

## Getting it right...ONLINE

Skips are on site and the scaffolding is up on many of Homes for Islington's estates, signalling that major improvement works are being carried out. And there is more to come as HFI goes through its programme to raise the standards of our housing to meet the government's Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

### Getting it right for you

Part of Homes for Islington's commitment to you is to provide up-to-date information about the works on your estate in the most convenient and accessible ways. Before works begin on your estate, you will be given the **Getting it right...** guide to major works on your home and an opportunity to see a DVD guide.

### And you can follow your project online on the HFI website

In mid-October 2005 the **Getting it right... ONLINE** pages will go live. From a handy "button" on the home page you will be able to go straight to a page where you can select the name of your block from an alphabetical index and that will link you to information about major works where you live.

Your page will also have links to information about public and steering group meetings for your estate and the minutes of these meetings will be posted as soon as they have been produced and agreed, usually within ten days of the meeting. There will also be photographs of details of works in progress and a glossary of terms used in connection with these works.

### The most up-to-date information about works on your home

The advantage of putting this information on the HFI website is that we can update it as frequently as required. The pages will be routinely checked once a month to make sure that anything that needs updating is posted on the site and updating will be more frequent if needed in between.



### What if you do not have a computer?

We have often mentioned that Islington's libraries all have computers that the public can use without any cost and we will be informing the libraries about the **Getting it right...ONLINE** pages, so that they can help you if you decide to make use of their facilities. See also pages 6 and 12 about how you can learn free to use a computer at one of Islington's learning centres.

Getting it right...ONLINE



## 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

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## Also on the web...

### HFI performance

Homes for Islington's company accounts are on the HFI website. Click the blue A-Z tab at the top of any web page on the site and look up company accounts (HFI). Click the link and the page will open.

For more details of HFI's performance look up Performance and when you get to the performance page, click the link for Homes for Islington performance reports.

### If you live in the Lyon Street area

The information about your housing area was updated following Lyon Street coming under direct management of Homes for Islington.

### What's New?

Don't forget to pick up the latest news, press releases and meetings information by clicking the What's New tab at the top of the web pages.

### Benefits calculator

If you want to check your possible entitlement to benefits, why not visit the online benefits calculator on the Islington Council website? You will find a handy link to it from the Homes for Islington site. Just go to the A-Z and look up Benefits calculator and click the link.

The HFI website is updated regularly, so visit it for the latest information about HFI and your services.



## Don't get lost ... Go to the A-Z

The HFI website's A-Z makes it easier to find what you are looking for. When we put new pages on the website, we also identify keywords to go into the A-Z. Keywords in the A-Z are quick links to the information you want and you look things up just like in an ordinary index in a book. The website has a Search on it, but the A-Z is usually a more direct way to the information you want.



# DIY AND HOME IMPROVEMENTS



Tenants are reminded that the fixtures and fittings (including kitchen and bathroom units, linoleum and tiles) belong to the council and should not be removed or replaced without permission.

Permission will not be withheld unreasonably, but tenants may be required to return fixtures and fittings to their original state before any move from the property, or they may be charged the cost of doing so.

## Satellite Dishes

Satellite dishes and aerials should not be fixed to the outside of buildings without permission. Application forms and copies of the satellite and aerial policy are obtainable from the area housing office. Permission will not be unreasonably withheld.

If a dish or aerial has been erected without written permission, tenants and leaseholders are advised to apply for retrospective permission. Your local housing office can send you the appropriate forms. Any dish or aerial erected without permission may be removed and the resident charged.



## Asbestos checks

A database of asbestos is checked to see that works will not disturb any sealed substances and guarantees are required that the tenant will properly dispose of any debris. Leaseholders are subject to slightly different rules but should still inform the housing office in case planning permission or asbestos checks are required.

# LAMINATE AND HARD SURFACE FLOORING

Homes for Islington is aware of a sharp increase in complaints about noise nuisance occasioned by the fashion for laminate and hard surface flooring. Although this is especially a problem in converted street properties, many residents of our estates properties also suffer.

Noise is not the only problem. The landlord needs to access under floor areas for laying of pipes or wiring, or maintaining these subsequently, but laminate flooring, unlike traditional floorboards or carpeting, cannot usually be lifted and re-laid.

Ceramic, stone, wood or laminate can look good and may be easy to care for and have some health benefits but the majority of our properties were designed to be carpeted.

The conditions of tenancy and of lease currently read that 'adequate floor covering' must be laid. However, no legal definition of the term 'adequate' exists and action against residents where the noise is that of everyday living remains problematic.

The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have recently produced a very thorough report on the problem that is available at [www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/research/hardfloors/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/noise/research/hardfloors/). Homes for Islington is examining the law and conditions of lease and tenancy to see what action is possible to reduce the distress this form of nuisance can cause. Our policy section is consulting DEFRA and taking legal advice on what changes in the conditions are needed to take the current fashion into account.

Any tenant or leaseholder considering laying hard surface flooring should inform their area housing office, detailing the materials they plan to use. If permission is given then a guide to good practice and suitable materials for laying laminates is available. Exposed floorboards, even when stripped and varnished, are not generally suitable in our properties and permission will usually be refused.

### **Options being considered are:**

- an outright ban
- permission provided specified sound insulation is used
- each case to be considered on merits

### **Whilst these changes are being considered anyone who does have hard surface flooring should remember:**

- If you are removing lino tiles, check to see if they contain asbestos. If they do, they must be disposed of properly.
- Access to under-floor services must be maintained.
- If the renewal of kitchen/bathrooms affects your flooring, HFI is unlikely to compensate.
- Changing from soft to hard surface flooring requires some lifestyle changes – use soft shoes, rugs in high traffic areas, child play pads to reduce noise. Use speaker stands or insulation (even a telephone directory helps) to prevent reduce noise transmission.

Anyone who has already laid such flooring without permission is advised to inform their area housing office.

## DOWN OUR WAY: THE HOLLAND WALK AREA

Continuing our series on the history of Islington, in this issue we are looking at the Holland Walk area of the borough and the legend of one of London's most famous historical figures: Dick Whittington.

Up on Highgate Hill, there is the Whittington Stone which marks the spot where in the late 14th century, as legend has it, Dick sat to ponder his future. He had come to London to seek his fortune but, having been mistreated by the cook in his master's building, had run away. Whilst resting on Highgate Hill with his cat, he heard in the distance the sound of Bow Bells which appeared to say "turn again Whittington, thrice Lord Mayor of London." Not wishing to be driven out of London, he returned to the city where the use of his cat as a rat catcher on merchant ships in and out of London made his fortune and in due course became Lord Mayor on three occasions - 1397, 1406 and 1420.

The stone was placed at its current site in 1821, replacing an older stone from 1735 which itself had taken the place of a stone cross of St Anthony. This cross was located by the roadside for alms and charitable donations outside a lazar house (a leper hospital) dating from the middle ages. This lazar house later became a home for the infirm during Tudor times.

The site gained a new use in the 1860s when the Smallpox and Vaccination hospital, previously based at Kings Cross, moved to

the site to make way for the train station - and is now the Jenner building within the hospital grounds. The architects charged with the design of the building sought the advice of Florence Nightingale who proclaimed it "the finest metropolitan hospital." The smallpox facility moved to South Mimms in 1900, though the other medical units carried on practising, expanding into what is today the Whittington hospital.

For more information on the history of the borough, pay a visit to 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 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** In what year did Dick Whittington first become Lord Mayor?



Above: Gatepost of the old smallpox hospital.



Above: This stone marks the spot where Dick Whittington decided to seek his fortune in London.



"THIS WALL AS BUILT IN 1868 ON LAND BELONGING ENTIRELY TO THE SMALLPOX HOSPITAL"



# FIREWORKS AND BONFIRES— KEEP IT SAFE!

Islington's trading standards team together with their partners in the antisocial behaviour team, Police and London Fire Brigade will again this year be out in force helping to reduce antisocial behaviour caused by firework misuse.

## **Trading standards are reminding everyone of the rules on fireworks:**

- No person under 18 years of age is allowed to possess fireworks in a public place.
- No person shall be allowed to possess a large 'category 4' firework (professional display fireworks clearly marked as such).
- On 5 November, fireworks may not be used between midnight and 7am.  
At all other times of the year the curfew starts at 11pm except for 31 December, the first day of Chinese New Year and Diwali when this is extended to 1.00am the next morning.
- Shops are not allowed to sell fireworks that make a noise greater than 120 decibels.
- Shops must also display signs about sales not being allowed to under 18's and not having them in their possession in a public place.

## **Report it!**

Tenants who see fireworks being let off in the street, parks or estates can report the problem on two special police firework hotline numbers which will be well publicised in the run up to 5 November.

If you believe that fireworks are being sold to under 18's, you can report the shop to trading standards on 020 7527 3198.

Last year the multi-agency approach to tackling firework misuse led to the police and fire brigade reporting a big reduction in firework related complaints, with trading standards also noticing a reduction in the number of shops who were caught selling to under 18's. The council want to see this downward trend continue, something which

can be achieved with the help of tenants, businesses and all the agencies working together.

Last year during the Bonfire Night season (11 October – 8 November) over a thousand people in the UK were injured and over 50% of the injuries occurred at family or private parties. The eyes, face and hands were the parts most frequently injured. Over 55% of those injured were 18 years old and under and nearly 25% of injured were 5-12 years old. The majority injured in all age groups were males. There has been an upturn in total injuries in recent years.

## **If you use fireworks as part of a party or other celebration, make sure it does not all end in tears.**

Here is some advice from the Department of Trade and Industry.

If you are buying fireworks, buy from a reputable dealer who has the knowledge to give you proper advice. Make sure the British Standard code BS 7114 is on the box.

Fireworks are rated in four categories according to where it is suitable to use them. Some are only suitable to be used by professionals. Never use fireworks in the wrong sorts of situations. Even sparklers can be dangerous. It is said they get six times hotter than a pan of cooking oil. Injuries from sparklers are increasing. Dip finished ones into a bucket of water to prevent fires and burns.

Make one responsible person in charge and that person should read all instructions carefully.

Alcohol increases the risks of injury. Don't serve alcohol until the fireworks are finished.

Take special care with children and pets. Never let children handle fireworks.

Always have on hand a bucket of water.

## ICT LEARNING - YOU CAN DO IT TOO!!!

Platform1 is a user-focused, high quality learning resource, which aims to provide local communities with training and education opportunities to help them to engage fully in the local economy. Based in King's Cross, London, the centre is playing a vital role in upskilling its residents, in preparation for the emergence of new jobs that will meet the needs of the ongoing Channel Tunnel development zone.

Platform1 boasts 140 computers in total, which are scattered across a number of ICT 'islands' on both floors. Once first time visitors have returned to use the centre more regularly, they are given an Independent Learning Plan (ILP) to encourage a more structured approach to future visits.

Typically, those who have not used computers or the internet before are invited to take the tutor-led Computers for Beginners course, which comprises of six sessions of two hours over a fortnight. A comprehensive range of CLAIT courses are also offered to users and are led by Ian, the full-time IT trainer.

The centre also employs an Employment and Training Advisor, again reflecting its commitment to upskill the future workforce of King's Cross. As well as providing one-to-one advice and guidance, the Advisor, Fabienne, runs a weekly Job Club - a drop-in session providing help with CVs and online employment research.

### **Vida's story:**

Vida Akom-Mensah has been with the centre since it opened, first as a user and now as an employee.

Over the last two years she has worked her way through courses such as Word, Excel and databases while working for us as a cleaner. Her new skills have allowed her to take the role of receptionist.

Vida's inside knowledge of Platform1 enables her to pass on word-of-mouth recommendations to users about courses from Skills for Life, ESOL and BBC Computers Don't Bite through to more advanced ICT and New Media Skills.

### **Theresa's story:**

The success of Platform1's attempts to signpost visitors to further learning can be seen in the case of Theresa Ibrahim, who came over from Sudan just two years ago with no ICT skills to speak of.

Phil Walker explains: "When Theresa arrived in this country she felt very isolated – her house had been burnt down by the militia in Sudan, and she had no qualifications to speak of. We quickly placed her on a Basic IT course to develop her confidence and later made her aware of a set of courses we were running with Islington Volunteer Action Council (IVAC).

"Theresa was taught how to set up a charity and one year on, she has formed her own – training elderly African refugee women in language skills. It's a fantastic achievement for Theresa, and another great feather in the cap for us."



## ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW CHALLENGE?

Islington online comprises a network of 20 neighbourhood learning centres and mobile computer bus. The learning centres are all sited in community locations, schools or libraries. The centres are all refurbished and installed with the latest PC's, interactive whiteboards, printers and broadband. The centres are connected via a network and users are able to progress from one site to another, to continue their learning.

Enrolment for new courses started in September 2005, including beginner taster sessions such as Internet, email, introduction to the computer, and support with English and maths, as well as exciting qualifications available to everyone. If you are interested in

new learning opportunities please contact the Adult & Community Learning team on 020 7527 5782.

We are committed to widening participation and to ensure that all tenants and residents have access to computers and the knowledge to use them.

***If you would like more information about opportunities within your housing office please contact Rhian Jenkins on 020 7527 5792 or 07970 720137***

# MAKE SURE ONE THING ... DOESN'T LEAD TO ANOTHER



## Don't miss your annual gas safety check!

***Too many people die each year in the UK from gas related carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and many others become chronically ill.***

Faulty appliances are often to blame, but a simple annual gas safety check by Homes for Islington's Corgi Registered partners could prevent the needless deaths of your children, parents and even yourself.

All Homes for Islington tenants have received several written requests to allow our partners to carry out the FREE annual gas safety check. For whatever reason, some tenants have yet to make an appointment, putting their families lives at risk and facing court action.

Homes for Islington is required by law to carry out a gas safety check of all Homes for Islington tenants' gas appliances at least once a year.

Your tenancy agreement requires you to cooperate by giving access to your home for gas safety checks.

**Don't end up in court** - In recent cases Homes for Islington tenants were ordered to pay over £450 in court costs for failing to give access.

### ***What do you need to do?***

Contact HFI Direct for your free gas safety check on Freephone 0800 694 3344, 8am-8pm Mondays-Fridays and 8am-noon Saturdays.

***Gas safety checks are free. Keep your appointment!***

**Don't let the warmth of your gas fire or boiler be the last thing you or your family experience.**

## THE LATIN AMERICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS SERVICE

The Latin American Women's Rights Service is a community-based project established 22 years ago to address the lack of support services for Latin American women and their dependants. LAWRS was created in recognition that women carry a disproportionate burden of the problems of displacement and our aim is to help Latin American women defend and secure their right to lead a fuller and more autonomous life.

The organisation strives to offer a seamless one-stop holistic service. Our users are supported to address their resettlement, welfare and legal advice needs, but also to widen opportunities to enable them to break away from poverty and exclusion and to lead independent and autonomous lives.

Our services include advice on housing, domestic violence, money and debt, and business start-up; an outreach advice service for frail and disabled elderly women; a counselling service to help women overcome traumatic situations; and a volunteering project to introduce Latin American women to the world of work in this country and access better jobs.

We now see around 1400 clients per year. LAWRS also provides complementary services such as ESOL, community interpreting courses and educational workshops.

The Housing and Older People's Housing and Development Projects provide free confidential information, advice and casework support to Latin American women and elderly people who are homeless, threatened with homelessness, living in unsatisfactory housing conditions and having problems with related welfare benefits.

There are between 100,000 and 300,000 Latin Americans living in London, but many cannot access mainstream services, due to barriers of language or lack of information about rights,



exacerbating isolation and exclusion. LAWRS now is focusing on tackling the "invisibility" of Latin American women from the agendas of policy makers and service providers and working to bring about better and more appropriate services for their users through more proactively engaging in strategy and policy at local and London-wide level.

**Address** Tindlemanor, 52-54 Featherstone Street,  
London EC1Y 8RT

**Telephone:** 0207 336 0888

**Fax:** 0207 336 0555

**Email** lawrs@lawrs.org.uk

**Nearest tube** Old Street

**Hours** 10am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

**Access** Full disabled access

**Director** Susana Klien

## Local organisations that work for you - The Islington Pensioners Forum

In each issue we will focus on the work of a local organisation which supplies help or support to Homes for Islington residents. This issue focuses on the Islington Pensioners Forum. If you would like us to feature your organisation please contact the editor.

The Islington Pensioners Forum campaigns about issues affecting older residents of the borough, including pensions, transport, the NHS and the pensioners manifesto.

It provides a social forum, organises social events and has a monthly meeting on the 2nd Thursday of the month at the Town Hall at 7:00 pm.

Music workshops are run with the London Symphony Orchestra and a variety of social events from bring and buy sales to days out to Eltham Palace, Kenwood House and other places of interest.

The forum publishes a monthly newsletter and contributes to projects like

the Voices from the Home Front, oral history interviews, which focus on working lives and trade union experiences during the Second World War. The forum has also published a book of reminiscences called 'Our Stories' jointly with City and Islington College.

The forum is a registered charity which was founded in 1984 with support from Jeremy Corbyn MP who is honorary president.

The office is open Mon-Thurs 10:30 am – 3:30 pm and membership is free to anyone over 55 who lives or works in Islington.

**Contacts:** Islington Pensioners Forum, 1A Providence Court,  
Providence Place London N1 0RN

**Tel:** 020 7226 7687

**Fax:** 020 7226 7687

**Email:** info@ipf.1t01.org

## DECENT HOMES – MAJOR WORKS RECHARGES FOR HOME OWNERS

The decent social housing target does not apply to leasehold properties, which are not classed as social housing. However, as part of Homes for Islington's duty to bring our social housing up to decency standards, we will be carrying out works to blocks of flats occupied by both secure tenants and leaseholders. Leaseholders will be recharged for a share of the costs of the works in accordance with your lease. You will be consulted under the terms of the Commonhold and Leasehold Reform Act 2002. Leaseholders are important stakeholders in the community, and your views will be taken into consideration. The good news is that because of more funding, we are able to invest and programme our major works. This is an ongoing process and we are seeing many projects underway already.

### Works that will not be carried out to home owners

Any internal works such as kitchens and bathrooms will not be carried out to home owners. If you want to carry out your own works/repairs within your property you will need to contact us in the first instance for permission. You will need to budget and carefully plan your finances before you carry out works, as the costs that will include other fees can be quite high.

### Works that home owners can be charged for under the lease

If you live in a building where you do not own the Freehold, any works to the structure and common parts will be rechargeable (e.g., a window replacement or roof renewal). There are many types of work that fall into this category. If in doubt please contact us at Home Ownership Services, 2-4 Tufnell Park Road, N7 ODL, or telephone on 020 7527 7715/7720.

## WEBSITE THAT HELPS CHILDREN WHO FACE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Hideout is the first national website at [www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk) for children and young people to inform about domestic violence and help them identify whether it is happening in their home. The site provides indirect and informal support to children and young people living with domestic violence or to those who may want to help a friend.



The Hideout uses language, graphics, checklists, quizzes and interactive games to help children and young people to think through the issues that surround domestic violence. The site includes information on safety planning and clearly signposts additional routes to help and further information. Safety functions have been incorporated into The Hideout to ensure that children and young people can access the site without putting themselves at risk. The Hideout is a place for children and young people to learn that domestic violence is not okay, that it is not their fault and that they are not alone – further help and support is available.

[www.thehideout.org.uk](http://www.thehideout.org.uk) is produced by Women's Aid, and is supported by BT and BBC Children in Need. Copyright © 2005 Women's Aid Federation of England. Charity number 1054154. For further information please contact 0117 9444411.

### Happy nappies

Islington Council are now offering savings of up to £51 for babies using real nappies. About eight million disposable nappies are thrown away every day in the UK and mostly go to landfill, and because of the length of time it would take a disposable nappy to decompose they will all still be in the ground!

Forget the old idea about boiling towelling nappies, today's nappies are cool and funky, come in a variety of styles without a safety pin in sight! They can be washed in a normal washing machine (or via a specialist laundry service) and a baby only needs 20-30 real nappies from birth to potty.

These can cost as little as £2 each and washing costs are less than you think - especially as Islington Council are now offering a £35 discount upon registration with a nappy laundry service with a further £16 credit after the child's first birthday. A door-to-door nappy laundry service will collect used nappies and deliver clean ones every week.

Alternatively the council offers £35 cash back on the first purchase of real nappies and an extra £16 for a further purchase after the child's first birthday.

For more information contact Karen Williams or Jean Hughes on 020 7527 5157 .

## RECYCLING COMES TO YOUR DOORSTEP

A major breakthrough was made in Islington Council's recycling services for residents on estates with the launch of a pilot door-to-door recycling collection scheme on 4th July.

The scheme is the first of its kind in Islington and will involve a doorstep collection from 4,436 properties in parts of Central Street and Upper Street on approximately 100 estates.

The scheme includes the collection of paper, glass, cans, cardboard and plastic bottles for recycling on a weekly basis in either a box or a bag depending on the estate. Once collected, the recycling will be taken to a Materials Recovery Facility where it is separated into the different material types and taken away to be recycled.

This scheme is being evaluated for a potential rollout across more estates managed by Homes for Islington. Depending on its success, further estates will have a doorstep collection service by the end of February 2006. The new scheme will make a significant contribution to Islington achieving a recycling rate of 18% of household waste in 2005/06.

If you are receiving this service and have any comments, please advise us by phoning Contact Islington on 020 7527 2000 or by email to [contact@islington.gov.uk](mailto:contact@islington.gov.uk).

Another pilot recycling scheme is being carried out on Girdlestone and Andover Estates and Charles Rowan House to deal with the



mixed collection of newspapers, cardboard, glass, plastic bottles tins and cans put together in single 'euro bins'.

Residents were supplied with either reusable bags or a polythene bag that can be placed in the 'euro bin' with a view to gauging their preferences. Again, the recycling will be collected and taken away to a Materials Recovery Facility to be sorted, separated and taken away to be recycled.

This scheme is being considered because not all estates have enough space to install separate bins for each recyclable material (the bring sites). The single bins were installed in August and depending on the success of the scheme, other estates may shortly be offered the same service.

## SAVE ENERGY- SAVE MONEY!

What could you do with up to an extra £149 pounds each year? Are there other things you can do that will help your bank account and save the world?

The Energy Saving Trust have calculated that you could save up to £35 each year by not leaving your fridge door open and defrosting regularly.

A further £45 could be saved by washing on a 40 degree wash cycle rather than 60 degrees.

If you ensure you physically turn off your television rather than leaving this on standby you could save up to £12.

Your computer could be costing you an extra £50 annually if you are not turning off your printer and modems when not in use or not setting the PC to a power saving mode.

If you only keep your lights on when necessary and use low energy light bulbs you could save up to £7 a year. The Islington Energy Centre at 159 Upper Street provide free low energy light bulbs if you complete a short home energy questionnaire.

Further information on how to save energy, visit the Energy Saving Trust website at <http://www.est.org.uk/>

## RAPID RESPONSE TEAM TACKLES BULK REFUSE DUMPING ON COUNCIL ESTATES

Homes for Islington is introducing a borough-wide bulk rapid response refuse collection service for council estates after its successful pilot resulted in the collection of 395 tonnes of household items, including 750 refrigerators.

With this service, estate residents or caretakers report the presence of dumped bulk refuse and within 24 hours a team arrives to collect the items and dispose of them efficiently. The items are assessed for their suitability for recycling or renewal.

With the support of council residents, the pilot, begun last August and funded by the Islington Strategic Partnership, has nearly doubled its target to collect 200 tonnes of refuse.

# PARKING ON ESTATES IMPROVING – AND MORE TO COME!

Homes for Islington (HFI) manages over 300 car parks, spread over 240 estates, containing 5,500 parking bays and over 2000 garages and car cages. HFI has been listening to residents who have rightfully been unhappy about dilapidated car parking areas where you are as likely as not to come across dumped, wrecked and burnt out vehicles. HFI is committed to doing something about this and improving many other areas of this important service.

The results are already apparent as the photographs on this page show. As a result of HFI's initiatives to build a better parking service, it has received requests for advice from other housing organisations.

## ***Here are just a few of the improvements:***

- New parking permits database to integrate management of waiting lists
- New permits will be self-adhesive
- New location signs with maps, as well as more parking warning notices
- Measures to tackle misuse of Blue Badges
- Visitor parking schemes
- Maintenance and improvement of car parking facilities
- Removal of abandoned and illegally parked vehicles

Detailed information on the Homes for Islington website. Look up Estate parking in the A-Z.

## **Contacts for estate parking**

Parking permits – Contact or go to your area housing office.

General enquiries about the service or in connection with parking appeals or reporting abandoned cars: 020 7527 8669 or email: [estate.parking.section@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:estate.parking.section@homesforislington.org.uk).

This line will be answered during working hours (9am-5pm, Mon-Fri), but you can leave a message out of hours and you will receive a response the next working day.

Reporting illegal parking and requesting declamping on estates – Contact Wing Security directly on 01525 87 80 80 or 0870 240 4139. The first of these two numbers is the cheapest to use, but the second number offers a menu.



## PENSIONERS PRIORITY PAGE!

### NEWS, VIEWS AND INFO FOR OLDER RESIDENTS

Our readership survey told us that you would like more information of special relevance for older residents. This section looks at what's on offer for our pensioners. Each edition will bring to your doorstep information on the many activities, events and services in Islington specifically designed for the elderly, as well as your views, comments and stories.

You can let us know the sorts of things that interest you by filling in and returning the slip below. You can also contact us using the information on page TWO. See FEEDBACK.

### OLDER RESIDENTS COMPUTER PROGRAMMES

If you're looking for a new challenge, why not try a computer class? Computers are a great way to keep in touch with friends and family, to get information about housing and council services or to book a holiday. It's easier than you might think and it's free. Whether you are interested in learning to use the Internet, sending emails, downloading digital camera pictures or even tracing family trees, then Islington Online can help. This network of neighbourhood learning centres has classes specifically catering for older residents. Whatever your level, pop along to find out more.

#### **Surfing the net and sending emails**

Every Monday 10.30am to 12.30pm

Thornhill Learning Centre, Orkney House, 199 Caledonian Road London N1 0AF

For more info call 020 7278 9500

#### **Internet and email**

Every Monday (from the 12th September) between 1pm and 2pm

Mayville Community Centre, Woodville Road, Mildmay, London N16 8NA

For more info call 020 7249 8286 ext. 2

#### **Local and family history: using the internet**

Every Monday (from the 12th Sept) drop in between 2pm and 4pm

Hilldrop Community Centre, Hilldrop Road, London N7 0JE

For more info call 020 7607 9453



*Never too old to learn new skills. IT classes specially designed for older residents*

### Older Residents Survey

As an older resident of the borough, what topics are of most interest to you? What would you like to see in the newsletter? Please tick all that apply or give us some more suggestions in the space below.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leisure activities, arts, culture | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local groups and events           | <input type="checkbox"/> Community news             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environment, conservation         | <input type="checkbox"/> Fitness and exercise       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Computers and IT                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare and caring      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Safety and crime prevention       | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning, employment       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance and welfare benefits      | <input type="checkbox"/> Charities and volunteering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please list)               |   |

.....  
 .....  
 .....

Name: .....

Age (please circle): 50-59 60-69 70-79 80-89 90+

Address: .....

Please return to the Editorial Team,  
 HFI News, Highbury House,  
 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN

Alternatively you can email your suggestions to  
[hfinews@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:hfinews@homesforislington.org.uk)

## LYON STREET JOINS HOMES FOR ISLINGTON



*1st July 2005 Lyon Street became the sixth Homes for Islington area housing office. Left to right: resident Danielle White, Customer Services Officer Usha Mathur, Area Housing Manager John Eustace and residents Donna and Jayden Romaine.*

## CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE FOREVER

Islington children are being looked after outside the borough where they may miss their friends and families. Islington Council's Fostering Team wants more local foster homes for Islington children.

Islington foster carers come from many different cultures and backgrounds and may be couples or single people, with or without their own children. Islington foster carers get full training and 24-hour support.

You don't need qualifications or to own a big home, but you do need to be good with children or young people. You would receive up to £377 per week in expenses and the satisfaction of giving a child an excellent start in life or helping them to catch up on what they have missed out on.

You could be the person who changes a child's life forever.

For an information pack or an informal chat please ring 0800 073 0428 or email [fostering@islington.gov.uk](mailto:fostering@islington.gov.uk)



## Ever thought about taking in a lodger?

Looking for some extra cash? Have a spare room? For those who don't mind sharing their home with someone they may not know, a lodger can provide a useful source of income.

### **Permission to lodge**

If you are thinking about taking a lodger in, have a chat with your tenancy management advisor. You will need to write to your local housing office to ask for permission. Let us know the name, age and sex of your proposed lodger, what you will be charging them, details of any meals, cleaning or other services you will be providing.

A lodger is someone who resides with you and has access to the whole of your property. This is different to subletting, where someone pays you rent to have exclusive rights to part of your home and would usually do their own cooking, cleaning etc. In either case, you must get written permission.

### **Do remember**

If you take in a lodger without permission, you will be in breach of your tenancy conditions.

You must live in your home as well. As a tenant you are not allowed to part with possession or let the whole of your property.

A lodger can be a good way to earn some extra cash, however if you are in receipt of benefits, your entitlement may be affected. You will need to fill out a change of circumstances form.

For more information, contact your local housing office.



*Lyon Street area children have fun and learn about activities they can join at the recent free Fun Day for local youth.*

## SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS TEAMS IN ISLINGTON



*In the effort to combat the scourge of antisocial behaviour some of our strongest allies are the Safer Neighbourhoods Teams – local police working with local knowledge and residents. Here are your local contacts.*

*For more information about Safer Neighbourhoods, you can also visit their website at [www.met.police.uk/islington/saferneighbourhoods.htm](http://www.met.police.uk/islington/saferneighbourhoods.htm)*

### **Clerkenwell & Bunhill**

Telephone 020 7421 0260  
Email: [bunhill&clerkenwellward-ni@met.police.uk](mailto:bunhill&clerkenwellward-ni@met.police.uk)

### **Holloway**

Telephone 020 7421 0362  
Email: [HollowayWard-NI@met.pnn.police.uk](mailto:HollowayWard-NI@met.pnn.police.uk)

### **Caledonian**

Telephone 020 7421 0271  
Email: [Caledonianward-ni@met.police.uk](mailto:Caledonianward-ni@met.police.uk)

### **St Mary's**

Telephone 020 7421 0259  
Email: [stmarysward-ni@met.police.uk](mailto:stmarysward-ni@met.police.uk)

### **Mildmay**

Telephone 020 8345 1512  
Email: [MildmayWard-NI@met.police.uk](mailto:MildmayWard-NI@met.police.uk)

### **Finsbury Park**

Telephone 020 7421 0554  
Email: [Finsburyparkward-NI@met.police.uk](mailto:Finsburyparkward-NI@met.police.uk)

### **Hillrise**

Telephone 020 8345 3921  
Email: [Hillriseward-NI@met.police.uk](mailto:Hillriseward-NI@met.police.uk)

### **Tollington**

Telephone 020 7421 0616  
Email: [Tollingtonward-ni@met.police.uk](mailto:Tollingtonward-ni@met.police.uk)



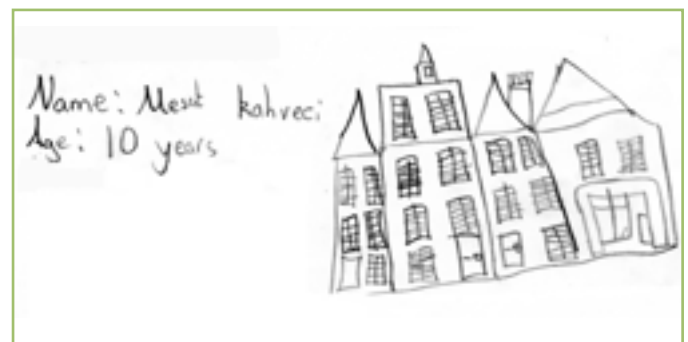
**METROPOLITAN  
POLICE**

**Working together for a safer London**

## WINNERS!

The question in our history competition was: *Newington Green is home to the oldest terrace of houses in England. In what year are the houses thought to have been built?* A draw was made of entries which got the correct answer: 1658. The winner, Mr P Stevenson, will receive a copy of the excellent book *A History of Islington* by Mary Cosh.

We were delighted also to receive entries from some children and so, on this occasion, have decided to give a special children's prize. The name drawn was Fleur Verebelyi, who is eight years old. Fleur will receive a copy of a fascinating book of pictures of old Islington. Another child drew an excellent picture of the houses at Newington



Green and we reproduce it here. Congratulations to ten-year-old Mesut Kahveci, who drew the picture.

We are continuing the Down our way series this month. Why not have a go? You could win our wonderful prize. See page 4.

## Leaseholders take to direct debit

Direct debit is proving a popular way for leaseholders to pay their service charges. Since April, over 1,000 leaseholders have signed up to pay their leasehold service charges by direct debit. For many leaseholders this is a more convenient way to pay than posting a cheque or visiting 222 Upper Street to make a payment.

If you are a leaseholder and would like to begin paying by direct debit you can call the Home Ownership Unit on 020 7527 7720 or 7715, or drop into their offices at 2/4 Tuffnel Park Road, London N7 0DL to pick up an application.

# RATS, SMELLS, HEALTH HAZARDS AND MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN...

Every year thousands of pounds have to be spent as a result of thousands of callouts to deal with blocked sinks, toilets and drains. That's money down the drain, because most of these blockages are avoidable. That's money that could be spent on other services to residents.

**What is the cause?** It's what people put into the drains through sinks, basins, washing machines and toilets. Cooking fats and oils poured down sinks account for the largest number of drain blockages. The fats harden and combine with other substances, such as washing powder, to form a hard substance that stops the free flow of waste water into the drains. The result is that drains back up, sometimes causing the foul water to come up on paths and even into people's sinks and basins.

**What is the result?** Smells in and around homes, foul water flooding and damaging carpets (even seeping down to the next flat), health and safety hazards from contact with waste water and even rats, inconvenience if you have to wait in for the repair.

## Here are some of the dos and don'ts:

- **DON'T** empty any type of fat or oil down your drain. DO dispose of fats and oils by pouring them into containers and putting them, once they are cold, into your waste bin.
- **DON'T** use excessive amounts of washing powder. It does not make your clothes any cleaner and it hardens into a cement-like substance which blocks drains. Excessive foaming also stops free flow of waste water. DO follow manufacturer's recommendations

about quantity of powder to use in your wash. Use less, save money and avoid blocking drains.

- **DON'T** let excessive amounts of food waste or other solid substances go down your drain. It blocks drains and encourages rats. DO use a mesh plughole strainer to catch bits of food matter so that it does not go down the drain and dispose of such waste in your kitchen bin.
- **DON'T** have your washing machine installed with the waste from it going into a gully that is only meant to take up rainwater draining off the building. This happens a lot where machines are installed on balconies. It is not allowed. DO contact your area housing office for advice.
- **DO** be careful with toilets. The major causes of blocked toilets are putting too much paper in them, children dropping toys and other things in them and toilet cleaners that clip onto the toilet rim (which often fall in).
- **DO** report any broken drain or gully covers that you see on your estate. They are dangerous and can result in blockages and a rat problem.



*One of HFI's repairs engineers told us "Some people just don't realise how much damage this causes. It may be someone who lives on the lower floors who suffers the resulting blockage. It's really a massive problem"*



## MANY ROOTS ONE ISLINGTON

As part of Black History Month Islington Council Housing, Performance and Property Services is hosting the Many Roots One Islington family fun day at Highbury Grove School on Saturday the 15th October. From 11am to 3pm, the event will include live

## FUN DAY

performances, children's games and activities and a variety of stalls including a black book shop and hair braiding. Come and join us in celebrating Islington's diverse roots!

## Homes for Islington Public Meetings

Homes for Islington's Board and Sub-Board meetings are open to the public. Agenda and papers for these meetings are available three days in advance of each meeting through Homes for Islington's website. A hard copy is 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

**Homes for Islington Board Meetings:** • Monday 3rd October 2005 • Monday 14th November 2005 • Monday 19th December 2005 • Monday 6th February 2006 • Monday 20th March 2006

## Homes for Islington Sub-Board Meetings

**Contracted Services Sub-Board** April 2005 – March 2006  
Tuesday, 18 October 2005, 13 December 2005, 14 February 2006

**Managed Property Sub-Board** April 2005 – March 2006  
Wednesday, 19 October 2005, 14 December 2005, 15 February 2006

For enquiries about any of the above meetings, please contact the HFI Governance Team on 020 7527 5148

### If you require any of the following please note:

- A signer requires two weeks notice to the HFI Governance Team prior to the meeting
  - Translation of papers for Sub-Board Board meetings require 4-6 weeks notice in the language required after the meeting takes place
  - Crèche facilities require notice two weeks in advance of meetings to the HFI Governance Team
  - An induction loop is available at the venue
  - Contact us if you have any special requirements
- Please contact HFI Governance Team at Room 115, Highbury House, Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN, telephone 020 7527 5148 or email [mary.switzer@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:mary.switzer@homesforislington.org.uk)

## Homes for Islington resident board director elections

Homes for Islington held its first elections for resident directors to join its board of directors between 1st and 15th September. At the time of this newsletter going to print the outcome of the elections was not known, but there will be an announcement of the results at HFI's board meeting on 3rd October and, following this, on the HFI website on the What's New pages. At the time of writing it was anticipated that eight candidates would be taking part in this year's resident director elections.

The borough has been split into two halves for the purpose of resident board director elections. The election this year has taken

## GETTING INVOLVED – Your chance to have your say

Following a comprehensive review of how we involve our residents in decisions affecting the service they receive and the running of HFI, Homes for Islington is now implementing the recommendations of the review.

### **More consultation for "hard-to-reach" groups**

One recommendation was that HFI should establish forums for groups identified as "hard-to-reach," such as BME, disabled and young persons.

These groups who are frequently under-represented in consultation.

We would like to hear from residents from these groups with their ideas for how these forums could work. Ideas so far include: targeted focus groups of disabled residents to look at specific issues and working with the council's youth parliament.

*Please let us have your views by 10th October*

You can forward your comments by e-mail at [RIT@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:RIT@homesforislington.org.uk) or by post to RIT, Room 104, Highbury House, 5 Highbury Crescent, London N5 1RN.

**If you wish to have more information on this issue or discuss it in more detail you can contact Janice Markey on 020 7527 4079 or Stephen White on 020 7257 8632.**

