

JULY 2021

H*in* Homing

The magazine for Harrow Council's tenants and leaseholders

WIN
£25
See p15

GLEN'S STORY

**ARE YOU WANTING TO
CHANGE CAREER? SEE P8**

INSIDE HOUSING FINALIST P5

REPAIRS SERVICE P3

CONSTRUCTION TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES P9

Housing Matters
webinar
**WEDNESDAY
8 SEPTEMBER**
6pm

*Harrow*COUNCIL
LONDON

In light of the recent Covid-19 guidelines we will be reviewing our service offer



Photo CORNER

Wing said, "Truffle is a very sweet 8 years old labrador (mixed), very intelligent and loves to play! We brought her to the garden and took this lovely picture where I managed to capture this cutie after playing a ball."

£10
for every
printed picture



Why not send in your favourite photo of Harrow or a photo of your pet to anthea.watkins@harrow.gov.uk and win £10 shopping vouchers when printed

HELLO FROM PHILLIP O'DELL



After Covid-19 lock down, one of my priorities is to focus on how we re-engage with you.

On page 10, Janice Johnson, Chair of the Residents' Board, introduces the new Residents Engagement Strategy and talks about new engagement opportunities such as joining a Social Value Engagement Group or the existing Residents' Board.

Two exciting initiatives that have kicked off this summer: co-ordinating better how we can leverage 'in-kind help' from our contractors such as clearing a community allotment or building a bike shed and secondly, signing up to using a digital platform. This is where we will set up a specific website for a council estate (piloting 5 to begin with) and this will be the go-to place for estate residents to find out what is happening on their estate such as major works, estate inspections and the caretaker's routine.

Other news items explain how Wates, who carry out repairs, are moving to a working mobile platform with operatives using a palmtop computer that functions as a personal organizer but also provides email and internet access. They can now log work outcomes in real time, and you will have the ability to track when the operative arrives.

Cllr Phillip O'Dell
Portfolio holder for Housing
✉ phillip.odell@harrow.gov.uk
☎ 0208 4242 1897

AFFINITY WATER

Affinity Water are fitting smart meters around homes in Harrow over the next few months

HOUSING MATTERS ONLINE EVENT

Please join us for the Housing Matters webinar on Wednesday 8 September 2021 at 6.00pm – 7.30pm. We will be talking about getting people back into work.

For the meeting link on MS Teams please contact:

✉ rinvolve@harrow.gov.uk
🌐 www.harrow.gov.uk/housingmatters

WEDNESDAY
8
SEPTEMBER

Cover: See page 8 to read about Glen's new career

IMPROVING REPAIRS AND PERFORMANCE

Improving the customer experience

We are pleased to inform you that we will be making improvements to Harrow Housing's repairs service. We are currently implementing a new Housing management system, which is expected to go live by the end of this year. This will give you much more information on your repairs and make ordering repairs much simpler. A new tenant portal will be available in the New Year, which will allow you to carry out more requests without having to contact us.

However, we are hoping to make some improvements over the next few months as our contractor, Wates, will be moving to a working mobile platform. This will include a repair tracking feature piloted in our East and West areas. This will allow residents to track how long before the repairs operative arrives at their property. The operatives will now also have the latest PDA equipment, meaning that information on your repair can be gathered in real time. This should make the repairs process much more efficient.

"This will allow residents to track how long before the repairs operative arrives at their property"

Wates operatives
benefiting from the
latest PDA equipment



The Repairs Team and Access Harrow will also be carrying out more satisfaction surveys after your repair has been delivered. It is important that we know what your experience was like and whether we can make any improvements. To deliver some of these improvements it is really important that we have your latest contact details and if you have one, your mobile phone number and email address.

✉ housing.repairs@harrow.gov.uk

ECO HEATING TO BE INSTALLED AT 3 SHELTERED SCHEMES

We are installing ground sourced heat pumps at 3 of our sheltered schemes: Cornell, Meadfield and Alma Sheltered schemes. Currently this is out to tender and we have been busy talking to residents about the proposed works and what is involved and answering questions. This pilot is an exciting step away from the high carbon emitting gas boilers currently used.

YOUR STORIES, YOUR MAG



7

Residents Wall

10

Residents' Board
update

15

Puzzle



UPDATE

BUILDING NEW HOMES

1,000 new homes in the pipeline

It is so important for people to have a chance to live in good quality homes they can afford. We are progressing plans on a number of sites to build around 600 new council homes – most for affordable rent but some shared ownership. You may have seen the recent consultations we have carried out on plans for vacant sites in Charles Crescent and Brookside Close. We have also put in a bid for funding to help us build around another 400 new homes. Not only will this help to meet housing needs but also contribute to meeting the council's carbon reduction targets by being highly energy efficient, using new technology like heat pumps and other sustainable measures to contribute to the council's climate change targets. The bid was submitted in April 2021 and we hope to know the outcome in the summer.

REGENERATION OF GRANGE FARM

Despite the delays from demolitions, utility works and Covid, Phase 1 of Grange Farm is progressing well and we're pleased to see that it really does look like a construction site now. We're closely monitoring the programme with Higgins and the new homes should be ready in September of next year.

There will be 68 social rented homes for existing secure tenants of the estate and we are in the process of updating housing needs information to support the allocation of the

new homes. Residents will be able to choose their kitchen and bathroom finishes when samples arrive on site in July.

There will also be 21 Shared Ownership homes which we will start marketing next Spring.

"We are progressing plans on a number of sites to build around 600 new council homes"

We're continuing negotiations to secure all interests on the remainder of the estate so as to deliver Phases 2 & 3, with the CPO process running in the background. The CPO Inquiry is set for 29th/30th June.

We will also shortly start work on choosing who will work with the Council to deliver the remaining 485 homes – of which 185 will be affordable.

Phase 1 of the regeneration of Grange Farm estate is well under way



AWARDS

FINALIST FOR INSIDE HOUSING AWARD

Along with the original scheme architects - Hawkins Brown - Harrow submitted the project to the Inside Housing Development Awards in the 'Best Affordable Development Category'.

We worked with the support of the Grange Farm Resident Steering Group to prepare the submission and were delighted to be able to incorporate within it a number of testimonials from residents. The good news is that we have been selected as a finalist – the not so good news is that we have to wait until November to find out the result!

INSIDE
HOUSING



Don't put off getting Tenants' Contents Insurance until it's too late... or time might start to drag!

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Insure your belongings

It's our responsibility as your landlord to insure the
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As a tenant of Harrow Council Homes you are eligible
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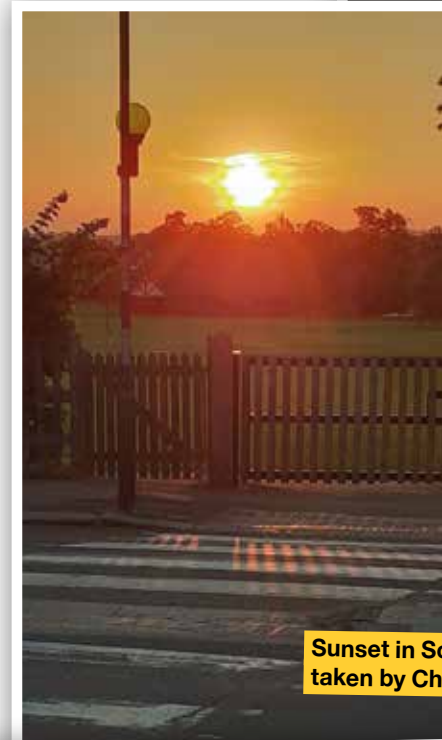


In association with



RESIDENTS' WALL

Photo taken by Wing, "My amazing
mum baked some really yummy
bread at home"



Sunset in South Harrow
taken by Chandrika Patel



"Morning walk through Pinner
Memorial Park to the bus stop,
to volunteer at Harrow Crown
Court", thank you Wing for
sending us this lovely photo



"Monroe was diagnosed with Triaditis which
is a problem with her liver and pancreas, but
with a change of diet which now includes
white fish and chicken and the help with
2 different tablets and painkillers, we are
hopeful that she will make a full recovery.
She also has to have special biscuits called
Gastrointestinal, they are expensive but she
is worth it. She is a very pretty cat" wrote
Tony Wretham

**PLEASE SEND ANY NEWS ARTICLES, PHOTOS, OR JOKES TO ✉ ANTHEA.WATKINS@HARROW.GOV.UK
AND IF IT IS PRINTED, WE'LL SEND YOU A £10 SHOPPING VOUCHER.**

MONEY

in your pocket



How Xcite can help

Xcite is part of Harrow Council and offers bespoke job brokerage and advice. It's a personal service, where each person is interviewed individually and depending on their experience and aims, can be put forward for jobs and free training.

■ If you are in construction, you can attend courses to increase your wage as long

as you are earning under £10.85/hr

■ Xcite engages with local businesses to identify possible job opportunities and runs Care Fairs and bespoke workshops for the police.

Case study – Glen's story

Glenn used to work in a bar but was made redundant due to lockdown impositions. He contacted Xcite for support.

Case study

Glen was looking for a career change in order to earn a regular income, better suited to his life commitments.

Glen was happy to pursue a career in construction after speaking to his own construction friends who had relevant experience. Xcite supported funding for Glen's CSCS card and provided him with tips on job searching techniques.

Xcite partnered up with a local developer, HG Construction and secured Glenn a role as a labourer.

The role is paid on a week-

to-week contract – but this is likely to become a 6-month contract, with training to become a hoist driver provided by HG Construction.

Glen said, "As someone who had never set foot on a construction site before, the assistance and advice given to me through Xcite was fantastic. In no time at all I gained my CSCS card and now I'm four months into a job with a wonderful Construction company. I highly recommend speaking to Xcite if you want a fresh start in a new career!"

Glen at work at HG Construction



Contact

To register for Xcite email

✉ xcite@harrow.gov.uk

🌐 www.harrow.gov.uk/jobs/careers-advice-training

To access Xcite's virtual employment workshops on Microsoft Teams every Thursday at 1.30pm

🌐 www.harrow.gov.uk/jobs/careers-advice-training

CIDORI

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PROPERTY SERVICES

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Brennan

Wates

FORMING CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN CONSTRUCTION

Wates are
sponsoring
10 places



CONSTRUCT A CAREER 2021

Pre- Employment Sector Based
Work Academy
Programme(SWAP)

Construction is one of the UK's fastest growing industries – the range of projects in your area makes it one of the most challenging and exciting sectors in which to build a career. When you add into the mix a blend of Digital, Securing Employment & Personal Resilience skills, this cements together a fantastic 3 week learning opportunity!



Course Enrolment Requirements:

- Age 19+ before 31.08.20 on JSA / ESA / UC / Income Support
- Photo ID required
- Laptop/PC/Tablet essential (no smart phones)
- UK resident 3 years minimum

Get the learning you need on-line and get ready for work with our qualified tutor, via 'Zoom' App from the comfort of your own home.

Advice and guidance sessions with our partners at Wates Group, plus our own recruitment expert to help you into work.

Superb employers: weekly job fairs held every Wednesday to meet potential employers!

First stage interview with construction specialists O'Neill & Brennan.

3 WEEKS ON-LINE TUTOR LED PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRAINING:
Every Monday @10:00am rolling classes with numerous tutors - referred to next available date

JUST SOME OF THE TOPICS COVERED:

- Starting work in the construction industry
- Health & safety - accidents at work, site safety and working at heights
- Asbestos Awareness, Manual Handling, Fire Marshall and Wellbeing in the Workplace
- Digital Skills - essential IT skills needed for the course and beyond
- Personal Resilience - how to bounce back & forward from setbacks and nurture self determination
- Work-skills - identify job opportunities, improve your CV & job applications
- Preparing for and succeeding at job interviews

WHAT WILL YOU COME AWAY WITH?

- Level 1 Health & Safety in Construction Environment Certificate
- Level 1 Personal Resilience & Perseverance Award
- Level 1 Certificate in Securing Employment
- Level 1 Certificate of Introduction to Digital Skills
- **PLUS:** We prepare you for the Construction Skills Certification Scheme* (CSCS) test – to work on a construction site, you must pass this test and carry a CSCS card.
- **ETA Online Test prior to CITB TEST**
- We book and pay for you to sit your CSCS test at your local Pearson test center, as soon as possible after completing the training - on passing you get your **FREE 5 year CSCS card**



To book your place on our next E-Learning course, contact: Your Work Coach
Abbey Temlett: atemlett@cidori.co.uk
<https://www.cidori.co.uk/buildmycareer/>

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MAYOR OF LONDON

RESIDENTS' ENGAGEMENT ... RESIDENTS' ENGAGEMENT ...

Residents' Board update



Chair of Residents Board
Janice Johnson

"This year the council consulted us about new ways of engagement and how to make sure they listen to our feedback. Resident Services Estates team also undertook a review of the caretaking service and as part of the process, they involved the Residents' Board.

"Regarding how we can maximise leverage of Social Value, we need your involvement in two ways:

1. Do you have a community project that would benefit from 'help in kind' or seed funding?
 2. And would you like to be one of four residents on the new Social Value Group? This Group will involve officers and residents and will help allocate the 'help in kind' offered by contractors and a small pot of money.
- "In addition, we are very interested to recruit new members to the Residents' Board. If you would like to shadow one of the monthly Board meetings you are welcome."

For more information on any of the above, please contact: ✉ rinvolve@harrow.gov.uk



Resident Engagement Strategy

We have been reviewing how we do resident involvement/ engagement over the last six months with residents and officers and benchmarking other organisations. The key is to offer a variety of ways for you to influence services or get answers to your queries. We will offer a mix of both face to face and online engagement methods.

Commonplace digital platform

We are launching a pilot on five estates of a digital platform called Commonplace. The Pilot estates are:

- Little Stanmore (Buckingham Road etc)
- The Grove Pinner
- Harrow Weald
- Honeybun
- Weald Village Estate



What else is new?

Well, apart from changing the way we deliver social value projects and introducing the Commonplace website in the near future, here is a table showing our planned involvement activities:

KEY PINK = New TURQUOISE = yet to start

INVOLVEMENT	FORMAL	INFORMAL
Local Neighbourhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tenants and Residents Associations• Commonplace digital platform• Grange Farm Steering Group• Estates major works improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Estate inspections• Estate monitors• Surveys• Focus groups• Social media• Estate community fun days• Community projects/social value
Strategic/ borough wide	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Residents' Board• Harrow Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations• New build and regeneration programmes and Section 106• Fire safety programme 'Homesafe'• Complaints Panel• Resident Task and Finish Scrutiny groups• Procurement advisors• Contractor appraisals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus groups• Surveys• Housing Editorial Board• Housing Matters webinars* (see dates on the next page)• Homing In articles and photos
Specialist interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leasehold Improvement Group• Estates Steering Group• Harrow Sheltered Residents Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young voices

Housing Matter webinar dates

All from 6pm to 7.30pm

These are regular open meetings where you can ask service questions. The webinars are chaired by the Director of Housing, Julian Higgins and the Portfolio Holder, Cllr Philip O'Dell.

- **8 September**
- **17 November**
- **12 January**
- **16 March**

We will text and email reminders beforehand and you are welcome to send questions or ideas for topics you'd like covered.

Contact: ✉ rinvolve@harrow.gov.uk
🌐 www.harrow.gov.uk/housingmatters

Complaints process

In case you are unaware, if you have a service enquiry you can send it via the website:

🌐 www.harrow.gov.uk/housing-property
☎ **020 8901 2630.**

If you want to make a complaint because we have let you down on completion of a service:

✉ housing.customerservices@harrow.gov.uk
☎ **020 8901 2630**



Harrow Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (HFTRA)

HFTRA's AGM is on Tuesday 27 July 2021 at 2pm – 4pm online via MS Teams.

For more information: ✉ hftraoffice@yahoo.co.uk

Paddy Lyne, Chair of HFTRA said,
"Thank you to Harrow Council Housing for providing HFTRA members with 20 digital tablets – much appreciated".

Housing portal update

The housing portal (www.harrow.gov.uk/housingportal) will NOT be available from September until year end when we roll out the new improved customer portal, Civica Cx. This means you won't be able to read your online rent balance or statement or see your repairs history. But all other functions will be temporarily transferred over to the main council website.

Use Microsoft MS Teams for resident meetings



LEASEHOLD *news*

Understanding your service charge notification

Leaseholder service charges will be issued at the end of July 2021. The services you can and can't be charged for are set out in your lease. For most leaseholders these cover the following:

- Day to day repairs
- Care and upkeep of our estates (caretaking)
- Grounds maintenance
- Building Insurance
- Management Fee

Harrow understands this is a worrying time for everyone and the impact of Covid 19 on employment and income. If you have been affected financially

please contact us so we can discuss options on your payment plan when you receive your service charge invoice.

If you paid last year's annual service charge by direct debit and if payments have been taken in the last 6 months, we will automatically claim this year's service charge by 10 equal instalments. You will be notified prior to the first payment being claimed.

If you have any queries, please contact us
✉ LeaseHoldandRTBservices@harrow.gov.uk
☎ 0208 901 2630

NEW Leasehold Improvement Group

We are planning to work with leaseholders with the launch of the new Leasehold Improvement Group. This group will discuss service delivery, costs and suggestions to improve the service. It will meet virtually several times a year in the evening.

Successful leasehold involvement helps to improve the service you receive and helps the council to make better decisions.

Interested in joining? You don't need any experience or skills to get involved.

Please contact the Resident Involvement team:
✉ Rinvolve@harrow.gov.uk

NEWSBITE

NEW Domestic Abuse law

The new Domestic Abuse Act creates a statutory definition of domestic abuse, emphasising that domestic abuse is not just physical violence, but can also be emotional, coercive or controlling, and economic abuse.

As part of this definition, children are explicitly recognised as victims if they see, hear or otherwise experience the effects of abuse.

Hestia supports people aged 16+ in Harrow who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. The service is free, confidential and non-judgemental. You can contact Hestia on 02089078148 or at Idva.Harrow@hestia.org

You should also speak to your Housing Officer. **In an emergency call 999.**

ESTATES SERVICES

We recently completed an independent review of Estate Services which was to evaluate the service and identify areas for improvement

Estate Services covers all the services provided to maintain the common parts of your blocks and estates such as: caretaking, cleaning, grounds maintenance, communal repairs and rubbish collection.

The outcomes from the review should ultimately lead to:

- Excellent customer services by delivering an improved and sustained standards of estate services to residents, more sustainable and safer communities
- Better partnership working with residents to shape

service is delivery, with co-design measures to better monitor performance

- More flexibility to respond to the changing needs of local communities
- A more joined up approach by the Council in the delivery of estate services
- A strategy for maintaining and improving estates
- Introduce a system of Resident Estate Monitors - we will soon be recruiting volunteers from each estate to help monitor services.

If you are interested, please contact:
✉ rinvolve@harrow.gov.uk



Congratulations to Mark Fox, Acting Residents Operations Manager and Debra Doyle, Senior Caretaker

An outcome of the Review - pro-actively managing pests

As part of our ongoing commitment to improve services for residents we have been working with the council's pest control team to tackle infestations on a number of our estates. Traditionally we have dealt with infestations in a reactive manner and as part of our commitment to review services we have developed a programme and schedule of treatments in conjunction with our pest control team. This is a pilot initiative and

if it works, we will be looking to roll this out to other areas of the borough.

The six sites are:

- 1) Churchill place
- 2) Grange Farm/Wesley Close
- 3) Francis Road
- 4) Overbrook
- 5) South Parade
- 6) Pinner Grove/Grove Avenue

If you notice an improvement or indeed if you feel the situation has not improved:

✉ housing. estateservices@harrow.gov.uk

Call us if you are worried about paying your service charges



Send in your questions
and I will answer them

✉ charlene.samms@harrow.gov.uk

☎ 07783 875 969

📍 Customer Service & Resident Engagement Manager,
Housing, Harrow Council, Civic Centre, Harrow, HA1 2XF

Ask Charlene

You should test
your smoke alarm
every month

**I know someone in Harrow
recently had a fire caused by
hot fat in their frying pan.
Do you have any safety tips?**

Charlene: Yes, there have been three fires in Harrow in the last four months from varying causes, all of these were safely contained. The London Fire Brigade say around 60% of fires in the home start in the kitchen.

Tips:

- Take extra care when cooking with hot oil as it can easily overheat and catch fire
- Never fill a pan more than one third full of fat or oil
- Make sure food is dry before putting it in hot oil – oil and water are a dangerous mix
- If the oil starts to smoke, it's too

hot. Turn off the heat and leave it to cool

- Try not to leave cooking unattended on the hob or grill – if you have to leave the kitchen, turn off the heat.
- Be fabric aware – loose clothing can easily catch fire, so take care not to lean over a hot hob, and always keep tea towels and cloths away from the cooker and hob.
- Check toasters are clean and not placed under kitchen cabinets or close to anything that can catch fire.
- Avoid putting in bread slices that are too thick for your toaster

**What happens
if my neighbour
has removed their
fire door closer or
damaged their fire
safe front door?**

Charlene: Do NOT drill through the door set as it will make the door non-compliant and not fire-safe. This puts everyone living in the block at risk if there is a fire.

And do not remove the fire door closer on your front door – this will make your fire door non-compliant. Please report it immediately to: maintenanceissues@harrow.gov.uk

Puzzles Page

Word Search

Try and find the 10 words below!
The clue is 'Words and phrases in
this Homing In edition'.

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

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send your 10 words with
your contact details by
28 August 2021 to:
✉ Anthea Watkins
Harrow Council, Civic 1,
Housing, Station Road,
Harrow HA1 2XY
✉ anthea.watkins@harrow.gov.uk

Love2shop vouchers can be
used at Iceland, Wilkinson,
WHSmith, Homebase,
Boots, Superdrug, Matalan
and many other stores.

WINNER Congratulations to Mrs Dawn Urpeth, Northolt, who has won £25 shopping vouchers for winning the March Puzzle.

Puzzle answers for 'Helping others', March 2021

Name 10 words or phrases and the clue was 'helping others'

Help, kindness, talk, shopping, yoga, empathy, walking, neighbour, friend, give

WE HAD OUR JABS



Book yours now at nhs.uk/coronavirus

Get back to the life we love

Community Fibre is coming to Harrow

Community Fibre are a broadband company exclusively serving the residents and businesses of London. They strive to bring faster, more affordable broadband to Londoners, especially those who would benefit the most from it.

In April 2021 Harrow Council signed a new partnership with Community Fibre to bring its 100% full fibre broadband network to 5,899 Harrow owned premises offering reliable, high speed internet connectivity up to 1 Gbps or 3 Gbps depending on the areas.

Furthermore, some community centres located across Harrow will be provided with a free Gigafast connection, enabling local communities to enjoy quality internet throughout the day, and access critical services online.