



Grenfell Tower: shock and sorrow



PIC: CHRISTINE DESBOROUGH

The comment wall set up by local volunteers to remember loved ones lost in the fire

On behalf of all staff, *Pioneer Press* expresses our great shock and sorrow over the appalling fire at Grenfell Tower on 14 June. Although the days are passing, the sense of horror and grief remains undiminished

Many of you live in the Notting Hill area, and a number of our staff either live in the area or work there. To all of you, we offer our special thoughts.

Local support

The local community has been giving amazing support. It has been incredible to see the donations sent in, sorted and distributed by the volunteers who organised themselves.

Many of you, and some of our staff, have been involved in these efforts. We have heard of local banks opening at the weekend to help people, and of local people offering their own furniture to those being rehoused.

There are many stories of those who were unable to escape, including a family who were once our tenants. People who did manage to leave are now without a home or possessions.

By quarter to eight on the morning of 14 June, Kensington and Chelsea council had sent an appeal to housing associations for information on properties we could offer.

We have responded by offering what we can, including the use of one of our sheltered housing guest rooms to the family of one of our tenants. They were evacuated during the fire.

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Some words from new chief executive

* Denise Fowler

My first month here has been overshadowed by the Grenfell tragedy but it has shown me the strength of this community and the commitment of staff here at Women's Pioneer.

It confirms to me, more than ever, how important it is that we work together to develop services that meet your needs.

I have also just been to the Chartered Institute of Housing conference and was really encouraged by a very different tone to that of some previous years.

I sensed a genuine commitment to giving tenants a voice, listening to what

you have to say and engaging you in shaping services and policies.

If any good comes from the horror that was Grenfell, it is the lesson that tenants' concerns must be heard.

There were interesting debates on women in housing and the need to make sure that equality and diversity is not seen as a 'fringe issue'. There was much less interest in the size of development programmes and more focus on our core purpose of providing safe, secure, good quality homes.

I hope to see all of these come across in our work with you over the coming year.

Grenfell Tower: shock and sorrow

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As we go to press we do not know if any of our vacant flats will be taken up but if they are needed by people made homeless by this harrowing fire, we will do all we can to help. We have no doubt that you will make them very welcome.

Despite our own record on fire safety being strong, on the day of the fire we felt it important to make immediate contact with all of you to offer our reassurance.

Our staff hand-delivered letters to every one of you. We want to be quite sure that all of you know what to do if a fire breaks out, so our letters included a reminder.

But we also wanted you to tell us if you feel there is more we could do to make your building safe. We have had many responses from you, most of them positive.

We are grateful to Dulcie Ahmed Ackland of 29 Stanley Gardens who phoned us on the morning of 14 June to say she was so upset by the fire that she wanted to tell us how much she appreciates the fire precautions at her sheltered housing scheme, the fire drills especially.

Where any of you have had queries

or concerns, asset manager Roger Barton has dealt with these.

Roger is also reviewing fire safety in all your homes. A tragedy like this means we look at everything with fresh eyes and, while nothing major has been identified, we will make improvements.

Your housing officer will be in touch if any work is planned for your property. We have also written to some of you about items still being left in the common parts of buildings, the correct use of fire doors, and evacuation routes in the event of fire.

Please also read our **fire safety advice** on **page 7** of this issue.

FIRE RISK REVIEW

- Reminding all of you of our common parts policy and why to keep fire doors closed
- Reminding you of our evacuation protocols
- Identifying and finding a solution for any of you unable to leave a building unaided
- Holding public meetings to talk with you on 5 July.

HISTORY SPOT

7, 9 and 11 Collingham Rd: THEN AND NOW



PIC: LUCY BAKER

Three Women's Pioneer properties in Collingham Road were built in the 1870s as single owner dwellings, part of a development near the then newly built St Jude's Anglican Church.

This was, then, on the very outer edge of south west London, an area of leafy country lanes, fields, market gardens, and orchards.

Census records from 1881 and 1891 show the property owners living in these buildings mostly returned to England after service in the Bengal Civil service and the Royal Artillery, East India, or were gentlemen of means.

The successful running of these large households depended on a retinue of servants including a lady's maid, cooks, a parlour maid, housemaids, butler plus footman. All are listed as working in the three properties.

Today these three properties are divided into 33 flats. St Jude's remains an Anglican church, as well as a theological college, renamed St Mellitus, and still surrounded by a garden.

Written and researched by **Jacqueline Anda**, Collingham Road tenant

WPH RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Looking back on two years of achievements

In two and a half years the association has gone from strength to strength, writes outgoing chair Penny Snowball, and I am so proud of all we have achieved

I'd like to thank everyone for their support, particularly Maggie Woonton, my right hand woman. Without her I don't think I could have done the job. I have also made friends with some wonderful women.

I would like to share our annual report to show just how far we have come and hope more of you will join us, not only to share your concerns but also to enjoy meeting new people and building a community.

Annual report 2016/17

It has been a challenging year but among our achievements we:

- * now have a stable home and the generous support of St Peter's church in Notting Hill
- * have support from our local MP, Victoria Borwick, who is doing her best to make a positive relationship between residents and WPH, with a focus on resolution
- * have met with Matthew Wicks and expect to next meet with new chief executive Denise Fowler
- * have the full support of Notting Hill councillor Monica Press
- * are supported by Kensington & Chelsea's community engagement team, who helped us with our constitution and help us make sure we do everything correctly.

I have also built a great relationship with John Lewis, whose community team donate samples for us to sell at our meetings and parties. These funds go into a kitty for incidentals.

Our local five star delicatessen, Mr Christian's, continues to support us with generous discounts on food and wine for our parties and AGMs.

Waitrose Notting Hill chose us for its green token scheme and we were awarded £160.

We were awarded £500 by Westway Trust for the cost of hiring

bands and premises, and £640 from City Living Local Life for our parties and room hire.

We have a regular slot in *Pioneer Press* on page 3, so you get updates on what we are doing.

We have two parties, summer and Christmas. Both will be funded by Westway Trust and CLLL this year so tickets will just cover food and wine and we hope more of you will come along. The food is delicious and the parties are a great way to get together.

We now have a scheme for sheltered housing headed by one of our residents. This will be under the main residents' association.

We welcome WPH's new chief executive and board chair to their posts and look forward to building a positive relationship with them.

Our committee has 12 members and is always open to new members so please get in touch if you would like an active role in the RA.

Last but not least we achieved two of our most important goals: communication between residents and a supportive community.

I hand over to new chair, Lizzie, supported by new secretary Kasia, treasurer Joyce and vice treasurer Trish. I wish you the very best and thank you for all you have given me.

Guest numbers double for WPR summer party



Musical interlude: Special Branch get the party moving

The summer party was a great success, with 60 guests - double the number at the Christmas Party.

Live music

We were entertained by Special Branch who, despite initial sound problems, got a lot of us on our feet and were great fun. Thanks guys.

The food and wine were supplied as always by Mr Christian's and at £5 per person on the door, it was a bargain, thanks to our sponsorship from Westway Trust and CLLL.

We had our usual sale of gorgeous John Lewis items, including curtains, which raised over £100. Thanks to everyone who came along.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- St Peter's Church, Kensington Park Road, Notting Hill, 6.30-8.45pm
- * 6 July
 - * 17 August
 - * 28 September
 - * 16 November
 - * 8 December **Christmas party**

ABOUT WPR

For more information on Women's Pioneer Residents Association please email us at womenspioneerresidents@gmail.com or call Maggie on 020 7229 8471.

PIC: PENNY SNOWBALL

Your political representatives

The June election brought some unexpected changes to the political map of the UK.

Despite a strong swing towards Labour across the country, most of you are still represented by the same member of parliament (MP) you had before the election. The exception of course is Kensington.

See below for details of the MP for the part of London you live in.

CHELSEA & FULHAM

Greg Hands (CON)

EALING CENTRAL & ACTON

Rupa Huq (LAB)

EAST HARROW

Bob Blackman (CON)

HAMMERSMITH

Andy Slaughter (LAB)

HAMPSTEAD & KILBURN

Tulip Siddiq (LAB)

HAYES & HARLINGTON

John McDonnell (LAB)

KENSINGTON

Emma Dent Coad (LAB)

PUTNEY

Justine Greening (CON)

RUISLIP, NORTHWOOD & PINNER

Nick Hurd (CON)

UXBRIDGE & SOUTH RUISLIP

Boris Johnson (CON)

WESTMINSTER NORTH

Karen Buck (LAB)

Your MP has a duty to represent your interests. It does not matter if you did not vote for him or her. If you have a problem you would like your MP to help you with, please contact their constituency office or call the House of Commons on ☎0800 112 4272.

Hung parliament leaves housing with no clear direction

When we planned the summer edition of *Pioneer Press* we expected to tell you what the Conservative Party manifesto would mean for **government housing policy**. Christine Desborough takes an impartial look at what may be in store

Little did we know on 8 June that Mrs May wouldn't sweep to an emphatic victory. That instead she would be making a deal with Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and be facing a revitalised Labour opposition.

CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO

- Build a million extra homes by the end of 2022
- Aim to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027 through a homelessness reduction task force
- Agree Council Housing Deals with ambitious councils to help them build more social housing and offer low-cost capital funding
- Offer fixed term tenancies
- Encourage modern methods of construction
- Build better houses of the quality of earlier generations of housing
- Protect the Green Belt
- Build more homes for older people
- Build more housing for multi-generational families
- Build 160,000 houses on government-owned land
- Reinvest in infrastructure, vital services and more housing so that councils and housing associations benefit from higher market value, and pass this down to communities
- Continue flood defence schemes

[Note: The voluntary right to buy didn't seem to get a mention – Ed]

What the next few months will bring is anyone's guess so, instead, here is what the Conservatives and Labour promised would be the basis of their housing policies. There is, of course, no guarantee that any political party will keep its promises.

LABOUR MANIFESTO

- Build at least 100,000 council and housing association homes a year
- Set out a plan to end rough sleeping by 2022 by making 4000 extra homes available for people with a history of rough sleeping
- Start work on a new generation of New Towns
- Insulate more homes and consult on minimum space standards
- Make choice and downsizing options available for older people
- Build 'thousands' more low-cost homes for first time buyers
- Give local people buying their first home 'first dibs' on new homes in the area
- Guarantee Help to Buy funding until 2027
- Scrap the bedroom tax.

LATE NEWS: Queen's speech

The Queen's speech lists the laws a government hopes to get passed over the year. This year's was very light on housing, mentioned only in 'proposals [to] ban unfair tenant fees, promote a [fair and transparent] housing market, and help make sure 'more homes are built'.

Remarkable women: Joan's 100th takes sisters' tally to 300

THE PIONEER PRESS INTERVIEW

In April, Joan Massey, our tenant for almost 40 years, turned 100. Clutching a bunch of flowers, housing inclusion manager Aidan McCarthy visited Joan to hear about her life and times

On a sunny spring morning, I visited Joan Massey to find out how she had celebrated her 100th birthday. I asked first if she'd had a party. 'My nephew put on a party,' she said, 'at a hotel near Gatwick, because we had people coming from Scotland.'

Table talk

How many guests, I asked. 'I didn't count! There were two long tables.'

Both of Joan's sisters were at the party: Ailsa, the eldest at 102, and Mercia, a spring chicken of 98.

Their combined age of 300 caught the eye of the BBC, which sent a reporter to cover the event (a video on the BBC's Facebook page has had 91,000 views so far). I asked Joan if the BBC interviewed her. 'I left it to my eldest sister,' she said. 'I answered a couple of questions, but she did the talking – she's great at that.'

Joan also told her guests 'no presents'. 'I said I had everything. I did get a card from the Queen – plenty of cards.'

Born in 1917 in a military hospital in Hyderabad, Joan's life has taken her



PIC: LUCY BAKER

“They said to me, “We'll let you know in three weeks” I said, “No way. I want a job today”. They gave me the job.

Joan Massey, taking on Shell Oil in Canada

to all four corners of the world. After a childhood in what was then India, her family moved to Burma, moving to London as war loomed in 1937.

In 1940, Joan started her first job, with Bomber Command. Employed as a draughtsperson, she hand-drew maps, using codenames for locations. She also compiled top secret dossiers of aerial photographs showing bomb damage: 'King George got one, Winston Churchill, Eisenhower – all the big cheeses got one.'

After the war Joan moved to Canada, landing a job within days as a draughtsperson for Shell Oil. Fittingly, this was pioneering work for a woman. She was the first to do so, and on a man's wage, no less.

Joan takes up the story: 'They'd never heard of a female draughtsman! I walked down, filled in the form, and they said to me, “We'll let you know in three weeks.” I said, “No way. I want a job today.” They gave me the job.'

She moved back to London in the early 1950s, but adds: 'I got cheesed off with London, turned around to my mum and said, “I'm emigrating”. She said “OK”. That's when I went to New Zealand.'

Planning to stay a month, she spent three years there before returning to Canada 'I think I had itchy feet.'

Joan has been our tenant since 1978, and has lived in her flat in Holland Park since 1988. How does she think London has changed? 'A lot. I knew the City of London like the back of my hand, but not any more.'

Joan cherishes her independence, and having her own space. 'I get cabin fever here sometimes so try to go out. It's a bit of a chore getting down the front steps, but I take a taxi to John Lewis to do my shopping.'

'I used to go there for a cup of coffee but it wasn't worth queuing up. You can get a better one at home. And I have very nice neighbours. It's very quiet here, even though we're on a main road. I tried moving out twice, but changed my mind.'

It was a pleasure and a privilege to meet Joan and all of us at Women's Pioneer Housing send her our warmest congratulations.

MAKE YOUR OWN CHANGE

COFFEE MORNINGS WITH WAND UK

EMPOWERING WOMEN TO BECOME
AGENTS FOR YOUR OWN CHANGE

Come along to WAND's free Friday coffee mornings at Mary Smith Court for an informal chat with us, one-to-one, to find out what we can do for you.

FRIDAY 8 AND 22 SEPTEMBER from 10am

FRIDAY 6 AND 20 OCTOBER from 10am

We can offer you

- advocacy and support, information and general advice
- help to find a job
- opportunities to volunteer
- training workshops
- emotional and wellbeing support
- tai chi, yoga or zumba
- and much more!

all
women
welcome

WAND UK

THE WOMEN'S
ASSOCIATION FOR
NETWORKING &
DEVELOPMENT

We help women control the direction of their lives

We work with lone parents, unemployed women, asylum seekers and refugees, and women infected with or affected by HIV

St Charles Centre for Health & Wellbeing, Exmoor Street, London W10 6DZ

☎ 020 8962 4132

☎ 07813 485 607

www.wanduk.org

Hoarding: when saving stuff for a rainy day gets out of hand

Clutter and hoarding are major fire risks. Though they are very difficult to deal with sensitively, ignoring them is not an option, writes housing inclusion manager Aidan McCarthy.

We all find that over time we end up with bits and pieces we don't need. Most of us will have the occasional clear out when we spring clean or look for goods to give to a charity shop.

Keeping tabs on the problem can be harder if you are less mobile due to age, illness or injury. But hoarding has since 2013 also been recognised as a sign of poor mental health.

It is estimated to affect between 2-5% of the UK population and that only 5% of these people get help.

WHEN IS IT A PROBLEM?

If you cannot get to your bed, use your bath or move easily around your kitchen because of boxes and bags, or piles of clothes and other goods, you have a problem.

WHY SHOULD I WORRY?

One in three people who die in a house fire is a hoarder. And as the vast majority of you live in flats in shared buildings, a fire risk in one flat puts your neighbours at risk too.

SHOULD I ASK FOR HELP?

The first and hardest step is admitting you have a problem. If clutter or your collecting is out of control we can help you get support to address your problem and get your home back in a safe and pleasant condition.

WHAT IF I HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT A FRIEND OR NEIGHBOUR?

If you have concerns about a friend or neighbour's hoarding or behaviour, please let us know, in confidence of course. Talk to your housing officer, scheme manager, estate services officer, or speak to housing inclusion manager Aidan McCarthy.

☎ 020 8749 7112

Fire alarm drills: Stanley Gardens shows the way

The horrifying fire at Grenfell Tower last month was a sobering reminder of the importance of our fire safety measures. It makes the response to recent practice fire drills at four of our five sheltered schemes a serious concern

We recently ran practice fire drills at all of our sheltered housing schemes, an event we plan to now do annually.

SOUND THE ALARM

At each scheme, the alarms rang for a long time, warning every resident to leave their flat and make their way to the assembly point outside the building. We arranged for plenty of staff to be around to make sure none of you were unduly alarmed.

Our sincere thanks to those of you at 26/29 Stanley Gardens, where almost all of you responded promptly to the drill. The response at the four other schemes was disappointingly low. Thank you to those of you who did evacuate.

We have since written to all of you living in our sheltered schemes to remind you of the procedures you need to follow.

For those of you who ignored the alarms it is just 12 months since a serious fire broke out in a building just a few doors down from Mary Smith Court. The blaze triggered fire alarms in our building. Some tenants were quick to leave but over half ignored the alarms, despite clouds of thick smoke engulfing the street.

Estate services manager Jamie Beckwith said: 'The fire alarms in our sheltered schemes are tested once a week, at set times.

'If they are triggered at any other time you must assume there is a fire,

and leave the building immediately, making sure not to use the lift.

'If you have any worries about your ability to get out of the building quickly please tell your scheme manager so we can make suitable arrangements.'

Grenfell Tower was a deeply distressing demonstration of how quickly a fire can spread.

Our own buildings are very different but the Trebovir Road incident was proof of how quickly a fire can take hold. It took 72 firefighters over five hours to bring that fire under control and the entire second floor was gutted.

We will be running sheltered housing fire drills annually and hope to see a very different response.

Helping people affected by the Grenfell fire

HOW YOU CAN DONATE

The K&C Foundation Grenfell Tower Fund Appeal is acting for charities and others fundraising to help people made homeless, injured or bereaved by the fire.

To find out more and/or donate go to thekandcfoundation.com

If you would like to donate food, clothing or toiletries these can be taken to The Salvation Army at 205 Portobello Road, W11 1LU.

IF YOU FIND A FIRE IN YOUR FLAT

- leave your flat at once, using the closest safe exit – usually your front door
- close all doors behind you
- sound the alarm to warn your neighbours
- leave the building using the shortest, safest route – usually the main entrance door
- go to the assembly point for your building (given in our letter of June 17)
- call the fire brigade on 999.

IF YOU HEAR THE FIRE ALARM

- never assume it is a test
- leave your flat at once, using the closest safe exit – usually your front door
- close all doors behind you
- leave the building using the shortest, safest route – usually the main entrance door
- go to the assembly point for your building (given in our letter of June 2017)
- call the fire brigade on 999.



Board chair's report *AGM

THE YEAR SUMMED UP

Chair **Maureen Hopcroft** reviewed the year gone by at this year's AGM. She noted that the last 12 months had seen the first full year of our subsidiary **Women's Pioneer Homes**, set up to build more homes. There were 17 new homes being planned or on site.

The government's plans to introduce the voluntary **right to buy** for housing associations' assured tenants now seemed unclear, although it had announced another pilot scheme.

Twenty tenants had begun claiming **universal credit** last year but by July this had grown to 50. New processes and computer software would now be needed to collect the rent.

Performance had been strong last year. Rent arrears were lower than in 2015, at just over 3%, 95% of repairs were finished on target and resident satisfaction was up. Twelve empty flats had undergone our 'more-than-decent' refurbishment works.

The **tenants scrutiny panel** had continued its work by reviewing service charges and had begun its next review, on vacant flats (voids). The chair thanked panel members for giving up their time to review our work.

The chair welcomed new staff and commended all staff for their hard work. She noted the retirement earlier in the year of cleaner **Margaret MacDonald** after 40 years' of service.

She thanked her predecessor in the chair, **Caroline Tolhurst**, for her strong leadership and thanked current vice-chair **Sofia Nilsson** for her support.

She welcomed new board members – **Kim Vernau**, **Claire Thurston** and **Chris Brown** – and thanked all current board members for their commitment to Women's Pioneer.

Janet Davies' retirement after 25 years of service was noted. After a rigorous recruitment process, the board had been delighted to appoint **Denise Fowler** who brings to Women's Pioneer a wealth of experience.

NEWS FROM OUR TEAMS

New faces in our property services and finance teams

JO EDWARDS TECHNICAL OFFICER



Technical officer is a new role at Women's Pioneer. My job is to specify works needed to empty properties to make sure each is brought up to our standard for letting flats. I liaise with tenants and inspect properties before and after repairs are done to assess whether the contractor has done the work to a satisfactory standard. I have worked in various councils for over 20 years in housing management. I also worked on a large estate that was being regenerated, rehusing tenants from blocks of flats that were scheduled for demolition.

NIGEL THOMPSON ESTATE SERVICES OFFICER.



Hi, my name is Nigel and I'm a British Jamaican. My job is estate services officer and I serve Browning House, Nightingale House, Archdale Court, Pioneer Way, Abbey Road, and Brook House. I'm really enjoying my position. All the residents are very friendly and so are the staff! In my spare time I like listening to music, watching movies, and I enjoying socialising and sport.

ATRIK GADOYA MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTANT



I joined Women's Pioneer initially as a temp in the finance team, but was appointed permanently to the management accountant position in May. I have worked for a number of years in the finance departments of several organisations. I am delighted to have found a role at Women's Pioneer and hope to contribute to the value of our services. In my spare time, I enjoy playing squash, tennis and football.

NATALIE AKPOM REPAIRS OFFICER



My name is Natalie and I am the new repairs officer, a job I enjoy very much. My background is mainly in property maintenance for social landlords. In my current role I raise repairs orders and make sure our contractors carry them out in the right timeframe. I like the variety, being able to speak to so many of you and liaising with other organisations. My interests outside work include dining out, reading, going to exhibitions and engaging in current cultural affairs.

Universal credit: making sense of the new system

From talking to some of you now getting **universal credit** it is clear that more help is needed for those of you moving onto this new benefit, writes housing assistant Michael Waters

It is very evident to us that many of you have struggled with the move to **universal credit (UC)** and that the information being given to you by the authorities has been patchy at best.

Who has to apply for UC?

UC combines six benefits, including housing benefit. You are likely to have to apply for UC if you make a fresh application for any of the six benefits, or if you have a change of circumstances, like a new address.

How do you apply for it?

You have to fill in a form online (on the internet). If you struggle with computers, ask a friend or one of your family to help you or use a computer at the JobCentre.

Make sure you that, at the end of your application, you book an appointment with a UC adviser.

APPLYING FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT TYPICAL TIME LINE

- 1) **1 January:** submit your online application, book appointment with a JobCentre adviser
 - 2) **8 January:** your appointment one week later starts the 'assessment period'
 - 3) **8 February:** claim 'starts' after one month
 - 4) **15 February:** first payment gets to you up to one week later.
- There may be a six-week gap before you get paid.** Anything that holds up your application will delay the payment even more.

What can I do to avoid delays?

Unlike housing benefit, UC isn't backdated to the day you apply or the date you moved into your home. It is also paid monthly in arrears. So in the example given below, the first payment would cover 8 January to 8 February, and is paid in February. **The payment will not include any money for at least one week so you'll need to find a way to cope until you get the first payment.**

You can apply for an advance while you wait but that will then be taken off future payments until it's repaid.

You could also ask for an **APA** (alternative payment arrangement) which would mean the housing costs element (your rent) would be paid to Women's Pioneer. **However, you will have to justify asking for an APA.**

Tell us about your application

One of the most important things to do is to keep in regular contact with us. We get told when you apply for UC but that is all - no details.

I will contact you to arrange a brief meeting and strongly advise that you keep the appointment. **I will make sure you have all information you need for your application.**

We can discuss when you are likely to get the first payment and how to deal with your rent. **Arrears are inevitable so we need to have a plan.** We may also be able to refer you to another agency for financial help.

If you are unsure about anything or worried that there might be a delay, contact the UC team. Don't wait for them to contact you!

Around the houses

Small grants to tighten your home security

If you feel vulnerable in your home and would like extra security measures we may be able to contribute up to £100 to cover part of your costs under our security grant policy.

Please first write to repairs officer Natalie Akpom explaining what you want to do and why. Natalie will then confirm, in writing, if we are happy for you to go ahead, and whether we can reimburse some of your costs.

Once the work is finished we will need you to send us receipts for all the costs you've run up. We can then arrange to pay you back, up to an upper limit of £100.

If you have any questions, please contact Natalie ☎020 8749 4422.

Meet the managers - in Notting Hill

Our most recent *Meet the Managers* was in a new venue, for us anyway. We were delighted to welcome 23 of you to the foyer of St Peter's Church in Notting Hill.

As well as enjoying being in a beautiful, historic building, we were able to discuss with you matters such as getting a transfer, service charges, home adaptations, concerns about neighbours, volunteering, the state of your property and much more.

Feedback forms indicate that all of you spoke to the manager you did want to see, and found the experience useful. We had some very positive comments. One of you said: 'It was a jolly good idea and I'm glad I came.'

We will continue to hold *Meet the Managers* events every six months, returning to the lounge at Mary Smith Court for our next gathering in October. Details will be in the next issue of *Pioneer Press*. We'll do our best to find other venues as well, and hope that some of you can get in touch to suggest rooms or spaces which we can use.

robertson's repairs blockages

If the **plumbing** in your flat gets blocked, clearing it is one of your responsibilities. In most cases this will mean sorting the problem yourself or arranging for a plumber to do it

WHEN IS A BLOCKAGE WOMEN'S PIONEER'S RESPONSIBILITY?

If it turns out to be a blockage in the pipe (stack) outside that your waste drains into, then it is our responsibility.

WATCH FOR WARNING SIGNS

Don't ignore early signs of a blockage in the waste pipe from a sink, bath or basin. If water only drains away slowly, something needs attention.

CHEMICAL TREATMENT

If water is slow to drain away you can try using a chemical cleaning product (available from any local supermarket) to remove the blockage.

MANUAL CLEARING

Sinks: Use a sink plunger or hand-operated hydraulic pump (available from DIY stores) to clear the blockage.

If you use a sink plunger, make sure there's enough water in the blocked basin to cover the cup. Hold a wet cloth in the overflow with one hand and pump the handle of the plunger up and down a few times.

The waste may not clear at once but there should be a loud and satisfying gurgle when it does, so repeat a few times until the water drains away.

If you use a pump, block the sink overflow with a wet cloth and fill the pump with water from the tap. Hold the pump's nozzle over the plug hole, press down firmly and pump until the obstruction is cleared.

Toilets: If the water in the toilet bowl rises when you flush it, there's most likely a blockage.

A larger version of the sink plunger may do the trick. It will force the obstruction into the soil pipe.

To do this, position the rubber cup end of the plunger well down in the u-bend and pump the handle. When the blockage clears, the water level will suddenly drop and gurgle.

Alternatively you may want to try a special **toilet auger**. This is essentially a long metal shaft which has a handle at one end and an auger at the other. Caution is advised – please wear gloves if using this method.



EMERGENCY REPAIRS OUT OF HOURS

If you have a genuine emergency when our office is closed please call the number below for the type of repair you need. Please let us know when our office reopens if you needed help in an emergency.

Plumbing, electrics, or other problems that need to be dealt with by a builder: Just 24/7 ☎020 8979 2220

Broken windows or if you're locked out or have lost keys (you will have to pay for this): Just 24/7 ☎020 8979 2220

Power cut to the whole house: UK Power Network ☎0800 056 6341 or ☐0333 32 32 105

Gas leak – if you smell gas or suspect a gas leak: National Grid ☎0800 111 999

Lift breakdown: 21st Century Lifts ☎020 8676 5700

Heating and hot water system for all flats in your property: S&S Burners ☎020 8330 7992

Gas fires and boilers that we have installed in your flat: Daynight ☎07860 234 899

Faulty fire alarm in a shared part of your building: Chameleon ☎01757 244 511. Leave your name, address and phone number, and a brief description of the problem. The duty engineer will call you back at once.

TV aerials and entry phones: this is not an emergency situation and can wait until we reopen.

DON'T LOOK NOW: ANSWERS TO OUR SUMMER QUIZ

- 
- 1 | *Glastonbury*
 - 2 | *DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince*
 - 3 | *A Midsummer's Night Dream*
 - 4 | *1963*
 - 5 | *Cricket*
 - 6 | *Tokyo*
 - 7 | *The Wicker Man*
 - 8 | *Llandudno*
 - 9 | *Julius Caesar*
 - 10 | *Home and Away*

SEASONAL BRAIN-TEASER: SUMMER PUZZLER

More questions to test your general knowledge. Housing inclusion manager **Aidan McCarthy** trawls his memory banks for summer-themed trivia



- 1 The festival which began in 1970 as the Pilton Pop, Blues and Folk Festival is now known as what?
- 2 Which duo recorded the 1991 hit single *Summertime*?
- 3 The majority of the action of which play by William Shakespeare takes place on the night of 21 June?
- 4 In which year was the Cliff Richard-starring film *Summer Holiday* released?
- 5 The Champions trophy took place in England this summer (1-18 June) - in which sport?
- 6 In which city will the 2020 Olympics be held?
- 7 Christopher Lee played Lord Summerisle in which cult horror film of the 1970s?
- 8 Which Welsh seaside resort is overlooked by The Great Orme?
- 9 The month of July was named after which historical figure?
- 10 Which long-running Australian television programme is set in the fictional town of Summer Bay?



INTO THE KITCHEN AT FORK-POINT

Homely chicken pasta

created by property and estate services support officer Cameron Robertson



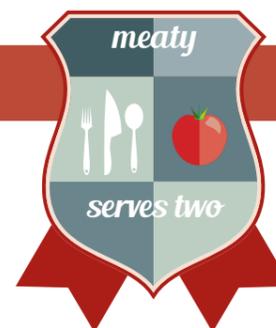
INGREDIENTS

150g spaghetti (pref. wholewheat)
200g cherry tomatoes
250ml of boiled water
one chicken breast
two chestnut mushrooms
one medium red onion
one clove of garlic
one red chilli (optional)
one veg stock cube
salt and pepper
cooking oil

COOKING METHOD

1 Pre-heat the oven to 200°C while you dice the mushrooms, garlic and onion and finely slice the chilli (if you're using it). Halve the cherry tomatoes and set to one side.

- 2 Season the chicken with salt, pepper and a splash of oil. Put in the hot oven.
- 3 Cook spaghetti to packet instructions.
- 4 Fry the garlic, onion and chilli for three minutes in a large pan.
- 5 Add the mushroom and fry for another two minutes.
- 6 Add tomatoes, crumble in the stock cube and add 250 ml boiled water.
- 7 Bring to the boil then lower to a medium heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Add a little hot water as needed if the sauce gets too thick.
- 8 When the chicken breast is done, take it out of the oven, dice and add to the pan.
- 9 Add salt and pepper to taste.
- 10 Drain the pasta, dish onto to two plates and put the sauce over the top.



free events July to September

Sun 2 July to Sun 20 August MIDDLE EASTERN WOMEN, INSIGHTS AND EXPERIENCES EXHIBITION

At St Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, WC2N. Mon-Tues from 8am to 8pm, Weds from 8am to 6pm, Thurs to Sat from 8am to 9pm, Sunday from 11am to 6pm. CARAVAN showcases women as they confront culture, religion and social reality in the Middle East and west.

Saturday 8 to Sunday 9 July COMIDA FESTIVAL

At Cutty Sark Gardens, SE10. From 11am to 8pm. An exciting showcase of Latin American food and drink, with music, arts and kids programmes.

Fri 14 July to Tues 2 January THE CITY IS OURS

Museum of London, 150 London Wall, EC2Y. Daily from 10am to 6pm. How people, communities and governments work to improve city life, from cutting food waste, to creating cleaner air and better transport systems.

Saturday 15 July GET ACTIVE WANDSWORTH FESTIVAL 2017

King George's Park, Wandsworth, SW18. From 12 noon to 5pm. Free taster sessions, performances, face painting, bouncy castles, climbing wall and children's rides.

Saturday 15 to Sunday 16 July YORUBA ARTS FESTIVAL

At Clissold Park, Green Lanes, Hackney, N16. From 12 noon to 9pm. Celebrate the art and culture of one of Africa's largest and oldest cultures.

Saturday 22 July EXPLORE ZOOLOGY

At the Grant Museum of Zoology, Rockefeller Building, University College London, University Street, WC1E. From 1pm to 4pm. Come along and be amazed at the natural world.

Saturday 22 to Sunday 23 July PARALLAX ART FAIR 2017

At Chelsea Town Hall, King's Road, SW3. From 11am to 5pm. The largest artist and designer fair in Europe.

Until Thursday 27 July 'A CABINET OF RARITIES': THE CURIOUS COLLECTIONS OF SIR THOMAS BROWNE

At the Royal College of Physicians, 11 St Andrews Place, Regent's Park, NW1. From Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. One of the 17th century's most remarkable and elusive figures.

Saturday 29 July UPLIFT FEST

At Stratford Park, West Ham Lane, Stratford, E15. From 12 noon to 8pm. Enjoy live performance acts and music, global delicacies, pop-up markets and other fun creative activities.

Sunday 30 July KARMA AND HOW IT WORKS

At The Urdang, Old Finsbury Town Hall, Rosebery Avenue, Clerkenwell, EC1R. From 4.30pm to 6pm. Organised by Inner Space, Covent Garden.

Until Monday 7 August SUMMER GARDEN AT STAMFORD BRIDGE

At Stamford Bridge, Fulham Road, SW6. For the full schedule of events visit: www.stamfordbridge.com/summergarden.

Saturday 12 August TCF'S AUGUST SUMMER HANDMADE GIFT FAIR

At St Mary's Church Hall, opposite St Mary's Church, Church Street, Twickenham, TW1. From 1.30pm to 5pm. Wide range of craft/handmade items available.

Until Sunday 24 September BP PORTRAIT AWARD 2017

At the National Portrait Gallery, St Martin's Place, WC2H. Daily from 10am to 6pm, Thurs and Friday until 9pm. Showcasing the most outstanding and innovative new portraits from around the world.

Friday 8, 22 September FREE COFFEE WITH WAND

Friendly chat and helpful advice. Open to all women. Starts 10am at Mary Smith Court, 17 Trebovir Road.

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POOR SERVICE OR UNFAIR TREATMENT?

If you think we have treated you unfairly or one of our services has been below an acceptable standard, please call us to ask for a complaints form or to make an appointment so we can discuss the matter.

☎ 020 8749 7112

✉ info@womenspioneer.co.uk

If you would like independent advice contact your MP or councillors or call the Housing Ombudsman Service on ☎ 0300 111 3000.

www.housing-ombudsman.co.uk

Ordering repairs

Call the team direct on Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 5.30pm: ☎ 020 8743 4422
Email: repairsresponseteam@womenspioneer.co.uk

For a serious risk to health and safety or to our property out of hours, see page 10 for numbers to call in an emergency.

These numbers are only to be used for a situation that cannot wait until our office reopens.

Contact us

Our Wood Lane offices are open from Monday to Friday, from 9.30am to 5.30pm.

Call in or write to: **227 Wood Lane, London W12 0EX**
Phone us: ☎ 020 8749 7112

Contact us by email or internet:
info@womenspioneer.co.uk

www.womenspioneer.co.uk
Repairs: ☎ 020 8743 4422