



Heritage Lottery Fund approval for our history project

We're delighted and relieved to announce that our second bid for a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, to preserve and promote our extraordinary history, has been a success. Chief executive **Denise Fowler** has the story

The Heritage Lottery Fund, a public body that answers to Parliament, has just awarded us a £79,500 grant to research, share and preserve our unique suffragist heritage.

Exciting discovery

The money will pay for a one-year project covering our first two decades up to 1940. It also means our early records, some found hidden at the back of our safe just this year, can be turned into a digital archive that anyone can study online.

Our founder members were almost all involved in the women's suffrage movement. Some, including Geraldine Lennox, Helen Archdale and Dorothy Evans, had been leading members of the Pankhurst's militant Women's Social & Political Union.

Others, like early board chair Ray Strachey, had been a significant player in the 'law-abiding' National Society of Women's Suffrage Societies, led by Millicent Fawcett.

So what inspired them to set up a housing service for single working women? We know that London in 1920 was in the grip of a dire housing shortage, much as we have now.

War-time losses had left one in three women in the UK with no choice but to support themselves. These same women were being cruelly accused by cynical politicians and the news media of 'stealing the jobs of returning heroes', a charge many private landlords believed.

A new law had now made it illegal to bar women from many professions but even in these jobs women's much lower pay made finding somewhere decent to live next to impossible.

We're therefore delighted to be able to use this money, raised by National Lottery players, to research the women who had the vision and drive to set up Women's Pioneer.

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See page 2 to find out how to take part in this exciting project

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**Funding raised by
The National Lottery**

and awarded by the Heritage Lottery Fund



LOTTERY FUNDED

Happy Christmas

All of us at Women's Pioneer wish you a very happy Christmas and New Year. We'll be closing as usual for the festive season - please see page two for details.

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HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND
APPROVES HISTORY PROJECT

Join our research team,
share your memories,
learn new skills and
change history!

Over the next 12 months, a team of volunteers led by a paid researcher will be researching our history. We're very much hoping that many of you will want to join this team.

It will be your chance to help rewrite the history of women's suffrage and learn about the women who lived in your homes in the interwar years. There are so many different ways you could take part that there should be something to suit any and all of you. Here are just two options.

CHANGE HISTORY

We've been reliably informed that our history is the only known link between woman suffragists after World War One and housing. Many of our founders had been involved in securing work for women during the war and they witnessed firsthand the distress the acute housing shortage caused these same women after the war. We'd love a helping hand with the research. You'll get training and expenses paid and be part of a motivated and friendly team.

WOMEN'S STORIES

Can you remember what life was like for your older women relatives in the interwar years? We'd love to hear, and record, these so we can give others a sense of what life was truly like for the sort of women history tends to overlook. Again, we'll offer training and access to websites where you can track your own family tree.

FIND OUT MORE

Work on the project should start early next year. If you might like to take part, call Aidan McCarthy for more info on 020 8749 7112 or email info@womenspioneer.co.uk

TENANT SCRUTINY PANEL CHAIR'S REPORT

Are we hitting the right buttons?

As the new chair of the tenant scrutiny panel, writes **Kasia Kwilecka**, I feel thankful that I am supported in my role by a team of panel members of diverse skills and experience, the expert assistance of Tpas and housing manager Matthew Wicks

Ever since becoming a Women's Pioneer tenant my ambition has been to get involved and learn more about what goes on 'under the bonnet', so to speak. Joining the tenant scrutiny panel gave me a chance to do just that. Now as chair, I look forward to even greater involvement.

RELETTING EMPTY FLATS

We have finished our review of the voids process and should present our report and recommendations to Women's Pioneer's board in January. We are very grateful to Sam Goodwin from Tpas for all her help during the review. I'm happy with the report and will let you know the detail of what we have recommended in the next issue of *Pioneer Press*.

WE ANTICIPATE FURTHER FEEDBACK FROM YOU ON SERVICE CHARGES

There have been two other reviews put to the board: one on complaints, a second on service charges. A good proportion of our recommendations have already been acted on. We need more feedback from you on our service charge recommendations before we can be satisfied with the outcomes. The panel recognises that these two services are important and that many more require a review.

SO WHAT NEXT FOR THE TSP?

The panel is happy to consider any review suggestions that you have for the future. We have discretion to

choose the topics we look at and when. We look forward to using Women's Pioneer's own performance data, our subjective opinions and building on connections with RAs to give us a wide range of views on what is important to you. All these will make it possible for us to submit informed choices for review topics.

If you have a suggestion, please feel free to email info@womenspioneer.co.uk, marked for the attention of the tenant scrutiny panel. The panel is always happy to hear from you, especially if you are interested in joining! Come to observe a meeting as a potential TSP member by contacting us on the above email.

FRESH APPROACH TO RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT

I'm sure we all look forward to seeing how Women's Pioneer's new resident engagement strategy progresses.

It was a really positive step to see chief executive Denise Fowler attend a meeting of the Women's Pioneer Residents' Association earlier this year. We look forward to seeing her again. This demonstrates a real desire to engage, and listen to us.

We must ensure Women's Pioneer continues to work positively with the tenant scrutiny panel and other groups such as the WPRA, and indeed all of you. This will ensure our relationships grow and strengthen over the coming years.

KASIA KWILECKA, TSP CHAIR

CLOSING DOWN FOR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

Our offices will be closing down for the Christmas and New Year break at 1pm on Friday 22 December. We reopen for business at 9.30am on Tuesday 2 January. If you need an emergency repair over the break you'll find a number for the type of service you need on page 10 or listen to the recorded message on our repairs line on 020 8743 4422.

We're all ears: more and better ways to shape our services

Good news if you have **strong views on our services** but can't spare the time for meetings, or frankly dread the thought of going to them. Housing manager Matthew Wicks explains a shift in tactics, and how you can add your pennyworth

We've just begun drafting a new strategy for engaging with those of you who rent your home from us.

Targets and tactics

We want to genuinely give you ways to tell us what we are doing well and what we can and should do differently.

We also need to agree goals so we can measure how well the strategy works and change tactics if you and we think that is needed.

One of the objectives of the strategy will be to put our relationship on a more level footing. That means giving you and us a broad range of ways to

discuss, as equals, how to make Women's Pioneer work for you.

We also want more of you actively involved in shaping our policies and services. We think this way we'll get a better idea of what you agree works well and hopefully find better ways to tackle any problems that prevent you enjoying the peace and security of the home you rent from us.

So how can we make this easy for you? We know some of you enjoy working with us in formal structured ways, like meetings. We're also quite sure quite a lot of you would prefer less formality, so might be happier

OUTSIDE EXPERTISE

We asked HQN and Tpas, both organisations with years of experience of working with tenants, to tell us how they would go about preparing our new resident engagement strategy. **We chose Tpas.**

Tpas will look at the ways we already engage with you, including the scrutiny panel and residents' associations, our surveys to test satisfaction, and the staff and budget we allocate to this work. They will also look at ways for our board members to get more involved in this work.

Tpas is the Tenant Participation Advisory Service. HQN is the Housing Quality Network

WPRA NEWS

We don't have our usual page of news and updates from WPRA for this edition of *Pioneer Press* but are looking forward to its return in our spring issue.

using social media forums or email. Our board members are very interested in the strategy. Early next year, in January, they will review the draft and set priorities for action. They will also consider the TSP's report on empty homes (see left) and will decide which of the recommendations should be adopted.



Phone calls: TLF will be asking your views

We have asked **research company TLF** to phone some of you at home to ask how you personally might be willing to engage with us in future. Some of you may have been contacted already and I hope you were able to help us with your answers. *TLF is the company which does our tenant surveys*

Volunteers wanted for new focus groups

We will soon be asking for **volunteers** to help us by joining one of our focus groups or just sending in your opinions by email. This is likely to start in **February 2018**. If you are interested, please call housing manager Matthew Wicks on 020 8749 7112 or email info@womenspioneer.co.uk

40th year of service

Director of property and estate services Sue Hockett marked her 40th year with us in November. Over a modest lunch to celebrate, Sue shared her thoughts with us



Sue Hockett offers a few thoughts on 40 years of working for Women's Pioneer

'I was 22 when I started here and before I was 27 I was buying hotels in Earl's Court and helping supervise their conversion into Mary Flux, Dain and Mary Smith courts, and all the properties on Warwick Road.

'I thought to myself recently, fancy having been able to do that, and then still be here when we're putting flats on top of Mary Flux Court.

'I've worked with some very able people over the years, and I am struck by how many lovely people I work with every day here.

'I've been given a lot of support, and the freedom to grow skills and gain experience. I've always valued that.

'I have no desire to give up quite yet but the moment it stops being fun, being a challenge, and being exciting, well that's the time to go.'

NEW PLAN FOR WHITE CITY

Ambitious plans for Wood Lane site

Our plans to build more homes for women are gaining speed with an ambitious new housing scheme for **Wood Lane**. Director of property and estate services Sue Hockett explains

Our biggest building project in years is now taking off in White City after a study by our architects found we could significantly add to the number of homes we let at reasonable rents. The plan involves knocking down our head office and rebuilding Browning House, which we bought in 1935.

Smarter use of land

An initial study looked at options for making better use of the site where our now cramped offices sit. It found we could, at very little cost to us and none to you, replace these with new, improved offices by leasing part of the land to a private developer.

Under the deal, the developer would build our new offices, with new flats above for us to rent out and we would lease a modest section of our land to the developer to house a block flats it would build for sale.

Our architects found that adding Browning House to the mix would give a huge lift to the number of new low rent homes we can provide here.

Browning House tenants: offered a choice of new homes

Our White City plans won't be news to those of you now living in or recently moved from Browning House, now over 80 years old. All tenants in the building are being offered new homes, helped by independent tenant advisors Source.

Our building project will also allow us to stay in White City, which has been home to our head office since we moved here from Buckingham Palace Road in the late 1970s.

The project is proving hard work and we have to comply with lots of regulations. But we have narrowed down to four the list of developers we think would do the job well.

Early next year we will choose two or three developers from our short list to draw up more detailed designs. We expect to pick the winning design and our preferred partner halfway through 2018.

NEXT STEPS

Mid 2018: We choose our development partner. It will be their job to get planning consent as needed from the local council.

Late 2019: we expect building works to start near the end of 2019

Late 2021: the new buildings should be complete

Truly affordable: new homes for rent

Our priority for the Wood Lane scheme will be getting the highest possible number of new one bedroom flats, to be let to single women at affordable rents. Each flat will be built to keep warmth in and noise out, designed for safety, and have low running costs.

Thirty and counting: more new homes for women in Kensington

Over the last few years we have built 16 new homes by extending buildings we own in Kensington & Chelsea. As well as the four new flats at Mary Flux Court (see right), we have another 14 underway or in the pipeline elsewhere in central London.

Presenting the case for women's housing

Women living alone need truly affordable homes just as much today as they did when we were first set up in 1920. Research bears this out - here are just a few examples:

.....
Women still earn less than men for doing the same job, despite the Equal Pay Act passed over 45 years ago.
.....

.....
According to the Fawcett Society, women in their 20s earn an average 5.5% less than men, and it rises to 18% by their 50s. The pay gap is highest for BAME women.
.....

.....
Women are more likely to be employed in professions that pay less, a hangover from the days when a man's wage supported the family.
.....

.....
Women are more likely to stay living with a dangerous partner just to have a roof over their head. High risk victims wait an average 2.3 years before seeking help.
.....

.....
The number of women sleeping rough is rising, though may be masked by women sofa surfing or staying with an unsuitable partner rather than risk the streets or a mixed-sex shelter.
.....

MARY FLUX UNVEILED



Internal shots of one of the four new flats at Mary Flux Court in Earl's Court



After one year on site, and having shelled out over £1 million, we are delighted to announce that we have four new flats at **Mary Flux Court** in Earl's Court, writes development and new business manager Andrew Richards

This challenging project began with our removing the old roof and a flat on the old third floor so we could build four flats on a new fourth floor.

Moving on up

We've now installed a new and much better lift that goes right to the top of the building, and put in new staircases to the fourth floor.

Third floor flats were extensively remodelled and have new tenants, and we also have people ready to

move into the new fourth floor flats. Elsewhere the sheltered scheme has been redecorated inside and out, smoke detectors fitted, lighting improved and the electrics updated.

We are hugely grateful to all of you who live at Mary Flux Court. You put up with the building works stoically and with good humour. Contractors Rosewood made sure their workers were polite and considerate, and worked hard to keep inconvenience to tenants to a minimum.

* OUR GUIDE TO banking

If you get any welfare benefit now, especially universal credit, you need a **bank account** that can **make and take automated payments**.

CURRENT ACCOUNT

Pros: Widely available. Can make automated payments for bills etc via direct debit or standing order. Easy access to the money in your account through most cash machines.

Cons: Some may charge interest and fees if you get overdrawn or if your account does not have enough funds to pay a direct debit or standing order.

Note: You may need a **credit check** to open a current account with a bank or building society. Credit union current accounts don't let you have an overdraft so often do not need a credit check. But they usually charge a monthly administration fee.

BASIC BANK ACCOUNT

Pros: No charges or fees for operating the account. No overdrafts, so that helps to stop you going into debt

Cons: Fewer cash machines let you take money out without a fee.

PREPAID CARD

Pros: No overdrafts, so that helps to stop you going into debt. Can make automated payments for bills etc via direct debit or standing order.

Cons: May make various charges. It's important to ask the card provider about these. Don't always allow for automated payments.

If you aren't able to open any of these accounts, please contact the office responsible for paying your benefit.

For more advice on money matters see www.moneyadvice.org.uk or call 0800 138 7777.

NEWS FROM OUR TEAMS



Rise in calls for halt to rollout of 'poorly planned' benefit

Universal credit continues to get bad press as critics claim it is driving people into poverty. Housing director Christine Desborough reports on this and other budget announcements

Since meeting with Conservative backbenchers, the government has made some welcome changes in its recent budget but foodbanks and other critics remain concerned.

Chancellor Philip Hammond made some concessions to critics of UC in his November budget:

- a **seven-day wait** at the start of a new universal credit claim is to go. From February UC claimants will get benefit to cover the first week rather than have no income
- **housing benefit** will now be paid for first two weeks to help stop tenants falling heavily into arrears while they wait for the first UC payment
- **advance loans**, now limited to 50% of a monthly payment and to be repaid over six months, will change in the new year, rising to 100% and repayable over 12 months.

Before the budget, the Chancellor had cut the benefit taper, so for every extra £1 you now earn above the 'work allowance', your benefit is cut by 63p, not 65p as before. Charges for the UC helpline have also been abolished. It is now free.

Parliament's Work and Pensions Committee has also published the findings of its recent inquiry into universal credit.

They include ample evidence from landlords and claimants that the current 42-day wait for a first payment has left many struggling to pay rent and basic living costs. About one in five wait longer than six weeks for a first payment, and an estimated 85% do not have enough savings to tide them over for a month.

Among other critics, church leaders have queried the way UC is being rolled out. Archbishop of York John Sentamu has said the assumption that everyone has a nest egg to tide them over is 'grotesquely ignorant, especially for those in need of support, [or] already in debt'.

Work and pensions secretary David Gauke has said: 'Universal credit is working [so] the rollout will continue, to the planned timetable.'

Adding a note of caution, he has also said: 'It is more important to get this right than do it quickly, and this won't be completed until 2022.'

UNIVERSAL CREDIT: NEXT IN LINE

Universal credit combines six benefits for working-age people into one. The upper age limit in areas where it is now 'live' is 60.5 years. In a 'full service area' you can be up to the age of qualifying for pension credit to claim. The roll out in north Kensington has been delayed until December 2018 but Harrow, Westminster, Wandsworth, Hillingdon (Hayes) and Wandsworth will all see universal credit come in between June and October, followed by Camden in December.

Christmas rubbish: don't let it pile up

CHRISTMAS TREE COLLECTIONS

Council information on **Christmas tree collections** has been a little slowcoming this year. We've done our best but strongly suggest you also call your local council or look on its website

Hillingdon

The council will take real Christmas trees with the normal weekly garden waste collection but please make sure you first cut it down to lengths of 0.9m (3 feet) or less.

Kensington & Chelsea

Please compost your tree if possible. If this isn't possible, contact Streetline on 020 7361 3001 to arrange a special collection between Thursday 4 and Saturday 20 January 2018.

Alternatively you can take it to a drop-off centre. Options for those of you in Notting Hill and Holland Park: Canal Way, Cornwall Crescent,

Kensington Park Road and Pembridge Square. For those of you in Earl's Court: The Boltons and Ifield Road. Please check the council's website for a full list.

Camden, Ealing, Harrow, Hammersmith & Fulham, Wandsworth, Westminster

No advice was ready when *Pioneer Press* went to print. Last year some were offering kerbside pick-ups or local drop-off spots. Please contact your local council to find out what arrangements it is offering. Do NOT put trees out with your household waste or recycling.

PUTTING YOUR RUBBISH OUT

We're still getting too many complaints that some of you aren't putting the rubbish out as you should, leading to overflowing bins or the council refusing to empty paladin bins.

Most councils will only take **normal household waste** that has been tightly bagged and **won't take bulky rubbish** unless you call to arrange for it to be collected. Some will charge for this.

I visited a Harrow property recently, having heard that the council had not emptied the bins for three weeks. I could see why at once. Access to the bins was blocked by a wardrobe and the bins had been filled with planks, drawers, a bike and a radiator!

This had led to three weeks of unpleasantness for others living there, especially those closest to the bins.

We had to ask a specialist contractor to remove these items and had to call in pest control because the rubbish had now attracted mice and insects.

Both those costs add to the service charge so everyone at that property has been penalised because of one person's selfish behaviour.

RUBBISH DOs AND DON'Ts

- ✓ If your council has separate bins for household waste and recycling make sure you put the right waste in the right bin.
- ✓ Make sure all household waste is in suitable waste bags and tightly knotted to stop it spilling out.
- ✓ Rinse clean any plastic or tin items for recycling but don't try to recycle dirty paper or card.

Bulky rubbish collections

If you have bulky items to throw out contact your council online or call to make an appointment to have it collected. Do not put it out by the bins. It will not be collected and will cause problems for everyone.

Camden go online at www.camden.gov.uk

Ealing go online at www.ealing.gov.uk or call 020 8825 6000

Hammersmith & Fulham Call 020 8753 1100

Harrow go online at www.harrow.gov.uk

Hillingdon go online at www.hillingdon.gov.uk

Kensington & Chelsea Call 020 7361 3001

Wandsworth go online at www.wandsworth.gov.uk

Westminster go online at www.westminster.gov.uk

More news on right to buy

After a long silence on the voluntary right to buy (VRTB), the budget brought news of a new pilot programme in the Midlands to test aspects of VRTB not yet tested.

The pilot will test portable discounts and one-for-one replacement homes. Portable discount means that if you are not allowed to buy the property you live in because it was intended for a special purpose, you can buy something else at the same discount.

One-for-one replacement was a condition of housing associations agreeing to extend right to buy to assured tenants. It means for every property sold, another home for rent will be provided. More news in *Pioneer Press* when we get it.

Go your own way: sensible steps to peace of mind

It is not easy thinking about the **end of our lives**, and what will happen to us or our belongings after we die. But two community projects in Kensington and Chelsea can help

BEFORE WE GO: A WOMEN'S PIONEER TENANT PROJECT

Women's Pioneer tenant Maggie Woonton has been awarded funding by the Westway Trust, to run **Before We Go**.

Kensington focus

Ms Woonton's project will give advice and support on planning a dignified exit to women living in the borough who have no next of kin.

You will get help planning your funeral, writing your will and making your wishes known before your death.

There will be five sessions at Mary

Smith Court, each lasting two hours, and running weekly at 11am on Mondays, starting on 8 January 2018.

All sessions will be run with the help of qualified trainers and a local funeral director.

Places on **Before We Go** are limited.

If you are interested in attending, please call Maggie directly on

020 7229 8471 to book your place.

There will be free transport to and from Mary Smith Court and lunch will also be provided.

LAST RIGHTS: CAB PROJECT

Kensington and Chelsea Citizen's Advice Bureau's **Last Rights** project offers end-of-life planning. It runs workshops explaining your choices and gives one-to-one support if you want to prepare your own plans.

Last Rights has one manager with three trained volunteers and is backed by a Martin Lewis Trust grant. The areas it covers are:

- **funerals:** planning an affordable and respectful funeral so your loved ones don't have to guess what would be best for you
- **making a will:** to prevent family stress and disputes and to control what happens to your property. This may be a last opportunity to show your kindness and care
- **power of attorney** to make sure someone will act and speak for you should you lose the capacity to do it yourself

- **organ and tissue donation** so your death might help others
- **advance care plans** to let people know what care you want, or don't want, and where you'd want to be.

To find out more email research@kensingtoncab.org.uk or call Last Rights on 07401 307 125. Leave a message with your name and number and they will ring you back promptly.

Open to all: Last Rights workshops

We will be hosting **Last Rights** workshops at all of our sheltered schemes in 2018. You are all welcome and do not have to live in sheltered housing. Keep an eye on your house noticeboard for more information.

Health & safety

Fire safety: bikes and buggies left in shared areas still risking 'no notice' removal

Despite sending out letters and putting up notices in the shared parts of your buildings we are disappointed to find that some of you are still leaving **pushchairs** and **bikes** in areas of the building you share with others.

Serious danger

Bikes and buggies can both seriously obstruct your escape from the building should you need to evacuate in an emergency. **For this reason we move them without notice.** Since the last issue of *Pioneer Press* alone we have confiscated five bicycles.

We have also **withdrawn permission to store anything in cupboards** where their use is not stated in your tenancy. Some of you are still leaving your goods in them.

We will give one final deadline: **all cupboards must be cleared by Sunday 31 December 2017.** From **January** we will enforce this policy and **confiscate any items left in cupboards in shared areas.** We will hold these items for **28 days only** in a storage facility near our head office.

Where we can identify the owner they will be billed for the full cost of our moving the items and a reasonable cost for the hire of the storage facility. We will dispose of any items not claimed after 28 days.

The chance of a fire occurring in shared areas of the building is low but this is no reason to be complacent.

If a fire did break out in a common area any items left there could catch fire. That would speed up the fire's spread and intensity, could prevent you getting out quickly and safely, and would slow down fire fighters trying to get in to tackle the blaze. The consequences could be fatal.

What's in a job title?

HOUSING INCLUSION MANAGER

You might know our job titles but what are our duties? To kick off the first of a regular new feature explaining what you get in return for your rent, **Aidan McCarthy** talks us through his job

It is too easy for those of us who work in housing to fall into the trap of thinking of you all as 'the tenants', one single group with identical needs. It is blatantly untrue. There are more than 1000 of you, each with your own personality, interests and story.

Constant reminder

Making sure we never fall into the 'us and you' trap is one of the main reasons why my job, **housing inclusion manager**, exists.

I have two main duties. Firstly I manage our five **sheltered schemes**, and the managers working in them: Gabriella Baranek, Linda Davies, Sheila Keddo and Eileen Remmer.

They are dedicated and experienced, and it's a genuine privilege to see the focus and care they show those of you they serve on a daily basis.

The issues that come up in sheltered housing are as varied as those in any of our homes. This week alone I've been to a licensing meeting with a local councillor to discuss nuisance caused by a local nightclub, provided cover at a scheme when the scheme manager was absent, and tried to resolve some unhappiness over the use of a communal laundry.

I also visit new tenants in sheltered housing after you've been with us for six months. This gives me a chance to get to know you and learn of any problems with your new home.

Secondly, I am responsible for supporting the **wellbeing and welfare of you all.** This involves lots of work on policies, procedures and training. There are also the more personal matters where I'll meet one of you to see if we can give extra help or support - and make sure you get it.

Sometimes this involves getting a contractor to make a small adaptation to someone's flat so they can carry on living independently. If substantial changes are needed I'll usually call in the council.

In my two years here I have also reviewed the ways we respond to reports of domestic abuse and what we do to safeguard vulnerable adults. I've made sure our staff are properly trained in both these matters, and that we can respond quickly to any of you who turn to us in need.

I've worked with charity Turning Point, setting up everything needed for it to offer NHS health checks to our older residents.

I've drafted plans for monitoring those of you we know to be vulnerable, and to make sure of your safety in the event of a fire.

These and other work done for your health and wellbeing need to be regularly reviewed and tweaked, our procedures tightened up and made more efficient, and the right training given to the right staff.

That way we can track who needs what help and make sure they get it, either from us or someone who has the right expertise.

I'm also keen to see how new technology can help. That may lead to our helping some of you to sharpen your own **digital skills.**

Finally, although it's certainly not in my official job description, I take great pleasure in compiling the *Pioneer Press* quiz.

I'm a big fan of quizzes (and have even appeared in a couple on the television). Plus thinking up fresh questions four times a year is an enormous amount of fun!

News in brief

New face in housing management team: universal credit focus

I'm Megan Redhouse and I'm your new **income officer.** I have previously worked for a homeless charity in sheltered accommodation.

It's my job to help with the changes now happening as more of you start claiming universal credit. I will be helping many of you and also Women's Pioneer adjust to these changes.



In my free time I like being with friends, dining and going to exhibitions. I also enjoy travel and being in the sun.

Stop press: officially accredited by domestic abuse response alliance

As we were going to press, the news arrived that we have been accredited by the **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)** so meet the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse. It makes sure anyone affected is treated fairly, effectively and with compassion. More on this in our next issue.

Small boost in November budget for housing supply

Extra spending on housing, announced in the recent budget, has been welcomed by the National Housing Federation. 'Taken together, today's package of measures is a good signal of intent. However, for a budget trailed as 'the housing budget', [it] fell short on the measures needed if the country is to reach the government's target of 300,000 new homes a year.'



Commonsense advice on staying safe at Christmas... and year round

Candles and fairy lights are the cause of most Christmas fires, according to government statistics.

Analysis by the fire service says that in 2011/12 **fairy lights caused 20 fires** alone. Other fire risks are **candles, Christmas trees, decorations and cards** - responsible between them for 47 house fires that year. And a burning Christmas tree can rapidly fill a room with poisonous gases.

CANDLES

- Place them well away from **fabrics, furniture and draughts**.
- Put them in a **proper holder** so there is no risk of them tilting or falling over.

- Only put candles on **heat-resistant surfaces**. TVs are not fire-resistant. Even a tea light can rapidly become hot enough to melt plastic.
- Never put candles under a shelf**. There should be at least 1 metre (3 feet) between the flame and the surface above it.
- Keep candles apart** - no closer than 10cm (4 inches) together.
- Take special care with **votive or scented candles** - put them in a glass or metal holder.
- Always put out candles with a **snuffer or spoon** before leaving a room and make sure they are not still smouldering.

XMAS FAIRY LIGHTS: ADVICE FROM ROSPA

If you have old lights, seriously consider buying new ones which will meet much higher safety standards. Look for safety marks eg BS Kitemark.

Don't buy lights second-hand or from a pop-up store on a street market unless you can afford to get them professionally checked.

Never insert or remove bulbs when they're switched on.

Do not use the lights outdoors unless they're made for such use.

Keep lights clear of decorations and other flammable materials.

Never leave lights on when you go to bed or leave your flat.

MONEY SAVING TIP

LED lights use 90% less energy than incandescent. If we all swapped a string of lights for LEDs we'd save £13 million just over the 12 days of Christmas.

DON'T LOOK NOW: ANSWERS TO OUR WINTER QUIZ

- 2017
- 1 Moonlight
 - 2 Mark Sampson
 - 3 Kim Jong-un of North Korea
 - 4 Jodie Whittaker
 - 5 They agreed to allow women to join
 - 6 The Conservatives
 - 7 The Great British Bake-Off
 - 8 *Pride and Prejudice*
 - 9 Malala Yousafzai
 - 10 25

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 called out a contractor for 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, locked out or 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: KONE ☎0845 199 9999

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.

UPS AND DOWNS: McCARTHY'S YEAR-END QUIZ

It hasn't been the happiest of years and we hope 2018 will be happier for you all. But how much of 2017 do you recall? Housing inclusion manager **Aidan McCarthy** is quizmaster



- 1 After a bit of a mix-up, which film was announced 'best picture' at this year's Oscars?
- 2 Who was sacked as manager of the England women's football team in September?
- 3 Which world leader has Donald Trump referred to as 'Rocket Man' this year?
- 4 Who was announced as Peter Capaldi's replacement in *Doctor Who* this year?
- 5 What did the members of Muirfield Golf Club agree to allow this year, for the first time since its formation in 1744?
- 6 Which party won the most seats in this year's general election?
- 7 Prue Leith replaced Mary Berry (controversially) in what this year?
- 8 A quote from which Jane Austen novel can be found on the new 10 pound note?
- 9 Which winner of the Nobel Peace Prize began studying for an undergraduate degree at Oxford this year?
- 10 Janet Davies retired as chief executive of Women's Pioneer this year after how many years at the helm?



INTO THE KITCHEN AT FORK-POINT

serves 8

Festive baked alaska

adapted by administrator Kim Culhane

INGREDIENTS

- 300g caramel ice cream
- 200g black cherry conserve
- 400g vanilla ice cream
- 5 egg whites
- 200g caster sugar
- 400g Christmas cake, with the icing removed



METHOD

- Preparation: **30 minutes**
- Freezing: **2 hours minimum**
- Cooking: **about 8 minutes**

- 1 Line a 900ml pudding basin or another deep round bowl suitable for the freezer with two layers of cling film.
- 2 Scoop the caramel ice cream into the bowl, patting it down well. Top with a layer of the conserve, followed by the vanilla ice cream. Pat down firmly, cover with cling film and freeze for at least two hours or better still, overnight. You'll want it frozen solid.
- 3 After two hours, or next day, heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6.

- 4 Whisk the egg whites until stiff, then slowly fold in the sugar until the mix is firm and glossy.
- 5 Slice the cake and arrange on a baking sheet lined with baking parchment. Make a round the same size as the top of the ice cream bowl. Press the cake together so there are no gaps.
- 6 Take the ice cream from the fridge, remove the top layer of cling film, upturn the bowl onto the cake and peel off the rest of the cling film.
- 7 Spread the meringue thickly and evenly over the ice cream and cake. Bake for about 8 minutes until nicely coloured. Serve at once.

free events



January to March

Until Friday 22 December **CHRISTMAS CAROLS IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE**

Trafalgar Square, Westminster, SW1. Weekdays 4-8pm, weekend 2-6pm. Each evening from 11 December a choir will sing carols to raise money for voluntary or charitable organisations.

Until Sunday 31 December **SHARD LIGHTS**

The Shard, 32 London Bridge St, SE1, after dark. Annual festive light show in the top 20 storeys.

Until Sunday 31 December **DRAPED SEATED WOMAN RETURNS TO THE EAST END**

Cabot Square, Canary Wharf, E14. From Monday to Friday. Campaign led by mayor John Biggs sees Henry Moore's famous bronze return to the East End after 20 years in Yorkshire.

Until Saturday 6 January **NATURE'S ALCHEMY**

At 222 Peckham Rye, SE15. From Wednesday to Saturday, 11am to 6pm. Artists use natural materials to explore nature's patterns and symbolism.

Until Sunday 7 January **ICONOCLASTS: ART OUT OF THE MAINSTREAM**

At the Saatchi Gallery, SW3. From 10am to 6pm. Featuring the work of 13 contemporary artists inviting us to engage with modern day iconoclasm.

Until Sunday 7 January **CHRISTMAS PAST**

400 years of English home tradition. At the Geffrye Museum of the Home, 136 Kingsland Road, Hoxton, E2. From 10am to 5pm. The origins and meaning of traditions of Christmas past.

Thurs 18 to Sun 21 January **LUMIERE LONDON**

After dark, the UK's largest light festival extends across the West End, King's Cross, South Bank and Waterloo.

Until Friday 19 January **WOMEN IN MEDICINE: A CELEBRATION**

At the Royal College of Physicians, 11 St Andrews Place, Regent's Park, NW1. Weekdays, from 9am to 5pm. Photographic portraits of leading female clinicians and past medical women who inspired them.

Until Saturday 20 January **SEAN LYNCH: DEVIL IN THE DETAIL**

At the Ronchini Gallery, 22 Dering St, Mayfair W1. Weekdays 10am to 6pm, Saturday 10am to 5pm. Sculptures, photographs, and prints.

Until Sunday 28 January **THE ARTFUL BOOK**

At the Victoria and Albert Museum, Cromwell Road, SW7. From 10am to 5.30pm. Folio – the world's foremost publisher of illustrated books.

Until Sunday 11 February **INSTANT STORIES. WIM WENDERS' POLAROIDS**

At the Photographers' Gallery, 16-18 Ramillies Street, W1. Free before 12 noon. Previously unseen Polaroids by filmmaker Wim Wenders.

Until Sunday 18 February **EVERYTHING WE DO IS MUSIC**

At the Drawing Room, Unit 8, Rich Estate, 46 Willow Walk, SE1. From Tuesday to Friday, 11am to 6pm, Sat and Sun, 12 noon to 6pm. How Indian classical music has inspired modern and contemporary artists.

Sat 10 to Sunday 11 March **PECKHAM SALVAGE YARD**

At the Copeland Gallery, 133 Copeland Road, SE15. From 11am to 6pm. South London's go-to place for vintage gems, with over 50 traders.

Thurs 16 March to 16 December **THAMES PULSE**

New art installation on the health of the Thames. At Sea Containers, South Bank, SE1, open 24 hours a day. The river's health in real time.

Until Sunday 15 April **FULHAM PALACE IN POSTCARDS**

At Fulham Palace, Bishop's Ave, SW6. From Monday to Thursday, 12.30 to 3.30pm, Sunday 12 to 4pm. Postcards from all periods about the palace and what they reveal about its history.

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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