

Talkback

Newsletter of Keniston Housing Association

Spring 2019

Housing hero in our midst

Terrence Bernard (pictured with his son) is a real-life housing hero. He was recently put forward for a Community Safety Champion award and was shocked when he actually won!

Terrence has lived his whole life at Merrow Street and is an integral part of the community. He has spent much of his life working with young people and says: "I try to help the young ones on the estate and in the local area. I talk to them and encourage them to help their neighbours – like carrying their shopping. I also offer some community sessions to train them and improve their general fitness. I am seen as an 'older' that they can listen to and talk to."

Terrence was nominated for Southwark Council's Housing Heroes award by fellow resident Zuwena: "Terrence.... wards off anti-social behaviour, mentors teenage neighbours and takes them under his wing. He gives them advice and gets them engaged in positive activities which help the area, e.g. fixing bikes of neighbours and maintaining our sheds."

"He also attends meetings and pushes for initiatives to enhance our living spaces."

"Terrence started community fitness sessions outdoors for all neighbours, to enhance health and wellbeing and foster community spirit. Mental health challenges are at an all-time high for young people, and he is showing the younger boys on the estate that someone cares. It's also inspiring because in a world where everyone is on their mobiles and rarely speaks to their neighbours, our area has maintained a sense of unity."

Terrence knew about Zuwena's nomination, but didn't pay much attention to it until he got to the



ceremony. "The Mayor of Southwark was there presenting the awards and when my name was called, my family were more excited and surprised than me! I never thought I'd win anything."

Terrence has recently joined our project to refurbish the play area. We're excited to be working with an enthusiastic and positive group of residents, who are helping with the planning (pictured below).

If you would like to get involved, speak to Lynn Russ, Engagement & Communications Officer.



Upskilling our Customer Services Team

The Customer Service Team aim to offer a one-stop shop for your minor enquiries, following a recent staff restructure.

Until recently, the team's main role has been to log your repair requests. For other enquiries, they had to arrange a call back with an officer in one of our specialist teams.

The new-look team are being trained to give you more information upfront. The change will make our phone service more efficient and give specialist officers more time to deal with complex cases.

Resident survey: What you told us

We're delighted to report that 95% of residents said they were satisfied with our overall services, in our latest major survey.

The survey, which was posted to all our residents in the autumn, gave us positive feedback about our friendly staff (98% satisfied), our repairs service (94% satisfied) and the quality of our homes (90% satisfied).

We didn't score so highly on your neighbourhood. Only 87% felt safe when out and about. We're taking this finding very seriously. While we can't change the surrounding area, we can

look at how we handle anti-social behaviour at our estates.

Our repairs results were more pleasing. Asked about your last repair, satisfaction with all aspects of our service had risen 3-5% since our 2015 survey.

We will publish full details from the survey in the near future.

Pictured: R Bates receives his prize from our Chief Executive, after winning the survey prize draw.



Pension credit changes for mixed-age couples

From 15 May 2019, there will be changes to the Pension Credit for mixed-age couples.

Currently, when someone reaches their state pension age, they move from working-age benefits to Pension Credit/Housing Benefit.

Couples can choose to change over when the older partner reaches state pension age.

Compared to a claim for Universal Credit, they are at least £130 a week better off.

But if you make a new claim from 15 May, you will only be able to move to Pension Credit/Housing Benefit when you have both reached state pension age.

Universal Credit (not taking rent into account) will pay you just



£114.85 per week. In addition, while the pensioner partner will not be expected to get a job, the younger partner may have to meet work-based conditions to get the benefit. They could still be hit with sanctions.

If you need more details, call the office for advice.

Bromley Well talks offer useful support



Sheltered housing residents at Darrick Wood have enjoyed eight weeks of free talks from the Bromley Well service, on a range of topics from eating well to planning for the future.

Bromley Well helps people stay well, happy and independent.

Residents told us: "I found it really interesting and enjoyable" and "It's been brilliant, I have learnt a lot."

Improving your schemes

Better homes, better neighbourhoods

We have now spent around £19,200 from our Better homes, better neighbourhoods fund, making the improvements featured.

Darrick Wood planting

When a wall collapsed on Keniston land, it left debris behind. The area became overgrown and difficult to maintain. So, we used money from the fund to transform the space. Our contractor and gardeners have done a great job of digging out the area, laying railway sleepers and planting.



Darrick Wood Artington Close bin store

Our risk assessors told us it was poor practice to store refuse bins in the lobby of the flats above our office. So, we dug up the road, moved parking bays and installed this purpose-built bin store instead. One resident said: "I walked past the new bin store outside the office and it looks really good and very professional and what a great idea. Can there be more like that around the estate?"

CCTV

We've brought in two mobile CCTV cameras to help tackle anti-social behaviour across our estates. We will use them in various anti-social behaviour hot spots to act as a deterrent.

Planned works

Here is some of the work completed recently.

Foxley Hall lighting upgrade

We introduced new LED lights, including emergency lighting, to the internal communal landings and stairwells at Foxley Hall. Thank you to Korr Construction for such good quality work.

Perryfield House: kitchen and shower room

Mr and Mrs Moore told us: "We are thoroughly pleased with our new kitchen... We are over the moon!"

"Also, the total renovations of our bathroom are making life a lot easier and it's looking very smart and modern. Barry and Luke have worked extremely hard to accomplish this in the time designated."



Thank you to B&L Construction for a consistently excellent standard of work.

The Future of Darrick Wood

We will soon be consulting residents publicly on our plan to build more homes at Darrick Wood and improve the estate. You are already telling us what you think about the project. The consultation date will be announced soon.

Newly refurbished home comes with a smile

Elliott's Row has a new family in residence, thanks to a major refurbishment project in partnership with Churchill Hui and Collier Contracts Ltd.

Funding from the Greater London Authority has allowed us to keep the property as affordable rented housing.

Our new resident told us:

"I moved from the Walworth Road, only about half a mile away. As well as needing a larger property, the council place where I lived was due to be demolished as part of regeneration in the area. I found the Elliott's Row property on the choice based lettings site and placed my bid. I was thrilled when I found out I could have it! The first time I went in, I said to myself: 'Is this really for me?' I was so excited!

"I had been living in a three bedroom flat with my children. We have never had a garden or any outdoor space. We now have a spacious four bedroom house with our own garden. The place is beautiful and the kids were excited about the move. It is really special and so different from our previous place. And the kids have been able to stay at the same school. They are very happy.

"When my family come here to visit, they ask me: 'How do you have a house like this? It's beautiful!'

"You can't compare the council to this housing association. As soon as you ask something, Keniston acts so quickly and



everything is just great. Before, I used to say that I don't like housing associations, as friends had said they were no good. When I moved into this property with Keniston, I then realised that it was perfect and I couldn't be happier.

"Any time I open the front door – as soon as I enter – I just start smiling. I can't believe that I have this house."

Pictured: Representatives from Keniston and our partners, who made this scheme possible.

Emergencies at your scheme



Be assured that whatever the time of day or night, we have someone you can call in an emergency.

Thankfully, fires and other major incidents are rare. But if the worst happened, we want you to know we're prepared.

During office hours, we ask you to call us on the usual number: **01689 889 700.**

Out of hours, you should phone

BAS, our out-of-hours contractor, on 020 8854 8700. You might want to store this number in your phone. In a major incident, BAS would contact a member of our staff, who would go straight to the site.

You will find a handy guide to fire safety in the home on the publications page on our website www.keniston.co.uk



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