

Spring 2017

Housing News

Latest housing news for London Borough
of Hounslow residents



Introducing the Council's Handyperson Service

for minor works and small maintenance jobs

New Heston Road

The last units for rent at New Heston Road site B were completed at the end of April 2017. The scheme, the largest council-owned development currently on site, started in March 2015.



As part of our Corporate Plan 2014–19, Hounslow Council promised to secure a further 3000 affordable homes in Hounslow, 400 of which would be new council homes. New Heston Road Site B provides 88 units of these new council homes (60 for rent and 28 for Shared Ownership).

The units for rent are composed of 52 flats, a mixture of 1, 2, 3 and 4 beds (arranged in two blocks – Allum and Blackmore House) and eight 3 and 4 bedroom houses. Nine of the units

are adapted for wheelchair use.

The Heston Road site forms part of the larger development of the Heston Leisure Centre site. In 2011 We commissioned a preliminary feasibility study to develop new sports and leisure facilities to replace Heston pool to meet the demands and expectations of the local community. The residential element on Site B was created by combining the vacant council buildings on New Heston Road (the local Area Office and the Acorn

Day Centre) and the area of dense vegetation immediately to the north.

Some notable mature trees, including Oaks and Sycamores, were retained from the original site and a number of additional trees were planted in the main square. The main footpath crossing the site links it to the nearby community buildings: the Leisure centre, Library and the Community Hall. The children's play area is located adjacent to Blackmore House.

Private Sector Direct Lettings and Leasing Scheme

The council is searching for landlords who are looking for a great service and quality tenants. Local authorities recognise the importance of the private sector housing market and the benefits it offers to our tenants. The council has researched what the needs of landlords are and sought to provide these via our Direct Lettings and Leasing Scheme.

Are you a Landlord looking for:

- Vetted long-term tenants who will look after your property?
- First class service and customer care?
- Hassle free tenancies?
- Guaranteed Rent?

- First class tenancy sustainment and support?
- Competitive rent and attractive incentives?
- No agency fees?

If you answered "Yes", we have what you are looking for. Our Private Sector Schemes can provide you with all of the above and more. The scheme focuses on creating a personalised service that is unique to each and every landlord. Our Acquisition Officers will develop a package specific to your needs, which in the private sector will come at a cost. However, if you choose our Direct Lets Scheme, you will get all of the above for free! We are committed to making a

difference in the community and we need your help in doing so. We have various tenants who are interested in relocating within or out of the borough. We are committed to forging and building healthy relationships with landlords in the community. In addition to our lettings service we encourage landlords in search of advice and information to make contact with us.

To obtain more information about our services and further clarification about Direct Lettings Scheme please get in contact with us.

To register your property or for more information email: landlords@hounslow.gov.uk or call 020 8583 3855

Buy your first home!

If you've ever thought about owning your own home, now could be the time.

The Home Ownership Team is busy with the launch of several new homes under the Shared Ownership and Discount Market Sales schemes, and are working with private developers and housing associations to give local residents more chances to find both new and resale homes in the borough.

There are various developments available under the Shared Ownership scheme coming up in Heston, Isleworth and Brentford, as well as three discounted market sale units now being offered in Chiswick, and some specialist apartments for the over 55s in Isleworth, near the River Thames. The first phase of homes being built on the Civic Centre site expected to be ready in 2018. For

more details about these, please call Notting Hill Sales on 020 3815 1234 or visit 88lamptonroad.com

To be eligible, you need to be a first time buyer, or to have sold your current home before buying again, have a household income of not more than £90,000 per year and be able to get a mortgage. You can register with First Steps, via www.sharetobuy.com to get more details on what's available, including resales in the borough as well.

To find out more, ask questions or to register your details with us, please contact the Home Ownership Team on 020 8583 3721 or email us at Home.Ownership@hounslow.gov.uk



Welcome to our latest edition of Housing News

Councillor Katherine Dunne, Cabinet Member for Housing

Housing News will now come jointly with Hounslow Matters. This means you can access news and information for tenants and leaseholders along with other news from across the borough in one place.

In this edition, the focus is on news about services that can help you.

Our feature on housing fraud gives you more information on the various types of tenancy fraud and what to do if you suspect someone of committing Social Housing fraud. We are determined to take action to tackle the things that matter and your help in reporting housing fraud is important as you can see what's going on in your neighbourhood. We will investigate your concerns and take the necessary action.

With council housing in short supply, and a lot of deserving people waiting for a home, anyone fraudulently occupying a council home is taking it away from those who really need it.

On another note, if you've ever thought about owning your own home, now could be the time. There are various developments available under the Shared Ownership scheme coming up in Heston, Isleworth and Brentford, plus some specialist apartments for the over 55's in Isleworth near the River Thames. Further information can be found on page 4.

Finally, please keep sending us your stories and news. Where we can we'll feature them in future editions. Send to hm@hounslow.gov.uk

Handyperson scheme



The council's Handyperson scheme carries out minor works and small maintenance jobs to your home if you are eligible. All Handyperson operatives are Disclosure and Barring Service checked.

The Handyperson scheme is available to you if you:

- have a disability or severe health problem preventing you from

carrying out the work yourself

- are a single parent with a disabled child
- are aged 65 years and over

You can contact us by email at Handypersonservice@hounslow.gov.uk or telephone 020 8583 3878 to discuss what we are able to help you with. Check our website www.hounslow.gov.uk for eligibility criteria.

Slam the door on Housing fraud

Help us tackle housing fraud in confidence

Housing Fraud is a crime and deprives people in genuine need of a home. The Housing Investigation Team needs your help to tackle this problem as you are the eyes and ears of our community.

If you suspect someone of committing Social Housing fraud, please contact the Tenancy Fraud hotline on **020 8583 3777** or you can email the investigation team at **tenancyfraud@hounslow.gov.uk**

THERE ARE VARIOUS TYPES OF TENANCY FRAUD:

Unlawful subletting - When a tenant moves out and rents out their home without our permission.

Unlawful assignment - When a tenant moves out of their home and allows someone else to occupy the property.

Obtaining a tenancy by giving false information - When a tenant is granted a tenancy on the basis of false information in their application.

Non occupation – Where a tenant does not use our property as their only or principle home.

Fraudulent Right to Buy applications - Misrepresenting information to exercise the Right to Buy.

Fraudulent succession - Where a person tries to succeed a tenancy after the tenants' death when they are not eligible to do so.

Abandonment – Where a tenant leaves a property without informing the council.

The Prevention of Social Housing Fraud Act 2013 carries a custodial sentence of up to two years and/or a fine of up to £5000.

The council may also claim any profit made from tenancy fraud to be repaid and claim possession of the property through the courts.

Bringing Leaseholders Together

Since the Leaseholder Forum AGM in 2016, we have held two meetings where the leaseholders have come together to review their Best Practice documents, which helps us keep on track with the work that we want to do for all leaseholders. We also invite speakers and have a range of topics to discuss at the meetings.

At our April meeting, Deborah Viljoen and Hayley Cooper from the Specialist Housing Team attended and were able to give updates and information that concern leaseholders such as – billing, major works and repairs.

Here are the highlights:

Actuals bills - these are currently managed by the Accounts Receivable Team and the format will be under review.

Major Works Costs – the costs will in future be included with the bills and the costs are proportioned on the basis of rateable value of each home (which can vary).

Major Works – the Specialist Housing team is aiming to contact those leaseholders affected by upcoming major works prior to the section 20 notice being sent out.

Guarantees – these are available. If you have had work including windows, roofing and lift replacement done within the last two years, please

contact Specialist Housing Services on Leaseholdservices@hounslow.gov.uk and they will liaise with the Investment Team to obtain copy documents.

Being a part of the Leaseholder Forum means that we feed into the Tenants, Leaseholders and Sheltered Housing Joint Consultative Committee (TLSHJCC) which meets with officers from Hounslow Housing and other forums – this is chaired by Councillor Dunne. This is where relevant issues and concerns can be raised on behalf of leaseholders.

A number of our members have taken part in free training which was offered by the Community Partnerships Unit – Chaining skills, Minute taking and First Aid. The feedback was very positive and the skills learned will be used.

Want to get more involved? Then get in touch:
Facebook page at www.facebook.com/groups/HounslowLeaseholders

Jenny Samuel (Secretary)
jennysamuel297@btinternet.com

NEXT MEETING:
Monday 31
July, 7pm
The Alf
Chandler
Centre, Benson
Close Hounslow
(TBC).



United Living, one of the UK's leading providers of new build solutions, was awarded the bronze award for development South Road B in Hounslow.

Pictured: Colin Chandler (Operations Manager), Nick Tijou (Contracts Manager), Devon Johnson (Site Manager) and John Glover (Design Manager) from United Living, with David Capel (Hunters Employers Agent), Miral Nandha (Project Manager, Redloft) and Colin Freeman, (Clerk of Works) for the council.



Tenant Forum AGM 17

The Tenant Forum AGM was held at the end of March at Montague Hall in Hounslow. There were a number of guest speakers, stalls with information, and some delicious food! Councillor Katherine Dunne, the lead member for Housing, along with Martin Greenway, Head of Repairs and Estate Management and Ben Tomlinson, Performance and Data Manager talked about some of the changes taking place within different departments and the services provided. Ruth Cadbury, Labour MP for Brentford and Isleworth, and a part of the Shadow Housing team, spoke about issues important to Hounslow (the forthcoming election had not yet been announced). Borough Commander Raj Kholi updated the meeting on his current policing priorities. All the speakers took questions from the floor and then spoke individually with residents afterwards. There were stalls with representatives from the Grounds Maintenance, Housing Enforcement, Estate Management, and Repairs teams, and information about Linkline, Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime, and Victim Support.

The reason for the AGM was to elect next year's Forum Committee and these proceedings were opened by the Queen's representative Maria Pedro, followed by a Chair's report from Cllr Mel Collins, and a report of the work done between the Forum and the TLSTJCC (Tenant, Leaseholders,

Sheltered Tenants, Joint Consultative Committee), given by the Secretary Carolyn Courage. Tenants had nominated themselves for election. Those elected then decided on the Officer roles, where Cllr Mel Collins returned as Chair, Carolyn Courage became Vice-Chair, and a new member Rajesh Solanki volunteered to be Secretary.

There are still spaces to be filled, including three youth posts, as it is very important to hear the issues that are of concern to younger residents, and to put their skills to good use.

There is plenty of work to be done on behalf of tenants during the next year, and it is hoped that much will be achieved in collaboration with Housing.

There is a Forum mobile for voice messages, or to speak to someone between 2 - 7pm on 07562 328332 for dates of meetings, subjects to be raised, or to become involved. Or contact hounslowtenantsforum@gmail.com

Carolyn
Courage
Vice Chair,
Tenant Forum



Linkline+

With free installation and a small weekly fee which starts at £3.50 per week, Linkline+ is a quick response alarm service that lets you tell someone when you need help and is staffed all day every day (24/7/365).

There are a variety of devices that can be installed depending on your needs to enable you to contact us inside (or if required) outside your own home. Additional devices include smoke detectors, bogus call alarms and other sensors.

If you feel you want the security and peace of mind the service offers, for example if you are older, have disabilities or feel threatened or vulnerable because of previous incidents of domestic violence or racial harassment, contact us for a discussion on 020 8583 4400.

For further information, contact us (7 days a week, 365 days a year) by email: linkline@hounslow.gov.uk or telephone: 020 8583 4400.

A Voice for Sheltered Residents

SARA (Sheltered Accommodation Residents Association) is a forum for residents living in sheltered schemes across the borough.

There are over 35 Reps from the schemes. The Rep is the voice of their scheme, they can raise concerns when needed and help bring the community together.

SARA has held a number of meetings with a range of different speakers and topics, including Cllr Steve Curran, Leader of Hounslow Council; Hounslow Housing Repairs Team; Linkline and Feltham Arts to name but a few.

Through these meeting, the Reps get information and updates about the topics which are then passed onto the residents and they can raise any questions or issues if needed.

SARA has support from Tesco, TBrown and Lodge Brothers to help with projects such as the SARA newsletter.

If you would like to know more and to get involved then please contact Keith Head, Chair of SARA:

keith.head.sara@gmail.com

