

Talk

# Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

## WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 24 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)

SUMMER 2023 ISSUE 24



## Thousands attend Together 23

**Inside**

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ROYAL borough of  
GREENWICH

## 5 minutes with Pat Slattery



An important part of the service we offer as your landlord is covered by the work of our tenancy teams and colleagues in caretaking, grounds maintenance, managing neighbour nuisance and anti-social behaviour and so on. Can we all work better with residents to create safe and peaceful neighbourhoods that people like living in?

We are proposing to take a wide-ranging look at how these services work together and whether we can make improvements. You may well have ideas about this and we'll be asking you for those, probably in the Autumn.

Meanwhile, we have some vacancies for the job of tenancy officer at the moment. We will be looking to recruit some more soon so do look out for the job adverts in the fortnightly Greenwich Info. It might be a job you feel you can do and applications are welcomed from residents.

Finally, we will be looking later this Summer into whether we need to change the way in which we allocate Council/Housing Association homes. Most of you will know that there is a serious shortage of affordable homes in the Borough and we cannot help all 26,000+ households on our waiting list. Again, please look out for that consultation.

Meanwhile, please do have a happy, peaceful and good neighbourly summer.

**Pat Slattery**  
Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness



## Barnfield Estate Fly-tipping Project

The Barnfield fly-tipping project started in 2023 and was designed and led by DG Cities in partnership with the Caretaking Service, Street Services, and the Enviro-Crime and Tenancy teams.

Since the start of the project, we have installed 4 cameras on the estate to catch fly-tippers and to deter them from fly-tipping. We also have posters advertised across the estate to help stop fly-tipping.

Officers are currently assessing the project's impact with residents, what worked well and what could be improved for continued interventions and for those that could be rolled out elsewhere across our Housing estates.

Don't forget, the Council picks up your bulky waste for free. Just head to [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/bulkywastecollection](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/bulkywastecollection)

## Don't lose your voice in future elections

You now need photo ID to vote at a polling station. Even if you are registered to vote you still need a valid form of photo ID. Don't worry if you don't have a valid form of voter ID as you can apply for free voter ID known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

Check you have a valid form of photo ID, in case you need to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate, so you will be prepared for the next elections in Royal Greenwich on 2 May 2024 for the Mayor of London and London Assembly elections.

Apply for a Voter Authority Certificate:  
[voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk](https://voter-authority-certificate.service.gov.uk)

Register to vote: [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/register tovot](https://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/register tovot)



## Watch out for grass and wild fires

During summer months, there is a substantial risk of grass and wild fires happening due to the heat. It's important to keep safe during the summer, here are few tips to stay safe while having fun in the heat.

- Remember, you are not allowed to use a barbecue or have an open fire in any of the Royal Borough of Greenwich's parks and open spaces

- Dispose of smoking materials such as cigarettes safely- don't drop cigarettes on dry ground and don't drop them out of car windows, as they may land on dry grass and lead to a fire.
- Explain to children the dangers of playing with and lighting fires.





# TOGETHER 23

## ALMOST 14,000 PEOPLE ENJOY FREE FAMILY FESTIVAL IN CHARLTON PARK

On Saturday 10 June, the Royal Borough of Greenwich hosted its annual free family festival in Charlton Park with almost 14,000 people in attendance.

Revellers enjoyed performances from acts including South London legend DJ Norman Jay MBE, Woolwich Singers, Lady Marga MC, Plumcroft Primary School Choir, Boppin' Bunnies and many more.

In the Pride Tent, sponsored by the University of Greenwich, residents tried their hand at voguing, salsa and bingo.

Crowds made the most of the sunny weather to enjoy facepainting, inflatables, funfair rides, bars and street food stalls and sports.

In the Community Village, sponsored by CU London Greenwich, residents got to know local community groups and the activities they offer.

Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture, and Communities, said: "It was fantastic to see almost 14,000 people enjoying a free day out against the beautiful backdrop of Charlton Park.

"The Royal Borough of Greenwich is a vibrant and welcoming place, and it was such a pleasure to see this reflected in people from all backgrounds getting together to enjoy local arts and culture. We should all be very proud to call Royal Greenwich our home.

"Events like Together 23 bring us together to create vibrant cohesive communities and provide opportunities and inspiration for everyone. They are also an opportunity to engage with the council and local community groups, and find out what services are available to you."

Attendees also waved goodbye to Farrah the Fox, the five-metre puppet created by Emergency Exit Arts as part of Royal Greenwich Festivals. She'll be travelling round the borough and high streets across the UK this summer, before returning to her hometown at Woolwich Carnival in September!

If you were at Together 23, tell us about your experience at [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/together-23](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/together-23)

## Flush Away

Regular flushing of toilets and use of taps keeps water flowing through pipes helps keep Legionella bacteria away.

Whenever your home is left for a week or more, a short flush of each outlet is a good way to prevent bacteria developing and maintain water quality. It is easy to do and requires only a small amount of time. Each tap and water outlet (including showers) should be opened and left to run through for around five minutes.

If you are at home and using water in the normal way, to ensure water is as fresh as possible, run the cold kitchen tap for 30 seconds or so before filling kettles and drinking etc., as this will ensure that water is freshly drawn and is as cold as possible.



## Help young people on the way to independence

Families and individuals in Greenwich are being encouraged to become 'hosts' for a service which aims to give a safe and loving temporary home for young people who are homeless.

Royal Borough of Greenwich has commissioned CAYSH (Children and Young Single Homeless charity) to provide a Supported Lodgings Service, which provides accommodation and support for vulnerable young adults 16- to 21-year-olds who are homeless or leaving care but are not quite ready to live independently.

Supported Lodgings Hosts will have the benefits of a CAYSH Advice and Support Officer who will expertly match a young person to them, ongoing support, and training for the duration of the placement and weekly payments to cover the costs of hosting the young person.

If you think you can help a young person on their journey to adulthood by becoming a Supported Lodgings Host, please get in touch with us to find out more. For more information, please email [lodgings@caysh.org](mailto:lodgings@caysh.org) or call CAYSH on **020 8655 3461**.

**Do you want to support homeless young people?**

Enquire today

For more on Supported Lodgings visit: [www.caysh.org](http://www.caysh.org)



# Providing extra value to the community



**As well as working to create 1,750 much needed new council homes across the borough for local people on the waiting list, Greenwich Builds is providing a lot of extra value to our community.**

This is because a requirement built into the contracts we make with companies building our homes to provide what is known as “social value”.

This can take the form of anything from improvements to the local area, to training and apprenticeships for local young people.

The past few months have seen a number of social value projects taking place around Royal Greenwich.

Among these were a visit by 19 young pre-apprenticeship candidates to construction bootcamp at a Greenwich Builds site in Gilbourne Road.

The visit gave the group an insight into working in the industry, the importance of health and safety, and a closer look at how modular methods of construction are changing the future of building.

As well as this, a new 'Secret Garden', with vegetable patch, climbing wall, birdhouses, play and reading areas was created at James Wolfe Primary School, by contractors working on new supported housing development in Royal Hill.

We look forward to sharing more examples of social value as we continue to build much-needed new homes!



## We're top for affordable home-building in London!

Royal Greenwich has topped a list measuring the number of affordable homes started in 2022.

Our borough saw more new council and housing association homes begin construction than any other in London.

The figures were published as part of an announcement by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan that a target to start work on 20,000 council homes by 2024 had been achieved a year early.

Our number one ranking demonstrates our commitment to ensuring high-quality, affordable housing for residents. This was a key priority in our new corporate plan, Our Greenwich, and the Housing and Homelessness Strategy, published in 2022.

Greenwich Builds will have completed or be working onsite on 1,750 new, low or zero carbon council homes within the next five years. Hundreds of homes are already under construction.

Of these, ten per cent will be wheelchair accessible and a large proportion will be family homes, with some five-bed homes included in the programme.

We are also working closely with housing associations and providers to deliver as many affordable homes as possible. This includes working with Meridian HomeStart who deliver discount market rent properties to key workers, a Greenwich Community Land Trust who will deliver some discounted priced homes to local people, and housing associations such as L+Q, Hyde, PA Housing and Peabody who will deliver nearly 2,000 affordable properties.

The Council also recently acquired hundreds of homes currently under construction by Lovell in Woolwich. These were to be sold privately once completed, but will instead be rented by us at council rent levels.

All of the above will speed up the delivery of quality social housing for people on the waiting list.

## Regulation Ready

The regulation of the social housing sector (council and housing association landlords) is undergoing its biggest change in a generation.

Social landlords will now need to involve their residents in any development and scrutiny of the whole range of services they provide. This ensures that we are more accountable to residents through analysing our performance. We are looking at the ways we talk to, and work with, residents in Greenwich, including how we work Housing Champions with those of you on YourView and all our existing meetings.

One of the changes helping to make us more accountable to you, is the collection of data used to analyse our performance. This exercise is called Tenant Satisfaction Measures, and it will examine how we are performing with repairs, building safety, complaint handling, tenant engagement, and dealing anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood management.

The information will be collected using surveys from a randomly selected sample of tenants and us collecting data on our operational activities.

As from 1 April we have started collecting our Tenant Satisfaction Measures data for the forthcoming year. This exercise will be then undertaken every year.



Our new survey provider Acuity Research and Practice will be phoning some tenants to obtain your views about the Housing Services provided by Royal Greenwich. This research forms part of the new Regulatory Framework to ensure high quality performance of the landlord for its tenants.

Not everyone will get a call so remember there are always other ways to have your say on services. Please see [royalgreenwich.gov.uk/YourView](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/YourView)



## Leaseholders Update

We would like to invite leaseholders to get involved in feeding back and shaping the services provided to them.

Since COVID, we have held online leasehold working groups and some leaseholders have attended the Borough Wide Housing Panel which is held quarterly. There is an open day planned for August to focus on the capital programme.

We are also compiling results from a telephone survey carried out in June. Leaseholders that took part were asked to score the Royal Borough, as Landlord, on a number of services provided.

There are two ways you can get involved, please either register your interest in Your View, or alternatively ask the Home Ownership Service directly about upcoming leaseholder involvement opportunities via [home.ownership@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:home.ownership@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)



## Safety checks in your home

In May last year, we referred ourselves voluntarily to the Regulator of Social Housing, which oversees all council housing.

This was following an internal review where we found we were not fully meeting safety standards in some areas.

We have safety systems, policies, procedures in place to make sure we are complying with the Government's new Building Safety Act 2022, The Fire Safety (England) Regulations and the Fire Safety Act 2021.

These new laws change the way that we manage fire safety in our homes, particularly in taller buildings.

All of our staff and contractors carry photo ID and if you want to check their identity you can always contact us on **020 8854 8888**.

### How do I find out more about the checks in my home?

Email [housing-safety-questions@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:housing-safety-questions@royalgreenwich.gov.uk).

### An update about the work we are doing to keep you safe

#### Fire checks & safety

We are checking all smoke alarms in our homes.

We will also check for alarms during electrical testing and other repairs visits. New alarms can be installed immediately on site with an update made to your record.

#### Electrical checks

Electrical checks need to be carried out every five years. We do not have an up-to-date electrical test for all of our homes and will be completing checks in every building, to make sure that the electrics in your home remain safe to use.

We have appointed three new contractors to support our repairs team and work started in December 2022.

#### Asbestos checks

We have fallen behind in checking the shared areas of buildings that are known to have asbestos materials (asbestos containing materials that are in good condition

and not disturbed do not pose a risk to health).

That's why we established a catch up inspection programme, which was completed in April 2023.

#### Water Safety

All of our water safety checks for preventing legionella (a bacteria which can cause a serious type of pneumonia (lung infection) called Legionnaires' disease) have now been completed and are up to date.

We are completing extra checks to make sure that our risk assessment process covers any building with a shared water supply. We aim to complete these by the end of 2023.

#### Gas Safety

We are double checking that your home has a carbon monoxide alarm fitted, if it needs one. This is a new requirement for all homes with a gas appliance (except when you just have a gas cooker). We will check this alarm every year during your gas service, and replace it if needed.

We will comply with the law whenever we complete an annual gas service.

# A year in review 2022-2023



If you would like to get involved with other residents to help improve services contact the Community Participation & Diversity Team. **Phone 020 8921 5149 or email [community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk)**

## KPI explanation

Some of our services are below the set targets and we are working hard to improve these. If you are interested in helping us to improve our service standards please email **YourVIEW@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** we'll keep you up to date with any engagement opportunities.

We continue to improve the repairs service and have updated the website including the form used to log a repair issue. Tell us about a problem with your home as a tenant **royalgreenwich.gov.uk/report-a-problem**. We have set up a repairs research panel to work together residents to improve services we provide.

We are still working to reduce the turnaround time for empty properties so we can get them re-let.

With the introduction of the Housing Ombudsman's new Complaint Handling Code, more of our correspondence is categorised as a formal complaint. The increase in volume has affected our response times to our complaints. We recognise that we need to do better in the time taken to respond to complaints

Rent is over 100% because we received the payment of £5million in water refunds which increased the collection rate for the year.

### Homes for Ukraine

If you want to offer a home to people fleeing Ukraine, you can become a sponsor as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. For more information please visit **[gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine](http://gov.uk/register-interest-homes-ukraine)**



### Could you help change a child's life forever?



- Now more than ever, Royal Greenwich needs foster carers for our children and young people.
- We want carers from all backgrounds, as we want our children in happy, loving homes.
- Fostering is rewarding and you could make a real impact to a child's life!
- We offer 24-hour support, generous allowances, excellent training and a wide range of support groups.
- Contact us to find out more on **0800 052 1499** or visit **[royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fostering](http://royalgreenwich.gov.uk/fostering)**

# Paying your rent, benefits and financial advice

If you need help managing or understanding your Universal Credit claim, please call our Universal Support Team on **020 8921 3333** on Monday – Friday, 10am - 4pm. If you need advice on

any other benefits or challenging benefit decisions you can call the Welfare Rights Public Advice Line **020 8921 6375** on Monday, Wednesday or Thursday 10am - 1pm.

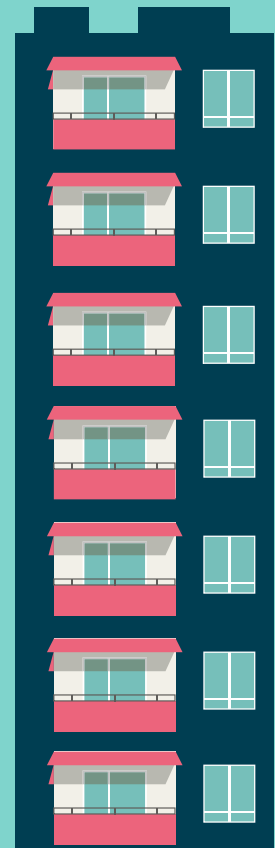
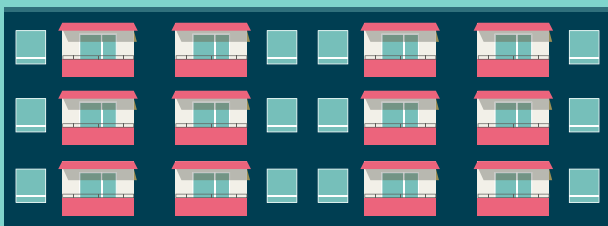
## The Small is Beautiful Scheme

**Are you living in a two, three, four or five bedroom council property that is now too big for you?**

The Small is Beautiful scheme can help you move to a smaller home and allow your property to be used to help other families in housing need.

Please contact the Access and Allocations Service at **housing-allocations@royalgreenwich.gov.uk** for further info.

Thank you to those who responded to our survey on possible changes to how we support more under-occupiers to downsize, we will let you know the outcome soon.



## Wordsearch

Thank you to those of you, who sent in your answers from Issue 23. We will not be having a wordsearch this time!

They were: Provide, Transforming, Champions, Webforms, Home, Clear, Thriving, Modules, Read and Minute

Congratulations to **Tina** for winning the last wordsearch!

