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Three of the young hedgehogs tuck into a tray of food



Prickly customer: This cute baby is just a ball of spines

Tiny hedgehogs make themselves at home

By John Lawrence

Hedgehogs are known to be shy and retiring creatures who come out mostly in the hours of darkness and prefer to spend their lives

away from human view. So Natalie Rogers and her family were more than surprised when a mother hedgehog and five tiny

hoglets popped out of the undergrowth and set up home in the back garden of their house in Kitchener Road, N2.

Natalie said: "The hoglets were not worried about us watching them at all. They explored through all the leaves before going back in after about 40 minutes. We have seen them in the day several times. They tend to stick to the shade and pick up insects under the dry leaves."

Natalie and her daughter Mia, who attends the Archer Academy, also gave them some apple, banana and hedgehog food, allowing them to get

close enough to capture these excellent photos.

Natalie suggests hedgehogs are increasingly adapting to life in suburban gardens and urges

everyone to be very careful using grass trimmers and to always check before burning piles of sticks or vegetation in case wildlife has moved in.



Berry tasty: One hoglet has healthy eating licked

Dismay at over-75s having to pay for TV licences

By Daphne Chamberlain

In spite of public protests and petitions, TV licences will no longer be free for people over 75 who are not on Pension Credit. At the time of writing that decision still stands, and comes into effect this month.

However, Covid-19 is still with us. Regional spikes or a second major wave of infection could occur at any time. If and when that happens, television will be more than ever a mainstay for the isolated among us.

Age UK comment

"We need to make as much noise as possible and call on the government and the BBC to urgently find a solution that allows the free licence to continue." That was the reaction of Age UK at the news. They continued: "Many older people on low incomes have told us that if they have to find £150 plus a year to pay for a licence then they will have to forego some other essential, or try to survive without TV at all. We genuinely worry about the mental health of older people living on their own in this situation."

Making the situation even worse is the fact that as many as two in five of pensioners on the

lowest incomes do not receive Pension Credit, even though they are entitled to it.

Beware scams

The BBC says it will contact all current recipients by post to agree a payment plan if they want to continue to be covered by the licence fee. It adds that no one will be expected to pay for a new licence until they have

been contacted, and that letters will start being sent in August.

The advice is to wait for the official letter, and only use official channels if you are making a payment. Some people have already been the victims of scams.

To find out more about Pension Credit or for other support contact the Age UK Barnet helpline on 020 8203 5040 or Citizens Advice Barnet on 0300 456 8365.



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