

Camden housing

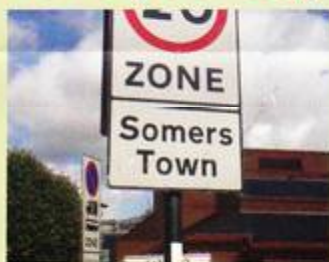
Camden Town edition

Autumn 2013



Including Primrose Hill, Regent's Park, St Pancras and Somers Town
Local housing news for Camden Council tenants and leaseholders

Have your say on Central Somers Town project



The second stage of consultation is now under way about a proposal to rebuild Edith Neville School, Plot 10 community play facility and St Aloysius Nursery. There are also plans to improve the open space and build new council and shared ownership housing in the area. Earlier this year people in Somers Town talked about the need to solve long-term issues with antisocial behaviour and spend money on facilities that are used by the Somers Town community. The latest idea for the 'Central Somers Town' project attempts to balance a number of those local priorities and get maximum benefits for local people.

It is still at a very early stage, it is not the final detailed design for Central Somers Town but your views will help to make sure we get this proposal right for you and your local community.



This proposal is part of Camden's Community Investment Programme (CIP), our 15-year plan to invest in schools, homes and community facilities.

Community Investment Programme

To take part in the consultation, view the proposal and give your views visit Camden.gov.uk/somerstown call 020 7974 5717 or email cip@camden.gov.uk before Friday 18 October 2013.

Come to our open house on housing



You're invited to an **open house** event, featuring fun activities and the opportunity to talk to the people who make decisions about housing in Camden.

The event, on Saturday 19 October, is for tenants, leaseholders and their families who are keen to discover our plans for the future of housing in the borough.

give your views on the five-year plan we're developing for tenant and leaseholder properties like yours.

There's also the opportunity to get involved in:

- indoor gardening – get tips on planting and community food growing projects
- joining Homeswapper – to find homes for mutual exchange
- a DIY and repairs workshop – learn how to do minor repairs around the house
- family events – including arts and crafts, face painting and a treasure hunt.

There will also be a festival-style community picnic and goody bags to take away.

Camden: A Quality Landlord open house 2013, 10am to 1pm, Saturday 19 October, at Arlington House, Camden Town. To register to attend email hsu@camden.gov.uk or call 020 7974 5519.

Come along to take part in discussions on the investment Camden is making in tenant and leaseholder homes, as well as our plans for improving public spaces in your local communities.

You can meet with Camden councillors and officers to

Contact
Camden



More choice,
better access

New ways to pay

You can now pay for a range of council services online, by phone and at your local Post Office.

Payments can be made for leaseholder services, council tax, rents, parking, nursery fees, allotments and street licensing.

The improvements are part of our programme to make access to council services easier.

We are enhancing digital access for online payments and changing over-the-counter payments. The Town Hall's cash office, on Judd Street, will

close on 31 October. After that, over the counter payments will be accepted at 18 Post Offices across the borough. This will allow residents and businesses to pay bills more conveniently.

How to pay

Direct Debit is one of the simplest ways to pay bills. You can also pay online at camden.gov.uk, call **020 7974 6104** or visit your local Post Office.

Pay by cash, cheque or debit card at your nearest Post Office:

Camden Town – Camden High Street, Albany Street, Crowndale Road, Regent's Park, Kentish Town, King's Cross.

Paypoint and rent cards

Paypoint can be used to pay for council services. You will need your barcoded bill or letter to ensure you're not charged for making the payment. You can also continue using your rent card to pay rent, or your payment book for council tax payments.

Cracking down on criminal subletting



Starting this month, council or housing association tenants who illegally sublet their home could end up in jail.

A change in the law means, for the first time, anyone who fraudulently deprives someone of a home will be committing a criminal offence.

Offenders can also face an unlimited fine, and Camden will continue to recover any money tenants make from illegally subletting council properties.

The new law will help tackle this fraud, which costs every Camden household £238 a year and increases homelessness.

The Council has recovered 736 illegally sublet homes, including a one bedroom flat on the Regent's Park Estate that was advertised to rent for £1,300 a month. Cases like this are the result of tip-offs, partnership working with the police and our key amnesty campaign.

Key amnesty campaign update

At the time of going to press, four illegally sublet homes had been returned during our key amnesty campaign.

They are a two bedroom property and a bedsit in Holborn, a one bed in Chalcot Street and a three bedroom property in Gospel Oak.

We also received a record number of reports about suspected illegal subletting.

You can report illegal subletting on **020 7974 5848**, or email keyamnesty@camden.gov.uk

You said ... we did

In the last edition, we told you about our engagement week where we visited five estates and spoke to residents on their doorsteps and at our fun events.

We have now completed our analysis of the 1,500 survey responses, and are beginning to follow through on some of your suggestions. We've included some below. Thanks to all of you who took part.

You said you would like regular property inspections.

We are getting caretakers, estate-based staff and contractors to look out for problems and report them to us.

You said you would like DIY workshops for residents.

We are holding a workshop for residents at the Residents Conference on October 19, as well as arranging others depending on demand.

You said you would like more enforcement over items left in communal areas.

We are increasing inspections of communal areas and contacting residents to remove items.

You said leaseholders would like to arrange their own communal repairs.

We are responsible for communal repairs under the terms of the lease, as well as health and safety, and fire risks. If repairs are not carried out to the correct standard we could become liable for damages. Where a building ends up with the majority of leaseholders from Right to Buy sales it is possible for the leaseholders to buy the freehold and take over the landlord's responsibilities.

A new and improved Credit Union for Camden

Everyone who lives or works in Camden can now become a member of the largest credit union in London.

The London Mutual Credit Union (LMCU) merged with the existing Camden Credit Union in July and is now offering a wider range of products and services to local people.

A credit union is a community-owned, not for profit financial co-operative. This means profits are shared with the members, and this keeps money in the local economy, helping everyone, rather than just shareholders.

So if you or your children want to start saving, or you need a low cost loan or straightforward current account, the friendly staff at LMCU will be happy to explain all of their accounts. They are especially keen to support those new to banking. You can phone, pop into the branch in Kentish Town or apply online.

London Mutual Credit Union

347 Royal College Street, NW1 9QS
Monday to Friday 9.30am to 4.30pm
Tel: 020 7787 0770
creditunion.co.uk

Confidential: Safety Views want to hear from you

Camden Safety Views wants to know how safe you feel in your neighbourhood.

This information is regularly passed on to the police and Council in confidence, with a view to targeting any problems that are reported.

If there are any emerging problems in your area, the aim is to target these issues before they get out of hand.

Administrator Peter Ward said: **"What makes Safety Views different is that when people tell us about problems we get back to let them know what's being done. We also collate the information so neither the police or Council know who made the comments. Regardless of whether you live in Kilburn or Holborn we want to hear from you."**

Safety Views is a pilot run jointly by two local groups with a long track record of work in the community; Camden Community and Police Consultative Group and Somers Town Community Association.

Find out more camdenpcpg.org.uk/projects or call 020 7383 0000.

Meet your housing team



Introducing Fiona Darmady.... parking and lettings officer.

It's Fiona's job to manage Camden's 11,282 non-residential housing properties. That covers sheds, parking spaces and garages. Her small team of six organise inspections, clean ups and lettings.

Fiona says: **"We have quite a long waiting list and we try to be as quick as possible in re-letting a shed or garage when it becomes vacant."**

Parking is at a premium in Camden and Fiona is keen to remind people that the Council offers visitor parking permits at reasonable rates. **"They're a great help for visiting relatives and carers."**

To meet the rest of the team or access useful information visit www.camden.gov.uk and search for **tenants** and **leaseholders**.

8 ways to be a noise-wise neighbour



Complaints about neighbour noise are among the most frequently made to the Council. A lot of unwelcome

noise can be avoided, so please read these eight pointers for a quiet life for you and your neighbours.

1. Avoid doing things like shouting, slamming doors and allowing children to jump around.
2. Let neighbours know if you will be holding a party. Be considerate and don't have them too often.
3. Let neighbours know if you are going to do noisy DIY. Do your DIY no later than 6pm on weekdays and 1pm on Saturdays. Avoid DIY on Sundays if possible.

4. When you have visitors, particularly between 11pm and 8am, ask them to arrive and leave your home quietly, and close the entrance door quietly too.
5. Keep your TV, radio and music volume down and place stereo and audio equipment away from walls shared with neighbours.
6. If you have people living beneath you keep floors covered with carpet and a good quality underlay.
7. If you own a dog, don't leave it alone for long periods. Don't let it bark or run around in your home, particularly at night.
8. Finally, be cooperative if someone complains to you about noise and listen to their point of view. Remember that they might be hearing noise you're not aware of making.

Camden Mediation can also help in difficult situations between neighbours.

Find out more at
camdenmediation.org.uk
020 7383 0733 or
info@camdenmediation.org.uk