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## Bertha Hollamby Court turns 40

One of our Sidcup schemes - Bertha Hollamby Court - has now been open for an impressive 40 years.



Built on the site of seven cottages that were generously donated to Sidcup Housing Association (our earlier name), Bertha Hollamby Court was completed in September 1983

and officially opened by our then President, Evelyn Rogers, on 8 June 1984. Stanley Glynn was our Chairman at the time. We later named two other schemes after Evelyn and Stanley.

Forty years ago, the newly built scheme was named for a Miss Bertha Hollamby (pictured above), who lived, for many years, in Foots Cray, near Sidcup in Bexley.

### Christmas lunch get together

Bertha Hollamby Court tenants kicked off the festive season with a three-course Christmas meal, with all the trimmings.

The feast was cooked by Sheltered Housing Manager Becky, with help from a tenant.



Everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon and tenants have already asked to book the table again for next Christmas!

### New logo for CSHA

From April 2024, we will be using a brand new logo that better represents who we are as an organisation and what we offer to our tenants.

You will see this new logo on all our publicity material, including our newsletters and flyers, and also on any letters we send out to you. We hope you like it!



Chislehurst and Sidcup  
Housing Association

# Your rent will rise in April

**We will shortly be sending out a letter telling you how much your rent will be from 1 April 2024. We will give you at least 28 days' notice of the change.**

Subject to approval by our Board, which next meets on 8 February, we expect the rise to be 7.7%.

## What you need to do

Unless you get your Housing Benefit paid directly to us, you will need to update the standing order you have with your bank, as soon as possible.

If your Housing Benefit is paid directly to us, we will give the local authority the new details in plenty of time. Aimée Howard, our Housing Services Manager, will write telling you what you

need to pay. This may be later than 1 April, but please don't worry. Housing Benefit offices take time to process any changes that apply; for example, if your pension income has changed.

Please contact your Sheltered Housing Manager in the first instance, followed by Aimée, if you need advice on making up any missed weeks of increase.

## Struggling to pay?

If you get into difficulties, please tell your Sheltered Housing Manager, followed by our Housing Services Manager, as soon as possible. We will always discuss this with you and try to come up with a solution together, to ensure that your home is not at risk.



## Meet the team

**Pictured above are CSHA's great team of Sheltered Housing Managers, together with their line manager.**

Our SHMs are usually based at a particular scheme, but you may see them elsewhere when they are providing cover.

Back row, left to right: Sheryl Read (Ursula Lodges), Linda Pattenden (Lingwood), Rae Davies (Blackmore House), Jenny Pratt (Bushell Way site – temporary).

Front row, left to right: Maria Bantt (Evelyn Rogers Court), Aimée Howard (Housing Services Manager), Becky Warne (Bertha Hollamby Court).

## Pension and benefits rises

**In April, state pensions and inflation-linked benefits, including tax credits, will all rise by 6.7%.**

The rise is in line with the CPI (Consumer Prices Index) rate of inflation, as recorded in September 2023.

To see how the rises will impact your income, go to: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/proposed-benefit-and-pension-rates-2024-to-2025/proposed-benefit-and-pension-rates-2024-to-2025#state-pension](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proposed-benefit-and-pension-rates-2024-to-2025/proposed-benefit-and-pension-rates-2024-to-2025#state-pension)

## CSHA staff march at the Cenotaph

**Two members of CSHA staff were selected to march at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Sunday in November.**

Kym Regan (Business Support Manager at head office) and Maria Bantt (Sheltered Housing Manager at Evelyn Rogers Court) are both British Army veterans, having served in both the UK and overseas, with the Women's Royal Army Corps. They are pictured opposite on Horseguards Parade, prior to the march past of veterans along Whitehall.

Kym (pictured right) and Maria (pictured left) were deeply honoured to be able to commemorate and remember those who have gone before them; particularly the women who served in World War II, in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). The Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) was formed in 1949, after the ATS was disbanded.



## Knit and natter at Ursula Lodges

After surveying tenants about the activities they wanted to take part in, we set up a small but perfect 'knit and natter' group at Ursula Lodges a few months ago.

The group meets on a Tuesday morning and has so far worked hard to produce dementia blankets and Pom Poms.

A member told us: "We will be progressing to other crafty things, when we feel like it! We may be small, but we are learning new skills between ourselves and have a good old chat with it. We even have some people turn up just for the chatter and the tea."

The group is linking up with Dementia Friends to give them dementia blankets and twiddle muffs, and there are plans to fundraise for them too.



## Lingwood tenants fundraise for a defibrillator



Linda would like to say a big well done to all the tenants at Lingwood who completed a five-mile walk, raising £1,200 for a defibrillator.

A big thank you too to their friends and family who sponsored them. Also to those, unable to do the walk, who made a donation instead.

## Change of circumstances

**If you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, don't forget that you must report any changes in your household as soon as they happen.**

If you fail to do this, your claim could be stopped or reduced – and you could end up owing us rent.

If you claim Universal Credit, any change in your circumstances can affect how much you are paid for your whole assessment period – not just from the date you report the change.

Changes might include:

- moving home
- your rent going up or down (but if your Housing Benefit is paid directly to us, not to you, we will tell your Housing Benefit office)
- changes to who lives with you
- starting or stopping work or education
- changes to your wages or working hours
- changes to any workplace pension you receive
- changes to your property, savings, investments and how much money you have

- changes to your health, or getting a disability benefit
- changes to other benefits you get
- becoming a carer or having someone care for you
- going into hospital or a care home, or
- going abroad for any length of time.

Make sure you keep any evidence of these changes when they occur, including any letters.

You should also make sure that you keep your contact details (and any bank details, if relevant) up to date.

## Tenant Engagement Scrutiny Panel

**The Tenant Engagement Scrutiny Panel has been meeting regularly to check and challenge our performance, review our policies and procedures, and generally to bring tenants to the heart of our decision making.**

Panel Chair Cathy Peters has begun chairing the meetings – so that tenants now run the process.

The Panel have been looking at our Key Performance Indicators, which track our performance over time. This gives members the opportunity to ask about any targets we miss.

Our targets now include the new tenant satisfaction measures



introduced by our regulator. Some of these involve asking tenants their opinion (such as finding out what % of you are satisfied that your homes are well maintained). Others involve us recording our performance (such as, what % of our homes have up-to-date fire risk assessments).

We ask the Panel to review any of our policies and procedures that are due for tenant consultation. Recently, this

included our 'Professional boundaries' policy – which sets out how our staff should behave with tenants.

The Panel has been lacking members from Lingwood, but we were pleased to invite some Lingwood tenants to sit in on our December meeting, so they could see how things work.

Our planned programme of training for members will now begin at the end of February. It is designed to give the Panel an overview of CSHA's responsibilities and to explain why we do what we do. We have already talked to the Panel about how we go about setting our budgets.

You will find the minutes of the Panel's last minute on your scheme noticeboards.



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To include your story in the next edition, contact  
**Aimée Howard**

## Evelyn Rogers Court remembers

Every year, we purchase a communal poppy wreath from the Royal British Legion, which is then placed in the garden at Evelyn Rogers Court for all to see and so that we can pay our respects to all those who have given their lives in conflict.

When you go home  
Tell them of us and say  
For your tomorrow  
We gave our today



We observe a two-minute silence as near as possible to the 11th day of the 11th month, each year.

This year, we raised £25 for the Royal British Legion. Thank you for your support.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun  
and in the morning  
We will remember them.