

Talk Housing

News for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders

WELCOME

Welcome to Issue 19 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.

SPRING 2022 ISSUE 19



Remembering our loved ones

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 [royal_greenwich](https://twitter.com/royal_greenwich)  [royalgreenwich](https://www.facebook.com/royalgreenwich)

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housing

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ROYAL *borough of*
GREENWICH

5 minutes with Jamie Carswell



We know it's been a tough couple of years for Royal Greenwich tenants and leaseholders, with the rising cost of living, fuel crisis and *impact* of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That's why we're committed to doing everything we can to support you; from benefits and hardship support to rent and universal credit advice. More information is available on page 12, and you can also visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/welfarerights for more information on benefits you may be entitled to. My most important message is to talk to us if things get difficult financially, so we can try to help as early as possible before debts mount up.

On a lighter note, you may have seen that a new Library of Things has opened in the Woolwich Centre. Whether it's a carpet cleaner or waffle maker, this inexpensive and easy-to-use rental service is open to everyone who lives in Royal Greenwich. All you need to do is sign-up and book your item! Visit libraryofthings.co.uk for more information, or head down to the Woolwich Centre to see the selection yourself.

Spring is now upon us and with it brings a welcome change in weather. We are gearing up for an exciting summer of free events across the borough to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

We are kicking things off in Charlton Park with Royal Greenwich Together 22 on the Bank Holiday Thursday, 2 June, followed by the Platinum Picnic in the Park on the Friday. Both events promise to be a free and fun day out for the whole family, and I hope to see many of you there. Keep your eyes peeled on our website royalgreenwich.gov.uk/summerevents for more information.

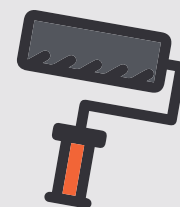
Jamie Carswell

Director of Housing and Safer Communities

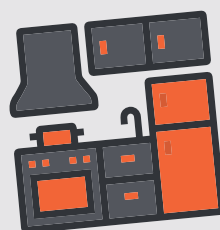
How satisfied are you?

How well is your housing department performing? How does it compare with other council or social housing landlords?

The Regulator of Social Housing is proposing 22 measures to check standards across council and social housing landlords. These include:



- Overall satisfaction level with your landlord
- Was your repair carried out on time?
- Do they listen to and act on your views?
- Do you know how to complain?
- How satisfied are you with the upkeep of communal areas – are they clean, safe and well maintained?
- How many cases of anti-social behaviour are there, relative to the size of your landlord?



Data will be collected via surveys and data from April 2023. If you are interested in joining a group of tenants to help us to monitor services, please

email community-participation@royalgreenwich.gov.uk. For more information visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/housingregulator

Royal Greenwich Housing is now a member of Tenant Participation Advisory Service. Please visit tpas.org.uk/membership-benefits to find out what this means for us and you!



Our new estates Enforcement Team dedicated to keeping you safe

We've launched a new enforcement team to help fight crime on our council estates across the borough!

The Safer Estates team will consist of a supervisor and six new officers actively patrolling housing estates. They will be tackling everything from anti-social behaviour and environmental offences to serious youth crime, with two additional officers recruited to focus solely on violence against women and girls.

The new team, dedicated to keeping you safe, will ensure that you receive the same level of enforcement on estates as you would in town centres. Keep an eye out for council officers in red uniforms, who will be on-the-ground ready to answer any questions you have about public *safety*.

For more information about the team, visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/SaferEstates

Register to vote for the local elections in May



On 5 May 2022, residents of Royal Greenwich along with the rest of London will be voting for their new ward councillors.

Ways to vote

The deadline to register to vote was 14 April. If you have already registered to vote but wish to vote by proxy or post, instead of going to a polling station, you must inform us by:

- 19 April, 5pm to vote by post
- 26 April, 5pm to vote by proxy

Ward boundaries are changing

There was a boundary review in 2021 so all wards have changed with many significantly different and with new ward names.

This means many people will be voting in a different polling station and ward to what they are used to.

Find out more:

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/vote

Estate Walkabouts

We have completed our March Estate Walkabouts. We will be scheduling a new round of walkabouts for April onwards, so please continue to check the website for updates.

royalgreenwich.gov.uk/EstateWalkabouts

Our Estate Walkabout Process

- 1** Residents log their issues and concerns on our *online* form on the website.
- 2** Residents receive an invite to an evening meeting online ahead of the walkabout to discuss issues raised with officers from various services.
- 3** Officers collate issues and concerns and go out on the estate.
- 4** A report is circulated to residents.



Royal Greenwich parks and open spaces become home to COVID-19 Memorials



The Council has opened 23 COVID-19 memorial areas dedicated to those who lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic. The benches offer a place to sit and *remember* loved ones.

Memorials will be placed at:

- Eltham Park South
- Charlotte Turner Gardens
- The Point, Blackheath
- Thames Path, North Greenwich
- Birchmere Park
- King George's Field
- St Mary's Gardens
- Sutcliffe Park
- Plumstead Gardens
- Horn Park
- Bostall Heath
- Fairy Hill Park
- Mycenae Gardens
- Plumstead Common
- Hornfair Park
- Shrewsbury Park
- Maryon Park
- Gallions Park
- East Greenwich Pleasance
- Maribor Park
- Well Hall Pleasance
- Academy Road Open Space
- Oxleas Meadow

Find out more: royalgreenwich.gov.uk/covidmemorials

Next generation council homes meeting the needs of people on waiting lists



Many people in our borough are suffering the effects of London's housing crisis, with rising living costs now causing further worry.

That's why we are using every possible method to deliver efficient new homes for those on our housing waiting lists.

Our Greenwich Builds programme is creating over 750 council homes, and hundreds more are being built in partnership with housing associations, private developers and community benefit societies.

One recently completed Greenwich Builds scheme in Eltham is a great example of the kind of quality, sustainable and cheap-to-run homes we are building.

The six family homes at Pulteney Mews also show how the Council Greenwich Builds programme is meeting

the needs of people on housing waiting lists by providing much-requested family homes.

Sustainable technologies like heat pumps and *solar* panels reduce running costs, helping to tackle the cost-of-living crisis whilst also assisting the council to meet targets in its Carbon Neutral Plan.

One new resident, Mr Mehr, described how he and his family had been on a housing waiting list for 14 years, living in a two-bedroom flat. Now in their new three-bedroom house their children can enjoy separate bedrooms for the first time.

Mr Mehr also praised the design of the new homes, saying "they look so good most people can't believe they are council homes!".

Find out more:
royalgreenwich.gov.uk/GreenwichBuilds

Greenwich Builds contractors recognised for their considerate construction

We go through a careful selection process when choosing which contractors to work with on our new council homes. Our approach has been validated by Considerate Constructors, who have awarded our contractor Elkins Ltd a Performance Beyond Compliance accreditation for its care and professionalism in building new council homes near Alderwood Road in Eltham.



Constantly consulting for better homes

Our extensive consultation process helps us to make sure our new council homes are the best they can be, both for new tenants and those living nearby, by taking on board views and suggestions from people across the borough. Since December we've held consultations on five developments which in total will bring 355 sustainable new council homes for people on our waiting lists!



MARCH 2022 UPDATE

We're building over 750 sustainable council homes for local people! Here's our progress so far:

- 30 homes being designed**
- 347 homes awaiting approval**
- 355 homes being built**
- 33 homes completed**



Greenwich Winter Night Shelter



After a monumental effort from volunteers, local businesses and the Council, Greenwich Winter Night Shelter (GWNS) is now settling into its new venue on Middle Park Avenue in Eltham. Having moved away from rotating between seven churches every night of the week, GWNS now has a building with nine single rooms for homeless people and rough sleepers in Royal Greenwich.

Guests are referred to GWNS from partner agencies and can stay at the shelter for up to 28 days. Within that time, they receive 1-2-1 support from a caseworker who works alongside the referral agencies and local organisations to move people on into more permanent housing solutions.

GWNS is reliant on the time, *dedication* and passion of volunteers to operate and is currently looking for more people to join the team! They are particularly looking for people to help out with evening, night and morning shifts, and for cooks to prepare food for the evenings.

All information, including the application form, can be found at gwns.org.uk or you can email directly at volunteering@gwns.org.uk.

If you are not able to volunteer but would like to make a donation, you can do so via the donate button on its website gwns.org.uk.

New Facebook group for The Oaks!

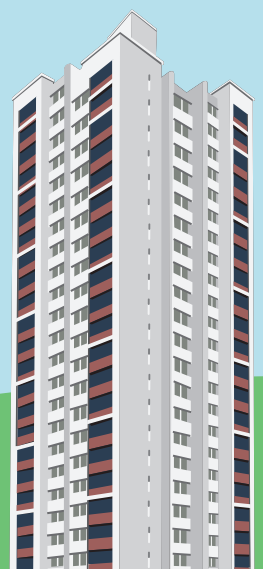
The Oaks Council Estate in Plumstead dates back to the 1970 and people from all ages and backgrounds live here.

Some residents who have known each other for a long time, like to use Facebook to keep in touch and have set up a new group for all Oaks residents. With 22 members, the group is for adults and messages are monitored closely so that the group stays well within Facebook's *community* rules.

The group's organisers said: "It is fascinating to see how people react to Council plans. We think there is some room for improvement on how the Council communicates with us, and how we communicate

with the Council, which is quite exciting when you come to think of it! On Facebook, we try to create a place where people feel safe to ask a question or share an idea."

Plans for the future include increasing the members and publishing a newsletter for residents who do not use Facebook.



THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR ABUSE



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ARE YOU USING ALCOHOL OR DRUGS AS AN EXCUSE FOR DOMESTIC ABUSE?

IT MAY FEEL LIKE YOU'RE OUT OF CONTROL, BUT HOW YOU RESPOND IS WITHIN YOUR CONTROL.

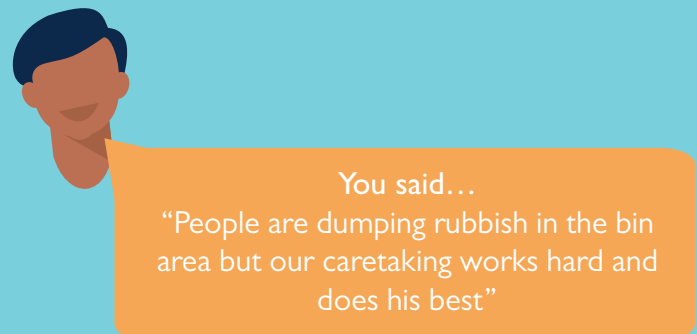
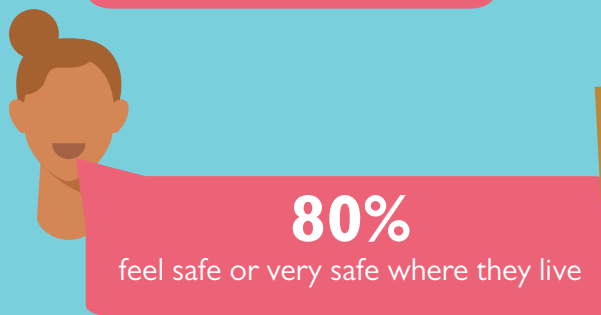
GET CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT TO HELP YOU BEHAVE IN NON-ABUSIVE WAYS.

GET HELP TODAY! CALL 0208 3178 273!

We will listen to you in a confidential and non-judgemental way, discuss your situation and help you think about how to change. Remember, domestic abuse is a **crime**. referrals_gdva@h4w.co.uk

We have been carrying out quarterly satisfaction surveys with our tenants and here is what you told us:

We have spoken to nearly 400 tenants in February and March 2022, asking for your views on our caretaking services, repairs services and how safe you feel where you live.



If you did want to speak to individual services, please see the details below:

Caretaking Service

020 8921 4661

caretaking@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

rubbish collection and fly tipping

020 8921 4661

waste-advisors@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Repairs and Investment Service

020 8921 8900

housing.repairs@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

AMCusComms@royalgreenwich.gov.uk

Safer Spaces

020 8921 5703

safer-spaces-team@royalgreenwich.gov.uk



Telephone surveys are still on going so please do tell us what you think of the services provided. We welcome your feedback.

Fire safety in your home: Did you know?

- **Smoke alarms:** You're four times more likely to die in a fire if you don't have a smoke alarm that works.
- **Cooking:** Around half of home fires are caused by cooking accidents.
- **Candles:** Two fires a day are started by candles. In 2020, over 200 fires in London were connected to candle use.
- **Smoking:** Every six days someone dies from a fire caused by a cigarette.
- **Heaters:** About two fires a day are started by heaters.
- **Faulty electrics:** (appliances, wiring and overloaded sockets) cause around 6,000 fires in the home across the country every year.



Parking on Estates

We are replacing the existing *parking* enforcement arrangements this summer and those affected will be contacted in May with more information. Find out more info, including how to renew your permit, at royalgreenwich.gov.uk/estateparking



Don't put off getting Home Contents Insurance until it's too late

Tenants' insurance can cover you for **burst pipes, fire, theft, storm damage, smashed glass, lost keys and leaks from flats above.**

Royal Greenwich tenants can obtain home contents insurance from as little as 0.89p a week which can be included with your rent payments. For more information go to the Royal Borough's website royalgreenwich.gov.uk/contentinsurance or call us on **020 8921 6442.**

Dementia Link

Do you know or care for someone living with dementia in Royal Greenwich? Would you like to receive support or find out more information? Please visit royalgreenwich.gov.uk/DementiaHub



Rent advice during the pandemic

We understand that the COVID-19 crisis has created financial difficulty for many people.

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** 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 now open 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**.

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

Employment and financial support can also be found at: **gov.uk/coronavirus** and **turn2us.org.uk**.

Universal Credit (UC) claimants – Don't miss out on help with your rent!

If you pay housing charges and claim UC – have you updated your new housing charge details on your UC online journal? If not, sign into your UC online account and do it today.

To get up to date details of rent and service charges email or telephone your Income Officer using the contact details on your rent statement.

If you do not have an online UC account, you should contact the UC Service Centre on **0800 328 5644** to tell them about your new charges.

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 and return this to the Community Participation & Diversity Team at the Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street, SE18 6HQ.

Please submit with your full name, mobile/telephone number and email.

Thank you to those of you, who sent in your answers from Issue 18.

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



The words from the last wordsearch are: Zero, Ecosystem, Digital, Authentic, Insulation, Environmental, Nutritious, Winter, Recycle, and Installation

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