

Neighbourhood Life

Summer 2016

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Welcome

Welcome to the new look Neighbourhood Life and our new Network Homes branding.

The first half of 2016 has been a time of major change. At the end of April, we completed the process of bringing together the different housing associations within Network Housing Group (Network Stadium, Riversmead, Community Trust Housing and London Strategic Housing) to become a single, charitable housing association called Network Homes.

Simplifying our organisational structure means that we are able to work more efficiently and effectively, providing you with a better service. We intend to make Network Homes one of the best performing housing associations in London and the Home Counties.

Group Panel

We have made great strides in ensuring that our decision-making structure remains strong and clear.

In May I was pleased to see the first meeting of the Group Panel. The residents participating in the Group Panel will play a key role in the way that we run Network Homes, as they feed information from our local panels through to the Board. I'm looking forward very much to working with them.

Audio, Braille, large print and translation services

We can provide any section of this document to you on audio tape, CD, in Braille or in large print. We can also translate this document into other languages. If you require these services please contact Customer Services on **0300 373 3000**.

An update on our Board

I am also delighted to announce that we have appointed a new Chair of the Network Homes Board, Bernadette Conroy. She will be taking over from our current Chair, Andy Watson on 28 July.



Bernadette brings with her over 20 years of experience working in senior roles in both the public and private sectors. We went

through a rigorous process to make sure we found the right person to become the new Chair of Network Homes. It was clear to us that Bernadette's track record, values and ambitions are a great fit for Network Homes and that she is the right person for the job.

The current Chair of Network Homes, Andy Watson, will be retiring after seven successful years in the role.

Andy has played an enormous part in the progress that Network Homes has made over the last seven years and we are grateful for the input and guidance that he has offered over that time.



Helen Evans
Chief Executive

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six months, a £10 Love to Shop voucher.

To switch to Direct Debit, simply phone us on **0300 373 3000** and our Customer Service Team will set it up for you over the phone.



Network Homes' new buildings win awards

Three of our newer developments have been named among the best in the industry.

At the Evening Standard New Homes Awards in May, Lime Walk in Wembley Park was named 'Best Affordable Development', The Junction in Stockwell was Highly Commended for 'Best First Time Buyer Home' and Stockwell Park was named 'Best Regeneration Project'.



Stockwell Park has transformed over the last 10 years. The £200m regeneration project is due to be complete in 2018/19, and is delivering 638 new homes and 571 refurbished homes.

Lime Walk is just five minutes from Wembley Park Station and built on the site of a former car park. It is made up of 111 homes of different tenures including shared ownership, shared equity, private sale and affordable rent.

The Junction in Stockwell includes 52 one and two bed apartments for outright sale and five 1 bed apartments for shared ownership sale.

Vicky Savage, Executive Director of Development, said: "These awards really showcase the diversity of the work we do at Network Homes. In every development project we undertake, whether for regeneration or new build, we take enormous care with our designs and keep people at the very centre of what we do."

"From supporting strong local communities to thrive, to building new homes that meet a variety of needs, we firmly believe that providing good homes opens up new possibilities for people to meet their aspirations in life."

"These awards really showcase the diversity of the work we do at Network Homes."



Tackling youth homelessness in Hackney

We're pleased to announce that we've entered an agreement with youth homelessness charity New Horizon to provide temporary accommodation in Homerton, Hackney, for the next three years.

We will be renting out eight en-suite rooms in shared accommodation to New Horizon,

and individuals will be able to live in the properties for a maximum of 12 months.

During their stay, New Horizon will provide each young person with a variety of support, including life skills and access to employment training. They will be expected to move into permanent



accommodation at the end of the 12 month period, allowing the rooms to be offered to new people.



New homes offer fresh start for Syrian refugees

We're proud to be supporting St Albans District Council in their efforts to provide Syrian refugee families with a fresh start.

St Albans District Council is working with the Refugee Council

to provide the families with the support they need to begin their new lives in the UK.

We are providing two homes to two families.

London schools visit Churchill's bunker

Did you know that we own a secret World War Two bunker in Dollis Hill? Codenamed 'Paddock', the bunker was built in 1940 as an alternative to the Cabinet War Rooms at Whitehall.



Only one War Cabinet meeting was held there during the war as Churchill felt that the conditions inside the bunker weren't suitable.

In June two London primary schools, Avigdor Hirsch Torah Temimah Primary School and Pardes House Primary School, took the opportunity to visit. They were joined on their tours by a very special guest – Winston Churchill's lookalike!

We open the site to tours twice a year and the tours are run by volunteer members of Subterranea



Britannica. The next open day will be in September and we will be taking bookings from August.

To book, go to our website – www.networkhomes.org.uk/Paddock

Hertfordshire residents celebrate Queen's birthday in style

As 2016 is the year of HRH Queen Elizabeth II's 90th birthday, our Hertfordshire residents have been taking the opportunity to throw a party. And we were only too happy to help out!

If you are interested in joining one of the Residents' Associations or you would like to find out more about setting up a Residents' Associations in your area, email us on get-involved@networkhomes.org.uk

On Saturday 11 June, Tower Road Residents' Association in Ware brought around 300 people together to mark the occasion with an afternoon tea, hog roast, children's entertainer, pony rides, live swing band and face painting.

On Sunday 12 June, the residents of Sevenacres, Tewin came together with food, music, face painting and a bouncy castle.



Winners at Tower School bring the jungle to Cozens Road, Ware

A group of children from Tower School in Ware, Hertfordshire, have turned our Cozens Road development site into a colourful jungle and scooped a prize at the same time!

The children were taking part in the nationwide Ivor Goodsite Hoarding Competition which encourages local communities, supported by the site developers, to help design and decorate development site hoardings. And their efforts were rewarded with second prize.

Bugler, our development contractor at Cozens Road, and

Alan Camp Architects (ACA), organised the event and helped the school children to bring out their wild side with the jungle themed hoardings.

Pupils were asked to produce pictures of animals and jungles, and ACA and Bugler transformed them into a montage to be projected and traced onto the hoarding.

Tower School is local to our development and Simon Camp from Alan Camp Architects is a parent governor.

Steven Rothwell, Neighbourhood



Officer in Hertfordshire, said: "We are absolutely delighted for the children and for the school. This is a brilliant competition and a great opportunity to bring some colourful creativity to the hoardings. The results look fantastic and if you're in the area, I'd recommend stopping by to take a look!"

Our Cozens Road development will bring 34 new one or two bed homes for affordable rent to Ware. The development is due to complete towards the end of 2016.



Thinking about downsizing? We can help!

If you're living in a home with bedrooms that you no longer need, moving to a smaller home could be just the thing. And we can help.

For each bedroom that you no longer need, we will offer you a financial reward when you move out. We'll offer you £1,000 for the first spare bedroom and £500 for

each spare bedroom after that.

We will also help you with the removal cost and the cost of buying curtains and carpets.

If you're thinking about moving to a smaller home, please contact us on 0300 373 3000 or at www.networkhomes.org.uk/contact-us



Safeguarding: we take it seriously

We have recently updated our safeguarding policy following recent changes in legislation.

The changes to our policy mean that it is now easier for you to report any concerns that you might have

about a neighbour's safety.

Every member of our staff will receive training in safeguarding, so that you can report an issue or concern to any one of them.

For more information, visit our website – www.networkhomes.org.uk/safeguarding

Welfare Advisors claim extra £800,000 for residents

Claiming benefits can often be a daunting task. That's why our Welfare Advisors are on hand to help guide you through the process.

Over the last year, our Advisors have helped our customers to claim an extra £800,000 in benefits.

Welfare Advisor Paul Wallis, said: "Claiming the support that they're entitled to can make a huge difference to the lives of our residents. I'm so pleased that we've been able to help so many people."

If you would like to speak to a Welfare Advisor, please phone us on 0300 373 3000.

Worksmart

Are you out of work or wanting to increase the hours that you work? Our Worksmart programme could be just the ticket!

If you're a Network Homes resident and you'd like help with preparing a CV, practising your interview technique, filling in applications, basic computer skills, job matching and lots of other tips, support and advice to help you get physically and mentally in the work zone, Worksmart is for you.

The free programme is tailored to your needs and starts with a one-to-one meeting to help us find out more about you. After that, we'll agree a programme and a pathway to get you started on your journey into work.

Your Neighbourhood Officer will be nominating people but you can also refer yourself onto this programme.

To register your interest email worksmart@networkhomes.org.uk

Pay your rent online

Network Homes has launched a new online Self Service Portal, where you can pay your rent, check your statements going back up to six years, request a repair to your home, log a communal repair in your building, and monitor the progress of your repairs.

The portal is simple to understand, easy to use, and will take a fraction of the time currently spent making a payment either on the phone or at your local Post Office. A user guide is also available on our website.

Visit www.networkhomes.org.uk/living-in-your-home/self-service-portal/ for more information.

Home contents insurance: are you covered?

We're offering a new, affordable home contents insurance scheme to all our customers.

While we hope that nothing will happen to our belongings, sometimes things can go wrong unexpectedly.

Home contents insurance will cover any damage or loss caused to your household goods and contents by fire, theft, water, vandalism or floods.

Contents insurance can also cover the replacement of external locks if your keys are lost or stolen, and even the contents of your freezer!

We're pleased to recommend the My Home Contents Insurance, which is provided by Thistle Insurance and offers a range of cover.

My Home Contents Insurance is available to all Network Homes and SW9 Community Housing customers.



How much does it cost?

For standard cover:

- **Outer London and Hertfordshire properties** – £1.61 per fortnight for over 60s and £2.18 per fortnight for under 60s.
- **London properties** – £2 per fortnight for over 60s and £2.78 per fortnight for under 60s.

There is no excess which means the insurer will pay out for the smallest claim.

To find out more:

- Phone 0345 450 7288
- Email myhome@thistleinsurance.co.uk
- Visit www.thistlemyhome.co.uk

Remember: although we insure the building you live in, it is your responsibility to insure your personal possessions.

Making improvements to your home

We recognise that your home is your castle and that you want to make it as comfortable and personal to you as possible. You might want to paint all your interior walls purple, put shelves up everywhere, or turn your lounge into a library. We like seeing properties that are loved and really lived in – it tells us that you're proud to be there and that you're taking care of it just as you would if you owned it.

There are some things that you do need to seek our permission

(as your landlord) for, before you start making improvements to your home. Fitting kitchens or bathrooms, heating systems, new windows, conservatories and turning front gardens into driveways – and many other major improvements – need our written permission before you begin. This means you should avoid buying expensive materials or making commitments to building contractors before you have spoken to us and checked that your improvement plans meet our criteria.

For more information about the improvements you can make to your home, please check your tenancy agreement and speak to our Customer Service team on 0300 373 3000 for advice.



Make sure the sizzle stays in your sausages this summer



As the summer arrives and the weather improves, many of us like to get the barbecue out and enjoy time with our friends and family. By following the tips below, you will keep your home, family, visitors and neighbours safe.

- ✓ You should never use a barbecue in an enclosed area such as a balcony.
- ✓ Always follow the manufacturers guidance.
- ✓ Make sure barbecues are placed on level ground where they will not tip over.

- ✓ Make sure the barbecue is positioned in a safe location, where kids and pets won't touch or bump into it. Remember, grills stay hot after you finish cooking.
- ✓ Never leave the barbecue unattended.
- ✓ Ensure that the barbecue is completely cooled before moving, disposing or placing it back in storage. Empty the cold ash onto bare garden soil – never put it in the dustbin. Be aware that it can often take a few hours for a barbecue to cool completely.

- ✓ Where possible, keep a bucket of water, sand or a garden hose nearby for emergencies.

- ✓ Avoid wearing loose clothing that might catch fire while you're cooking.
- ✓ Keep alcoholic beverages away from the barbecue – they are flammable.

If you would like any further information about keeping you and your household safe when having a barbecue, please contact the Fire Safety Team on 0300 373 3000.

Fan heater recall

A number of fan heaters have been recalled following the discovery of a technical fault. The Center FH-06A 2kW portable electric fan heater may overheat and cause a fire hazard.

The manufacturer has recalled this product and all of our contractors have returned their current stocks. **If you were issued**

with one of these heaters by our gas maintenance contractors before 13 April, please don't use it.

Any heaters issued to you by PH Jones, Oakray Heating or T Brown Group after 13 April will not have been this model, so please do not be concerned if you received a heater after this time.

If you have previously been issued with and continue to use a Center FH-06A 2kW portable electric fan heater, please phone us on **0300 373 3000**.

There is no need to contact us or to be concerned if you have already disposed of your heater.

Help to Buy – help getting your foot onto the property ladder

The Government's Help to Buy scheme is available to first-time buyers who want to buy a new-build home with a purchase price up to £600,000.

Through the scheme, you will only need a 5% deposit. The Government will then provide an equity loan of up to 40% of the purchase price, interest-free for the first five years.

And, unlike shared ownership, you will own 100% of your new home!

To find out more about Help to Buy, go to www.networkhomes.org.uk/homes-to-buy



Help to Buy is available on some of our new homes at Kilburn Quarter.

Shared ownership: is it right for you?

Shared ownership is designed to help you buy a home with a smaller deposit and lower monthly housing costs than if you were to buy on the open market.

With shared ownership, you buy between a 25-75% share of the full market value of the home and pay rent on the remaining portion. When you can afford to, you can increase the share you own gradually until you reach full ownership. We call this 'staircasing'.

Buying with shared ownership from Network Homes means that you won't have a chain and you will be able to buy a brand new home that's ready for you to move straight in to.

To be able to buy through shared ownership, there are some criteria that you have to meet.

In London

- You must have a gross household income of up to £90,000 per annum.
- You must be a first-time buyer or be unable to buy a home now if you owned one in the past.

Outside London

- You must have a gross household income of up to £80,000.
- You must be a first-time buyer or be unable to buy a home now if you owned one in the past.

If it sounds like shared ownership might be right for you, check out the homes to buy section of our website, www.networkhomes.org.uk/homes-to-buy

Update your information and enter a prize draw

Having up-to-date, accurate information about our residents is important to us. It means that we can plan and provide services that are relevant to you.

We are currently updating the information we hold on our residents and are asking you to help. Over the summer we will be sending out links via SMS and email so you can update your information yourself. As an added incentive, if you fill in the form online you'll be entered into a prize draw. You could win one of ten prizes including a weekend away in the UK or £250 in shopping vouchers. So watch out for that email or text!

One small step onto the property ladder, one giant change for the Singh family

Couple Gurpritam Singh and Jasbir Kaur (both 37) were keen to get on the property ladder and purchase a bigger home for their two children. But with high house prices, they didn't want all their money going on mortgage repayments. Nor did they want to keep throwing their money 'down the drain' on monthly rent.

"We wanted to get onto the property ladder and have somewhere we could call home, but we couldn't find a solution that worked for us as a family," says Gurpritam.

Then they came across the family-sized apartments available to purchase through shared ownership at Lime Walk in Wembley Park.

Using part of their savings to put down a 25% deposit, the family bought a 35% share (valued at £156,000) of a three-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment. The full market value was £445,714.

Whereas their previous monthly outgoings were £1,350 per month, they now pay £1,307, comprising £575 mortgage repayment, £600 subsidised rent and £132 service charges. Importantly, it's their home.

"The apartment is lovely and bright with lots of storage," says Gurpritam. "We didn't want a home that was entirely open plan. We wanted a separate kitchen as we do a lot of home cooking, as well as entertaining friends and family."

"Shared ownership has made the world of difference to our family," he adds. "It's such a relief to be in our own place - it's brought stability to our lives. Now that we've decorated and made it our own, it really feels like home. We are very happy."



▶ Regeneration update

We believe in the possibilities that regeneration can bring to communities.

Relocation of Ridgeway tree helps memory to live on

Regeneration is as much about the community as it is about the bricks and mortar that go into the buildings.



Our plans at the Ridgeway estate in Hertfordshire include building over an area that was previously grassed. A commemorative tree was planted there in memory of a young boy who was tragically killed in a road accident. Resident Liaison Officer, Emma White, says: "The tree is important to the community here and we were keen to ensure that it was safely relocated. We worked with Garden Barber to dig up the tree without damaging it and we have replanted it near the soon to be built children's play area on the estate. I'm really pleased that we were able to help Heath's memory to live on."

The Ridgeway estate, Hertford

In April, our regeneration plans for the Ridgeway estate received planning permission. Later this year we will begin work on site, demolishing the five existing blocks and starting the build of 120 new homes on the site.



South Kilburn

We have nearly completed the first of the new blocks at South Kilburn and residents of the old tower block will be moving back into their brand new homes later this year.

Building confidence, developing a career

Providing apprenticeship opportunities is an important part of our regeneration work. Here we take a closer look at one of those apprenticeships and talk to Nomsa from South Kilburn.



Nomsa - or Titch as she is better known - is a 26 year old painter and decorator.

She had already achieved her Level 1 in the trade at Barnet and

Finchley College when she took an apprenticeship on our South Kilburn development.

Titch says she is inspired to do creative things as her father is a famous artist in South Africa and she feels certain this creativity to work with paint - in any form - is in her blood. But she wasn't always so sure of herself. An early dabble with Performance and Drama at college left her lacking in confidence and feeling unsure of finding a career that suited her.

When she joined the project, she was working on a site in Brent and although her skills were growing, she was suffering from her lack of confidence, despite encouragement from her managers. However, a move to South Kilburn has made all the

difference. She now works with Beverley - a mature apprentice, painter and decorator. Beverley has been mentoring and supporting Titch - and both of them have been benefiting from this relationship.

Although she is still quite shy, Titch has a quiet determination about her and says she hopes one day to run her own painting and decorating business. But for now she's happy to build on the basic skills she has learnt and her confidence is growing daily - having already gained her Level 2 Diploma.

She says: "I've really learned a lot being an apprentice. I'm building up my skills daily and I know it will help me get the qualifications I need to do something different with my life and hopefully start my own business one day."

Stockwell Park

Wayland House welcomes residents

We were thrilled to welcome both the residents of the original Wayland House and new homeowners as they moved into their brand new homes on Robsart Street in March. The new building, called Park Heights, is a 20 storey tower with two fantastic communal roof gardens and incredible views from the balconies.

Thrayle House receives planning permission

Thrayle House is the latest phase of our Stockwell Park regeneration programme and received planning permission in April. We will be building 177 new homes and two community facilities on the existing site. Residents of Thrayle House will be able to move back into the new homes and there will also be homes in the landmark tower available for sale.



Spotlight on: Rectory Park



Our work with Ealing Council to regenerate Rectory Park in Northolt began four years ago in 2012. The homes on the estate were in need of major renovation and modernisation and, in December 2012, we began work on Phase 1 of the regeneration.

Fast forward to 2016 and we have completed Phases 1 and 2 of the programme, building 160 new homes for local people at a mixture of social rent, affordable rent, affordable home ownership and private sale. We have also

received planning permission for the remaining phases of the programme.

In May we began work on Phase 3a, demolishing numbers 166-259 Rectory Park to make way for 137 new homes. We are aiming to complete Phase 3a in March 2018.

Phases 3b and 4 will be the final chapter of Rectory Park's transformation. Work will begin for phase 3b in June 2017 and phase 4 in November 2017.

Demolition: what happens to the debris?

When we demolish a building to make way for a shiny new one, there's a lot of debris to clear away from the old building. So what happens to it?

Senior Construction Project Manager, Abi Jacobs explains: "Our contractors sort through all of the materials on site, separating out bricks, metals, glass, plastics and anything else that can be recycled."

"The rubble from the demolition

gets crushed on site and sorted into different British Standard grades which means that the rubble can be re-used for temporary car parks, footpaths, roads and to backfill trenches.

"We try to re-use as much as we can in the building process. So for example, we use the stones and brick fragments to create the foundations for the scaffolding."

Reusing and recycling materials



Contractors Hill sorting through the recyclable materials.

is a key part of the demolition process and less than 0.5% of the materials created in the demolition end up in landfill!

▶ London residents celebrated at awards

In May, we celebrated our involved residents at our London region Resident Involvement and Celebration Awards (RICA) ceremony in Wembley.

Attended by over 100 residents and staff, the awards ceremony enabled us to thank those

residents who have gone the extra mile, driving forward service improvement for the benefit of all residents.

Sarah Tickner, Community Engagement and Investment Manager, said: "These awards are our way of recognising the

important contribution that our involved residents make, both in their local communities and in the way that we run our services.

"We are always keen to work with our residents and these awards showcase just some of the opportunities that are available."

▶ This year's awards winners

Arm Chair Involvement Award

Sujatha Jothi

Residents Working Together Award

243 Ealing Road Residents' Group

- Kathryn Andrews
- Achi Ejikeme
- Lycia Lobo
- Samia Moktar

Kingsley Court Social Club

- Lawrence Johnson
- Harold Lisk
- Brenda Harris
- Ken Evans

Community Champion of the Year Award

Patricia Hafez

Scheme Representative of the Year Award

Lawrence Johnson

Community Spirit of the Year Award

- Jeanette Cain
- Dennis Payne
- Evelyn Gruber
- Jeanine Margurite
- Lycia Lobo

Improving the Customer Experience Award

Resident Quality Inspectors

- Martin Pover
- Lawrence Johnson
- Darcy Alkins

Contribution to Service Improvement Award

- Abiodun Adeyemi
- Dee Alapafuja
- Emma Grant
- Geraldine Kwokori
- Gerod Harris
- Helen Oriot
- Kate Elliot
- Mohamed Abubaker
- Sujatha Jothi

Older Person of the Year

Anna Viero (Community Champion)

Involved Resident of the Year

Dianne Larrington

For more information about ways that you can get involved, visit our website www.networkhomes.org.uk

Group Panel gets started

Residents from across London and Hertfordshire came together at the first ever Network Homes Group Panel meeting on Wednesday 15 June.

The Panel is made up of representatives from each existing local group. They will play a key role in making sure that services are as good as they can be, wherever you live.

Ian Lamerton, Co-regulation Manager for Herts and Out of London, explains: "This was the first chance for members of the

Group Panel to meet and get a taste of what they can achieve together. The Panel will use service information to commission scrutiny reviews and mystery shopping projects across Network Homes. This will give them a great ability to bring about service improvements."

If you would like to know more about how the local panel in your area will make a difference, contact the Resident Engagement team on Get-Involved@networkhomes.org.uk or call 0300 373 3000.

Your Group Panel members are:

- Helen Barnard
- Teresa Burrows
- Jacqui Coleman
- Peter Fiddeman
- Satish Jassal
- Julia Jennings-Hatt
- Andrew Lee
- Nick Sharman

Representatives from SW9 Community Housing will join the Panel at a later date.

Resident Involvement Framework: we want your views

We are starting to form a framework for our resident involvement and we'd like your help.

The result will be guidelines that explain how we will seek your involvement in services and improvements to ensure that we are giving you a choice in the way we work with you, and a structure for listening to your comments and receiving feedback. It will also provide a framework for how you can work with your neighbours to directly improve your community.

This framework is a core part of

our statutory requirement, so you'll be helping us to lay down the foundations of our resident engagement agenda - an important piece of work that lies at the very core of what Network Homes is about.

We'll be consulting with all our residents towards the end of September 2016 and we want to hear from you if you would like to take part in the process.

We'll be working closely with our local and group panels but we also want residents generally - across all areas and type of tenancy or

home ownership - to comment on the draft strategy and to give us feedback.

The comments we receive from you will inform the framework that will go to our Board for approval in early 2017.

If you would like to take part in the consultation, please contact Ian Lamerton at our Hertford office on 01992 800629, or by email at ian.lamerton@networkhomes.org.uk by 5pm on Wednesday 31 August 2016.



▶ You're invited!

Network Homes Residents' Day 2016
Saturday 24 September 11am-3:30pm
The Drum, Brent Civic Centre, Wembley Park

- ▶ **Interested in housing hot topics?** Come and meet the team from Network Homes.
- ▶ **Want to know more about welfare reform and how it will affect you?** Find out more about who we are and our promises to you.
- ▶ **Looking for employment and training advice?** Tell us how we can make your homes even better.
And get advice from our experts.

We will provide:

- Light buffet lunch
- Advice clinics on money management, welfare reform and employment
- A chance to enter our prize draw!

**To register your interest
call us on: 0300 373 3000 or
email info@networkhomes.org.uk
and look out for your
invitation in the post.**

Keep in touch

0300 373 3000

customerservice@networkhomes.org.uk

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