



## Season's greetings

**A community project with a difference**

**A big night for BOOST**

**Last Christmas... with debt**

# In this issue

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<b>3</b>	Welcome from our CEO	<b>12</b>	Fire safety
<b>4</b>	Downsizing	<b>13</b>	Rough sleepers
<b>5</b>	Keeping in contact	<b>14</b>	Rent & Money
<b>6</b>	Silver Week	<b>16</b>	Performance Advisory Group
<b>7</b>	Leaseholders	<b>17</b>	Ansell Court
<b>8</b>	CommunitySpace Christmas	<b>18</b>	Barnet Police
<b>10</b>	BOOST Awards	<b>19</b>	Recycling over Christmas

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## How to contact us

**020 8359 5225 (8am - 6pm, translators available)**

<b>Email</b>	talk2us@barnethomes.org
<b>Online</b>	barnethomes.org
<b>Contact Centre/Repairs</b>	020 8359 5225
<b>Leaseholder repairs service</b>	020 8368 6017
<b>Leaseholder Services Team</b>	020 8359 6020
<b>Right to Buy applications and enquiries</b>	020 8359 6020
<b>Pay your rent or service charges</b>	0845 356 3456 (24 hours) or barnet.gov.uk
<b>Our offices</b>	Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, N20 0EJ 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW
<b>Assist service</b>	020 8359 4841 or assist@barnethomes.org

### Complaints

The Barnet Group is committed to continuously improving what we do and the way we do it as a result of feedback from customers, and the people we support and their families. The Barnet Group aims to listen to and learn from our customers, enabling us to address any service failures, identify areas for improvement or areas of good practice, and monitor services in a customer-focused way.

We welcome complaints and feedback from our customers to help us do this. Feedback can be given to us by email, in writing, by telephone, and in person. Please visit [barnethomes.org/complaints](https://barnethomes.org/complaints) or use the information above to contact the Complaints Team.

# Welcome from our CEO

The last few months of the year are a busy time for most of us, and at The Barnet Group it's been exception.

As I talked about in the autumn issue of atHome, we are continuing to work with you on service improvement via our Customer Experience Project.

I'm happy to be able to report that we've made a lot of progress with the repairs service we deliver to you. Our Performance Advisory Chair, John Davies, provides an update for you on **page 16**.

Last issue we asked you for any ideas you had about how we can make atHome as informative and engaging for you as possible. One of the things you said to us via focus groups, was that you would like to see more about tenants' lives.

To get that off to a good start, I have been trying to get out and meet tenants to hear what's important to you.

We've followed up by meeting one of the residents at our new extra-care scheme, Ansell Court. An interview with Paula is on **page 17**.



I was also really pleased to be able to attend the first ever BOOST partnership awards, **pages 10-11**.

Not only was it the best opportunity to spend time with the core people involved in setting up and co-ordinating the BOOST project – I got the chance to meet people in the community (now deserved award-winners) who work so hard to help people.

Over the festive period, we were delighted to get a visit from some of our Your Choice Barnet service users who made some Christmas baubles to get us all into the spirit, **page 8**.

By the time you get this issue, we will have held our annual Customer Awards and Thank You party.

We'll reveal the winners next time, but I'd like to take this opportunity now to thank all our residents who play such a big part in making their communities better places to live and work for all.

With that said, enjoy the festive season and stay safe everybody.

Tim Mulvenna

Chief Executive,  
The Barnet Group

## About atHome

If you have any comments or questions about atHome, please write to: Communications Team, 3rd Floor, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale NW9 4EW, or email [atHome@barnethomes.org](mailto:atHome@barnethomes.org). You can also find an electronic copy at [barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org).

Editor: Tamara Wright | Design: Andrzej Perkins

# Time to downsize

One of our tenants, Judith Brooks, knew it was time to downsize when she was struggling to keep up with the maintenance of a family-sized house and garden.

"I wanted to stay in my local area as it was where I was born and raised. I was waiting for a bungalow to come up in the area. But in that time, I was contacted by Denise at Barnet Homes and she suggested a Sheltered Housing scheme, which I hadn't really considered before.

"I thought it was worth going to have a look. And then when I walked in, I knew it was for me. The flats had a nice size dining room and bedroom. My scheme is very close to local shops and other amenities. I have fantastic neighbours, so I have company when I need it. I am really happy with how

my move was all arranged and how my life has turned out. I've been here for about six months now. If you get into any problems, the scheme manager comes to your flat straight away – they are very good."

## Finding the right home for you

We have a number of partners who can help you move to more suitable accommodation. Below are three of the best options for you if you want to move to a more manageable property, another part of London or even to the seaside or countryside.

For more information about any of our schemes, use the contact details below or visit [barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org).



Want to move out of London and keep your secure tenancy? Homefinder UK is affordable and self-registered



Want to move to another London Borough and keep your secure tenancy? Try Housing Moves



Are you over 60?  
Want to live by the seaside?  
This scheme has bungalows in many locations.

Please contact Denise Bracken on 020 8359 4695 or email [Denise.Bracken@barnethomes.org](mailto:Denise.Bracken@barnethomes.org)

# Keeping your confidential details safe

When you contact us by phone, we need to ask security questions to make sure we are speaking to the right person. This is so we do not divulge any confidential information to somebody else, or do not take any instructions concerning your home or your tenancy without your consent.

We will ask for your Tenant Reference Number if you are a tenant, or your Account Number if you are a Leaseholder.

We may also ask what your most recently reported repair, what your email address is, or how you pay your rent. Although we already hold this information in our records, we ask several of these questions to ensure that we are talking to the right person.

You can find your tenant reference number on a rent statement, on your rent card, or on a letter from us.

## To post or not to post?

In the last addition of atHome we asked you if you would like to receive the magazine by email, rather than receiving it a print copy. We'd still like to hear from you on that so please email us with your feedback (as well as any other improvements to atHome) to [atHome@barnethomes.org](mailto:atHome@barnethomes.org).

We also want to improve all the other communications we send to you and one of the options our Customer Experience Project Team is looking at, involves sending you an email or text instead of letters and leaflets, where possible.

This means you will be able to get a quicker response from us, rather than

waiting for one via a letter, we can link to the information you need directly on our website and reduce waste. In order to do this, we will need some information from you.

### Interested?

Please email: [Talktous@barnethomes.org](mailto:Talktous@barnethomes.org) from your own email address and include the below information:

In the subject heading: Contact details update

Your full name and address, your current mobile number, your date of birth and your rent account number.



# A winning silver week!



In October, Barnet Homes joined forces with Barnet Council to host a series of events as part of Silver Week to celebrate the vital contribution older people make to our community.

During Silver Week, our sheltered housing scheme Drummond House held a health and wellbeing day with some additional pampering for residents, courtesy of therapists from the Disability Foundation.

The Disability Foundation is a charity that provides complimentary therapy services to disabled people, those with a chronic health issue or medical condition, as well as those involved in their care, including NHS staff.

Silver Week ended on an inspirational note – as the works of art created by older

people across the borough were entered into an art exhibition on Silver Sunday.

It was a brilliant day with more than 300 residents attending, including some from our very own sheltered schemes and new extra-care scheme, Ansell Court.

Huge congratulations to all the winners from Barnet Homes:

- **Anne McGuinness (Gadsbury Close)** won joint first place for a flower painting (pictured above).
- **Patience Dubre (Gadsbury Close)** was given a highly commended prize
- **Adina Cohen (Christchurch Close)** was joint second for one of her three paintings
- **Matilda (Hanshawe Drive)** was highly commended for one of her five paintings.

# Barnet Homes management fee review

## Information for leaseholders

### What are we doing?

In a nutshell, Barnet Homes charge leaseholders a management fee to cover the cost of arranging services, calculating and distributing service charges invoices, collecting service charge payments, dealing with queries from leaseholders, etc; this is common practice within the leasehold sector. We are reviewing the management fee and the major works admin fee to determine if our fees cover the organisation's operational costs of managing the leasehold property portfolio.

basis for calculating the management and major works admin fees are reasonable and in keeping with similar organisations within the sector.

### What does this mean for leaseholders?

This means that there may be a change to the way that we calculate these fees and the amount that leaseholders pay may be subject to change.

### Why are we doing this?

We need to establish if we are recovering all costs associated with administering services to our leasehold portfolio and if the



# A CommunitySpace Christmas!

Barnet Homes' sister company Your Choice Barnet (YCB) works with adults with learning disabilities.

Recently we were delighted that a group of service users from YCB's CommunitySpace service put their skills toward making Christmas decorations for a tree Barnet Homes sponsored at the Christmas Tree Festival (held All Saints Church) on the 14th December.

At CommunitySpace, staff support service users to take part in activities that meet their needs and interests. At the same time

as developing skills, service users gain confidence and independence in taking full part in the community.

So, a project involving making Christmas decorations isn't just for the festive season, but has a huge impact service users' quality of life.

Your Choice Employment Project This isn't the only project CommunitySpace is involved in – The Your Choice Barnet Employment Project is dedicated to supporting adults with learning disabilities with work and training opportunities.





The latest project CommunitySpace are working on is Plot 52, where service users make seasonal produce from the fruits, vegetables and herbs they grow throughout the year.

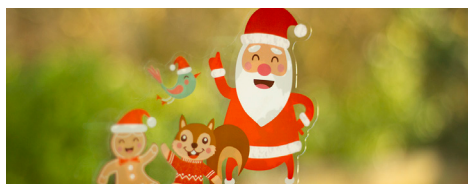
Plot 52 is a cross service collaboration between Sweet Tree Farm and YCB, providing gardening and enterprise opportunities to people with support needs on a community allotment.

At the heart of it is the opportunity to grow together and feel a sense of belonging and achievement.

They had a successful Christmas selling their hand-made wreaths and herb and fruit-infused oils.

Look for more news on Plot 52 in the spring – as they get ready to prepare their very popular fresh pesto sauce to sell.

If you know someone who you think would benefit from working with the YCB Employment Project, please call 020 8359 3202 or email [Nikki.barnett@yourchoicebarnet.org](mailto:Nikki.barnett@yourchoicebarnet.org).



# An opportunity to celebrate BOOST

In November, BOOST (Burnt Oak Opportunity Support Team) held their first ever awards evening to celebrate the contribution of its partners to the project.

The BOOST project is funded by Barnet Council, and delivered by Barnet Homes. We work in partnership with a number of organisations including JobCentre Plus, Citizen's Advice and Love Burnt Oak.

The awards evening at the International Gospel Church in Burnt Oak, was also the perfect opportunity to reflect on achievements of the BOOST which launched in 2015.

As well as our winners, other attendees at the event also live and work in the heart of the community in Burnt Oak.

Some of them, like Michelle Tye - who featured in the Autumn issue of atHome - were former clients of BOOST. Michelle now works at the BOOST project herself, helping others.



# 2019 BOOST Award Winners

## **PARTNER OF THE YEAR**

Hasan Cakmak, Citizens Advice Barnet

## **VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR**

Trevor Fenton, The Real Junk Food Project

## **JOBCENTREPLUS PARTNER OF THE YEAR**

Stuart Downie, Disability Employment Adviser

## **EMPLOYER OF THE YEAR**

Savers

## **EXTRAORDINARY PERSON**

Marie Kohan

## **RISING STAR**

Charlie Stacey

Special commendations were given to recognise our contractors Morgan Sindall, Blue9 Security and Barnet Council.

Congratulations to all the winners of a BOOST award and supporters of the project.

BOOST began as a project in Burnt Oak and then extended to Childs Hill in the form of BOOST@184. The good news is that BOOST can now help anyone approaches them for help from anywhere in Barnet.

Email [boost@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:boost@barnet.gov.uk) to find out more, or call Burnt Oak on 020 8359 5600 or Childs Hill on 020 8359 7200.

ANI  
J W



# Festive fire safety

We all love to bring light and heat to the dark nights of winter, but make sure you protect your home from those extra fire hazards. The London Fire Brigade (LFB) report that they have managed to reduce fires over the festive season by about 21%, but are working at lowering fire risks (that can be avoided) in your home even further. LFB have shared some fire safety tips to help you understand and reduce fire risks in your home:

1. If you are planning to buy electrical goods like Christmas lights or even electrical-based items for gifts, the recommendation is that you **buy them from a reputable retailer**. Try to avoid buying items like lights from online auction sites because, if the price is too good to be true, it probably is! With a reputable retailer, electrical goods usually have guarantees and return policies for faulty items.

**2. Never place candles on or close to your Christmas tree.** Christmas trees and other decorations can catch fire easily, so candles and other open flames carry a high risk of setting these alight. LED candle decorations that carry the British Safety Standard sign are a safe alternative.

### **3. Decorations can burn easily.**

Tinsel, foil banners and other festive decorations can easily catch fire, so it's safest to keep them away from any lights and heaters around your home.

### **4. Always switch off Christmas lights when you go to bed.**

Switching these off each evening will ensure that the bulbs within them don't overheat. It's also best to make sure that you don't overload plug sockets as this can also cause the lights to overheat.

### **5. Make sure that your cooker is never left unattended when in use.**

Making Christmas dinner can be a huge task, but it's important to remember that most home fires start in the kitchen. It's also safest to avoid cooking whilst under the influence of alcohol.

### **6. Take extra care around open fires**

as clothes can easily catch fire.

### **7. Check in on elderly relatives and neighbours.**

Older people are at greater risk from fire, so by checking in on them over the holidays, you can make sure that they are safe from any hazards.





# Help for rough sleepers

It's the time of the year when temperatures regularly drop below zero and rough sleepers become even more vulnerable.

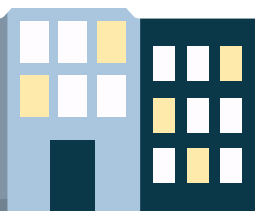
With funding of nearly half a million pounds from the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative, Barnet Homes formed a Rough Sleeper Team, who have been operating since 2018.

The Rough Sleeper Team is currently providing intensive support to 61 rough sleepers. Of these 51 are now being supported through temporary accommodation and 10 are being engaged with through street outreach.

The ultimate aim is to support these clients into longer-term accommodation and employment – reducing the risk of a return to rough sleeping.

**Have you seen, or are concerned about someone sleeping rough? You can send an alert by visiting [streetlink.org.uk](https://streetlink.org.uk), via the mobile app, or by calling 0300 500 0914.**

In Barnet the notification is passed onto a local rapid response outreach team and who will go out look for the rough sleeper and help them. This outreach team work with our Rough Sleeper Team to review each case.



# Your rent

Your rent is a priority payment and our Rental Income Team is available to give you advice and ensure you don't fall into rent arrears.

## Rent statements have gone digital

Rent statements are now be accessible online. If you are interested in accessing your rent account online, please call us

on 020 8359 5225 or email [talk2us@barnethomes.org](mailto:talk2us@barnethomes.org) with "sign me up" in the subject box.

## Automatic payments

Remember, you can also make automated payments direct from your bank account by setting up a standing order. In order to do this, you will need our bank details which are as follows:

- **Sort code:** 60-23-36
- **Account number:** 82622833
- **Receiving bank:** Natwest
- **Beneficiary:** London Borough of Barnet

Please quote your rent account number as the transaction reference. This is nine digits long and starts with a '1'.

### By Direct Debit

If you would like to pay by direct debit, please download a form from our website on the 'Ways to pay your rent' section, or call us on 020 8359 5225.

### Win a rent-free month!

We run a direct debit prize draw twice a year, where two lucky winners will win a month's worth of rent. All you have to do is sign up to pay your rent by direct debit.

### By Debit/Credit card

You can pay your rent using a debit/credit card by calling the automated line on **0845 356 3456**.

You will need to choose the option 'housing rent' (this can also be used if you are paying your garage rent) and you will need your nine-digit rent account number

### Online

Go to [barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org) and select 'make a payment'.

## Payment by cheque or postal order

Please note that cheques and postal orders will no longer be accepted for rent payments and will no longer be issued in

the form of a refund from 1 January 2020. Refunds will only be processed via bank transfer.

# Last Christmas with debt worries

Every year, most of us make that New Year's resolution to save up and have a separate budget for Christmas spending. That doesn't always work out as planned, and many people find themselves going into (further debt) to finance Christmas with all the trimmings for the family.

The good news is, Barnet Homes works in partnership with Credit Union to help our residents save and manage priority payments like rent and utility bills and move towards getting your finances back in to the black.

## Look forward to a debt-free 2020

We work with other debt charity partners who can advise you about any debt problems or financial difficulties you might be experiencing.

If you need debt advice at any time, please contact:

- Christians Against Poverty Debt Advice  
0800 328 0006 or [capdebthelp.org](http://capdebthelp.org)
- StepChange  
0800 138 1111 or [stepchange.org](http://stepchange.org)

If you have mounting debts, getting in control of your finances might seem overwhelming, but 2020 will look so much better if you face up to them and towards getting into the black.

Credit Union's website is packed with loads of useful information on saving, loans, rates and budget planning tools – all free and easy to use at [credit-union.coop](http://credit-union.coop)

They have a friendly team who can talk you through managing your finances; what you can afford to borrow to tackle your debts and how to look after your money better – not only at Christmastime, but throughout the year.



# FROM PAG TO YOU



Dear Residents,

Back in October, you will have received a letter from Barnet Homes, informing you of the decision to bring the repairs service in-house. This means it will be managed by Barnet Homes rather than an external contractor.

PAG has been involved in ensuring the changes have no direct impact on residents and will continue to work with Barnet Homes on behalf of residents for the service to go live on 1 April 2020.

Ryan Bolton, Head of Repairs and Estate for Barnet Homes, attended our PAG meeting in October to explain to residents how the transition and new service would work. The group raised many questions on behalf of residents to make sure all the views you have on the new service are taken into account. You can find the minutes for this meeting on the Barnet Homes website. Ryan is keeping PAG involved and informed every step of the way so that we, as a group representing all residents, will be part of designing a repairs service that

works effectively for our customers.

I am confident that all the work done within the Customer Experience Team, a special project team set up within Barnet Homes, will improve customer services.

We are in the process of establishing a sub-group of residents who will monitor the repairs service closely to ensure the improvements planned deliver what customers need. I would like to thank Ryan and his team for the amount of work they have put in to make this happen.

The festive season is now upon us. During this time, the annual Customer Awards evening and thank you party is held. This is when we celebrate all the exceptional work that you do which makes such a difference to the community. Watch out for the winners which will be announced in our Spring edition!

Wishing you all a lovely festive break.

Best wishes, John.



# A new life at Ansell Court



Our flagship extra-care scheme, Ansell Court, has been officially open for more than six months. But how have its residents there been settling into their new lives? One resident shares their experience, so far, of Ansell Court.

Paula has led a very busy and full life, including being a store detective at one of Britain's most popular department stores. But how does her new way of life in an extra-care scheme measure up?

Paula says: "You can always get a nice cup of tea at Ansell Court! It did take a while to get to know my neighbours, but you eventually get to know people.

"I love it here. I've made some great friends – we've even now got some regular entertainment going. All in all, I have a lovely home here. I say home, because even though I have lovely children and grandchildren I visit, I have a real feeling of home when I come back to Ansell Court. Everybody is as nice as pie and so helpful."

## What's next for extra care?

We are now going to be developing a similar, 51-unit extra-care scheme at Stag House in Burnt Oak - with building set to start in Spring 2020. The scheme will be funded in the most part by Barnet Council, with an additional grant of £4m from the Greater London Council.

Check [barnethomes.org](http://barnethomes.org) for updates.

## MESSAGE FROM BARNET POLICE

# Be a savvy and safe online shopper

We're online shopping more than ever. But we want to make sure you stay safe from cyber-crime while online shopping for those bargains.

Follow these tips from Barnet Police which will help increase your safety online:

- Keep your devices' security up-to-date and use strong passwords.
- Before making a purchase, ensure the shopping site is authentic. Research unfamiliar retailers online to learn from other customers' experiences.
- If something seems too much of a bargain... it probably is! It could well be of poor quality, not as described, or even non-existent.
- Ensure the payment page is secure by checking that the address starts with 'https' ('s' is for secure) and there's a closed padlock in the address bar. However, this does not guarantee that the shop itself is legitimate.
- Never pay by transferring money directly to people or companies you

don't know, however desperate you are to buy. The safest way to pay online is by credit card. Alternatively, use a secure payment site such as PayPal – but beware of scam PayPal emails.

- When you've finished your payment, log out, as simply closing the page may not end your session.
- Beware emails or texts from delivery firms asking you to open an attachment for your delivery note - a real delivery firm wouldn't do this. Any unexpected emails or texts urging you to click on a link for any reason should be treated with caution.
- Take care not to get duped into buying counterfeit goods. Similarly, do not buy them intentionally, as they contravene copyright law, cost livelihoods of authentic workers, can be of poor quality, or even dangerous.

If you need help with your digital skills (or know someone that does), we support Barnet's Digital Champions scheme: [digitalchampions@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:digitalchampions@barnet.gov.uk) or 077 7325 7470.

## MESSAGE FROM BARNET POLICE

# Your Christmas recycling and waste collection schedule

Normal collection day	Revised collection day
Monday 23 December	Monday 23 December (NO CHANGE)
Tuesday 24 December	Tuesday 24 December (NO CHANGE)
Wednesday 25 December	Friday 27 December
Thursday 26 December	Saturday 28 December
Friday 27 December	Sunday 29 December
Saturday 28 December	Monday 30 December
Monday 30 December	Monday 30 December (NO CHANGE)
Tuesday 31 December	Tuesday 31 December (NO CHANGE)
Wednesday 1 January	Thursday 2 January
Thursday 2 January	Friday 3 January
Friday 3 January	Saturday 4 January
Saturday 4 January	Sunday 5 January

**Your blue recycling bin and black refuse bin collections will resume on your normal collection day from the week commencing 6 January 2020**



## Garden waste collection pause

Due to urgent works at Oakleigh Depot, garden waste bin collections are currently paused. This is to enable the council to support other street scene services.

Collections are planned to resume in February 2020. For more information visit

[www.barnet.gov.uk/depotworks](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/depotworks).



## Real Christmas trees

Between 6 January and 1 February, real Christmas trees cut in half will be collected if you leave them at the boundary of your property by 6am on your collection day.

## What goes in your recycling bin?

Recycling bin	Yes please ✓	No X
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ aerosols</li> <li>✓ cardboard</li> <li>✓ cartons</li> <li>✓ food tins and drink cans</li> <li>✓ mixed glass bottles and jars</li> <li>✓ mixed paper</li> <li>✓ plastic bottles</li> <li>✓ plastic tubs, pots and trays</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✗ nappies - place in black refuse bin</li> <li>✗ food waste - place in black refuse bin</li> <li>✗ textiles - donate or take to Reuse and Recycling Centre</li> <li>✗ wood - take to Reuse and Recycling Centre</li> <li>✗ electrical items - take to Reuse and Recycling Centre</li> <li>✗ polystyrene - place in black refuse bin</li> <li>✗ clinical waste - arrange clinical collections by visiting the website below</li> <li>✗ batteries - place in a clear bag on top of your blue bin</li> <li>✗ black sacks or plastic bags - place in black refuse bin</li> </ul>

Find out more at:  
[www.barnet.gov.uk/recycling](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/recycling)

**BARNET**  
 LONDON BOROUGH



B U M B L E B E E

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