

Its all about being active!

Looking to try a different way to keep fit, well there are so many different ways.

Its important we all do some exercise no matter what age we are, it will help prevent lifestyle diseases such as heart diseases, stroke, obesity and type 2 diabetes. Exercise also helps to prevent mental health diseases like depression and by doing exercise we will ensure our bodies stay fit and healthy as we get older. Exercise can be from as little as walking, light jogs around the park or joining your local gym/leisure centre.

So why don't you check out what activities are going on in your local area, many of which are free.

Why not try out free swimming lessons at Vale Farm or Willesden Sports Centres. For full details and timetable go to www.brent.gov.uk/freeswimming. Or try out the many outdoor gyms which have a wide variety of equipment for anyone aged 12 and above, each piece of equipment has instructions on how to use it. You can also enjoy free group exercise classes in some of the borough's parks go to www.ourparks.org.uk to register.

So get yourself out there and be active!



Energy saving monitors for Brent residents

Wembley, Kilburn and Kingsbury libraries are lending energy monitors to residents to help them save money on their fuel bills. After hundreds of local people visited energy-saving roadshow which took place earlier this year the monitors proved to be a great hit. For more information visit: www.brent.gov.uk/saveenergy

What's happening in your area...

JOB SEEKERS CLUB

SRCF Deane Avenue, South Ruislip, Middlesex, HA4 6SR
Thursday 23rd April 9.30-11.00

Just turn up and get free help and advice. You can access their webpages by googling South Ruislip Job Seekers' Club. Get help with CV writing, using computers and internet. They have local papers, help with form filling, making phone calls, debt advice and anything else you need they hopefully can direct you to someone who can!

Contact Phil on 020 8841 9636

NOAH'S ARK RAINBOW RUN

Allianz Park Greenlands lane NW4 1RL

Sunday 7th April 12.00pm-5.30pm
Noah's Ark Children's Hospice annual rainbow run! Fun Day for the family to raise money for a good cause. Register by going to www.noahsarkhospice.org.uk

TEA DANCE AT BRENT CIVIC CENTRE

Ball room dancing at the Grand Hall, Civic Centre, Engineers Way Wembley HA9 0FJ. Every Monday form 1.30pm. For further

info please call 020 8937 1234



KALLIKIDS - FAMILY FUN DAY

At Coram's' Fields WC1N 1DN Saturday 27th June 2015 1.30pm - 4.30pm.

There will be lots to see and do on the day with crafts, dancing, forest activities, face painting, hair styling, nails, make up, theatre workshop, children's entertainers, science workshops and much more including some great raffle prizes.

Contact Dorothy Williams on 07824512797 -020 7637 6297

Tenants' Newsletter

Odu-Dua Housing Association



Unallocated rent payment - Is it yours?

We have received an unidentified payment of £30.00. An over the counter payment was paid using a paying in slip at Lloyds Bank in Swiss Cottage on 20th March 2015. If you believe this payment to be yours, or that you have made a payment that has not shown on your rent statement, please contact your Housing Officer, Diana Duncan on 020 7625 1799. We will need to see proof that the money belongs to you and your rent account will be credited accordingly.



Staff changes

There have been further staff changes to the Odu-Dua team. We said goodbye to the Repairs Officer, Sharon Dawe, who worked at Odu-Dua for nearly 2 years and provided a dedicated service to our tenants. The new Repairs Officer is Rudolph Rutherford who joined the team in February 2015. We would also like to remind tenants that Diana Duncan is the Housing Officer to all tenants at Odu-Dua and Omar Tunkara is the Estate Services Co-ordinator for Lithos Road, managing the communal areas there.

Feedback from consultation



We consulted all our tenants on our proposal to change the frequency and format of our newsletter and on the provision of late opening service and rent surgeries.

As a result our newsletter will now go out on a quarterly basis; on occasions we will send out special edition newsletters on specific topics; this could be at anytime throughout the year. We hope you enjoy the new format of the newsletter.

We are discontinuing with the late openings every Wednesday. **In place we will have rent surgeries every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month. These will take place from 8th April 2015 from 5pm-7pm, and from 11am-1pm for those that prefer to come in during our normal opening hours.**

In this issue

- Unallocated rent payment....p1
- Staff changes.....p1
- Feedback from consultation.....p1
- 2015 General Election.....p1
- Rent & Service Charge increase.....p2
- Rent Statements.....p2
- How we work out your rent payments.....p2
- Rent arrears and evictions ..p3
- Mutual exchangep3
- How you can get your bulk refuse collected.....p3
- Its all about being active.....p4
- Energy saving monitors.....p4
- What's happening in your local area.....p4

2015 GENERAL ELECTION

Register to vote by 20th April



Don't leave it to the deadline— Register today!

Its quick and easy to register online. Go to:

www.gov.uk/register-to-vote

Changes to your rent and service charges

Explaining the changes to your recent rent and service charges

If you are due a rent increase you will have received a formal notice from us by now. This will have included details of your service charge and the list below gives you information on what types of services are included. The new rents will be starting on Monday 6 April 2015. Rents have been increased by 2.2% which is in line with what our regulator, the Housing and Communities Agency, have allowed.

The service charges at some of our properties have increased to reflect the actual cost we have incurred in providing these services. This affects 70 properties and 19 of these were increased by less than 2.2%. The good news is that we have been able to also reduce the service charges on a larger number of homes - 88 properties. Tenants there will be making savings in their service charges ranging from £0.14 to £7.32 per week. We have also managed to keep the service charge at the same level as last year for a further 9 properties.

Service charges are costs that are not covered by your rent, usually for the maintenance of the common parts of blocks of flats and estates. Not everyone will pay a service charge as not everyone receives these services. Your service charge may pay for items such as:

- Grounds maintenance and gardening
- Cleaning of communal areas
- Bulk refuse removal & bin hire
- Electricity and water supplies in communal areas
- Replacement of lightbulbs in communal areas
- Caretaking services
- Servicing and maintenance of door entry system
- Testing, servicing and inspection of fire safety equipment
- Servicing and maintenance of CCTV equipment
- Servicing and maintenance of lifts
- Pest control treatments in communal areas
- Maintenance of communal television aerials
- Parking controls

Rent Statements

We are sending you rent statements for the last 12 months – from 7th April 2014 to 5th April 2015.

Please take the time to check them and let us know if you have any queries.

How we calculate your monthly rent payments

If you pay your rent monthly, we use the calculation below to work out your monthly rent payments:

- Number of day in an average year = 365.25
(365 days x 4 years = 1460 days, + 1 leap day = 1461 days, 1461 divided by 4 years = 365.25)
- Number of weeks in an average year = 52.18
(365.25 days divided by 7 days)
- Number of weeks in an average month = 4.35
(52.18 weeks divided by 12 months)

Your rent is charged weekly therefore to convert the weeks to months, we multiply your weekly rent by 4.35 to give an average monthly rent.

If you are not sure how much rent you should be paying, contact your Housing Officer, Diana Duncan for advice and assistance.

RENT ARREARS AND EVICTIONS

Last year there were two evictions and this year more may take place. If you fall behind with your rent payments, you must act quickly and get in touch with your Housing Officer. We can discuss your situation, see what assistance we can offer you including referring you to agencies who may be able to help you. If you fail to engage with us, fail to make or keep to a rent agreement, you may find yourself in court and risk losing your home. Your rent provides us with the income needed to carry out repairs to your homes and maintain them to a decent standard, hence we will always take necessary steps to recover arrears.

PAYING YOUR RENT

You will have signed a Tenancy Agreement when you moved into your property, which states that the payment of your weekly rent is due in advance of the Monday of each week.

The requirement to pay your rent in advance applies whether or not you get full or partial Housing Benefit towards your rent. If you have not already done so, you need to start paying an extra amount until you are at least a week in advance if you pay weekly (or more if you pay less frequently). If you are not sure how much rent you should be paying, contact your Housing Officer, Diana Duncan for advice and assistance.

MUTUAL EXCHANGE

Earlier this year one of our tenants mutually exchanged their home through HomeSwapper. More and more people are finding themselves suitable exchange partners and are able to move into the type of property that they had previously been waiting for.

Odu-Dua has signed up to HomeSwapper.co.uk which means you can register with it for free, however please note that if your rent account is in arrears we will not approve your membership.



How you can get your bulk refuse collected

You can have most large or bulk waste collected from outside your property using the **Special Collections service, provided by most councils.**

This service is for items that are too large to go out with your household rubbish. Most bulk refuse services will take the following items beds & mattresses, wardrobes, sofas, dining tables and chairs etc., your local council will have a list items that they will and will not take. But before just throwing these items out think if they might be of use to others. Most bulk refuse services offer a service where they collect re-useable furniture/items. By making use of this service not only are we reducing the infestation of mice but we are keeping our community clean and tidy.

Listed below are the numbers for the bulk refuse service in your area

- Barnet 020 8359 4600
- Brent 020 8937 5050
- Camden 020 7974 4444
- Hillingdon 01895 556000

Remember if we have to arrange bulk refuse collections, you will end up paying for this through your service charge.