

Meet Emma Keegan, our new Chair



Keniston's new Chair, Emma Keegan comes to us with more than 20 years' experience of working in the housing sector.

Like many housing professionals, Emma hadn't planned on a housing career – until she took a module in housing in the final year of her Urban Geography degree. She went on to study housing at post-graduate level.

A career in housing

Emma started out as a policy trainee with a council and over time gained experience in different roles and teams, particularly in housing management. She says: "I had no career path mapped out, but was fortunate enough that positions arose where I could move around and gain new skills, eventually leading me onto Director level."

Emma spent 10 years as Managing Director for Rochford Housing Association, but currently focuses on her family and her governance roles on two housing association boards. She says: "The regular meetings and running around taking my daughter to her activities keep me very busy. Apart from a spot of walking and running, I

don't have time for hobbies any more, although I did used to like doing a bit of jive dancing!"

Emma wants to add value to Keniston and make a positive difference. "My aim for the future is to keep working with like-minded housing providers and the charity sector. When I looked at Keniston, I saw an excellent value-based community association, with impressive performance. An association that really cares for its residents."

Getting to know Keniston

Since joining Keniston, Emma has visited different schemes, getting to know staff. She was also thrown into the deep end early on, by going on a board away day.

Asked to recall a proud moment in her career, she said: "When I was in Rochford, we owned a scheme that was deemed not fit for purpose. Even the residents didn't want to live in it, with some of them waiting on our transfer list.

"Talking with the council, we

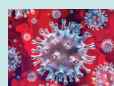
realised there was an urgent need to house homeless families locally. Many families were being sent out of district to bed & breakfast accommodation and this meant their children had to change schools.

"Our residents at the scheme were keen to move and we were keen to transform the scheme into good quality temporary accommodation. When we achieved our aim, it was overwhelmingly positive for the residents who had moved out and also for the families who were now going to be able to stay locally in the new accommodation. I was really proud of what we achieved."

Message from Emma

"I want to send my best wishes to residents at this time, on behalf of Keniston. Be assured that we are committed to supporting you as best we can.

"You will find more information inside this issue of Talkback newsletter."



50 years of Keniston

2020 marks our 50th year as Keniston Housing Association.



Keniston began life in a small office on our Silver Court Estate in Islington, North London. We eventually moved to Darrick Wood in Farnborough, where we have stayed ever since.

To mark this anniversary, we were



planning some events – but we have had to put them all on hold.

Staff chose to support the Samaritans in our 50th year. We hope that you will sponsor us or organise your own fundraising activities once things are back to some normality. You could bake 50 cupcakes for a cake sale or cycle 50k if you are feeling very fit!

Since January, we have collected 50 items a month for the Bromley Foodbank, thanks to donations from staff and residents. The food bank has been good to us – providing regular food parcels as well as hampers at Christmas to

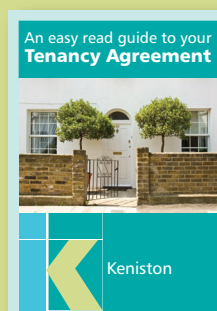
residents most in need. Sadly, donations to our office are on hold for the time being. We will start again as soon as we can.

We would like to feature stories about your time with Keniston. Do you have any photos of your home or estate from years ago? We hope to create a gallery of images of our homes, estates, staff, residents and the local areas, to see how things have changed since 1970. To share your story or photos, contact Lynn Russ – Engagement & Communications Officer.

Better information

Easy read tenancy guide

We have published an easy read guide to Keniston's tenancy agreement, after taking on board the views of staff and panel members. All new residents get this guide.



Information leaflets

We have also updated the leaflets in our tenancy packs and are publishing leaflets on COVID-19. You can access all these items on our website at www.kenistonha.co.uk

Credit union holds drop-in session

Lewisham and Bromley Credit Union held a drop-in session recently at our community centre.

A credit union is a financial co-operative, owned and controlled by its members, which provides savings, loans and a range of other services.

If you live, work or study in the



London Boroughs of Lewisham and Bromley, we can send you leaflets and application packs. Alternatively, go to their website at www.lewishampluscu.co.uk, to find out more and join online.

If you live elsewhere, you can check for your nearest credit union by searching online at www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk

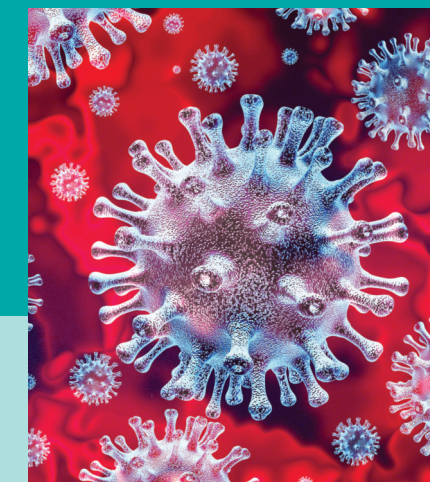
If you need help to find a local credit union, please contact Lynn Russ, Engagement & Communications Officer.

Note: Lewisham and Bromley Credit Union is still open for business during the crisis.



Coronavirus

What you can expect from Keniston



We are following the latest government advice, while aiming to limit the impact on our services.

In this fast-moving situation, we have already had to make some changes to our service.

We now have staff working from home. This is so that they don't have to travel, they can reduce their social contact, and they can take care of their children.

What this means

- Our service may be limited at this time.
- We will only be carrying out essential repairs.
- You can phone us on the numbers shown opposite or email us at enquiries@kenistonha.co.uk

Please note: We want you, staff and contractors to be safe. Tell us if anyone in your household has any of the symptoms of the coronavirus. This is especially important if you have ordered a repair. You must tell us your situation before the contractor arrives.

Phone calls to Keniston

Keniston repairs: 01689 889702
Chris Little (Rent Income Officer): 01689 889708
Jan Lewis (Rent Income Officer): 01689 889719
Sharon Hobbs (Housing Officer): 01689 889706
Andrea Spittle & Susan Rimmer (Housing Officers): 01689 889705
Vivienne Astall (Operations Director): 01689 889712
Jonathan Card (Chief Executive): 01689 889718

Other essential numbers

BAS – for non-gas out-of-hours repairs emergencies: 020 8854 8700
Clairglow Heating – all gas repairs. Office hours: 0800 074 8055. Out-of-hours: 01892 531 421
Allpay – to pay your rent: 0844 557 8321 & 0844 225 5729. Or call your Rent Income Officer.

Gas safety first

We are working hard to make sure all our properties stay safe during the coronavirus pandemic.

Clairglow Heating are carrying out the usual annual gas safety checks to all homes with a gas supply.

Please work with us to give Clairglow access for this check.

When they come to your home, Clairglow will take all appropriate

precautions. They will ask you to stay in another room while they work.

If you are showing symptoms of the virus, you must tell Clairglow when you phone.

If you have no heating or hot water, you can still call Clairglow

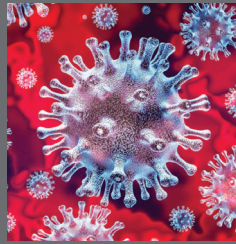


direct. See the 'other essential numbers' box above.

If you have any concerns, please tell us by phoning our repair line on 01689 889702.

Coronavirus

Information about your finances



If you're on a low income, we know this is a worrying time.

There may be further changes to the information below, as the situation develops.

If your job is at risk

If your employer joins the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme offer, you become a 'furloughed employee' and 80% of your wages up to £2,500 a month will come from the Government. If your employer doesn't make up the remaining 20%, you could claim benefits.

If you're in work and not claiming benefits

If the virus stops you working (because you or someone at home is sick) and you qualify for Statutory Sick Pay, you'll now get it from day one not day four, backdated to 13 March.

You can self-certify for the first seven days. If you need to stay at home for longer, get an isolation note from the NHS 111 website (<https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note>) or via the NHS mobile phone app.

Sick pay

If you qualify, you get £94.25 a week in Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) from your employer, for up to 28 weeks. If you have several jobs you may get it from each employer.

To be eligible, you must:

- be an employee with a contract or an agency worker (check at www.gov.uk/employment-status/employee)
- earn an average of at least £118 per week, and
- claim from your employer within their deadline – or within seven days if they don't have one.

If you are a gig worker and/or on a zero hours contract, you may be entitled to sick pay.

If you don't qualify for sick pay, you can apply for:

- Universal Credit (go to www.gov.uk/universal-credit), or
- the new-style Employment and Support Allowance (go to www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance).

Ask your employer for an SSP1 form to support your application.

If you're making a new claim

Don't delay making a benefit claim, even if you think you may be affected by the coronavirus. You can apply for Universal Credit and get a month's advance upfront, without going to the Jobcentre. The usual seven-day waiting time for Employment Support Allowance won't apply either.

If you are claiming because you have been hit by the coronavirus and are not eligible for sick pay, you can apply for Universal Credit or Employment Support Allowance without a fit note.

If you have worked within the last two to three years and built up enough National Insurance contributions, you may be able to claim New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). You can claim this on its own or with Universal Credit. Your savings and capital (or your partner's savings, capital and income) are not taken into account.

If you already get benefits

All JobCentre appointments are suspended for three months from 19 March 2020. DWP health assessments are suspended too. You will still get your payments.

The standard allowance for Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits rises from 6 April to pay claimants an extra £20 per week.



Which animal most resembles Keniston?

We asked our Resident Panel members to tell us which animal they thought Keniston might be. We asked staff the same question during a staff away day in October.

Asking a question like this might seem a bit odd – but it can actually give an organisation like ours powerful insights into how different groups of people see us.

We wanted this feedback to help us think about how to develop Keniston's 'personality' and structure – and think about what it would take for our people to achieve this.

The responses were certainly interesting, as you can see from this page.

"This has made me laugh, and we have discussed it as a household and we think a crab, which has many legs and a tough shell, and can move quickly!"



"A lioness... noble, strong, caring and protective."



"I have thought and thought! Keniston could be an Emperor Penguin. Working hard in adverse conditions and sitting on its egg, that being us the tenants, keeping us safe as we venture into the big, wild world."



"A combined animal of a new-born and a sheep. Slow to take new ideas, would rather go when others lead."



If you are self-employed

Self-employed people on Universal Credit who have to stay at home or who are ill with the coronavirus, will not have a Minimum Income Floor applied. You can also claim Universal Credit to make up for having no sick pay.

Your July tax payment will be put off until next January.

Self-employed workers will be able to apply for taxable grants worth up to 80% of their average monthly profits. The grants will be capped at £2,500 per month and an amount for March, April and May will be paid at the start of June. You can claim this, even if you are still working.

You are eligible for this scheme if:

- more than half of your income comes from self-employment
- your average annual profits are less than £50,000 a year
- you were self-employed before April 2019 – if you are late filing for 2018-19, you have until 23 April to do this.

HMRC will contact eligible people direct, inviting you to complete an online form on the gov.uk website. BE AWARE there are already scammers making phone calls, sending texts and emails claiming to be from HMRC. Do not click on any links or give out any information. When the time comes, go direct to the gov.uk website.

There are more details on the Money Saving Expert website: www.moneysavingexpert.com



Starters and leavers

We warmly welcome Vivianne Summers, James Gavin, Laura Creed and Diane Thompson.

Vivianne is the new cleaner for the Darrick Wood Community Centre, while James is now the Caretaker at Nethewode Court.

Laura has returned from maternity leave to her role as Administrator in the Property Services Team. Diane is our new Housing Management Team Leader.

Sharon Hobbs now works only from Wednesday to Friday. Diane will oversee the Housing Officers, as well as covering Sharon's housing schemes on Mondays and Tuesdays.

We are preparing to say farewell to Vivienne Astall our Operations Director and will soon be welcoming Sue McDonnell to the role.

Keep an eye on your estate

Please keep a look out at your estate and report back any problems with health and safety.

This is especially important, while our officers aren't visiting.



You must still pay your rent

We know these are difficult times, especially if you're worried about your job.

At Keniston, we will do all we can to offer help, support and advice at this difficult time.

The Government advice is clear – no renter who has lost income due to coronavirus will be forced out of their home.

If your income has reduced due to Coronavirus, please contact your Rent Income Officer as soon as possible.

We can help you get access to all the financial help you are entitled to as quickly as possible. We will help you to claim benefit and we can make flexible



payment arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

Your rent pays for the services we provide like repairs to your home, so please don't just stop paying rent – talk to us if you are worried, we're here to help.

If your income has not reduced as a result of Coronavirus, you need to carry on paying any rent and arrears as you normally do.

Securing payments

Please note that we can only take debit or credit card payments from you, if the card you pay with is in your name.

If you can't make payment yourself, there are many alternative ways to pay. Consider setting up a recurring card payment, or pay via standing order or direct debit.

Please speak to your Rent Income Officer.



Don't abandon your home

We recently took back an empty home.

If you're going to be away from your home for more than four weeks, you need to tell us, as well as any agencies that pay you benefits.

If you suspect that a property has been abandoned, please let your Housing Officer know.



Keniston Housing Association Limited

13 Artington Close • Farnborough • Kent • BR6 7UL

Phone 01689 889 700 • Fax 01689 889 701 • www.kenistonha.org.uk

follow us on



YouTube