

Spa Green II* - Newsletter - August 2013



As well as reasons to celebrate, we have included important information about services, advice and contact information which you should ideally retain for future reference. Importantly, make sure you mark the date and time of the 2013 Annual General Meeting (AGM) firmly in your diary!

**Come Along to the Spa Green Management Organisation
Annual General Meeting (AGM)
THE LODGE - WEDNESDAY 4TH SEPTEMBER - 2013 - 7.30PM
(REFRESHMENTS FROM 7.15)**



Too Good to be Forgotten:

We remember with respect and great pride Betty Knight, the recognised driving force behind Spa Green TMO when it was first established in 1995. Betty was the first ever Chair of the organisation and chaired her last AGM less than a month before her sad death on 21st September 2010. Local residents were determined that her significant contribution to the community would not be allowed to be forgotten.



Not only has Spa Green TMO erected a tribute plaque (image above right), but following a public vote in February this year Betty also fought off a champion wrestler, an eminent chemist and even a Hollywood actress to clinch another victory – an Islington People's Plaque. The event to mark the unveiling of Betty's Islington People's Plaque is being planned for early next year.

Islington TMO Caretaker of the Year!

At the prestigious award ceremony where Islington Council paid tribute to the most commended housing and adult social services staff, Spa Green's Mihai Oanea was presented with his award by the Council's executive member for residents and communities, Cllr Barbara Sidnell (who seized her opportunity to steal a kiss in the process).

Cllr Sidnell quoted residents as making the following statements in their nominations for caretaker of the year: "It is difficult to put into words but... Mihai is brilliant; he is so kind and obliging". "I have lived on this estate for over 30 years. I've never known a caretaker so friendly, helpful and hardworking as Mihai. He definitely deserves recognition".



Left to right: Spa Green Estate Manager, (Thomas Cooper), Islington Mayor (Jilani Chowdhury) and... the TMO Caretaker of the year 2013 – Mihai Oanea.

Estate Fun-day 2013 – Trip to Littlehampton (Oh we do like to be beside the seaside...)

Even heavy, delaying traffic couldn't dampen our spirits as we realised that the literally scenic route was being taken.

For many of the travellers it was their first experience of really beautiful English countryside views, including the South Downs and they seemed to be really impressed.



When we say "fun for all" we mean it quite literally – from enjoying the peace and quiet of a long anticipated novel or the excitement of cold ice cream along with all the fun of the fair!

We would have thought that after the long coach ride, staying still might have been the obvious choice, but not for Spa Green's die-hard day-trippers.



The coach home was topped off with a children's rendition of "What Shall we do with the Drunken Parents"

What we would ALL like to say is:
Thank You Esther Mwape
of Tunbridge House
for organising the event.



You can take the boy out of Islington but you can't take the Gunners out of the boy

C'mon Ye Reds!



The next BIG date for your social diary:

The SGMO Annual General Meeting (AGM):

The AGM will take place at the **Lodge (community room) at 7.30pm on Wed 4th September**. If you haven't already joined, you can buy a non-transferable share (membership certificate) from the estate office or at the meeting on the night for a one-off payment of only 10p. This entitles you to not only vote but also stand for election to the management committee (The SGMO Board) and really get stuck in.

Welcome to New Residents:

If you have moved to the Estate since the last AGM – it's a great opportunity to meet your new neighbours and the SGMO Board and staff.

Plans for the Future:

Fire Safety Improvements:

In response to a number of well reported fires in purpose built blocks and changes to Fire Safety Regulations, Islington Council's Fire Safety Team have been working with SGMO to ensure that any related works (including upgrading front doors to meet the new standards) are safe, robust, minimally intrusive and cost effective. It is the Council's intention to upgrade all tenanted properties with (if desirable) an opt-in option for leaseholder properties. **The Fire Safety Team will be attending the AGM, so that's the best place to have any related questions answered.**

Lift refurbishments:

Although most lifts on the estate are generally reliable, it is also recognised that they are already older than their design life. Spare parts are increasingly difficult to source and in order to provide lifts that are both reliable and serviceable, the Council plan to renew all lifts on the estate. This work will inevitably be very disruptive; each lift will take several weeks to replace and could have significant financial implications for leaseholders. **The Council's Bill Hickmott will be attending the AGM** to answer your questions.

More capital works to communal heating (and hot water?) system:

It's (almost) hard to believe that yet more work is planned for the heating system – replacement of internal pipework, radiators and possibly installation of thermostats etc. When the last works were carried out – replacement of external pipework and new hot water system – were estimated to cost just over half a million pounds, but ended up costing little short of a full million pounds (literally double). On that occasion the Council's consultation and management was so inadequate that the increased costs were borne by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which translates to tenants' rent – will the Council be any better or will leaseholders be so lucky next time? **Come along to the AGM to hear what the Council officer, Alan Price, has to offer.**

Don't be a Victim – be Vigilant:

Hopefully, most residents will be oblivious to some criminal and anti-social behaviour that we have been working on behind the scenes – sadly, many will have experienced these problems first hand. Earlier this year residents in Wells House were being intimidated and harassed by a group/groups of youths (mainly non-resident). Even those who did not experience the intimidating behaviour, suffered the littering, spitting (and worse) that was being left by the group on a daily basis. Despite assurances of improved community safety under the cloak of police restructuring, the most effective means of keeping Spa Green Estate a safe, clean and desirable place for all residents (young and old) to call home, is by residents being vigilant and responsive. **Representatives of the local policing team will be attending the AGM** to speak (and hopefully listen) – come along and have your say too.

The Garchey Waste Disposal System:

Do You Have One? Do You Use One? Do You Want One? What's it Worth?

In the 1940's, a kitchen waste disposal system was "state of the art" and Spa Green's Garchey system was the first of its kind in the country and very practical at the time (back then, dried waste was burned to fuel the heating system for example). However, the present day costs of maintaining the system really bring the appropriateness of preserving the historic system, seriously into question. The first kitchen waste disposal system in the UK has a great heritage value, but why should only residents (many of whom do not even have, use or want the system) pay for the preservation of national heritage? **Come along to the AGM and tell us what you think?**

On a cautionary note – please do not:

- Use the stairwells as a holding/resting place for rubbish
- Use litter bins for disposing of domestic rubbish (they are for litter only!)
- Play ball games anywhere except in the football pitch, or after 10pm
- Feed vermin (pigeons, foxes, rats and mice)
- Throw/drop any rubbish / food waste / cigarette ends / etc from windows
- Allow dogs off a lead anywhere on the estate including the estate's green spaces
- Allow any visitors or family members to litter, spoil or damage the estate
- Light BBQs or any type of fire on balconies or anywhere on the estate
- Carryout any material or structural changes without the required consents (Listed Building etc.)

On a positive note - please do:

- Make sure all family members know to treat the estate and fellow residents with respect
- Look out for neighbours, especially the elderly and vulnerable
- Use the recycling bins (save costs and the planet)
- Obtain Listed Building Consent before carrying out any major changes to your home
- Come to our AGM at The Lodge 7.30 on 4th September - all residents welcome!
- Stand for election to the SGM Board and really get involved
- Report any crime or anti-social behaviour (see numbers below)
- Keep this information, including the numbers below, safe and accessible for your reference

SGMO Contact Information:

SGMO Estate Office (34 Wells House, London, EC1R 4TR):.....020 7833 2377
SGMO Emergency service:.....07932 648 843
E-mail:.....sgmo@spagreen.org.uk
Website:.....www.spagreen.org.uk

Emergency Services Contact Information:

REPORT ANY CRIME IN PROGRESS BY CALLING 999

Emergency Services (Police, Fire, Ambulance):..... 999
Police non-emergency:..... 101
Crimestoppers (report crime anonymously)..... 0800 555 111
Clerkenwell Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT):..... 020 7160 8121

Council Contact Information:

Islington Council Switchboard (Town Hall).....020 7527 2000
Housing Direct:.....0800 694 3344
Anti-social Behaviour Hot Line:.....020 7527 7272
Old Street Area Housing Office:.....020 7527 6250
Council Tax (enquiries):.....020 7527 2000
Council Payments: (Rent, Service/Community Charges etc).....020 7527 8000
Estate Parking:.....020 7527 8666
Home Ownership Unit:.....020 7527 7715
Noise Patrol (Sun - Thur 8pm-2am / Fri & Sat 10pm – 4am):.....020 7527 3229
Pest Control:.....020 7527 3231
Wings Security (parking enforcement and vehicle release):.....0870 444 3838

Other Useful Contacts:

Citizens Advice Bureau:.....0870 751 0925
Electricity emergency :.....0800 028 0247
Thames Water:.....0845 920 0800
National Grid (gas emergencies – if you smell gas etc.).....0800 111 999