

Talk

Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

SPRING 2019 ISSUE 7

Step into spring

WELCOME

to Issue 7 of Talk Housing newsletter. We have packed the newsletter with information for our tenants and leaseholders and hope that you find it enjoyable to read. We would love to have your feedback and ideas for future editions.

And if you have got a story you would like to share in Talk Housing, email:

community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Inside

4. A day in the life of the Gilbourne Estate caretaking team 6. Find out about the parks in Greenwich such as Charlton Park near the Shooters Hill Estate 7. Protect your home with our affordable contents insurance

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www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing


ROYAL borough of
GREENWICH



Five minutes with Chris

Spring is the season of new beginnings and Cabinet Member for Housing Cllr Chris Kirby tells Talk Housing what's new on the horizon.

Any new housing projects you can tell us about?

We've recently announced our new housing delivery programme which will see us building 750 new homes in the borough. This is going to be the biggest council house building programme in my lifetime and I'm 35!

How will you pay for these homes?

We've previously been restricted by the government on the amount we can borrow to build homes, but now this has been lifted we plan to borrow £142m. We also have a £32m grant from the Mayor of London which will go towards this project.

Where will these homes be built?

We've got five initial sites for the first 75 new homes that will be built - Sam Manners House, Tuskar Street, Greenwich; the Simba Building, Artillery Place, Woolwich; Well Hall Road, Eltham; the Underwood, Mottingham and Southspring, Sidcup. The locations for the other homes will be announced soon.

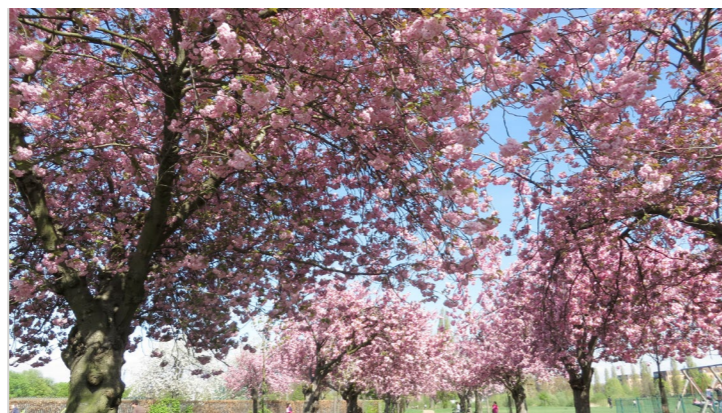
What about existing council homes?

This won't affect existing residents and we're still prioritising repairs and continuing our work to become a first class landlord for all of our tenants.

What happens next?

We are currently analysing each site and procuring professionals to help us deliver the programme. We'll also be talking to residents because your involvement will be crucial as this project progresses and though in its early stages, for further information you can phone **020 8921 6383** or email **central-neighbourhood-office@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**.

Spring in Brief



1 Enjoy the spring weather in our green spaces. Play games, exercise and even have a picnic in the park. Find out which parks are near you on our website, visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/parks.

2 Would you like to support the local community in you spare time? Contact your local volunteer centre to see what opportunities are available near you. For more information visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/volunteer.

3 There's a great choice of museums, galleries and an observatory in Greenwich, visit them to discover a wealth of art, history and science. For more information visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/culturalevents.

4 Sign up to YourVIEW to shape housing services. Get involved to be entered into a quarterly prize draw. For more information visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview or phone the team **020 8921 5149**.

5 Find out what's happening in Greenwich this spring. Look out for events and activities on our events page by visiting royalgreenwich.gov.uk/events or visit the Greenwich Community Directory at greenwichcommunitydirectory.org.uk.

Are you a Greenwich student who would like a taster of what a career in local government could be like?

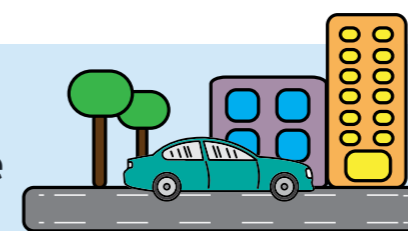
Each year, we offer a number of students (aged 14 to 19) attending a Royal Greenwich school, the opportunity to come and spend up to two weeks with us to gain some work experience. These placements are unpaid and you will have someone available to help and support you during your placement. For more information or to submit an application please email work-experience@royalgreenwich.gov.uk.



Support a rough sleeper

If you see someone sleeping rough in your block or when out and about contact StreetLink so the person can get the help and support they need. To report a rough sleeper visit streetlink.org.uk.

Are you ready for the Ultra Low Emissions Zone?



The Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) aims to improve air quality within London by placing stricter emission standards on petrol and diesel vehicles. The initiative launches on 8 April 2019 and will initially cover the existing congestion zone in central London. From 25 October 2021 the ULEZ will expand to the area bounded by the north and south circular roads and will include parts of Royal Greenwich. To check if your vehicle is going to be affected by these changes search 'ULEZ' or visit tfl.gov.uk or phone Transport for London on **0343 222 2222** (please note you will be charged).



Step into sport this spring!

61% of Royal Greenwich residents are regularly active*. Are you one of them?

Keeping active is important for our physical and mental wellbeing, helping us to have more energy, feel happier and potentially reduce the risk of many long term health conditions.

There are lots of ways to get active in Greenwich. From health walks to dance classes – there is something for everyone. If you are unsure of what you might like to do or are worried about taking your first steps into exercise, then there is a friendly team on hand to help you on your way. Search for an activity at greenwichgetactive.com or speak to a live well coach on the Freephone number **0800 470 4831**.

(*Active Lives survey, Sport England 2017-18)

Spend Less on your Spring Cleaning!

You won't need to clean out your wallet with these quick and easy tips:

1. Make your kitchen sink lemon fresh by rubbing half a lemon on any water stains.
2. A window squeegee is great for gripping and removing pet hair from a rug or carpet.
3. When you move around your furniture place clean towels under it to avoid scratching the floor.





A day in the life of the Gilbourne Estate caretaking team

Our typical day is 7.30 am – 3.30pm.

The thing we like the most about our job is that no two days are the same; you never know what to expect.

Our typical morning starts on site or at a team briefing.

Every day we check the bin areas, pick up litter sweep and mop the lifts and lobbies. We also do a thorough clean every week where we wash

the floors and bin chambers, inspect the lights and sweep the foot paths and garages.

We're really proud of the work we do and so it's important that we clean our blocks to a high standard. We pay extra attention to the areas that are easy to miss such as window sills, corners, buttons on the lifts and those harder to reach places where cobwebs can collect.

Sometimes we have an urgent job like removing needles or offensive graffiti. If you see something which needs urgent attention phone us and we will try our best to deal with the issue within 24 hours.

It can be frustrating when you go to clean a block and there are bulky items like furniture left in the way. Not only does this make it difficult to clean the block, but it's also a fire risk. Residents can phone us to report a potential fire hazard in a block or to arrange a bulky waste collection.

You might not expect us to do this but caretakers are so much more than just people who clean estates; we also look out for the vulnerable residents in the borough including reporting rough sleepers to StreetLink.

To contact caretaking services phone **020 8921 4661** or email **contact-centre@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**.

One resident's experiences of our caretaking service.

We work hard to ensure our estates are well looked after. Woolwich resident Gaye, tells us about the great caretaking service she receives in her local area.

"For a few months now, every time I have walked the foster dogs through our estate I have been greeted by two caretakers; a very cheery woman and her colleague.

Apart from being ultra friendly and polite they are constantly working. The bin room by the alley never smells anymore. If I have noticed broken glass on the way through I just mention it and they clear it up. They are always happy and obliging."

Read our Caretaking Service Charter on our website royalgreenwich.gov.uk/estatescaretaking.

If you have any questions or feedback about our care taking service email housing-caretaking@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or phone **020 8921 4661**.

Plant a seed to change your community

Getting involved in your local community is a great way to meet new people, learn more about your local area and even pick up a new skill.

Here we talk to Siobhan, from the Orchard Estate, on how attending an estate walkabout led to the transformation of neglected land on the Orchard Estate into a blossoming community garden.

"In 2011, there was an area of land on our estate which was a bit run down. I and some other residents wanted to change this so we attended an estate walkabout.

"During the estate walkabout our community participation officer suggested that we form a residents' association which we did. As a



residents association we applied for some funding which we were successful in securing. This enabled us to develop the space into a community garden.

"Fast forward a few years and we currently have an outdoor gym, an informal garden where people can relax, orchards and allotment spaces where people can grow their own fruit and vegetables.

"We have managed the community garden together as volunteers and neighbours, it's been a really great experience and I have learnt so much. If someone was thinking about how they could improve their

local area, I would recommend that they start by getting to know their neighbours. Our project is really, just a group of neighbours who got together to change their local area."

If you would like to improve your local area, consider requesting your local estate walkabout. For more information phone **020 8921 5149**, or email community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk or visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview.



Send us a picture of your community garden and it may get featured in a future edition of Talk Housing!

Behind the scenes...

We have a combined total of 1,448,616 tasks on our to do lists each year



Caretakers walk an average of 5 – 6 miles per day



Across Royal Greenwich caretakers remove around 235 tonnes of bulky waste from estates every month



Caretakers have changed 11,894 light bulbs in the past 12 months



Get green this spring!



With the weather getting warmer, now's the perfect chance to get out and about and explore the many open spaces Greenwich has to offer.

Our parks include play areas, tree trails, outdoor gyms, conservation areas, dog free zones and some include cafés, so there really is something for everyone!

The Royal Borough of Greenwich's park rangers and grounds

maintenance teams look after our parks, and assist with the maintenance of open spaces on housing estates. They are also working to create wildflower meadows and improve shrub beds on estates. If your community group would like to plant in a green space on your estate, contact the grounds maintenance team who are always happy to donate bulbs.

The parks team wants to keep parks and open spaces looking great in the borough, as part of this they run a successful campaign alongside the Metropolitan Police and CrimesStoppers to stop mopeds and motorbikes being used in parks. To anonymously report motorbikes or mopeds in any of our parks phone **0208 921 4329**.

To contact the parks team email **parks@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** or phone **020 8856 0100** or **020 8854 8888** outside of usual office hours.

Spot the leaf

Royal Greenwich has over 9000 trees in the borough. Can you tell which leaf is which?



Sycamore Leaf



Ash Leaf



Oak Leaf



Horse Chestnut Leaf

Would you like to know how to safely carry out basic DIY in your home?



Join our free beginners decoration and DIY courses available for council tenants and leaseholders delivered by London South East Colleges.

The course is perfect for those looking to build confidence and skills to carry out basic DIY and decoration at home. Topics covered during the course include,

health and safety, decorating, tiling and resealing and much more!

Future course dates:

- 24 April & 1 May 2019 – Home Maintenance & DIY
- 5 & 12 June 2019 – Painting and decorating course

To book your place or for more information phone tenancy services **020 8921 6383** or email **central-neighbourhood-office@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**

Don't forget to check with your tenancy enforcement officer if you are planning to make improvements to your home.

Feedback from attendees has been positive

"I have learned quite a number of useful tips from this course which I will use when decorating rooms at home"

"The course instructor was very very good. She was helpful in providing lots of tips of what I could do at home."

"I really enjoyed it and would recommend it to people lacking confidence in DIY."

? The big question: How can I protect the content of my home?

Having home contents insurance can't prevent floods, thefts or fires from happening, but it can help you get back on your feet. As a council tenant of the Royal Borough of Greenwich you are eligible for a home contents insurance scheme, created just for the Royal Borough, starting from just £0.89 a week for £9,000* standard cover.

This charge is added to your rent account. There's no long term commitment, it can be cancelled at any time and there's no excess to pay if you need to make a claim.

To find out if you are eligible or for more information phone **0208 921 6442** or visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/contentsinsurance**.

*Lower sums insured at lower rates are available for over 60's

A happy tenant makes a happy landlord

Due to Right to Buy, we have private renters living on our council estates. Here are our top tips for landlords to help ensure healthy and safe homes for your tenants:

- Ensure gas appliances have been inspected and registered as 'Gas Safe' each year
- Ensure electrics, wiring and plumbing meet the required standard and are water tight
- Yourself and your tenant should be aware of your rights as a landlord and tenant
- Make sure your tenant(s) is aware and compliant of the terms and conditions of the lease

For more information contact our home ownership service on **020 8921 4097** or visit **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200173/council_leaseholders**.

Fire Safety



Declutter to keep your home safe!

Communal areas are an escape route in an emergency and need to be kept clear.

Remember to not put clutter outside your flat front door or in the common areas and stairwells. Items not only cause obstructions but can also be fuel for fire and help spread a fire.

Keep the areas clear to:

- Enable residents to escape from the building
- Help the fire services carry out their duties
- Minimise the risk of items giving off toxic smoke and gas when burning in a fire
- Reduce the risk of fire spreading more quickly

If you have a concern about fire safety in your building, don't hesitate to contact your tenancy enforcement officer by phoning **020 8921 6383** or email **central-neighbourhood-office@royalgreenwich.gov.uk**.

London Fire Brigade Home Visit

Book a free home safety visit with the London Fire Brigade to keep your home safe from fire.

They can help you prevent accidents, give advice on high risk rooms and activities and keep you safe from fire in your home.

Call **0800 028 4428** to arrange a visit or email: **smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk** or text on **07860 021319**

SHOULD YOU CLAIM UNIVERSAL CREDIT?

Get advice before claiming Universal Credit (UC) as some people will find they are worse off under (UC) and may be better off not claiming. You cannot go back to your old benefits, even if Universal Credit is claimed by mistake.

For advice on Universal Credit phone our Welfare Rights Public Advice Line **0208 921 6375**. The line is open **Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday between 10am and 12pm**

MANAGE YOUR ACCOUNT THE WAY YOU CHOOSE



Managing your account

You can check your housing charges, account balance and account transactions online. To register for this free service visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housingselfserviceguide, note this service is not currently compatible with tablets or mobile phones.

Making a payment

You can make payments to the council weekly, fortnightly or monthly and you must pay in advance. Pay your charges in any of the following ways:

ONLINE

Visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk and pay online using a credit or debit card.

TELEPHONE

Use our automated payment line on **0845 8350140** or telephone **030 03320202** to pay using a credit or debit card.

DIRECT DEBIT

You can set up a monthly direct debit by visiting royalgreenwich.gov.uk/pay or you can phone the council housing direct debit team on **020 8921 3201**. Bank standing order – any frequency. You can set up a bank standing order directly with your bank to pay your rent at any time of the month. Please contact your income officer on **020 8854 8888** to request a standing order form.

PAYPOINT OUTLETS OR THE POST OFFICE

Make a payment using your payment card.

BY CHEQUE

Cheques should be made payable to: "Royal Greenwich" and posted to **PO Box 252, London SE18 6BU**. Remember to clearly write your name, address and housing reference number on the back of the cheque.

YOU CAN VISIT ONE OF OUR OFFICES AND MAKE A PAYMENT IN PERSON.

The Woolwich Centre, Wellington Street, Woolwich, London SE18 6HQ or The Eltham Centre, 2 Archery Lane, Eltham, London SE9 1HA.

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR MONEY ONLINE:



- Create strong passwords with a variety of numbers, letters and special characters.
- Don't use the same password for all accounts.
- Keep your passwords, pin and any other log in details in a safe place and do not share them with anyone else.
- If you have a computer, make sure it's protected with security software.
- Always log out of any online account after use, especially if you are using a public or shared computer.
- Beware of e-mails and phone calls asking for your personal or log in details.
- Always access your bank via your usual route and not by clicking on a link in an e-mail.
- Monitor your on line accounts as often as possible so you can quickly alert your bank early of any suspicious transactions.

To find out more information on how you can stay safe online visit: www.actionfraud.police.uk.