

Hexagon

Brickfield Cottages in Plumstead

Open letter to all residents from Tom McCormack,
Chief Executive, Hexagon Housing

Dear Resident,

October 2016

On 2nd May there was a ground collapse on the driveway to one of the houses at Brickfield Cottages in Plumstead. Thankfully no one was hurt. However, the hole presented real danger and with the help of police, other emergency services and Greenwich Council, we evacuated all households immediately while we made sure it was safe to return.

The hole was made safe by the end of the day on 3rd May. On the advice of engineers, most families were able to go back to their homes. However, five families did not return as further investigation and repair work at their homes continued.

Nobody knew exactly why this hole appeared and since that time, Hexagon Housing has been working with a leading team of ground investigation experts who have been carrying out further surveys of the ground beneath Brickfield Cottages. This work is being undertaken because the safety of all our residents, visitors and our staff is our absolute priority.

So far, the initial results of these investigations have shown some areas of weakness in the ground due to chalk mining deep underground some 150 years ago. We have yet to discover any open mines but this type of hole is indicative of collapsing historical mine work.

We have also been able to identify one other area of potential weakness in the ground and as such we have contacted four households with a view to moving them quickly. On the rest of the Brickfield Cottages development, we are going to have to undertake further, more detailed investigations. This will mean a considerable level of disturbance for residents in terms of heavy machinery, noise and dust. We will have to dig investigation holes in communal areas as well as gardens and driveways. Having this machinery on site is not only disruptive, it is also potentially dangerous. So, with great reluctance, we have taken the decision to begin moving all residents.

We know how difficult this is but we have no other choice, everyone's safety has to be our priority.

Continued on the other side...

Hexagon Housing has already begun working with Greenwich Council, other housing associations and estate agents to identify suitable homes. Also, to make sure we find the best solution possible for people and families' individual needs and circumstances we have offered every household a named case officer who will be in regular contact, available to answer questions and hear concerns. Pamela Hunte leads this team and can be contacted on:

Tel: 0208 768 7977 / 07887 780 543

Email: phunte@hexagon.org.uk

Looking to the future, we are not yet be able to confirm exactly when people can return to Brickfield Cottages until the results of our further investigation work are known. This work is likely to take a period of 12 months and cannot begin until all residents have moved out. We are committed to keeping you and everyone at Brickfield Cottages updated with information as the investigation work progresses. As a next step we will be contacting each household

We know this will come as a shock. It has been a very difficult decision but one, in the interests of safety that we have had to take.

We would like to reassure all residents that we are doing and will continue to do all we can to find the best alternative living arrangements that we can. We can also confirm that no one will be out of pocket as a result of moving. Not only has Hexagon Housing pledged to meet your moving costs, we will also shortly be announcing an additional payment that all households will be offered as a gesture of goodwill.

I would like to close with an apology. I know how difficult this news must be for many and for that I am truly sorry. I would also like to extend my thanks and the gratitude of all my staff for your patience, help, cooperation and understanding. My thanks to all.

Yours sincerely,

Tom McCormack

Remember to talk to your case officer about

Your concerns
Your circumstances
Moving costs

Telephone: 0208 768 7977 / 07887 780 543

