

atHome



**BARNET'S FINEST FLOWERS
REVEALED!**

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How to contact us

020 8080 6587 (8am - 6pm, translators available)

Email	talk2us@barnethomes.org
Online	barnethomes.org
Contact Centre/Repairs	020 8080 6587
Pay your rent or service charges	0845 356 3456 (24 hours) or barnet.gov.uk
Our offices	Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, N20 0EJ 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW
Assist service	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 or use the information above to contact the Complaints Team.

Welcome from our CEO

Dear residents,

I hope that you, your families and friends are continuing to keep well during this time, and look after one another. Please continue to follow the latest government guidance. You can keep up-to-date with all information you need at this time at our website, barnethomes.org and the Barnet Council website, barnet.gov.uk.

After launching our in-house repairs service in July, we began our gas maintenance and repairs service in August. Initial feedback from residents has been positive, as we work to make sure we get more repairs completed correctly in the first visit, and make the process as easy and streamlined as possible for our residents. We appreciate your patience as we continue to work through a backlog of repairs which built up during the initial lockdown period.

The Black Lives Matter movement has prompted conversations about race and equality across The Barnet Group. We are proud of our diverse communities and workforce, and there is always more which can be done to ensure equality for all. We have set up a Race Equality Steering Group to work with colleagues to help identify and understand issues around race equality at work, and try to find solutions that will drive lasting change. We will also be working closely with resident and community groups to make positive change to Barnet.

Our vision is 'for customers to be our biggest advocates', and we hope that the changes we are making to our services can help

achieve this. However, we can't do this without our residents' input, which is why we're recruiting to our new Resident Board. This board will carry on from the brilliant work our Performance Advisory Group does, and will give residents a voice at the top level of our service delivery. As part of our commitment to equality and diversity, I would encourage those from BAME communities to apply. You can find out more about this opportunity on page four.

At the end of August, we hosted our Urban Gamez at Grahame Park. This event is always one of the highlights of the summer, and even though social distancing guidelines meant we were not able to host the full event like most years, it was still a great experience for the children who took part. The high-tech curved treadmill we used in the Community Centre was a novel experience for everyone involved, but it was amazing to see how quickly the young people got to grips with it, setting some pretty impressive times in our 60 metre time trial. We hope to be back with a full Urban Gamez on The Concourse next year.

If you turn to page eight, you can find out the winners of our 2020 Finest Flowers Gardening competition. We're so grateful at Barnet Homes for our residents' efforts to keeping their gardens and our communities in blossom. We had a brilliant number of entries this year, and there were some tough decisions for the judges to make. If you're a keen gardener, please make sure to join in next year's competition!

Take care,

Tim Mulvenna,
Chief Executive
The Barnet Group



News in brief

We're recruiting to our resident board!

At Barnet Homes, we continue to be committed to supporting our residents to get involved in shaping how we deliver services.

To strengthen our commitment, over the past eight months we have been consulting with the Residents' Performance Advisory Group (PAG) into transitioning them into a Resident Board.

The Resident Board will be accountable to The Barnet Group Board and our residents, in monitoring our operational services

and performance, ensuring we meet the standards resident expect from us.

Their role will include reviewing our existing services and being involved in the introduction of new services. We are keen to start to appoint residents onto the Resident Board starting from December

This is an exciting opportunity. If you are interested in finding out more information, email our Customer Involvement Officer, Camille.Yerles@Barnethomes.org or call 020 8359 3148.

Barnet Homes' gas service goes live

Following the successful launch of our in-house repairs service in July, we went live with our new gas servicing and maintenance team at the end of August 2020.

The gas servicing was previously operated by Mears, and by bringing it 'in-house', we hope to make improvements to the customer service offered, and ensure our operatives get your repairs right at the first visit.

We have invested in a new fleet of vehicles as well as a new IT system, which means we will be able to use our resources more effectively and provide better value for money for our residents.

If you need to request a repair to your gas system, please call us on 020 8080 6587.



A thank you from Burnt Oak Womens' group

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen many individuals and groups give up their time to support those most in need. One group that has stood out for us amongst the rest has been Burnt Oak Women's Group (BOWG). Based at North Road Community Centre and led by Innas Ibrahim, the group and its band of volunteers, have supported over 80 families with essential food supplies every week since lockdown measures began.



We have been proud to work with and support the group, and the feeling has been mutual. Innas dropped us a message to say "I just wanted to send you a HUGE thank you for all the support you've provided to us. Especially operating the food bank."



It has been our pleasure, and we will continue to work with BOWG to support local residents in and around Burnt Oak.

Be aware of phone and email scams

Please be aware of phone and email scams during this time. The National Cyber Security Centre have recorded a marked increase in suspicious messages, phishing attempts and scam communications over the last six months.

It can be hard to tell the difference between a scam and cold calling. However, common scams can include people claiming to be from your bank or from a government agency.

Be sure to never give over any personal details on the phone. Remember that your bank will not call you and ask for any personal information.

Please also keep safe when you are online.

Here are some top tips for staying safe when using the internet:

- protect your email account by using a strong and separate password
- install the latest software and app updates
- turn on two-factor authentication on your email
- using a password manager can help you create and remember passwords
- secure smartphones and tablets with a screen lock
- always back up your most important data.

If you think you may have been a victim of fraud or cyber crime, you should report this to Action Fraud at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2020.

New package to support and enforce self-isolation



From 28 September, people will be required by law to self-isolate if they, or someone they have been in close contact with, has tested positive for COVID-19.

Those who are found to be breaking self-isolation rules can be fined, with fines starting at £1,000 and rising to £10,000 for the most serious breaches.

A new package has been announced to support those on lower incomes who cannot work from home as a result of having to self-isolate.

Recognising that self-isolation is one of the most powerful tools for controlling the transmission of COVID-19, a new Test and Trace Support payment of £500 will ensure that those on low incomes are able to self-isolate and still receive financial support.

Just under four million people who are in receipt of benefits in England will be eligible for this payment, which will be available to

those who are required to self-isolate from 28 September.

Local authorities will be working quickly to set up these self-isolation support schemes and they are expected to be in place by 12 October. Those who start to self-isolate from 28 September will receive backdated payments once the scheme is set up in Barnet. More information about eligibility and how to apply for support will be published shortly at barnethomes.org.

This financial support comes as the government places a legal requirement on people to self-isolate when instructed to by NHS Test and Trace and introduces tougher fines for breaking the rules.

Many people are following the rules around self-isolation, but these steps will make sure more do and help ensure the public do not unknowingly spread the virus.

Barnet Homes works to support rough sleepers during the COVID-19 pandemic

At the start of the COVID-19 lockdown in March, Barnet Homes housed 88 rough sleepers into private sector self-contained accommodation in just one week. This was following a request from the government to house everyone sleeping rough or staying in hostels and night shelters. This number rose to 141 families or individuals as the initial lockdown period went on.

The accommodation has been funded by central government, and we will continue supporting these people the best we can.

We are working closely with a number of partners, including Barnet Council and Homeless Action in Barnet (HAB) to individually assess each person we have provided with accommodation. This will ensure that we can provide suitable and sustainable housing to keep them off the streets in the future.

We will continue to work with HAB to ensure the health and safety of rough sleepers throughout the current pandemic.



Make It Click – build your digital skills

Technology doesn't have to be difficult. Through their online webinar, the BOOST team will make sure to help you with everything digital until it clicks. Do you or someone you know need help with the internet? Make It Click is a website with free tools, courses and templates which helps you to learn new skills or improve the skills you already have. For more information, visit boostbarnet.org.



URBAN
GAMEZ
2020

P R E S E N T S

BEAT THE CURVE

Barnet Homes' Urban Gamez event is one of the highlights of the summer on Grahame Park Estate in Colindale, and this year it was no different, despite the pressures presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 60 metre running track which usually lines The Concourse was exchanged for a cutting edge self-powered curved treadmill. Children and young people of Grahame Park were invited into the Community Centre over two days, following social distancing guidelines, to take on the challenge of sprinting 60 metres on the treadmill in the quickest time.

After a couple of minutes' practice to get to grips with the new machines, contestants were off to a flyer, clocking up some impressive times. As is the tradition at Urban Gamez, some of the parents had a go on the treadmill too, but it quickly became clear that the running should be left to the younger generation!





After two days of intense competition, the winners collected their medals and prizes on Friday 28 August, presented by The Worshipful The Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet, Cllr Caroline Stock.

The celebrations extended out onto The Concourse on Friday too, with Living Way Ministries providing a BBQ and a chance for local residents to have a catch up with people they may not have seen over months of lockdown.

Barnet Homes would like to thank Morgan Sindall Property Services for their continued sponsorship of the event, as well as F.U.S.E. Youth Project, whose youth workers were crucial volunteers over the three days, and the Colindale Communities Trust, for the use of the Community Centre.

We hope that Urban Gamez will be back on The Concourse next summer, for a tenth-anniversary spectacular.



The flower show must go on!

The show must go on, and it did: our Finest Flowers competitors could not be held back! This year's competition was intense and all gardeners that took part can be proud of themselves as there were beautiful examples in all categories.

Due to health and safety measures imposed by COVID-19, the competition took place virtually, and gardeners submitted their photos to us for six different categories, to be judged remotely.

The panel of judges, which included two residents and two members of our staff, undertook the job of deciding the worthy winners for 2020. Below are the winners in each category:

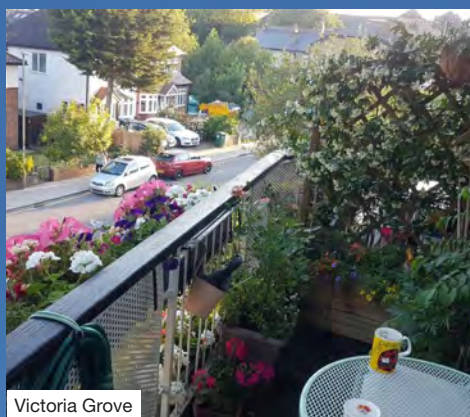
Best Balcony – Victoria Grove
Best Sheltered site – St. Johns Close

Best communal garden – Bittacy Court
Best new gardener – Pursley Road
Best front/back garden – Deans Road
Geoff Bedingfield Award – Poplar Grove

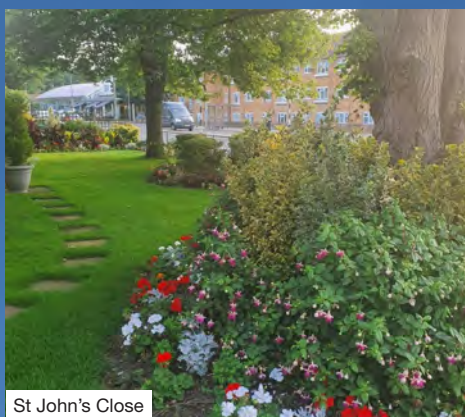
The Finest Flowers competition gives residents a real platform to take pride in their homes and the surrounding areas. This, in turn, makes a huge difference to our communities and Barnet Homes appreciates the efforts that our residents make to create these beautiful gardens and balconies.

Thank you and well done to all our residents and garden club members that took part in this year's competition. We hope to be back to our full glorious gardening celebration next summer!

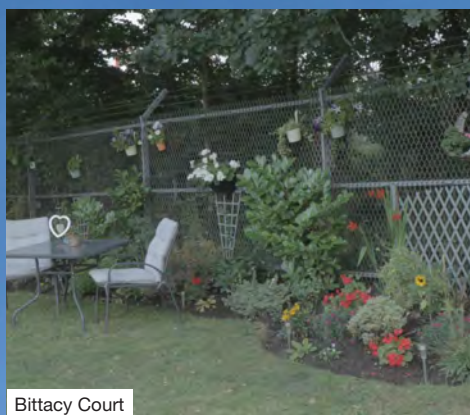




Victoria Grove



St John's Close



Bittacy Court



Pursley Road



Deans Road



Poplar Grove

FROM PAG TO YOU



Dear fellow resident,

As we adjust to the new normal, it is good to see that in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Barnet Homes were able to adapt two of the most popular annual events to ensure residents have not had to miss out. The Barnet Homes Finest Flowers Competition was held in a virtual form with entrants emailing their photos of their beautiful gardens so that judging can continue, take a look at the winning entries on page eight.

An alternative to Urban Gamez was also held on Grahame Park Estate; you can find out more about it on page six.

The residents' Performance Advisory Group (PAG) has continued its work with Barnet Homes during lockdown with business meetings and development session to transition PAG into a Resident Board both through the use of video conferencing. After the launch of the Resident Board in December, we will be actively recruiting new members, so if you are interested in finding out more about the role, turn to page four for more information.

Now for some more formal business news. Following the go-live of Barnet Homes' new in-house repairs service in July, they have mobilised a new fleet of vehicles and a new IT system to support the new service. Barnet Homes are logging all repair calls and booking these in within agreed priority time-frames where safe to do so and where residents are happy for us to enter their homes.

Plans continue to bring the domestic gas service in-house and will have gone live by the time you read this. PAG will continue to act on behalf of residents, ensuring service performance and resident satisfaction are all within the expected standards we have set, so it's business as usual.

Don't forget to visit barnethomes.org to keep up to date with all the latest news.

All the best,
John Davies Chair of PAG

The Barnet Group Community Awards

This year we want to recognise and truly thank all our residents that have gone above and beyond in supporting their fellow neighbours across our communities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also want to take the time to appreciate the hard work of local community groups and the voluntary sector in supporting our elderly and most vulnerable in Barnet.

If you know of someone or any group you want to thank, now is the time to nominate them for a community award by visiting the Barnet Homes website; barnethomes.org.

The categories are:

- Good Neighbour Award
- Volunteer of the Year
- Volunteer of the Year (under 25)
- Group of the Year (community or resident association)
- Voluntary Sector Organisation or Charity of the Year
- COVID-19 Inspirational person of the year

Visit the barnethomes.org to submit your nominations. If you do not have access to the internet, please call Camille Yerles on 020 8359 3148 to place your nomination.

The closing date for nominations is Friday 13 November.



Universal Credit (UC) & Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA):

As your landlord, Barnet Homes is entitled to request that payments towards your rent and/or service charges are made directly to us, instead of being paid to you – these are called Alternative Payment Arrangements (APA). When Barnet Homes requests these, it is to ensure the rent is paid and will help sustain your tenancy.

Like with Housing Benefit, UC might not cover the full amount for your rent and

charges, so there may well be a shortfall that you will need to pay yourself. If payments for your rent and service charges are being made by UC directly to you, you must ensure that you make payments to Barnet Homes.

Should you have any queries regarding UC & APAs, please contact the Income Collection Team on 020 8359 3102.

Paying your rent Why not move to ePayments?

There are a number of ways in which rent can be paid, although the quickest and most flexible way of paying is by using the following methods:

By direct debit. We offer two monthly payment dates (the 1st and the 15th). A form can be downloaded from our website on the 'Ways to pay your rent' section.

By debit/credit card by telephoning the automated telephone 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 account reference number which starts with a '1'.

By debit/credit card on our website at barnethomes.org by selecting 'make a payment'.

You can also set up 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 No: 82622833
- Receiving bank: NatWest
- Beneficiary: London Borough of Barnet. Please put your rent account number as the transaction reference. This is nine digits long and starts with a '1'.

Have your rent payments affected by COVID-19?

If so, please do not ignore your arrears; talk to the Income Collection Service who are able to help with support on:

- Exploring increasing income

- Referrals to specialists
- Advice on Universal Credit
- Support with accessing Discretionary housing payments (DHP)



Credit Union
the savings & loans co-operative



SAVING
feels
GOOD

&

WINNING
feels
GREAT

PrizeSaver accounts offer a free
monthly prize draw for £5,000

PrizeSaver

The credit union savings
account with monthly prizes

It is never easy to save money and there are far too many people encouraging you to borrow. Interest free periods, buy now, pay later schemes, tempting store card offers all play their part in trapping people into debt. That's what makes the credit union different.

The primary purpose of the credit union is to encourage people to save, but also provides low cost loans at times of need. As an incentive to save the credit union is offering a Prize Saver Account with savings counting as entries into a monthly prize draw with a

top prize of £5,000 every month.

Members' savings are pooled to form a loan fund which allows them to help members pay off high cost credit. Employees can apply for a 'Saver Loan' at any time and have payments deducted directly from pay. The credit union allocates a small proportion of the repayment to the borrowers savings account which leaves a cash lump sum available once the loan is repaid.

Why not open a PrizeSaver account and start saving a little with the credit union. Starting saving now may help if you need a low-cost loan nearer Christmas or plan to clear your credit card.

To find out more about London Capital Credit Union's savings or loans products you can visit credit-union.coop or email info@credit-union.coop or call 020 7561 1786.

THE DIRTY DOZEN

These items should NEVER be flushed down the toilet

When these items are flushed down the toilet they can cause problems in our homes, wastewater treatment network and the environment



Cotton Buds



Baby Wipes



Facial Wipes



Cleansing Pads



Toilet Roll Tube



Medicines



Cigarettes



Plasters



Nappies



Tampons



Tampon Applicator



Sanitary Pads

Please put these items in the bin and NOT down the toilet

Help to beat

THE DIRTY DOZEN
and support **Think Before You Flush**

Join the campaign at www.thinkbeforeyouflush.org



Think Before You Flush is operated by An Taisce's Clean Coasts Programme in partnership with Irish Water



Community Learning Classes 2020/21

MOST COURSES ARE FREE

Most courses are free although some may have a charge.

*Chargeable courses are FREE if you are in receipt of certain benefits when your course begins or if you work and earn less than £20,962 per year (gross salary)

COURSES IN MANY SUBJECTS RUN ONLINE & AT VARIOUS COMMUNITY VENUES IN BARNET AND ENFIELD (when safe to do so), INCLUDING:

- ESOL/ESOL Conversation Café
- Brush Up Your English/Maths
- Skills for Work and Employability
- Beginners Plus / Further Computing
- Introduction to Excel
- Intermediate Computing
- Introduction to Childcare
- Business Administration
- Paediatric First Aid
- Beauty Therapies
- Hairdressing/Barbering
- Sewing
- Arts and Crafts
- Art - Includes Painting and Drawing
- Health & Wellbeing (including Mindfulness and Art for Wellbeing)
- Family Learning

For more information, call

020 8266 4000 *When calling, please ask for 'Community Classes'.*

or email community.classes@barnetsouthgate.ac.uk

www.barnetsouthgate.ac.uk/adult-community-courses

Keeping the peace

With more of us at home more often now, it's important to keep your neighbours in mind. Whether that's waiting until the afternoon to do noisy activities like hoovering, or making sure your TV or stereo are at a reasonable level, we can all do our bit to help keep our communities peaceful.

Everyone has the right to enjoy their

home and community and live peacefully alongside their neighbours. We are committed to helping residents to be good neighbours and build tolerant communities. Part of how we do this is to help residents tackle incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their homes and around the community.



We define ASB as:

- Personal threats that are deliberately targeted at a particular individual or group
- Public nuisance – where an individual or group causes trouble, annoyance, inconvenience, offence or suffering to people in the local community rather than targeted at a particular individual or group
- Environmental nuisance such as graffiti, damage to buildings and structures

While it may make noise, we do not class issues such as washing machine noise, mowing lawns or children playing outside

as ASB, unless it is late at night and repeated. We encourage residents to work with their neighbours to resolve issues in the first instance.

What to do

If you wish to report ASB, you should call the Customer Contact Centre on 020 8080 6587 who will complete a questionnaire called an ASB triage. If the ASB triage identifies the issue you are reporting is ASB, it will be referred to the anti-social behaviour officer in the Neighbourhood team who will contact you to complete a more in-depth questionnaire and who will be able to advise you further.



YOU SAID WE DID

As part of our ongoing commitment to a high level of service, we are sharing examples of how we have made changes following your feedback.



You said:

We were missing too many repairs appointments.

We did:

From 1 July 2020, the Barnet Homes repairs service came in-house. The service is now using a new IT system that gives us greater visibility over the repairs being completed, and we expect to be able to address any issues that occur a lot sooner. This should help to reduce the number of delays and missed appointments that have been experienced by our residents over the past 18 months.

Protect yourself by getting the flu jab

The flu vaccine is a safe and effective vaccine. It's offered every year on the NHS to help protect people at risk of flu and its complications.

The best time to have the flu vaccine is in the autumn before flu starts spreading. But you can get the vaccine later.

Flu vaccination is important because:

- if you're at higher risk from coronavirus, you're also more at risk of problems from flu
- if you get flu and coronavirus at the same time, research shows you're more likely to be seriously ill

- it'll help to reduce pressure on the NHS and social care staff who may be dealing with coronavirus
- If you've had COVID-19, it's safe to have the flu vaccine. It'll be effective at helping to prevent flu.

The flu vaccine is given to people at higher risk, such as those aged 65 and over, and those who are pregnant.

You can have the NHS flu vaccine at your GP surgery, a pharmacy offering the service, your midwifery service if you're pregnant. For more information, visit [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk).

We've changed our number!

We have changed our main phone number. Our new number is a standard rate number, meaning you can use your inclusive minutes to call us.

Please update your phone books!

020 8080 6587



The current 0800 number will continue to work during the coming months. We will confirm its turn-off date in a forthcoming issue of atHome.