

## WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### Welcome to our Pesach 2023 newsletter!



It still seems only five minutes, yet somehow a lifetime ago, that I was writing my first introduction as Chief Executive in 2020 as the pandemic became a part of our everyday lives and we all settled into our new normal.

I doubt that any of us could have foreseen the changes that have happened since March 2020. While we have learned to live with Covid and its challenges, we continue to adapt to ongoing world events and the associated financial challenges wrought by those events; challenges that affect staff, tenants, and leaseholders alike. None of us remain untouched.

However, out of difficult times we adapt and move forward. I am pleased to advise that plans that we previously informed you about, and indeed new opportunities, are starting to take shape.

We shall shortly have all the information from our recent Stock Condition Survey, which will help us to plan and shape our investment strategy for the coming years. We know that we have work to do and that time lost due to the pandemic and its associated restrictions delayed our original plans set out in 2015. We hope to be able to share our reshaped plans in the coming months. However, we are delighted that the kitchen and bathroom upgrade works have recommenced at Young Court. While progress has not been as quick as we would have liked, due in the main to supply issues, things are moving forwards.

In other matters, you will see that we have now migrated to a new IT system, one that will provide greater efficiencies for our Finance, Housing and Property teams, and in time greater accessibility for you as tenants and leaseholders. We are not quite there yet but we will keep you informed.

I am delighted that we have been able to welcome new members to the team and we continue to seek to expand our Inhouse maintenance and repairs team and alleviate our reliance on external contractors where possible. This has been no easy task in a challenging employment market across the housing and social care sector, but I remain proud of our committed staff members who, although it may not be immediately apparent, always go the extra mile for their tenants and colleagues.

And so, to our most exciting news. Following extensive work carried out over the past nine months I am delighted to announce that as of April 1st, jLiving completed a merger with Brighton and Hove Jewish Housing Association, whereby their operations and assets transferred to the ownership and management of jLiving. Further details will follow shortly on our website and on the Scheme digital screens, but I know that you will join me in welcoming our new tenants to the jLiving community as we embark on our next chapter together.

With best wishes for a peaceful Pesach.

**Chag Pesach Sameach**

**Jane Goodman CEO**



jLiving completed a merger with Brighton and Hove Jewish Housing Association. Above you can see photos of two Brighton properties: Vallance Gardens (left) and Holland Road.

# IT UPDATE

**In November, we upgraded our IT systems to make things more efficient for our staff and tenants.**

Director of Finance and IT, Tajul said: "Since September and our last newsletter there has been a lot happening in the IT area of the business. The big news is the rollout of HomeMaster which began on 1st November 2022."

HomeMaster is an integrated cloud-based system bringing together Housing and Finance. He added: "Information has been migrated across to the new system from the old systems, which we are no longer using, and staff are being trained on the new system to ensure we get the most from it."

The main benefit for tenants will be that Housing Managers at jLiving Schemes will have access to tenants' rent accounts and will be able to let tenants know what their balances are, without the need for tenants to call Head Office.

By integrating jLiving's separate systems into one, staff will benefit from efficiencies by no longer needing to interface data between systems. The cloud-based nature of HomeMaster will help staff when working remotely as it reduces the need for extra software. In the medium term, we will no longer need to maintain jLiving's data and software on our own servers. Money saved can then be used elsewhere in the Association.

We are aiming to complete the training and rollout of HomeMaster across jLiving by the summer.

Looking to the future we are investigating the possibility of further additions to HomeMaster which could bring even more benefits. For example, we would like to enable tenants to view their rent accounts and report repairs online.

Tajul concluded: "We are constantly looking to improve what we can offer, and how efficiently we can offer it. Staying up to date with technological advances and keeping in line with industry standards is paramount in bringing your Housing Association into the future!"



## NEW WINDOWS ON WEMBLEY

**Tenants at our Wembley Scheme, The Martins, are benefitting from smart new windows across the whole Scheme – leaseholders' homes, communal areas as well as the bungalows at the rear of the site.**

The contractor, Nationwide, undertook the work, between August and October 2022, just before the chilly winter weather.

Marjorie, the Housing Manager at The Martins said: "I have been speaking and visiting leaseholders and they are very happy with the windows and the workmanship."

The Maintenance Team was also involved in the successful delivery of this project with Maintenance Technicians helping remove and reinstate curtains and blinds for tenants.

## NEW SIGNAGE AT SHINE HOUSE



**Shine House has had a sparkling new sign put up to point people in the right direction as tenants' relatives, taxis and deliveries used to struggle to find the entrance.**

Shine House Housing Manager, Ann said: "We are so pleased we have a new, clearer sign on the side of the building. This should make it much easier for people to find us."

## KITCHEN & BATHROOM RENEWAL PROGRAMME

**We are currently working on improving kitchens and bathrooms at Young Court - our Scheme in Willesden.**

We are replacing 16 Kitchens and 24 bathrooms and repairs are also being completed to 17 kitchens and to seven bathrooms where a full replacement was not required.

### BATHROOMS

A total of four pilots were completed to trial several solutions to resolve some of the existing issues with the bathrooms.

The favoured design removed the existing radiator, replacing it with an electric towel rail that can be turned on and off, offering more responsive control. A raised shower tray was installed so the shower waste could be re-routed, removing the need for a noisy waste pump that was previously present in many of the bathrooms.

Floor to ceiling shower screens were installed, which the tenants preferred to the existing low level shower



## NEW COMMUNAL BOILERS

**We are planning on replacing two communal boilers, one for Harmony Close and one for Meta Worms Court.**

These two boilers were identified as the highest priority following a boiler condition survey across all our Schemes which was undertaken last year.

screen and shower curtain arrangement that was present in many of the flats.

Lastly, more powerful in-line extractor fans were installed to draw moisture out of the kitchen and bathrooms, through the lounge or bedroom to the exterior of the block.



### KITCHENS

The kitchen layout has also been redesigned to provide tenants with more worktop space as well as removing the radiator from the kitchen.

The removal of one or two radiators was favoured to help reduce the over-heating issue experienced by many tenants.

Interim Director of Property, Adam, said of the project: "We have tried to solve as many problems or issues as possible while we were on-site."

"Feedback from one tenant summarises other feedback received from tenants. When asked what they thought they replied, "it's beautiful!"



A tender exercise began before Christmas 2022 to select a contractor to replace the two communal boilers. In the meantime, temporary boilers are in operation keeping everyone cosy and supplied with hot water at these Schemes.

The tender closed in January 2023. We are currently clarifying the responses with the two contractors before selecting a winner.

# NEW FACES

Since the last newsletter, in September 2022, we have welcomed four new staff members to the jLiving team.

## HOUSING TEAM

Barry Morse joined the Association in October as Housing Manager at our Margate Scheme, Montefiore Court.

In December we welcomed Joseph Ukpabi as a permanent team member - Housing Manager at Daniel Court, Colindale. Some of you may be familiar with him as he worked at several Schemes as bank staff, covering sickness and holidays.



Barry Morse



Tanja Dedic

In January, Tanja Dedic, started her new role as Housing Manager at Harmony Close, Meta Worms Court and 99PPA; working together with Senior Housing Manager, Gabriela.

In April, Housing Manager Jo Willis joins the jLiving team. Jo is based in Brighton at our new properties where she has been working for around eight years.



Jo Willis



Joseph Ukpabi

# TRIVIA TIME FOR TENANTS

Tenants and staff from across jLiving came together last October for the fun jLiving inter-Scheme Quiz, the first since the pandemic.



jLiving Chair, Adam Gamsu, with the winning team from Wolfson Court.

The quiz was put together by tenant Jon, who kindly offered to not only devise the questions but to be Quizmaster on the day. The theme was the 1960s and 1970s and categories included sport, geography, TV, music, and science.

Delicious refreshments were served, and everyone had a lovely time with the usual thrill, competitive spirit, and fun of an in-person quiz. The winning teams were from Wolfson Court (first prize), The Martins (second) and Maitland Joseph House (third). Huge thanks to Jon the Quizmaster and well done to all.

# CHANUKAH PARTY FUN

Around the Association tenants got together to celebrate Chanukah.

Tenants had a fabulous time celebrating the festival thanks in part to the JBG Housing Trust who very kindly donated money towards the parties. Here you can see tenants from Lionel Leighton Court and Wolfson Court having a wonderful time, thanks to Housing Managers, Joseph and Jackie who put the party together.



# BABY NEWS



Simona and Mia



Lori and Sunny

**Congratulations to two of our team members who have welcomed babies recently.**

Housing Manager, Simona can be seen here with her delightful daughter Mia, born on 19th November weighing in at 7lbs 1oz. They are enjoying Simona's maternity leave. Meanwhile, Head of Housing, Lori became a grandma for the second time on the 15th January. Her gorgeous new granddaughter called Sunny Willow, was born at 6lbs 4oz.

**Mazel tov to both! We hope your new additions bring you and your families lots of happiness and joy.**

# TENANT SATISFACTION MEASURES

Your views are important to us. They let us know what we're doing well and where we need to improve, and previously we have carried out three-yearly tenant satisfaction surveys (which some of you will recall taking part in) carried out by an external company.

The Regulator of Social Housing is creating a new system for assessing how well social housing landlords in England are doing at providing good quality homes and services. In addition to introducing revised consumer standards, there will be set of tenant satisfaction measures (TSMs) that social housing landlords must report on.

Tenant satisfaction measures are intended to make landlords' performance more visible to tenants. From 1 April 2023, the new requirements will come into force and landlords will need to start collecting the data required. During Autumn 2024, the first year of tenant satisfaction measures data, will be published by the Regulator.

Landlords must meet standards that have been set by the Regulator. There will be 22 tenant satisfaction measures in total, covering five themes. Ten of these will be measured by landlords directly and will include landlords' compliance in areas such as Gas safety, Fire safety and Asbestos safety checks.

Tenant perception surveys will look at the remaining 12 measures. A number of these are concerning: Decent Homes Standard, Repairs service, effective handling of complaints and anti-social behaviour.

Further information regarding the survey, which we hope to carry out during 2023, will be provided later in the year. Any information tenants provide to help us to determine our tenant satisfaction measures results, will be covered by privacy and data protection laws.



## DENISE'S PESACH ANY TIME BERRY BAKE RECIPE

This delicious family friendly recipe is quick to prepare and perfect either as a dessert after a meal or a cake for afternoon tea.

**Preparation Time: 15 minutes**

**Cooking Time: 40 minutes**

**Serves: 8 people**

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons coconut cream
- 200g ground almonds
- 6 tablespoons honey/ maple syrup
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- Zest of lemon
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 eggs
- 350g frozen mixed berries – drained

**Topping:** 2 tablespoons fresh blueberries

### METHOD

- Preheat the oven to 180C/ 350F.
- Line a 2kg loaf tin with non-stick baking paper.
- Mix the coconut cream with the ground almonds, honey, baking powder, lemon zest and juice, vanilla extract together.
- Stir in the eggs and mix well.
- Transfer the mixture to the prepared tin and sprinkle over the defrosted berries and gently stir in.
- Bake for 40 minutes or until firm in the middle and just golden on top.
- Cool for 10 minutes before removing from the cake tin.
- Top with some fresh blueberries just before serving and enjoy!

With thanks to chef Denise Phillips for the recipe. Photo © Denise Phillips 07803 895 341. For more fabulous recipes check out Denise's website [www.jewishcooking.com](http://www.jewishcooking.com)



## HELP WITH COST OF LIVING

With household bills rising, some tenants and leaseholders are facing budget concerns and worrying about how to make difficult choices, like paying for food or reducing their heating and hot water bills.

**You may be impacted by:**

- rent and service charge increases
- increases in food prices
- energy price rises
- National Insurance contributions increasing by 1.25%



**Our Welfare Officer, Biljana has put together a few tips on energy savings and quick actions that could reduce your cost of living.**

***If you claim certain benefits or tax credits, you may be eligible for an extra payment from government funds to help with the cost of living. There will be further payments made between spring 2023 and spring 2024.***

**These payments are:**

- £301 for people on an eligible low-income benefit to be paid during spring 2023.
- £150 for people on an eligible disability benefit to be paid during summer 2023.
- £300 for people on an eligible low-income benefit to be paid during autumn 2023.
- £300 for pensioner households to be paid during winter 2023 and 2024.
- £299 for people on an eligible low-income benefit to be paid in spring 2024

**These payments will be made directly into your bank accounts over the course of the financial year.**

*There are several simple quick actions that you can take that could add up to serious savings on your energy bills and can reduce energy bills in the long term:*

- Turning appliances off (TV, toasters, chargers, Microwaves, etc.) at the socket when not using them could save up to £70 a year.
- Closing all curtains and blinds at night to stop heat escaping.
- Switching to energy savings lightbulbs such as LED could save up to £55 a year.
- Washing clothes at a lower temperature could save up to £40 a year.
- Make use of the jLiving communal lounges as they are warm, and you can participate in the free coffee mornings/afternoons.

**There are several tips to reduce the cost of living:**

- Have a budget planner. Track your income and expenditure.
- Save money on the services you use every day such as TV subscriptions, phone, broadband and try to get the best deal.
- Turn down your thermostat or your radiator valve.
- Chop your food spend by drawing up a weekly meal plan, batch cooking and shopping online. Try to save money by cutting down on take away services and by cooking your own meals. Shop for offers.
- Cut your car fuel cost by filling up at garages with cheaper petrol prices.
- Embrace energy-efficient appliances so when replacing fridges etc look for the more efficient models.

It is important to remember that even with the cost-of-living crisis essential bills such as rent and Council Tax are paid on time and your accounts are up to date.

If you are struggling financially or worried, please do contact your Housing Manager or jLiving's dedicated Welfare Officer who would be able to give you impartial advice on how to manage your priority bills.

**To contact your Welfare Officer, Biljana Vidojevic call 0208 731 0919, or email her on [bvidojevic@jliving.org.uk](mailto:bvidojevic@jliving.org.uk)**

# MOVIE MAGIC



Tenants at Wohl Lodge were brought together for a movie afternoon in February and had a fabulous time watching two movies to celebrate Global Movie Day.

Housing Manager, George arranged the event & refreshments were kindly supplied by two tenants.



*jLiving – Leading the Jewish community in providing affordable, secure, welcoming accommodation, including associated services for those aspiring to live independently.*

# FESTIVAL OPENING HOURS

The staff at jLiving wish all our tenants and their families a very happy Pesach.

## PESACH AND EASTER OPENING TIMES 2023

**Closed from 2pm, Wednesday 5 April and Thursday 6 April**

**Closed Good Friday 7 April and Bank Holiday Easter Monday 10 April.**

**Closed from 2pm, Tuesday 11 and all-day Wednesday 12 and Thursday 13 April.**

**Re-open Friday 14 April.**

## FESTIVAL TIMES 2023

Pesach begins at 7.26 pm on Wednesday 5 April.

Second day begins at 8.31pm on Thursday 6 April.

Seventh day Pesach begins Tuesday 11 at 7.36pm, and eighth day begins on Wednesday 12 at 8.41pm and the festival ends on Thursday 13 April at 8.43pm.

## SUMMER WORKING HOURS

From Friday 14 April, Head office staff will be working until 5.30pm on Fridays.

Summer Head Office hours are Monday to Friday 9am to 5.30pm.

**020 8381 4901**

**info@jliving.org.uk**

**www.jliving.org.uk**



jlivinguk



@jliving\_housing



@jliving\_housing