

Arneway

Housing Co-operative

www.arnewayhousing.co.uk



WELCOME TO OUR JULY NEWSLETTER: YOUR VOICE IN OUR COMMUNITY

THE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF ARNEWAY HOUSING

Arneway Housing Co-op was formed back in 1978 by a small group of friends who were homeless and could not find suitable accommodation at that time. However, it was also at that period in the 1970's when the idea of forming housing co-ops became very popular and this group many of whom were employed in local government had some professional knowledge of forming a housing co-op and so began the long and hard-fought campaign to form a Housing Co-op.



Many local authorities at that time encouraged these groups to form Co-ops and so it was that Arneway Housing was formed and Brent Council kindly offered the group some old properties to purchase with the help of Government loans and subsidies; these properties have all been paid through the mortgages that was arranged at the start of the Co-op. But these are fairly old properties and very soon many, if not all of them, will be 100 years old. So, you can imagine we need to maintain these properties to ensure accommodation for many more homeless applications in future years. The Board must make arrangements to celebrate 50 years since the formation as I believe some 400 or more members have enjoyed the accommodation that Arneway has been offering in Brent over these 45 years.

CARING FOR YOUR PROPERTY

It is important that members who now occupy these properties maintain their flats in good working order as costs are increasing and it is also becoming more crucial to ensure that our stock does not deteriorate which would only drive-up rents and make it more expensive to maintain. Every member has a duty to keep these costs down and take care of their accommodation every day. I wonder how the first original members would feel knowing that through their efforts some 400 plus members have enjoyed accommodation in their properties bought and now are owned by the Co-op. This is a fantastic achievement by the efforts of the Board of Management and the staff.



This was not always the case, and I can recall that when I came to the Co-op, the Co-op was in dire straits and on the verge of closure because the Management Board had not managed the affairs very well and the Regulator wanted to close the Co-op and remove the Charter and transfer the properties to a much larger Housing Association in Brent! I met with the Housing Inspector at that time, and we agreed a 30- point plan which meant sending in weekly reports to the Inspector and changing the culture of the Co-op and making it more in line with other Co-op's who had a professional approach to the management of its affairs. The Board of Management had also to take on a professional approach to their decisions to enable the Co-op to continue. So, I know how close Arneway Housing came to be closed down entirely.

Over the years we have had many excellent members on the Board and Veronica Blair is a lady of outstanding ability and management who recognised this situation and took decisions with the other members of the Board which helped the Co-op to achieve a better performance and lead to the high standards we have today. The new regulations which are coming forward place a greater emphasis on regulation and professionalism and all members and staff and Board Members will be required to meet exacting standards of competence in the future and the deadline is 2027 when all these standards will apply.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CO-OPERATION

More recently we have some members who have been offered accommodation have abused their tenancies and created enormous problems for the Co-op; being a mutual Co-op means that one bad tenant affects all the other tenants; where we have had members making silly complaints and then taking these complaints to the Ombudsman for no acceptable reasons and making life difficult for everyone and causing enormous amounts of additional costs; these costs are borne by all the members and it is NOT the way to behave as a co-operative. The very word co-operative means co-operation and working together: and making Complaints should be the very last resort.



We also have members who deliberately break their tenancy Agreements and feel that they can do what they want without any discussion or seeking permission from the Office or the Board. We do not want these members; they are creating additional costs and expenses and wasting the resources of the Co-op that have been slowly increased over many years. The Co-op is now in a position to build additional homes for the homeless in Brent and it would be terrific to see the Co-op grow and be a beacon of hope for those many, many homeless people who will need accommodation in the years

So, I appeal to all members pay your rent on time , keep to your Tenancy Agreement, don't be nuisance, do not break your tenancy Agreement and do not fall into arrears, if you do, contact the office immediately to make an Agreement; if you fail to do this you will be Evicted; the Co-op cannot carry members who take advantage of all the other members who pay their rent on a regular basis. If you cannot agree to this - then Arneway Housing may not be the Co-op you wish to remain with?

Tenancy Fraud is huge problem now in Brent and elsewhere and the Board will not tolerate any Tenancy Fraud in the Co-op and if found guilty you will receive a criminal sentence and your ability to acquire social housing will be limited; so, don't do it.



Let me end on a positive note; we have a Board who have the interests of all the members of the Co-op and they work hard and put in a lot of their own time to take decisions for everyone, we have Judith as our Maintenance Manager who is attending housing maintenance courses and seminars to become more professionally accomplished and we have a series of excellent contractors who know our properties and maintain them to a very high standard of excellency and every member is asked to provide their response after a repair job; so you know the high standards expected. We are looking to increase the number of properties and we want to achieve greater accomplishments when we can celebrate 50 years of co-operative housing in Brent.

Sadly, I will not be here then, but I am hopeful that my small contribution towards that achievement will be a huge celebration for all members of Arneway past and present.

Duncan Aitkins

PS In the next issue I will explain more about the word Arneway !!

PPS On the next 2 pages you can read more about the fundamental principles and values of Co-ops



From the outside a co-op may look like any other business - it's what happens inside that makes them different. All co-ops are based on the same principles and they share a set of values.

THERE ARE SEVEN CO-OPERATIVE PRINCIPLES THAT DEFINE HOW A CO-OP OPERATES

- 1. A co-op is owned and controlled by its members. It exists for the benefit of its members, who may be customers, workers, suppliers or the wider community.**
- 2. A co-op is democratic - this means every member has an equal say in how it's run and how profits are used.**
- 3. Every member contributes financially in some way - from buying products, working for the co-op, investing in it or deciding how to spend its profits.**
- 4. A co-op is an independent business, owned and controlled by its members.**
- 5. It offers education and training to everyone involved, so they can develop the co-op and promote the benefits of co-operation.**
- 6. It co-operates, works with and supports other co-ops.**



THE CO-OPERATIVE VALUES

There are 10 values that all co-ops are based on:

1. Caring for others
2. Democracy
3. Equity
4. Equality
5. Honesty
6. Openness
7. Self help
8. Self responsibility
9. Solidarity
10. Social responsibility

“ We share a commitment to be a co-op. We want to do this together - in the truest meaning of the word.”