

# Community matters

What's going on at your local community centre?



# What's new

## Islington news roundup

### New proposals with Major Works

Good news for local authority leaseholders! A new option to help leaseholders with the cost of major works has been included in the Housing and Regeneration Bill. All leaseholders have to contribute their share of costs for Major Works for their block such as replacement windows or a new roof. But this can sometimes be expensive. So, under proposals in the Bill, local authority leaseholders will be able to apply for interest-free equity loans to help pay their Major Works bills. These won't have to be repaid until the flat is sold. For those who are really struggling, the Bill will let landlords help out by buying a share in the flat to cover the cost of the works. Of course, there are already loan and buyback schemes to help people pay their Major Works bills. But these new options will mean leaseholders can choose what works for them.

HFI will provide some information on this once the Bill is law and we receive details from the Government on how the scheme will work.

For more information on the Bill and its progress through Parliament, visit the Communities and Local Government website at:

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk).

### Giving carers a helping hand

If you provide unpaid care or support to someone aged 18 or over who lives in Islington and you or the person you care for are known to Social Services then the council's new emergency card scheme could be for you. You nominate two people who could cover for you in an emergency. You will receive a credit card sized carers emergency card. Should something happen to you and someone finds the card, they can call the 24 hour number and the emergency plan will be activated.

To find out more please contact the council's Carers Officer on **020 7527 8154** or [carers@islington.gov.uk](mailto:carers@islington.gov.uk). You can also log onto [www.islington.gov.uk/carers](http://www.islington.gov.uk/carers)

## Bulk Refuse charges



On this year's estimated annual service charge, you will notice a new heading for "Bulk Refuse". This is for the collection of any rubbish that has been fly-tipped (such as discarded fridges, car tyres etc). The rubbish is safely removed, and electrical goods and tyres are recycled. The team's other duties include removing offensive graffiti, oil/paint spillages, pigeon droppings, moss from play areas and mechanically sweeping estate roads. These duties are directed by Area Housing Office staff. The team that provides this service is the Mobile Response Team. They are on call from estate officers and caretakers. The service they provide is separate from the free bulky waste collection service that the council provide for larger items of waste such as furniture and beds. That service is funded by council tax.

The 2008/2009 estimated charge was calculated by dividing the budget estimate from the team who carry out this service by the amount of properties who will receive this service.

After this financial year has ended in March 2009, Home Ownership will receive information regarding your block/estate and will be able to charge you your share of the actual cost. Even if you have not requested the service yourself, if your property is on a block/estate that has benefited from the service then you will be charged your share of the total cost. Each collection or any other work carried out by this team is well documented and logged to each block/estate including how much time has been spent. If nothing is done then you will not be charged but we have to charge an estimated amount to all home owners.

# Just a little more time

**Do you want Home Ownership to have extended hours and a surgery service twice a year?**



To help us tailor our service to your needs, we are asking for feedback on our extended opening hours and surgery service provision.

Home Ownership currently extend their opening hours for a period of time after home owners have received their estimated and actual annual service charge statements.

The purpose is to specifically answer queries on how the annual service charge was calculated, and to give home owners the opportunity to have any query on their statement answered.

When estimated statements were issued in March 2008, we:

- held three surgeries at each of the four area housing offices,
- had extended opening hours at Home Ownership for four days, and
- opened the Home Ownership office on a Saturday.

## Your feedback please

We would like to know if you think the amount of surgeries and extended opening hours is too many, too few, or about right. During July 2008 we are placing a short online survey for you to complete to gather your views on current service provision. This can be accessed through the leaseholder section of the Homes for Islington website, [www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk).

Alternatively, if you would like to give your feedback to the survey by telephone, please call Alex Evans on **020 7527 7810** between 10am and 12 noon any Tuesday in July. You can also request a copy of the survey to be sent to you by contacting Home Ownership.

The survey will close 31 July 2008. We look forward to receiving your feedback.

## Combating anti-social behaviour

### How we're working with you to tackle ASB

#### ASBO given to Archway teenager

Mohammed Ahmed has been given an anti-social behaviour order (ASBO). He was part of a group of young people responsible for drug and weapon offences and street robberies in Islington. He is now banned from: the Harvist Estate; parts of Finsbury Park; associating with seven named individuals; and gathering in a public place in a group of three or more people in a manner that causes or is likely to cause any person to fear for their safety. The ASBO lasts until July 2010.

#### Crack house closure on Holly Park Estate

A crack house has been closed on the Holly Park Estate. The property had been linked with drugs and anti-social behaviour (ASB). The address will be closed for three months. During this time Homes for Islington will be initiating proceedings to re-possess the property.

#### Successful prosecution of racist neighbour

Maureen McLaughlin has been convicted of racially aggravated harassment (non-violence) against a local family. She has been sentenced to: three months' imprisonment suspended for 18 months; a restraining order to keep away from the family; and a supervision order for one year requiring her to have rehabilitation supervised by the probation service. HFI will now be taking action against her about her tenancy.

# Get involved!

**Each issue you can find out how you can have your say in how your homes are managed**

**Your home, your future: Islington's housing strategy 2008 – 2012**

**Young people from across the borough had their say on the future of housing in Islington.**

Tameka Anderson and Jerome Jackson from Islington Young Advisors came along to the 'Your home, your future' seminar at the Emirates and spoke about the findings of the consultation they carried out. They asked about 54 young people a series of questions about housing in Islington. The main issues were overcrowding and homelessness.

Jerome said "We really enjoyed doing this. The best bit was being out there and talking to young people and finding out what they really think. Then being invited here to speak in front of all these people shows the council want to hear what young people have to say."

The council will take all this information and the information from around 400 questionnaires that people have filled in and the results will help shape the council's plans for housing over the next few years. Feedback will be available shortly and the draft housing strategy will be ready in the summer.

For more information about the consultation and the future of housing in Islington go to [www.islington.gov.uk/housingstrategy](http://www.islington.gov.uk/housingstrategy) or call Bryony Willett on **020 7527 4438**.



Jerome Jackson and Tameka Anderson feedback on the results of their consultation

## Get £20 for paying by Direct Debit

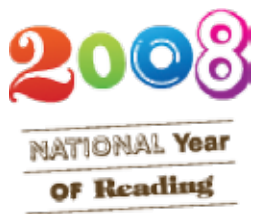


In January 2008 we introduced a £20 incentive for home owners to set up a Direct Debit to pay their annual service charge. This is because it costs us less money to process payments

made by Direct Debit than by other methods. You can choose to either have the £20 credited to your annual service charge account, which will reduce your monthly instalments, or you can donate it to the Council's Climate Change Fund. The incentive will not be applied retrospectively to home owners that set up a Direct Debit before January.

By the end of April, 470 home owners had benefited from this incentive, and 26 of them donated their £20 to the Climate Change Fund. The Council's Climate Change Fund has been created to support green energy and transport projects that will reduce carbon emissions throughout the borough.

Paying by Direct Debit is the easiest way to pay your annual service charge. There are no cheques to write, no paperwork or postage and no queuing. Payments are made for you by your bank or building society, and there is a choice of four dates that your monthly payment can be made on. If you would like a Direct Debit form either contact Home Ownership or print one from the leaseholder section of our website, by clicking on the "How and where to pay your Service Charges" link under the service charges heading.



# National Year of Reading

**Get down to your local library, you'll be amazed at what's on offer!**

With 2008 as the National Year of Reading there is no better time to visit your local library. Joining has never been easier and most of the services are free.

There are activities for children of all ages including sessions for toddlers and study support. Children love books and it is now proven that this helps with their learning and at school. You can access the Internet for free or maybe take home a CD or DVD which you can rent from as little as a £1 a week.

In addition to the 10 Libraries there are once a week community libraries on the Andover, Packington and Bemerton estates, at Rahere House and Hanley Crouch Community Centre and the Home Library Service will deliver books to your home if needed.

Make time for reading and exploring all the exciting promotions, activities and events that your local library offers. Phone **020 7527 6900** for details of your nearest library.



## Andover prize-winner Marie McCaffrey from the Andover Estate is Tenant Liaison Officer of the Year!

Marie McCaffrey, Resident Liaison Officer for Balfour Beatty, has won a Tenant Liaison Officer of the Year Award for her work on the Andover Estate and on HFI's street properties. The award scheme was run by the Tenant Participation Advisory Service (TPAS).

## Caretaker of the year He made a clean sweep!

Ali Bey-Osman of the Highcroft and Belvoir Estates is this year's caretaker of the year. He was nominated by residents and HFI staff alike for the way he is friendly and approachable and keeps this estate clean and tidy. One resident who nominated him wrote: "He is dedicated to his work and is always helping the elderly residents on this estate. His commitment to his work, helpfulness and good manners make him an ideal candidate for this award." Congratulations Ali!



Ali Bey-Osman

# New housing in Islington

## More council housing will soon be built following Islington Council's approval of a new planning application in Holloway

The proposals for the use of the land currently occupied by garages at the rear of 8-11 Armour Close N7 were approved by the council on 3 March 2008.

Four brand new three-bedroomed homes will be built to house families living in overcrowded accommodation. Each home will incorporate a courtyard for children to play in and all will have access to a newly created green space.

Cllr Terry Stacy, Islington Council's Executive Member for Housing and Communities said: "This is yet more great news for those on Islington's housing waiting list. It follows hard on the heels of last month's ground clearance for the first new council housing in a generation to be built at Boleyn Road, N16.

"We are spending millions and building much more affordable housing than our neighbours despite being one of the most densely populated boroughs in London. Last year, 800 families got a new affordable home.

"But new build alone won't solve the housing crisis - that's why we are also putting money into extensions, reconvertng flats back into family sized homes, tackling under-occupancy and releasing private homes kept empty by their owners into the rental market.

"All this - and our decent homes programme - mean more opportunities for Islington families to be raised in good quality accommodation."

Homes for Islington will build and manage the homes on behalf of Islington Council. They are expected to be completed by 2009 and the first families will move in shortly after.

Islington Council completed 800 affordable housing units in 2006/7, largely through planning agreements with major developers in the borough.



## Estate parking rents

### Green parking charges are being introduced

From 7 April the amount that someone will pay to rent an estate parking space from Homes for Islington (HFI) will be based on the carbon emission band for their vehicle. For newer vehicles the emission band is printed on the vehicle log book. For older vehicles the emission rating is based on the vehicle's engine size, according to DVLA guidelines. Further information, including a Carbon Emission Parking Charges 'Ready Reckoner', is available on our website at [www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk). Anyone wishing to apply for an estate parking facility should contact HFI at their local Area Housing Office.

## Winner of Mayor's Civic Awards

Sophie Bardy of Cyrus House TRA has won a Mayor's Civic Award for her fundraising to make Cyrus House a better place to live for its residents. She has raised money to kit out the A4 Allstars football team, which involves around thirty 18-25 year olds from Cyrus House and the surrounding area. The funding was used for sports and first aid equipment, football kits and local league costs and has had a very positive impact on local young people. She has also raised money for estate events, trips, improvements to the block and a kids gardening club.

# Get with the programme

Name: **Wesley Jolly**

Job title: **Area Programme Manager**

## 1. You're an Area Programme Manager, what does this mean in practice?

It means I am one of four managers responsible for delivering the Decent Homes Programme. Each one of us is tasked to a housing area in Islington. (For example, I deal with homes in the Holland Walk area).

## 2. Do you have direct contact with home owner?

Yes. As home owners have to pay service charges based on the works we are planning on doing to their home, I have meetings with them to discuss proposed costs for this work. There are two meetings for each project: one dealing with costs and charges and the other with the scope of works to be undertaken.

## 3. If a home owner wants to comment on work being done, who should they contact? Is it HFI or the constructor?

Whether a home owner wants to compliment or complain, the first port of call should be the Resident Liaison Officer (RLO) who is on site on behalf of the constructor doing the work to their home. The RLO may refer them on to an HFI Project Officer. (Details of the relevant Project Officer for the works taking place will have been sent to you before work started.) Home owners may even be familiar with their Project Officer as they are the public face of HFI when works are taking place and tend to have a lot of contact with all residents.

## 4. Who should home owners contact once works have finished?

Once works have finished, there is a twelve month "defects period" where the constructor

will come back to put right anything that might have gone wrong or been forgotten (e.g. a window sash has been replaced but not painted).

HFI writes to all residents after works asking if there are any defects that need rectifying. This form gets sent to the HFI Project Officer (not the site manager) who passes it on to the relevant constructor.

This doesn't mean we wait until works are completed before going to fix problems as during the works, our Clerks of Work inspect each property as work is taking place to ensure the specifications for the job and HFI processes are being adhered to.



## Training for Tenant and Resident Associations

### Effective chairing skills course a success

In December 2007 most Area Housing Panels agreed that they would like training in how to chair a meeting effectively.

In April, 22 Tenant and Resident Association (TRA) and Area Housing Panel members took part in an effective chairing skills course. Barbara Price, of Newbery House Co-op, said: "We were able to learn so much from the evening and came away feeling that we had so many ideas for future Committee Meetings."

Similar sessions are planned for once a year, to cover different topics of interest to TRA members.

**Switch on to your council...** ISLINGTON

The Islington Looking Local service lets you search for jobs, check bus timetables, order a new recycling box and do much more... all through your TV!

To switch on to the free, easy-to-use Islington Looking Local service, press the interactive button on your remote control.

sky Sky customers, select: Sky Active Services Looking Local

Virgin Media customers, select: Home and Away Find It... Looking Local

[www.islington.gov.uk/lookinglocal](http://www.islington.gov.uk/lookinglocal)

# Savings and loans club

## Helping you manage your money and deal with your debts

A credit union is relaunching to help people manage their money and deal with their debts.

Islington & City Credit Union is a not for profit savings and loans co-operative set up by and for local people. It provides secure savings accounts and encourages people to save up for the things that they need rather than borrow. They also pool the members' savings to form a pot of money from which people can borrow at those times when we need to. Because there are no outside shareholders the loans are low cost and flexible, unlike many of the alternatives.

The credit union loan is called a 'Save As You Borrow' scheme which sees part of each borrower's loan repayments paid into their savings account. This means that the member has a pot of savings by the time they have cleared the loan, and over time reduces the need to borrow at all.

For further information about your local credit union contact:

Islington & City Credit Union  
Caxton House, 129 St John's Way,  
London N19 3RQ  
tel: 020 7561 1786  
email: info@iccu.coop  
web: www.iccu.coop



## Get into gardening!

### Does your estate have a community garden? If not get digging!

What better way to spend a summer's day than out in the garden! Here are some gardening projects that people from local estates have worked on. If you'd like more information on how you can get involved contact the Community and Service Development Officer at your local area housing office.

#### Mayville gardening club

Founded in January 2007 the Mayville gardening club has already won three awards for its vegetable planters! The club has recently built a knot garden of herbs and vegetables, based on an 18<sup>th</sup> century design. To help them complete such fine work, the club have been sponsored by organisations including Groundwork Islington, The Conservation Foundation and Timebank.

#### King Henry's Walk garden

This site is being transformed into a peaceful, organic garden with all sorts of vegetation. The local community is very involved and the garden includes small community plots that are allocated to local people. They also recently held a successful Turkish barbecue. King Henry's Walk Garden is open to the public on Saturdays from 12 noon until 4pm and Wednesdays from 10am until 3pm. More details can be found on their website at [www.khwgarden.org.uk](http://www.khwgarden.org.uk).

#### Fortuna Close gardening club

The Fortuna Close gardening club, in partnership with Mackwest TRA and HFI, recently completed a major transformation of two planting areas in the close. The scheme, supervised and guided by groundworks, saw two small plots cleared of old and uncared for shrubs and replaced with a blend of shrubs, climbers, herbs and some perennials.

#### Islington in bloom

The Islington in bloom competition is now underway. This year HFI is sponsoring the category for Best Entry from an HFI Resident. So, get your trowels out and start planting! For more information, contact Islington Council, Greenspace Section on 020 7527 3288.

# Community matters

## Did you know that Homes for Islington (HFI) manages 49 community centres and community rooms across Islington?

The four area housing offices manage and support these centres in partnership with local voluntary community associations like your local Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) or community centre committee.

Most of the centres are in the heart of estates and provide a hub for Islington residents. Our centres are open to all, regardless of whether you actually live on the local estate.

### What's on offer?

The community centres mean different things to different people. They are used by local people to provide a whole range of activities and events for you and your community to enjoy. They are ideal meeting places for local interest clubs such as fitness groups, nurseries, bingo, after school clubs and many others, even belly dancing! But they're also places where you can learn new skills, get information and meet new friends. Most of the centres

can be hired for special occasions like birthday parties and christenings.

Without you these centres would be just buildings, lacking in character if they were not "owned" by local communities. You, our residents, provide the warmth which makes them welcoming to all. Unfortunately, some of

the centres are less well used than others so please remember to find out where your nearest one is and use it. That's what it's there for after all!

All of the committees that manage the centres are supported by HFI and training is available to help them manage the centre effectively, including the accounts. If you are interested in joining a committee, have a group that is missing a venue or have a celebration to hold, then either contact your local Area Housing Office for more information or contact the community centres directly.

### Hornsey Lane Community Centre

An example of one of the more vibrant centres in the borough is the Hornsey Lane Community Centre, situated in the middle of the Hornsey Lane estate in the Holland Walk area. Many years ago this centre wasn't functioning that well but now it is bursting with community activities all year round!

The centre runs a hugely successful after schools club, and all are welcome from 3.30pm to 6pm term time only. Prices are £4.90 and concessions £3.50 including snacks. The program includes activities such as puppet making, creating a dinosaur village, photography, creating an indoor garden, circus skills, healthy eating and cooking. There's almost too much for the kids to enjoy!

For more information on your local community centre visit the HFI website at [www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk) and go to 'your housing area' or contact your local area office and ask to speak to the community and service development officer.



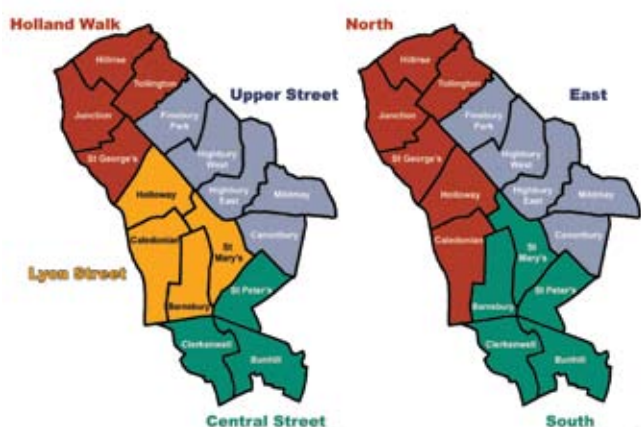
Library at the Andover community centre

# You said, we did

We recently asked a number of home owners who had volunteered to join HFI's Resident Involvement Register to comment on the first draft of our updated Leaseholders' handbook.

As a result of the feedback a number of changes were made.

- Two maps have been added, one showing which Area Housing Office covers each area of Islington, the other showing which team in Home Ownership covers which areas of Islington.



- The phone number for the Anti-social Behaviour team was repeated on the second page about anti-social behaviour.



- Details about Islington Law Centre were added.
- A sentence was added to confirm that reports of anti-social behaviour will be treated in confidence.
- The photographs of various locations in Islington were labelled.

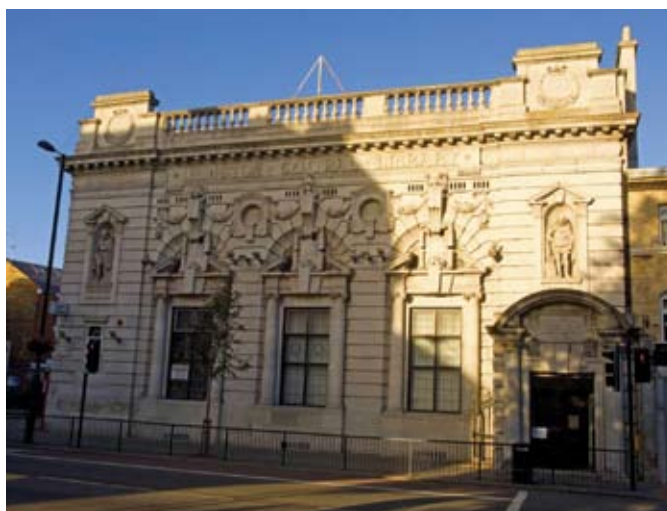
- The photographs on the front cover were changed from those of a shopping centre and two elderly women to a block of flats and a caretaker.



We also asked if we should continue to print hard copies of the handbook, or just make it available online. The feedback was that we should continue to produce hard copies, and there were two suggestions that we make the handbook available in libraries.

The handbook is sent to all new home owners and is available on the leaseholder section of our website. If you would like a hard copy please contact **Home Ownership** on **020 7527 7715** or **020 7527 7720**. The updated version will be available soon.

If you would like to join the Resident Involvement Register, or would like more information about it, please contact **Jacqueline Robinson** on **020 7527 2903**, by email at [jacqueline.robinson@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:jacqueline.robinson@homesforislington.org.uk) or by post at Highbury House, 4-5 Highbury Crescent, London, N5 1RN.



# Performance news

## How clean is your estate?

### Get involved and let us know.

Every estate is inspected four times a year by a group of Homes for Islington staff, councillors and representatives from Tenants and Residents Associations. They look at repairs that might need doing, caretaking services and communal areas – basically the whole estate. Information on the inspections is then sent back to those who attended along with what needs to be done to put things right. We'd like a wider range of people to take part in these inspections. So if you're interested in inspecting your estate please visit the Homes for Islington website at [www.homesforislington.org.uk](http://www.homesforislington.org.uk) or contact:

#### Central Street:

**Daniel Tomey** on 020 7527 6205  
or **Denise Hayward** on 020 7527 6232

#### Holland Walk:

**David Evans** on 020 7527 7416  
or **Nikita Alphonso** on 020 7527 7447

#### Lyon Street:

**Pat Hutchings** on 020 7527 6861  
or **Althea Webb** on 020 7527 6875

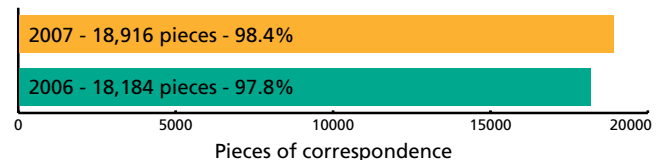
#### Upper Street:

**Lee Riley** on 020 7527 5371,  
**Jade Fear** on 020 7527 5331  
or **Liz McAlarey** on 020 7527 5376

# How Home Ownership are performing

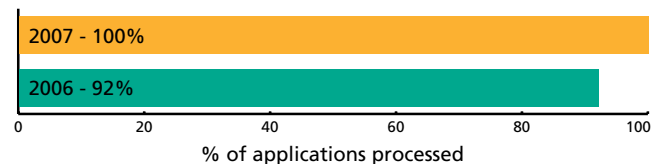
## Correspondence replied to within 10 working days.

The target for responding to correspondence within 10 working days is 100%. Last year we received 18,916 pieces of correspondence, and responded to 98.4% within 10 working days. The previous year we received 18,184 pieces of correspondence, and responded to 97.8% within 10 working days.



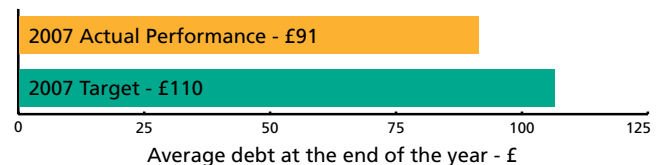
## Right to Buy.

The target timeframe for admitting Right to Buy applications is 4 weeks. Last year 100% of applications were processed within this period. The previous year 92% of applications were processed within this period.



## Average annual service charge debt.

Last year the target for average debt was £110. The average debt at the end of the year was £91.





This is a newsletter about issues facing home owners. If you need a translation or more information in your own language, please contact Home Ownership. Contact details are below.

এই নিউজলেটারটি বাড়ির মালিকেরা যেসব বিষয়ের সম্মুখীন হন সেই সম্পর্কিত। আপনি যদি এর অনুবাদ চান অথবা আপনার নিজের ভাষায় আরও তথ্য চান, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে ঐসম্পর্কিত ঙ্গপাতিমহ এর সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করুন। যোগাযোগ সম্পর্কিত বিস্তারিত তথ্য নিচে দেওয়া হল। (Bengali)

Αυτή είναι η εφημερίδα για τους ενοικιαστές του Islington. Αν θέλετε μετάφραση ή περισσότερες πληροφορίες στη γλώσσα σας, παρακαλούμε όπως επικοινωνήσετε με την υπηρεσία Home Ownership. Ο αριθμός τηλεφώνου αναγράφεται παρακάτω. (Greek)

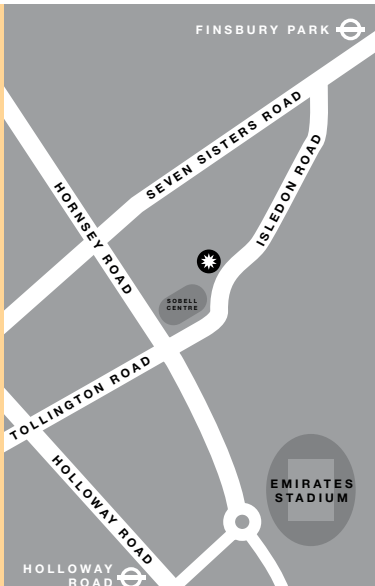
Esta newsletter destina-se aos inquilinos de Islington. Se necessitar de tradução deste material ou de mais informações no seu idioma, favor entrar em contacto com o proprietário do local. O número de telefone é apresentado abaixo. (Portuguese)

Kani waa warside loogu talo galay heshiis-kiro heystayaasha gudaha Islington. Haddii aad u baahan tahay tarjumaad ama warar dheeraada oo luuqaddaada ah, fadlan la xiriir Milkyad Guri (Home Ownership). Lambarka telefoonka hoos ayuu ku qoran yahay. (Somali)

Esto es un boletín informativo para los arrendatarios de Islington. Si necesita una traducción del mismo o más información en su idioma, le rogamos que se ponga en contacto con Propiedad de Viviendas. El número de teléfono de contacto aparece indicado más abajo. (Spanish)

Bu, Islington'daki kiracılar için bir haber bültenidir. Eğer, kendi lisanınızda bir çeviriye veya daha fazla bilgiye ihtiyaç duyarsanız, lütfen (Ev sahipliği) Home Ownership ile temas kurun. Telefon numarası aşağıdadır. (Turkish)

If you require this information in English recorded on tape or compact disc or in large print or braille please contact Home Ownership.



#### By post

50 Isledon Road  
London N7 7LP  
Phone: 020 7527 7715/7720  
Email: [homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk](mailto:homeownership@homesforislington.org.uk)

Parking is available in the Sobell Leisure Centre, which you will have to pay for. Parking is available within 60 metres for Blue Badge holders.

#### Transport

Nearest tube stations are Holloway Road (Piccadilly Line) and Finsbury Park (Piccadilly & Victoria Lines)

#### Bus routes:

17, 43, 153, 271, 393 (run along Holloway Road)  
Bus routes: 4, 29, 153, 253, 254, 259, 279 (run along Isledon Road)  
Bus route: 91 (runs along Hornsey Road)