

# Belgrave

BELGRAVE NEIGHBOURHOOD  
CO-OPERATIVE HOUSING  
ASSOCIATION MEMBERS'  
NEWSLETTER

## Community News

SPRING 2022

**Welcome to this spring edition of the BNCHA newsletter. It's been a while but we have so much to update you on. As we move out of the difficult COVID period, we feel very hopeful for a positive 2022.**

Our front page is dedicated to Mr Makwana on the anniversary of his death. Mr Makwana was a guiding force behind the development of BNCHA; one of the most unique

community led housing projects in the country. His vision, and that of his family, to establish the Belgrave Housing Co-operative was nothing short of inspirational and one we should all feel so proud of. We send our love, thanks and best wishes to his family and friends, with a commitment that his work and efforts for the community will never be forgotten.

As Uganda 50 reflects back on the situation many in our community faced in 1972, forced to move from their homes to another country, its remarkable what we have created as a community. Without the hard work and efforts of Mr Makwana we wouldn't have come so far.

*Jaimini Bharakhada*

### ‘Mak’ - a tribute to Mr Belgrave Co-op”

**It is now 10 years since our late chairman Shantilal Makwana, affectionately known as ‘Mak’, passed away in April 2012.**

Having fled war-torn Uganda to come to Britain, settling in Leicester in the early 1970s, he became a driving force helping to evolve BNCHA into the largest fully mutual co-operative housing association in the UK.

After moving to Leicester, he played a pivotal role in the campaign to save much of Belgrave's housing from demolition, leading to the forming of the co-operative in 1975.

He then helped set up and run our co-operative becoming chairman in 1979 and holding this position for 33 years. Under his leadership, our co-operative grew and flourished to become the strong, independent organisation it is today.

Having overseen the acquisition of Canterbury House and speaking proudly at the hand-over ceremony in March 2012, he sadly passed away the following month at the age of 71 years.

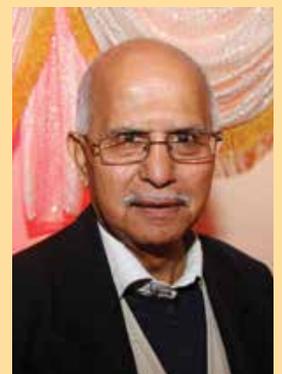
Later that year, more than 300 friends, family and colleagues gathered at The Platinum Suite for a tribute evening to celebrate his achievements.

Jai Khodiara, who took over as BNCHA Chair, paid tribute to

Mak: “Mr Makwana ran the co-operative in a confident, unbiased way for many years, encouraging tenant members to get involved and have a say in how their homes are managed.

“It is because of his excellent leadership that the co-operative is so strong today. We will all miss him greatly and are determined to maintain the good reputation that he has built for Belgrave.”

Leicester assistant mayor Majula Sood also paid tribute, saying: “Shantilal was a great community leader and stood up for those who did not have a lot. He worked so hard for others and was tireless in his campaigning for people's rights.”



## Inside this newsletter you will find

- An Update from your Chair and the BNCHA committee
- An Update on staff working for BNCHA and their roles
- An update on our exciting Home Improvements programme
- Some reviews of our policies and our work contractors
- Uganda 50
- Meetings held at Canterbury House and Loughborough Cottages
- Our Spring get together and some proposed rule changes
- Key Contacts

Hello from **Jaimini Bharakhada**, Chair of BNCHA

# Family. Community. Diversity. Culture. Unity. Empowerment. Respect.

**These are not just words but a reality that BNCHA is heading towards. 16 months ago, when I became your Chair, I pledged to not only improve the homes you live in but to also help improve the health and wellbeing of the BNCHA family. Whilst things can sometimes take time, here are some of the things I am proud to be say we have made happen.**

We have employed 4 new members of staff to support BNCHA members and their families (full details on pages 4&5). These are

- A full-time Tenant Support Worker who is there to help solve issues for individual tenants
- A part time Warden post for Loughborough Cottages to support the community there.
- A Security Guard for Canterbury House and for our members in the nearby area to address some of the anti-social behaviour people were facing.

- A Member Engagement Officer to ensure BNCHA committee hears the views of our members about the work we do.

We have listened to your concerns about repairs and have undertaken a review of all our contractors who do our repairs and made changes to improve our service.

We have put in place a brilliant home improvements programme to help deal with some of the long-standing issues people have faced. The next 3 years should see great improvements to your homes.

We have put in place a communications programme to help ensure we talk to you in the right way. We are setting up a Youth Forum to engage with our younger people, and hope to work with them to develop our social media presence. We have also had meetings with Canterbury House and Loughborough Cottage members to help us start to address their needs.

Much has been achieved in setting the foundation for the future of our coop, a coop that you can be proud to be a part of. This is just the start - there is still so much for us to do. But as always with your love, trust, support and blessings we are most definitely moving in the right direction.

Please also note my contact details below. I'm happy for any member to make contact with me about your concerns. I am here to help you.



*Jaimini Bharakhada*

**Chair of Belgrave Neighbourhood  
Co-operative Housing Association**

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# 2021 Events

## Our AGM

In late September we held our annual AGM and we think it was a great success. The pictures below were testament to a great event ...



## Lord Mayor of Leicester Visit

On Sunday November 7th we were very honoured to host a lunchtime visit by the Honourable Lord Mayor of Leicester Councillor Deepak Bajaj to our Loughborough Cottages housing scheme. The event was organised by BNCHA committee member Dr Pramod, as well as the lovely lunch provided by the Lions Club of Leicester. A great afternoon was had by all.



# New staff working for BNCHA



Member Engagement Officer

## **Rupal Rajani** BNCHA Staff Member

**Rupal joined in February as Member Engagement Officer. Her role will be to support the BNCHA committee to make connections with all our members and their families to ensure that your views are heard within the organisation. This will include:**

- Direct communications with BNCHA members to get their views on issues
- Gathering information about BNCHA members', such as how they wish to be communicated with and whether they have special needs that we need to address to help them to be involved
- Contacting BNCHA members to find out their views about the repairs and other services to ensure that their individual needs are being properly addressed and to gather general information that could improve services
- Being involved with the BNCHA community and other events and workshops aimed at involving BNCHA members in improvements for the local community.



Belgrave Member Support Officer

## **Devi Sunda** Pinnacle Staff Member

**Devi joined the Local Pinnacle team as the Member Support Officer working exclusively with Belgrave Co-op tenant members. Devi will be supporting members on a range of issues that look to improve the health-wellbeing and welfare of members. This will include:**

- Regular contact with tenant members to identify issues they might need help with.
- Receiving referrals from other Pinnacle colleagues and BNCHA committee members who may need help to maintain positive health and well-being.
- To help and support tenant members sustain and maintain their home and live independently.
- Carry out tenant member needs and risk assessments and deliver mutually shared support plans.
- Signpost and where needed directly access services that improve tenant members quality of life.



Loughborough Cottages on-site Warden

**Janki Joshi**  
**Pinnacle Staff Member**

starts 18th April 2022

**Janki joined in March 2022 as the on-site warden at Loughborough cottages working 20 hours per week. The role is to support some of Belgrave's most vulnerable tenant members by being the first point of contact for Loughborough Cottages residents in accessing Belgrave and other agencies services.**

As the independent support on site, Janki will be carrying out support plans that are reviewed regularly to ensure that we are responsive to changing needs. Working closely with the residents at Loughborough Cottages Janki will be arranging activities and events that promote positive well-being and improve social well-being. In addition, Janki will be carrying out regular checks as part of our building health & safety requirements so that your homes and the scheme is a safe place that is fully compliant.

Canterbury House Security/Concierge Officer

**Amrita Laxmi Kanda**  
**Pinnacle Staff Member**

starts 1st April 2022

**Amrita joined the team in March 2022 as the security officer at Canterbury House working between 7.00pm-2.00am 7 days a week and comes with a wealth of experience in looking after tenanted properties. Amrita's overall duty will be to provide building/estate security and offer low level support to our tenants primarily around Canterbury House and but also within a local geographical area. Some of the key features of the role are to :**

- act as an initial point of reference for service users, visitors, and external agencies while on duty.
- implement night security systems, ensuring overall safety and security of the housing service and respond to faults as discovered.
- patrol the immediate geographical location to maximise the safety and security of the building and service users.
- monitor access to the services and visitors and log and report incidents and antisocial behaviour.
- monitor CCTV systems throughout her shift.
- conduct relevant Health and Safety checks

# Major improvements planned

BNCHA committee have approved the 2022/23 budget plans to deliver a range of major improvements to your homes. Pinnacle, our service provider, will be in touch with you as the programmes are being delivered to arrange survey and works access.



## Kitchen and Bathrooms

We have commenced the kitchen and bathroom renewal programme that will mean everyone will have their kitchen and bathroom renewed over the next 3 years. Surveys are already taking place and the programme starts in the next few months.



## Major Canterbury House refurbishments

Canterbury House has needed significant investment for many years to upgrade parts of the building. So, as well as the kitchen and bathroom renewal programme, residents in Canterbury house will also see internal and external improvements, including heating upgrades.

## Loughborough Cottages

Following a recent joint visit with Pinnacle surveyors and the BNCHA committee members, a range of internal and external works have been identified and approved. We are just waiting for quotes for the works to come in and then we will directly liaise with residents with the details and timescales of when the works will commence.



## Communal Decoration/Flooring

All our internal communal areas and flooring have been included into a Co-op wide communal improvement programme. This includes renewing the flooring and re-painting the communal areas.



**Loughborough Cottages**

## Structural works

After surveying properties that suffer from historic structural defects, we have approved a programme to carry out major structural stabilisation works to address this issue to protect homes and improve the quality of life for those members.

## Window replacement programme

Building on the initial window replacement programme that tackled the issue of blown windows, we have approved plans to renew all the windows and doors to all the remaining BNCHA properties.

## Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund

Some FANTASTIC news! Pinnacle, on our behalf, submitted a bid to the government for monies to help address some of the poor energy efficiency issues affecting our properties. We are very pleased to confirm that our bid has been successful, and we have been awarded nearly £500,000 to carry out works to an initial 38 properties.

The works include internal/external insulation and will start in May 2022 and will be completed in a year. The grant pays for about 66% of the total cost, while BNCHA will pay for the rest of the cost.

There is also a second bidding round for more funding about to open and we have approved for Pinnacle to submit a further much larger bid which potentially could bring in a lot more grant to be spent on your homes to improve their energy efficiency over the next 3 years from 2023.

**Many thanks to Pinnacle, especially Nathan Pemberton, for their hard work on this improvement programme.**



# The Management Committee - shaping up for Belgrave

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Since Belgrave Co-op's members elected the new management committee at the AGM in October 2021, the committee (Jaimini, Ketan, Kay, Manish, Ann, Jorubhai and Dr Pramod) have been working hard to ensure that Belgrave's tenants receive the best possible services.

Some key issues we have been addressing (many of them referred to elsewhere in this newsletter) include:

- Dealing with increasing numbers of repairs and other cases where tenants have contacted us about problems that have arisen
- Working with our service providers Pinnacle to improve how services are provided. We have agreed a new Repairs Policy that will enable our members get more of their repairs done with more focus on what our tenants need and want. We are working with Nathan Pemberton from Pinnacle, who has taken over managing the repairs service, and he is gradually assessing works that need doing on all our homes.
- A key part of this has been that Pinnacle have successfully applied for about half a million pounds from Government funding to address environmental efficiency. It is also planned to apply for a further £2 million from the same Government funding. These measures will lead to our members reducing their fuel bills at a time when the costs for gas and electricity are going up.
- Producing a Damp and Mould Policy. We have been aware that we have a small number of homes that suffer from damp and mould. Previously these problems were ignored and any repairs work done on these homes was (literally in some cases) papering over the cracks. Our aim is that the new policy will address these problems over time. All households will get a copy of this new policy.
- Working on an "Active Membership Strategy" to make sure that all our members can have an input into how the co-op functions. Our employment of Rupal Rajani as our Member Engagement Officer means that we will be out in our community talking to you about your views and issues much more than we have done previously.
- Working with the Leicester Action for Mental Health Project (LAMP) to ensure that tenants who have particular health challenges are able to get access to the help and support they need.





- Planning various community events and activities for young people, old people and for everyone else. As we come out of the pandemic, we hope that as many of you as possible will join us in our forthcoming Spring celebration.
- Maintaining the behind-the-scenes systems to ensure that Belgrave Co-op is properly governed. In some ways, this is the more boring stuff. But we have previously told our members about the independent reports that showed how previous committees did not govern the co-op properly; how some former committee members were just there for their own personal interest; and how previous committees did not focus on getting tenants what they want and need. So, the systems we have set up are vital in ensuring that these things do not happen ever again.
- Ensuring that the new committee is properly trained so that we can take decisions that will improve the co-op and provide our tenants with the quality services, homes and community everyone wants.

## Ensuring that this good work continues

The committee wants to make sure we can continue to provide tenants with these quality services, homes and community. Our current rules state that all committee members have to re-stand for election every year. We are proposing to our members that it is pointless to train up committee members to do a good job for our tenants if they could be removed every year at the Annual General Meeting.

Therefore, the committee has taken legal advice from our solicitors and on the basis of that is proposing a rule change to our members which will ensure that:

- The current seven committee members will all remain in post for a period of three years from the September 2021 Annual General Meeting
- After that, each year a third of the committee would stand down and their places would be available for election
- The remaining five places on the committee will be available for other members to put themselves forward for election to the committee (as is the case now).

We will be holding a Special General Meeting to which all Belgrave Co-op members are welcome to attend and vote to agree this rule change on **Friday May 6th at 7PM at the Maher Community Centre.**

The exact text of the proposed change to the rules is available on our website at [belgravecoop.org.uk](http://belgravecoop.org.uk)

**We hope you will come along and support your committee with this important rule change.**



## How are you feeling?

**Strange question perhaps! But we are increasingly worried that there may be co-op members or people who they know who are suffering in silence as a result of the COVID pandemic, increasing life pressures or for any other reason. People may be unsure where to turn, and often people don't want to publicly admit that they have mental or physical health problems.**

**Strictly confidential help is at hand if you want it. It often helps just to be able to talk.**

Belgrave Co-op has been working with local charity **Leicester Action for Mental Health Project (LAMP)** to ensure that our members have access to help and support if they feel like they need it.

LAMP was set up in 1989 to offer free mental and physical health advocacy in Leicester. Their service is completely confidential and non-judgemental. LAMP's advocates are:

- Someone who can be at a person's side at a time when they are most vulnerable, and at a time when their life can be both overwhelming and confusing.
- There when people are least able to deal with a complicated health system.
- A supportive friend who can help people take control and plan for the future and help them manage their future wellbeing.
- Someone to listen and guide and support and plan for meetings and reviews.
- On hand to help with writing letters to health professionals on people's behalf or signposting to other services and ensuring their needs are properly considered and their rights upheld.

LAMP advocates are not employed by the NHS or any other healthcare provider and are independent of Leicester City Council and Belgrave Co-op. If you contact

LAMP either for yourself or for someone you know, we will not know about it, unless you ask them to contact us on your behalf.

LAMP can be reached via telephone on **0116 255 6286** selecting the advocacy option, or go to their website and complete a referral request for either yourself or someone else [www.lampadvocacy.co.uk/lets-talk/](http://www.lampadvocacy.co.uk/lets-talk/). Or you can ask Belgrave Co-op, either through getting in touch with us at our office, or through speaking to our service provider Pinnacle and we can refer you on to LAMP.

LAMP's Gujarati explains a little more about the service they can offer **Lamp - Promotional Video (Gujarati) - YouTube** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TVwPOxAUxY>

**PS.** LAMP also want you to take a trip with them to the moon between 9th and 15th May 2022!!!! For further information go to [www.lampadvocacy.co.uk/lamp5k](http://www.lampadvocacy.co.uk/lamp5k)

**PPS.** If you feel like you could offer help to people who might have mental health challenges, LAMP is also seeking mental health first aiders and can provide support to people who want to help. Please get in touch with the co-op if you feel you could offer help.

# Uganda 50

This year will mark the 50th Anniversary of the arrival of thousands of Ugandan Asians who were given just 90 days to leave the country by Idi Amin in 1972. Around 28,000 Asian families were displaced. Most of those who had British Passports came to the UK with little more than £50 and a suitcase full of clothes, leaving everything else they owned behind.

Even though the city council had published a letter in the Ugandan Argus asking them not to come to the city, most of the Asians settled here in Leicester and most have successfully rebuilt their lives and made it their home. Contributing to its socio/economic success.

What makes this even more poignant for us is that former Ugandan refugee Shantilal Makwana was instrumental in setting up Belgrave Neighbourhood Co-operative Housing Association, in Leicester,

There are many events planned throughout the year to mark the anniversary including an exhibition at Leicester Museum, Performances at Curve

Theatre, Sabras Radio and Radio Leicester will be marking the Anniversary and the Documentary Media Centre in Leicester along with our new member engagement Officer Rupal Rajani are creating podcasts, documentaries and archive for the 50th Anniversary. They will be running regular drop-in sessions for you to go and share your story of expulsion with them. Find out more at [www.ug2uk50.org.uk](http://www.ug2uk50.org.uk) or follow them on social media Twitter: @ug2uk50 Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Ugandafifty> and Instagram: @ug2uk50

Rupal is also hoping to run some drop-in sessions with BNCHA tenants so watch this space for details or contact her via email [rupal@belgravecoop.org.uk](mailto:rupal@belgravecoop.org.uk)

## Our Spring Party – Dhamaka 2022

Friday May 6th at 7pm at the Maher Community Centre Leicester

Our spring party, Dhamaka 2022, is a celebration for BNCHA members after a difficult two years during COVID. The event will be held at Maher Community Centre and full details will be sent in the Post to all our members. Food and entertainment will be provided and transport arranged to get you to and from the venue if you need it. Watch out for your invite in the post.

## ANSWERS TO THE QUIZ

In the previous newsletter, there was a quiz for you to see how well you know about your housing co-op. All returned completed quiz forms were entered into a prize draw at the AGM on 1st October 2021, and the member whose completed quiz form was picked had won the prize of a shopping voucher of £25.

**How well do you know your co-op? These are the answers:**

**1. BNCHA is:**

Answer: BNCHA is Social housing.

**2. BNCHA is a:**

Answer: BNCHA is a fully mutual housing association.

**3. BNCHA has how many properties at present?:**

Answer: 300 to 400., BNCHA currently has 378 homes and 1 garage.

**4. BNCHA properties are located in:**

Answer: BNCHA properties are located in the Belgrave area,

**5. BNCHA is the largest organisation of its kind in England:**

Answer: True. BNCHA is the largest fully mutual housing co-op in England.

**6. Who is landlord for BNCHA?:**

Answer: All the BNCHA tenants are jointly the landlord of BNCHA.

**7. Who does BNCHA belong to?:**

Answer: BNCHA belongs to BNCHA tenants.

**8. Where is the BNCHA office located?:**

Answer: BNCHA office is located at 131 Loughborough Road.

**9. Who is Pinnacle?:**

Answer: Pinnacle is the Service Provider to BNCHA. Pinnacle provide the services required by BNCHA tenants.

**10. By a tenant having made a £1 payment at the beginning of their tenancy, and having been issued a receipt with the share number on it, the tenant becomes a shareholder of BNCHA:**

Answer: True. BNCHA tenant member is a share-holder of BNCHA.

**11. BNCHA shareholder tenants run the co-op by electing a certain number of tenant members to form a committee to represent them:**

Answer: True. BNCHA Committee can have up to 12 tenant members to represent the tenants of BNCHA.

**12. Shareholder tenants over the age of 18 years interested in joining the committee can put themselves forward by completing**

**a nomination form which is available to all tenants prior to the AGM:**

Answer: True. Any BNCHA tenant member over the age of 18 who would like to represent BNCHA tenant members in the running/governing of BNCHA and has the required skills, knowledge, experience and the time to offer to the committee can nominate themselves just prior to the AGM to become a committee member for the next committee year.

**13. There is no other way of becoming a committee member:**

Answer: False. Between AGMs, a tenant member who would like to represent BNCHA tenant members in the running/governing of BNCHA and has the required skills, knowledge, experience and time to offer to the committee can apply to the committee to become a committee member.

**14. BNCHA committee members meet once a month to make decisions regarding the running of the co-op:**

Answer: True. The full committee meeting is normally held once a month in the evening time from 6pm to 8pm. However, special committee meetings (if required) can be called giving at least seven day's notice to the committee members.

# Your Belgrave Committee

Jaimini Bharakhada, Chair

Ketan Ganatra,

Jorubha Barot,

Dr Pramod Patel,

Ann Smith,

Manish Thobani,

Kulwant Hunjan.



## Your BNCHA & Pinnacle staff and their contact details

Staff Name	Role	Contact Number office number
<b>BNCHA Staff</b>		
Mina Khoda	Admin Officer/ Secretary	0116 5020888
Rupal Rajani	Member Engagement Officer	07936 028 730
<b>Pinnacle Staff</b>		
Harinder Rai	Regional Manger	0333 600 2500
Ramesh Raikundal	Liaison Manager	0333 600 2500
Dawn Dudding	Senior Housing Officer	0333 600 2500
Nathan Pembertone	Senior Surveyor	0333 600 2500
Hiran Bhatt	Trainee Surveyor	0333 600 2500
Nita Bhardwa	Housing Officer	0333 600 2500
Devi Sunda (Co BNCHA)	Support Worker	0333 600 2500
Caroline Beattie	Housing Officer	0333 600 2500
Kiron Singh	Housing Apprentice	0333 600 2500
Janki Joshi (Co BNCHA)	Warden	0333 600 2500
Amrita Laxmi (Co BNCHA)	Security Warden	0333 600 2500

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