WECH
Walterton and Elgin Community Homes

Newsletter
Spring 2024

Springtime Greetings From WECH's Chair

Hello to everyone and I hope you all got through the winter in one piece! The staff and board have worked tirelessly these last few months to improve services and expand our community projects which you can read about in this newsletter. WECH is well on the way to re-establishing itself as a positive driving force within the local area.

This year Ramadan and Easter coincide and I'd like to make a few observations on these festivals. For those that don't know during the month of Ramadan all healthy adults observe a fast from sunrise to sunset where neither food nor drink (or tobacco) must pass the lips. It is a month to give consideration to the many millions on this earth who are on the brink of starvation. In the Western world we take for granted electricity, water on tap and plentiful supplies of food.

The Christian equivalent of Ramadan is Lent but this has been watered down to giving up something like chocolate for a month or not eating meat on a Friday, thus losing its potential for healing. Ramadan has remained as it was for the last 1400 years and is more appealing to my ascetic nature. So for the first time I decided to fast following the sunrise to sunset rule and, 11 days in, I have to say it has been nothing short of a revelation. I can already feel the physical benefits and see them for myself in the mirror! Equally important is the strengthening of the will and mastering your mind, both of which occur during the fast.

One of my themes as Chairman of WECH is to unite all our residents of differing cultures and Ramadan gives a tremendous opportunity to engage with our Muslim community. When I have told Muslims that I, as a non-Muslim, am observing the Ramadan fast I have been met with surprise and slight bemusement but also with incredible kindness and generosity. I would recommend to everyone to try it, even if only for a day, and it is great way to interact with your neighbours which can only further strengthen our WECH family. So Ramadan Mubarak to our Muslim residents, Happy Easter to our Christian residents and Happy Holidays (Holy Days) to those of other faiths or of no faith at all.

Gordon Quinlan (Chair)

A message from our Chief Executive

Spring is here and WECH is bathed in sunshine (and rain). 2024 is well and truly underway, with many changes since last September's AGM. We are working hard on the priorities that you, our residents, have set us – including strengthening our housing and repairs service - and are ready to listen and help.

The six-year cyclical works programme will re-start on the Walterton Estate this year – preparations for this are underway. Work will start on those homes that were next in line when the last programme ended. We are also preparing for cyclical works on Rodborough, Campaign and Victory Courts, as part of the 'Elgin Estate 100-day promise'.

There is a lot to be done. Our team and Board are working closely to make sure residents' stated priorities come first, and listening to you - on our estates, in our WECH Community Centre, and at celebrations such as our tree planting day, where we were joined by Westminster's Lord Mayor, Councillor Patricia McAllister, and Ward Councillors Ruth Bush and Concia Albert. There are further events planned, including a 'WECH In Bloom' competition and Summer Festival. We've secured funding from Westminster Council for more greening projects and these will help make our gardens some of the best of their kind.

We know that these are tough times for almost everyone, so we're stepping up the WECH community programme, with extra practical help for residents including our weekly Food Bank and Brunch Club – see inside for more details. We want everyone to know what is on offer, and for residents to use what is provided. It's important for me to know what you think, so please get in touch with our Reception if you'd like to talk or see me at one of our community events. I am excited to see what the months ahead hold – to see our founding principle of 'residents in control' in action, and the spirit of WECH alive and well.

Suzanne Wolfe (Chief Executive)

Jackie is Back!

I wanted to take a moment to express my sincere gratitude for all the support and kind wishes I have received following my return to WECH; It truly means a lot to me. When I joined WECH in 1994 my journey began as a receptionist which has led to my current role as a Housing Services Manager.

With a passion for socialising and caring for other's well-being I have grown into a role that involves handling various aspects of housing management. From facilitating Right to Buy, Right to Acquire, Mutual Exchanges, Successions, Transfer request to addressing Anti-Social Behaviour and providing support for general housing queries. I am delighted to be back, and I look forward to continuing to work with each and every one of you to make a positive impact in your community. I am confident that together we can achieve great things. Thank you once again for your warm welcome and ongoing support. I am excited to be working alongside such amazing individuals and I am committed to serving you to the best of my abilities.

Jackie Dawkins, Housing Manager

What to do if you are experiencing anti-social behaviour

If you are experiencing any antisocial behaviour issues, please call 101 to log this with the Police and or to the report It website **(https://www.westminster.gov.uk/report-it)**, which can be anonymous. Both are the most effective way to report any antisocial issues, as this highlights the issues you are experiencing to the appropriate Police and Westminster team, to ensure they are aware and can allocatee their patrols and resources accordingly.

Your report will be assessed and directed to the appropriate team for investigation. The more reports received the more resources will be allocated. Please also let our Housing Team know, so they can also help to address the issues you are experiencing and liaise with the relevant organisations and teams to ensure they are addressed, to prevent them escalating further.

Debs is Back!

Hi all, I am back working at WECH as a part-time Community Development role and its lovely to be back! I still live locally and since I left, I have worked freelance across London fundraising for and developing a range of Charities, Community Hubs, services and projects, which I will now be doing for WECH.

I will be fundraising to develop a range of community projects and events to support your various needs, aiming to engage a range of ages, economies and interests, including expanding the range of activities available from our Community Centre and spaces.

I really want to bring you all together, to make WECH a thriving community again, where neighbours know and look out for each other. It will be great to see you all again, find out more about what community services/ activities you need and would like to engage with.

We're setting up a new Welfare Benefits entitlement drop in (See the Cost of Living Article on page 6 for details), new children's afterschool clubs (See Community Centre listings on page 9) and the Easter WECH Family Gardening event.

I will be available at the Easter Family Gardening Event so please drop in as I want to consult with you and gather your feedback to further identify the community's priorities to focus on addressing.

Best wishes

Debs Bourner,
Community Development Lead

Cost of living support available

Here are some of the ways you can access support weekly from the WECH Community Centre:

FREE Weekly Welfare Benefit entitlement checks

From Thursday 4 April, 3pm – 6pm

A 10 minute check in with WECH's welfare benefits advisor, to ensure you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to. Please bring details of the benefits you have been awarded with you. These drop-in sessions are open to all residents, but we can only provide follow-up form-filling support to WECH residents.

Jacqui's Maida Hill Foodbank

Every Thursday, 4pm – 6pm

Open to all struggling with the cost of living crisis, run by local volunteers providing a range of food. Available for anyone struggling to meet food costs. Weekly on a drop-in basis, no referral needed.

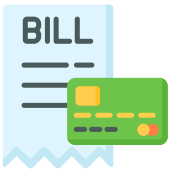
Maida Hill Project - Jacqui's FREE Community BRUNCH

Every Wednesday, 11am – 1.30pm

Halal and vegetarian food available; all welcome to come along and meet your neighbours.

The North Paddington Foodbank

Provides a range of services in addition to the Foodbank, including a Money Advice Hub, Baby Bank, Lunch Run (support to cook nutritious affordable meals for women). Speak to WECH's housing team for a North Paddington Foodbank referral.



Support with Utility Bills and Debts

If you are struggling with high utility bills there is help available from the British Gas Energy Trust, **https://britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/grants-available/** a charity providing grants towards higher bills and debts for all utility suppliers and open to those with prepayment Meters, see eligibility on the next page.

Individuals and Families Fund

Open to pre-payment meter customers only

The fund is available to British Gas and Non-British Gas customers. If you are a British Gas customer, you can still apply for the Energy Support Fund, whether you have a credit account or pre-payment meter.

To be eligible you must meet the below criteria:

- Have energy debt up to £2,000 and use a pre-payment meter in your main residence and the energy account must be in the name of the applicant
- You have received help from a money advice agency - this could be WECH's Welfare Benefits service or as outlined in the link on the previous page

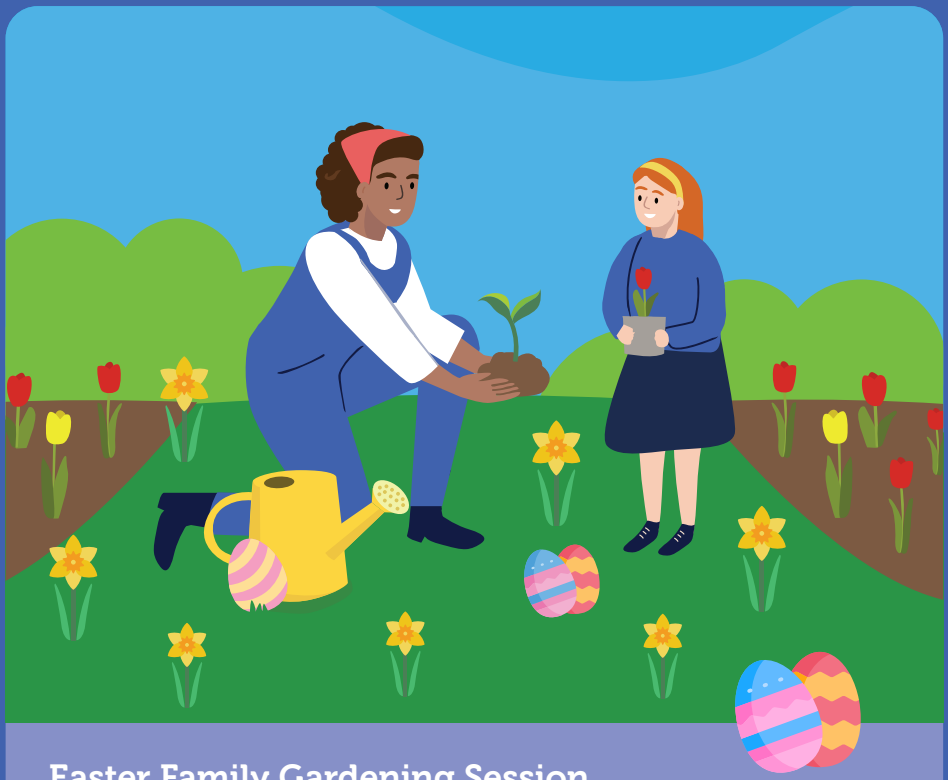
Westminster Council's Cost of Living Hub

https://www.westminster.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support

For more information about all the support available to you, to lessen the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, this website offers the following support options locally and more:

- Grants available to support with increasing costs and additional local services to maximize your income.
- Energy saving tips and resources to help you save on your utility bills.
- Affordable broadband and mobile options.
- Support to address debts.
- Foodbanks, pantries and access to free meals and warm spaces across Westminster and its surrounding boroughs.

Event dates for your diary



Easter Family Gardening Session

Wednesday 3 April, 2.30pm – 4.30pm, WECH Community Centre

FREE planting events for all ages, free plants, children's seedbomb making, sunflower planting, floral arts, gardening tips and a community consultation with Debs.

The WECH Summer Festival

Sunday 14 July

If you are interested in volunteering on the day or organizing a stall, activity or entertainment please let me know **debs@wech.org.uk** or drop in and see me at the Easter Family Gardening Session.

Regular Weekly Community Activities at the WECH Community Centre

There will soon be a Community Centre Timetable on display at the entrance of the Community Centre, which will outline all the activities you can access, so keep a look out. In the meantime take a look at the activities available below, lots of which are **FREE.**

Mondays

FREE Treasure Boxing for all ages

5pm	After School Boxing Club for 6 - 12 years old
6pm	Boxing for young people aged 13 - 25 years old
7pm	Female Only HIIT for 13 years old +

Email: Info@TreasureBoxingClub.com for booking form

Tuesdays

Hartbeeps Babies, Toddlers and Preschoolers

9.45am – 12.45pm

9.45am	Happy House class for toddlers and pre-schoolers
10.45am	Baby Beeps class for babies from sitting unaided to first steps
11.45am	Baby Bells class for babies from newborn to sitting

FREE trial sessions available to WECH residents.
£13.50 per week when you book the term, £16 for drop-ins.
Book online at www.bookeo.com/hartbeepslondon

Wednesdays

FREE Maida Hill Project - Jacqui's FREE Community BRUNCH

11.00 – 1.30 pm

Halal and vegetarian food available - all welcome to come along

Wednesdays continued...

FREE women's only yoga from Queens Park Bangladeshi Association

Starting on Wednesday 17 April, 11.30am – 2 pm
All women of all ages and abilities are welcome, come along and give it a try, no booking is required.

FREE WECH Over 60's Bingo

Every Wednesday, 6.30pm – 8.30pm
FREE and all over 60's welcome.

Thursdays

FREE weekly WECH welfare benefit entitlement checks and health advice drop-in

Starting Thursday 4 April, 3pm – 6pm

FREE The Maida Hill Foodbank

4pm – 6pm
Open to all struggling with the cost of living crisis on a drop-in basis.

WECH Adults Yoga

5.30pm – 6.45pm
All ages and abilities welcome. FREE for WECH; Non-residents £10 per class or £60 for one months' classes (£7.50 a class)

Fridays

FREE Protouch Children's after school club

Starting Friday 19 April, 5pm – 7pm
FREE for 5 - 12 year olds. Multiple activities for children, including Arts from the WECH Community Centre and Sports from the Sport pitch at Watsons Gardens, The Elgin Estate.

Saturdays

WECH Adults Yoga

9.30am – 11am
All ages and abilities welcome. FREE for WECH residents; Non-residents £10 per class or £60 for one months' classes (£7.50 a class)

The Harrow Road Community Champions Event Schedule

Monday

Maternity Champions - for all women
10am – 12pm
New & expectant mothers - Baby Clothes Swap, coffee morning, and parenting support from volunteers

Move with Yaz
Resuming 15 April, 11 – 11.30am
Monthly Change4life healthy living sessions.
All welcome to drop in.

Umoja Community Champions Community Singing Sessions
Resuming on Monday 15 April , 12.30 – 13.30 - All welcome.

Community Champions Health Drop-In
1 – 3 pm
Health advice, chats and snacks, all welcome to drop in.

Tuesday

Community Champions Women's Group
12 – 3pm
Health advice, chats, arts and crafts and snacks, all women welcome to drop in.

Saturday

Walking Football
11 – 12 pm
WECH Football Pitch, Watsons Gardens - All welcome

COMMUNITY Champions Harrow Road

MATERNITY Champions WESTMINSTER

City of Westminster

Free yoga classes for WECH Residents

Saturday classes are 9.30am to 11am; Thursdays from 5.30pm to 6.45pm

Improve your health and fitness - all abilities are welcome!

About Seamus
Seamus discovered Yoga whilst on tour as a musician in the mid 1990's.

> *'I found a way to recover from the tough days and nights and breathe again'.*

His practice took a boost in 2003 when he discovered Iyengar Yoga shortly after moving to back London.

> *'The practice of yoga became a regular part of daily life'.*

Seamus began his teaching practice in 2006 and in between raising 3 boys, working various jobs, he qualified as a yoga teacher in 2017. Proof that there is no rush when it comes to yoga.

Yoga is for every body. That's very important when we are new or trying yoga for the first time. Seamus teaches regular classes and covers at yoga studios including Anytime Fitness, Fitness First, Yoga Rocks, The Lab Spa, Retro Fit, Gymbox, TruBe, KADA, Westminster University, and Gibfit studio.

WECH residents free; Non-residents £10 per class or £60 for one months' classes (£7.50 a class)

Get involved with greening your estate

As part of the WECH Community Gardening project, funded by Westminster City Council, the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Councillor Patricia McAllister visited Elgin Estate on Saturday 24 February and helped dedicate a cherry tree to the memory of a friend and neighbour, Beryl Carmody.

Together, we planted many new trees and shrubs which will help make Elgin greener, more beautiful and bee friendly.

We are bringing in better garden management and reviewing how we are maintaining our communal gardens; we will be running more Gardening Club activities through the year.

Tree planting and dedication
Let us know if you have a local person you would like remembered in this way.

WECH

Walterton and Elgin Community Homes

Our team are working hard to help

Please be kind to our WECH team

Treat our team as you would like to be treated

We welcome your valued compliments, complaints and concerns

Email: admin@wech.org.uk

WECH
Walterton and Elgin
Community Homes

Dumping rubbish is dangerous and attracts unwanted guests

Keep our estates clean and tidy for everyone

Please place all rubbish in the bin stores

How to contact WECH

Opening Hours
Monday to Friday
9:30am – 5:30pm

Address
Selbourne House,
36A Elgin Avenue, London, W9 3AZ

Telephone
020 7266 3347

Out of Hours Emergencies
0208 979 2220 (Just 24/7 Ltd)

Useful numbers

Emergency Gas Leaks Cadent
0800 111 999

National Grid Electricity
0800 3163 105

Thames Water
(no water or low pressure)
0800 3169 800

Disposal of large items
020 7641 2000

Crimestoppers
0800 555 111

Police Non Urgent Crime & ASB
0300 123 1212

Police Emergency
999