

theLink



October 2020

Keeping calm and carrying on!



Hello again, and I hope this finds you well.

Recent announcements by government to tackle the coronavirus pandemic have affected all of us. We know our tenants are continuing to keep themselves safe and we will continue helping you get the support you need.

We will continue to work safely as the pandemic continues. We are having to revisit our working practice as we have begun to make use of the office again but equally

all our staff are still fully or partly also working from home.

It remains the case that our office isn't open to visitors at the moment.

We will be making sure that you can still get essential help including with repairs.

Everyone needs to find a balance between trying to live their lives and taking care. We are a community housing trust and local businesses in Haringey are struggling and we need to show support while staying safe.

“ We will continue helping you get the support you need ”

Meanwhile there have been further changes at HHT, in particular to our board. Rosie Boughton has now stepped down as Chair. I'd like to thank Rosie on behalf of HHT for all the hard work she has put in as Chair. I'm pleased to say that she will remain on the Board and her knowledge and experience will continue to be highly valuable. In her place Board member June Barnes has now become our new Chair.

I'm sure you will all join me in welcoming her to the position and you can read more about her in this edition of *the Link*.



Many thanks to our previous Chair, Rosie Boughton (left), who has now stepped down and we welcome our new Chair, June Barnes (right)

Always



The Link meets

June Barnes

Chair of Hornsey Housing Trust

At the recent HHT Annual General Meeting, our previous Chair, Rosie Boughton, stepped down after three years in the role. Her replacement is June Barnes, who was already a Board Director.

The Link sat down with June to find out more about her and her plans for the Trust.

So tell us a bit about your background...

JB: I have had a long career in housing. I studied Town Planning at Polytechnic and my first proper job was at the local authority housing department in Islington. I then went to work at Community Housing Association as a housing officer and managed properties in Kilburn and West Hampstead, Stamford Hill and Marylebone.

I moved onto work as a development officer for several housing co-operatives in north-west London, getting government funding to convert housing into flats. This included working with homeless people living in hotels in Bayswater, to provide them with new homes.

After some further roles I became the Development Director at Tower Hamlets Housing Action Trust, working with our tenants to agree a redevelopment plan for what was not very nice housing to eventually provide everyone with a new home.

I then went to work as a Regional Director for the Guinness Trust, leading an area covering East Anglia, the East Midlands, Derbyshire and Herts.

Following this I was appointed as Chief Executive of East Thames Housing Group, (now part of L&Q Group). East Thames owned and managed 15,000 homes, including housing for families, housing for older people and a big programme of specialist housing for people with learning difficulties, physical difficulties, Alzheimer's disease, autism and other conditions. We also did a lot of employment training and community development with our tenants. We were actively involved in the Olympics site and managed the affordable housing created as part of the Olympic Village and used by athletes during the Games.

I was there for just over 16 years and retired in September 2014.

As well as paid positions I have also been involved in various other housing-related activities, one example being the Campaign for Homes in Central London. I was for a time Chair of the London Mayor's Sustainable Development Commission. I was also on the board of the National Housing Federation, a trade body for housing associations, and was Vice Chair for just over a year.

I am currently a Non-Executive Director of Urban & Civic plc – we have a programme to build around 40,000 homes for sale and rent, mostly within 100 miles of London, with a big focus on sustainability, including creating more green spaces and having parks and cycle paths and creating local employment programmes.

You have mentioned a lot of work on tackling issues like homelessness, sustainability, tenant involvement. This sounds like you are very committed to the societal benefits from housing associations and housing?

JB: Yes – people ought to be able to live in decent homes which they feel meet their needs and they like and are happy to invite friends and family to – they should feel comfortable about where they live. I'm also keen for tenants to have a say in their housing association as they know their own homes and can contribute a lot.

So tell us about getting involved in HHT

JB: I moved into the area last year and I was keen to connect with the locality – one option was to get involved with a local housing association. Being a member of a small independent association is a way of using my expertise in the locality where I live.

I have been on the board for just over two years and

“...people ought to be able to live in decent homes which they feel meet their needs and they like and are happy to invite friends and family to.”

when Rosie, after three years as Chair, decided to step down I was happy to put my name forward.

As a small association with around 370 properties, we should be able to offer a good relationship with every tenant. Some tenants will want more than others but we have the ability to provide this. Both in our sheltered schemes and our street properties we can help with tenants needs, putting them in touch with local agencies and making sure they get what they're entitled to. The fact that HHT has a staff member (Trevor Small) who spends all his time making sure people get any funds due from the state is a fantastic resource.

HHT's creation of new homes in its existing sheltered housing blocks enables it to do a bit more with what it's already got. Having seen a number of our sheltered schemes and street properties I'm impressed that we are keeping them clean and the gardens in good order. Our street houses don't stick out from the other houses in the area, unlike some social housing.

There's a role for small housing associations – they can be a good landlord, with fewer layers between the people running the Trust and the tenants. Obviously HHT has relatively limited resources compared to a larger trust, which is a challenge.

HHT's dementia services are also of special interest, as my own mother passed away having been living with dementia.

What do you think of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Trust and how it's coped with it?

JB: It's been difficult to continue all of HHT's services during the pandemic, but we're looking at how, as we work our way through our pandemic, we can continue our support for tenants and their families.

It's a shame that so many social events the Trust normally organise have had to stop due to the need to keep tenants safe. More positively, we've tried to

be inventive around how we maintain our services, making remote phone calls and the staff working remotely. The Board think this has been successful and we would like to keep some of this going after we return to a more normal way of life as it's helped to keep in touch with tenants.

Staff have helped tenants with shopping and accessing services and helping them to generally live as well as they can in the circumstances, and to keep up contact via the telephone.

The Board has been meeting via video conferencing so we're missing some of the conversations we have around the meeting table.

I don't think we'll go back to living our lives quite like we did before, when we get through Covid.

What are your priorities as Chair?

JB: Firstly, I'm enthused by the opportunity to be Chair at Hornsey Housing Trust and believe there is a continuing role for us to provide good quality homes and services for people over 45. We don't see ourselves as ever being very big but want to be very good at what we do. We need to make sure our tenants are happy – our tenant satisfaction surveys have always shown a good level of satisfaction – and that our staff have a good place to work.

I'm currently working with the Board and the Chief Executive to take stock of the way we do things, to ensure we meet all our regulatory obligations and have a strong foundation for providing services and housing to our tenants in the future. It's about getting the basics right so we can do what we're here for, providing homes to people who need them in Haringey. This includes continuing to make sure we meet all the recent government guidance around fire safety that's appeared after the Grenfell tragedy.

And lastly, I'm really looking forward to seeing more of our tenants once we can begin to organise social events again. ■

Enjoying nature during the pandemic



A robin in Railway Fields, Haringey

Lockdown has produced some issues with people feeling isolated and needing to change their environment but with more limited options.

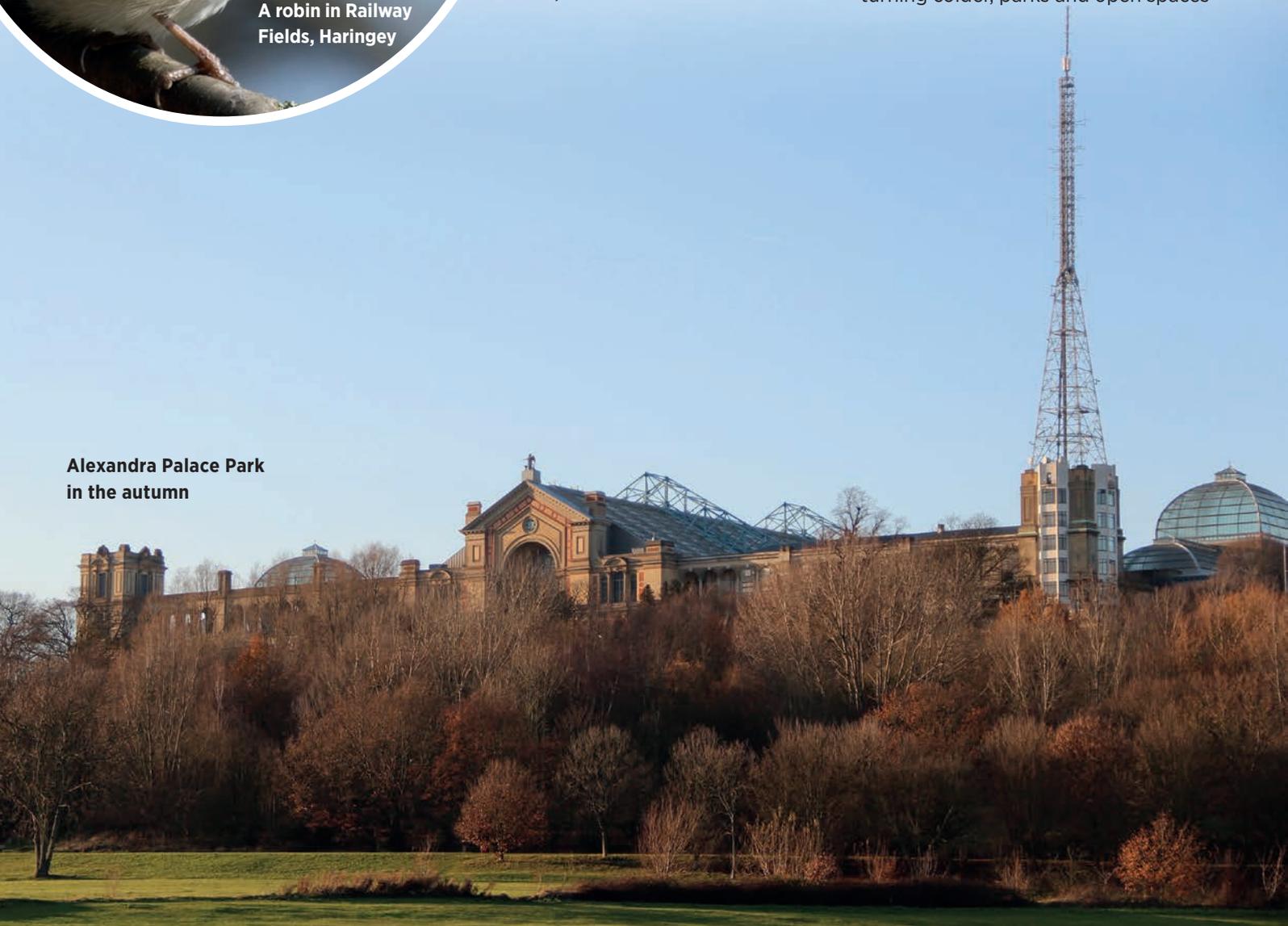
According to the mental health charity Mind, older people have been less prone to mental health issues as a result of lockdown than other age groups, but nevertheless issues have increased as there is less social activity. However we have reported already on how our tenants, staff and others – even

postmen! – have reached out to support each other during this time.

While the Covid-19 pandemic continues there will continue to be changes to the rules around what people can do and who we can see. But with the need to continue exercising and also seeing people within distancing rules, and simply to experience an environment outside our homes, our local parks really come into their own.

Although the weather will now be turning colder, parks and open spaces

Alexandra Palace Park in the autumn



will continue to be places we can go and see nature, breathe different air and meet people safely out of doors.

Many people have reported enjoying being able to visit their local park more and see nature and experience the plants and wildlife they can see there.

The Walthamstow Wetlands nature reserve is now open (please check here for updates on times and facilities: <https://walthamstowwetlands.com/operational-updates>), as is Finsbury Park and of course Alexandra Palace Park (some challenging hills but well worth it for the exercise!) as well so spaces such as Priory Park and Stationers Park, which is right by our Abyssinia Court scheme.

So do remember to try to get to and about and see how our nature is continuing through the pandemic and changing with the seasons as always.



A view from the bridge in Finsbury Park

Puzzles

Nature wordsearch

See if you can find all the words in this nature-related wordsearch



F	X	J	J	B	I	R	D	S	R
D	L	I	V	L	U	T	M	T	W
B	L	O	S	S	O	M	O	F	D
T	F	E	W	G	R	Z	U	O	V
G	E	M	I	E	R	A	N	R	R
B	R	I	A	F	R	B	T	E	Y
I	M	A	U	T	P	T	A	S	O
S	N	O	S	A	E	S	I	T	F
R	P	U	N	S	T	E	N	X	V
P	S	T	C	E	S	N	I	A	S

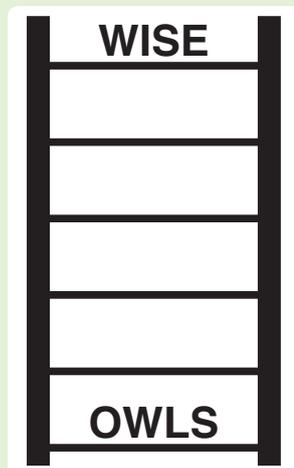
BEES
BIRDS
BLOSSOM
FIELD

FLOWER
FOREST
GRASS
INSECTS

MOUNTAIN
SEASONS

Word Ladder

Move from the word at the top of the ladder to the word at the bottom of the ladder by changing one letter on each step of the ladder. Do not rearrange the order of the letters. There may be more than one way of doing this.



Solutions to the puzzles are on page 7

Smart meters

by Phil Johnson, Housing Services Manager



You will recall that the government is now requiring energy suppliers to offer smart meters to all homes and small businesses across Great Britain. A SMART meter allows you to see, at a glance, how much gas or electricity you are using, helping you to budget and make decisions on how to get the best value for money that you can.

SMART meters are available for gas and

electricity, for pre-paid or billed meters, and are installed and run at no cost to you.

More than four in five people who have a SMART meter say they would recommend one.

So – be SMART and call us for more information and assistance on how to get set up. Then sit back and wonder how you ever managed without one!

Call me on **020 8340 6374** for more information.



Government information on smart meters

Smart meters are the next generation of gas and electricity meters and offer a range of intelligent functions.

For example, they can tell you how much energy you are using through an In-Home Display (IHD). They communicate directly with your energy supplier, meaning you will get accurate bills, and there will be no need for your energy supplier to visit your home to read your meter in future.

Smart meters bring a wide range of benefits. For example:

- smart meters give you near real-time information on energy use – expressed in pounds and pence
- you will be able to better manage your energy use, save money and reduce emissions

- smart meters will bring an end to estimated billing – you will only be billed for the energy you actually use, helping you budget better
- in time smart meters will make switching supplier smoother and faster, making it easier to get the best deals

You will not be charged separately for a smart meter or for the In-Home Display. Under current arrangements you pay for the cost of your meter and its maintenance through your energy bills, and this will be the same for smart meters.

Source: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/smart-meters-how-they-work>

Trevor Small

I would like to say Hi to all our Hornsey Housing Trust tenants. My name is Trevor Small and I am the Universal Credit/Welfare Benefits Officer at Hornsey Housing Trust.

Are you feeling the blues through these challenging times due to Covid-19 that has just come out from nowhere?

Let me see if I can help you to maximize your income, which can help towards paying your bills, help pay towards your rent, or even to treat yourself to some extra shopping.

To all pensioners

If you are of pension age and receiving state pension, it is possible for you to receive further benefits, such as pension credit or attendance allowance.

Attendance Allowance is an extra benefit, which is not means tested. This means that the money you receive, will not affect your rent.

People with a disability, or need help with care, or find it difficult to cope with everyday things such as finding it hard to wash, walk long distances, cook, clean or fill in forms can apply.

It's non-taxable, which means it, does not need to be considered for tax purposes. You won't need to include any Attendance Allowance payments you've received as income in your tax calculations.

It does not matter if you are actually getting any help with care or what you spend the allowance on. If you qualify as 'needing help', you should get the allowance.

You could get extra Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or council tax reduction if you get Attendance Allowance

There are two rates of attendance allowance payment

that you may be able to receive:

- The Lower rate of attendance allowance payment is £59.70 a week.
- The Higher rate of attendance allowance payment is £89.15 a week.

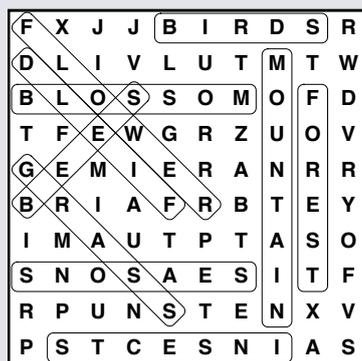
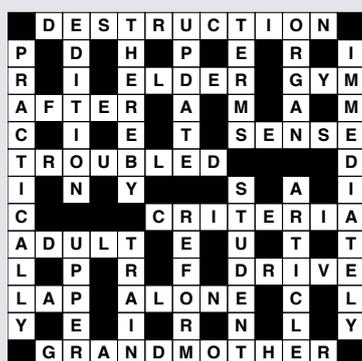
However, if you are already receiving Personal Independent Payment (PIP) or Disability Living Allowance (DLA), then you will NOT be eligible for Attendance Allowance.

If you would like to see if you qualify for Attendance Allowance, please contact our office on Telephone number **020 83406374** or speak to your Housing Officer.

For tenants who are of working age (18 to 65 years old)

If you are finding it difficult financially, whether you are in receipt of Universal credit only, self-employed or employed and on a low income, or have a disability, it is possible that you can receive help with welfare benefits. It all depends on your circumstances. You may be eligible to receive a disability benefit such as Personal Independent Payment or extra help from universal credit that you may not be aware of. Again, to find out more, please contact our office on Telephone number **020 83406374** or speak to your housing officer. Or you can contact me via email. Please send to me information about your employment status and your contact number to trevor.small@hornseyht.co.uk. I will then get back to you and discuss the possibilities of how we can maximize your income.

Solutions to the puzzles pages 5 and 8

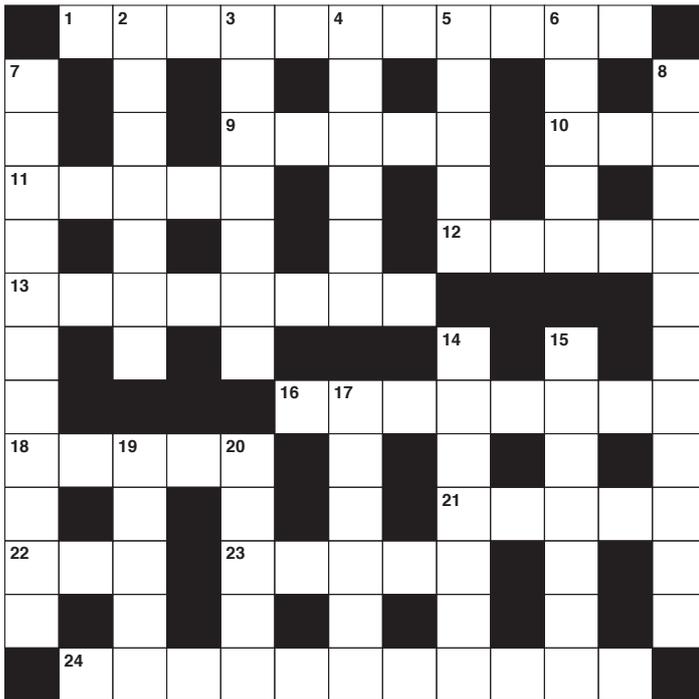


2	9	1	8	4	6	5	7	3
8	3	5	7	9	1	6	4	2
7	4	6	5	3	2	8	1	9
1	6	9	4	7	5	2	3	8
4	5	7	2	8	3	9	6	1
3	2	8	6	1	9	4	5	7
9	8	3	1	5	4	7	2	6
6	1	4	9	2	7	3	8	5
5	7	2	3	6	8	1	9	4

Word ladder solution

WISE
WILE
WILY
OILY
OILS
OWLS

Crossword



Across

- 1 Demolition (11)
- 9 Senior figure in a tribe (5)
- 10 Athletic facility (3)
- 11 Later (5)
- 12 Eg taste or touch (5)
- 13 Bothered (8)
- 16 Standards (8)
- 18 Mature human (5)
- 21 Propel forwards (5)
- 22 One circuit of a track (3)
- 23 Isolated (5)
- 24 A parent's Mum (11)

Down

- 2 Version of a book (7)
- 3 Thus; as a result (7)
- 4 Modernise (6)
- 5 Conditions (5)
- 6 Musical instrument (5)
- 7 Realistically; virtually (11)
- 8 Instantly (11)
- 14 Learner (7)
- 15 A particular item (7)
- 17 Implement change (6)
- 19 Opposite of lower (5)
- 20 Instruct; teach (5)

Sudoku

2		1	8			5		3
		5			1	6		
	4				2			9
	6		4		5	2		
				8				
		8	6		9		5	
9			1				2	
		4	9			3		
5		2			8	1		4

Solutions to the puzzles are on page 7

Staff

- **Alwyn Lewis** – Chief Executive
- **Mark Dibblin** – Asset Manager
- **Vacant** – Executive Assistant
- **Phil Johnson** – Housing Services Manager
- **Barbara Moore** – Housing Support Coordinator
- **Tennicia Cameron** – Housing Support Officer
- **Veronica Lindsay** – Head of Finance and IT
- **Michael Benjamin** – Assistant Financial Accountant
- **Vishwanne Jagdeo** – Management Accountant
- **Trevor Small** – Universal Credit & Benefits Specialist

Support Services Officers

- **Dipesh Anandji** – Abyssinia Court (temporary)
- **Maria Reyes** – Margaret Hill House;
Waverley Road; Hillfield Avenue
- **Indje Shahin** – Olive Tree House
- **Oluwatoyin Balogun** – Palm Tree Court/Sheba Court

Telephone: 020 8340 6374
(Office 9am–5pm weekdays)
Fax: 020 8341 1134
E-mail: admin@hornseyht.co.uk
Web: www.hornseyht.co.uk

Repairs service (urgent/emergency only)
Freephone Number: 0808 196 2200
HTTrepairs@newlon.org.uk

Other useful numbers

Haringey Housing and Council Tax benefits
020 8489 2800

Gas leaks (National Grid)
0800 111 999 (24hours)

Noise nuisance (Haringey Council)
020 8489 1000 (9:00am – 17:00pm)
020 8348 3148 (17.01pm until 08.59am)

Crime stoppers 0800 555 111

Rubbish and recycling (Veolia)
020 8885 7700

Thames Water – 0800 714 614

Electricity (Power cut) National Grid
0800 31 63 105

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