

 COST OF  
LIVING SPECIAL

# TENANT TALK

Summer 2022



***How to cope with rising bills, Page 5***

***Survival kit to reduce your cost of living, Page 8***

***Alicia dreams of becoming a nurse thanks to BCHA, Page 11***



**Please Stay Connected and Join Us:**

We want to hear your views and you can do this by joining our Residents Facebook page.

If you are struggling with technology, those working with the free service 'Bournemouth Digital' are happy to help. Call them on 01202 677557

There are many ways to stay up to date with BCHA news and events including following our social media channels.



# Welcome

Hello everyone, we are pleased to introduce you to this, the Summer edition of Tenant Talk, in which we, the Editorial Panel, have chosen to focus on providing a wide range of help and advice in response to the current cost of living crisis.

People everywhere are being stretched to their limits due to soaring energy and food costs and

for families on low incomes, those at risk of homelessness and people with disabilities in particular, this is an immensely difficult period.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue and might also consider joining the panel or sending your comments and opinions on Tenant Talk.

## Meet the Tenant Talk Editorial Panel

My name is **Adam** and I'm a member of the editorial panel. I look forward to sharing some of my hobbies and interests that you may be able to enjoy.

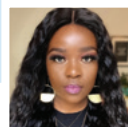
Hello, my name is **Flo**, a Zimbabwean girl residing in Bournemouth who, after some struggles has managed to find refuge in the UK under the BCHA organisation. I hope to inspire souls out there that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

Hi, my name is **Janet**. I live in Boscombe and I am retired and enjoy reading - and now being part of - Tenant Talk.

Hello, I am **Mario**. I live in Swanage. I am taking part in Tenant Talk to spread the word on resident participation and co-production.

Hi, my name is **Mike** and I am Co-Production Lead for BCHA. Co-Production for me means fully involving people in decisions that are made on their behalf.

We all hope you enjoy this latest issue of Tenant Talk.



In this issue, the Panel has worked hard to assist readers in making sure they are receiving the full range of help and support they are entitled to and can access via BCHA. There is also signposting to information and assistance available from some of our external partner agencies and organisations.

Three of our panel members have also shared articles passing on tips they themselves are using to save money during these extremely difficult times and I thank them for their informative contributions.

Other news featured in this issue includes a report on the first meeting of the Reference Panel, which has taken place and has been a great success.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as I have.

**Martin Hancock,**  
Chief Executive.



## Contents

- 2 Welcome
- 3 New Starters at BCHA
- 4 We have listened to you and acted
- 5 How to cope with rising bills
- 6 Waste not want not!
- 6 Help to pay for food and energy from the Household Support Fund
- 7 Reference panel continues to support your views
- 8 'Survival kit' to reduce your cost of living
- 8 Free mobile phone SIM cards and data available
- 9 Training opportunities
- 10 Build your online confidence
- 11 Alicia dreams of becoming a nurse thanks to BCHA
- 12 Cooking on a budget
- 13 Stargazing for Beginners
- 14 Hello from the allotment
- 15 Thank you for the music
- 16 Fire Safety

# New Starters at BCHA



**Tara Nolan**

"I started with BCHA on April 11 and work for BCHA Learn across Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole. My role is to provide advice and guidance to promote empowerment and independence for the customers we work with and to ultimately enable them to access meaningful occupation and a sense of wellbeing.

"I came back to BCHA after working here in the past, as I believe in the values which the organisation upholds. I love the positive impact BCHA Learn can have on our community.

"I count myself very lucky to have a job where I see people make inspiring changes, engage with careers and improve their self-esteem, relationships and financial health on a daily basis."



**Jonathan Clark**

"I started work with BCHA on April 20 and my role as the Repairs Scheduling Team Leader is to oversee the daily planning and scheduling of repairs delivering a quality service to our customers and maintaining our homes. I'm responsible for the day-to-day management and supervision of a small team of repair schedulers/administrators, ensuring that resources are assigned effectively.

"BCHA has an excellent reputation for providing quality affordable and secure homes and when this role recently became available, it was a fantastic opportunity for me to join the organisation.

"I bring a wealth of experience of working in social housing of over 10 years and am aiming to deliver a "quality repair, right first time" service to all our customers, helping them maintain their homes."



**Sarah Hopkins**

"I started on 21st March 2022 for BCHA Learn as an Employability and Skills Project Advisor. I support people across a range of the projects that we offer and assist colleagues with workshop delivery.

"I took the decision about a year ago to address my own work life balance, something that I had coached others to consider. Having worked in the charity sector before I knew it was where I always felt a sense of purpose. BCHA is giving me the opportunity use my wide range of knowledge and skills to empower others to develop their employability skills and support them into work, education or training.

"I had some knowledge of the BCHA Learn courses that BCHA offer and always had the BCHA jobs page on my favourites page as I knew this was a chance to thrive in a team of likeminded peers."

# BCHA - We have listened to you and acted

BCHA's Income and Inclusion Team recently held eight drop-in clinics and individual sessions where service charge increases are due to go above five pounds.

When planning the sessions we also mapped energy support and advice in each area, to share with session attendees.

The clinics were well attended and some customers spoke very positively about the buildings and services they are living in.

Customers also raised a number of issues relating to areas where we need to improve.

For example, the pandemic has meant that we have not always been able to find cleaners, window cleaners and gardeners.

We are working hard to ensure that customers receive these services, where this has been an issue.

Here are some more of the concerns you raised, which we are actively taking forward:



## You said

You said that you do not always understand our rent and service charge letters, and want to know about what the rent element was spent on



There could be long delays to getting new universal credit claims processed and you want more help and support around claiming benefits such as universal credit and personal independence payments



Where there are communal laundry rooms, the washing machines and dryers have not always been reliable



Access to good WIFI is really important to you, so you can remain connected to services and have access to information and communication networks



You talked about repairs and maintenance issues and not being kept up to date with their progress



Reducing energy bills is a key concern and you want control over when the heating is turned on and off. Additionally, you believe there should be more thermostats in buildings, so that the temperature can be turned down in your rooms



## We did

We are going to work with the reference panel to redraft our rent and service charge, and arrears letters

We are training our staff on how to advise and support you around maximizing your income from benefits

There is a project underway to look at whether we are able to put washing machines and dryers into kitchens in some of our services, instead of having communal laundry facilities

BCHA is committed to an ambitious digital strategy, as part of this we are working on a digital inclusion project

Our Asset Team are looking into the issues you have raised

Our support and tenancy teams will involve you in when the heating is on and we are looking into whether we are able to put on more thermostats (where this is relevant)

# How to cope with rising bills – Lee and his team can support you



Are your bills putting you and your finances under stress? BCHA's Financial Inclusion Officer Lee Podesta can work with you to manage your budgets, maximise your income and make sure you are receiving all the benefits of which you are entitled.

Lee can arrange a visit, phone or video call with you in which you can discuss your financial circumstances and carry out a benefits check.

After completing a check Lee can help you with an actual application process, as well as any appeals or in sourcing supporting information that might be required for benefits such as PIP or ESA.

He can also offer guidance concerning Universal Credit/Housing Benefit and solve any confusion around payments or job search meeting requirements.

Drop-in surgeries also take place at some of BCHA's temporary accommodation properties, where we ensure people are receiving the right benefits and can also give advice on handling rent debt arrears and budgeting.

BCHA is also collaborating with HACT and a number of other Housing Associations to provide additional fuel hardship funding for people who meet the requirements.

If you are struggling with your energy bills we would just need to gather a few details from you regarding who you pay your bill to and the method you use to pay.

The process is very simple and if you feel like this could be helpful to you then please get in touch as soon as possible so we can take full advantage of this scheme while it is available.

We are here to help so please do get in touch.

Contact: Lee Podesta, Financial Inclusion Officer  
phone: **07966 808862** or  
email: [leepodesta@bcha.org.uk](mailto:leepodesta@bcha.org.uk)

Money Matters Talk podcasts will start in June to discuss the financial crises and support you with ways to survive during this tough time. They will include discussions between BCHA colleagues, led by our financial inclusion officer Lee Podesta, and BCHA customers. Please tune into these episodes which will be on the BCHA website and social media channels



# Waste Not Want Not!

Adam, a member of the Tenant Talk Editorial Panel, shares a great way to grab a takeaway food bargain and reduce the amount of waste food going to landfill.



As you are no doubt aware, the cost of living in the UK is soaring; everything from gas to chocolate is rapidly becoming more expensive.

When money is tight, many of us turn to the reduced section of the supermarket, those bright yellow stickers drawing our eyes like a tiger spotting its prey.

*"Loaf of bread reduced to 15p? That'll last forever in the freezer!"*

*"I've never tried beef rogan josh, but at 90p, what's the harm?"*

And the frugality we apply to our food shopping doesn't need to end when you fancy a takeaway.

Did you know most restaurants throw away any food that wasn't bought that evening? Greggs, Papa John's, Costa, Starbucks, etc. all simply dispose of unsold produce. Well, they did, until Too Good To Go came along.

The first time I ever used Too Good To Go, I managed to bag myself a medium margherita pizza plus garlic sticks from Papa John's, all for just £2.66! Not only was that a great treat, I also prevented food wastage, which is a big problem in the UK.

Getting set up with Too Good To Go couldn't be easier. Just download the app, create an account, reserve a goodie bag, and then collect it at the time displayed in the app. Grab yourself some great feel-good food at incredible prices, all whilst preventing wastage.

Too Good To Go is available on Android and iOS

## Help to pay for food and energy from the Household Support Fund

**If your household is on a low income and is struggling to pay for food and energy you may be able to access help via the government's Household Support Fund.**

A new round of grants are being allocated from June 1st by councils including Wiltshire, Dorset, BCP, Plymouth, Exeter and Devon.

If you are eligible you will receive vouchers, not cash payments, which can be used for food and home essentials, housing costs (excluding mortgages), water and energy.

Details of eligibility and how to apply can be accessed from the following websites and phone numbers:

[www.devon.gov.uk](http://www.devon.gov.uk) Tel: 0345 155 1015

[www.bpcouncil.gov.uk](http://www.bpcouncil.gov.uk)

Tel: Bournemouth: 01202 123 330

Christchurch and Poole: 0345 034 4569

[www.wiltshire.gov.uk](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk) Tel: 0300 456 0111

[www.plymouth.gov.uk](http://www.plymouth.gov.uk) Tel: 01752 668000

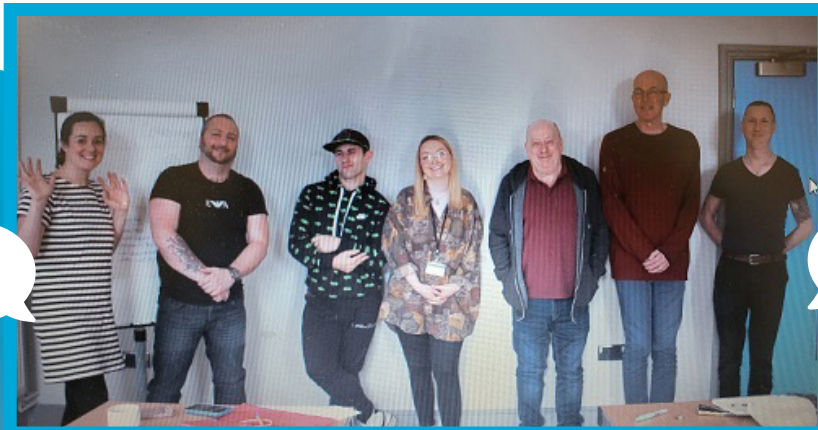
[www.exeter.gov.uk](http://www.exeter.gov.uk) Tel: 01392 277888

# Reference panel continues to support your views

**Mike Knowles, BCHA Reference Panel member and co-production advocate, reports on the Panel's recent progress and successes:**

"BCHA has asked customers in supported housing to join a Reference Panel so they can use their lived experience of homelessness and their service-user status to help develop and critique the work of BCHA - and ultimately help improve the lives of other residents.

This is a form of co-production which can be the most effective practice when it comes to meeting the needs of people who are/have been marginalised. It also reframes lived experience as an asset with its own accompanying skill set, rather than a disadvantage and barrier to participation.



The panel has been meeting online since December and there have been some noticeable successes in some areas. This has had an impact on service delivery which has been valued by attendees and by BCHA staff who have presented on a variety of topics. This has included discussions about the service charge increase, meaningful activities, cleaning, mental health support, training and podcasting.

Customer attendance at meetings has varied between 2 and 10 people and this variation has been due to a variety of reasons, such as people moving on, poor health, relapse, oversleeping, forgetting, disinterest, access to tech, staff not able to facilitate attendance etc; incentivising, remuneration and recruitment are also key challenges.

The BCHA customer Reference Panel also met for its first in-person meeting at an Away Day in Exeter on Wednesday 24th March.

The invite was made to all supported housing properties and proved to be a great opportunity for customers to get to know each other.

The agenda included a very useful participation exercise which encouraged people to look beyond the roles they performed and to instead list the skills, attributes and passions they had. This exercise broke down barriers and power relationships and revealed that our shared lived experience meant that that we had more in common with each other than was realised. This was followed up with sessions on celebrating successes and planning for the future.

We will be holding another Away Day in the coming months"

If you would like to get involved in the BCHA Reference Panel please email Mike at: [mikeknowles@bcha.org.uk](mailto:mikeknowles@bcha.org.uk)



# 'Survival Kit' to reduce your cost of living

We all appreciate tips on how to cut our spending and avoid paying above the line – particularly when the cost of living is rising at such a fast rate. Here, Tenant Talk Editorial Panel member Mario outlines the results of his exhaustive trawl of the internet for ways to be more benefit savvy and reduce unnecessary spending.



The cost of living crisis is now affecting the majority of the population and has forced us to look at our spending. An estimated £15 billion means-tested benefits are unclaimed annually, so a benefits check is essential. Citizens Advice offers these free as well as a look if you can pay less council tax and organise any debt you may have.

In Dorset where I live, the county council has funded face-to-face appointments with Citizens Advice at local libraries.

There is also help out there to help you save money. The Money Saving Expert website is the one I have been using. It was founded by the consumer champion Martin Lewis and is a mine of information and tips.

If not, there are other ways to save: According to the Survival Kit, 16 million people are out of contract on their broadband and mobile. Changing companies can save hundreds of pounds annually.

Try NHS prescription prepayment certificates if you use a lot of medication. They act like a season ticket saving you money.

Or, how about getting some free food from 'community fridges'. There are around 250 'community fridges' across the country, allowing people to take food when they need it.

Check if any are local to you via the Community Fridge Network at [www.hubhub.org.uk](http://www.hubhub.org.uk).

The Cost of Living Survival Kit has so much more and is available free on Money Saving Expert website. Visit: [www.moneysavingexpert.com](http://www.moneysavingexpert.com)



## Free mobile phone SIM cards and data available

More than seven million people across the UK are unable to access or afford mobile data and broadband, including many BCHA residents - and the cost of living crisis is making this issue even worse.

As part of the National Databank scheme being driven by the Good Things Foundation, BCHA has 40 free SIM cards with free calls, text and 20GB of data, available to eligible customers, each month over the next 12 months.

Eligible customers can apply once and receive up to six consecutive cards.

To find out more and whether you are eligible please telephone **01202 410500** and ask to speak to a BCHA Learn team member.



# Training Opportunities

These courses are completely free of charge and are open to anyone aged 19+ who is currently unemployed and living in Dorset. Please note that a referral / application needs to be completed prior to attending any enrolment session. We are looking at opportunities to run similar courses in other BCHA locations shortly.

To sign up for these courses, please call 01202 410595 or visit the BCHA website.

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE (NOCN ACCREDITED)

This course will be delivered face to face at BCHA LEARN, and focuses on personal and social development as well as improving wellbeing. The course consists of 11 sessions on various days over four weeks (3 hours per session, 10.00 – 13.00).

Topics include: Confidence and Self Esteem Building; Stress Less; Building Resilience; Art as Relaxation; Assertiveness; and Take the Next Steps.

**Enrols on 12th – 18th July (times vary)**  
**Course starts 13th – 19th July: 10:00**  
**Course ends 4th August**

**Enrols on 16th – 22nd August (times vary)**  
**Course starts 17th – 23rd August: 10:00**  
**Course ends 8th September**



## DIGITAL LIFE SKILLS (BASIC IT) COURSE

This course will be delivered face to face at BCHA LEARN, and is ideal for beginners with little or no knowledge, as well as those wishing to brush up their computer skills and develop confidence in using technology. The course consists of ten sessions over ten weeks on Friday afternoons (3 hours per session, 13.00 – 16.00).

Topics include: IT Fundamentals; Word Processing Software; Effective use of the Internet; IT Security; Money Matters; and Web-based Email.

**Enrols on Friday 17th June: 14.00 – 16.00**  
**Course starts Friday 24th June: 13.00 – 16.00**  
**Course ends 2nd September**

**Enrols on Friday 16th September: 13.00 – 15.00**  
**Course starts Friday 23rd September: 13.00 – 16.00**  
**Course ends 25th November**



## LEVEL 1 SKILLS FOR SUPPORTING OTHERS (NOCN ACCREDITED)

This course will be delivered face to face at BCHA LEARN, and is an ideal starting place for those wishing to start a career as a Support Worker or Mentor. The course consists of five sessions over five weeks on Mondays (5 hours per session, 10.00 – 15.00).

Topics include: Interpersonal Skills; Professional Boundaries; Communication Skills; Goal Setting; and Equality & Diversity.

**Enrols on Monday 1st August: 10.00 - 12.00**  
**Course starts Monday 8th August: 10.00 - 15.30**  
**Course ends 5th September**



## LEVEL 1 HORTICULTURE COURSE (NOCN ACCREDITED)

This course will be delivered at the New Leaf Allotment, Muscliffe Lane, and is ideal for anyone wishing to learn horticulture as a hobby or as a career path. The course consists of ten sessions over five weeks, Tuesdays and Wednesdays (5 hours per session, 10.00 – 15.00).

Topics include: Health & Safety in an Outdoor Environment; Plant Propagation; Plant Selection & Identification; Understanding Soils & Growing Media; Plant Pruning; Using & Maintaining Hand Tools; and Organic Soil Management.

**Enrols on Tuesday 21st June: 10.00 - 12.00 or 13.00 - 15.00**  
**Course starts Tuesday 28th June: 10.00 - 15.00**  
**Course ends 27th July**

**Enrols on Tuesday 9th August: 10.00 - 12.00 or 13.00 - 15.00**  
**Course starts Tuesday 16th August: 10.00 - 15.00**  
**Course ends 14th September**



# Build your online confidence with Bournemouth Digital

Whether you have no experience of the internet and don't know where to start, or, would just like to feel more confident about going online, new **BCHA Bournemouth Digital** is **FREE** and aims to provide those with little or no digital skills the confidence to succeed online.

BCHA is pleased to have secured funding from Power Up, an initiative by the Good Things Foundation, along with financial support from J.P Morgan, to set up the Bournemouth Digital course.

Bournemouth Digital is a **FREE** four-week course, consisting of weekly three-hour sessions, plus additional tailored 1-2-1 support.

Throughout the four weeks, participants will learn about such things as basic computer functionality, including how to use your keyboard and mouse, internet searching, getting to grips with sending emails, uploading attachments and replying to emails, online job searching via various job sites, CV creation, document editing and online finance, including online banking.

Bournemouth Digital will be run at various digital hubs across Bournemouth and is open to people living in Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole who are aged 18-plus and have little or no digital skills.

For more information, course dates and next steps, please phone: 07929 709903 or email: [bournemouthdigital@bcha.org.uk](mailto:bournemouthdigital@bcha.org.uk)



## BCHA resident amongst our host of award nominees

BCHA resident Dan is one of five BCHA nominees in this year's Housing Heroes and Women in Housing Awards. Dan is a finalist in the Resident of the Year category of the annual Housing Heroes awards, run by Inside Housing magazine. Dan has also set up the Reference Panel and helped in the running of the new social cafe.

He lives at Gabriel House in Exeter and is nominated because of his commitment to helping improve the lives of residents where he lives and in other properties.

BCHA is also a finalist on the Team of the Year category (1001-15,000 homes).

Meanwhile, 350 entries were made in this year's Women in Housing Awards and BCHA colleagues have been shortlisted in an incredible three categories.

Val Jefferies, project manager at BCHA Learn is hoping to win Professional of the Year.

While Rio Argent of Bournemouth Women's Refuge is competing for the title of Woman of the Year and Paige Hutchings, also from BCHA Learn, is hoping to win the Woman of the Future award.

Leaders, innovators and changemakers from across the housing sector, will meet in Manchester on Monday June 27 for the dual ceremonies which will shine a light on the incredible work carried over the past 12 months.

**Best of luck to all!**

**STOP THE PRESS!**



We are delighted to announce our BCHA Learn team won the **Community Support award** at the **Bournemouth Business Awards**! We are extremely proud of this recognition of how BCHA Learn has transformed hundreds of lives by providing free employability training and empowering learners to take their learning forward throughout the pandemic and beyond.



HOUSING HEROES AWARDS



WOMEN IN HOUSING AWARDS

# Alicia dreams of becoming a nurse thanks to BCHA

BCHA resident Alicia Hanson has told how BCHA's Millennium House in Poole helped her build a safe and happy future.

Alicia, 20, moved into Millennium House in August 2020.

She said: "I was struggling severely with my mental health and was unable to keep myself safe in my own flat.

"Millennium House helped me by giving me support that I had never had before, as well as place to recover from my illnesses, while having the freedom of the community."

She continued: "The staff were supportive, encouraging me to talk to them whenever I needed and providing me with a stable environment to help with my recovery. They ensured everyone was aware of ways to help and support me in a crisis and how to recognise my warning signs to help calm me down before things escalated."

She added: "I moved out this April because I felt I could face the rest of my recovery in the community.

"I have a lovely one-bedroom BCHA flat that I've made homely and my own.

"It makes me feel in control to have adult responsibilities and be responsible for my own mental health.

"The Millennium House staff helped me massive amounts every day while I was here and still help me now with follow-up support through weekly keyworks and going there or calling when I need to have a chat.

"I'm currently studying at college and in September I will be doing an Access to Higher Education course in healthcare with the aim of becoming a paediatric nurse."



## Rising to the Customer Engagement Challenge

We are thrilled to pass on more great news from the winners of the inaugural Bchangemakers Customer Engagement Challenge.

The Challenge invited BCHA properties and projects to apply for prize money to fund equipment and facilities to enrich their customers' lives.

In the last issue of Tenant Talk we heard how Gabriel House in Exeter has created a lively cafeteria and hub with its funding.

And families staying at Poole Refuge are enjoying some much-needed fun movie nights thanks to a new multi-purpose entertainment system.

Refuge manager, Steve Muir, said: "Our aim was to promote inclusion within the refuge, to give families a sense of normality after fleeing traumatic situations and our multi-purpose entertainment system allows all residents to integrate and socialise, expanding their support networks."

Steve continued: "Since gaining the equipment we have been able to hold weekly cinema nights both for the adults as well as the children and when you add pizzas to the mix, it's a perfect night of entertainment! We have also been able to hold staff training using the projector and screen which has been beneficial to us all."

Meanwhile, over at Millennium House in Poole, colleagues and customers are celebrating not having to sing in the rain anymore thanks to their very own 'Millennium Dome'.

Mental Health Support Worker, Lisa Boon, explained:

"We have noticed the huge benefits of utilising outside space and fresh air to improve the mood and lift the spirits of our clients.

"Many of our residents have PTSD, anxiety and agoraphobia, which makes it hugely challenging for them to leave Millennium House. And on rainy days, they are often left with the prospect of being stuck indoors.

"Our 'Millennium Dome' now enables our customers to sit under an attractive covered area with a warming chiminea, where they can toast marshmallows, sing, play the guitar and chat.



"The Dome also means we can also host a much-cherished therapy pet. And we intend to use the space for fitness classes, group keyworks and for our clients to meet with their professionals in a more relaxed atmosphere, while getting that much needed boost of vitamin D and fresh air.

Millennium House resident Laura Culver White, said: "I like sitting out in the dome, it's nice to be able to sit outside when the weather's bad."

# Cooking on a budget

If you like to cook wholesome food on a seriously low budget there is a good chance you have already heard of Jack Monroe, bestselling author of 'A Girl Called Jack' and her amazing website Cooking on a Bootstrap. But if not, prepare to be wowed. Vegan Jack creates mouth-watering burgers for 17 pence, crave-worthy crumbles for 20 pence and scrumptious soda bread for 7 pence using her cooking talents and budget supermarket ingredients. She's also hilariously honest and writes a riveting blog to keep you entertained while you are tucking into some of her Red Lentil and Mandarin curry (just 26 pence!)

There are around 200 or so more recipes to be discovered at: <https://cookingonabootstrap.com/>



## Dollar Pancakes

Serves 4-6, depending on appetite, from 6p each

**150g plain flour**  
**2 tbsp cornflour**  
**1 tsp baking powder**  
**A pinch of salt (optional)**

**2 tbsp sugar**  
**150ml milk (use soy for vegan pancakes)**  
**2 tbsp water**  
**2 tbsp oil**

### Method

Weigh the flour and measure the cornflour into a large mixing bowl, add the baking powder, salt (if using) and sugar, and mix well to evenly distribute throughout the mixture.

Make a well in the middle of the dry ingredients and pour in most of the milk and water, and the butter or oil. Mix well with a whisk or fork to form a smooth batter, adding the rest of the milk to loosen it if needed.

Now, give it a rest, preferably in a fridge for at least half an hour to chill out.

...half an hour later, melt a pinch of butter or heat 2 tbsp of oil until your pan is hot-hot, then turn the heat down to medium to keep it hot but not at risk of burning everything or spitting fat at you. Dollop a teaspoon of batter into the pan to make one little dollar-sized pancake, and another one, and another one. They only need a matter of seconds until they're golden on one side (you'll see them puff up slightly and little bubbles form in the top) - then turn them over and cook the other side. Repeat until you have enough tiny pancakes to satisfy all appetites present.



## Carrot, Cumin and Kidney Bean Burgers

Cost seven pence each

**1 x 400g tin of kidney beans**  
**1 onion, peeled and finely chopped**  
**1 carrot, grated,**  
**1 teaspoon ground cumin,**

**a handful of fresh coriander, finely chopped**  
**a splash of oil, plus 2 tablespoons to fry the burgers**  
**1 heaped teaspoon flour plus a little extra to shape the burgers**

### Method

Drain the kidney beans and rinse in cold water. Put into a saucepan and cover with cold water. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 10 minutes to soften.

Put the onion, carrot, cumin and coriander into a medium pan. Add the splash of oil and cook on a low heat to soften.

When the kidney beans have softened, drain and add to the carrots and onions. Take off the heat and mash together until you have a smoothish purée (like mashed potato consistency). Stir in the flour.

Heat the 2 tablespoons of oil in a frying pan on a medium heat.

With floured hands, take a quarter of the burger mixture and roll it into a ball, about the size of a golf ball.

Make three more balls with the remaining mixture. Place one in the oil and flatten gently with a fork to make the burger shape. Depending on the size of your pan, you may be able to cook all the burgers at once or need to do them in batches - unless you're freezing some of the uncooked patties.

Cook for a few minutes on one side, before turning. The burgers need to be handled with care as they can be quite fragile! When cooked on both sides, remove from the pan and serve - eating them hot.

# Stargazing for beginners

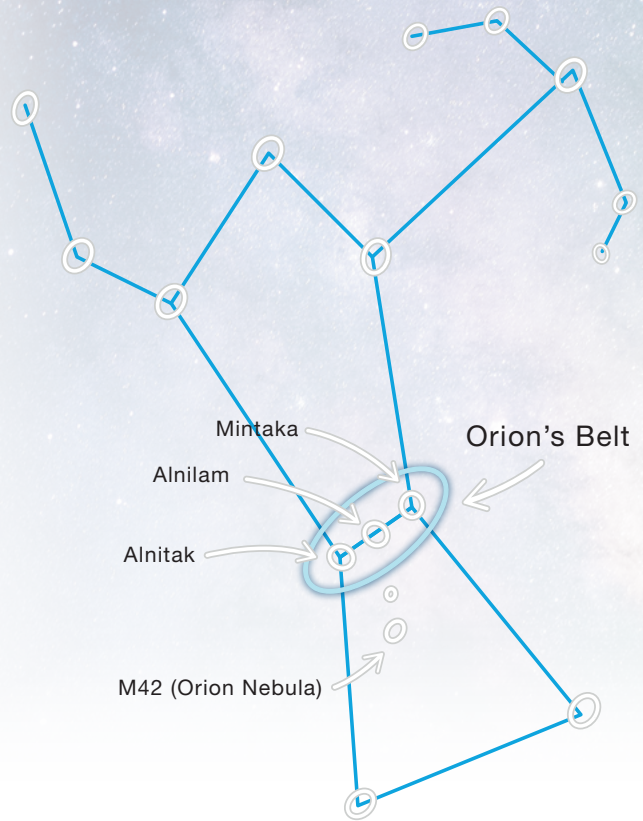
Editorial Panel member Adam Ecclestone is an amateur astronomer and in this and the previous edition of *Tenant Talk* he reports on some of the dazzling things we can all hope to see in the night sky.

## What will I see?

It all depends on where you are, the visibility, ambient light levels, time of year, astronomical events, and many other variables. However, chances are you'll be able to spot the moon and/or Orion. Let's talk about Orion's belt. The left "star" is called Alnitak and is actually a triple star system over 1,000 light years away! In the middle of Orion's belt is a lone star 40 times the size of the Sun. Known as Alnilam, it is over 2,000 light years away. The right "star" is Mintaka, another multiple star system 1,200 light years away. So, just by looking at those three lights in the sky, you've actually been peering at seven stars! That's not all Orion's belt has to offer, though.





Turn your gaze back towards Alnilam, and trace a straight line down, you should spot two (or three if it's dark enough) fainter points. Notice how one of them looks a bit murky? You're looking at a nebula, M42 to be exact. A nebula is a giant cloud of gas (you could fit roughly 8,909,617,080 Earths in a line within the Orion nebula) that seeds new stars and planets. You might even see some planets — Jupiter is one of the brightest objects in our sky, aside from the moon and sun, and can even be seen in the daytime.

Finally, a favourite of mine is the International Space Station. Here's how to tell if you're looking at the ISS: Do you think it's probably a plane? Is it moving really quickly? If the answers are "yes," it's probably the ISS. Give them a wave!



## BCHA's Annual Priorities for 2022-23

Making sure BCHA performs in the best ways possible for all our customers is paramount, and in this, the third year of the BCHA five-year Business Plan our focus will be firmly on:

-  Every Contact Counts - improving how we inform, engage and coproduce with our customers.
-  Getting the Basics Right - focusing on delivering what a customer needs in a timely and cost-efficient manner.
-  Putting the Heart into Our Homes - bringing our commitment to the principles of Psychologically Informed Environments (PIE) into our properties with the creation of some exemplifier locations where customers' experiences have been directly used to develop and maintain properties.
-  Becoming Smarter - improving the collection, storage and use of data to improve our decision-making, drive down costs and learn key lessons.

For more information about the BCHA Business Plan, please visit the Business & Performance section of the website at: [www.bcha.org.uk](http://www.bcha.org.uk)



# Hello from the Allotment



May is one of the busiest months on the allotment as the days continue to lengthen and grow warmer.

Sowing seeds for the future begins in earnest in May and coincidentally, we are hosting a group of young men who are seeking asylum after leaving Iran and Afghanistan and are taking part in BCHA's The Way Forward project, to help them build a successful new future in the UK.

The group certainly isn't afraid of hard work and despite the language barriers - and the help of their

translator - they were able to confidently clear the ground, mark out planting channels and plant peas, which they then covered with netting to protect them from the pigeons and other birds.

The group are fascinated by the wildlife on the allotment and have been asking lots of questions about the fruits and vegetables we grow.

They - and we - are looking forward to further sessions and seeing their peas grow and flourish in the coming weeks.



## Become a member of the BCHA Green Champions Network

Our effects as humans on the environment is quite rightly at the forefront of many of our minds and BCHA is keen to look for measures and improvements that will positively impact our customers and staff and ultimately enable us all to improve our contribution to the wider world.

Over the past year, we have received some fantastic and innovative ideas from colleagues and customers and we would like to establish a network of Green Champions throughout the organisation to help us take these ideas forward.

This network is open for any BCHA customer or colleague to join.

Jonathan Rickard from the BCHA Board has agreed to be a founding member which will enable us to learn from his vast experience, including his current role as Head of Sustainability and Design at Abri Group. Other founding members include Jamie Clarke and BCHA Reference Panel member Mike Knowles.

If you are interested in joining, please email Laura Jump on [laurajump@bcha.org.uk](mailto:laurajump@bcha.org.uk) and we will make sure you are invited to the first meeting.



# Thank you for the music

After years of bravely battling with severe mental health issues, Brian Hassanali, 56, has found a safe and secure home with the help of BCHA and 'resounding' happiness as a member of the Sound of Soul Choir. Here he talks about his amazing journey to recovery.

"I love being part of the Sound of Soul Choir in Bournemouth. To tell you the truth, they have been through five hellish years with me as I've struggled with mental breakdowns and suicidal thoughts. But they have stuck by me all the way. They are like my family.

After being helped by BCHA's Lansdowne Gardens in Bournemouth I have also been supported by BCHA to move into a nice place of my own and I feel settled but still very supported.

"There have been so many years of struggle and tragedy, but now my life is full thanks to my music, volunteering and friends."

Brian first experienced mental health problems at the age of 21 and this led to substance abuse and suicide attempts.

After going through detox in London, he moved to Dorset, started volunteering with the Samaritans and moved into his own flat in Boscombe. But the lack of support quickly led to relapse.

He said: "I moved from there into supported housing and benefited from knowing there were people close by who could help me. I started volunteering for the Trussell Trust in Boscombe and it was there I met a customer who told me about the Sound of Soul Choir. I had loved singing when I was younger and went to audition. I was ecstatic to be offered a place.

But then, in 2018 my partner died suddenly and I was plunged back into the depths of despair and suffered a mental breakdown.

I moved into BCHA's Lansdowne Gardens and was helped by the support staff there, especially during lockdown, which was again very hard on me. But that was a real turning point for me.

"The last five years have been quite terrible in many ways, but what has kept me going has been the love and support of the other choir members, my BCHA support workers and volunteering for a charity shop in Winton, Bournemouth.

"Around 18 months ago, I felt ready to move into my own accommodation in Bournemouth. But I still have my support worker keeping an eye on me – and of course my friends in the choir.

"We perform at events all over, for private bookings and charities. We also appear at BCHA events and even our fellow choir members' weddings. It is quite simply the best thing in my life.

"Standing amongst the other members, singing my heart out and surrounded by music, I know what I have been through, but I also know what I have overcome and I'm truly thankful for that."

People interested in joining the Sound of Soul Choir can audition.

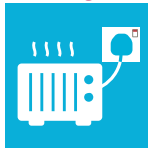
More details are available via:  
<https://m.facebook.com/soundofsoulbournemouth/>



# Fire Safety in your home

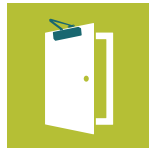
## Top tips for keeping you and your family safe

### Plugs



Turn off appliances when not in use

### Doors



Do not leave a fire door open and never disconnect an automatic closer

### Appliances



Do not leave an appliance running when no-one is home

### Smoking



Do not smoke in bed and always put out cigarettes fully

### Smoke alarms



Test your smoke alarm weekly and do not cover or remove

### BBQ



If you have a balcony do not have a BBQ on it

### Cooking



Do not leave cooking unattended

### Belongings



A tidy home with fewer belongings can reduce the risk of fire spreading

### Candles



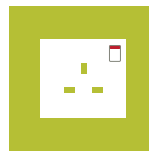
Do not leave candles unattended and always put out fully

### Matches



Store matches and lighters in a safe place and away from children

### Electrical



Do not overload electrical sockets and switch them off when not in use

### Flammable



Do not store anything flammable such as petrol in your home

**bcha**

## Get Connected

Did you know that BCHA is still giving away the old staff phones, please call Daryl Gibbins on **01202 612 480** if you would like one.

## Useful Contacts at BCHA

### BCHA Customer Service

01202 410 500 • [customerservices@bcha.org.uk](mailto:customerservices@bcha.org.uk)

### Maintenance Enquiries

New Leaf 0300 1234 001 or email: [repairs@bcha.org.uk](mailto:repairs@bcha.org.uk)

### BCHA Floating Mental Health Support

Phone-in service on 01202 612 600 (Mon-Fri 10:00-16:00)

[MHfloatingsupprt@bcha.org.uk](mailto:MHfloatingsupprt@bcha.org.uk)

### Ignite Team

01202 410 595 • [ignite@bcha.org.uk](mailto:ignite@bcha.org.uk)

### Foodbanks

are available if you are struggling to cope financially. Call 01202 410 500 for further advice

Help with housing, learning and living

Call **01202 410500**

Email [enquiries@bcha.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@bcha.org.uk) [www.bcha.org.uk](http://www.bcha.org.uk)

The Factory, 14 Alder Hills, Poole, BH12 4AS

## Are you getting everything you're entitled to?

[www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk)

[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)

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

All websites have a benefits calculator to assist you.

## Emergency Numbers

**NHS**

111

### Mental Health Connections

0300 123 5440

### National Domestic Abuse

0808 2000 247

### Samaritans

116 213

### NSPCC

0808 800 5000

### Cruse Bereavement

0800 808 1677

### Shelter

0808 800 4444