

Talkback

Newsletter of Keniston Housing Association

Winter 2020

What a transformation!

If you've been thinking about reworking your outdoor space or garden, Annis and Ray Henry, who live at Foxley Hall in Purley, could be a great inspiration.

Annis and Ray have been Foxley Hall residents for nearly 30 years. In Keniston's 50th year, we thought we would share something about their time at Foxley and how they recently transformed their garden into a tranquil outdoor space.



At the heart of the community, this lovely couple have seen three generations of families grow up here. Annis always looked out for the children playing outside and would be the one telling them to "Get out of that tree!".

If you haven't been to Foxley, it is set in very lush green grounds with lots of trees and woodland, and with wildlife visiting regularly.

Annis recalls a time when she was looking out from the balcony and

saw a family of deer wandering around the Foxley grounds. As she was admiring this spectacle, the two adults got up on their hind legs and started fighting as if they were boxing. It is a sight she will never forget – especially as they looked so out of place as they walked past the cars.

As the years went on, children grew up and moved out, then often returned to what Annis refers to as 'the safe haven' of Foxley.

Continued on p2

The **Foxley Hall** site was once part of a very large country estate with a grand house, several smaller lodges and extensive woodland. The estate was sold in 1937 and the original large house 'Foxley' became Foxley Hall. It was then divided into flats and served as a hotel.

In the 1950s, the leaseholder homes were built. The main building was demolished in 1968 to make way for the flats now standing on the site since the early 1970s.

Today, the Friends of Foxley help to preserve the wonderful woodland and the history of the original site. You can find out more from our resident, Anthony Mills, who is a member of Friends of Foxley.



What a transformation

Continued from page 1

Annis has had mobility problems over the years and was reluctantly thinking she would have to move away to find a ground floor flat. Then a downstairs flat became available. The couple are very grateful to Housing Officer Sharon Hobbs for helping them make the move.

Living on the ground floor meant having a new garden to enjoy. But to start with it was a bit of a jungle. Annis and Ray have had to put in lots of time and effort to transform it into something beautiful and tranquil. (Well, Annis does admit that her role was more about keeping the troops fed and watered!)

The couple can now enjoy time outdoors and they can even watch a film on their projector with a hot chocolate or something stronger. They tell me they are lucky to have good friends and family who were able to help not only with the garden but with their move to the ground floor.

Annis says: "I'm really happy here and my spirit has been lifted since the move and the new garden. I hope that our garden will inspire others to get out there and transform their own outdoor spaces."



New-look front garden

Contacting us

Our office remains closed to the public. Some of our staff are working in the office at certain times and we hope to offer office appointments in future. We will let you know more later.

While we are all still mainly working from home, we have installed a new phone system, allowing us to take calls on our main number, 01689 889700, again. This will be staffed between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday, and calls will be answered by our Customer Services Team. They will try to deal with your query themselves. If they can't, they will be able to transfer the call to a colleague.

One change is that for practical reasons, we will not be able to answer calls in person between 12:30pm and 1:30pm each day. During that time, you will get a message explaining how emergency repairs and heating

calls will still be dealt with, and we will keep this under review.

Keep your details up to date

If we have your mobile number and email address on our system, we can send you important texts or email updates especially about repairs.

However, we often find that the contact information we have is out of date. Please let us know if you have changed your email or phone number.



Christmas hours

Our phone service will close on Thursday 24 December at 5pm and reopen at 9am on Wednesday 30 December. We will take calls on 31 December, but will then be closed on New Year's Day.

During these times, our contractors will only be able to carry out emergency repairs.

To report an emergency repair, please phone 01689 889700. A recorded message will direct you to our contractors for emergencies.

Your survey feedback

We need to know how well we have been communicating with you since March.

That's why we recently sent out a survey to ask for your views.



We will report back on the results in our next edition of Talkback. In the meantime, here are some of your comments so far.

"I understood everything that was sent to me. I also appreciated the phone calls to make sure that I was alright."

"I think you have kept things good the whole time."

"Text messaging I find especially useful, as the info is accessible while I am on the go."

"I like the phone texts, e-mails and I love the colour A3 newsletters."

"I have only had to make one call to 'the office', which was answered as normal. Much more so than many other organisations I have tried to contact, so all credit to KHA."

Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHPs) can provide extra money when your council decides that you need more help to meet your housing costs.

The council will look at your circumstances to see whether you are eligible for a payment.

You need to be claiming Housing Benefit or Universal

Credit. They will decide whether to give you a payment, how much you will be paid and for how long.

Here at Keniston, we have made many successful applications this year. For example, some furloughed residents now get payments to cover their Housing Benefit shortfalls.

We are here to help, so please phone your Rent Income Officer on 01689 889700.



Living on your estate

Help keep your estate looking clean and tidy for everyone.

Clean up after your dog

Winter is here, which means darker nights. This makes it much harder to see if you are treading in something nasty.

Please clear up after your dogs and use dog waste bins for dog waste only and not household waste.

No dumping allowed

Dumping large items at your estate or block makes for an unsightly neighbourhood. We then have to pay to have them removed, adding the cost to everyone's service charge.

Worse still, your rubbish can encourage fly tipping



– when outsiders, often in vans, drop off rubbish to avoid paying commercial refuse charges.

If you see a resident dumping rubbish, please contact your Housing Officer, so we can take action. A resident doing this is risking their tenancy. If you see an outsider fly tipping, they are breaking the law and you can report this to your local council.



Super sleuth Danny

When rubbish and bulky items started being dumped just outside the entrance to Silver Court, the council thought it might be one of our tenants and set out to investigate.

Caretaker Danny wasn't so sure, so he took on a super-sleuth role and scanned the CCTV footage.

Danny was able to establish that our residents were not behind the dumping – it was the landlord of the pub across the road. The council inspector will be visiting the pub and issuing a fine.

We are really impressed with Danny's willingness to help sort out this problem for us. Thank you Danny and well done!

Keeping up with planned works

Despite the pandemic, our Property Services Team have been busy in the background organising planned work and refurbishments – all carried out in a Covid-safe way.

So far, the Team have overseen:

- redecorations at **Byers Court**
- window and front door replacements for 10 homes in **Darrick Wood**
- kitchen upgrades – by the end of March, we aim to have work completed in 70 homes, and
- heating upgrades at **Nethewode** (pictured) and some homes in **Darrick Wood**.

Since taking on **Southwood Close** in Bickley in 2019, we've been aware that the existing biomass boiler system is not coping with the demand for heating and hot water for 39 flats. Having set up the gas infrastructure, we began replacing the system with individual gas boilers in October, giving residents greater control over their heating and hot water. This work is due to be completed by 25 January 2021.

We are continuing with our plans for new developments. At **Darrick Wood**, we weren't able to hold the second public consultation we

planned for the spring. So, we are planning to meet the Sounding Board and carry out a Covid-safe public consultation soon instead. Once the consultation is complete, we will make a full planning application to Bromley Council.

At **Robert Whyte House** in Bickley, we have nearly completed the hard work of finding alternative accommodation for residents. We are redeveloping the building because it doesn't meet current fire safety standards and we wouldn't easily be able to bring it up to standard. Plans are not yet finalised for what the building will look like in the future. We will keep you posted. However, we have had to say goodbye to several members of staff who worked on site.

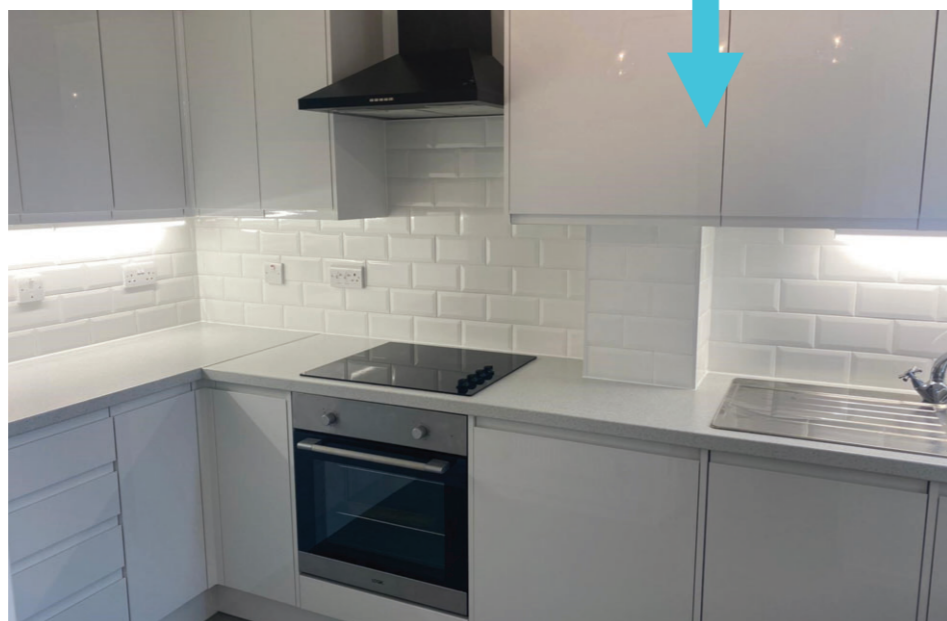


What you said about your kitchens

"Very pleased with the attitude and helpfulness of the workmen."

"Everything was great. The contractors were punctual, friendly and informative and they debriefed me at the end of every working day."

"Fast, efficient workers. Great quality kitchen and flooring. Thank you."



Thank you

Gas and electrical safety checks are a legal requirement.

We want to say a big thank you for giving us access to your homes to carry these out checks during recent months.

Christmas cookie competition

There's a £20 shopping voucher up for grabs for the best gingerbread cookies. Bake yours using the recipe below and use your creativity to decorate them with a festive theme.

Send your photos to lynnruss@kenistonha.co.uk by Friday 8 January to enter. We will select the best and most festive cookie creator as the winner. *Open to all ages.*

Ingredients

150g butter, softened
 150g light muscovado sugar
 150g golden syrup
 50g black treacle
 1 egg
 1 tsp vanilla extract
 450g plain flour
 1 tsp baking powder
 1 tbsp ground ginger
 icing pens and edible decorations to decorate



Step 1: Beat the butter until it is soft and then beat in, one by one, the sugar, golden syrup and treacle. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract and scrape down the sides of the bowl. Tip in the flour, baking powder and ginger along with a pinch of salt and beat in the flour slowly until it is just combined. The dough will be very soft at this point. Scrape the dough into a container and chill it in the fridge for about eight hours or overnight. (You don't have to leave it for this long, but it does improve the flavour.)

Step 2: To roll out the dough, you'll need a non-stick work surface that is lightly dusted with flour. Scoop out a small batch of the dough (it will still be very soft) and roll it out carefully to about 2mm thick. Cut out gingerbread people or shapes and transfer them to a lined baking sheet.

When you have filled the sheet, leaving enough room for spreading, put it into the fridge for 30 mins along with the remaining dough. (You can freeze the dough in batches, if you like.)

Step 3: Heat the oven to 170C/150C fan/gas mark 3. Cook the gingerbread for 10-12 minutes. Don't try to remove them from the sheet until the gingerbread shapes have cooled enough. Cool completely and then decorate. You can freeze the cooked gingerbread or keep it for up to three days in an airtight container.

Step 4: Take photos of your creations and send them to us. You can even share them on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/kenistonhousing

Starters and leavers

We recently said farewell to Katie North, Gay Jenner, Pat Tappenden, Jenita Samuels and Deane McCoy from Robert Whyte House.

We also said goodbye to Laura Creed from our Property Services Team, who is moving on to pastures new. They had all served our residents for up to 10 years, so it was sad to see them go. We wish them well for the future.



Keniston Housing Association Limited

13 Artington Close • Farnborough • Kent • BR6 7UL
 Phone 01689 889 700 • Fax 01689 889 701 • www.kenistonha.co.uk

follow us on YouTube