

# What do you think of our new look?

As you can see we have changed the Newsletter style! I have to say that I quite like the look of it. It's retro. What do you think? Let us know, email [satta@arawakwalton.com](mailto:satta@arawakwalton.com) or call 0161 272 6094. We would love to hear what you think!

If you are on Twitter and Facebook you can connect with us there!



Follow us, Like us, Tweet us, Talk to us!

[www.arawakwalton.com](http://www.arawakwalton.com)



## Email Savvy?

Do we have your email address?

We will enter your name in a draw and you could win a £20 voucher if you provide us with your email address!!

We are going to be sending more information via email wherever possible. This will allow us to get important information to you much faster. Please give us your email address by calling the office on 0800 389 4616 or emailing [customerservices@arawakwalton.com](mailto:customerservices@arawakwalton.com).

## How are we performing

Arawak Walton Performance	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
Voids % (number of empty properties)	0.3%	1.2%	0.7%	1.1%
Rent Arrears– the amount of unpaid rent (as % of weekly rent)	5.1%	5.2%	5.2%	4.8%
Number of days to re-let a property	27	24	30	25
Average number of seconds taken to answer calls	4	4	N/A	4.0
Overall Satisfaction with the repairs service	95%	94%	95%	99%
Repairs completion statistics	Jul	Aug	Sep	Target
Emergency – completed within 24 hours	100%	100%	N/A	99%
Urgent – completed within 7 days	99%	99%	N/A	99%
Routine – completed within 21 days	97%	97%	N/A	99%

October 2015

SPECIAL EDITION



# ARAWAK WALTON

# TENANTS NEWSLETTER

## HOT TOPICS

AGM–Sycamore Court  
Opening–Email addresses–  
Right to buy- Rent Cut -  
Universal Credit- Insurance for  
tenants– NWCHA -Staff News

## Sycamore Court Opening and Annual Celebration

Arawak Walton held its annual celebration on Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2015 with the official opening of our newly refurbished apartments for over 55's in Miles Platting called Sycamore Court.

The scheme was officially opened up by The Right Worshipful the Lord Mayor of the City of Manchester, Councilor Paul Murphy.

Sycamore Court was transferred by Anchor and has been redeveloped to meet the needs of our diverse and multi-cultural tenants. We believe that the scheme will come to represent a flagship of how over 55's housing should designed be in the future.

The event was a great success. We welcomed over 100 guests who had come to see the 'hotel like' ambiance and enjoy both the steel pan



**Grand Opening:** Lord Mayor of Manchester Paul Murphy cutting the ribbon for Sycamore Court.



**Jamming:** Steel Bands kept the crowd entertained at Sycamore Court.

band playing upbeat Caribbean music and the Caribbean food!

The Lord Mayor noted the importance of maintaining a link to our roots and culture and our strength in facing many challenges.

Paul Beardmore from Manchester City Council delivered an informative speech on Devolution Manchester and the role of small housing associations in this.

We would like to thank all our tenants, partners and staff who have been involved in making this refurbishment a great success and one that has received excellent feedback.



## Annual General Meeting

Following the celebration many guests stayed to attend the Annual General Meeting. They heard that the association had achieved a turnover of over £5m, with operating costs almost £3.5 million and interest costs of £600k. This gave a surplus of just over £1 million for the year, which has been invested primarily in acquiring and refurbishing Sycamore Court.

Shareholders and guests were delighted to hear that the association's financial position was strong and stable. The Chair noted that we remain the largest independent BME housing association in the North West and we plan to

stay this way. She went on to state that the association will continue to address the challenges facing us. Thanks were given to the Staff, the Board, our partners, members of the Tenants Quality Panel and our lenders for their continued commitment and support.

Following the AGM, we would officially like to welcome the following new members to the Board: Mr David Brown, Ms Nadia Fortune-Nesbit and Ms Hilda Kaponda. David joins us from Pine Court Housing Association, Nadia from Cariocca Enterprises and Hilda joins us from Hilko Consulting Limited and will be our new Chair of the Finance and Risk Committee.

**BREAKING  
NEWS**

## BREAKING NEWS: RIGHT TO BUY

**BREAKING  
NEWS**

As part of the election Manifesto the Government promised to introduce the right to buy for Housing Association tenants.

In a historic move the National Housing Federation made an offer on behalf of Housing Associations to do this voluntarily so that the Government would not need to introduce new legislation.

All housing Associations voted on the proposed deal and the government announced at the Conservative Party Conference that they had accepted the Housing Associations offer.

This means that a Right to Buy will be made available to you at some point in the future. The Government and the National Housing Federation are now working on the detail of this plan which has to include the Right to Buy for Tenants and the ability for Associations to replace the property that is sold within 2 years.

The scheme will include discount for tenants which could be significant, if they are the same as the Council Right to Buy up to 70% for tenants who have lived in their home for many years.

We are still waiting for details, but if you might be interested in this, please email us on [RTB@arawakwalton.com](mailto:RTB@arawakwalton.com) and we will send the details to you as soon as the government have announced them!

## RENT DECREASE

For tenants paying £85 a week this year, by April 2019 their rent will be cut to £81.65. That works out at a reduction of £175 over a full year.

As part of the July Budget, the Government asked us to

cut our rents by 1% a year for four years, so we are busily working with our Board to deliver on this without it having an impact on our services.

We know how tight the finances are for many of our

tenants and their families at the moment so hope that this helps make a difference.

**1%**

## Congratulations Barlow's

### Skills for Business

## Medium Business of the year award Winner

Barlows (UK) Ltd, has been honoured with a prestigious award in this year's Skills for Business Awards. The Nominees span every aspect of business from construction to education and reflect the breadth of talent, expertise and knowledge in Greater Manchester.

The Skills for Business Awards, delivered by Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Manchester Learning Provider Network (GMLPN) and Greater Manchester Apprenticeship Hub and in association with Pearson, is an annual event celebrating the outstanding contribution that skills and learning make to businesses across Greater Manchester.

David Barlow, Skills Development Director said: "I would like to express my thanks to the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce for our organisation's nomination and our win. The challenge for all companies is to maintain and develop the skills of their staff, but with the support of bodies such as the Chamber, the path is definitely made easier. The winners award we received last year enabled us to continue to promote our company and this year's win will help us to keep telling our story."



## Arawak Walton in Heaton Mersey

Arawak Walton is delighted to take ownership of 8 new properties in a fantastic new estate in Heaton Mersey in Stockport. The homes built by Bellway Homes and developed with our partner Equity Housing Association enjoy the most modern facilities including patio doors and energy efficient insulation and heating systems.

The association has enjoyed a great relationship with Stockport Council since they

invited us into the borough a decade ago.

We have been slowly acquiring properties to give our communities a chance to live in Stockport and these properties are the icing on the cake. They were snapped up very quickly by delighted new residents who are now enjoying the security of an Arawak Walton home in this stunning setting.

# NWCHA Conference

The Annual North West Community Housing Association Conference was held on Wednesday 7th October at the Village Hotel in Warrington.

Cym D'Souza, Chief Executive of Arawak Walton Chaired the meeting which consisted of Small Housing Associations in the North West.

We had presentations from Katie Teasdale of The National Housing Federation, Steve Smedley who has worked with HouseMark and the day was finished off with a Behavioural change specialist, Juliette Yardley who discussed how the workforce can effectively work well under difficult and testing times.



Katie Teasdale, National Housing Federation discussed the current Housing Situation in today's political climate, Government's plans and how we as Small Housing Associations deal with this effectively.

## Louise DaCocodia shortlisted for Manchester's Statue



Mrs Louise DaCocodia MBE, BEM, JP, DL, MA (Hon) was the Co Founder and first Chair of Arawak Walton Housing Association back in 1987 and also an influential anti racism campaigner.

We are delighted to read that Mrs Louise DaCocodia has made the final line up for Manchester's first female statue in over 100 years.

Six legendary women have

been shortlisted by a town hall panel - and will now go to the public vote. It is hoped the statue will be unveiled on International Women's Day 2019. You can vote at

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/WoManchesterStatue](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WoManchesterStatue)

We at Arawak Walton are very proud of Mrs DaCocodia's achievements and hope her legacy continues.

# Universal Credit

The Government's new benefit system is up and running in many parts of Manchester, Stockport and Trafford and some of our tenants are already on this benefit. Universal Credit joins a number of benefits together and pays it to the claimant in a monthly lump sum. This lump sum goes up and down as the amount you are paid through work changes.

You can move onto Universal Credit if you start a new claim or indeed if you choose to do so at the Job Centre.

Please remember that if you move onto Universal Credit we will not know unless you tell us and Housing Benefit you receive will be paid directly to you. We are keen to help you make an accurate claim and to help you we have included a benefits calculator on our web site.

[www.arawakwalton.entitledto.co.uk/](http://www.arawakwalton.entitledto.co.uk/)



In addition we are also keen to help you so please contact us if you are moving onto Universal Credit and we will work with you to ensure that your housing costs are paid as efficiently as possible. Please speak to your Housing Officer.

## Insurance for Tenants

'Home Insurance is one of the last things people think about in life but maybe one of the first things people think about in a crisis.'

Home Insurance is there for when things do go wrong to give you peace of mind!

**Why should you get insured?**

There is a misconception that Arawak Walton will pay for any damages that occur from the following:

- Accidental damage
- Flooding
- Leaks

However this is not the case so we encourage all our tenants to have Home Contents Insurance.

**What are the Benefits of Home Contents Insurance (HCI)?**

The National Housing Federation (NHF) offers affordable HCI with varying benefits for social housing tenants

It has many benefits that other providers may not offer such as:

- Pay-as-you go

- Cash or Direct Debt payments
- Postal order payments
- No excess to pay on claims

**How much does it cost?**

Premiums will vary so contact the Insurance company for all for an FREE estimate

**Who can provide Homes Contents Insurance?**

Many companies do if you search the internet or we can suggest **My Home Contents Insurance** Call 0845 337 2463 for an information pack or email [Myhome@jltgroup.com](mailto:Myhome@jltgroup.com)





# The Winter Money Saving Checklist

Save yourself money this winter with this helpful money saving guide taken from [moneysavingexpert.com](http://moneysavingexpert.com)



- 1) According to leading energy experts at the Energy Saving Trust, the idea that it's cheaper to leave the heating on low all day is a myth. They're clear that you'll save energy, and therefore money, by only having the heating on when it's required. (Using a timer's best, because your thermostat is designed to turn your heating on and off to keep your home at the temperature you set it.)
- 2) Find where your Stop Cock is. Frozen pipe bursts create an average £4k of damage, worse if you can't find the off switch as your home floods. Call us if you are not sure where yours is.
- 3) **4. Save £250+ on energy bills.** Switch energy ASAP so you're sorted before the high use period - it normally takes 17 days. Plug your details into [www.moneysavingexpert.com/cheapenergyclub](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/cheapenergyclub) to find your cheapest - it includes pros & cons for each tariff.
- 4) **Paying energy by monthly direct debit is cheaper.** You pay up to 6% less. Firms estimate your annual usage and divide by 12 so you're likely to build up credit after summer and be a little in debt after winter.
- 5) **More bedrooms than people?** You could save £100s on water. Live in Eng or Wales? If your home has more or the same no of bedrooms as people, it's likely you'll save fitting a water meter.
- 6) **Free loft/cavity wall insulation, open to all.** Energy firms face sanctions if they don't meet Eco quotas, so some, eg, British Gas, give free insulation to anyone in England with a suitable home (you don't have to be their customer or on a low income).
- 7) **Are you entitled to any extra winter help?** Winter is a tough time for many as the cold sets in. But

there are funds which may help...

**a) Winter fuel payments.** If you were born on or before 5 Jan 1953 (and meet other qualifying criteria ) you're eligible for the up-to-£300 winter fuel payment. If you get certain benefits, eg, state pension, pension credit or jobseeker's allowance, you'll usually get it automatically, otherwise you may have to claim. [www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/grant-grabbing#winterfuel](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/grant-grabbing#winterfuel) for full info.

**b) Cold weather payments.** Anyone on certain benefits, eg, specific income support/ jobseeker's allowance/ pension credit, gets £25 for every 7 days it's sub-zero. [www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/grant-grabbing#coldweather](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com/family/grant-grabbing#coldweather)

For more information on money saving tips there are plenty of useful websites out there such as Step change, Money Saving Expert, Money Advice Service and many more if you search on the internet.

# Staff News

We have appointed Ann Flood to cover Natalie Rowen's Maternity post for a 12 month period. Ann has a wealth of housing experience under her belt and is already settling in to her new role.

Ann Flood,  
Housing Officer



Lisa Jowrey,  
Communal Services



Monika Rahman,  
Housing Assistant

Lisa Jowrey, who was a Housing Officer, now has a new role as a Communal Service Manager. Lisa will be responsible for the management of all the sheltered schemes and communal services including gardening and cleaning.

Monika Rahman has also been appointed to the Housing Assistant role and will be supporting Lisa in the communal services team.

## Congratulations to Jo Moon and Natalie Rowen on the birth of their baby boys!!

Following a successful recruitment drive, we are pleased to announce that Sabrina Khan was recently appointed as the new Scheme Manager at Daisy Bank Court.

Sabrina worked with us on a temporary basis and we are pleased to welcome her to the team!



Last but not least... we are sad to announce that Andrew Tyczynski, Maintenance Officer left the association in August. Andrew has been with us for 5 years and is moving onto new pastures and joining the Riverside Group. It has been an absolute pleasure having Andrew with us and we wish him the best of luck for the future.

*'It is with great sadness that I will be leaving Arawak Walton after five years. The association has provided me with a priceless amount of working experience since leaving University, for which I am extremely grateful and it has been a pleasure meeting tenants along the way. Although I am looking forward to the next chapter of my career, I will most definitely miss working here and will be keeping a close*

*eye on the association moving forward in the future. With best wishes to all the staff and tenants, Andrew'.*

