

# Berneslai Beacon

Edition 02

## Creating Great Communities Together Page 6

Volunteering at Autism Allotments



Stay safe and well in warm weather Page 7

Grow your ambition with us Page 2

Keep moving for your mental health Page 5

# Grow your ambition with us!



Our Ambition programme is just the thing if you're looking to grow your confidence, learn new skills, and meet new people.

The programme is for Berneslai Homes tenants who are currently not in education, training, or employment. It's also open to anyone living in your home with you, or if you're currently on the housing register.

We know it can be daunting to take that first step, so our friendly Ambition Coaches Dani, Freya, and Lisa will support you at the right pace, with activities and opportunities you'll enjoy.

## It's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Meet your Ambition Coach
2. Tell us about the hobbies and interests you have, and anything new you'd like to try
3. We'll match you with local opportunities to learn and gain experience!

### Freya says:

"There's no pressure – we can meet every week, every month, or every few months – whatever suits you best. We can meet for a coffee, we can meet at your house, or we can go to any public location like your local library. We want you to feel confident and comfortable in whatever way we can. It's all about you at the end of the day!"

We're here to offer advice and support so you can access opportunities in your local area. This can include one-off activities, workshops, work experience, and even volunteering in the community. We'll help you spark your interests and find new things that you love doing."



### Lisa says:

"We really encourage you to get in touch, so you can enjoy many benefits including better mental health and wellbeing, and the chance to connect with others. We can also help you with practical things including getting online, accessing local healthcare services, and updating your CV."

We have a proven track record of helping people, so you're in good hands with us!"



### Dani says:

"We enjoy meeting new people and working with them to achieve their dreams and overcoming any barriers that are stopping them. I love hearing about the different careers that people want to have, everything from working with children with additional needs to filming or photography, to working with animals – anything is possible and we're here to help make it a reality!"



Email [workandskills@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:workandskills@berneslaihomes.co.uk) or call **01226 787878** quoting 'Ambition team'. Let us know the best way to contact you and a member of our friendly team will get in touch!



Scan the QR code to view the film Roan helped to edit on our YouTube channel.

Roan said: "The Berneslai Homes team were interested in me personally and really listened to what I wanted to get from this experience. They found me work experience quickly and I've been able to learn how to use new software and editing tools, experience being back in the workplace, and meet new people. I feel more confident and ready to start looking for my next role."

If you, or someone you know would benefit from joining our Ambition programme, please get in touch. It's your journey and we want to find the right way forward for you. We'll support you at the right pace, with activities and opportunities you'll enjoy.



## Autism Allotments Volunteering

The Ambition team went over to the allotments to join one of their regular volunteer days.

Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, try something different, and gain confidence. Autism Allotments run a regular volunteering day every Wednesday from 10.30am-2.30pm and tasks include things like watering, weeding, general tidying and maintenance, planting, and picking! You can read more about the Autism Allotments project on page 6.

### Case study: Roan

Roan met the team at an event in Goldthorpe, and although he spoke with a number of different organisations, it was the Berneslai Homes Ambition team who followed up and offered practical support. After a home visit, the team set about finding some suitable work experience for Roan, who has a degree in film and media. They didn't need to look too far, as our own communications and marketing team were able to offer him a placement to create short storytelling films about our community work.



# Every Voice Matters

## It's okay to complain

Your feedback is really important to us and helps us improve what we do. We're committed to providing a good service. Whether it's good or bad, we want to hear what you have to say. It's okay to complain. If you've raised concerns about an issue with our service and it hasn't been dealt with quickly and effectively, please let us know that you remain dissatisfied.

You can make a complaint by:

- Phoning us on **01226 787878**
- Emailing us at [customerservices@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@berneslaihomes.co.uk)
- Talking to a Berneslai Homes staff member

From 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 we've received:

- **712** stage 1 complaints, and we've agreed with **85%** of them
- **136** stage 2 complaints, and we've agreed with **82%** of them

Following your complaint, we'll put things right for you and we'll change our service to prevent the same problem happening again. You feedback counts and we've highlighted 36 actions which will improve our service.

We've been making lots of changes to our website to make it more user friendly. If you're online then please visit [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk). You'll find a wide range of online forms for you to contact us along with lots of information and latest news.



## Get involved!

To find out more about the opportunities on this page, visit our website [www.berneslaihomes.co.uk/get-involved](http://www.berneslaihomes.co.uk/get-involved)

## Check It Challengers – a new way to get involved

Do you want to give us your views, but don't have the time to attend a meeting? Have you got some free time when you're having a cuppa, to give us your thoughts? If so, then why not become a Check It Challenger, a new way to get involved.

### Who can apply?

Our Check It Challenger programme is open to all Berneslai Homes tenants and leaseholders.

### What do I need to do?

We'll ask for you to share your thoughts by email on our letters, policies, and website. We'll ask you to check they're written in a tenant friendly format and contain all the information you'd expect to see.

We'll send you an email when we want you to check something and ask for your comments back within 10 days. You don't have to comment if it's something that doesn't interest you.

### How much time will this take?

There's no time commitment to being a Check It Challenger. You can take part from the comfort of your own home, at a time that suits you.

### How do I sign up?

If you're interested then please email [communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk) with your name and email address.

We're looking forward to hearing from you.

If you don't use email but would still like to get involved just give us a call on **01226 787878** to register your interest.

## Be a Community Champion

Do you love where you live? Do you have a passion for local resolution? **If this is you, then why not become a Community Champion?**

You'll be joining our network of Community Champions and will work in your neighbourhood to be the eyes and ears on the ground. You'll be reporting any local problems, areas we can improve on, or any general issues on estates, good or bad.

We'll share with you any plans or changes we're thinking about in the community. You'll have access to any events that are taking place, and you can give us your thoughts, at a time that suits you.

We'll contact you every two months, to keep in touch and ask for your feedback on the services we deliver in your community.

### Can I speak to other Community Champions?

Yes, we'll provide the opportunity for you to get together with other community champions by:

- Meeting up with them in your local area, once a year.
- Attending our annual networking session.

You'll be able to speak with other volunteers, share stories and ideas and help create solutions to local issues.

### How do I sign up?

It's simple, email [communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:communityengagement@berneslaihomes.co.uk) and we'll be in touch with more details.

### How much time does it take?

You won't need to commit to regular meetings, just be on hand to share any issues within your community as and when they develop by email or phone.

# Local support and advice

## Let the Green Doctor help you

Groundwork has partnered with the Cadent Foundation to support households to take control of their energy bills and stay warm and well. Green Doctors offer free, impartial advice and access other services and initiatives available.

They can provide different kinds of support, whether that's advice on paying off debt with energy or water companies or spotting other concerns for a referral to other services.



Some of the reasons people ask for help are:

- struggling to pay energy bills
- finding it hard to manage fuel debt
- worrying about keeping warm or choosing between eating and heating
- feeling that the home is cold, damp or draughty
- respiratory problems e.g. asthma or a persistent cough

If you'd like more information or to arrange a FREE home visit, contact Green Doctor by:

Freephone 0808 168 3547

Phone 0113 238 0601

Email [greendocorleeds@groundwork.org.uk](mailto:greendocorleeds@groundwork.org.uk)



## BIADS

BIADS is a brilliant local charity formed by Barnsley people to provide support to other Barnsley people who have any form of dementia and their families and friends. They have a dedicated dementia centre on Dodworth Road, Barnsley and provide support to those affected by dementia, their carers, families and friends by providing information, emotional support, social opportunities, meaningful activities and events.

Their range of services are designed to help members to live well with dementia in the community. You can find out more by phoning 01226 280057.

## Be a Dementia Friend

If you want to learn more about dementia and help, then why not become a Dementia Friend. This could be anything from telling your friends and family about Dementia Friends to visiting someone you know living with dementia, every action counts. If you'd like to become a Dementia Friend, then please register by:

Phone 01226 296301

Email [dementiafriends@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:dementiafriends@alzheimers.org.uk)



## Dementia help and support

Did you know that 1 in 3 people living with dementia don't have a diagnosis?

If you're worried that a person you know may have dementia then it's really important they're diagnosed so they can get help and support.

A dementia diagnosis may feel daunting, but 9 out of 10 people affected by dementia said there are clear benefits to getting a diagnosis. This includes accessing care, treatment, and support they desperately need.

If you're worried about yourself, or someone close to you, then the Alzheimer's Society dementia support service can give you personalised help and advice face to face or over the phone. Their expert team will listen, answer your questions, and connect you to the support you need. You can contact them on:

Phone 01226 296301

Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm

Email [barnsley@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:barnsley@alzheimers.org.uk)

## Tenants First – here to help you

Our dedicated Tenants First team give specialist tenancy and family support to help you manage your tenancy and enjoy where you live.

We offer:

- family intervention support
- tenancy support – including help with claiming benefits, support accessing services and grants
- referrals to third party services like Citizens Advice, charities, and trusts
- housing coaches
- mental health (housing related) support for adults and families
- employment training support – helping tenants to get into training, skills, and employment (funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) – see page 2 for more information!

We offer a personalised package of support targeted to your individual needs, and we'll work with you to offer practical help and advice.

If you feel like you need this extra support, please get in touch with us on 01226 787878 and ask for Tenants First.

## Handyperson / Gardening Service

Age UK Barnsley now offer a Handyperson and Gardening Service for Barnsley residents aged 50+. If you're struggling with basic DIY jobs and maintaining your garden and need a little extra help, we'd encourage you to contact them.

At a cost of £20 +VAT this service provides a very affordable alternative for older people in Barnsley. It will make a big difference to you if you're struggling with jobs around the house and in the garden. You're encouraged to fit in as many small jobs as possible within your hour appointment! Please note there may be an extra charge for any equipment/materials supplied.

For more information please contact Age UK Barnsley on 01226 776825 or by email: [information@ageukbarnsley.org.uk](mailto:information@ageukbarnsley.org.uk)

# Keep moving for your mental health



Looking after your mental health is just as important as looking after your physical health, and the two are strongly connected. One of the ways we can improve our mental health is by keeping active.

## Being active can:

- Lower our risk of heart disease, stroke, some cancers, depression, and dementia.
- Improve our thinking skills like problem-solving, decision-making, and remembering facts and words.
- Lessen aches and pains, help you stay steady on your feet, and boost your mood.

Here are some tips that you can fit into your day to get you moving:



## Regular standing

If you sit down a lot during the day, try to get up at least once an hour. If that's not possible, moving your arms and legs for a few minutes will help.

## Gentle stretches

Try some gentle stretches in bed or on a chair every day to keep supple.

## We'd love to see your photos

Send your snaps of your garden, favourite park, or best walking route to [comms@berneslaihomes.co.uk](mailto:comms@berneslaihomes.co.uk)



## Walking between rooms

Walk from one room to another and back if you're steady on your feet, and time how long it takes. Try to beat your time each day.

## Take regular exercise

Making regular exercise part of your routine is one of the best ways to stay well in later life and can be a great opportunity to socialise and meet new people. Go for a walk with a friend, go swimming, or go to an exercise class at your local leisure centre.

## Be mindful about your movement

We're often moving without realising it like when we're doing housework, grocery shopping, or walking to places. Noticing how you're breathing, the sights and sounds around you, how the air feels on your face, can help us relax and feel less stressed.

## Listen to music that gets you moving

This will boost your mood and increase your heart rate!



## Do some gardening

This is a really good way to exercise. You'll also get some fresh air and your garden will look great too.



## Get outdoors whenever you can

Whether it's a stroll around your communal spaces or gardens, or a visit to one of Barnsley's beautiful parks or green spaces, being outside is a great mood booster and a pleasant way to get some steps in!



# Creating great communities together



From making sure our homes, estates, and shared spaces are nice places to live, to supporting community projects and providing opportunities for local people of all ages to gain experience and learn new skills, we're passionate about being a force for good.

Here are just some of the activities we've been involved with recently, working together with tenants, residents, and partners to create thriving communities.

## Inspiring future careers at Barnsley College academy

We have a strong relationship with the college, supporting a range of apprentices as well as hosting a number of T-Level placements who are gaining valuable work experience across the business whilst studying.

Our new academy is a vibrant and inspiring space. Johnny Inglesfield, Head of Construction, said:

**"It's an incredible opportunity for our students to be inspired by the specialist workforce in Berneslai Homes and hear about potential employment opportunities."**

We'll soon be launching a new 'multi skilled apprenticeship' which will be a great opportunity for local people to learn a variety of trades on the job.



## Digging in at Autism Allotments

We've been lending a helping hand to Autism Allotments in Thurnscoe. As part of our 'Can Do Crew' – employer supported volunteering (ESV) programme, more than 30 volunteers from across the country gave their time and skills to help with this fantastic community project that was founded by local couple Michael and Paul Atwal-Brice.

The couple, whose oldest twin sons are autistic and have epilepsy and learning difficulties, wanted to create a safe and supportive space for autistic people to learn and spend time together in the outdoors. Included in their ambitious plans were sensory raised beds, wheelchair accessible paving, a wooden cabin to host workshops and other group activities, and a wildflower meadow and mini forest to encourage wildlife habitats to develop. Along with our partners Ideal Heating and Jewson Partnership Solutions, we've supported the project with funding, materials, donated items, and many volunteer hours. We can't wait to see what's next, and we'll be supporting every step of the way.

Paul said:

**"From day one Berneslai Homes have been supporting us, helping create such a wonderful, beautiful space and we're looking forward to working together on the next phase!"**

## A sunny day's work at Saville Court

The sun was shining on our volunteers at Saville Court in Hoyland, where they got stuck into weeding, mowing, and giving the place a fantastic facelift.

96-years-young resident Joyce was on hand to supervise and see the work in action. Another resident James told us:

**"It's making a proper difference for everybody here. If it looks better, you feel better!"**



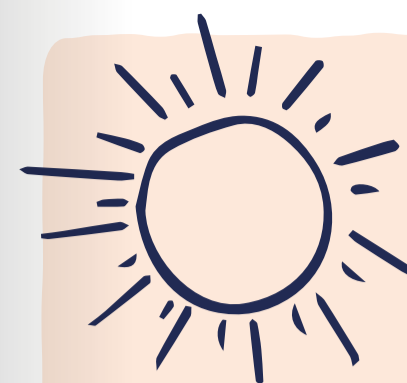
## Growing seeds of kindness in Grimethorpe

Grimethorpe Community Allotments is the second project to receive funding from Ideal Heating through our social value partnership. Generous gardeners including Mick, Scott, and Marie have kindly given their time and effort to a project that sees excess plants, flowers, fruit and vegetables donated to the local community. With the funding received they've bought essentials like seeds and compost to boost their project and provide some extra insurance against this year's changeable weather.

This year alone, they've managed to grow an extra 570 plants with a retail value of over £1,385! All these have been given away for free to local residents, schools, groups, and local charities. If you travel through Grimethorpe, you're likely to see the bright orange marigolds in the community beds that have been grown on site. Bloomin' marvellous!

Scott said:

**"This is the second year we've had funding from Berneslai Homes and Ideal Heating and we've been able to turn the funding into plants worth much more for the local community!"**



# Stay safe and well in warm weather



With summer upon us, it's time to enjoy the sunshine and outdoor activities. However, hot weather can pose some health risks if we're not careful. If you're older, you might be more vulnerable to heat. We want to help you and your family stay safe and well during the warmer months.



## Stay hydrated

Dehydration is a significant risk in hot weather. Our bodies lose more water through sweat, so it's crucial to stay hydrated by drinking plenty of water throughout the day. Avoid alcohol, which can dehydrate you more. Water, lower fat milks, tea and coffee are good options.

## Keep your home cool

- ✓ Close curtains or blinds during the hottest part of the day to keep the sun out
- ✓ Open windows during the early morning and late evening to let cooler air in
- ✓ Use fans to circulate air and consider placing a bowl of ice in front of the fan to cool the air further
- ✓ If you have an air conditioning unit, make sure it's serviced and working properly



## Dress for the weather

Light, loose-fitting clothes made of natural fabrics like cotton can help your body regulate its temperature. A hat can provide much-needed shade and protect your face from the sun's rays.

## Limit sun exposure

Avoid the sun during peak hours, typically between 11am and 3pm. If you must be outside, take frequent breaks in the shade or indoors. Use a sunscreen with a high SPF to protect your skin.

## Garden fires and BBQs

Always be cautious when having BBQs or using any kind of open flame in your garden:

- ✓ Keep BBQs well away from sheds, fences, trees, and garden furniture
- ✓ Never leave BBQs unattended and keep a bucket of water or sand nearby for emergencies
- ✓ Avoid using BBQs on balconies or in enclosed spaces

If you notice any uncontrolled fires or suspect arson, you can contact FireStoppers anonymously on **0800 169 5558**



## Take extra care

- Slow down when it's hot – don't do too much exercise or physical activity, especially outdoors.
- Carry on taking any prescribed medicines unless you're advised not to by a medical professional. Be aware that some prescription medicines can reduce your tolerance of heat.
- If you feel unwell, get dizzy, weak, anxious or have intense thirst, move to a cool place, drink water and try to cool your body down. Call **111** if you need medical support.

## Water safety

Although it's tempting to cool off when the weather is warm, open water is very dangerous. Drowning accidents are especially high in the summer months. If you have young family members or friends, chat to them about water safety. It could save a life.

Remember:

**It's colder than it looks** – cold water can affect even the strongest of swimmers

**It's stronger than it looks** – currents can be very strong, swim with the current, not against it

**Float to live** – fight the instinct to thrash or swim hard – instead, you should float to live:

- Lean back – extend your arms and legs
- Gently move them around to help you float if you need to
- Float until you can control your breathing
- Only then, call 999 for help or swim to safety

## Remember

By keeping these safety tips in mind, you can enjoy the summer months without leaving yourself or your loved ones at risk.

# Let us in to do essential safety checks

Electrical faults, faulty wiring, and outdated electrical systems can pose serious risks.



They could cause electric shocks and fires, putting you and your loved ones at risk of serious injury or even death.

Electrical safety checks are crucial for identifying potential hazards and preventing problems. Allowing access to your home for our qualified officers to inspect your electrical systems is an important step in safeguarding your home and family.

## What's involved?

The inspection and testing can take a few hours to complete. It is non-invasive so we'll leave no mess and will cause minimal disruption. The process identifies any potential hazards or risks within the electrical installation in your home.

## Convenient scheduling

We understand that providing access to your home for these checks can be disruptive. Our team will contact you to schedule a visit at a time that suits you.

If you need to change your appointment, just give us a call on **01226 787878** to let us know, and we can reschedule.

Your safety is our top priority. By allowing us to perform these essential electrical safety checks, you're playing a vital role in maintaining a safe and secure living environment for everyone.

# Do you have home contents insurance?

If you need to get home contents insurance, then we offer the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme(\*).

This is a specialist insurance scheme for tenants provided by Thistle Tenant Risks. The policy covers the contents and personal belongings for tenants against loss or damage from specific events (for example, fire, theft or escape of water).

Berneslai Homes doesn't cover your contents as part of your tenancy agreement, so it's important that you arrange contents insurance to cover your belongings in case of things like theft, water damage, fire, and other household risks. No matter how careful you are, there's always a risk that your belongings could be broken, damaged, or stolen. Home contents insurance can help give peace of mind should the worst happen.

Sign up today by phoning **0345 450 7288**  
(Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm)

(\* Other insurance providers are also available, and insurance comparison websites can help you find the best deal for you and your circumstances.



## The move to Universal Credit

The Government is moving people who are currently claiming legacy benefits such as tax credits, Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support and Housing benefit etc onto Universal Credit. This is called Universal Credit Managed Migration.

You don't need to do anything until you have received a Universal Credit 'Migration Notice' (letter) from the DWP. To find out more phone DWP on **0800 328 5644**.



# Contact us

## Find us online

We hope you've enjoyed reading our newspaper. If you have internet access at home or on a smartphone or tablet, you can keep up with all the latest news online too!

Our website is full of useful information and is available 24/7 at [berneslaihomes.co.uk](http://berneslaihomes.co.uk)

## Find us on social media

 [facebook.com/berneslaihomes.page](https://facebook.com/berneslaihomes.page)

 [Instagram.com/berneslaihomes](https://Instagram.com/berneslaihomes)