

BITS & PIECES

WINTER 2019

THE **BITMO** NEWSLETTER FOR BELLE ISLE TENANTS & RESIDENTS

BELLE ISLE HISTORY

Have you ever wondered where the name Belle Isle comes from?

Belle île is the French for beautiful island, but Belle Isle is built on a hill on the way south out of Leeds. One idea is that it is from Bell Hill, coming from the distinctive "bell"-shaped early coal mining bell pits of the hilly area. A "Newbell-île" at Middleton Wood End is mentioned in the Rothwell parish register for 1762.

We know that in the late 1700s, Belle Isle was just a small hamlet for workers at a colliery opposite Middleton

Woods, near the current site of Middleton colliery railway. Belle Isle now is largely made up of housing estates built on farming land by the Council during the clearance of slum dwellings and the expansion of Leeds during the last century.

We would like to print photos and information about Belle Isle history in future editions. Please send them in to gate@belleisletmo.co.uk or drop them in to BITMOs GATE.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

CONTINUATION BALLOT

We were delighted that the continuation ballot yielded a turnout of 48% and a 96% vote in favour of BITMO continuing to provide management services. A lessons learned exercise has been carried out and key messages collated for future reference. The key lessons are that the use of social media was very successful and cost effective. In future years the various social events that were arranged to promote the ballot should take place during the ballot period. A massive thank you from the Board and all the BITMO staff for putting your faith in us to provide outstanding services in Belle Isle for a further 5 years.

We are thrilled and proud but not complacent. Despite a better than previous turn out, the fact remains that 52%

BY BITMO CHIEF EXECUTIVE DEBORAH KELLY

of our residents did not vote, and we now must consider why this might be and explore ways to engage with them more successfully. There is a lot we need to understand about how relevant this 52% of our customers consider BITMO to be to them, and what we can do to meet their needs.

So all in all, it's a really exciting time to be leading BITMO and working with our fantastic team of staff, Board members and volunteers to provide you with the best services in the City.

Happy Christmas, peace and comfort to you all, and thank you again for your support.



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Help getting a better job p5
Bidding for a new home p6

WIN A £50 VOUCHER!
SEE PAGE 3 FOR DETAILS

TOP TIPS FOR BUDGETING OVER CHRISTMAS

- Don't use your bill money to pay for Christmas. You will only end up in debt and could be facing legal action.
- Set a budget for Christmas presents and stick to it.
- Buy a little something extra each week for your food cupboard.
- Don't go overboard on buying food.
- Try to shop around at different supermarkets for the best buys

Planning for Christmas 2020

- Now is the time to think about saving for next Christmas consider setting up a Christmas savings club with Leeds Credit Union.

- Put an extra few pounds on your gas and electric each week.
- Try to negotiate reducing your mobile phone contracts and TV package contracts. Look out for deals that don't tie you in to long term contracts that you can't get out



ENERGY SAVING TIPS

- Switch off things instead of leaving them on standby
- Unplug phone chargers
- Switch off lights when you leave the room
- Turn down your heating thermostat
- **Have you got any energy or money saving tips? Send us them by email gate@belleislethmo.co.uk or speak to staff in the GATE.**



IF IN DEBT SEEK ADVICE

- If you are in debt seek help as soon as possible. There are lots of agencies that offer free debt advice.
- Citizens Advice Bureau advice sessions at BITMOs GATE. Call 0113 344 8367 for an appointment.
- Step Change Debt Charity 0800 138111
- Money Buddies 0113 235 0276
- Leeds Credit Union: St Georges Centre, Middleton. Monday – Friday 9am – 2pm
BITMOs GATE every Friday morning 9.15 – 10.45am



5 WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT

- By Direct Debit ... by far the easiest. It saves time, is more convenient and gives you greater control of your money. To set up a direct debit, download a form from the website at www.leeds.gov.uk/rentpayment or visit the BITMO housing office to collect one.
- You can set up a Standing Order to pay your rent. Every week the same amount of money will come out of your account on the same day of every week.
- 24/7 automated telephone payments call 0113 395 7100.
- With your rent payment card every Monday in advance or at any Post Office or where you see the PayPoint or Payzone symbol.
- Calling BITMO on 0113 3782187 during office hours to pay by Debit Card.

GETTING INFORMATION TO YOU AND HEARING YOUR OPINIONS

BITMO wants to communicate with all tenants and leaseholders and anyone else living in the local area.

We want to know how can we best get information to you. And how do you want to tell us your opinions?

At the moment

- ☐ We send you this newsletter twice a year
- ☐ We post on Facebook
- ☐ We display posters in BITMOs GATE, the housing reception and sometimes in local shops
- ☐ In 2019 we have started
 - ☐ texting you (if we have a correct mobile number for you)
 - ☐ emailing you (if we have a correct email address for you).

We are offering one £50 voucher prize to be drawn from everyone who has entered by filling in and returning the form below, or replied with the same information by email or Facebook message. Full details of the draw are at the bottom of this page.

Which of these ways are most useful for communicating to you?

Please mark in 1,2,3 order the methods useful to you

- ☐ Bits N Pieces newsletter
- ☐ Letters through the post
- ☐ Facebook and other social media
- ☐ Text message
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Visits to your home
- ☐ Other (please state)

Please return this to BITMOs GATE, Aberfield Gate, Belle Isle, Leeds LS10, 3QH, or email gate@belleisletmo.co.uk or reply to our post on Facebook by 10am on Monday 6 January 2020.

Which of these ways are the best way for you to give your opinions to BITMO?

Please mark in 1,2,3 order the methods useful to you

- ☐ Evening meeting near your home
- ☐ Commenting on a post on Facebook or other social media
- ☐ Commenting on an article on the BITMO website
- ☐ Coming to BITMO offices.
- ☐ Other (please state)

Prize draw to be carried out on Monday 6 January at 12pm in BITMOs GATE. One entry per household. Only open to tenants and leaseholders whose homes are managed by BITMO.

Name

Address

COMMUNITY HEROES

We were delighted that Happy Fridays Breakfast Club and Tasty Tuesdays, based at BITMOs GATE were winners in the Inner South Leeds Community Heroes Awards in October. Pictured right are Penny and Tracey from the group receiving the awards from the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Eileen Taylor on behalf of the whole team.



Both sessions are run by volunteers. They have been serving cooked breakfasts on Friday mornings for 5 years. Volunteers come in at 7.30am to get started and following last orders at 10.30am finish serving by 11am before sitting down to a well-deserved breakfast of their own. Then the clean up begins. **Founder Steph Horner said, "We set it up to support people who need help. We enjoy working as a team and giving something to the community". Everyone who attends is asked for a donation. It is voluntary but everyone is asked to chip in what they can.**

Volunteers cooking Friday morning breakfasts

Tasty Tuesdays is run by the same volunteers and serves soup and toasties from 10.30am to 12pm on Tuesdays. At times they will cook their own soup from scratch and they have served jacket potatoes.

Again everyone is asked for a voluntary donation if they can afford it.

A number of BITMO staff are also happy to chip in to have a hot meal on site. All volunteers have completed a Level 2 Food Hygiene course.

Two other leading members of the Belle Isle community were honoured at the Inner South Leeds Community Hero Awards 2019.

Margaret Brown received her individual award: 'For ongoing volunteering work over the past four



decades and dedication to supporting older people in the community'. Margaret was also present to help accept awards on behalf of Belle Isle Senior Action and the Ciaran Bingham Foundation Trust.

Paula Liptrot received her award: 'For ongoing dedication as a volunteer at BITMO and in the community'. In true style and dedication, she turned up at the ceremony despite having a broken shoulder and injured knee after a bad fall the day before.



New members of BITMO's Board

Lisa Caley

Lisa has lived in Belle Isle for 40 years and has been a tenant of Belle Isle TMO for 15 years. She lives in the Brooms area of the estate. She has got three children and works at Middleton Primary School. She has worked as a Classroom Assistant for 24 years, a job which she loves every minute of. She also runs a local voluntary majorette troupe, the Supreme Starlets. Lisa wanted to join the Board as she enjoys being involved with the community and is keen to share some great ideas. She also loves a challenge!



Tony Alexander

Tony lives in the Belle Isle Circus area of the estate, having moved there in 2018. Tony wanted to serve on the Board to help tenants as much as possible within the remit of the organisation and to understand their needs from their perspective. Tony is interested in ensuring relevant rules and regulations are adhered to and all the work that is carried on by Belle Isle TMO is done within the budgets allowed. He is very keen to improve communications between tenants and residents and Belle Isle TMO. Tony flies kites in his spare time!



Tracey Morris

Tracey lives in the Aberfields area of the estate. She undertakes volunteer work and volunteers her services for the Happy Friday Breakfast Club and Tasty Tuesdays held every week in BITMOs GATE. Tracey also volunteers for community events across the estate on behalf of Belle Isle TMO. She has been a tenant in Belle Isle since 2014 and is keen for BITMO to develop links across the area to promote work to include all members of the community.



NEW JOB, FIRST JOB, BETTER JOB

If you are looking for work or want to find a better job, we might be able to help you in BITMOs GATE. Here are 10 ways we can help you to get that job you are looking for.

1. Have you got a great-looking CV? Most jobs want a CV these days and we can help you get one, or improve the one you have got.
2. Use our computers or free Wi-Fi to search for work, including uploading your CV to sites like Indeed and Totaljobs.
3. Our jobs board is updated regularly with local vacancies.
4. 16-24? We can set you up with an appointment with a jobs advisor who will meet you in BITMOs GATE to help you find work. We can help get you a work placement with top companies like Marks & Spencer and Boots through the Prince's Trust.
5. Want to improve your English, Maths or computer skills? We arrange courses in BITMOs GATE run by Leeds City College.
6. If you have any kind of disability, long-term health condition or suffer from anxiety or depression we have a pre-employment course run by Scope to help you get ready for applying for work, training or voluntary work. The course is on Tuesday and Friday mornings from January 14.
7. Becoming a volunteer could help improve your confidence and would look good on your CV. There are volunteer jobs you can do in BITMOs GATE and in the local area.
8. If you have a job interview coming up we can arrange interview practice for you to help you do better.
9. Engage Leeds run a session to help you find work or get a better job in BITMOs GATE every Thursday afternoon from 2-4pm. No appointment necessary.
10. Register with us and we will make sure that you find out about training courses, jobs fairs, vacancies and offer as much support as we can.

BITMOs GATE is open 9am - 4pm Monday to Friday. Come in at any time for help and to register with us.

How we can help you find a job?
Contact us

Text 07891 274237

Email gate@belleislelmo.co.uk

Twitter @BITMO_LS10



Here are 4 ways BITMOs GATE can help you

1. Come and practise using computers – we have PCs, laptops and iPads you can use. Or you can bring your own phone or tablet and use the free Wi-Fi.
2. Join in with our beginners computer club on Tuesday mornings. It's a small friendly group and anyone can join in. The group practise getting used to using a mouse or searching on the internet. They finish just in time for a toastie and a soup provided by Tasty Tuesdays.
3. Improve your computer skills with an online training course called Learn My Way. We can get you started and then you can continue at home or in BITMOs GATE.
4. There's a new 6-week computer course starting in January with Leeds City College. This course can take you to the next level and job seekers can put it on their CV. Ask at the GATE for more details.

NEED HELP REGISTERING WITH LEEDS HOMES OR BIDDING?

Drop-in with Keith in BITMOs GATE Tuesdays 2-4pm or Thursdays 10am – 12pm

In order to complete the application you will need

- National Insurance Numbers for you (and any joint applicant)
- A contact mobile number and email address
- The full names and dates of birth of everyone on the application
- Five years' address history for the main and joint applicant(s) with no missing dates

You need to provide the following information the details of all household members, including any support workers assisting you, any pregnancies within the household or overnight child access arrangements and overnight carers' requirements and your current income

PROOFS FOR ALL ADULTS:

Two items from **GROUP A**; OR

One item from **GROUP A** and one from **GROUP B**;
OR Three items from **GROUP B**

At least one item must confirm the current address.

GROUP A

Passport
UK photocard driving licence (full or provisional)
Blue Badge
EU national identity card, HM Forces ID card, UK firearms licence

GROUP B

Birth/adoption certificate
Marriage/civil partner certificate
NHS card
DBS certificate
Vehicle registration document
TV licence
National Insurance Number card
Exam certificate

The following must be less than three months old and must come from different organisations.

- Utility bill (gas/electricity/digital television/mobile phone/internet)
- Bank/building society statement, credit card statement
- Letter from support worker/head teacher
- Store card statement, mail order catalogue statement

Proofs for all children under 16

We will only accept a birth certificate and a current Child Benefit award letter or Child Tax Credit award letter which must include your name and address and the child's name.

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

**BY BITMO CHIEF
EXECUTIVE
DEBORAH KELLY**

The first two quarters of the year have been very busy with preparations for the continuation ballot, team training and improving our services to tenants. We have focused on our debt collection service to make sure we've got the right staff in place with the right support to maximise our debt collection and also to help customers who are in financial difficulty. The thing that "Housing folk" hate more than anything is evicting people for breaches of tenancy conditions and failure to pay rent on time, which is why we work so hard to encourage prompt payment in full.

We've helped over 50 customers to get on a better financial footing, and generated over £22,000 in additional income for them, which in turn helps them to pay their rent on time.

We have just started a piece of work to look at how we can improve our front line service to you, to make sure you get the right answers and service each time you contact us. We will be asking you for your opinions on our service delivery so keep a look out on Facebook for surveys and updates on progress.

We've made a big investment in staff training this year and will continue to make sure our staff have the tools and support they need to make a difference to Belle Isle.

The GATE has been a very busy place this year with 467 people registering under our new membership system to become regular visitors in the first seven months, taking advantage of the sessions we run in collaboration with Leeds City College, Scope, Red Ladder Theatre Company and so many more. Next year we will be working even harder on supporting BITMO tenants to access training education and employment.

We have just completed our Board Strategy event and Staff Away Day and are brimming with ideas about what we want to do over the next five years to improve services, make Belle Isle a safer stronger community and remain a well-run organisation. We will be consulting residents on these ideas before we finalise our five year plan, so again look out for opportunities to be involved. Events will be advertised on Facebook.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS – RIGHT UP YOUR STREET

There is a community meeting that covers your neighbourhood. Residents come together between two and four times a year and meet with BITMO, police and local councillors. Issues affecting your community are discussed – from speeding cars in the back streets to rubbish collections to anti-social behaviour as well as proposals for improvements like fencing or children's play areas. The police, councillors and BITMO give up-to-date information and anyone can ask questions or bring points up. Some of the local meetings have organised walkabouts, where residents, police, BITMO and councillors have looked at the areas on foot together and seen what needs to be done. Others have organised drop-ins, where anyone who can't make or doesn't like attending meetings can still put their point across individually and have it raised for them at the meeting.

THE LOCAL AREAS:

Lanshaws are invited to attend Aberfields & Newhalls or Brooms & Nesfields. West Granges are invited to attend Winroses or Rosedales.

To find out when your local meeting is text us on 07891 274237 or email us at gate@belleisletmo.co.uk



CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR OPENING TIMES

The housing office will close for the break and be run out of BITMOs GATE at the following times

Monday 23 December - 9am till 5pm

Tuesday 24 December - 9am till 1pm

Wednesday 25 December - CLOSED

Thursday 26 December - CLOSED

Friday 27 December - 10am till 4pm

Monday 30 December - 10am till 4pm

Tuesday 31 December - 10am till 1pm

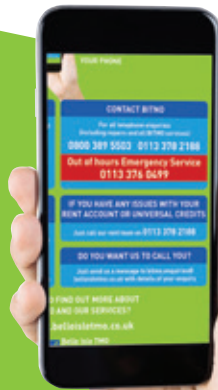
Wednesday 1 January - CLOSED

BITMOs GATE will offer a limited "coffee and computers" service during these hours.

Normal hours for the housing office and BITMOs GATE resume on January 2.

BITMO

OPENING TIMES AND CONTACT DETAILS



WHY NOT TAKE
A PICTURE OF
THIS PAGE ON
YOUR PHONE?

OPENING TIMES

Monday, Tuesday Thursday
9.00 am – 5.00 pm

Wednesday
9.00 am – 1.00 pm

Friday
9.00 am – 4.00 pm

CONTACT BITMO

For all telephone enquiries
(including repairs and all BITMO services)

0800 389 5503 0113 378 2188

Out of hours Emergency Service
0113 376 0499

HAVE YOUR CONTACT DETAILS CHANGED?

If we don't have your up to date
contact details we can't get in touch
with you to offer the right services.

If your details have changed just
call us on 0113 378 2188 or email
bitmo.enquiries@belleisletmo.co.uk

IF YOU HAVE ANY ISSUES WITH YOUR RENT ACCOUNT OR UNIVERSAL CREDITS

Just call our rent team on **0113 378 2188**

DO YOU WANT US TO CALL YOU?

Just send us a message to bitmo.enquiries@belleisletmo.co.uk with details of your enquiry

NEED TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
BITMO AND OUR SERVICES?

www.belleisletmo.co.uk

 Belle Isle TMO

 @BITMO_LS10

Aberfield Gate, Belle Isle, Leeds LS10 3QH