



Your independent community newspaper

# WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free  
May 2023, No. 98

Email [WFEcho@socialspider.com](mailto:WFEcho@socialspider.com)  
Facebook [/WalthamForestEcho](https://www.facebook.com/WalthamForestEcho)  
Instagram [@walthamforestecho](https://www.instagram.com/walthamforestecho)  
Tweet [@WFEcho](https://twitter.com/WFEcho)  
Visit [walthamforestecho.co.uk](https://walthamforestecho.co.uk)

## News

Hero schoolgirl 'may have saved boy's life' after stabbing on bus

► P. 3

## News

Complaint about former council leader dismissed as 'politically motivated'

► P. 5

## News

Tributes made to 'lovely' teen stabbed to death in Chingford

► P. 6

## Arts & Culture

Soho Theatre Walthamstow set to 'soft launch' in November

► P. 12

## Sport

Leyton Orient promoted after meteoric rise up League Two table

► P. 15

Construction at the incinerator site Credit NLWA



## Hundreds of millions added to cost of new incinerator

**T**he estimated cost of rebuilding North London's rubbish incinerator has risen by hundreds of millions of pounds.

In 2019, the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) began work on a project to build a new, larger incinerator just over the border from Chingford, alongside new recycling facilities, at

Edmonton EcoPark.

At the time, it estimated the overall cost of the project would be £1.2billion. However, a recent report for the NLWA board, chaired by Waltham Forest Council deputy leader Clyde Loakes, revealed the current estimate is now £1.42bn-£1.52bn.

The report explains the original budget "did not include

subsequent inflation", which the Bank of England believed at that time would remain at around 2% in the coming years. Last October, inflation rose to just over 11%.

The report reads: "The NLWA has successfully mitigated its exposure to the subsequent exceptional levels of inflation, unlike many other major infrastructure

projects which have been more adversely affected.

"The upward pressure on the project's cost has been effectively mitigated with the careful management of borrowing and appropriate risk-sharing with contractors.

"Over 80% of costs for the project are now secured under contract and it is possible to

forecast the outturn cost with a degree of certainty.

"As more of the project is delivered, NLWA's exposure to inflation risk will continue to diminish, though there is still some uncertainty given the ever-changing financial climate, which is outside the project's control."

The NLWA insists the current incinerator, built in 1969, is on its last legs and argues it has "a duty... to provide facilities to deal with waste" from the seven North London boroughs it serves "in the best possible way".

Environmental campaigners meanwhile have viciously opposed the project, arguing the new incinerator's capacity of 700,000 tonnes a year will greatly exceed demand, while releasing more pollution.

The NLWA awarded a contract to rebuild the incinerator to Spanish company Acciona in December 2021, estimating it would cost £960million. Construction is "approximately 75% complete" and Acciona "remains on plan" to finish in late 2026.

When contacted for comment, a NLWA spokesperson argued the project is "on time and budget to deliver at £1.2bn in 2019 prices".

They said: "Given that it is a project lasting over 10 years with record high levels of inflation currently affecting the economy, it shows careful management that we are expecting outturn costs to include relatively low inflation.

"The project also continues to be the best value option by far for North London's waste disposal. Sending the waste elsewhere would add at least £20 million per year to the cost for council taxpayers, as well as being worse for the environment."



## NEWS



FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

**MAY 2023**  
**No. 98**

Waltham Forest Echo is the borough's free community newspaper. We publish monthly and distribute 15,000 free copies of each issue

**Publisher**

David Floyd

**Editor**

Victoria Munro

**Designer**

Jonathan Duncan

**Head of Advertising**

Klaudia Kiss

**Local Democracy Reporter**

Josh Mellor

**Contributors**

Sarah Fairbairn, Tom Quigley,  
Phil Veasey, David O'Driscoll,  
Andrzej Perkins, Simon  
O'Connor, National Federation  
for the Blind UK, Noah Vickers

**The member organisations of WFWellComm CIC are:**

Community Transport Waltham Forest, Social Spider CIC, HEET.

**WFWellComm CIC Board:**

David Floyd, *Social Spider CIC*  
Tom Ruxton, *HEET*  
Helen Tredoux,  
*Community Transport WF*

**Contact**

Call 020 8521 7956

Email [WFEcho@socialspider.com](mailto:WFEcho@socialspider.com)

Post The Mill, 7-11 Coppermill Lane, Walthamstow E17 7HA

**Advertising**

Call 020 8521 7956

Email [klaudia@socialspider.com](mailto:klaudia@socialspider.com)

**WFE is published by Social Spider Community News:**

**Visit** [socialspidercommunitynews.co.uk](http://socialspidercommunitynews.co.uk)



Waltham Forest Echo is regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). For more information on the Echo's complaints policy and how to make a complaint visit: [walthamforestecho.co.uk/complaints](http://walthamforestecho.co.uk/complaints)

## Record amount of Waltham Forest recycling rejected

by Victoria Munro

A record amount of Waltham Forest recycling was "rejected" in the 2021/22 financial year, new figures show.

Data from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs show an estimated 5,170 tonnes of trash placed in the borough's recycling bins that year could not be recycled.

This is the highest amount recorded since records of rejected recycling began in 2014/15, when only 1,193 tonnes of recycling was rejected in the borough.

Recycling can be rejected due to contamination or because the material is not actually recyclable. Across England as a whole, 6.4% of recycling in 2021/22 was rejected, while the rejected recycling in Waltham Forest accounted for 13.8% of the 37,447 tonnes of household waste sent for recycling.

In turn, this amount makes up 32% of all household waste produced in the borough that year, a slight increase from the 31.9% recycling rate reported the previous year. This means the

borough remains below the London average of 33% and well below the nationwide average of 42.3%.

Waltham Forest Council's deputy leader Clyde Loakes has previously called for new legislation to make recycling compulsory.

Speaking at a neighbourhoods scrutiny committee last year, he said: "I find it quite obscene that recycling is still a voluntary endeavour and that councils have no recourse – people can just go and stick their stuff in the black bin."

"We're hoping to get up to 50% recycling in the coming couple of years – that's a big leap from where we are now – but that is realistically where we need to go."

Regarding the amount of recycling being rejected, he added: "A lot of this is about education reinforcing behaviour changes [...] contamination [is happening] because people put things like dirty nappies and pizza boxes that are greasy."

The North London Waste Authority was contacted for comment on the figures but had yet to respond at the time of writing.

## Unhygienic butcher banned from food business

by Victoria Munro

An unhygienic local butcher has been banned from running any food business and ordered to pay more than £10,000.

Al Mustafa Halal Butchers in High Road, Leyton, was shut down in December 2021, just days after its owner Kashif Umar appeared in court over a previous hygiene offence.

Waltham Forest Council officers found an "ongoing mouse infestation" and "poor levels of cleanliness and repair".

Kashif's company has now been fined £2,500 for each offence, while he was personally fined £1,800 overall. The

company was also ordered to pay £3,183 in court costs.

Khevy Limbajee, the council's cabinet member for community safety, said: "The council takes the safety and health of its residents seriously."

"Unfortunately, in this case the [owner] was not proactive in addressing earlier food hygiene contraventions and allowed conditions at the premises to remain [poor]. I am pleased the court recognised the significant risks posed and took the decision not only to issue financial sanctions, but also to prohibit Mr Umar from operating a food business in the future."

## Repeated losses for council-owned company

by Josh Mellor, Local Democracy Reporter

A maintenance company owned by Waltham Forest Council has repeatedly lost money since its creation five years ago.

Servicestore has provided maintenance, pest control and caretaker services for the council and other clients since 2018.

Public accounts on Companies House show it last recorded a profit in its first year of operation.

In the 2021/22 financial year, it made a loss of £45,000. The year before, it lost £212,000 and, the year before that, it lost £136,000.

A Servicestore spokesperson said: "Many start-up companies make losses in the first few years of operation as they establish themselves in the market and meet their start-up costs."

"After making losses in its first two years we are pleased that performance last year has improved and that we are forecast to make a profit. This will be reinvested in council services to improve the lives of local people."

The company's forecast profits for this financial year are

£287,000, although this does not include tax or overheads carried out by council staff, such as website development, marketing, human resources or accountancy.

A report before the council's shareholder committee last month said Servicestore has "exceed[ed] targets" and "met all contributions" to the council.

According to the report, the council would be "protected financially" from the company if it failed, as it would only lose its initial investment of £100.

If the company folded, any debt it owed would be "written off" at no cost to the council.

Earlier this year, Servicestore lost a legal battle against a former employee, who was unfairly sacked after a tragic death on the Town Hall grounds.

"CCTV worker Narayan Acharya worked for Servicestore for 13 years until his dismissal in 2021 for failing to alert security about a man quietly drinking outside the Town Hall at night."

"Last year, an employment tribunal judge ruled "no reasonable employer" would have blamed him after the man was later found unresponsive."

## Cop charged with off-duty assault

A local cop has been arrested and charged with assault and perverting the court of justice.

Police Constable Bilal Naveed works for the joint police force for Waltham Forest and Newham but is currently suspended after his arrest last month.

PC Naveed was arrested on 21st April in connection with an alleged assault on Saturday, 1st April, that took place while he was off-duty.

He was held in policy custody ahead of his first court appearance at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court on 24th April.

Both the Directorate of Professional Standards and the Independent Office for Police Conduct have been made aware.

Last summer, a police officer was sacked for punching a handcuffed teenager in Leyton. An investigation found Steve Martin used "unnecessary and unreasonable force" while responding to a reported robbery.

Two years ago, former local cops Deniz Jaffer and Jamie Lewis were jailed for two years and nine months each for misconduct in public office after mocking a pair of murdered women they were assigned to guard.



NEWS

Local business park picked to open new food court

by Victoria Munro

The team behind the borough’s own version of Boxpark have been chosen to run a food court in Walthamstow’s rebuilt shopping centre.

CRATE, near St James Street Station, is a business park made of shipping containers, which opened in 2019 and hosts a number of independent local businesses, organisations and events.

The CRATE team was chosen from a number of bidders to run an exciting space in the rebuilt 17&Central, formerly The Mall, in Walthamstow Town Centre.

CRATE Walthamstow will host seven street food vendors; a cocktail, wine, and craft beer bar; two event spaces with regular classes and a nine-hole mini-golf course.

Peter Harper from CRATE told the *Echo* the 17&Central deal has been in the works for two years and will finally materialise this summer.

He said the new space will

“work hand in hand” with the existing St James Street location when it comes to “entertainment and events” and mirror its “community feel” by offering a gallery space to showcase local creative talent.

While CRATE originally pitched a retro arcade-themed space, 17&Central were particularly keen to have a mini-golf course to provide something accessible for kids and families.

Peter’s colleague Dannie Hodson said they designed the course as a tribute to the borough’s nature, with one hole featuring a miniature Queen Elizabeth’s Hunting Lodge in Chingford.

She said: “There was a bit of an uproar about all the greenery that’s going around the town square [because of the redevelopment] so we wanted to show that we still appreciate the nature around the borough.”

Peter and Dannie met while managing The Bell pub in Walthamstow seven years ago, under former manager Andy Potter, which she said meant they



Design for CRATE Walthamstow Credit CRATE

“know the local area really well”.

This motivated them to make sure that the bar in their space will still offer drinks “at an accessible price point”, such as at least two beers under £5, “for everyday drinkers”.

Dannie said: “We know the old Walthamstow boys and the crew really well, because we used to serve them, and we want to make sure they’re still welcome.”

This ethos will extend to the hiring process for CRATE Walthamstow, with the team looking to “target people in the borough first” to fill their vacancies. This has involved holding off on posting job listings online and reaching out to local youth group Project Zero to see if their older teenagers want to apply.

Peter said: “We’re really proud of the work we do for the community. [Before CRATE St James Street] this place was a carpark and quite an undesirable location, there were often

people in tents shooting up.

“My boss went to the council and offered to redevelop this site as a temporary measure for five years, although it looks like the council wants us to stay for the foreseeable future.

“We don’t limit ourselves on who we work with, we want this to be an accessible space for anyone and everyone to use. There’s some really lovely people in the community here and it’s been great to be able to support them.”

He added that CRATE St James Street has offered fledgling local businesses a space to grow and eventually outgrow, with past occupants like restaurant Hanoi Cà Phê and barbers CoveE17 moving out into more permanent homes.

Vendors already set to open in CRATE Walthamstow include Yorkshire Burrito, Hanoi Kitchen, Carne and Nanny Bill’s.



Design for the mini-golf course

Advertisement

LICENSING ACT 2003  
Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence

Notice of application for the Grant of a Premises Licence under section 34 of the Licensing Act 2003

Notice is hereby given that **Lavinia-Geanina Zoica** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of Premises licence at **Meats Bazar, 146-148 High Street, Walthamstow, London E17 7JS**. The nature of application as follows:

- To permit the sale of alcohol consumption off the premises: from Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 19:00, Saturday from 08:00 to 20:00, Sunday from 08:00 to 17:00 and opening hours of the premises from Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 19:00, Saturday from 08:00 to 20:00, Sunday from 08:00 to 17:00 including Public Holidays and Bank Holidays.

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4JF. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am-5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4JF or via email: Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk.

Representations must be received no later than **22nd May 2023**.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on conviction should such a false statement be made.

Date: 24th April 2023

Bilimway: 07813 101 092

Town and County Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

NOTICE UNDER ARTICLE 13 OF APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

Proposed development at: 205–207 Lea Bridge Road, Leyton, Walthamstow E10 7PN

Take notice that application is made by:  
Organisation name Elitok Properties  
Applicant name Mr Elitok

For planning permission to:  
Construction of Ground Floor infill rear extension to Commercial Unit; internal alterations to convert three 2-bedroom flats (under planning permission reference 160857) into four self-contained flats and maisonettes including refuse storage and cycle storage and retention of the as-built dormers.

Local Planning Authority to whom the application is being submitted:  
London Borough of Waltham Forest, Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Road, London E17 4NX

Any owner of the land or tenant who wishes to make representations about this application, should write to the council within 21 days of the date of this notice.

Signed by Mr Peter John Stanway 24/04/2023

Statement of owners right's: The grant of planning permission does not affect owners' rights to retain or dispose of their property, unless there is some provision to the contrary in an agreement or lease. Statement of agricultural tenants' rights: The grant of planning permission for non-agricultural development may affect agricultural tenants' security of tenure. 'Owner' means a person having a freehold interest or a leasehold interest in the unexpired term of which is not less than 7 years. 'Tenant' means a tenant of an agricultural holding any part of which is comprised in the land.

Hero schoolgirl may have saved stabbing victim’s life

Walthamstow schoolgirl who rushed to help the victim of a shocking stabbing may have saved his life, according to police.

On 21st March, Maisarah Assam, a Year 10 from Eden Girls’ School, was riding the 158 bus home when a horrifying attack took place.

A 16-year-old boy was stabbed in the chest, splattering the clothes of those around him with blood and leaving most passengers on the packed bus crying or frozen in shock.

Maisarah went to the victim and comforted him, telling him he would be okay, as she put pressure on his chest to slow his bleeding.

The boy was then taken by London’s Air Ambulance to hospital, where doctors feared he could die for some time before he eventually stabilised.

After interviewing Maisarah the following day, Waltham Forest Police told her school that, without her efforts to help, the boy might well have been killed.

On 6th April, on the last day of Easter term, she was presented with an award for her bravery by borough commander Chief Superintendent Simon Crick.

Vice Principal Rijia Rafiq told the *Echo* it was “lovely to see Maisarah getting recognition for her bravery”, adding that her parents were invited to the ceremony “so they too could witness the proud moment”.

Unfortunately, Maisarah was not available for interview, as she is busy studying for her GCSE exams.

A 16-year-old boy was arrested shortly after the attack and has been charged with attempted murder and possession of a knife.

Advertisement

LICENSING ACT 2003  
Application for the Variation of a Premises Licence

Notice of application for the variation of a Premises Licence under section 34 of the Licensing Act 2003

Notice is hereby given that **Homies on Donkeys Ltd** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the variation of an existing Premises Licence at: **686 High Road Leytonstone, London, E11 3AA**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- Live music (indoors), Recorded music (indoors), Supply of alcohol consumed on & off premises: Tuesday-Saturday 12:00-01:00, Sunday 11:00-23:00

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am – 5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF or via email: Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Representations must be received no later than: **25th May 2023**.

It is an offence under Section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on conviction should such a false statement be made.



## NEWS

# So much but still not enough

*Waltham Forest's affordable housing inquiry paints a worrying picture of the borough's future*

by Victoria Munro

**“W**e had three months to find a new place to live but there was nothing,” said a renter in Wood Street. “We’d call agents and the place would be gone before it was listed... You have to make a decision knowing almost nothing.”

A Walthamstow homeowner described feeling similarly stuck, explaining: “We bought our house through right to buy, it has increased in value, but so has everywhere else. We want to move to Chingford but we can’t afford it.”

Meanwhile, a social housing tenant in Lea Bridge was desperate to swap properties with someone but was finding it “impossible”. “No-one wants to live where I live,” they said, “I don’t want to live where I live.”

These accounts were given to an independent inquiry into Waltham Forest’s housing crisis, which presented its results to Waltham Forest Council last month.

The council launched the Affordable Housing Commission, led by a panel of eight experts from both inside and outside the housing industry, in January this year, asking them to produce recommendations for the next decade of house-building in the borough.

What their report depicts, however, is a borough that consistently outperforms most of London when it comes to building homes – but still finds it increasingly difficult to house its residents.

Between 2011 and 2022, more than 9,000 homes were built in Waltham Forest, of which almost 3,000 were available for less than the market rate, bringing the total number of homes in the borough to more than 105,000.

At the same time, however, the borough experienced the fastest growth in house prices in London, with the average price more than doubling since 2011. Data from 2019 showed a typical renter would have to spend 44% of their basic pay on rent.

Unsurprisingly, this has begun to have a significant effect on who can – and cannot – afford to live in Waltham Forest. One renter told the commission they felt the council was “importing richer people into the borough” without “doing much to provide for people” who already live here, while a Walthamstow resident said the council’s housing strategy “feels like people deciding what they want London to look like”.

A tenant in social housing, who accepted the council needs “first class passengers to make the flight viable”, insisted: “The problem is [the council is] only delivering



Credit Pixabay

for the first class passengers here.”

While the council would protest it is doing as much as it can to support low-income residents, the data clearly supports the impression that rich people are moving in, while poorer residents are moving on.

The proportion of Waltham Forest residents in “higher managerial, administrative and professional occupations” – generally considered a key harbinger of gentrification – grew by 70% in the decade up to 2021, the second biggest increase in London after Newham.

These well-heeled professionals were most likely to move into the borough’s ten “high growth” areas, namely: Blackhorse Road, Sutherland Road, Highams Park, North Higham Hill, Walthamstow Dog Track, Walthamstow Central, Temple Mills, Wood Street, Lea Bridge, and St James Street. In the average Waltham Forest neighbourhood, they make up just 14% of residents, while in Blackhorse Road, for example, they account for close to a third.

These residents, despite their greater earnings, are frequently moving into Waltham Forest after getting priced out of other London boroughs. Since 2012, more than 10,000 individuals or households have moved into the borough from Hackney alone. At the same time, poorer residents are being priced out to Redbridge or areas outside of London like Epping Forest.

The data suggests those being forced out are most often the borough’s Black

residents, the only ethnic group to have decreased in absolute terms in the last decade. More than 3,000 Black people have moved out of the borough since 2011, with the biggest decreases in areas of Walthamstow and Temple Mills in Leyton. At the same time, the proportion of White people has grown, now making up more than half of the borough.

The majority of new homes being built in the borough are doing little to help the problem. The report states that “many of the new developments available to rent would require household incomes significantly above” the borough average. Even when it comes to new affordable housing, a “significant amount” is still “only likely to be affordable to higher-earning eligible residents”, which one Walthamstow resident described as “a slap in the face to people living here”.

The current financial climate also means private developers are likely to get even more resistant to building discounted housing. The report states that “build costs are forecast to increase over the coming years, meaning that high levels of affordable housing may be less viable to developers in the short-term”, while house prices are expected to drop over the next two years.

At the same time, those specifically looking to build affordable homes, such as the council, housing associations and charities, are finding their task even

harder. They are grappling with a rise in the cost of borrowing and “wider cost pressures associated with their existing [homes], such as damp, mould, and cladding issues”.

The report imagines a hypothetical housing scheme with 100 homes, built on two acres of land and expected to meet the Mayor of London’s target of 35% affordable homes. A private developer who built the scheme would lose an estimated £3.7million.

What complicates this picture, however, is that it considers “all costs”, including the profit the developer expects to make. If only the cost of building the properties is included, the same scheme would make a profit of £13m.

This leads to situations like Countryside, the developer currently rebuilding Walthamstow’s Marlowe Road Estate, insisting it could not afford to increase the percentage of affordable homes from 45 to 50%, despite being set to make a £14m profit from the project. In this case, after ten months of negotiations, the council eventually backed down.

Many who spoke to the Affordable Housing Commission were keen to see the council take a more hard line with private developers. As one Lea Bridge resident pointed out: “It’s obviously a popular area to build, the council should be making more of that and holding developers to account. Make them deliver.”



## NEWS

# Whistleblower complaint about former council leader dismissed

by Victoria Munro

A “whistleblowing complaint” from within Waltham Forest Council about its former leader Clare Coghill was dismissed as “politically motivated”, a new report reveals.

On 25th April, the council’s audit and governance committee conducted its annual review of the whistleblowing policy and all complaints received that year.

A report prepared for the meeting reveals that, in February last year, a complaint was made against former leader Clare Coghill “as well as several other senior members and officers”.

The complaint was related to Cllr Coghill joining the board of social housing provider Square Roots Ltd, a subsidiary of developer London Square, in September 2021. A month previously, London Square had submitted a planning application to build more than 300 homes near Lea Bridge Station.

Regarding the whistleblower’s complaint, the report states: “The matter



Former council leader Clare Coghill  
Credit Waltham Forest Council

was investigated by both the monitoring officer and the council’s fraud team, who concluded that it was a politically motivated complaint which was frivolous and vexatious.”

Cllr Coghill stepped down as council leader in June 2021, announcing she

would also not run in the borough’s next local elections, and was replaced by Grace Williams three months later.

At a full council meeting in December that year, Conservative councillor John Moss asked if the “close” relationship between Cllr Coghill and London Square could create “impropriety”.

New leader Cllr Williams said the council’s monitoring officer Mark Hynes had advised that there was “no question of any impropriety or conflict of interest”.

She added: “Given Cllr Coghill has now stepped down as both leader and from cabinet, it is unlikely that any conflict of interest will arise in her continued role as a councillor.

*“It was a politically motivated complaint which was frivolous and vexatious”*

“However, should such a conflict arise, the monitoring officer’s advice would be sought in terms of the necessary declarations that would need to be made by Cllr Coghill, so that she is not put in a position where her integrity is able to be challenged.

“London Square Ltd have confirmed that Cllr Coghill will not be involved in any work in Waltham Forest, including the Lea Bridge Station redevelopment scheme, whilst she remains a local councillor in the borough.”

London Square’s plans for the three sites near Lea Bridge Station, which include a 26-storey tower, were granted planning permission in March last year.

In addition to outlining last year’s whistleblowing complaints, the report prepared for councillors last month details changes to the council’s whistleblowing policy.

One change, in a section on whistleblowers who choose to “take the matter outside the council”, is the addition of the sentence: “It will rarely, if ever, be appropriate to alert the media.”

Advertisement

enjoy our  
**Spring**  
offers

**Coppermills**

Fixed fee sales from  
your local independent  
property experts

**Leasehold sales**  
£3,000 + VAT, fixed fee!

**Freehold sales**  
£4,000 + VAT, fixed fee!

...including floor plan and professional photographs

More properties needed!

*‘An excellent estate agency with proven  
management experience in the local area’.*  
Google reviews



## NEWS



Chima Osuji (courtesy of Met Police)

Tributes left at the scene of Chima's death  
Credit Tom Quigley

## ‘Lovely’ teen stabbed to death in Chingford

by Victoria Munro

**A** “lovely, polite young man” was stabbed to death in Chingford last month. Shortly before 9.30pm on 10th April, 17-year-old Chima Osuji was walking with another boy in Longshaw Road when he was suddenly attacked and stabbed in the chest.

Despite the best efforts of members of the public, paramedics and even London’s Air Ambulance, he died shortly afterwards at the scene.

Since his death, three teenage boys – two aged 16 and one just 15 – have been arrested. The younger boy has been released on bail, while the other two have been charged with murder.

Flowers have been laid at the scene of the crime, while tributes to Chima have poured in on social media from friends and staff at his former schools, Longshaw Primary School and Heathcote School.

One friend wrote: “Can’t get over the loss of him. He was such a kind person, always made me feel safe, always made me laugh, always made me happy.”

“There was never ever a single time we would link and he wouldn’t make me laugh[...] you didn’t deserve this Chima.”

Another friend, who was with Chima earlier on the day he died, told the *Evening Standard* he was a “very good person” with no involvement in “any of the Waltham Forest gang stuff”.

They added: “Out of all my friends he was the nicest, most generous person. I can’t think of one person on this planet who would want to hurt him. There

was no reason.”

In a tribute posted on Facebook, a staff member from Longshaw Primary School wrote: “Rest in Peace, dear sweet Chima. My heart breaks for your dear mum and family and friends. This should never have happened.”

A school dinner lady who remembered Chima wrote that he “was a lovely young boy” and always “nice and polite” to her.

Following Chima’s death, Waltham Forest Council’s cabinet member for community safety, Khevin Limbajee, released a statement expressing “deep sadness” at the tragedy.

He wrote: “Too many of our young people are afraid of violence in Waltham Forest when they should instead feel secure.

“We and our partners are using all the powers and tools available to us to make our community a safe place where young people and their families can enjoy their lives.

“The council is working closely with local police colleagues to reassure the community and we will provide extra presence in the area over the next few days.

“Please speak to our neighbourhood officers about any concerns you have when you see them. They will listen and take forward these concerns as we work to make the area safer.”

He also encouraged anyone with information about the crime to contact police on 101, citing the reference number CAD 6358/10Apr, or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

## Local police taking hours to respond to crashes and burglaries

by Noah Vickers,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**W**altham Forest Police took an average time of more than three hours to respond to less urgent crimes like burglaries and car crashes last winter.

From December to February, the average response time to “S-grade” calls for the combined police force for Waltham Forest and Newham was the second worst in London.

It was pipped only by the unit that covers Barking & Dagenham, Havering, and Redbridge, where the average response time to these less urgent incidents in December was four hours and 42 minutes.

“S-grade” calls, otherwise known as ‘low urgency’ calls, are where there is a “degree of importance or urgency associated with the initial police action, but an emergency response is not required”. Examples include road traffic collisions, hate crimes, anti-social behaviour and burglaries.

The target time to respond to such calls is one hour but recent statistics provided by the Mayor of London’s office show the average response time across London was just over two hours in winter.

The statistics were published in response to a question by Caroline Pidgeon, a City Hall politician for the Liberal Democrats, who said it was “shocking”

that the Met Police was “nowhere close” to meeting its target.

She said: “The fact that someone in East London who has experienced a burglary or hate crime may have to wait almost 5 hours for a response just isn’t acceptable.

“In 2018, Sadiq Khan conceded that there were ‘some specific response times problems related to the rollout of the new Basic Command Units’. Here we are, five years later, and every single unit is missing S-Grade target times, most of them by a country mile.

“It is quite clear that we need a return to proper community policing with more borough-based officers and response teams to help Londoners when they need them most.”

Responding to the figures, a Met Police spokeswoman said the Metropolitan Police received 915,842 calls during the three months the statistics cover.

She said: “Our officers are regularly the first emergency service workers at the scene of a stabbing or a serious collision and they are trained to provide first aid, as well as to keep the public safe.

“We know this is an important area for us and, where we have identified challenges in some policing areas, we have worked hard to ensure we are doing all we can to prioritise the most urgent calls for service.

“The Commissioner has spoken publicly about the demands and pressures created on policing from cut-backs in other emergency and local services and the impact these have on our key mission of tackling crime and keeping the people of London safe.

“He will continue to work with partners and the government to find long-term solutions to these issues, as well as tackling the root causes of much of this demand by creating the strongest ever neighbourhoods policing under our Turnaround Plan.”

A spokesman for Mayor of London Sadiq Khan’s office said “nothing is more important” to him “than keeping Londoners safe”.

He added: “[Mayor Khan’s] record funding of the police is working to put more officers on our streets, restoring neighbourhood policing and improving the care and support Londoners receive when they contact police in an emergency. This is despite huge cuts from central government.

“The vast majority of emergency calls to police in London are responded to within national target times, but more needs to be done and the Mayor is committed to working with [Met Commissioner] Sir Mark Rowley to ensure police can be there for Londoners quickly when they need them most.”

## ADVERTISE WITH US

Our newspapers are a growing and valued part of the local community – loved by readers who want to read about what matters to them. Be part of that and advertise with us!

For the borough of Waltham Forest, we distribute 15,000 free copies to readers via local, community venues, and door-to-door, with a total estimated readership of 45,000 people.

Call Klaudia 07903 212 659

Email [klaudia@socialspider.com](mailto:klaudia@socialspider.com)

Advertisement

# Waltham Forest College



think  
**BIG**

# OPEN EVENTS

17<sup>th</sup> May & 7<sup>th</sup> June, 4pm-7pm

## Join us at our Open Event!

Guided Campus Tour

Chat to Students and Staff

Interactive Taster Events

Apprenticeship Workshops

Admissions Advice and Guidance

Apply for a Course



Visit [waltham.ac.uk](https://waltham.ac.uk) or  
scan the QR code to register.

020 8501 8501

myfuture@waltham.ac.uk

707 Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4JB





## FEATURES

# Inside the Freemasons' Chingford home

by Victoria Munro

**“W**e’re not a secret society,” insists Eric Husband, member of the Chingford-based branch of the mysterious Freemasons, “We’re a society with secrets.”

The Chingford Masonic Hall is an unassuming one-storey building only a short walk from Chingford Station and the site of rituals and ceremonies that members of the public are forbidden to witness, although parts of the building are available to hire.

While these intricate rituals – so numerous a member of 40 years told me he had not learned all of them – are underway, two of the current 29 masons in Hainault Lodge guard the doors to their ceremonial space, one armed with a dagger and the other armed with a sword.

They are purportedly prepared to use them if an outsider tries to force their way inside. Given both men are, like many of the lodge’s members, over retirement age, it’s unclear if they would pose a serious threat.

That said, it’s also possible the mason who told me they would fight to the death was pulling my leg. Among other masonic lodges, the one covering Waltham Forest and part of Essex is apparently nicknamed “Happy Hainault” for their love of joking around.

According to most accounts, the world’s oldest fraternity began as a sort of trade union for medieval stonemasons, offering “lodges” to stay in when the work of building castles and cathedrals took them to far-flung parts of England. The famous secret handshake allowed travelling members with unfamiliar faces to prove they had a right to come inside.

The symbols that decorate the hall, however, hark back to a far more ancient history. In the eyes of modern masons, they are keeping alive traditions that originated with the builders of Solomon’s Temple in ancient Jerusalem, although few would know what to do with a block of granite today. One mason I spoke to, for example, was an electrician, while another worked in IT.

Regardless, on two desks in the ceremonial room sit “ashlars”, blocks of stone that prehistoric trainee stonemasons would have practised honing to a smooth surface, while from the ceiling hangs a “Seal of Solomon”, a six-pointed

Members of Hainault Lodge at Chingford Masonic Hall



star made of two interlocking equilateral triangles.

It is not, I am gently but firmly told, a Star of David. It, in fact, could not be a Star of David because a central principle of the masons is that any discussion of specific religions or politics is left firmly at the door.

Morris Sharp, 66, tells me this policy was introduced “right at the start, three and a half thousand years ago” to avoid arguments. This was necessary because, while masons must have “genuine belief in a supreme being”, which supreme being is entirely up to their discretion.

Within the temple, every deity becomes the “grand geometrician”; the mason that built the world, one could say, just as the original masons built temples. Other requirements, Morris adds, include “no criminal record” and the “support of your family”, given the meetings take up a not

inconsiderable amount of the members’ free time.

Eric, 76, says: “You don’t have to be a good ritualist to become a good mason, it’s more about your outlook on life.”

A key part of this is “caring for others”, a quality directed both inside and outside the lodge, since multiple members are keen to emphasise how much the lodge raises for charity each year. “For us, it’s a brotherhood,” Eric adds, “When my wife was very ill, I knew I had 30 blokes that I could phone up with the complete understanding that they would help me out.”

Asked if this solidarity means the masons are something of a networking opportunity, Paul James, 65, tells me: “Because we all become such close friends then, quite naturally, if I need an electrician, the first person I would call is an electrician in my lodge.

“But he’s under no obligation to do me any particular favours, in fact I would not want that, I’d want him to present me with a sensible and reasonable bill. It’s no different from knocking on your neighbour’s door if you need help.”

In any case, the masons have made a deliberate decision to become less exclusive and “step out of the shadows” in the last 20 or so years, following a decline in membership. While new recruits once had to be recommended by an existing mason, now anyone can apply to the United Grand

Lodge of England, who will find a lodge that suits their needs.

In addition to lodges for different geographical areas, there are a number of lodges for interests, such as the lodge for classic car lovers, which is very charmingly called “Square Wheels”.

The decision to open up was made in an effort to combat the number of conspiracy theories about the masons exerting a sinister influence on society.

For example, Eric says, the myth that masons often get away with crimes because fellow members in the police let them off the hook. “Because we were behind a cloak of secrecy, people could say all sorts of things and we didn’t defend ourselves.”

The rituals and ceremonies, he insists, are “not a way of improving the world but improving yourself”, while Paul explains they “instil life lessons”, although not as an “instantaneous change”.



One of two armed guards

Instead, masons gradually acquire a “way of being” from each ritual “after having listened to it over a long period of time”.

“It definitely changes you,” he tells me, “It changes your outlook. It’s helped me with my confidence, my ability to speak in front of an audience. It’s been part of a process of growing up and becoming a much more rounded individual.”

Still, it’s difficult for him to convey precisely how, given he is forbidden from going into specifics with a non-mason. One direct quote from a ritual he is able to reveal to me is that they are intended to be “a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols”.

To find out more, I’d have to join. While Chingford Masonic Hall is one of relatively few in the country that is home to a “ladies lodge” for female masons, first accepted in this country at the start of the 20th century, they only meet a handful of times a year and are kept entirely separate from their male counterparts.

The only woman who has ever been inside the ceremonial room in Chingford during a ritual of the male masons, Eric says, is Florence, a guide dog.

That said, all hope is not lost when it comes to my chances of joining Happy Hainault. Throwing them what I had expected to be something of a curve ball, I ask about their policy on transgender men joining the masons.

To my surprise – and proving that they are serious about not letting politics through the door – they’re for it. “I’m sure it will come up in the future,” Morris tells me.

Advertisement

## LICENSING ACT 2003

Application to Grant a Premises Licence

I Ademola Ademolu, hereby give notice that I have applied for the new grant for a Premises Licence in respect of as follows:

- Black Pepper Restaurant and Lounge Ltd, 694 Lea Bridge Road London E10 6AW
- If granted the application will allow for the following licensable activities to take place: The sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises, Mon-Thurs and Sunday 16:00–23:00; Fri-Sat 16:00–00:00
- The provision of facilities for regulated entertainment, playing of recorded music: Mon-Thurs and Sunday 16:00–23:00; Fri-Sat 16:00–00:00

Any interested party or responsible authority may make representations on this application in writing to the Waltham Forest Licensing Section, Waltham Forest Council, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E7 4JF, or by email to: [licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk) by no later than **24th May 2023**.

The full application can be viewed at the above offices between 10.00am and 4.00pm Monday to Friday (except Bank Holidays) or at the Council’s website – [www.walthamforest.gov.uk](http://www.walthamforest.gov.uk)

IT IS AN OFFENCE knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with an application for which you may be liable to a fine of up to £5000 on summary conviction.

Date of Application: 27th April 2023



One of two armed guards



Advertisement

# SMALL JOURNEY BIG IMPACT



Recycling is closer  
than you think!



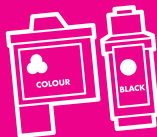
cables



small  
appliances



batteries



printer  
cartridges



mixed light  
bulbs



electricals



mobile  
phones



NORTH  
LONDON  
WASTE  
AUTHORITY



## HEALTH

# ‘Unfathomable’ cut planned to NHS staff budget



Credit Pixabay

by Josh Mellor,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**N**orth East London’s NHS is bracing itself for an “unfathomable” cut to its staffing budget over the next two years.

The administrative NHS body for the seven boroughs of North East London and the City

of London, an area with more than two million residents, has a combined total of 756 staff.

The annual staffing budget for NHS North East London (NHS NEL) is currently £38million. However, last month the government warned that this budget would be slashed by 30% in “real terms” by the 2025/26 financial year.

At a board meeting last

month, chair of NHS NEL Marie Gabriel said staff are “understandably concerned” about potential job losses but promised the board is committed to being “transparent, inclusive and supportive”.

A letter sent by NHS England’s chief officers in March insisted the cuts would be “significant but deliverable” and would ensure NHS NEL is at its “optimal size”.

North East London contains some of the most deprived areas in London, where residents have fewer GPs than the national average and hospitals with some of the country’s longest A&E wait times.

More than half of NHS NEL’s staff budget - £22.8m - is spent on finance, performance and “strategy and transformation”.

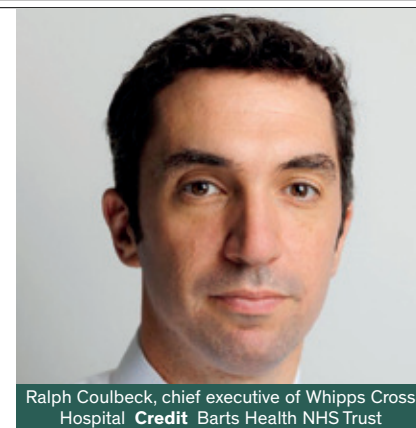
Phil Edwards, joint secretary of campaign group Save Our

NHS North East London, said news of the cuts was an “unfathomable” shock. He said: “It says in the letter from NHS England that money [saved by cutting costs] may well be directed into primary care but that is like robbing Peter to pay Paul.

“If they’re cutting running costs, one wonders what impact that’s going to have on the procurement process for GP services and all the things [NHS NEL] is responsible for.

“How are they going to carry out these responsibilities with a massive reduction which will have a massive impact on staff? This is quite dangerous... we’re facing the biggest crisis of GP provision we’ve ever faced.”

Neither NHS England nor the Department of Health and Social Care had responded to requests for comment at the time of writing.



Ralph Coulbeck, chief executive of Whipps Cross Hospital Credit Barts Health NHS Trust

## Whipps boss steps down for ‘career break’

by Josh Mellor,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**T**he chief executive of Whipps Cross Hospital is stepping down, only 18 months after being permanently appointed.

Hospital trust Barts Health – which runs Whipps Cross – announced Ralph Coulbeck had decided to take a “career break” but said he would remain in post until a replacement is found.

In a statement announcing his departure, Ralph said he is “sorry to be leaving” and thanked hospital staff for their “amazing hard work and support” during his tenure.

He wrote: “I am proud of how we have navigated a range of different pressures and challenges while focusing on our patients and revitalising our leadership team.

“We have also made progress for the longer term through the redevelopment programme and the recently agreed investment in a new academic centre.

“I am sorry to be leaving my role but I do so knowing that the hospital has the foundations in place for future success. The people at Whipps Cross make it a special place to work and it has been a privilege to be a part of this.”

A spokesperson for the hospital declined to comment on the reasons for his departure.

Shane DeGaris, group chief executive for Barts Health NHS Trust, said: “Ralph has done a fantastic job in steering Whipps Cross through the recovery period after the pandemic and in preparing the hospital for the challenges of the future.

“He is an extremely valued member of the group leadership team and has played an important part in our improvement journey, both in this role and previously as our group director of strategy. I will personally miss his insight and wisdom.

“However, I respect his decision to take a career break and on behalf of all of us wish him all the best for the future.”

# Charity for blind slams ‘dangerous’ bus stops

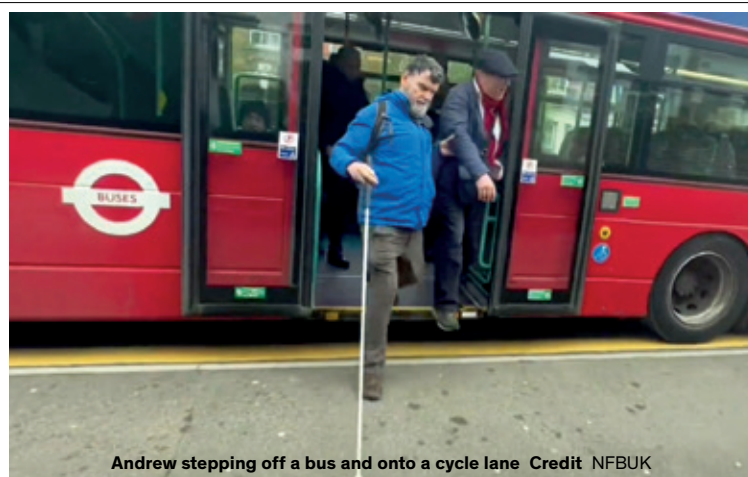
by Josh Mellor,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**A** charity for the blind has criticised Waltham Forest Council for installing “extremely dangerous” bus stops.

Andrew Hodgson, chair of the National Federation for the Blind UK (NFBUK), visited “shared-use” bus stops in Walthamstow last month, where a cycle lane passes between the stop and the road.

In one video filmed at a bus stop in Markhouse Road, Andrew, who is blind and uses a cane to walk, stepped off the bus and immediately onto a cycle lane.

After asking if he was still on the cycle lane and being told they had moved to the pavement, he added: “The demarcation between the pavement and the cycle lane is pathetic.



Andrew stepping off a bus and onto a cycle lane Credit NFBUK

It really is extremely dangerous.”

Andrew argues that bus stops where cycle lanes pass between the shelter and the road should be scrapped completely as they “ignore” the needs of pedestrians and disabled people.

However, Transport for London (TfL) supports the use of such stops as a way to keep cyclists safe from road traffic if alternative options are not possible.

Both stops were installed by Waltham Forest Council between 2017 and 2018 under the £27m Transport for London-funded Mini-Holland programme.

At the time, a blog post by Waltham Forest Cycling Campaign raised concerns they could create “conflict” between pedestrians and cyclists.

When contacted for comment, the council’s cabinet member for air quality and

climate action Clyde Loakes said vulnerable road users and active travellers have been “marginalised” by the last few decades of highway design.

He said: “Between 2017 and 2021 there were nine serious injuries to pedestrians with four fatalities at Lea Bridge Road, none of which involved cyclists. Over the same time, there were 14 serious injuries to cyclists.

“The biggest danger to vulnerable road users continues to be motor vehicles and that is where our focus needs to be – any injury or fatality is one too many. By prioritising the safety of people who walk or cycle we can help keep all road users safe.

“Waltham Forest will continue to put all vulnerable road users at the centre of our highways design, encourage residents and visitors to use active travel wherever possible, and learn from the places across the world that do it best.”



## HOUSING

# Homeless mum accused of lying to get council support

by Josh Mellor,  
Local Democracy Reporter

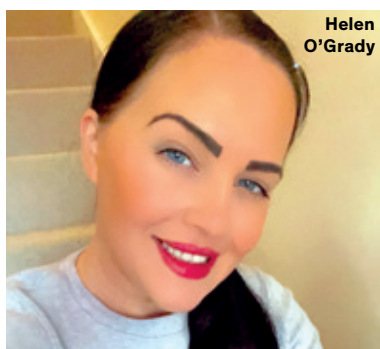
A homeless mum and her three children were threatened with eviction by Waltham Forest Council after its housing team mistakenly accused her of lying about her finances.

Helen O'Grady's family was made homeless by a "no-fault eviction" from their Chingford landlord in November last year and placed in emergency housing by the council.

After over a month bouncing between four different hostels and hotels, they were finally given more stable temporary accommodation, in a flat in Newham, in early January.

However, the family soon found themselves at risk of homelessness again when Waltham Forest's housing benefits team refused to approve rental payments for the flat.

The team accused Helen of "unlawfully" obtaining income support in 2021 and demanded



Helen O'Grady

The turmoil of it was too much, it made me ill."

Helen said she believes the problem with her benefits stemmed from a "system error" in 2021, which the council's benefits unit manager Samantha Cornelius apologised for after an investigation.

Evidence the benefits team demanded included three years of bank statements to scrutinise Helen's spending. She said: "It's just not OK to treat a family trying to live like this, they scrutinised every single item of evidence and every word I've used.

"They genuinely think I've got money stashed under my bed that I'm not declaring, are single mothers not allowed to have a car?

"They wanted two years MOT to look at its mileage, then there was another thing and another thing, they wanted my kids' bank statements... they even asked how I could afford takeaways!"

Waltham Forest Council has not responded to requests for comment on Helen's case.

that she hand over years of evidence about her finances. On 14th March, she received a "notice to quit" her flat within 28 days unless she found the money to cover several weeks of rent at once.

Thankfully, with the help of Waltham Forest Housing Action Network, Helen was able to convince the council to reinstate her rental payments last month and cancel the eviction.

She told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: "I was homeless, given a home, then potentially homeless again, all while suffering with my mental health and [caring for my] kids.

## Council to keep all money from Right to Buy sales for two years

Waltham Forest Council will keep 100% of money raised by selling council homes through the Right to Buy scheme for two years.

The government recently announced councils across the country will keep all income from sales in this and last financial year, a temporary change it hopes will boost the number of social homes.

The Right to Buy scheme allows council tenants to purchase their home at a discount, which increases up to a maximum of £127,940 in London, depending on how long they have lived there.

Since Right to Buy was introduced in the early 1980s, it has raised more than £47billion from sales but, according to John Perry from the Chartered Institute of Housing, it is "very unlikely" that "more than half" of this money was given back to councils to pay for new social housing.

In the 16 years from the 2006/07 financial year until 2021/22, 806 Waltham Forest Council homes were purchased

through Right to Buy, an average of around 50 each year.

However, in the same 16-year period, the council was only able to buy or start building 378 council homes with the portion of the money it received from these sales.

Responding to the announcement, the council's cabinet member for housing Ahsan Khan said: "[This] will help us to build more much-needed homes for social rent and allow people who have grown up in Waltham Forest and whose friends and families are based here to have the chance to enjoy a high-quality, decently priced home.

"We already have plans to construct 1,000 new social rent properties over the next few years.

"In light of this announcement, we have scheduled an additional session of our Affordable Housing Commission to examine the impact it will have locally.

"We are determined to build the right homes in the right areas and give local families more opportunity to have a place to call their own."

In partnership with:



Countryside  
Partnerships

The College of  
Haringey, Enfield  
and North East London



part of  
Capital City  
College Group



YOU  
HAVE  
IT IN  
YOU



## Enfield Construction Skills Academy

Get into the construction industry!

- Electrical Installation
- Decorating
- Painting
- Bricklaying
- Plumbing
- Carpentry

FIND OUT MORE

capitalccg.ac.uk/skills-academies/enfield  
020 8442 3055 | courseinfo@conel.ac.uk





## ARTS & CULTURE

# Soho Theatre Walthamstow to 'soft launch' in November

by Victoria Munro



Soho Theatre Walthamstow will have a "soft launch" this November, followed by a grand opening in February. Work renovating the building in Hoe Street, a project that first took shape in 2017, is expected to finish this autumn.

A range of events aimed at the community will take place from November to January, before the formal opening of the theatre brings the start of the official programme of events.

Since Waltham Forest Council first drew up a business case for the project, both the expected benefit and the cost of refurbishing the old EMD cinema have increased by millions of pounds.

In 2017, the council expected the theatre to boost the local economy by anywhere from £34million to £52m in its first decade. However, more recent estimates now place its initial "economic impact" between £46m to £61m.

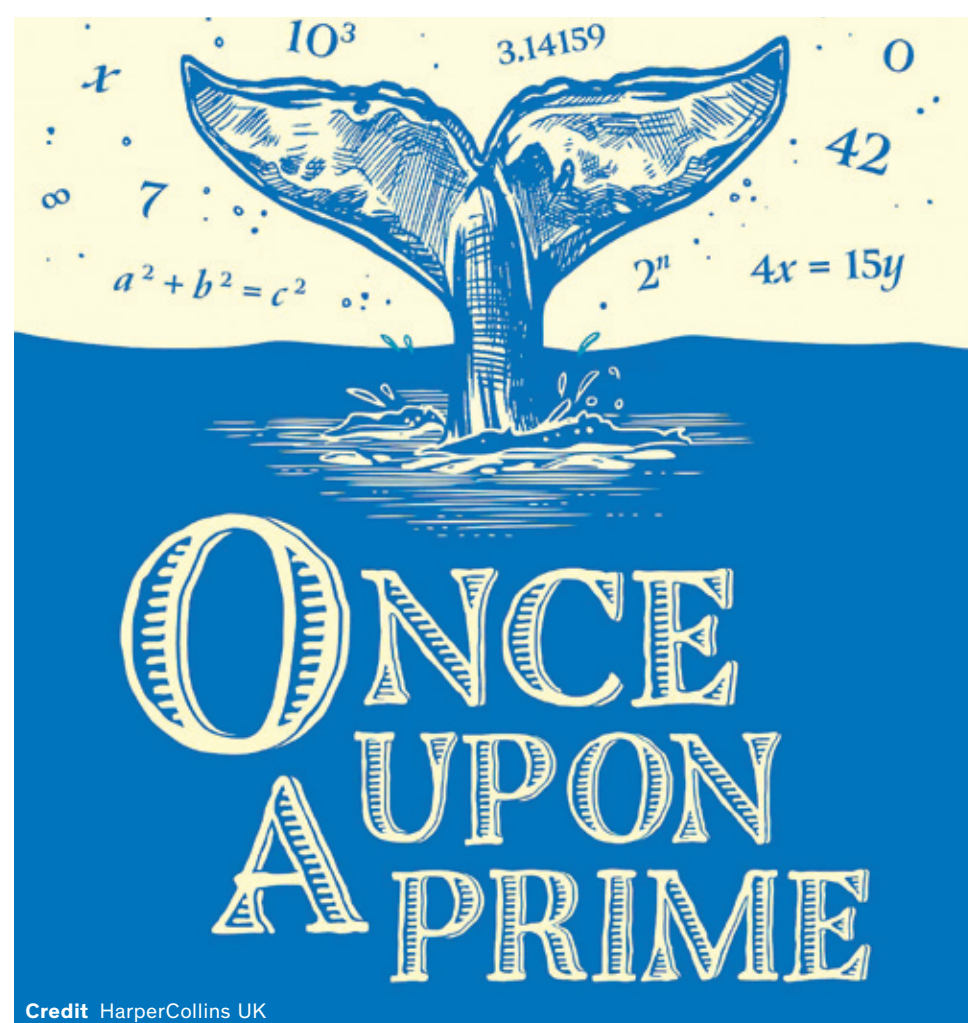
While this boost comes as good news, especially as the theatre is the core of the council's vision for Walthamstow to become a "cultural quarter", it has unfortunately been accompanied by an increase in the project's cost over the same period from £19.95m to £30m.

A report prepared for council leaders this week explained this cost increase is partly due to issues discovered in the building during construction, including "asbestos, heritage-related matters and structural issues". Furthermore, "market conditions for the construction sector remain challenging" due to inflation and the impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit, while "several sub-contractors working on the project have gone into administration".

Responding to a request for comment, co-deputy leader of the council Ahsan Khan conceded the "increased economic benefit is not proportional to the increase of the project cost" but insisted it "still represents value for money".

The recent report stated that the decision to invest in restoring the listed building "has formed the foundation for a clear direction of travel for the borough", which will entail using "culture and creativity" to "deliver economic growth, jobs, local area improvements and improved quality of life for residents".

It also credits the investment with helping to attract the University of Portsmouth to open a branch in the borough, Waltham Forest's first ever university campus, and £17m from the government's Levelling Up Fund.



## Review: Once Upon a Prime by Professor Sarah Hart

*Sarah Fairbairn reviews a "glorious" book by a Walthamstow maths professor*

**O**nce Upon A Prime, the just-released exploration of maths and literature by Professor Sarah Hart, is a book that absolutely fizzles with its author's enthusiasm. From the very first pages, it is clear this is a book for anyone who gets excited discovering new ways of looking at things. Hart claims "mathematics... is the key to an entirely different perspective on literature" and her argument – which touches on a host of well-loved and well-read titles, linking them together with a keen interest and barely containable joy – is a true revelation.

Maths, as the book explains, has only recently been deemed a science, after hundreds of years when it was considered a liberal art. Our forebears considered maths a way of distilling their view of the world in much the same way as poetry or painting; indeed Einstein once described maths as the "poetry of logical ideas". It thus follows that authors would readily draw on mathematical concepts in their art, assuming a level of fluency in their readers that might surprise a modern-day audience. The works of Tolstoy, Eliot, Joyce, Poe and Swift all feature maths-based jokes that would have been easily recognisable in their day but fly invisibly over the heads

of unsuspecting readers today.

Thankfully, Sarah Hart's position as Professor of Geometry at Gresham College in London – notably the first woman to hold the role since its creation in 1597 – means she is more than equipped to clue the modern public in. Her experience as an educator, making complicated ideas as accessible as possible, is obvious from the deftness and clarity of her writing and the fact even simple explanations are backed up by examples and diagrams. If, like me, you are a little less fluent in quadratics than you were 20 years ago, you'll still find yourself able to follow the theatre trees, fractal pictures and cycloids without wanting to go hide under the kitchen table.

Overall, *Once Upon A Prime* is a glorious example of non-fiction writing. Playful, learned and wide-ranging, it expertly draws together a vast array of sources and concepts and lays them out for the reader in a way that is both authoritative and unpretentious. Sarah Hart wears lightly the huge amount of biographical research and reading that must have gone into such a well-informed book, pulling out only the juiciest details, the most enlightening facets and the most gleeful discoveries for her reader to enjoy.

*Once Upon a Prime* is available in hardback for £16.99.

Advertisement



# SPARKLE WALK

## FRIDAY 19 MAY 2023



10k evening walk in Woodford, 6.00pm start.  
Help raise funds for seriously ill children.

[havenhouse.org.uk/sparklewalk2023](https://havenhouse.org.uk/sparklewalk2023)

**BOOK NOW**






Charity Number: 1044296



Advertisement

Pocket Living

Waltham Forest

# First time buyers: we offer pockets of hope.

Own 100% of your home at a  
20% discount to the local market  
in Waltham Forest.

One and two-bed discounted homes.  
Prices from £274,000 at Osier Way E10, Leyton.  
Register now for Forest Road E17, Walthamstow.

pocket

Register now  
[pocketliving.com](https://pocketliving.com)



AROUND THE BOROUGH

WALTHAMSTOW

Nurse honoured for Covid-19 work



Mohammad Soobhun Credit NELFT

A community nurse from Walthamstow has won an award for working “tirelessly” to protect adults with learning disabilities from Covid-19. Mohammad Soobhun, 39, works for the Community

Learning Disability Team at North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), the NHS trust that provides mental health care and community services across North East London. Throughout the pandemic, the father-of-two went “above

and beyond” to ensure patients who could not attend vaccination centres were not left behind when it came to protection from the potentially deadly virus. Mohammad and his team offered to vaccinate patients in their homes or in schools and, to honour his work, he recently won a Special Recognition award at NELFT’s Make a Difference Awards. Mohammad said: “I’m humbled to be recognised for service during the pandemic and I take pride in having successfully advocated for people with learning disabilities during an extremely difficult time. “It wasn’t just me though, it was a truly collaborative effort, and my team is absolutely committed to reducing health inequalities and delivering the best care for the people we serve.” Jacqui Van Rossum, NELFT acting chief executive, added: “Mohammad’s passion for his work is an inspiration, not only to his colleagues but also to the wider community. His dedication and expertise have truly made a difference to our patients.”

LEYTONSTONE

Risky roof at leisure centre needs replacing

Waltham Forest Council is set to spend millions replacing the risky roof at Leytonstone Leisure Centre after potentially dangerous concrete was discovered last year. In February last year, a survey discovered Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in parts of the roof and the building was temporarily shut. RAAC is a lightweight form of concrete with a limited lifespan that has been known to collapse with little to no warning, meaning the current roof poses a “known significant risk”. The following month, the council funded “urgent works to prop up sections of the roof structure to make the leisure centre safe” so it could reopen. However, given this interim measure requires twice monthly inspections, council leaders now plan to spend a little over £3million replacing the roof entirely. A report prepared for a meeting



Leytonstone Leisure Centre Credit Google Streetview

of council leaders last month stated the new roof should last “at least 25 years” and will likely be installed in phases to avoid shutting the centre down. Council leaders approved the preferred option for the project, meaning there will be a “rolling phased closure of parts of the cen-

tre to allow works to take place”, estimated to take a year in total. The report adds: “Some sections of the centre will not require closure. Temporary changing facilities will be provided within the centre and the gym will be temporarily relocated to another area.”

LEYTON

Damaged library to reopen with ‘new look’

Leyton Library is set to reopen this month with a “new look”, almost half a year after it shut down for repairs. The library in the High Road closed “indefinitely” on 4th December after a flood damaged the building’s ceilings and floors. Speaking in January, the council’s cabinet member for public services Paul Douglas said that the “safety and comfort of visitors and staff” is the council’s “top priority”, adding there was a “book delivery service available” for residents unable to travel to other libraries. In an update last month, a council spokesperson confirmed

that the council finally plans to reopen the building to the public in May. They wrote: “We would like to apologise for the continued inconvenience and disruption that this has caused to residents. “We’re working tirelessly on a new look for the library and[...] really appreciate your patience.” The council’s webpage for the library currently directs residents to their nearest alternatives in Lea Bridge and Leytonstone. Those looking for Parking Visitor Scratchcards for Leyton postcodes are able to get them from Leytonstone Library.

CHINGFORD

Restaurant in listed pub building shuts

A chain restaurant in a listed building in Chingford abruptly shut down last month, with the company citing a sharp rise in costs. On 24th April, Italian restaurant company Prezzo announced it would shut down 46 loss-making branches, including the restaurant in The Green. A Prezzo spokesperson said the company’s utility bills had more than doubled in the last year, while the price of spaghetti had risen by 40%. However, many locals did not mourn the loss, with some seeing it as an opportunity for the listed building, built in 1898, to return to its original use as a pub called The Bull and Crown. Responding to the news on a public Facebook group, Sharma Hussein wrote: “I’ve worked as a Chingford cabbie for the last three years and I’ve never seen anyone going to that restaurant.” Another resident, Adam Roper, wrote: “Turn it back into a pub and a restaurant upstairs. Let’s go back to the good old days.”

Chingford Prezzo Credit Edwardx/Wikimedia



The closure of 46 Prezzo branches has put 810 workers at the risk of redundancy and comes only two years after the group shut 22 other branches, axing 216 jobs. The chain will now have 97 restaurants remaining, with around 2,000 staff. Dean Challenger, chief executive of Prezzo, said: “The cost-of-living crisis, the changing face of the high street and soaring inflation has made it impossible to keep all our restaurants operating profitably. “We believe the tough decisions we are making today will ensure Prezzo can continue serving communities with high-quality, accessible Italian-inspired meals for many more years to come.”



## SPORT

Leyton Orient celebrate their promotion  
Credit Simon O'Connor



# Deserved promotion for Leyton Orient

by Phil Veasey

**W**hen you're an Orient fan, it can sometimes seem like there are more lows than highs but maybe part of the magic of following the club is learning how to endure the hard times and navigate the rollercoaster ride that supporting the Os so often becomes. Thankfully, our devotion paid off spectacularly last month, when the team won promotion to League One.

Amid the celebrations, my mind raced back to a fateful day on 15th August in 2017. I was walking to the nearby station from Bromley FC, where we had suffered a 6-1 hammering on a dreadful plastic pitch. It was our first season in the National League.

Fearing another relegation, I was struggling to remember what the next league down was even called when I passed two fellow fans, who asked me if this was the all-time Orient low. I optimistically replied that we were well past that nadir. Before the start of the season, the club had had no players at all, whereas now we had new caring owners. Martin Ling, the Director of Football, had assembled a threadbare squad

with a sprinkling of new stars to be – Macauley Bonne, Dan Happe – and older experienced heads – such as Jobi McAnuff, Josh Coulson and Craig Clay. The fact that we were even out there playing Bromley was good enough for me.

As it happened, my fears turned out to be unfounded, thanks to the arrival of new manager Justin Edinburgh mid-way through the season. At the end of his first match – a draining 1-nil defeat to Solihull Moors – he told the players in frank terms: “I am not here for the sake of it, I am here for the memories!” In the end, he made more memories than we could ever imagine, shepherding the Os to victory in the National League in the next season, ahead of the monied and highly fancied Salford City.

Tragically, the club lost Edinburgh before a ball had even been kicked in the 19/20 season and his death arguably took this wonderful close-knit club 18 months to grieve. He had been entirely central to the club's rise and was loved by players and fans alike.

The 21/22 season was sluggish but, as it drew to a close, lightning struck again with

the arrival of current manager Richie Wellens. Using virtually the same band of players that he inherited, plus inspired loanees, his direction saw Orient quickly prosper, entering this current season with ambitions for a play-off place.

It turned out our ambitions were too low! The team got off to a flyer – earning 28 points from the first 30 – and never looked back. Wellens's relentless march towards promotion was punctuated with a series of wonder goals and sell-out crowds. Of course there was the odd Orient wobble but the true believers wouldn't want it any other way! Wellens had created the best team in the league by far and what a season we have witnessed. A team playing neat and exciting football with standout games like the 3-nil home demolition of Bradford City and an imperious away victory at Salford, with George Moncur scoring a breath-taking team goal!

Like Edinburgh, Wellens constantly talks about making memories and engaging the fans. The only question remaining now is where can he take us next, and what new memories can he thrillingly unleash? Come on Orient!

## Play-offs beckon for Stow

by David O'Driscoll

**W**althamstow FC have cemented their place in the play-offs this season, having clawed their way up from 13th place in the league since December.

While there are a number of reasons for this transformation in their fortunes, some credit is rightly owed to centre forward Duncan Culley, who joined the Stow in January. He has been the focal point of the team's attacks since and, most importantly, a dab hand when it comes to launching the ball into the back of the net, having scored six times.

It's hard not to notice Culley from the terraces, both because of his strength at holding the ball and the size of his lungs. Fans can often hear his rich Welsh accent demanding the ball and he appears to show real leadership in the team. Confidence is a key trait for any forward and Culley demonstrated it in spades during a recent tense game against Kempton Rovers.

With the score at 2-2, the Stow were awarded a penalty that was hotly disputed by Kempton's players, who even tried to scrub out the penalty spot and delayed Culley taking his shot for over five minutes. A lesser player would have been understandably rattled but he showed great composure and scored with ease, hitting the ball with real power after only a very short run up.

The 34-year-old has had an unconventional career path for a footballer, having come to the sport later in life after a childhood playing rugby.

He told me: “I only started playing seriously when I was 24 and out working in Los Angeles. A coach saw something in me and I was invited to a trial for the Los Angeles Galaxy club.”

Culley ended up playing for the reserve team at the same time that David Beckham was playing for the main squad, giving him a front-row seat to watch the football legend train. His time at Galaxy attracted a lot of interest from clubs when he returned to England and he most recently tasted success playing for Bracknell Town FC, who won their league.

Culley hopes to be part of a similar victory for his new team. He said: “It's been a very hard-fought journey to this point but the ‘never say die’ attitude has been apparent since I joined. It is interesting to think how we would have fared in the league if this team had been together from the start.”

However, he is more than aware that the team “cannot afford to rest on [their] laurels”, adding: “We will need to approach the final three games, as well as the playoffs, in the same way we've taken every game so far: 90 minutes at a time.”

“With the talent we have in the squad, if we do that we stand a great chance of going up and giving the club and its incredible fans the celebrations they deserve. They have been absolutely amazing, and we will push to the very end to secure promotion.”

“We hope as many people as possible will support us over the next few weeks as it makes such a difference – Up The ‘Stow!’”

Duncan Culley  
Credit Andrzej Perkins







# WE NEED YOUR HELP

## WE ARE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE WHO CAN HELP SUPPORT US TO PRODUCE MORE HIGH-QUALITY LOCAL JOURNALISM IN WALTHAM FOREST

- We have NO shareholders
- We have NO wealthy backers
- We are run by a small but dedicated team as part of a not-for-profit community interest company
- We hold authority to account, expose scandals, highlight inequality, promote good causes, and provide a platform for local people
- Every penny of income from the Echo helps us deliver more journalism in Waltham Forest
- The paper costs nearly £6,000 per month to produce and distribute, but monthly income is under £5,000 currently
- We currently have 293 supporters who contribute around 25% of our income, but we need more!

Can you help us? Our membership scheme has many different options depending on your ability to contribute. Rewards include having a copy of the paper posted to you every month. Local businesses and charities can also sign up and access discounts on advertising.

Find out more at: [walthamforestecho.co.uk/membership](http://walthamforestecho.co.uk/membership)

## OUR CURRENT MEMBERS

Darrel Hunneybell, David Hamilton, Chris Lemin, David Gardiner, Jean Duggleby, Michael Grimshaw, Dexter Coles, Roland Karthaus, Graham Millington, Renetta Neal, Graham Larkbey, Paul Schneider, Deri Jones, Scott Davies, Madeleine Munday, Ian Cadogan, Lee Mitchell, Pat Stannard, Paul Scaife, Jon Dalladay, David McDade, Community Counts UK, Saradadevii Hull-Jurkovic, Claire Weiss, (Alfred) George Clarke, Ben Marlow, Creative Works, Carmen Trachenko, Transition Leytonstone, Clem Cowton, Linda Ridgers-Waite, Stephanie Waterman Hugh Grant Peterkin, Alke Schmidt, Keith Segal, Daniel Stanley, Sarah Jones, Bob Sullivan, Jo Pinney, Andrew Diamond, Julian Richards, James Wragg, Doreen Harding, Miranda Grell, Jawed Akhtar, Jean Anderson, Katherine Green, Shona Mackintosh, Laonikos Psimikakis, Joanna Moncrieff, Steve Cushion, Namir Shabibi, Andrew Boyd, Florent Lassalle, The Digital Story Company, Lora Parkes, Sarah McCulloch, Amy Rixon, Holly Wilkins, Steve Roffey, Ruth Goldsmith, Kate Bohdanowicz, Kizzy Gardiner, Louis Wallinger, Peter Brennan, Paul Perkins and Lesley Perkins, Anne McKenna, Clare Thomas, Tom Thompson, Barbara Korner, Tamsin Green, Lucy Birchenough, Sam Brewster, Carolyn Difalco, Jonathan Weymer, Miriam Ceribelli, Maura Wilding, Steven Scorer, Paul Dart, Allyiah Walcott, Philip Hall, Debra Antwi, Amer Saad, Eduardo Regalado, Andrew Johns, Robert Bell, Claudia Hillaire, Sylvia Sullivan, Mike Lanchin, Ben Holt, Martin Goodsell, Jo Fletcher, Darren Kneller, Salaheddin AbuEin, George T Goodchild, William Slater, Adam Shone, Jill Hasler, Paul Clements, Alexandra Martinelli, Thomas Ableman, Matt Bennett, Wendy Wood, Gary Anderson, Jamie Smyth, John Hugill, Victoria Crabb, Richard Hughes, Michael Campbell, Bryony Forde, Matthew Rodriguez, Dara Maguire, Carole Sturdy, Alex Wilson, Richard Campbell, Ben Plant, Rossalyn Warren, Saskia Rombach, Gail Courtney, Ruth Kosminsky, Ryan de Ste Croix, Chris Radley, Louisa Ackermann, John Field, Ollie Daw, Justin Tilley, Carl Antbring, Felicity Hall, Tristan Moyle, Mary Seabrook, Joyce Quarrie, Simon Cook, Flora Fyfe-Graham, Elaine Hocter, Jennifer Crampton, James Mayne, Rob Plant, Ciaran O'Connor, Peter Baker, Tanja Nielsen, Darren Lawrence, Emily Emmott, Roger Huddle, Dan Browne, Sophy Harper, Adrian Stannard, Lily Nelson, Sonia Fletcher, Terence Button-Sands, Ellie Dawes, Derrick Hibbett, Justina Forristal, David Cato, Anne Strudwick, Mark Brown, Philip Wray, Nick Dovey, Christina Carè, Jon Parker-Dean, Sophie & John deGraft-Johnson, Rhod Morgan, Steve Bloomfield, Abigail Ross, Ruth Parmessur, Albert Carter-Phillips, Mary Burnett, Simon Thompson, Alistair Scott, Niklas Friedberg, Angie Tilley, Helen Porter, Sybil Ritten, Rob Skipwith, James Baines, Graham Norman, Alex Maws, Sharon Matthews, Rosio Cafarelli, John Gilbert, Roy Sutton, Matt Button, Karen Ruddock, Fatemah Abidi, Alistair Scott, Jane Tilson, Liam Jones, Sarah Jones, Hilda Varley, Emily Parsonage, Elisa Williams, Monica Westin, Lisa Lisker, Jason Halverson, Alex Lee, Lloyd Purnell, Katherine Stokes, Catherine Tildesley Mears, Richard Thompson, Megan Cupid and Ed Torpey, Jonny Davies, Carolyn Axtell, pam williams, Esther Neslen, Cranston Watts, Rachael Castell, Hewing Wittare, Martin Riches, Daniel Garay, Roland Zell, David Boote, Manuel Arroyo-Kalin, Deborah Nash, Steve Lambert, Helen Weighell, Ines Nastali, Lydia Noon, Mark and Laura McCormack, Alis Templeton, Mary Logan, Claire Lee Shepherd, Thomas Greenhill, Marisa Takom, Annie Constable, Tom Penn, Mette Isaksen, Tony Lawlor, Joseph Clift, Akhtarul Haque, Jane McCormick, Jon Seymour Jr., Scott Rodgers, Linda Green, Claire Hambleton, Clive Power, Amy Keegan, Lesley Finlayson, Lewis Robinson, Matthew Wyatt, David O'Driscoll, Andrew Cole, Paul Gasson, Tom Belger, Irena Chudzio, Angela Shek, John Leeming, Mike Bartlett, Fiona Johnson, Delroy Peters, Anoushka Huntington-Bowles, Natasha McFadzean, Louise Krzan, Daniel Bowman, Diana Wellings, Richard Bagley, Robert Gay, Michael Parker, Caramel Quin, david mcdade, Aisha Doherty, Pamela Ojideagu, Laurence Palfreyman, Kenneth Driscoll, WILLMA (WILLMA TEAM), Abigail Dyer, Tiffany-Louise Bird, Roland Rance, Rob Watson, Albert Carter Phillips, Sarah Fairbairn, Abigail Woodman, Fred Harrison, Peter O'Kane, Tony Lobo, Tiffany-Louise Bird, Andrew Prescott, Daniel Demmel, Louise Sheppey, Ros Kane, Linda Bean, James Riley.

