

Camden housing

Gospel Oak edition Spring 2019

Local housing news for Camden Council tenants and leaseholders, including Hampstead Town, Gospel Oak and Haverstock.

The Greenwood Centre opens

The borough's first centre to help residents with a range of care needs to live more independently has opened in Kentish Town.

The new centre is run by disabled people, for disabled people. It provides a one-stop shop for residents, with advice, support and activities to empower and help people to develop their interests, skills and independence.

The centre includes accessible space for meetings, a café and space to socialise and meet other people. Special adaptations help people with particularly complex needs to use the centre and give staff the space to support them. People using the centre also have the freedom to take part in a range of activities including art, music, gardening and pottery, as

well as activities in the community, including swimming.

Oliver Greene, Chair of Camden Disability Action (CDA), said: "The dream of many has come to fruition and now we as disabled people with various disabilities – both visible and invisible – will have a one-stop shop for all."

Local resident Jason Fong has

been busy making use of the centre's facilities. He says: "I enjoy coming to the Greenwood Centre.

Everyone is friendly and I've made more friends since coming to the new centre. I come here three to four days a week and feel really relaxed. I'm looking forward to doing pottery here and using the garden in the summer time."



The mental health service's band members Miss Boshby (left) and Patrick (right) with Oliver Greene, Chair of Camden Disability Action (centre)

The way you pay for water is changing

The way you pay for water is changing. From April you will no longer pay the council for your water charges and you will need to look out for a water bill from Thames Water.

What should I do? Nothing will change until April, so all you need to do for now is make sure that Thames Water have the correct personal details for you and that they know how you would like to

pay your bill. You can do that by sending back the form Thames Water sent you in January, over the phone on **0800 009 4238** or at **thameswater.co.uk/yourthames**

Could I save money on my water bills? You might be eligible to save money on your water bills with Watersure Plus. This is a special tariff for Thames Water customers on incomes below £19,201 (not including any disability benefits). If you are eligible and successfully apply, your water charges can be reduced

by up to 50 per cent. Find out if you can save by completing the form Thames Water sent you or contacting Thames Water using the details in this article.

If you need help understanding what is happening with your bills the council can also help. There is more information about the change to your water billing, including frequently asked questions at **camden.gov.uk/payforwater** or you can contact us on **020 7974 4444** or at **payforwater@camden.gov.uk**

This will be the last full edition of the housing newsletters. We will be including our housing news in our new quarterly magazines. The first edition will be out this summer.

Using football to build confidence

St Pancras Way TRA have been doing great work with their under 13s football club.

The club started two and a half years ago with the aim of tackling childhood obesity and antisocial behaviour as well as promoting confidence and team building.

The children are taught by FA qualified local football team Somers Town Future and is run by TRA Chair Momota Khatoon with some helpful volunteers. Mark Brown, a local senior youth worker, has also been very supportive helping the team find somewhere to train.

Momota said: "What can I say about our football team – so much youthful energy! Our team



The children have become more confident since joining the team

is a way of keeping young people away from antisocial behaviour, giving them a little hope for

a brighter future and most importantly a means of staying healthy, fit and safe whilst mixing with diverse communities".

Due to the success of the team and the impact it is having on the children, it's being opened up to the rest of the borough. It's free to join, so if you have a child under 13 that would benefit from taking part, contact Momota on **07400 293 393** or email **momotakhatoon@yahoo.co.uk**

If you are a TRA rep or a resident and you'd like to share a good news story about where you live, please email **camdenmagazine@camden.gov.uk**

**You said,
we did:**



We're handing out fines for dumping on your estate

You said: You told us that dumping and fly-tipping on your estates is becoming a problem, partly because businesses are dumping their rubbish in your residential bins. This is leaving no room for residents' rubbish and making a mess on your estates.

We did: After hearing your concerns, the caretaking and estate services team contacted environmental services to help resolve the issue.

Following investigation, we have

issued fines to businesses who dump their rubbish and cardboard in your estate bins. Six notices requesting proof of how the business is disposing of waste have been issued, two businesses were given formal instructions to put their rubbish in front of their business and not residential bins, and two businesses were fined £200 each for fly-tipping.

We are also aware that sub-tenants of some of our leaseholders, who are unfamiliar with the estate, have been dumping rubbish. The owners of the relevant properties were written to and have been warned

that they will be fined if their tenants continue.

Help us to keep your estate clean by continuing to report dumping and fly-tipping using the Clean Camden app. You can download it at **camden.gov.uk/rubbishandrecycling**

In April, we're handing out harsher fines to prevent more littering and fly-tipping:

- Littering fines will increase from £80 to £100
- Fly-tipping fines will increase from £200 to £400

Investment near you

We have been continuing our fire safety work on 150 blocks consisting of 713 homes in **Gospel Oak** and so far, seven blocks have been completed. Works included painting

communal areas with fire resistant paint, replacing flat entrance doors with fire rated doors and installing emergency lighting and fire alarms.

We have completed external works on 123 of the 405 homes that we have been improving under the Better Homes

external scheme. This included repairing or replacing the roofs and windows for better insulation.

Works will begin this year at **St Silas Estate** where we are investing £5 million in updating the district-heating scheme in 500 homes.

Five new homes for Gospel Oak

New homes on Barrington Close and Lamble Street are the latest in the Community Investment Programme's development of Gospel Oak. Three of these are council homes and local families were able to move in just in time for their new year's celebrations.

Mr Miah and Ms Begum moved from a one bedroom flat with their three children to one of the brand new homes. "As our family grew so did our need for extra space" said Mr Miah, "now we have three bedrooms, a big living room

and two bathrooms – the extra bathroom has made our morning routine so much easier."

"The children love that they've got more space to play and our daughters are really happy to have their own room" added Ms Begum, "we even have private space to ourselves that we didn't before, it's great."

The homes were funded through our Community Investment Programme with the remaining two sold privately. The funds from the two private flats sold will be reinvested into the council homes and landscaping improvements across the estate, as well as

investment in the play area.

Find out more at cip.camden.gov.uk



Ms Begum and Mr Miah in their brand new kitchen

New Dementia Wellness Café

The first Dementia Wellness Café in Camden is now open to residents.

Residents with dementia and their carers can drop into Highgate Newtown Community Centre on **Tuesdays between 10am and 3pm** where there will be free activities including memory painting and drawing, board games, arts and crafts, singing and even a nail bar. Those who stay for lunch can enjoy a meal at the centre's café for just £2.50. The centre is a member of Camden Dementia Action Alliance, which has more than 50 members who are committed to making Camden a dementia-friendly borough.

Lorraine Revah, head of older people's services at the centre, said: "We've started with one day a week but I'm hoping this will develop so we can open on other days. Anyone from any part of Camden is welcome to attend but people with severe dementia need to come with their carer."

Find out more by visiting highgatenevntown.org.uk/dementia-wellness-café or call **020 7272 7201**.



Artist and tutor Angus Anderson (right) runs a memory painting session at the Dementia Wellness Café

Get your community connected

The world is becoming more connected, and so are Camden's residents. As part of our Connecting Community Spaces project we are providing free wifi connections and equipment in 40 of our tenant and resident association (TRA) halls and rooms.

The chosen TRAs will have the opportunity to decide how best to use their new wifi connection and equipment for their residents, and the council will support them to achieve that. Your TRA could set up a homework club, classes to get more people online and much more. Once agreed, your TRA will be in contact with you to ask for your ideas.

For more information visit camden.gov.uk/connectingcommunityspaces

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about your caretaking service

We told you in December last year that we were carrying out a review of the caretaking service provided on estates and some of our street

properties. We want to make sure you are happy with how we look after where you live, and find out how we can do better in future.

We've had a fantastic response. Thank you to everyone who has taken part in our caretaking review so far – that's over 1,300 residents of all ages, from all over the borough.

We are currently analysing your feedback and using what you've told us to find ways to improve your caretaking service. We will let you know more about our plans in the coming weeks but to find out more about the caretaking review as it develops visit camden.gov.uk/caretakingreview or email caretakingreview@camden.gov.uk

Meter reading service update

Following feedback from residents, we launched a pilot service last year for officers to take meter readings and provide access for upgrades on behalf of residents.

Access to meters in communal electrical intake cupboards had to be restricted following guidance from the Health and Safety Executive. This meant that

residents were unable to access their meters to take meter readings.

Since launching late last year, the service has proved to be very popular with residents and our meter reading officer has dealt with over 260 requests.

If your electricity meter is in a communal area and you need a meter reading you can call Contact Camden on **020 7974 4444** option 3 then option 5 or email **meterreading@camden.gov.uk**

Easter play schemes near you

Come along to our fun Easter play schemes for children aged four to 13, which are run by community organisations, including Talacre Action Group in Wilkin Street and Camden Square Play Space in Murray Street.

Play schemes cater for children with varying needs and messy play is encouraged – so children should wear comfortable, older clothes. For more details visit **camden.gov.uk/play**

An update on Camden's financial challenge

Public services across the country are at tipping point. Continued cuts, combined with increasing demand on services, mean Camden Council has had to reduce its budget by £169 million since 2010, to be followed by a further estimated £35-40 million from our annual

budget by 2022. This includes £23 million in 2019/20.

In December, we published plans for how we will reduce our budget. We want to make sure services have the biggest impact long term, which means reviewing how we deliver some services. At the heart of our work is protecting frontline services and supporting our most vulnerable residents.

What happens now?

The majority of our plans will require further development. We'll be giving residents the opportunity to help shape decisions around individual proposals through consultations and engagement. You can read our plans and watch a short video that explains the challenge at **camden.gov.uk/financialchallenge**

Camden's community fridge

The Sherriff Centre in West Hampstead is now the proud owner of a community fridge. Thanks to a great idea from local student and resident Tamara Jacobs, our public health team has funded the fridge as one of its Camden Can projects.

A community fridge allows communities to share fresh fruit and vegetables.

If you would like to donate food

to the community fridge or know any organisation that can help with donating, please bring your donation to The Sherriff Centre, St James Church, Sherriff Road, NW6 2AP between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

If you're on a low income and would benefit from fresh food from the community fridge, please feel free to drop in.

Find out more by calling **020 7625 1184**, or email **hello@thesherriffcentre.co.uk** or visit **thesherriffcentre.co.uk**



Try a bike for free

Camden offers free cycle skills training and free bicycle loans to residents so you can try before you bike.

With our free bike loans you can try cycling for free for four weeks. We offer pedal bikes and high-quality

electric bikes (eBikes). To borrow a bike, you must be over 18 and have a secure place to store the bicycle overnight. Advance registration is required along with a £10 deposit for manual bikes and a £50 deposit for electric bikes.

The next times you can collect a bike are **Saturday 6 April 2019** and **Saturday 4 May 2019**.

Those returning to or new to cycling can join Camden Cycle Skills beginner group courses or individual, advanced training. Children can attend Camden school holiday courses and the Community Cycling Project.

To find out more and register call **020 7974 1451** or visit **camden.gov.uk/tryabike** or **camden.gov.uk/cycleskills**