>Philip Boothby</b>	HFI Managed Property Sub-board (tenant)
<b>Mary Caudron</b>	Central Street Area Housing Office
<b>Liza Durrant</b>	Holland Walk Area Housing Office
<b>Christopher Donovan</b>	Upper Street Area Housing Office
<b>Morgan Ereku</b>	Lyon Street Area Housing Office
<b>Lee Farrow</b>	Boleyn Road Area Housing Office
<b>Jaime Goumal</b>	HFI Communications
<b>John Michael-Lane</b>	Isledon Road Area Housing Office
<b>William McGarvie</b>	HFI Board (tenant)
<b>Fabian Mugodhi</b>	Resident Involvement Officer
<b>Stuart Phillips</b>	Home Ownership Team Leader
<b>Richard Rosser</b>	HFI Board (leaseholder)
<b>Desmond Smith</b>	HFI Board (tenant)
<b>Aiden Stapleton</b>	Area Programme Manager (Central Street Area)
<b>Scott Swinton</b>	Special Features Editor



*Winter is off to a cold start, but Islington has seen some glorious sunsets.*

# DON'T LET BULLIES

## ***It all started in 2002***

Jean Harvey had only recently moved to her flat when she found herself in the middle of the sort of nightmare that all too many people have come to experience as a result of antisocial neighbours.

A noisy party that did not end until 2am was just a taste of things to come. Later the noise would continue till next day, with loud music, shouting, foul language, drugs and violence. They threw cans over the fence and even climbed into her garden.

Jean suffers from epilepsy, which was aggravated by the stress of living with these conditions. "All this had a terrible effect on my health. I got quite depressed. You read a lot about this kind of thing, but I never imagined it could be like this," she told us.

The antisocial neighbour had a partner with whom he had frequent rows

One night at 3.30am Jean was woken by what she describes as dreadful screams. "I ran out and soon four police cars arrived and he was taken away to the police station. It seems he had tried to kill his partner with a knife."

"If we wanted a future in this block, we had to get him out."

William McGarvie of the Witness Service explains, "You have a much better chance of getting an antisocial resident evicted when witnesses are prepared to testify in person in court."

Jean Harvey agrees. She was determined not to let this antisocial tenant win. "It has to be stopped," she told us "and going to court is the only way to do it."

## ***And help was at hand***

She was prepared to go to court, but first she did her preparation. From the beginning she kept a diary. "Just keep going on," she advises; "Report everything. Go ahead, because you've got all the support you need. It was hell, but at the end of the day, there was a light at the end of the tunnel. You mustn't give in and you mustn't be frightened of them."

Jean kept in contact with Carol Thornburn, the antisocial behaviour officer at Boleyn Road, whom she found very helpful. "She writes and keeps in touch." With the help of Carol and PC Mel West, things started to look up.

She also received help from the Witness Service. "I was frightened to go to court, but after the help and understanding I got from the Witness Service, it made me feel happier about testifying."

# THE ANTISOCIAL WIN!

## Here's one tenant's story of her day in court



Before going to court, someone from the Witness Service took Jean to visit Clerkenwell Court and helped prepare her for the experience. She testified for nearly two hours on 26 May 2005. "I was the first witness, but I felt very relaxed and quite confident. I knew I was amongst friends that would help me if I needed it."

On 23 June the antisocial tenant was out. "Two years of hell and there was no other word for it. I can't begin to tell you what it was like," says Jean. "But I felt top of the world when I came out of the court. "

### ***If you are suffering antisocial behaviour, why not take Jean's advice?***

- Keep evidence in a diary. You can get help from the antisocial behaviour officer (ASB officer) at your Homes for Islington area housing office.
- Keep all letters and anything relating to the case.
- Keep in contact with the ASB officer and Neighbourhood Watch and Community Safety officer.
- Talk to the Witness Service and be prepared to give evidence in person in court.
- There is plenty of support. Don't be afraid of them. Don't let them win.

"Antisocial behaviour has to be stamped out if we are to live in a safer community," says Jean. "If you help it will be safer for everybody."

### ***Contacts and further information***

If you have any questions about antisocial behaviour, you can start by contacting your area housing office. You can leave a message any hour of the day or night on the antisocial behaviour message line in your area:

**Boleyn Road 020 7527 8346**

**Central Street 020 7527 6247**

**Holland Walk 020 7527 7477**

**Isledon Road 020 7527 6567**



*Jean Harvey with her copious files and William McGarvie from the Homes for Islington board.*

**Lyon Street 020 7527 6853**

**Upper Street 020 7527 5346**

Messages are checked every morning, Mondays through Fridays (except holidays). If there is an emergency, please contact the police on 999.

You can contact the Witness Service on 020 7506 3207 – or email to: [witnessservice@islingtonvictimsupport.co.uk](mailto:witnessservice@islingtonvictimsupport.co.uk), or contact Victim Support on 020 7272 0784 or email to [infor@islingtonvictimsupport.co.uk](mailto:infor@islingtonvictimsupport.co.uk).

Information about antisocial behaviour is on the Homes for Islington website. Look up "Antisocial behaviour" and similar keywords on the A-Z.

See also the Summer 2005 issue of this newsletter, which had several articles about antisocial behaviour. If you no longer have your copy, it is on the HFI website. Look under Publications and then under Newsletters.

A new leaflet explaining the Witness Service is available from area offices or from the Witness Service. (See article page 10)

## WORKING TOGETHER

A total of 1600 homes on the Tollington Estates are undergoing modernisation works in a £33.5m project supported by funding from Islington Council, government funds and the Finsbury Park Partnership (FPP).

To make sure the work stays on track progress is monitored by the Tollington project team, which is made up of residents, Homes for Islington staff, constructors and the FPP. Theresa Coyle, a Six Acre Estate resident who is also a Homes for Islington Board Director, chairs the team.

One of the estates at Tollington is the Andover Estate. On Andover, a dedicated resident liaison officer deals with all the issues that a tenant may have before, during and after the works on their property. The result has been that Andover estate residents have been very pleased with the work.

Some residents have even taken the time to write letters commending the work. One resident wrote:

“My windows look fantastic, the workmen were polite and helpful, cleaned all the mess, explained who to open/lock the windows and door and put my blinds back up for me. The team was very informative, approachable and helpful.”

Under the HFI framework agreement resident satisfaction with constructors is an important consideration influencing the award of further contracts for improvement works. An example of this is that, in response to good performance and resident satisfaction with their windows replacements, constructors Balfour Beatty have been awarded a contract to install new kitchens and bathrooms in eligible flats on the Andover Estate.

## ISLINGTON'S CHINESE WIN QUEEN'S AWARD

Community groups catering for minority communities play a valuable role supporting people from abroad who have settled in the UK, making it easier for them to integrate into the local culture by providing vital support networks and sharing their knowledge of the UK.

One such group is the Islington Chinese Association (ICA). ICA is a registered charity that has been providing a multicultural resource centre for people of Chinese origin and the wider community since 1986.

In recognition of its outstanding work in the community, ICA was honoured with the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, which consisted of a commemorative crystal and a certificate signed by the Queen. ICA was one of only eight groups in London to receive the award in 2005.

### **Activities and services for young and old**

ICA, which is situated on Giesbach Road in Archway, offers a wide range of services for all those that attend its centre. It provides essential services for older members, including welfare advice, help with legalities and completing forms, meals, book clubs, and aromatherapy. It is also keen to help older members stay fit and healthy by doing weekly walks and keep fit classes.

Younger members can get involved with the Chinese Energetic Young Enthusiasts group and engage in a fantastic range of activities including bowling, football, sports days, bike touring and visits to theme parks!

*Members doing keep fit & stretching exercises*



Many of the activities at the centre reflect ICA's aims to celebrate living in multicultural UK while enabling members to keep in touch with Chinese culture and traditions. Activities, including t'ai chi, traditional Chinese opera, dancing and English lessons, all reflect this desire.

### **Find out more...**

If you would like to find out more about the Islington Chinese Association, you can phone them on 020 7263 5986, visit the centre in Archway at 33 Giesbach Road, or log onto their website at [www.islingtonchinese.com](http://www.islingtonchinese.com).



*Members and workers at the ICA centre*

# APPRENTICE TRAINEES

Welcome to our new trainees who joined Homes for Islington on 7 November as apprentice trainees!

Daniel Davies who attended Islington Green school and Daniel Scolah from Central Boys Foundation School are both resident within the borough. This scheme is an important part of HFI's ongoing commitments to employ young people from the local area and to become a first class employer.

The trainees, who are on a two-year contract, have their first placements in customer service teams at Upper Street and Isledon Road Area Housing Offices. Over the next two years, the trainees will learn about all aspects of housing and customer service through workplace development. This will involve working in rotation in various teams to gain exposure to different areas of the organisation's activities.

These placements will aid both Daniels as they undertake an NVQ in customer service this year and in their studies for a housing qualification which they will be starting from next September as part of the scheme.



*Daniel Davies is on the left and Daniel Scolah is on the right*

# ASBO HITS NOTORIOUS GRAFFITI ARTIST



The Marquess Estate/New River Green/Bentham Court has been continually targeted by youths/young adults with antisocial behaviour, including graffiti, mopeds and drug and alcohol misuse. We can identify youths by their graffiti and tags and we will continue to work with our partners the police in order to stop this behaviour.

In September graffiti artist Parnell James Perkins, aka Pjay, was given an antisocial behaviour order with these prohibitions:

- Not to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person in England and/or Wales by words behaviour or visible representation
- That Parnell James Perkins be prohibited from being in

possession of any spray or aerosol paint system or any marker pen or other indelible marking system which could be used for the purpose of causing criminal damage or graffiti

- That Parnell James Perkins does not enter any prohibited area indicated on the map (Marquess Estate/ New River Green/Bentham Court)
- The order shall run for a period of four years from 1st September 2005 until 1st September 2009.

He also was sentenced for criminal damage and was awarded a 12 month community supervision order.

This particular ASBO is one of many actions planned for perpetrators who continue to participate in antisocial behaviour on our estates.

## NORTH KINGS CROSS CLEAN UP DAY BRINGS OUT TIDY KIDS SQUAD!

Saturday 29th of October saw the North Kings Cross Neighbourhood Management Project once again co-ordinating its annual Clean Up Day, which began with a week long series of activities for local kids based around a recycling theme.

Residents came out in force to visit information stalls on Tilloch Street with information on a range of issues such as healthy eating, energy efficiency, the Plus Bus and recycling at home.

Local children, led by the Mayor, Jonathan Dearth and Charlie the Clown, were at the forefront of the Clean Up, energetically collecting and sorting rubbish into separate bags of glass, plastic and paper for recycling.

The event attended by Cllr. Carol Powell, Cllr. Arnie Gibbons, Chair of North Kings Cross Project Steering Group and Cllr. Bridget Fox, lead member for Sustainability, saw the coming together of the largest number of key partners from the

voluntary, statutory and local business sectors. Homes for Islington was there, along with the LBI Clean Team, IC SL Waste Management, Bemerton Villages TMO, Tesco, Sure Start, Crumbles Castle, and Copenhagen Youth Project, to name just a few.

All children participating received Tidy Citizens Certificates from Gloria Johnson, treasurer of Bemerton TMO and Chair of Lyon Street Area Housing Panel. Local kids closed the event with street dancing and singing entertaining the crowds.

North Kings Cross Neighbour Manager, Sade Johnson said that she was delighted with the turnout and confident that this new expanded partnership of the local community, businesses, voluntary sector and the statutory agencies will continue to grow and work jointly to make North Kings Cross a better place for all.



*The children with the Tidy Citizens' Certificates and Gloria Johnson, treasurer of Bemerton TMO and Chair of Lyon Street Area Housing Panel*



*Lyon Street's new mechanised street cleaner.*



*The clean up team in action*

## WE ARE ALL EARS

Over the past year you've made many suggestions, comments and complaints about the services we offer. This feedback has been analysed and several changes have been made, to our reception areas in particular, which we hope you'll find useful. These include:

- Direct telephone lines to housing officers.
- A new queuing and appointment system.
- Internet access for information and to some services.
- Bigger notice boards with more information.
- Improved interview rooms to give visitors more space.

HFI welcomes your comments – both good and bad. Please remember that you can use the comment cards that are available in the reception areas of every office to let HFI know how you feel about the service we provide.



*Holland Walk reception area*

# DOWN OUR WAY: THE CENTRAL STREET AREA



The Central Street area is composed of the former metropolitan borough of Finsbury, in the south of Islington, and being on the northern reaches of the city of London, there is history around almost every corner...

## **St John's Gate**

Going south from Angel towards Farringdon, sandwiched amongst the modern bars of Clerkenwell, sits St John's Gate, an old stone gatehouse, as the most obvious remnant of the Priory of St John.

## **It all started around the year 1140**

The priory was founded in around 1140 by the Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem (more commonly known as the "Hospitallers"). It consisted of a range of monastic buildings stretching from Clerkenwell Green in the north to St John's Gate in the south and from Britton Street to St John's Street.

Over the course of the next four centuries, the priory fulfilled a number of roles from being a simple religious order to acting as a base for the crusading Hospitallers to being the occasional temporary residence for royalty. During this time, in the 1381 Peasants' Revolt, the priory was sacked and burnt as marauding peasants took out their anger on those charged with collecting the much-hated Poll Tax, before it was swiftly rebuilt. Later, in 1461, the future Edward IV was proclaimed king in St John's Square in the heart of the priory.

The priory suffered along with other religious orders with Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries, closing as a religious order in 1540 and becoming a store for the king's hunting equipment – though St John's church remained in use.

After the closure of the priory, St John's Gate, the old southern gateway, built in 1504, found use as a coffee house where only Latin was spoken (a short-run commercial failure) and a pub before in the 19th century becoming the headquarters for the newly formed St John's Ambulance Association. This association sought to work in the tradition of the original Hospitallers helping the sick and is part of the modern day secular Most Venerable Order of St John which continues to be based in the gatehouse.

For more information on the history of the borough, you can visit the Local History Centre at Finsbury Library, 245 St John Street, London EC1V 4NB. Appointments are necessary, so please telephone in advance on 020 7527 7988 or email: [localhistory@islington.gov.uk](mailto:localhistory@islington.gov.uk).

For guided tours around the Museum of the British Order of St John (in St John's Gateway) or more information on the order, call 020 7324 4070.

*For a chance to win a book about Islington history, answer the question below and send your answers with your name and address to:*

Local history competition, Homes for Islington News, Room 212, Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN.

**Q** *How were the Knights of the Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem more commonly known?*





**What's at the top of your list?**

CHRISTMAS LIST

**\* PAY THE RENT**

DVD player for Kylie  
Harry Potter video  
Silk tie for Dad  
Digital camera for Sam  
Drinks  
Chocolates for Aunt Jessica  
Soaps for Gran  
Teddy bear for Tracy  
Turkey + trimmings  
Mince pies

**If you don't pay, you can't stay.  
Rent arrears can lead to eviction.**

*If your rent is in arrears, don't delay.  
Contact your area housing office.*



[www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk)



## Important changes to bids for housing

Residents bidding for housing through Home Connections should note that the way that points are allocated has been changed to make the system clearer and to give priority to those most in need. The changes, which came into effect last month, mean that priority will be given to households living in overcrowded or poor conditions, to Islington residents and to those living in temporary accommodation with shared facilities.

Under the new system, residents in these priority categories will receive extra points. Additional points will also be awarded for each complete year they have been on the housing list, or if they have extra bedrooms and agree to move to a smaller home. Applicants will still get points for medical and welfare issues, or because they have to leave their homes for major works or other management grounds.

Due to the extreme demand for social housing, only those with 140 points or more are likely to be successful in their bids, but there may be alternative avenues to explore.

For advice and information contact the council's Rehousing Team on 020 7527 4140 or 4143.

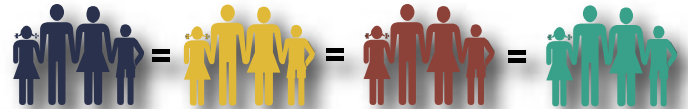
## WHO ARE YOU?

We want to make sure the services we offer you meet your needs. In order to do this they need to be accessible, and we need to know you feel confident in using them. To help us do this we are collecting information on who is taking up our services and joining us as employees. The picture that emerges will help us to improve these services and ensure that they truly include the whole community.

In January all our tenants, leaseholders and staff will receive a questionnaire. The questions will cover six key areas: gender, disability, race, sexuality, age and religion or belief. This information will help us target our services to all our community and to fill in any gaps that emerge.

So, when a questionnaire comes through your door please take a few minutes to fill it in. The more information you can give us, the more we can make sure that our services meet your needs. We will treat the information you provide us with the highest confidentiality and will only use it to improve the services we offer you.

Help us to help you and in the process you could win one of a number of exciting prizes!



## Just another day in medical research

The past horrors of medical research in Islington are revealed in a new exhibition.

With suitable cadavers in short supply, trainee doctors and surgeons turned to illegal sources to obtain bodies for their training and research.

Find out more by visiting the free exhibition 'From Leeches to the NHS – Medicine in Islington – 1850 – 1960' at the Islington Museum. The museum is at the Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD and is open Wednesday to Saturday 11am to 5pm and Sunday 2pm to 4pm.



## GAS SAFETY REMINDER

Residents using the Highbury and Islington and Holloway Road tube stations during the next couple of weeks will see this poster which is a strong reminder of the serious consequences that can result from gas appliances that are not regularly checked for safety. The poster will appear in the lifts at Holloway Road and on the escalator at Highbury and Islington.

Homes for Islington runs an annual programme of gas safety checks which are provided free to all our tenants. Tenants should contact HFI Direct on 0800 694 3344 Mondays-Fridays 8am-8pm and Saturdays 8am-12noon.

If you are a leaseholder you are responsible for your own gas servicing. You have a duty under law to ensure that you do not do harm or injury to others due to faulty appliances. Having a gas safety check every year by a CORGI registered person is the only way to ensure this.



## NEW LEAFLET FROM THE WITNESS SERVICE

We hope you've read our report on tenant Jean Harvey's successful day in court on page 2 of this newsletter.

If you are being bothered by antisocial behaviour, why not consider following Jean's advice and contact the Witness Service?

Homes for Islington and the Witness Service have just published a helpful explanatory leaflet. You can pick one up at any of the area housing offices or get one from the Witness Service.

To contact the Witness Service, telephone 020 7506 3207 or email them on: [witnessservice@islingtonvictimsupport.co.uk](mailto:witnessservice@islingtonvictimsupport.co.uk). You can also find out information on the Homes for Islington website. Look up Witness Service in the A-Z.



## NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION: IMPROVE YOUR SKILLS WITH NEW FREE COURSES

Adult and Community Learning will be producing a new brochure of free courses around the end of January 2006. It will feature an excellent range of computer training courses, both advanced and for the absolute beginner. You can learn to use the Internet or develop skills in word processing, Photoshop, Dreamweaver and computer graphics or develop your skills with digital video and stills cameras or music technology. Special courses for people who want to learn English and people with dyslexia are also on offer.

Copies of the brochure will be available in the area housing offices around the end of January or you can telephone 020 7527 5782 to request a copy and further information. The information will be available at the end of January on the Homes for Islington website.

## Your new quarterly rent statement

### Co-ordinated mailings

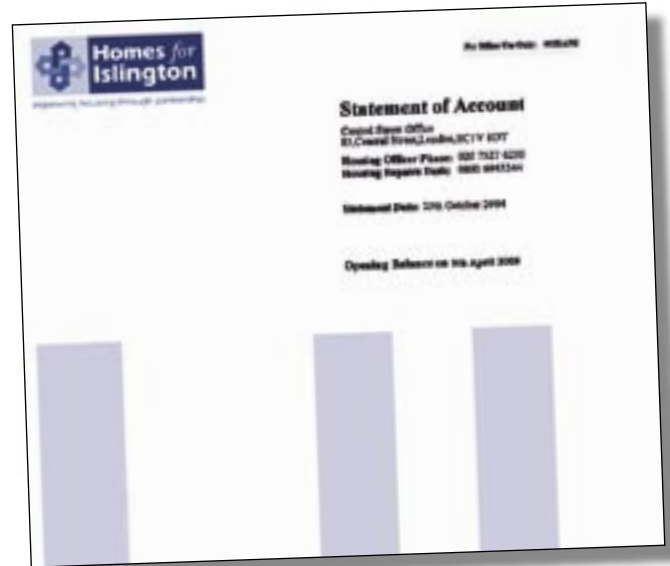
Noticed anything strange about your rent statements? Yes, that's right your third one of the year has turned up with this newsletter! From now on, you will no longer be receiving statements twice a year, but every three months – with the next coming through your postbox in March 2006.

These quarterly leaflets and of course your favourite newsletter - Homes for Islington News – will land on your doormat every March, June, September and December to keep you better informed. Additionally, when other items need to be sent, we shall try to enclose them with these regular mailings.

### Rent changes in April 2006

In addition to the normal rent amendment letter advising you of any change to your weekly charges which will be with you at the beginning of March 2006, the rent statement you will receive in March will include a

breakdown of the new rent effective from 3 April 2006, including the revised benefit entitlement (where applicable). This change will mean that we will not be sending out Weekly Charge notification letters in April 2006, as you will have already received this information, making us more cost effective.



## Improving our caretaking standards

Every month quality assurance officers inspect and grade the hard work that our caretakers do. They look at all areas of a caretaker's job. Are estates clean and free from litter? Has graffiti been removed? Are play areas free from health hazards such as broken glass? And many other areas.

### Is this a picture from the past?

Thankfully, pictures such as these below are becoming rare. The inspections can highlight problems that our caretakers may have missed and allow them to go back and remedy the problem, if they have not already done it.



Over the last year, the caretaking inspections have shown how the standard of the caretaking service across Islington is improving. From April to September last year, 2.5% of all our checks were graded as very poor, for the same period this year it's down to 0.5%. And with the continuing hard work of our caretakers, backed up by the quality assurance officers, Homes for Islington is confident that it will continue to get better and better.

**Can you spot the litter? No, neither can we. This is how it should look.**



Do you have an eyesore on your estate, or something that might prove dangerous? If you do, we want to know. Please contact your area housing office so that we can put it right! Or if your caretaker is fantastic, tell us about them!

## Getting it right...**ONLINE**...update

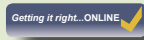


In Homes for Islington News in the autumn we announced that the new pages about major works on your home would go live in October 2005, but there is a lot of information to go onto the site and this has meant developing special software to handle it smoothly. Therefore, these pages will appear on the Homes for Islington website early in the new year.

We apologise for the delay, but we believe you will find the information on these pages worth waiting for. Just to remind you, there will be information about:

- what works are being carried out in the property where you live
- who the constructors are
- estimated start and completion dates
- contact information and information about local consultation meetings
- a glossary of special terms
- an online link to our DVD guide to major works

A simple index will allow you to select the name of the block where you live and find out all the above.

So to ensure we are getting it right, visit the Homes for Islington Website and click this button  which will appear on the homepage.

### Islington's new website created for and by young people

Log onto [www.young.islington.gov.uk](http://www.young.islington.gov.uk) where you'll find a new site packed full of interactive elements like games, online polls and competitions. It's got useful information and advice about health, learning, work and keeping safe!

In addition to the council's Listen Up project the website is an excellent way for young people to have their say about issues in their local area, find out about what is going on and how to get involved. The council will also use it as a way to engage with children and young people and find out what they think.

Young Islington is the result of a years work in which young people played a major part. Over 1,000 children and young people in Islington were asked about what they wanted to see on their website and they were also involved shaping the look and feel of the site.

### It's on the web...Did you know...?

- You can find a list of community centres on the Homes for Islington website. Look up Community centres in the A-Z and click the link.
- You can check on how well Homes for Islington is performing. Just click Performance on the A-Z. On the page that opens up you will see links to performance reports.
- Not sure whether the service is provided by Homes for Islington or Islington Council? On the home page click the link that says: Homes for Islington and the Council - Who Provides Which Services?
- There is a whole section on the website for leaseholders and covering the Right to Buy. Just click the blue Leaseholders tab at the top of any web page.

### Jobs search - It's on the website

The Homes for Islington website has a blue tab at the top of every web page which is labelled "Jobs." If you click this, you can find out what jobs vacancies there are at Homes for Islington. There is also a link on the jobs page to vacancies at Islington Council. So, if you are job hunting, why not start at Jobs on the HFI website. There is a summary description of each job. You can download an application form, print it and send it in completed or apply online by clicking the Apply online link at the bottom of any job summary.

The jobs page is powered by [www.jobsgopublic.com](http://www.jobsgopublic.com). If you go to that site, you can look for jobs generally in the public and not-for-profit sector and search by geographical area or other criteria.

# RESPONSIBLE PET OWNERSHIP

As a nation of pet lovers, we share our homes with 7.5 million cats and 6.1 million dogs and half of all UK households own a pet. With so many pets it is important that people consider their neighbours and ensure they look after pets responsibly to minimise the potential for problems.

## **What are the rules for residents?**

Tenancy conditions say that you may keep in or bring onto their premises without permission:

- Up to two cats
- One dog (except listed dangerous breeds)
- Any small caged animal or bird normally kept as a pet, i.e. hamsters, guinea pigs, budgies, canaries
- Small fish in an aquarium

If you wish to keep any more than or any other animal not listed above, you must have the written permission of the council which may be given in certain specified circumstances.

## **How animal welfare officers help you and the animals**

Islington Council Animal Welfare gives advice and responds to animal nuisance complaints. The primary role of the animal welfare officer is an educational one, to offer advice on animal welfare and promote responsible pet ownership by the use of educational leaflets, talks, personal visits, dog training classes and school visits.

In Islington there has been a range of complaints regarding pets, the majority concerning dogs fouling on estates, barking, and being left to roam freely. If a pet causes a nuisance to others, owners are asked to control their pet's behaviour or remove it from the property. The animal welfare officer endeavours to resolve problems by education and persuasion, but occasionally needs to resort to legal action when co-operation is refused.



*The condition a council property was in when the owner abandoned 1 dog and 2 puppies.*

Our request to dog owners is that your dog:

- is housed appropriately, and never left alone for long periods
- is never allowed out alone
- wears a collar and identity tag at all times (It is the law.)
- is always under your control by being kept on a lead when out and exercised off the estate, and, if your dog has an "accident" you must clean it up IMMEDIATELY.

There have also been reported incidents of dogs being baited and encouraged to fight. Under the Protection of Animals Act 1911, it is an offence to cause, procure, or assist at the fighting or baiting of an animal. Any person found guilty of an offence within the meaning of this Act may be liable upon conviction to imprisonment, or a fine of up to £5000, or both.

Please look after pets responsibly, consider your neighbours and keep your estate clean and safe to ensure that pets remain welcome on estates.

For more information, practical advice and details of dog training classes, contact Animal Welfare on 020 7527 3222. You can also go to the Islington Council website at [www.islington.gov.uk](http://www.islington.gov.uk) and click the Environment button on the left and next the Animal Welfare button. There is an online form to report nuisance or incidents of animal cruelty.



*The animal welfare officer also covers licensing and transportation of animals. This picture is of longhorn cattle at an event in Clerkenwell.*



*A picture of the Animal Welfare Officer educating local school kids about responsibility of pet ownership*

## Islington's fantastic i-recycle centre

Islington's £200,000 state-of-the-art recycling education centre, 'i-recycle', was launched on October 7.

The purpose-built centre is a fantastic free new resource for Islington schools and community groups and is made entirely of recycled or sustainable material. So chairs and table-tops are made from recycled industrial chopping boards, puzzle games are made of plastic bottles and Forestry Stewardship Council wood has been used. It is the first of its kind in the country and other councils are banging on Islington's door to find out how it was done.

The council developed the centre with experts from the Science Museum. It features touch-screen displays, games and videos to teach local youngsters and adults about recycling and waste issues.

"The i-recycle centre is highly flexible in its design, making it accessible to groups of all ages and all abilities. Visitors can find out about the UK's rubbish problem, discover how to make a real difference in reducing rubbish by recycling at home and be amazed by the interesting things that can be made from rubbish, including i-recycle itself", says Melissa Painter, the centre's new manager.

Visits are by appointment only. To find out more call Melissa Painter on 020 7527 5996 or email [melissa.painter@islington.gov.uk](mailto:melissa.painter@islington.gov.uk)



## THANK YOU FOR RECYCLING

Thank you to residents in the Upper Street and Central Street Housing Office areas for their help in making the doorstep estate recycling pilot a success. The scheme is now being expanded to most council estates and some properties belonging to registered social landlords (such as housing associations). This will help reduce the amount that we would have to pay in landfill tax and also help the environment.

Please remember that you can recycle newspapers, cardboard, plastic bottles, glass bottles and cans in the same container. It is also helpful if you could squash your plastic bottles and cardboard boxes. Your bag should only be left out on the day of collection.

If you need an extra recycling container then please call Contact Islington on 020 7527 2000 or email them at [contact@islington.gov.uk](mailto:contact@islington.gov.uk) and they will request one for you. To find out how collections will be carried out during the Christmas week and the following week, check Islington's website [www.islington.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.islington.gov.uk/recycling) or in the local newspapers.

## WINNERS!

The question in our last history competition was In what year did Dick Whittington first become Lord Mayor? A draw was made from the entries that had the correct answer: 1397. The winner, Mr. John Helfer, will receive a copy of A History of Islington by Mary Cosh.

Why not enter this month's DOWN OUR WAY competition? See details on page 7.



## CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTION - RECYCLING

We want to make it as easy as possible for you to recycle your Christmas tree by collecting them from your estate or your street. If you live in a street property, you will need to leave your tree in a place visible to a crew that will be driving around the borough during the first and second weeks in January.

If you live on an estate in the Boleyn Road, Central Street, Isledon Road or Lyon Street areas, simply leave your tree next to the bin chamber. In the Holland Walk and Upper Street areas, contact your caretaker or see the list that will be displayed in your area office.

Alternatively, you can also leave your Christmas tree for recycling in the following parks in the North of the borough - Whittington Park, Yerbury Road, (opposite Whittington Park Community Centre). The South of the borough - King Square Gardens, King Square, (opposite Church of St Clement with St Barnabas and St Matthew) and in the West of the borough - Barnard Park, corner of Barnsbury Road and Copenhagen Street, (near the adventure playground).

## Winter festivities are here

The winter season is finally here. Although long, dark nights and cold weather are what most people seem to associate with winter it is also a time for giving gifts and having fun with family and friends. Throughout history mid winter has been a time of feasting and celebration across many cultures and religions.

One of the oldest winter celebrations in the world is the pagan celebration of Winter Solstice, which was traditionally held on the shortest day of the year, December 21st. The festival involved decorating houses, lighting candles and giving presents.

Many of these customs are still followed today in other winter festivals. The Christian holy day of Christmas on December 25th remains the most celebrated. Traditions over the Christmas period include decorating Christmas trees and homes, eating turkey, singing carols, exchanging gifts and attending midnight mass or other church services.

This year December 25th also marks the start of another winter celebration, Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of lights. In Hebrew, the word "Hanukkah" means "dedication." With similarities to Christmas it is also a time of giving gifts. The festival lasts eight days and the most important ritual is the candle lighting, one is lit every day and placed in a special candleholder called a 'menorah'. Traditions also include eating food fried in oil and playing the dreidel game (spinning wheel game).

A celebration that occurred on November 1st is Diwali, also called the Hindu Festival of Lights. The term comes from the rows of lights that decorate houses, shops and public places. It is the most popular of all the festivals from South Asia and extends over five days. The festival is a time for exchanging traditional gifts of sweets and dried fruit and having fireworks displays. Over the past four years in Islington there have been Diwali celebrations at the Islington Ecology centre in Gillespie Park where people can experience some of the tasty festival delights and watch traditional Indian dances.



*Traditional Indian dance at Diwali celebrations, Islington Ecology centre*

## HFI TACKLES PIRATE RADIO

Homes for Islington's estate inspection process coupled with customer feedback highlighted the fact that pirate radio has become an issue for some of our residents.

HFI teamed up with the police and OFCOM (Office of Communications), who are the independent regulators for the UK communications industries, with responsibilities across television, radio and telecommunications.

As a result of this partnership, a training course has been developed to make our estate services and antisocial behaviour officers aware of legislation related to pirate radio and of the equipment used in a pirate radio station and aerial site. This will mean that our staff are armed with the knowledge to allow them to effectively tackle pirate radio on estates across the borough.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

### Getting residents' views on HFI services

Homes for Islington (HFI) seeks to improve services by listening to residents' views and HFI has devised a strategy for this. We would like volunteers to join focus groups which will discuss how our customers experience our services and to recommend improvements for them. We also carry out mystery shopping exercises where residents directly check a service and comment on its quality. We offer incentives such as shopping vouchers, travel and childcare expenses in order to entice people to participate. We encourage residents from hard to reach groups to join in. If you are interested in this please complete and return this form:

Your name .....

Your address.....  
.....

Your daytime telephone number .....

Return form to I. Willis, HFI, Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN. This form can be delivered to your local area housing office or you can telephone your details to Mr. I. Willis on telephone number 020 7527 4197.

## Homes for Islington Board and Sub-Board Meetings

### **Homes for Islington's Board and Sub-Board meetings are open to the public.**

Agenda and papers for these meetings are normally available three days in advance of each meeting through Homes for Islington's website at [www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk). Click the blue Public Meetings tab at the top of any web page and next the green Minutes of Meetings tab on the left. Hard copies of the reports for the meeting are available to view in area housing offices.

All meetings take place at 6.30pm at The Stephenson Hall at the NCH, 85 Highbury Park, London N5 1UD. You are welcome to attend meetings on the following dates:

#### **HFI Board Meetings:**

**Monday 19th December 2005**

**Monday 6th February 2006**

**Monday 20th March 2006**

#### **Contracted Services Sub-Board April 2005 – March 2006**

13 December 2005, 14 February 2006

#### **Managed Property Sub-Board April 2005 – March 2006**

14 December 2005, 15 February 2006

For enquiries about meetings please contact the HFI Governance Team on 020 7527 5148

#### **Do you have any special requirements?**

- A signer requires two weeks notice to the HFI Governance Team prior to the meeting
- Translation of papers for meetings require 4-6 weeks notice in the language required after the meeting takes place
- Creche facilities require notice two weeks in advance of meetings to the HFI Governance Team
- An induction loop is available at the venue
- Contact the Governance Team if you have any special requirements

Please contact HFI Governance Team at Highbury House, Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN. Telephone 020 7527 5148 or email to [mary.switzer@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:mary.switzer@homesforislington.org.uk).

## Homes for Islington Board election results

### **Resident board director election winners**

Theresa Coyle, Richard Rosser and Desmond Smith were each re-elected for a four-year term as Homes for Islington resident board directors.



The election for three resident directors to Homes for Islington's Board took place from 1 to 15 September with a field of eight candidates. All council households in the Holland Walk, Isledon Road and Boleyn Road housing areas were entitled to vote for up to three candidates. Among the three residents elected, there was a maximum allowed of one leaseholder. Richard Rosser is a leaseholder. Theresa Coyle and Des Smith are council tenants.

There were 6,107 votes cast from 2,358 returned ballots - a result representing 14% of all eligible households. The postal ballot election was administered by Electoral Reform Services.



### **New independent directors selected**

Three new Independent directors have been selected, subject to references and Companies House checks.

They are: Kate Barns, housing consultant, Adam Borrie, from the Peabody Trust, Stephen Town, former government housing and social policy adviser.



The vacancies arose with the retirement from the board of Catherine Diamond and Claire Bonham-Carter and the earlier retirement of Jason Bingham. The new appointments were announced at the Board meeting on 3 October.