

Talk

# Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

## WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 13 of the Talk Housing newsletter, packed with information for tenants and leaseholders. We hope you enjoy it and if you have any feedback or ideas for future editions we would love to hear them.

Please email  
[community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

AUTUMN 2020 ISSUE 13



## New generation of council housing

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[www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing)

  
ROYAL borough of  
GREENWICH

# Cabinet Member for Housing: Cllr Anthony Okereke



## 1) Tell us about your recent YourVIEW online listening campaign with tenants and leaseholders?

Stepping into my new position as Cabinet Member for Housing, I made a commitment to approach housing from the ground up, working with all our tenants and leaseholders to ensure the housing service is something we can all be proud of in the borough. The digital listening campaign was a core part of that commitment and I have found it to be a valuable way to

speak directly with residents and tackle concerns and issues head on.

## 2) What were the sessions about?

The sessions raised various points. We discussed repairs and works on our estates; our caretaking service and how we communicate with residents. It has helped address the issues our residents wanted to speak about with us.

## 3) What did you take away from these sessions?

For me, it was the ability to make that personal connection with our residents that I appreciated. There

are thousands of residents who live in the borough and as the Cabinet Member for Housing, I do not get to meet them all. These sessions exemplify why I got into politics; to defend people's right to housing.

## 4) What will you do with the feedback received from tenants and leaseholders?

We are currently compiling the feedback and we will use it to shape the council service as we move forward. We will also be reporting back to our residents on the changes we take up.

Over 100 residents attended between June and August 2020.

11 meetings were held which included Leaseholders, Young Tenants and residents in Temporary Accommodation.

Top three priorities given by residents attending were  
1. Repairs – which was a clear top priority. 2. Staying safe and 3. Improving the look and feel of the estate.

Just under half of residents who took part were from Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities. The attendance was representative of the local communities in the borough.

Residents wanted a mix of digital and face to face meetings.

There will be a final summary circulated to participants to see the overall results.



Missed the *Digital* Listening Campaign? You can still get involved in making changes to your area/estate by signing up to YourVIEW at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/yourview). You can also take part in our *training* opportunities.

### Sheldon Allen of SE3, said:

“The training was great. I learnt a lot about the council and it was nice to also have Anthony [Councillor Okereke] drop in to explain how the council functions as a democratic organisation. The opportunities available to residents via YourVIEW are great and I'd highly recommend people to get involved!”

For more information email [YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) or call 020 8921 5149.

# ROYAL GREENWICH BLACK HISTORY

365

## CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH, ROYAL GREENWICH STYLE

An online Black Lives Matter poetry and spoken word night, a Black women's health symposium and *eclectic* mix of music, dance, storytelling and fashion events will bring a taste of African and Caribbean heritage to your doorstep this October.

Through this year's specially curated Black History Month season, featuring a mix of socially-distanced live events alongside online activities, we will recognise and appreciate the contributions of people from the African and Caribbean diaspora to both our borough and the UK, and celebrate the role models that are inspiring the next generation.

Nine organisations have been awarded grants to deliver a varied programme of activities for our Black History Month season and beyond.

Our Royal Greenwich Black History 365 launch on Thursday 1 October, will also introduce our new borough-wide Equality and Equity Charter. More than

750 people shared their views on the draft charter. We are now reviewing the responses and updating the charter ready for launch.



Find out more about our Black History Month programme and see what events are happening at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/blackhistorymonth](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/blackhistorymonth)

# Say hello to a new generation of council homes!

We are delighted to announce that the pilot scheme in our 750 home Greenwich Builds programme – designed to tackle the effects of London’s housing crisis – has been successfully completed. The scheme of four homes is located in Woolwich at Lister Terrace on Robert Street, with tenants moving in since July.

Greenwich Builds aims to combat a housing crisis which has led to homes becoming unaffordable for many people, including the key workers we all rely on to keep essential services running. These first homes have helped to establish Greenwich Builds’ environmental credentials through the use of technologies like air source heat pumps and solar panels, helping to tackle the climate emergency.

Despite the complications of COVID-19, Lister Terrace was completed quickly and with minimal disruption to neighbours, thanks in large part to the use of innovative modular construction which meant that the properties could be built offsite before being safely craned into place and installed. This also allowed work to be finished safely and in line with government guidelines on social distancing in the workplace.

One of the new tenants described her new home as “a great improvement, our old place was too big for just me and my daughter and I am very impressed by the look of my new house, as I’ve never lived in a new-build before. My hopes are to take it a day at a time, get the house decorated room by room... I love it!”



Another new resident, Laura, pictured below with husband Saulius on their moving-in day, said “I’m so happy and excited, compared with my old place it’s so much better, finally we have our home!”



All Greenwich Builds homes will be:



available for social rent to people on our housing register



Sustainable, with most achieving zero carbon status



Built quickly and to high standards using innovative construction techniques

Work on all Greenwich Builds homes should begin no later than 2022, and if you’d like to see all the locations currently marked for development please visit [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwichbuilds](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/greenwichbuilds).

### Greenwich Builds progress so far

- Delivered: four new homes at Lister Terrace
- Under construction: 26 homes across six sites
- Planning applications currently submitted: 197 homes across four sites, with a nursery & retail unit with more to come.



## Stay safe this Autumn

We understand that *autumn* is the season of falling leaves, Halloween, Guy Fawkes Night, bonfires and fireworks.

**Residents can only hold bonfires or fireworks in their own private garden, not on any other part of the council housing estate or communal area.**

If you want to use fireworks in your own private garden, follow these tips from London Fire Brigade:

[london-fire.gov.uk/safety/fireworks](http://london-fire.gov.uk/safety/fireworks)

Residents should also follow social distancing measures, in place from 14 September, that restrict people from meeting with other households socially in groups of more than six.

It is important that we all follow these measures to suppress the coronavirus and avoid another lockdown



## Unlicensed music events

We’re being extra vigilant after a growing number of unlicensed *music* events, block parties and illegal gatherings across London and the wider UK. These types of events are normally held without the necessary



legal permissions and safety precautions and pose a significant risk to those who attend.

These events also place an additional burden on the police, the Council and other public sector organisations that help keep Royal Greenwich and its residents safe.

Although there has been some relaxation of lockdown restrictions, social distancing still applies, because if there is a concerning rise in the infection rate, then the government may have to re-impose some restrictions;

by acting responsibly and within the law, we can help avoid this. You can report a suspected unlicensed music event to the police by calling **101**. In an emergency always call **999**. Information can also be passed anonymously to Crimestoppers by calling **0800 555 111**.

## Rewilding of Abbey Wood

Rewilding helps restore and protect wild nature and the Abbey Wood wild flower planting took place earlier this year. Over the next five years, we will select five sites annually to carry out rewilding on our estates. This will bring back wildflowers and increase native species in the area – specifically the five B's.

- 1 Bats 
- 2 Bees 
- 3 Birds 
- 4 Beetles 
- 5 Butterflies 



## Ex-servicemen from Nepal help to restore communal garden

Bill Walden House provides housing for elderly residents and they've set up a gardening group. Despite all residents having issues with their mobility, they like to grow flowers on the roof terrace as well as in the communal garden.

Two ex-servicemen from Nepal who live at Bill Walden House have been an incredible help in tending and watering the flowers during the very hot summer weather.

Mr Limbu is a former Corporal and spent 18 years in the British army. Mr Gurung is a former Rifleman, who spent ten years in the army.



They are both great members of the community and have put their previous military expertise and precision to great use, by helping to make the garden beautiful and colourful.

Submitted by Dr Elena Rowland

## Do you want to set up a community garden in your area?

To find out how you can set up a community garden and whether there is funding available, email [community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk).

## Grow food on your estate

Would you like the opportunity to grow your own healthy food and improve your local community?

Growing Greenwich supports residents across the borough to plant, maintain and manage herbs, shrubs, vegetables and fruit trees throughout the seasons with the help of community gardeners and volunteers.

Find out more at [gcda.coop/growing-greenwich](http://gcda.coop/growing-greenwich)



For the latest updates on council services, sign up to the Greenwich Info newsletter at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/newsletter](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/newsletter) or check the website [royalgreenwich.gov.uk](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

If you, or someone you know, is experiencing domestic abuse, there is support and help available. For confidential support, call the Greenwich Domestic Violence and Abuse Helpline on 020 8317 8273, in an emergency always call 999.

Reminder: Parking Enforcement is now fully operational across council estates with wing parking. Find out more [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/estateparking](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/estateparking)



If you, or anyone you know, is an EEA National the deadline for applying for Settled Status is 31/12/20 if there is no Brexit deal (or 30/6/21 if a deal is agreed). If you don't apply you may lose your entitlement to social security benefits. For more information go to [gov.uk/eusettledstatus](http://gov.uk/eusettledstatus) or speak to an immigration adviser.



## Looking for something to do as a family?

Why not try out some fun games and sports in your local community?

All activities are taking place in Abbey Wood, Plumstead, Middle Park, Thamesmead and Woolwich.

All activities FREE! No equipment or experience needed. Come have fun and spend time together.

Email [greenwich.getactive@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:greenwich.getactive@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) to find out more and book your place.

## London Fire Brigade home visit

The London Fire Brigade have stopped cold calling during this time. Residents can request a visit via the details below, as long as they can confirm they are not self-isolating or showing COVID-19 symptoms.

Please call 0800 028 4428, email: [smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk](mailto:smokealarms@london-fire.gov.uk) or text on 07860 021319.

# Rent advice during the pandemic

We understand that the COVID-19 crisis has created financial difficulty for many people. If you are on the government's furlough scheme which will stop at the end of October, and think this may make paying your rent difficult, please contact us now.

We want to do all that we can to support you, so if you are unable to pay your rent, please contact us immediately to discuss your situation and we will work with you to address any issues.

You can email [rent-account-enquiries@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:rent-account-enquiries@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) to explain your situation and we will get back to you. You can also speak to your Income Officer, whose telephone number is on your rent statement and arrears letters.

If you are currently experiencing financial difficulties, we can renegotiate payment plans and help you claim *financial* support and benefits that you may be entitled to.

If your income has been reduced, you may be entitled to Universal Credit and/or other benefits. This may include help with your rent payments. If you think you are entitled to any support, take action straight away.

The courts are reopening for serious arrears, anti-social behaviour and other cases. If you have high arrears and have not discussed this with your Income Officer – contact us now for advice and to make a repayment plan otherwise you could risk eviction.

## Benefits advice and hardship support

If you need advice on your benefits entitlement, support to manage your claim or to complete an application, contact our Welfare Rights and Universal Support team on **0208 921 3333** (Monday -Friday, 10am - 4pm) or visit [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefitsupport](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/benefitsupport).

The team is experiencing a very high volume of queries and will get back to you as soon as possible. If asked, please leave a message and they will get back to you.

Employment and financial support can also be found at: [gov.uk/coronavirus](http://gov.uk/coronavirus) and [turn2us.org.uk](http://turn2us.org.uk).



## Wordsearch

Have a go at completing our wordsearch, and you could be in with a chance of winning a prize.

There are 10 words in the wordsearch below which will be in italics within this newsletter. You can either:

Email the 10 words to

**YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** or tear out the back page with your full name, contact number or email and return this to the Community Participation & Diversity Team at the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street, SE18 6HQ.

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

Congratulations to **Minelva Ugwonno-Cocks** for winning the last wordsearch!

The words from the last wordsearch are:

Together, Wellbeing, Diversity, Payment, Community, Hub, Furloughed, Support, Parking, Achievement