



HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Taking the Initiative- Islington Private Tenants

Islington has the highest proportion of single people (60% of adults) in the country, with many renting privately.



We cannot presume that this is what people want and Shelter, in a recent survey - Private Rent Watch, found that 94% of renters in London would prefer to be tenants in social housing or own their own homes. Such options are nearly impossible for the more than one in four people who now rent in Islington.

With rents rising by 7% per year in London and property ownership down to 64% of households nationally, it must be galling to private tenants to know that there are 50,000 empty properties in London.

London Renters, a coalition of private tenants groups around London (including Islington Private Tenants), has been set up 'to provide information and advocacy for fair private rented housing for all. Recent action by Islington Private Tenants has workshops and activities for private renters, including a documentary showing in July, a 'Show and Tell' night in March at the Lorraine Estate Community Centre telling stories of distant landlords and poorly maintained property. In August last year, the network met with UN housing experts to discuss the privately rented situation in London.

As Eleonora Schinella from Islington Private Tenants notes, as well as high rents, another major

problem for us is insecurity of tenure. Once the fixed period of a standard tenancy (typically six or twelve months) has passed, most renters can be evicted at two months notice without any reason. Partly as a result, being evicted by a private landlord is now the reason for a quarter of all homelessness cases.

In the meantime, the Government has increased support to professional landlords, including the Built to Rent fund which is providing £1 billion subsidised finance (through loans or equity) to private developers to build privately rented homes to be let at market rents. As well, the taxpayer funds £13 billion per year in buy-to-let tax subsidies, reports the Intergenerational Foundation. Landlords can offset mortgages against rental income and deduct 10% 'wear and tear' from profits, which owner-occupiers cannot. It is not a surprise that buy-to-let mortgages have virtually doubled to 23,600 since 2009.

So what can be done?

The Mayor's London Rental Standard aims to have 100,000 landlords and agents meet basic accreditation standards by 2016. But the scale of the issue is now so broad, and it is

precipitating at such speed in the capital, that more drastic solutions are needed. As highlighted in research, private tenants do not want to rent privately - most people want to feel secure and safe, and belong to an area, not having to worry about having to move frequently. And yet the number of people renting in the private sector is destined to keep growing.

As the 2015 elections loom, political parties are starting to respond to the needs of this growing section of the population. Options being discussed by parties include: banning letting agents' fees for tenants; insisting on default three year tenancies rather than six or 12 months, and putting in place measures to stop large rent hikes during a tenancy.

Obviously, not everyone who wants to live in Islington can, but to have so many people now living here in the privately rented sector not by choice, must surely affect our community cohesion. The Highbury Community Association was set up to promote such community networking, and we need to think about what we can do to improve this situation in some way.
DIANE BURRIDGE

★ PARTY! ★ PARTY! ★ PARTY! ★

Come and meet neighbours & members of Highbury Community Association! We will be hosting a social at the Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, 6.30-9.30pm on Friday 26 September 2014.

All welcome & please RSVP to hcanews@hotmail.com so we have a rough idea of numbers, and bring some food to share. Wine and soft drinks at the bar.



The HCA represents over 900 residents and businesses on all aspects of living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park.

Membership is free. Members receive bi-monthly newsletters like this one. New members will receive the newsletter by email (unless you don't have email).

To join or talk to us about anything Highbury-related, please email hcanews@hotmail.com

The opinions expressed in HCN are not necessarily those of the Highbury Community Association and its committee members.



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Historic shop front tells forgotten story



Recently, Mr Patel who runs Lees newsagents at the Barn had his sign replaced.

While the modern signs were down, Mr Patel took some pictures of the old Victorian shop sign, which clearly says "Welfords and Premier Dairies Ltd."

The Welford family ran a string of dairies round north London, starting in 1845. They covered the northern suburbs around Highbury and Dalston with offices at 90 Stamford Hill and in 1894 had four branches and a farm, Haweswell Farm in Dalston Lane. They also had a branch at 88 Mountgrove Road. Come the First World War, the Government was concerned to maintain milk supplies and "encouraged" most of London's dairies to merge to form United Dairies. Welford's building in Paddington became the HQ for United Dairies and was still in use in the 1980s, then called "Unigate House"

The area between Highbury Barn and Finsbury Park was a historic dairy producing area - there was a "Cream Hall" where the produce was brought to sale to retailers up from the City. You can see where it was on the old maps in Godfrey's Butchers shop.

ROGER WRIGHT

Photo courtesy of Patel/Lees Newsagents 2014

Gillespie Park 'Apple Day' 2014

The Friends of Gillespie Park and Islington Council's Ecology Centre staff are organising an 'Apple Day' on 19th October between 12noon and 4pm to celebrate British apples. The event will take place in and around the Ecology Centre with lots of apple related activities, stalls, music and tours of the park. We will have an apple juicer and a display of heritage apples from Brogdale. If you have any spare apples please bring them along for juicing or just to show us how lovely they are.



Children will be well catered for with apple dipping, the longest peel and all the usual fun. Food will be available throughout the day from the Sunday Cafe in the eco centre. Please tell all your friends.

Islington Ecology Centre, Gillespie Park Local Nature Reserve 191 Drayton Park London N5 1PH
Tel: 020 7527 4374 we are just behind Arsenal Station and next to Arsenal Stadium.

For further information please contact Pat on 020 7609 5093 or email: pattuson@btinternet.com

No more concerts rules High Court

Arsenal Football Club lost their case for more concerts at the Emirates Stadium at a Planning Enquiry held after the Council had already rejected the application. However, they persisted with the case and sought a Judicial Review in the High Court of the Planning Inspector's judgement. This was heard on 22nd July, 2014 before Mr. Justice Cranston.

Unlike the Hornsey Road Tower hearing, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government decided to defend the decision of his Planning Inspector. As a result, the case was brought by Arsenal FC and defended by the minister and London Borough of Islington, all three having their own barristers and legal team.

No one from the club's management attended and Arsenal's long serving Solicitor David Cooper only attended for the morning session. The hearing lasted from 10:30 to about 15:00 with an hour for lunch.

Arsenal was represented by Dan Kolinsky from Landmark Chambers, The Secretary of State by Richard Honey of Francis Taylor Chambers and LBI by Robert Walton, also of Landmark Chambers, who also led the LBI team at the Planning Enquiry hearing.

What happened...

As this was a judicial review, it hinged on "points of law", not the actual facts of noise levels, disruption etc. Mr Kolinsky did not argue with any of the individual points made by the Planning Inspector, but he argued with the "weighing up" process applied by the Inspector. "Weighing up" is required where there are some negative impacts and some (supposedly) positive aspects to an application.

Using a variety of case law, Kolinsky attempted to show that the sequence in which the weighing up was undertaken did not accord with what is required by law and hence, even if the actual decision would have been the same had the correct sequence been applied, the planning decision should be quashed and the Planning Enquiry re-run.

Both Mr. Honey and Mr Walton maintained that the Inspector had acted lawfully and that whilst he could have made his decision process clearer in the Decision Notice, he had not erred in law.

Mr. Kolinsky's case was so rarefied and dependent on previous case law rather than any actual facts of the case, it was difficult to get a feeling for how the judge would rule on the case.

The Judgement...

Mr Justice Cranston handed down his judgement the following week. He completely rejected Arsenal's arguments and said that the Inspector had made the correct decision with no room for doubt.

His written judgement was also interesting in that it named Mesut Ozil, Arsenal's recent signing, as an indication that the Club did not really need the extra income from the Concerts, as they had claimed.

The Council and its legal team should be congratulated on the outcome.

ROGER WRIGHT

Towering Ambition

In March this year, the Appeal Court upheld the earlier decision of the High Court, from July 2013, to quash the approval of the Hornsey Road Student Tower made at the Planning Enquiry in October, 2012. Arsenal have now applied to have the Planning Enquiry re-heard. Will they ever give up? Watch this space.

Seasons and Blossoms

We are a new shop in Highbury selling a large range of fresh fruit and vegetables and organic health foods.

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The Great War and Social Change - notes on Islington's home front in 1914-1915

In the centenary year of the outbreak of the Great War, Jerry White's book *Zeppelin Nights, London in the First World War* (The Bodley Head, 2014) and London Metropolitan Archive's free exhibition *Emergency! London 1914* give us a detailed and fascinating picture of developments on the home front in London. Some of these changes can be traced at the local level in Islington.

The sudden outbreak of war caused an industrial crisis in London. The London County Council responded by establishing the Emergency Committee which required inspectors to report back on employment borough by borough. By early December 1914, half of the firms reported an increase in trade, half a decrease. However, by early February 1915, 70% were reporting an increase as industries responded to the demands of war. In Islington's workshop economy, LCC inspectors record a firm of scientific instrument makers in Hornsey Road transferring to making tubular steel couches for the Red Cross, and a firm of metal toy makers in Mildmay Grove expanding their production of toy soldiers. The economic boom significantly reduced unemployment levels; by early 1915 children's care organisers in Islington were reporting that no able-bodied man needed to be out of work. Due to the shortage of men, bakers and grocers were reportedly employing underage boys. This experience of full employment was, White argues, the dramatic change that improved living standards during the war, and ended the acute poverty of many working families in London.

Indicating the declining rates of poverty and need at the household level, in January 1915 Islington's care organisers' reports show families withdrawing their children from the school feeding lists both in both term and holiday time. A large local pawnbroker's business was reported to have had no customers for 3 days at the end of January 1915. But despite these gains, rising food prices as early as mid-December 1914 was one economic aspect of the war that hit poor areas such as Newington Green particularly hard. Rationing was only introduced in London in 1918, by which time severe food shortages and long queues were common. An outbreak of illness among the population was also figuring in local reports in early 1915.

For women, the expansion of work was another major change on the home front and White suggests from 1915 women were present in every field of skilled work. In Islington's factories the Inspector of Workshops reported an increase of 734 women employed in Islington by the end of 1914, although evidence from Islington's care organisers suggests that some unskilled work undertaken by women, such as cleaning ('charing') and street selling, remained adversely affected in early February 1915. Less frequently cited is the social anxiety at the time around women's drinking, particularly in the early days of the war when it was feared that soldiers' wives were spending their government allowance on alcohol. In November 1914, when pub opening hours had already been restricted because of the war, an agreement was made between publicans and the Metropolitan Police to stop serving women with drink before 11.30am. By February 1915, school attendance officers in Finsbury reported that there was a decrease in women's drinking and that they were more often to be found at home.

Considered to be the most severe threat to London since the beginning of the war, in May 1915 Zeppelin raids dropped their first bombs on Stoke Newington (and further east). Just two years later Highbury and Stoke Newington were bombed by huge Gotha bomber aeroplanes, marking the rapid technological advancement and change in enemy tactics. The home front in London was a place of fear, tragedy and bleakness and also of dramatic social change.

Acknowledgements and thanks are due to the archivists at the London Metropolitan Archive and the Islington Local History Centre for their assistance. *Emergency! London 1914*, runs until 30th October 2014. 40 Northampton Road, Clerkenwell, EC1R 0HB. Free admission.

SARAH POTTER.

Image Source: Islington Local History Centre



Islington People's Plaques 2014

Voting for the Islington People's Plaques 2014 reached record levels this year with a total of 6,736 votes cast. This year's winners again represent the rich diversity represented in the borough, and are:

Mary Tealby (1801-1865)
Founder of 'The Home for Lost and Starving Dogs' (now 'Battersea Cats and Dogs Home').

Where? Freightliners Farm, Sheringham Road, London, N7. Having supported the RSPCA for some years, Mary Tealby wanted to do something positive about the number of lost, stray and abandoned dogs in London. Helped by celebrity supporters such as Lady Millicent Barber, Charles Dickens and the RSPCA, the 'Home for Lost and Starving Dogs' opened in 1860 in stables behind 15/16 Hollingsworth Street, now Freightliners Farm, moving to larger premises in Battersea in 1871. From 1883 cats were accepted and the Home continues to operate as Battersea Cats and Dogs Home.

North London Synagogue

Where? Banes Court, Lofting Road, N1. From the 18th to early 20th century Islington had one of the largest Jewish communities in England and in 1868 the North London Synagogue on Lofting Road (formally John Street West). Due to WW2 bomb damage and the dwindling community's lack of funds, the synagogue was replaced by a council estate. Despite being the first significant migrant community in Islington there is little public recognition of this important historical community currently in the borough.

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Ladbroke House new plans to be unveiled at public exhibition

Local residents and businesses will be able to view the new proposals to redevelop Ladbroke House, 62-66 Highbury Grove, at a public exhibition on Friday 26 September 2014 (3pm to 8pm) and Saturday 27 September 2014 (9.30am to 1pm) at Christ Church Highbury, 155 Highbury Grove, London N5 1SA.

The new plans are to use the building to provide new homes for older people with the provision of ongoing wellbeing and healthcare facilities on-site. There is currently an under-provision of this type of housing in the borough. This new application is not connected to a previous application for flats submitted by Ladbroke House (Jersey) Ltd.

Members of the development team will be on hand to talk through the new proposals and answer any questions.

Ward Partnership Meetings

Come to hear what your local councilors are up to and about local issues, from your ward improvement plan and local initiatives funding, to other council matters such as community safety, planning and transport. Next meetings as follows:

Highbury East: 19 November 2014 & 25 February 2015 (venue and time tbc).

Highbury West: 21 January 2015 (venue and time tbc).

Venue, times, agendas and minutes are all published on Islington council website. If you'd like to be added to the distribution list for info on upcoming meetings, contact your link officer: martijn.coojimans@islington.gov.uk (Highbury East), or caroline.spott@islington.gov.uk (Highbury West).

Islington People's Plaques 2014

Continued from page 4

Nina Bawden (1925-2012) Author and Campaigner for Railway Safety.

Where? 22 Noel Road. Nina was born and raised in London, living at 22 Noel Road from 1976 until her death in 2012. Author of many books for adults and children, with some drawing on her life in Islington, Bawden's most famous book *Carrie's War* was based on her experience as an evacuee in South Wales. In 2002 Nina was seriously injured in the Potters Bar train crash in which her husband, Austen, and 6 other people were killed. She campaigned tirelessly to make the railways safer and to hold those responsible for the accident to account. Success came when it was recognised that poor maintenance in the private sector had been the cause of the accident, and routine maintenance of the railways is now the responsibility of Network Rail.

You can find a full list of this years nominees and a list of Islington plaques on the Council website, and the original text 'Islington People's Plaques 2014' from which this article is adapted.



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Growing Local - Transitions Vision



A church garden in the heart of London might not be the first place you'd expect to find a wizard bean. These beanstalks aren't anything to do with a boy called Jack but the work of Transition Highbury's Food Group. Grown using pooled local knowledge, trial and error - and no pesticides - the range of seasonal fruit and vegetables is impressive and

includes ; rhubarb, courgettes, squash, tomatoes, fennel, lettuce, rocket, mustard, beetroot leaf, rapeseed, blackcurrants, raspberries, grapes, basil, and mint.

Having taken some time to secure a plot, the project kicked off in December 2009 when the Diocese granted the group a plot in Christ Church's garden. Thanks to early 'seed' funding from *Edible Islington* the Transition growers equipped themselves with the physical resources and the first beds were dug in 2010 and have been expanding the beds gradually ever since. Starting



with scant experience of food growing, the group has accumulated four years of experiential knowledge with lots of interest and tips coming from intrigued members of the community. At the garden, Fiona, a long-time member of the group, talked fondly of residents who often stop by to offer tips and get involved.

Walking round the garden, I also saw the mechanics of their closed loop system; the rich compost made on-site that nourishes the soil and

the water butt that collects the rainwater off the church roof.

The community garden is a catalyst for relearning lost skills and knowledge about food growing in a way that encourages people from all over the neighbourhood to come together and meet, reflecting the vision upon which Transition Highbury was founded. Like the other 200 or so Transition towns in the UK, including those in nearby Finsbury Park, Stoke Newington and Hackney, the members of Transition Highbury were motivated by a desire to find ways of living that are based on localised food production,



sustainable energy sources, vibrant local economies and an enlivened, more connected, sense of community.

The garden gate at 155 Highbury Grove (N5 1SA) is always open to the public and you can wander round at leisure. The group is always keen for new people to come and join in. Sundays are the gardening days and in return for your

time - and sweat - you are also welcome to a share of the harvest! Check Transition Highbury's website for dates and times www.transitionhighbury.org.uk.

This autumn the group is also organising Green on the Screen, a documentary film season based on the theme of sustainability, with tasty food and discussions. Details on the website in due course, and to recommend a film email info@transitionhighbury.org.uk.

Transition Highbury is part of the Transition Network, for more info about the national network visit www.transitiontowns.org/
LUCY BRADLEY

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