

# Talkback

Newsletter of Keniston Housing Association

Summer 2021

## Meet Maurizio

# Property Guardian at Robert Whyte House

Maurizio Monti is one of our Property Guardians at Robert Whyte House in Bickley. He is living there while we progress plans for a new housing development on the site.

Maurizio comes from a picturesque town called Terracina on the south western coast between Rome and Naples.

When he came from Italy to Britain more than 20 years ago, he intended to learn the language and eventually return home. But, as time went by, he learnt English and Spanish, made new friends and loved our multicultural society. He made a new life for himself and never looked back – though he still regularly visits Italy and will be heading over there next month for a road trip.

Before Coronavirus struck, Maurizio had been working in cyber security at a London office.

*The Woodland Trust's Sitopia Farm.*



He was on the verge of taking a sabbatical to travel across South Asia and South America. His flights were booked and he was ready to go. But, sadly, he had to cancel his plans.

Instead, he is currently freelancing as a cyber security consultant. He is also volunteering, as well as studying coding, programming and project management, so that he can change his career path.

In a bid to find affordable and flexible housing, Maurizio was previously a house sitter. For more than two years he looked after other people's homes and animals while they travelled. He was able to split his time between the office and working from home. But this too was affected by the pandemic – housing options like this were no longer available.

Since December 2020, Maurizio has been a Property Guardian for Dotdotdot. Being a guardian gives him the affordable and



flexible housing he wants and lets him take part in some fantastic volunteering projects.

### Volunteering

Maurizio has volunteered his time at Good Gym, which is a non-profit organisation that works on community projects such as clearing rubbish from parks and cutting down vegetation.

He has also been heavily involved in volunteering at Sitopia Farm – a new organic and sustainable farm on land owned by the Woodland Trust. It is here that his wealth of previous experience has served him well. In the past, back in Italy, Maurizio had served in the military and worked in plumbing, building and as a general handyman, as well as time spent working as a sales representative.

At Sitopia Farm, Maurizio has progressed from helping with the

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## Meet Maurizio Property Guardian

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build to assisting with planting and harvesting vegetables, which are being sold at local markets and to restaurants in the Greenwich area. He is in charge of the new irrigation system.

You can find out more about the good work being done here at [www.sitopiafarm.com](http://www.sitopiafarm.com)

Finally, we asked Maurizio what he makes of Bickley. He told us: "I like it because of the very green open spaces. The people are friendly and talk to me and it's very quiet."

*If you know someone who might be interested in being a Property Guardian at our Bickley scheme, refer them to: [dotdotdotproperty.com/location/studio-spaces-in-bromley-br1/](http://dotdotdotproperty.com/location/studio-spaces-in-bromley-br1/)*

# Pandemic Office update

The Government lifted most Covid restrictions in England on 19 July, but we are still taking precautions to keep residents and staff safe.

We have decided for now to continue with mask wearing and social distancing. Our office remains closed, but we are still providing a full landlord service, with staff splitting their time between home and office.

In the future, we will operate an appointment-only service at the office. We will let you know when this starts. We are pleased to report that we are not aware of any transmission between Keniston staff and residents. We want to keep it that way.

If we need to make a home



visit, carry out an inspection, or work on repairs, our staff and contractors will require you to wear a mask and observe social distancing. Before entering your home, we will check whether anyone in the property is self-isolating, positive for Covid or symptomatic. This will allow us to take extra precautions, or to cancel the appointment if necessary.

We will monitor the ongoing situation and keep you updated when we are ready to make further changes. You will see updates first on our website and social media.

## No more cash or cheques

From 1 October 2021, we will no longer take payments in cash or by cheque.

We recommend switching to direct debit payments instead. But you can also pick any of the options listed opposite.

For more details, contact your Rent Income Officer.



## Switch to Direct Debit today

Switching to Direct Debit is easy.....



Give us a call on 01689 889700 and we'll give you the details.



Other ways to pay your rent



On line through Allpay. You can download the Allpay app to your smartphone or tablet. You can also contact them directly:

0330 041 6497  
[allpayments.net/allpay.net/app](http://allpayments.net/allpay.net/app)



At any store where the Paypoint symbol is displayed.

At a Post Office.



By phone via your Rent Income Officer.

Standing order or recurring card payment.

**From 1st October, we no longer accept cash or cheque payments**





# Collecting for food banks

We have been collecting donations for the Bromley food banks. Many thanks for your support so far.

You are welcome to drop off your donations each fortnight, to the Darrick Wood community centre in Farnborough. Please ask Lynn Russ for more details.

# Fundraising for Samaritans

We recently hosted another table sale at our Bickley scheme, in aid of Samaritans. All remaining donations were then given to St Christopher's Hospice, so that others could benefit too.



## Take care of your garden

Keeping your front and back gardens tidy is one of your responsibilities as our tenant.

We're pleased when you take a pride in your gardens. But please look out for self-seeded trees – they are easier to pull out when small.

The communal planters at Merrow Street are looking great and we have recently filled in the pond at Southwood Close, replacing it with new planting.



## e-scooters Don't break the law!

e-scooter rental schemes are being trialled in London and elsewhere. You can rent one if you have a full or provisional driving licence.

However, the rules are different for private owners. Despite having to licence, tax and insure your e-scooter, it is illegal for you to use it on any public road, path, or cycle lane. If you do, you could be fined £300 or have your scooter seized.

With permission, you can use your e-scooter on private land. We don't currently allow this on our land, but we are seeking residents' views.

## Be a careful dog owner

Being a dog owner comes with responsibilities.

Dog fouling ranks as a top complaint received by local councils – and by Keniston too.

You must 'scoop the poop' in public and communal areas, to avoid causing illness in people or animals. If you can't find a suitable bin while out, you need to bin it at home.

You must keep your dog on a lead when in our public and communal areas.

Whatever the type of dog, you must not let it be dangerously out of control (ready to injure or terrify someone).



# Leavers and starters

## New faces

We recently said fairwell to Paul Alderson, who had been covering the Housing Officer role with Sharon Hobbs.

Kelsey Thorogood has now joined and will be Sharon's job share.

We have welcomed back Lorraine Bull, who used to work at Robert Whyte House. She is now our cleaner at Tarling Close.

Michael Jarrett has joined us as Interim Finance

Director, while Andrew Shiatis is temporarily away from Keniston.

We also have a new Housing Services Team Leader, Aaron Nicholson.

## Your housing officers

Andrea Spittle and Susan Rimmer jobshare to cover Darrick Wood, Southwood Close, Whites Meadow and Meadow Cottage

Kelsey Thorogood and Sharon Hobbs jobshare to cover all our other schemes.

## Meet Kelsey

Hi, I'm Kelsey Thorogood. I joined Keniston in June as a Housing Officer and will be job sharing with Sharon Hobbs.

I previously worked for a large housing association for seven years, first as a Lettings Agent and then as a Housing Officer.

My new job role involves managing scheme-based staff to ensure the schemes are a safe and pleasant environment for our residents.

I will also be your first point of contact, with Sharon, to deal with any enquiries or issues you wish to discuss. I look forward to building a good relationship with my new residents.



## How to report your repair

### During office hours

General repairs

Phone Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm, on 01689 889700.

Text REPAIR to 07376 617616.

Email [reportingrepairs@kenistonha.co.uk](mailto:reportingrepairs@kenistonha.co.uk) (give us your address and contact details as well repair details).

Complete the [online form](http://www.kenistonha.co.uk) at [www.kenistonha.co.uk](http://www.kenistonha.co.uk)

Heating & hot water repairs

Phone Clairglow, during office hours, on 0800 074 8055.

### Emergencies outside office hours

Phone 01689 889700 and choose between BAS (general repairs) or Clairglow (heating/hot water repairs).



## Bin it, don't flush it

Don't pour or flush the wrong things into our drainage systems – or you could end up footing the bill.

More of you have been reporting blocked sinks and toilets in recent weeks. But keeping the pipes that serve your flat clear is your responsibility.

This means if you call out our contractors, we may recharge you the cost of putting things right.

You can avoid blockages by remembering to bin items that should not go down your loo or sink. Here are some hints.



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