



SPRING 2019 THH.ORG.UK

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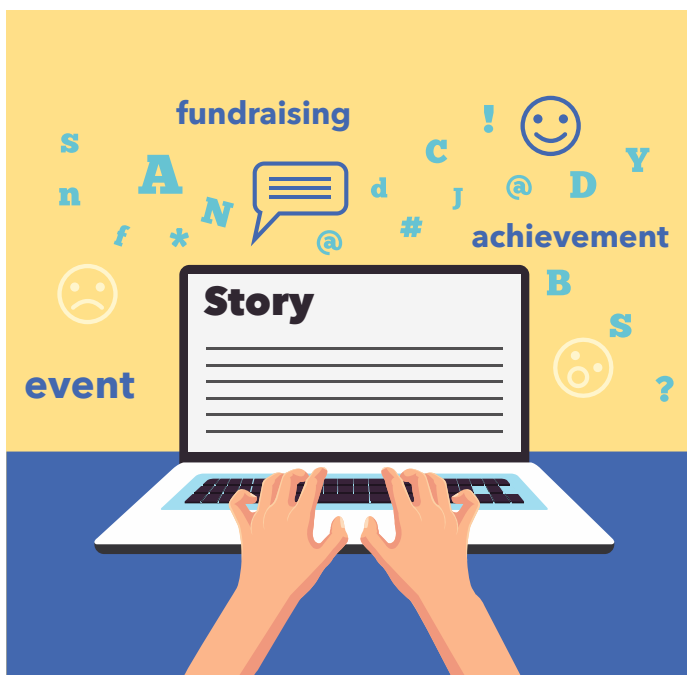
**TOWER HAMLETS HOMES**  
Spring 2019

**opendoor**  
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## Have your story featured in opendoor

If you've got a story you'd like to share – whether it's a personal achievement, a successful event or a fun-filled fundraiser – we'd like to hear from you. We want to see inspiring residents' stories in opendoor – so get in touch.

Contact our editors  
**Jane Bailey** or **Natalie Hughes**  
Communications Account Managers

020 7364 5015  
**communications@thh.org.uk**

# Here to help

**Struggling with Universal Credit? Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) has a dedicated team of staff that are on hand to help with everything related to money and welfare reform.**



Ashleigh, a Financial Inclusion Officer, tells us more:

“We support residents who are affected by welfare reform – particularly Universal Credit (UC). We can offer support around money management and can help to get the housing benefit element of UC paid directly to THH. We hold surgeries for tenants four days a week at locations across the borough – residents just need to contact us for an assessment.

“The most common situations that people are facing with UC are understanding how UC

works, managing income and navigating the UC journal. Our Financial Inclusion Team can help you with all of those things. We can book you in for personal appointments and also offer home visits for those unable to come to our sessions.”

## **Get in touch**

If you need help with money or benefits visit [thh.org.uk](http://thh.org.uk) or call 020 7364 5015 to book an appointment with one of our advisors. THH can also put you in touch with a work coach from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) who can help with your Universal Credit Journal.

## **Case study**

“Mr B’s case was referred to me because the tenant had a lot of rent arrears and had been served an eviction notice. I discovered that he was vulnerable and that his account had fallen in to arrears because of a complicated situation with his Housing Benefit being incorrectly stopped.

“I set up a meeting with all the different support services and THH’s rent officer – together we put in place a plan to support Mr B. I also contacted the DWP (Department for Work and Pensions) on his behalf to find out why his benefit had been stopped and to ask that his case be investigated.

With Mr B’s help I sent a letter to the DWP asking them to backdate the Housing Benefit. This was successful and we received a backdated payment of nearly £12,000. This reduced the rent arrears owed by Mr B and we were able to work out a manageable payment plan for the outstanding amount of arrears. We were able to stop the eviction and keep the tenant in his home.”

**Ashleigh,  
Financial Inclusion Officer, THH.**



# Caught on camera

The borough of Tower Hamlets is a hugely popular location for filming, attracting top named TV shows and Hollywood royalty. Music acts like Dizzee Rascal and blockbusting movies like Marvel's latest 'Spider-Man: Far from Home' have chosen Tower Hamlets as a backdrop. Housing estates managed by Tower Hamlets Homes are used regularly for everything from TV dramas to commercials.

The film industry brings important cultural and economic benefits to the borough, for example providing job opportunities and encouraging tourists to visit and spend money with local businesses.

## **Tower Hamlets Film Office**

All filming in the borough is overseen by Tower Hamlets

Film Office, who are managed by the Film Office (a company managing filming across many boroughs). The Film Office provides a one stop shop for all enquiries and applications to film within Tower Hamlets. They provide professional management and expertise to ensure that filming takes place in a safe and controlled manner whilst

minimising disruption for local residents and businesses.

When THH housing estates are used for filming locations, the Film Office works with local residents to make sure that any disruption to them is minimised. Financial donations are usually often made to local community groups to benefit the area, and work experience can sometimes be offered to local residents.



THH resident, Nahimul Islam asks a question.



Idris Elba and Nahimul Islam

# Hollywood comes to Tower Hamlets

Last year saw the filming of series five of Luther, the smash hit, Emmy-nominated BBC One series, starring Idris Elba as DCI John Luther. As with the previous series, the borough again took centre stage. Key locations for the filming included Victoria Park, Robin Hood Gardens Estate (as Luther’s home) and various streets in the East End.

## THH resident meets Idris Elba

In January, the Film Office were excited to be invited to the press screening of the first episode of series five of Luther at The Picture House in Shoreditch. The Film Office are always keen to maximise opportunities for local people to work with productions and as a result Tower Hamlets Homes

were able to invite a resident to the press screening.

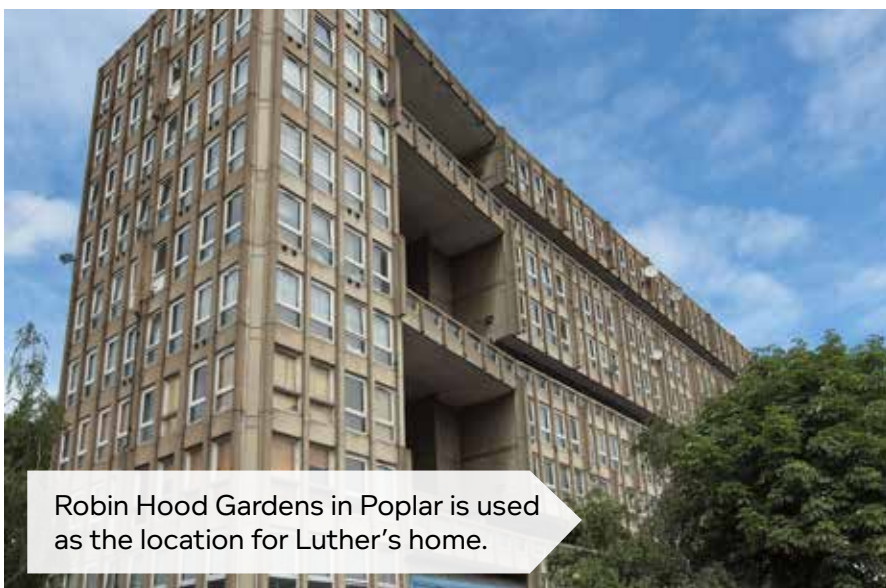
Nahimul Islam, an aspiring journalist, went along to the press screening and was able to ask a question to the cast, during the briefing for journalists. Nahimul, a previous Tower Hamlets Young Mayor, even managed to grab a photo with Idris Elba himself. Nahimul said:

“As a fan of Luther it was an event not to be missed. It was a great evening and an opportunity I wish I could have shared with other fans. The amount of people that asked to accompany me just to meet Idris Elba shows how much of a fan favourite he is.

“It definitely left me feeling inspired and I am more than ever determined to enter the film industry soon.”

## Find out more

[towerhamlets.filmoffice.co.uk](http://towerhamlets.filmoffice.co.uk)



Robin Hood Gardens in Poplar is used as the location for Luther’s home.

# Tree-mendous planting program



New trees being planted in Wapping



At the start of the year THH began a programme to plant more than 200 new trees on housing estates. The trees include an oak at Cranbrook, poplars in Shadwell and fruit orchards at Collingwood and Malmesbury.

We plan the site of each new tree carefully. The type and location of tree will depend on the area it is being planted in, for example we make sure they do not grow too large for the space. Each tree takes our specialist contractors about 40 minutes to plant. Once the hole has been dug the tree is put into position, with particular attention given to the roots, to make sure that the tree will establish itself in the ground properly and are fixed to a wooden post to give them stability whilst they grow.

### Cherry trees in Wapping

At the Wapping estate we recently planted a number of trees, including cherry trees, in the green area between Franklin House and Fenner House. A local resident came out to give her support, and said: "I saw the new trees being planted from my balcony so came down to watch. I'm happy that they are here and hopefully they will blossom this year so I can see them from my kitchen window."

### Looking after our trees

We manage and maintain our trees to make sure that they are safe and cut them back regularly to ensure healthy growth and help prolong their life. Sometimes trees do have to

be removed, for example if they become diseased or damaged, or are a safety risk. However our aim is to replace every lost tree with a new one.

### Helping us smile more and breathe better

Trees are important in improving air quality, especially in urban areas such as Tower Hamlets, as they remove harmful gasses such as carbon monoxide and sulphur dioxide from the atmosphere and trap pollutants and toxic particles. A mature tree can provide enough oxygen in a year for the needs of ten people.

Trees also provide a habitat for birds and wildlife; they provide shelter and shade and slow down wind speed, reducing air turbulence around buildings. In areas with lots of large buildings, for example around some of our higher-rise housing blocks they look attractive. Research has shown that people are happier if they can see trees and green areas from their homes and even recover from illness more quickly.

### Case study – Poplar, trees in Poplar

At Walford House in Poplar three poplar trees had grown very tall in the car park area and were overhanging the track of the Docklands Light Railway. A tree survey in 2017 had shown that there was damage to the stems and that they had over 50% of major deadwood. The branches couldn't be pruned because of safety concerns of them being so near the railway.

In 2018 we removed them and in February this year we replaced them with five black poplar trees which will reach a mature height of 20metres, less than the old ones, and will create a sound barrier from the noise of the railway for residents living at Walford House.

### Did you know?

Despite their name, Poplar trees do not in fact originate from Poplar in London but were first planted in ancient Rome. During the sixth century Romans planted poplars in areas where public meetings were held. The Latin word for people is populus and that's where the name comes from.

**Tower  
Hamlets  
Homes**

# Tenant Board Member Vacancy



We would like to hear from people who want to create better neighbourhoods where people choose to live.

We need tenants who understand their neighbourhood and the wider community.

We need tenants with good communication skills and who are well connected within the community.

Great things are happening at Tower Hamlets Homes. We manage more than 21,000 homes and have a fantastic reputation when it comes to making a sustainable impact in our neighbourhoods.

We are looking for a Tenant Board Member to help us deliver great services that meet customers' needs.

For an application form please call us or download one from our website:

 020 7364 1657  [www.thh.org.uk](http://www.thh.org.uk)

**Closing  
date:**  
Friday 3 May  
2019





# £40million boost for Better Neighbourhoods

The Better Neighbourhoods programme is the long-term planned investment into the homes and neighbourhoods we manage. It covers everything from roof replacement and repairs to block decoration, lifts, door entry systems and individual boiler renewals.

We know how important your home is to you. Works will improve the appearance of the whole estate, aiming to give residents homes that they can be proud to live in.

The new programme for 2019/20 starts in April and £40million will be spent to improve homes.

All of the 900 blocks that we manage are different, meaning that the works will be different. We survey all blocks to see what is needed then let residents know what our plans are, with an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

### **Supporting and involving residents**

Building work can be an inconvenience, particularly if we are working inside your home, but we always aim to keep this to a minimum. We will give all residents detailed information about the type of works that are happening and related issues such as noise. We provide extra

support to residents who may need it, for example if they have health issues.

### **New online information about our Better Neighbourhoods work**

We now have an online database where you can search for information about your Better Neighbourhood works. Residents can find things like details of the work, timeframes, and contact details for the project team. Surveys and photographs are also available to access.

# Continuing success in tackling anti-social behaviour



ASB officers door knocking in the local community

Tackling and preventing anti-social behaviour (ASB) continues to be one of our highest priorities as a landlord and we know how important it is to our residents.

Our specialist team of ASB officers work with two dedicated police teams who only operate on council estates managed by Tower Hamlets Homes.

## Partnership working leads to prison sentences

Two men have received prison sentences for the supply of drugs on a Tower Hamlets Homes (THH) managed housing estate in the Bethnal Green area.

On 3 July 2018 an officer from THH's anti-social behaviour team and a member of Parkguard Ltd patrol service overheard a telephone conversation on Bethnal Green Road concerning the arrangement of a drug exchange. Police officers from THH's teams were contacted and went to the location of the drug deal. Police witnessed the deal and arrested known

drug dealers for the supply and possession of drugs.

Lee Wayne Carpenter (29) from E2 and Juel Ahmed (23) from E14 were found guilty of supplying a controlled drug of Class A to another person, contrary to section 4(3)(a) of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971. Both received sentences of 4 years and 6 months at Snaresbrook Crown Court on 7 January 2019.

The arrests were part of a successful ten day police and partners operation in July last year called Operation Shadow which tackled drug supply and demand in the E2 area.

At court statements were given in evidence by THH and Parkguard officers which assisted the conviction and sentence.

Susmita Sen, Chief Executive of Tower Hamlets Homes said;



The area where arrests were made for a drug exchange

“Drug dealers should stay away from our housing estates - one overheard conversation has ended up with two of them in prison for a long time. Through working together we will stop at nothing to stop individuals causing misery to our residents.”

### **SmartWater – helping to get stolen items back to owners**

Smartwater is a permanent liquid, supplied by the police, that leaves a unique invisible trace on items so that they can be returned to their owners if they are stolen. The liquid only shows up under ultraviolet light, allowing the police to identify if an item has been stolen. THH are working with the police to roll out the supply of Smartwater to hotspot areas around housing estates.

### **Operation Continuum – activity in the Weavers area**

Operation Continuum is a partnership operation between THH, the police and Tower Hamlets Council to improve safety on housing estates. Following months of hard work a week of high-visibility activity took place at the end of February in the Weavers area.

Together with Parkguard Ltd, our estate patrol service, the ASB team carried out searches and weapons sweeps in communal



areas and car parks, distributing leaflets, answering questions and providing reassurance to local residents.

Following intelligence received, 19 warrants were executed at residential addresses, with large quantities of cash and class A drugs found by police. Residents in homes that are managed by

THH are in the process of having Notices of Seeking Possession served which could lead to the loss of their home if criminal activity is proved to have taken place.

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#### **Find out more**

[thh.org.uk/asb](http://thh.org.uk/asb)  
[@THH\\_ASBTEAM](https://twitter.com/THH_ASBTEAM)

#### **How to report ASB**

Phone us on 020 7364 5015 (option 6) (24hrs)  
Report online via MyTHH (only for THH residents).

#### **Contacting the police**

In an emergency always call the police on 999, if it is not an emergency call 101.

#### **How to report ASB anonymously**

If you wish to report ASB without being identified you can do this on Tower Hamlets Council's website. An anonymous reporting form will then be sent to THH to investigate.

#### **How to report crime anonymously**

To report crime anonymously you can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 (Free phone call) or use their website - [crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org)



# Keeping residents safe in the unlikely event of fire

**Instances of fire are rare, but preventing them and keeping residents safe in their homes is the highest priority for Tower Hamlets Homes (THH).**

## **How we manage fire safety**

In 2016 THH changed their approach to fire safety management and introduced a new inspection process with detailed Fire Risk Assessments for all blocks, carried out by an independent fire safety specialist company.

The information from the risk assessments was used to draw up our strategy for dealing with fires. The strategy includes everything from building design and day-to-day management to communicating with residents.

## **Cladding and external wall insulation**

In the last few years THH has looked at cladding and external wall insulation, following London Fire Brigade advice after a fire in Shepherds Court.

We do not have the same or similar cladding on buildings we manage to that used on Grenfell Tower, however when we inspected older wall insulations there were some causes for concern. We have removed it from two blocks, Malting and Brewster Houses in Limehouse.

## Update on fire safety work carried out so far

### Front doors

The Fire Risk Assessments identified that there was some urgent work to be done in nine blocks and this has been completed. The only issue remaining is that some individual front entrance doors have not yet been updated. Government have been looking at new standards for fire-safe front doors which has delayed progress, however we have now found a supplier for the doors who can meet the strict safety certification.

### Other works

Essential fire safety works have been completed in 46 blocks and another 10 blocks commenced works at the beginning of April. Works include:

- renewing communal area doors
- installing emergency lighting
- works to ensure compartmentalisation of buildings to stop fire spreading
- glazing and building materials upgrades

- clearing communal areas of obstacles and monitoring to make sure they stay clear.

### Our Neighbourhood Fire Safety team

Our Neighbourhood Fire Safety TEam are visiting all THH managed blocks, providing advice to tenants, leaseholders and their sub-tenants. The team are taking action, including ensuring that smoke detectors are fitted and working.

So far the fire safety team have visited almost 4,000 residents in nearly 100 blocks and we've had commendation from the London Fire Brigade for this work.

### Keeping residents updated and involved in fire safety

Our website has useful and updated fire safety information. We've sent information to residents and regularly attend tenants and residents association (TRA) meetings. Last year we provided fire safety training to TRA

representatives and Councillors, in partnership with the London Fire Brigade.

We have also formed a joint working group on fire safety. The group is resident-led, made up of our residents who are on our Board and the Tower Hamlets Federation of TRAs. It also includes our other formal engagement groups with THH officers and London Fire Brigade officers. The group will officially represent the views of residents and involve them in our fire safety processes.

## Check your door closers

Door closers are the safety feature which ensures that doors are pulled to a closed position to help stop fire and smoke spreading.

We are asking all residents to check that their door closer is working properly on their front door. The closer should pull your front door shut after going in or out. During checks, we have noticed that some residents have removed the closers to prevent them being locked out. This is putting residents and their neighbours at risk so please do not tamper with door closers.

If your door closer is missing or not working properly please report it to us.





# FINANCIAL HEALTH CENTRE

**In September 2018 Tower Hamlets Homes opened a Financial Health Centre in the heart of Stepney Green, London. The Centre brings together independent partners from across the borough to offer a wealth of free financial support services and impartial, confidential advice.**



The centre is open to all residents of Tower Hamlets and Partners in the scheme include:



**Between September 2018 and January 2019, the Financial Health Centre has:**

**760**

Helped over 760 residents



**£298k**

Consolidated £298,000 worth of debt



**£529k**

Helped residents apply for over £529,000 worth of benefits



**142**

Given employment advice or training to 142 people



**29**

Supported 29 people into employment



# Cleaning up with Camilla



An army of local volunteers from the Malmesbury estate in Bow got a royal boost in January, when they were joined on a litter pick by Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall.

The newly formed Malmesbury Residents Association was supported by CleanupUK and AgeUK East London in organising the event and the Duchess of Cornwall met local residents and children from the Central Foundation Girls' School.

Camilla arrived at the Caxton Hall community centre through an honour guard of litter-pickers held by local residents and was presented with personalised litter pickers for Princes William and Harry.

Camilla said:

"I will deliver these personally. I will say they (William and Harry) are real pros at the job. We know we have to do something about it... We need a lot of young people to get out there on an afternoon, a nice afternoon, and pick up litter. We can get them all at it."

The Duchess is President of CleanupUK, a charity which focuses on helping people to make their communities more welcoming and helps local people to form litter-picking groups; the charity's mission is 'to bring about



stronger, safer and integrated communities by involving people in litter-picking activity'.

After the litter picking event, the Duchess joined locals for some well-earned tea and cake in nearby Caxton Hall where she met members of AgeUK East London, CleanupUK staff and volunteers and local school children.

**Find out more**  
[cleanupuk.org.uk](http://cleanupuk.org.uk)





# Get involved in your local community



Neeta Kanagaratnam (CleanupUK) with James Clark (Malmesbury Residents Association)

out and about litter-picking – it lets people know that you care about the way the neighbourhood looks. It makes people want to support you."

The local allotment here in Trellis Square is a miniature community – people come together to help each other and we wanted to try and recreate that on a bigger scale. Part of the reason we set up the Malmesbury Residents Association was to empower people to think that they are able to make things happen. A Residents Association means that we can bring people from THH and the Council to Malmesbury to highlight any problems and influence change. We want to create a sense of pride in the area."

**James Clark helped set up the Malmesbury Residents Association to encourage local people to get involved in their local community. He was helped to organise the litter picking event by Neeta Kanagaratnam of CleanupUK.**

start a Residents Association.' It makes a difference to the places people live because it brings people together – it gets a conversation going about what's happening in the community."

#### James

"After moving to Malmesbury, we realised there was no Residents Association and one of our main issues was litter. If you have residents

THH has a community engagement team and they are very happy to help residents to set up TRAs (Tenants and Residents Associations) so the best thing to do is contact them at the start. I really like the challenge of being part of a Residents Association – it inspires me; by taking small steps we can make big improvements. There are no limits to what you can do."

#### Neeta

"CleanupUK's thinking is – Imagine if you could have a litter-picking group in every road, think about how quickly a change would happen.' It's all about making the community where we live better. Litter is something that is universal – you don't need to speak the same language or have the same beliefs - it's not just about the cleaning up, it makes people think 'next I'd like to plant some bulbs or

### How to get help setting up a Residents Association

If you'd like to set up a Tenants and Residents Association or get involved with the community on your THH estate, get in touch with our community partnerships team by emailing [community.partnerships@thh.org.uk](mailto:community.partnerships@thh.org.uk)

More information on CleanupUK and Malmesbury Residents Association can be found on the following websites: [cleanupuk.org.uk](http://cleanupuk.org.uk) and [malmesburyresidents.com](http://malmesburyresidents.com)

If you would like to start a litter picking group in your local area, please contact [Neeta.Kanagaratnam@cleanupuk.org.uk](mailto:Neeta.Kanagaratnam@cleanupuk.org.uk) or **07469 660 843**.

# Cash conservers

**Samira Johnson is on a mission to save residents money. After taking money mentoring training last year, she's gone on to help others and now runs the course from Tower Hamlets Homes' Financial Health Centre.**

Samira says:

"I work with local residents as a trainer on a ten-week money management course. I have twelve learners who will go on to help others as Community Money Mentors.

"It's important because in Tower Hamlets we need to know how to make the most of what money we have. Now, more than ever, people need to know how to budget, how to get the best deals and keep up-to-date with benefit changes.

"Money is such an emotional topic, quite taboo and it takes a lot for people to open up. But if people know how to save, budget and prioritise they can improve their lives. Even for me, when I did the course last year, I kept a weekly spending diary. It showed me that I was spending money on things that I didn't need. Even simple things like not buying bottled water or walking instead of using public transport for short distances can make a difference.

"In the first week there's a challenge, you have to change

one thing to save you money. A woman on a pension has saved herself £20 a month just by negotiating with Sky TV. Another learner – an Idea Store volunteer – saves £3 a day by walking between Stores, it's only a 20 minute walk. Small changes make big differences.

"I've always had an interest in my community, I'm an East End girl. My mission over the next five years is to inform and educate 5,000 families to become debt free and financially independent."

**Alexandria Lewicka**



"There's really useful information in the course. My tip to save is to think to yourself that for every pound you've saved, you've made a pound."

**Luz Dadone**



"Since I started I'm saving £50 a month. I'm also a volunteer at the Idea Store, where I teach maths and Spanish language."

**Financial Health Centre,  
Raynham House,  
Massingham Street, E1 4EB**

The Financial Health Centre is open from 9:30am – 4:30pm, Monday to Friday, with drop-in sessions and appointments available. The service is free and you can book an appointment by phone on 020 7364 2200 or by emailing [fhc@thh.org.uk](mailto:fhc@thh.org.uk).

**How to sign up for the course.**

Email: [fhc@thh.org.uk](mailto:fhc@thh.org.uk)  
Phone: 020 7364 2200



**“ Now more than ever, people need to know how to budget.**

**”**

**Samira Johnson is on a mission to save residents money.**



# Samira's top money saving tips with **Quids in!** Magazine

Our resident money saving expert gives you her top tips with a little bit of help from *Quids in!*

## Supermarket shopping tips

The average weekly family shop comes in at £53.20. Over the course of a year that adds up to £2,766! If we are savvy about the way we use a supermarket, chances are we can shave off a fair amount of our yearly spend. Here are some tips on how to do it:

### ALWAYS USE A SHOPPING LIST

Supermarkets are designed to make us spend as much money as possible. One way we can push back against this is by making sure we go in armed with a shopping list. By working out exactly what we need before we step into the store, we're more likely to avoid making impulse buys.



### SWITCH DOWN WHERE POSSIBLE

Often the supermarket own-brand and 'value' brand version of the same product is of the same quality as the big brand version. The only reason they cost less is that they spend less on advertising and packaging. Try out the cheaper brands and judge for yourself.



### PAY IN CASH

Paying by credit or debit card offers convenience, but using them in store makes us much more likely to overspend. The best way to make this work is to allocate a weekly budget for the food shop, and take exactly that amount with you in cash.



### GO THE EXTRA MILE, AND COMPARE SUPERMARKETS

Supermarkets are locked into pricing wars with each other. This can be good news for us, as customers. It's not realistic to think we all have the time to go around each supermarket, jotting down prices and comparing them. Now, though, we can do it in a few minutes, using a comparison site. **Mysupermarket.co.uk** lists the prices of products at 15 different supermarkets, and lets you compare them against each other. You fill your 'virtual shopping basket' and the site tells you how much your shop will cost at each of the supermarkets.



Following these few simple tips is a great way of making sure you're in control of your food shop.



### Deals on tap

*Quids in!* magazine explores the tips, tricks and loopholes that it often seems we're the last to hear about.

They're all at it. Shops, restaurants, cinemas... All offering deals to the few, paid for by the many.

It's annoying but most deals are online but easy to find, even on a smartphone. Sitting down to a bite to eat in town? Type in the name of the restaurant and 'voucher' and see what comes up. No burger is worth £14 but when people with a discount get two for one, that's more like it.

Those in the know, and on the internet, have these deals on tap. There are dozens of bloggers, newspapers and clubs sending out regular finance tips by email. Some dig out some absolute gems.

*SkintDad* is a blogger who exposed a way to get two-for-one cinema tickets and dinners out. By taking one day's travel insurance for just £1.05 on **comparethemarket.com**, he was able to sign up for Meerkat Movies and Meals. It feels wrong but it's totally legit. Use your smartphone or tablet to search out these deals online.



### Quids In!

*Quids in!* is the latest to launch a money email service. Unlike most of the others, it's just for people on modest budgets. It doesn't waste readers' time with details on where to stash large pots of cash and it includes all the fun stuff, like deals, cheap eats and crosswords. Sign up for free at **qimag.uk/readersclub**

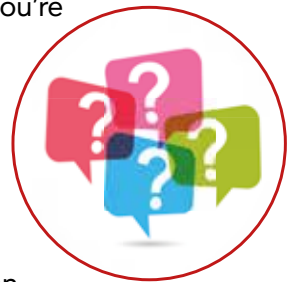
If you have QR code reader on your phone you can scan here to sign up:



If you don't have a reader on your phone, just search 'QR code reader' on the Apple App Store or Google Play to get a free app.

### Future proof your finances

Want to check you're fit to withstand future money shocks? The *Quids in!* Future-Proof Finances Test is an online quiz that takes an overview of how you manage your money. It can take as little as five minutes to complete and advice on improving things pops up at the end. It even offers to email its advice to you. The quiz was designed for anyone on a limited budget but, in particular, for benefit claimants. Go to: **qimag.uk/futureproof**



For more details and top tips visit **www.quidsinmagazine.com**

# Helping residents get online



## Save time and money

In recent years the internet has revolutionised our lives, from shopping and getting news to how we communicate with family and friends. Getting online and going on to the internet is a great way of saving money and time. It also makes it easier to access services, such as from Tower Hamlets Homes.

Getting access to the internet and learning how to use it can save money and time. There are great deals on all kind of things from cheap utility providers, phone deals, insurance and much more. Many businesses have special deals for online purchases, saving you money when you shop and letting you shop around for the best deals to suit your budget

Using the internet can save you lots of time and energy. Why go to the bank and queue up when you can do most of your banking online, making sure that you are careful about things like keeping your password secret. Most public organisations, including THH, provide a large range of services that can be accessed

online, such as paying bills, reporting repairs or applying for benefits.

## How we can help

We know that some residents may not be using the internet for a variety of reasons, from not knowing how to use it to not having access to an affordable internet services provider.

## Use the internet for free

If you don't have internet at home, you can get free access in all Idea stores and libraries in Tower Hamlets. Some of the Idea Stores have staff that can support you. Idea stores also offer IT and computer training programmes from beginners to advanced users. They are located in:

- Bow
- Canary Wharf
- Chrisp Street
- Watney Market
- Whitechapel
- Bethnal Green library

## How to get low-cost internet at home

There are a range of good low-cost internet options to be

found. Below is one example which could be good for people who are on welfare benefits or a limited income. There are also other deals around from other providers and by using this example THH are not endorsing it.

### **British Telecom Basic + Broadband (from £9.95 a month for phone line and broadband)**

If you receive Income Support, Income based Jobseeker's allowance (JSA), Guaranteed pensions credit, Income based Employment and Support Allowance or Universal Credit, with zero earnings, then you may qualify for this package. Contact British Telecom for more details.

## Find out more

To find out about computer support and training programmes call 020 7364 5015 or email: [community.partnerships@thh.org.uk](mailto:community.partnerships@thh.org.uk)

**Tower  
Hamlets  
Homes**

**MyTHH**

**Manage your  
account online 24/7**

**Tower  
Hamlets  
Homes**

Manage your services online 24/7  
with **MyTHH** | [my.thh.org.uk](http://my.thh.org.uk)  
[thh.org.uk](http://thh.org.uk) | 020 7364 5015

**More than 4,200 THH residents have now signed up - why not join them?  
Signing up is quick and easy – just follow the steps below and you'll be  
able to check all the details of your rent, leasehold or garage account  
online – whenever it suits you.**

### **Not registered yet? sign up at [my.thh.org.uk](http://my.thh.org.uk)**

Visit [my.thh.org.uk](http://my.thh.org.uk) and click 'view my details' – this will take you to the login page – at the bottom there's a link - 'Click here to sign up for MyTHH'

On the registration page you'll need to enter the following information:

- Surname
- Date of birth
- Payment reference number for tenants (on your rent payment card or any rent letters from us)
- Leasehold account number (on your statement of account)

This information will be matched with what we already hold about you.

### **Need help registering?**

If you're having trouble, try the following:

- **Surname** – check your statements and other letters we've sent you, have we got the correct spelling? You may find you can register if you match the spelling on the letter, or you may need to contact us on 020 7364 5015 to update your details before you can register.
- **Date of Birth** – If you're a leaseholder who purchased your property from an existing leaseholder it's likely you won't have given us your date of birth previously. To protect your account from unauthorised access we will have set your 'date of birth' on our system to the date you purchased your property. If you can't remember this date

or still have problems you may need to contact us on 020 7364 5015 to update your details before you can register.

Once you've registered we'll send you two emails – one containing your username and one containing your password. (Don't forget to check your junk/spam folder in your email account).

The first time you register you'll be able to change both of these to something more memorable. You'll also be asked to set a memorable question and answer, which you'll then be asked to enter every time you login.

If you're still having problems just follow our simple step-by-step guide, available on the website at [thh.org.uk/mythh](http://thh.org.uk/mythh)

# Can you dig it?





Tahera Begum (opposite page)  
and Iljana Eggert (below)



There's nothing better than growing and eating your own veg and the members of the Bethnal Green Poets' Corner Community Garden – do just that.

Recent winners at our STAR in the Community Awards for local heroes who have gone the extra mile to help their local area, Tahera Begum and Iljana Eggert explain how they turned a wasteland into a thriving community garden in just three years.

"Our garden creates a positive feeling, it creates an atmosphere. We've taken a derelict space and made something of it." says founding member Tahera: "People are caring for the estate in a way that's never been done before. Now we get visitors from other areas. We've built a bridge between us and the outside."

### Growing food with their friends and neighbours

Tahera, Iljana and a handful of other residents were inspired to set up the garden because they

wanted to grow food with their friends and neighbours.

Tahera said: "We have members who grow food in the raised beds and key holders who just enjoy the space. We're not exclusive. We're making the most of the area's resources to grow anything we want; purple and green kale, spinach, beans - tomatoes are popular, especially with the squirrels!"

### Cookbook coming soon

It's one thing sowing and growing but what to do with all that produce? Iljana has the answer: "Our next project is a cookbook, something we've never done before. It will combine our knowledge of gardening with our passion for cooking. It will have cheap and healthy recipes from all over the world."

### The spirit of love

The garden is overlooked by handsome ninety-year old brick blocks named after poets — Burns, Milton, Moore, Morris, Shelley, Swinburne, and Whitman. The romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote: 'And the spring arose on the garden fair, like the spirit of love felt everywhere.'

### Fancy setting up your own food garden?

If you would like a community food garden in your neighbourhood, email us at [communitypartneshipsteam@thh.org.uk](mailto:communitypartneshipsteam@thh.org.uk). We can check if there is a suitable area nearby. There is a fair bit of work involved in getting food gardens off the ground, but we will give you all the help and support that you need.

# Spot the difference

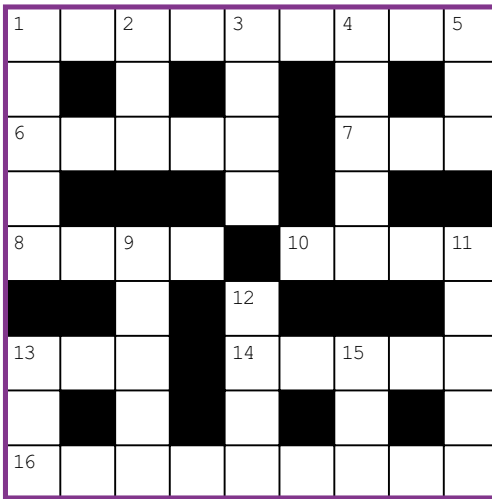
There are 6 differences between these two pictures – can you spot them?



## Crossword

### ACROSS

1. Large, scaly reptile (9)
6. Room under the roof of a house (5)
7. Upper limb (3)
8. Long tube used to carry water (4)
10. Football side (4)
13. Collection of articles sold at an auction (3)
14. Yell (5)
16. Extremely good (9)



### DOWN

1. Collide (5)
2. Make a choice (3)
3. One time only (4)
4. Picture (5)
5. Type of tree (3)
9. Smooth, shiny fabric (5)
11. E.g iron or gold (5)
12. Small island (4)
13. Not high (3)
15. The opposite of on (3)

## Wordsearch

Can you find all the vegetables in the grid? One word on the list is missing, can you see what it is?

- BEAN
- BEETROOT
- BROCCOLI
- CABBAGE
- CARROT
- CUCUMBER
- GARLIC
- LETTUCE
- PARSNIP
- POTATO
- TURNIP

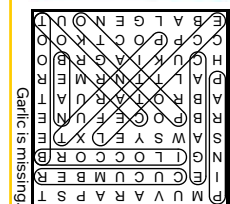
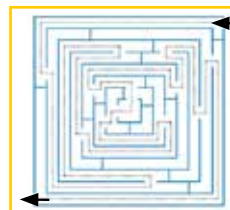
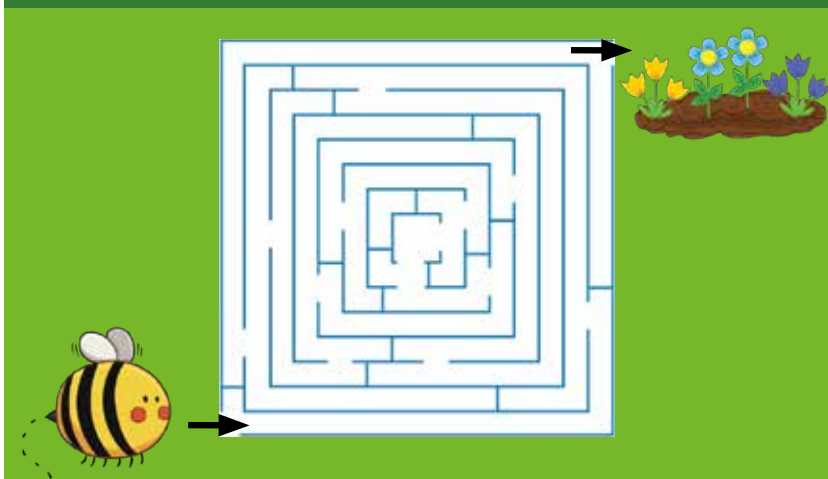


## True or false?

- 1 Butterflies taste with their feet
- 2 Beetles cannot fly
- 3 Caterpillars have 12 eyes
- 4 Spiders are insects



Buzz the bee needs to fly to the flower bed. Can you help her by finding the way through the maze?



TRUE OR FALSE  
1 True; 2 False, most can;  
3 True; 4 False, they are arachnids

CROSSWORD  
Across: 1 Crocodile;  
6 Attic; 7 Arm;  
8 Hose; 10 Team;  
13 Lot; 14 Shout;  
16 Wonderful.  
Down: 1 Crash; 2 Opt;  
3 Once; 4 Image;  
5 Elm; 9 Satin;  
11 Metal; 12 Isle;  
13 Low; 15 Off.



## Solutions

# Helping us improve our customer service



Tower Hamlets Homes are constantly working on improving services to customers and it's thanks to the help we receive from our residents. Just before Christmas we took part in the Institute of Customer Services (ICS) satisfaction survey. We had a total of 368 responses online and by telephone, with comments and suggestions on how we can improve our services and would like to say thank you to everyone who took part.

## What you told us

The survey was designed to help us improve our services to you, and we have been working with the ICS to come up with ways we can improve, based on what you told us.

Overall you told us you were happy with the helpfulness and ability of our staff when it comes to dealing with

enquiries by telephone or in person, but that we need to improve our handling of written letters and email enquiries. We also need to do more to keep you informed of progress when dealing with enquiries, particularly when we are dealing with a complaint.

## Our service to leaseholders

We know that we need to do more work on our services for leaseholders and recognising this, over the past few months we have been working with groups of leaseholders in workshops to come up with ways to make improvements.

Leaseholders have correctly pointed out that the information on our website could be improved and we will be reviewing and replacing the content on all our pages over the coming months.

## We need your help to improve our website

We know that our website needs improving and we're looking for volunteers to take surveys, test new features, be part of focus groups and suggest more ways to make sure it meets the needs of users.

Even if you only have around 15 minutes to spare to complete a few online activities it would be appreciated. We would also need you to fill in a short survey so that we have information about how and why you use the website.

If you can help please email [communications@thh.org.uk](mailto:communications@thh.org.uk)

# Need help

# and advice?


The Financial Health Centre offers a range of free, confidential and independent services to residents of Tower Hamlets, including support on the following:

- **Debt**
- **Welfare Benefits**
- **Universal Credit**
- **Employment**
- **Housing**
- **Money Management**
- **Training & Job Search**
- **Disability Matters**



**Financial Health Centre**  
Raynham House  
Massingham Street, London E1 4EB

Open 9.30-4.30pm Monday – Friday

 [www.thh.org.uk/fhc](http://www.thh.org.uk/fhc)

Contact us to find out more  0207 364 2200  [fhc@thh.org.uk](mailto:fhc@thh.org.uk)



Tower Hamlets



Limehouse Project

