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WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free
Aug 2023, N° 101

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Waltham Forest lags behind on dental visits for children in care

by Marco Marcelline

Children in Waltham Forest's care are the least likely in London to have seen a dentist for the past two years in a row.

According to data published by the Department for Education (DfE) Waltham Forest was the worst-performing borough in London for looked-after children's dental visits in 2020/21, and in 2021/22.

Just twelve (6%) and 33 (15%) of looked after children in the borough saw a dentist in 2020/21, and 2021/22 respectively. There is a statutory requirement that children being looked after by the council have their teeth checked by a dentist once a year.

The statistic means Waltham Forest is significantly under-performing compared to other London boroughs. 39% of looked after children saw a dentist last year in Croydon, which ranked as the second-worst performing London local authority, while 93% of looked after children in Kingston upon Thames, the best-performing London borough, saw a dentist in 2021/22.

When contacted for comment, Waltham Forest Council claimed that the latest 2021/22 figure for looked-after children was "incorrect as a result of under-reporting due to human error".

The council refused to comment when asked if the 2020/21 figure was also incorrect and did not respond to requests for updated or corrected 2020/21



Credit MM Dental via Pexels

or 2021/22 figures, except for stating that in June 2023 "43.96%" of looked-after children had their teeth checked by a dentist. This still falls below the 71% average for London boroughs reported by the DfE in their latest (2021–22) published report.

Kizzy Gardiner, the council's cabinet member for children and young people, said: "The figure supplied to the Department for Education was incorrect, as a result of under-reporting due to human error. This is an issue that we were aware of and have been working hard to resolve."

Cllr Gardiner added: "Our first priority is, and always will be, the health and wellbeing of our looked-after children and young people, and this includes their dental care."

"Since this report was published, we have reviewed our data against that held by the NHS and are pleased to report that from 2023/24 we expect to see them showing an accurate report, with the number of dental check-ups for our looked after children among the best in the capital."

In 2019/20, DfE data shows 94% of looked-after children

in the borough saw a dentist. Meanwhile, House of Commons data has revealed that the borough performed below England-wide averages for the amount of Waltham Forest children (35.5%) and adults (33.7%) who had seen a dentist last year.

NHS North East London, which received the delegated responsibility for the commissioning of NHS dentistry services from NHS England in April 2023, told the *Echo*: "We are committed to ensuring everyone in Waltham Forest can access high-quality dental care; this

includes looked after children."

The spokesperson added: "We acknowledge that some people have found it difficult to register with a dentist and we are currently considering a number of approaches to improve access for patients in the borough and more widely across north-east London."

The British Dental Association (BDA) cited the much-maligned NHS dental contract as a possible reason for the low figures. The dental contract effectively places a cap on the number of treatments that dentists can provide, as once they reach their contractual target, dentists aren't paid for additional treatments. The BDA also pointed to "failure" by successive governments "to fund NHS dentistry to meet the needs of the population" while adding that the lack of a national prevention programme in England (like in Wales and Scotland) "doesn't help".

The Liberal Democrat parliamentary spokesperson for Leyton and Wanstead, Tara Copeland, called the DfE figures "deeply concerning" and said they were evidence of "children in care in Waltham Forest" being "sorely let down" by the council.

Copeland continued: "The NHS has lost almost 700 dentists in the last year, however, the government's poor performance cannot explain why Waltham Forest lags behind other local councils. We urge Waltham Forest's newly installed portfolio holder for children and young people to get to grips with this as a matter of urgency."

NEWS

Montague Road Estate tenants accuse council of 'mismanaged' refurbishment

The residents have been effectively living in a work site since 2019

by Josh Mellor,
Local Democracy Reporter

Tenants of a Leytonstone estate have accused Waltham Forest Council of wasting millions on a “badly mismanaged” building improvements programme that remains mostly incomplete almost four years after work began.

Since 2019, residents of Fred Wigg and John Walsh towers, in Leytonstone’s Montague Road Estate, have been living amid a refurbishment and building safety project with an original budget of £20million.

According to the most recent budgets, at least £4m has been spent on new kitchens and bathrooms, a communal heating system, sprinklers, lift improvements and new fire doors.

However, almost four years after starting, much of the work remains incomplete and, earlier this year, the council secretly began considering halting the refurbishments in favour of “comprehensive redevelopment” of the estate.

Work by Morgan Sindall on upgrading kitchens and bathrooms in the estate’s 225 flats “paused” more than a year ago – with about 20 complete – after tenants raised concerns about the quality and design.

The towers’ tenants and residents association (TRA) has said that the council “failed to act” to reduce spiralling costs, which it claims



have now jumped to “circa £35m”.

In a statement to the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS), the TRA said: “In spring 2023 [Waltham Forest Council] had promised to re-tender the badly mismanaged improvement contract after costs began to seriously over-run.

“First works were badly done if at all, now the council has junked the revised improvement works schedule to look at an option which would take years to complete.”

The TRA added that the 20 kitchen upgrades took “months” when they should have taken weeks and that many residents felt “unsure” after seeing a completed flat.

Concerns raised by the TRA included lowering the flats’ ceilings, replacing solid walls with plasterboard, weak heating and hot water, “haphazard” scheduling of works and smoke detectors that are triggered “randomly”.

The council denies the TRA’s

claim that it is in a cost dispute with Morgan Sindall.

However, in a sign of concerns about the council’s housing team managing the works, responsibility has now been given to the regeneration team.

According to the most recently shared budget for works on the estate, between May and August 2021, the cost of refurbishing the small council-flat bathrooms and kitchens doubled to £6m – about £27,000 per flat.

The council has blamed unfinished sprinkler systems running through tenants’ flats on issues with getting “access” to every flat.

Waltham Forest Town Hall, which has spent a decade deciding the future of the estate, again appeared to change its mind about spending further money on the estate earlier this year.

The council secretly sent out a “tender opportunity” for a planning consultant who could advise on the best “future investment

plans” for the estate.

In the advert, which the LDRS later found on a public tender website, the council said it had already appointed an architect to “explore capacity” for more homes to be built on the site due to rising costs.

It added that the consultant should look at three options: the “minimum”, a major refurbishment with a possible “decant” of residents or comprehensive redevelopment with an “appropriate” relocation programme.

The TRA has called comprehensive redevelopment the “most expensive” and least tenant-friendly option.

Last month, the council’s director of place Joe Garrod wrote to residents of the towers to say that building safety improvements to the outside of the buildings will continue “as planned”.

Fire safety installations such as sprinkler systems, which remain incomplete three years after work started, are also “progressing”, he added.

A spokesperson for Morgan Sindall Property Services said: “There is no suggestion of any criticism of our workmanship.

Ahsan Khan, deputy leader admitted that Morgan Sindall’s kitchen and bathroom upgrades had stopped after hearing residents’ “feedback”.

He added: “In parallel with the building safety upgrades, the council is exploring options to invest in the estate and improve it further for residents.”

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

by Marco Marcelline

I’m delighted to say that this issue, the *Echo*’s 101st, is my first as editor. Having grown up and spent the entirety of my childhood in Newham, just a stone’s throw away, I fondly remember running rampant with my sister in the Leytonstone McDonald’s play area, losing my mum a million times in the Tesco next door, skating with my friends at

the Lee Valley Ice Centre, and cycling through Epping Forest with my dad. Starting this job has meant happily returning to East London after many years away, and it’s a pleasure to both reconnect with and report on areas I know well.

I follow in the footsteps of the amazing Victoria Munro, Elizabeth Atkin, James Cracknell, and David Floyd, who have all worked diligently to provide

Waltham Forest residents with the rigorous local journalism that is so sorely needed today. It is my steadfast mission to continue that excellent work with the help of Josh Mellor, our intrepid Local Democracy Reporter.

Amid a housing shortage and cost of living crisis that is battering the lives of most people, there is a lot to frown about. But it can be easy to forget that there’s also good

things, and good people out there too. In fact, our borough is teeming with both. As editor, I plan to thoroughly hold those in power to account while still managing to draw out the magic of this exciting, diverse and culturally rich place.

I hope you enjoy Issue 101.

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FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

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Publisher

David Floyd

Editor

Marco Marcelline

Designer

Jonathan Duncan

Head of Advertising

Klaudia Kiss

Local Democracy

Reporter

Josh Mellor

Contributors

Lindsay Collier, Amanda Connolly, Angry Dan, David O’Driscoll, Jo Robinson, Nancy Taaffe

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

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

Advertising

Call 07732 000430

Email klaudia@socialspider.com

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NEWS

Walthamstow cinema owed council ‘significant’ deferred rent

Empire Cinema CEO Justin Ribbons said his company failed to get the council to indefinitely suspend rent for Covid-19 related closures

by Marco Marcelline

The boss of Empire Cinemas said the now shuttered Walthamstow cinema owed a “significant” amount of deferred rent to Waltham Forest Council that administrators refused to cover.

The cinema chain fell into administration on 7th July and 27 employees at the Walthamstow site were made redundant with immediate effect.

Commenting on LinkedIn, the cinema group’s chief executive Justin Ribbons said that the site carries a “significant” deferred rent obligation to Waltham Forest Council and that the council had not been persuaded to indefinitely suspend it when the cinema was forced to close during Covid. The council owns the building the cinema operated in.

Ribbons made the claims in response to a post by a former employee at the Walthamstow cinema, Peter Amey, who had been its assistant general manager. Amey had complained about the no-notice nature of the redundancies and lack of communication from head office.

Ribbons stated that the cinema group’s administrators BDO would not accept the Walthamstow site as they “are unable to trade at a loss”.

Ribbons explained: “I have fought for a long time to keep the Walthamstow cinema open and trading since Covid. When we had to bring in BDO as administrators each site was looked at carefully to see if it could continue to trade.” Ribbons added that he had “argued forcefully” that Empire Walthamstow should continue to trade and that the redundancy of the team at Walthamstow is “tragic”.

It’s not clear if the rent was ever paid to the council or not. Neither Empire nor BDO, the cinema group’s administrators, returned requests for comment.

Grace Williams, leader of the council, confirmed to the *Echo* that the local authority deferred Empire Walthamstow’s rent obligations when the venue was forced to shut during the first Covid lockdown in March 2020. The *Echo* asked the council when it lifted the rent deferral and why it declined to indefinitely suspend the rent but did not receive a response.

The *Echo* additionally asked the council whether it suspended rent for any businesses in the borough as a result of Covid-related lockdowns and restrictions but did not



receive a response in time for publication.

According to Cllr Williams, the council is currently “looking at options” to bring the cinema space back into use “as soon as possible to benefit the local community.”

During the pandemic, Empire Cinemas Group was able to apply for the government furlough scheme, and was eligible for the Retail, Hospitality and Relief Scheme that reduced business rates bills by 50%.

“Waltham Forest deferred Empire’s rent when the venue shut during Covid”

Speaking earlier via a press release, Ribbons said the reason to close the cinema was because of an “extremely challenging” operating environment and a Covid related income decline.

Six of the company’s 14 cinemas ceased operations on 7th July. Other than Walthamstow, these were Bishop’s Stortford, Catterick Garrison, Sunderland, Swindon, and Wigan. The remaining Empire Cinemas in Birmingham, Clydebank, High Wycombe, Ipswich and Sutton, as well as the two Tivoli sites in Bath and Cheltenham, have continued to trade.

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FEATURES

Walthamstow's got talent

A classic fade or classical? Meet the barber who can do both

by Marco Marcelline

Walk down Walthamstow High Street during the day and, if you're lucky, you might be blessed with the graceful sound of a fine-tuned violin streaming through the window of Mozart, a rather appropriately named barber's shop near St James Street.

Pop your head in, as I did one muggy July afternoon, and you may also be treated to a mini-concerto – spanning from traditional Kurdish music to classic Mozart – by Alan, a barber who's been working at the shop for just over three years. As soft jazz plays over the markedly less therapeutic sound of hair clippers, he begins to unfurl his life story.

The 28-year-old came to London from his small Iraqi hometown in 2016, leaving behind a country ravaged by war and conflict at the hands of foreign forces and now ISIS.

He grew up around music. His father, for example, plays the baglama, a pear-shaped seven-stringed instrument that popularly features in Kurdish music, and eight of his cousins all play instruments of some kind, though "none play the violin", he emphasises. When he was twelve, Alan began to study music theory and learned how to read and write music. Then, as a teenager he started a five-year music course at a fine art college, where the delicate violin was his instrument of choice.

I ask him if he was one of the best violinists in the college. "I wasn't bad!", he laughs, before explaining his fondness for the four-stringed instrument. "The sound is lovely, I love it," he says, grinning. After picking the violin up, it didn't take long for him to start performing in front of people. While at college, he used to play in the local under-18 orchestra, and would regularly perform at local music events and concerts in his



Alan regularly entertains customers with violin performances Credit Marco Marcelline
hometown. After picking up his college certificate, he made his way to the UK where he found work as a barber. While he had some experience in cutting

hair in Iraq, it was never in a professional context, he says.

At Mozart, Alan isn't alone in possessing musical chops. There's the singing shop owner,

who Alan says is like an uncle, while his colleague can play the setar, a long-necked lute that originated in Persia. During quiet moments in the shop or after closing, the trio have sung, strummed and performed Kurdish music together. While the business isn't a family-run one per se, he says it very much feels like one.

A departing customer comes to the back of the shop, where we are sitting, to compliment him on his "serious talent". He clearly has no shortage of fans. Alan says that customers ask him to play while they're getting their hair cut. Does he take requests on the violin? "Yes", he nods, smiling, "anything".

Alan continues to play the violin in small bands and at any event he can perform at on weekends, and has hopes to play in a large professional orchestra one day. Chat to your barber; you might be surprised to learn their talents don't stop at an excellent fade and trim.

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FEATURES



Andrea Moore serves meals to kids at a primary school Credit Waltham Forest Council

Waltham Forest’s school dinner revolution

The ex-Harrods food hall manager behind what goes on your child’s plate

by Marco Marcelline

Remember lining up in school for generous servings of creamy mash, chips, soggy diced carrots and, of course, chocolate sponge in pink custard? Whether you loved or loathed them, school dinners of yore aren’t coming back. And Andrea Moore, the development chef for Waltham Forest Catering, is making sure of that. Think of her as the ultimate school kitchen boss, who’s main mission is masterminding the meals for 46 primary schools throughout the borough. Andrea, who no doubt knows her capiscum from her cardamom, managed the food halls at Harrods and Selfridges for many years, before tucking into the entirely different demands of the school canteen back in 1999. The school dinner visionary has cooked up a new menu that includes days with only plant-based options and allergy-free days. After Andrea delivered the menus, school council members decided their favourites on special taster days.

The winning food fare includes jackfruit jambalaya, chickpea and sweetcorn wraps, vegan pizza, and puddings such as coconut jelly, chocolate brownies and lime and mint cookies. Meanwhile on allergen free days kids can opt for chickpea tikka masala, roasted pepper risotto, peri peri chicken, and coconut rice, which all exclude the 14 major allergens. Speaking on her menu, Andrea said: “Presentation is very important for the children; we all learn to eat with our eyes. Not only that but we want even young children to get an idea of the dining experience. It’s about helping young children to develop. If you put on a display like an owl or a hedgehog, children will see it and it will get excited. But most of all you need to encourage the children, not force them. With the little ones, they will say ‘I don’t like it, I don’t like it’ but their taste buds are changing all the time.” In July, Tanya and Nadim Ednan-Laperouse OBE, whose daughter died from an allergic reaction to sesame seeds that were not listed on a Pret a Manger baguette’s ingredients, visited a Waltham Forest primary school to see an allergen free day in action. Tanya praised Andrea’s “thrilling” intervention that “will be applauded by the hundreds of thousands of families across the UK who live in daily fear of their children suffering severe food allergic reactions”. It seems that the kids are alright and probably better for the fact that chips aren’t on the menu every day anymore. As Andrea says, “most of all, we listen to the children. They don’t just want chips every day, we need to credit them with a lot more than we do.”



Gang member turned pastor

A faith leader in Walthamstow is helping young people stay away from the life he once lived

by Marco Marcelline

“I’m trying to bring light to Walthamstow.” That’s the mission of a pastor who turned a previous life of gang violence into service and who has just launched a ministry in Walthamstow dedicated to supporting disadvantaged and troubled young people. Onyeka grew up in Brixton, and at the age of 14 he began getting involved in a gang with friends in his area. Gang life quickly escalated and at age 15 he witnessed his friend get stabbed through the heart. This fatal act of violence led him on an even more dangerous path of vengeance and retribution, and he stayed as a gang member until he was 18. When working with young people stuck in difficult situations, the mantra he tries to relay is that if he can change, so can they. Through his work and telling his story, Onyeka says he’s been able to change the lives of many young people involved in gang violence. Now 27, Onyeka strives to be the positive mentor for

troubled youths that he lacked when he was growing up. Reflecting on the importance of faith on his life trajectory, Onyeka says: “You don’t have to be religious but when I found God that’s when I started to live a better life.” Through the ministry, his “main goal is to lead people to the right path, and make sure we provide mentorship, career advice, CV creation, job search help, health and wellbeing, food and clothes banks” as well as voluntary and community projects that help young people involved in gang violence. Onyeka adds that he’s been able to help young footballers embark on a professional career and get signed by clubs, as well as assist youth battling severe mental health problems that have caused them to self-harm. Previously based in Newham, his church, Eternal Life Ministries, holds weekly Sunday and Friday services. Young people of any faith and none are welcome to attend his youth ministry services and workshops.

Eternal Life Ministries is at 43 Sutherland House, Walthamstow, E17 6BU Email onyekwulu@outlook.com



Onyeka Power Credit Minister Inge and Louisiana

NEWS

Homeless mother begins appeal fight

Katie-Leigh Webb-Harnden was moved 170 miles away by the council

by Josh Mellor,
Local Democracy Reporter

A homeless Walthamstow mother who was moved more than 170 miles away by Waltham Forest Council has taken her case to the Court of Appeal.

Mother-of-three Katie-Leigh Webb-Harnden was two days away from eviction and unable to afford a new home in September 2021 when the council offered to house her in Walsall, West Midlands.

To avoid homelessness she accepted the offer and moved to the new home, but has been challenging the decision in the courts for the last two years.

At the Court of Appeal on 13th July, her legal team argued the council failed to consider the discrimination of moving Katie-Leigh's family "very, very, very many miles away" from her home and support network.

Karon Monaghan KC said the council had not taken into account the adverse impact that the benefit cap has on single mothers, who are "frankly, more likely to be poor" because



A protest in support of Katie-Leigh's case was organised outside the court Credit LDRS

they usually need to look after their children.

She added that Waltham Forest Council could have held on to see if it could find her suitable accommodation closer to the borough.

A ruling by the appeal judges is expected at a later date.

It remains unclear what Waltham Forest Council's case is, as its legal team declined to share a copy of its legal arguments with the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS).

Due to the distance and cost of travelling from Walsall to the Royal Courts of Justice in London, where the case is being heard, Katie-Leigh did not attend the court.

Her appeal is the latest in a string of controversial cases where single-parent families

have been moved far from the borough by Waltham Forest Council.

In March, appeal judges told Waltham Forest Council it was wrong to only offer to house mother-of-three Nadia Zaman – a lifelong borough resident – 150 miles away in Stoke-on-Trent.

In December 2021, mother-of-three Izebela Kickoseka – who the council temporarily housed in Bexley – found herself homeless after refusing a two-year tenancy in Derby.

Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth (HASL) organised a protest with a number of Londoners affected by similar issues outside the court.

HASL's Elizabeth Wyatt said: "Waltham Forest Council has gained the reputation of being one of the worst councils in London for their cruel treatment of vulnerable homeless families. They are routinely forcing single mums and their families out of London and they aggressively pursue legal cases taken by homeless residents through the courts in an attempt to further erode homeless rights."

"Whilst all London councils face similar situations, it's only Waltham Forest who have taken such extreme measures showing that their social cleansing agenda is a political choice. There is simply no excuse for the appalling and harmful treatment that the council have subjected some of their

most vulnerable residents to."

Ahsan Khan, deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and regeneration, told the LDRS that the council "works hard" to accommodate residents who need its assistance.

He added: "Our approach is in line with that taken by other local authorities and we entirely reject suggestions we do not treat people fairly. We operate within the guidelines laid out by central government and the Local Housing Allowance levels that it sets."

"Their social cleansing agenda is a political choice"

"We have lobbied the government for change, but as of yet have had no success. Our clear preference is to house every household in need locally. Unfortunately, demand for housing in London, including Waltham Forest, far outstrips supply. Housing options for households on low incomes are extremely limited and we can only place households into properties where they can afford to pay the rent. We understand it is a very difficult time for households that find themselves homeless or are at risk of losing their home."

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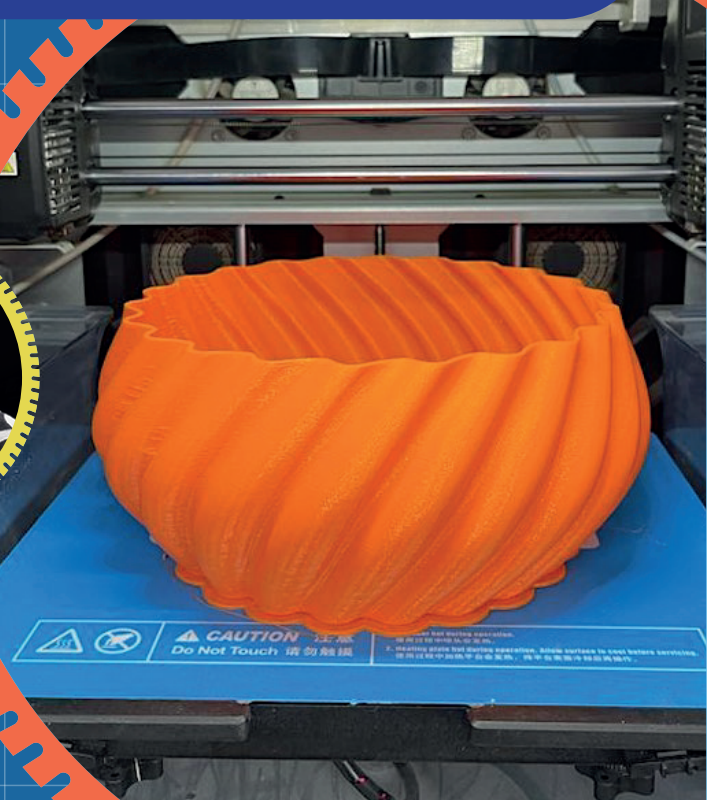
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¹Evidence summarised in the report 'Impacts of air pollution across the life course - evidence highlight note' prepared by the Environmental Research Group, Imperial College London: london.gov.uk/pollution-across-lifecourse

LETTERS

Lea Valley History

Dear WFE

THE LEA VALLEY REGION has a unique industrial past. Long before the 2012 Olympic Games, the idea of a museum celebrating the largest untold industrial story in the world was proposed, yet here we are in 2023 with nothing to show.

A meeting held a few years ago with the then secretary of state for culture Matt Hancock regarding the Lea Valley being given World Heritage Status came to nothing. A presentation held in the House of Commons by the Chingford MP and our patron Sir Iain Duncan Smith soon also got forgotten due to the Covid lockdown. The heritage concept shown at the Olympics opening ceremony was a few puffing chimneys, the NHS, and hats with lightbulbs.

A few years ago, Waltham Forest missed the chance to highlight the importance of the region's industrial past when it held the London Borough of Culture. If this history is not important then why are most of the region's industrial treasures in national museums?

There is now however a chink of light in the armour with a website currently being developed to tell this unique world story. There are several sites in the Lea Valley where an industrial museum could still be constructed. Until a regional museum is developed, I am afraid to say that the Lea Valley region's unique industrial history is still being sold down the River Lea.

Lindsay Collier BEM
Chairman of Lea Valley
Heritage Alliance

Dropped kerb charge

Dear WFE

I HAVE A 70-YEAR-OLD MUM living outside of London. She is able to drive and visits me regularly. She gets stressed by the parking, so I thought I'd be a good daughter and get a dropped

kerb put in. A previous builder had quoted me £1,500 so I thought I'd apply to the council. You have to put in a semi-permeable surface now, due to the flooding. I received a quote from the council of £9,287.77.

I nearly fell off my seat when I read that. The sum is something to do with our road being single file so the parking is on the pavement and they need to resurface it all. The point is that if I'd done it outside of the council, it would only cost me £1,500 and how would they have known?

There's no recourse for appeal, my councillors (Forest ward) have not replied or have forwarded back my email saying they basically "can't help". It's ridiculous. Mum is back to stressing out before her journeys. Thanks, Waltham Forest Council, for always putting profit before people. I don't really know why I'm surprised.

Amanda Connolly
Leyton

Small buses

Dear WFE

A CONSULTATION ON rerouting the W12 bus away from Orford Road ends on 30th July.

TfL says that using larger buses and increasing the service to four buses an hour is an improvement.

However, smaller buses contribute to getting people out of their cars, they encourage more local shopping and they help many who may not be able to walk 500 yards to the nearest bus stop.

Small buses are needed on side streets such as Walthamstow Village or for trips to Wood Street Market. Using school trip vehicles during shopping hours would also be a good use of buses.

Jo Robinson
Walthamstow

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A room available to let for a female lodger from September 2023, in a ground floor flat in Walthamstow, at £600 per month with everything included. A ten minute walk from the tube and five minutes from Queen's Road overground station. Contact Winnie at 07881 603 053 for more information.

Send us your letters

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COMMENT

Credit Nicolas J Leclercq via Unsplash



Top up fees don't belong in the NHS

Nancy Taaffe, from the Socialist Party

We all know the problems the NHS is facing. We all hear the horror stories every day of long queues, delays to treatment, strikes, and staff shortages. Apart from all this being true, and my support for the strikes for fair pay for nurses, junior doctors and all health service professionals, I am concerned by recent calls for NHS top-up fees by former prime minister Tony Blair.

NHS top up fees are a poisonous medicine being proposed from some political quarters to solve the NHS's woes. We are increasingly hearing politicians, from both the Conservative and Labour parties, calling for top-up charges in the NHS. This means that not only will people pay for the NHS through taxation, they will be asked to pay extra for some services.

I, and the Socialist Party of which I am a member, totally oppose this call. Last month, Tony Blair authored a report that said the current crisis in the NHS warrants a radical 'rethink' and top-up charges have been mentioned. I would like to point out that this is precisely what Tony Blair argued for when tuition fees were introduced in higher

education. Initially, Tony Blair argued that only the most able would pay top-up fees, but soon enough these top-up fees became universal, and then they were hiked up to £9,000 a year by the Conservative and Lib-Dem coalition. This proposal smoothed the way for a whole generation to be saddled with debt that it will never pay back.

I oppose the Tories calling for increased charges to access healthcare, but it is pretty much to be expected from them. From its inception, when thousands of hungry soldiers came back from war and established the NHS, along with working class communities, the Tories have wanted to dismantle it. It has never been safe in Tory hands. But, I also oppose Tony Blair's proposal of top-up fees and Labour shadow health secretary Wes Streeting's call for more partnerships with private hospitals into the mix as a solution to solve the current financial crisis in the NHS. Thatcher and Blair used 'disaster capitalism' as a means to privatise whole swathes of British industry. This is one of the reasons we are so poor and so exposed to financial pain right now.

The Socialist Party will not accept that a future Labour government could be the Trojan

horse by which NHS top-up fees are introduced, as they were for university fees. We don't want an American-style healthcare system in Britain.

Back in 2005, the Socialist Party warned that the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) would be a millstone around future generations' necks. We now know that the PFI at Whipps is bleeding the hospital dry at a time when they could do with the money.

We must battle to re-found a socialist NHS built on the principles it was founded on, and to extend the socialist ideal of free healthcare for all.

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HEALTH



Huge data hack hits Barts Health NHS Trust

by Marco Marcelline

A criminal investigation is underway after a Russian hacking group claimed to have hacked Barts Health NHS Trust, which manages Whipps Cross Hospital. The group, called Alphv, has threatened to release seven terabytes of stolen information from the hack, which occurred on 30th June.

The data breach could potentially affect 2.5 million people as the NHS trust manages St. Bartholomew's, the Royal London, Mile End, and Newham in addition to Whipps Cross Hospital.

A spokesperson for Barts Health NHS Trust told the *Echo*: "We are aware of claims of a ransomware attack and are urgently investigating."

In an updated statement, Barts Health said: "although the group responsible claims to have accessed a large amount of data, these claims have not yet been verified and assessing the level of risk is a lengthy and complex process."

"At this stage, we can confirm that some personal information affecting four

individuals was posted on a part of the internet that is not accessible by search engines, known as the dark web. We have contacted those individuals and offered them support."

The health trust added that there is "no evidence that patient data has been accessed."

Brett Callow, a threat analyst from Emisoft, a cybersecurity firm, told the *Echo* that it's a common attack with "hundreds" of hospitals across the world having been "heavily targeted with these attacks in recent years."

As Callow notes, Alphv claim to have stolen about 7 TB of data from Barts, "which would represent a massive amount of information". It's unclear whether Alphv's claim is true or not, however.



The dark web post made by the hackers describing the leak Credit Brett Callow/Emisoft

In broken English, the hackers claimed on their dark web page that Barts Health data hack amounted to the "most bigger leak from health care system in UK."

That dark web post listed the files the hacking group purportedly stole from Barts Health. This includes copies of employees' driving licenses and passports, NHS client documentation and credit card information, as well as internal emails marked as confidential.

As Bloomberg noted in a prior report, the hackers have been active since November 2021 and have authored attacks on a wide range of targets around the world. Palo Alto Networks, a US cybersecurity firm, reported last year that the hacking group operates by recruiting "affiliates" on cybercrime forums who pay to use its ransomware to hack companies and organisations.

Ransomware is a type of malicious software that blocks access to a computer system until a sum is paid. Hackers using ransomware typically threaten to publicly release stolen private information unless they receive payment, as is the case here.

Council shuts two restaurants due to pest infestation

Council officers discovered mice droppings in rice containers, a cockroach infestation, and a dead mouse

by Marco Marcelline

Two Waltham Forest restaurants were shut down by the council in June because of pest infestations and dirty conditions.

Butt Kebabish Grill and Curry, at 755 High Road, Leytonstone, and Dessert Inn, at 534 Lea Bridge Road, were shut down following visits by officers on 2nd June and 23rd June respectively.

On arrival to Butt Kebabish Grill and Curry, officers from the council's environmental health team noted that mouse droppings were on the floor, on shelving used for food storage, and in rice containers. One of the attendant officers also spotted dirt, grease and debris "littering the floor in the servery and in the preparation kitchen".

Butt Kebabish Grill was immediately shut when inspected by environmental health officers. Thames Magistrates Court approved a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order (HEPO) on 9th June and awarded the council costs of £1,591.86.

Butt Kebabish Grill and Curry re-opened on 29th June after the

council was satisfied with the steps taken to improve hygiene at the restaurant, which serves popular dishes such as lamb sage and chicken biriyani.

Meanwhile, Dessert Inn was also closed immediately after officers discovered a cockroach infestation and a dead mouse. Officers also noted a lack of cleanliness throughout the premises.

At the time the *Echo* went to press, Dessert Inn still remains shut. The vending prohibition will remain in place until an environmental health officer is satisfied that sufficient measures have been taken to improve conditions and alleviate health risks.

A post on the restaurant's Instagram page says Dessert Inn is "closed for refurbishment". Thames Magistrates Court granted a HEPO at a hearing about Dessert Inn on 21st June and awarded Waltham Forest Council costs of £1,237.13.

Khevy Limbajee, Waltham Forest's cabinet member for community safety, said: "Anyone who runs a food premises should know by now, how seriously Waltham Forest Council takes food hygiene."

"Unfortunately, not all food



Dessert Inn, Lea Bridge Road

business operators take hygiene matters seriously enough when preparing and cooking food for customers, as a result the council will take formal action where the health of the public is put at risk due to a lack of food safety management and poor standards."

The news comes after a Food Standards Agency report revealed that Waltham Forest's cafes, restaurants and takeaways have the lowest average hygiene ratings in the whole of the UK.

NEWS

Food bank founder, Leyton Orient awarded 'Freedom of the Borough'

by Marco Marcelline

Leyton Orient FC, food bank founder Saira Begum Mir and departing Waltham Forest Council chief executive Martin Esom were all awarded the Freedom of Waltham Forest last month.

Begum Mir, who set up the food bank PL84U AL-SUFFA, based at the Epicentre, West Street in Leytonstone, has helped feed hundreds of people every week since its launch ten years ago. These include refugees from Afghanistan. Begum Mir has already received a British Empire Medal for her efforts in helping people across the borough with food, clothes, haircuts, toiletries, and providing general support.

Begum Mir has also provided cooking sessions for women from migrant backgrounds and volunteering roles for those seeking to prepare for work in the UK.

Speaking at Waltham Forest Town Hall, Begum Mir said: "I am truly honoured and blessed to be the recipient of this prestigious award, setting up PL84U AL-SUFFA allows us to serve our diverse community



Founder of Leytonstone food bank, Saira Begum Mir with mayor Roy Berg Credit Waltham Forest Council

through difficult times, and continues to fulfil our duty as Muslims.

"This recognition is for my family for being my backbone, for our dedicated team of volunteers who work extremely hard each day, and the community for their ongoing support.

"Our thanks and appreciation to the council for their support and for recognising PL84U AL-SUFFA's vital role in the community."

Council leader Grace Williams said: "Saira is an absolute inspiration and what PL84U AL-SUFFA has achieved in helping so many of our residents in so many different ways is simply outstanding."

Accepting the honour on behalf of Leyton Orient FC, the club's community liaison officer Robbie Minchin brought along the League Two trophy to show to councillors.

He said: "Following the club's promotion back to the Football League in 2019, the club has gone from strength to strength on and off the pitch, which ended the 2022/2023 season being crowned champions of Sky Bet Football League Two. Since our promotion back to the Football League our focus has been on growing our relationship with the local community, made possible by the ongoing support from Waltham Forest Council."

Outgoing chief executive Esom was also honoured with the Freedom of the Borough. He is retiring after 13 years in the job, making him the longest-serving chief executive of any London borough.

Accepting the honour, Esom said: "When I joined 16 years ago it was a very different place, I've worked with five different administrations under four leaders...I am a public servant with public service at the core. I've never regarded it as a job, more as a vocation. It's given me the opportunity to work with people, transform places and people's lives.

"Waltham Forest is a vibrant creative community that lives together in harmony. It's been an absolute blast and honour, thank you."



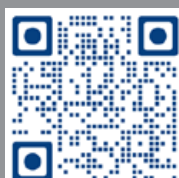
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ARTS & CULTURE

Kenza Blanka's art of resilience

The Leytonstone singer fusing Moroccan beats with empowering lyrics

by Marco Marcelline

In the music video for Leytonstone based musician Kenza Blanka's song *Malika*, Kenza is sporting traditional Moroccan attire and a 'Yaz' chin tattoo which means 'freedom' in Amazigh, the language of her Berber ancestors. The track, which channels self and women empowerment, includes Moroccan live traditional instruments set against an Afro-Amapiiano beat. It also includes lyrics from eight languages, English, French, Moroccan Arabic, Zulu, Shona, Uroba (Nigerian), and Italian. The decision to include such a range of languages is a nod of respect to the rich diversity of female friends she has in London who heavily inspired her, Kenza says.

Warm and bubbly in person, Kenza notices my name and asks if I'm Italian, and laughing, she reveals: "The first time I said the Italian lyric, [which proclaims 'I am Moroccan'], I said it from a man's point of view."

It's been a journey for Kenza to get to this point of uninhibited self-expression and pride, however. Turn back the clock some years and a younger Kenza would be surprised at the unabashedly Moroccan flavour and symbolism present in her music and imagery these days. Raised on a Norfolk council estate by a Moroccan father and English mother, Kenza grew up not feeling comfortable with owning her North African heritage and faced some troubles at school because of her unique voice and look. She moved to Hackney at 17 before settling in Leytonstone a year and half later.

Her first years in London saw Kenza navigate a period of having to live in her car, but it was also a formative time in beginning her career as a musician and forging helpful musical connections. During this time she hung out a lot with the rapper Professor Green, the singer Labrinth, as well as Labrinth's musician sister Sherelle, and additionally spent time recording with Ludacris in the United States.

Being a working class woman of colour, Kenza had wanted to sing about her experiences of poverty, mental health, and discrimination but was told by those around



Kenza Blanka Credit Dele Oluwayomi (@errbodysaycheese)

her that her "baby voice" didn't suit the subjects at the time. This meant she jumped between RnB, hip-hop, and pop in her early years of recording music, without making the music that she felt was completely true to her being.

After a period of recording more experimental music, a transformative meetup with a Moroccan artist friend saw the construction of her Moroccan inspired stage-name (Blanka is a reflection of Casablanca, the city her dad hails from). Then, in 2019, an invite to audition for the Voice UK came in.

Kenza ended up singing her own Arabic, French and English version of Belgian artist Stromae's *Papaoutai* on *The Voice* stage in front of Sir Tom Jones, Olly Murs, Will.I.Am, and Jennifer Hudson. The electric performance had everyone in the crowd standing up on their feet, and garnered an incredible reaction from viewers at home. "I had people in their seventies and eighties messaging me from all over the world. An older gentleman told me, 'I'm 79, I put my crutches on the floor and I started dancing,'" she laughs.

"I didn't know it would get the reception it did at the time. It just went wild." The fact that Kenza didn't manage to turn the coaches

around didn't matter: the YouTube video of her performance now has close to one million views. A few days after the performance Kenza noticed that her Twitter had started to blow up. It turned out that coach Olly Murs had posted a video apologising for not turning his chair around for her. And in the aftermath of the television broadcast, someone had even started a petition calling for Kenza to be put through to the next round.

She was also blown away by the fact she didn't see a single negative comment on social media after the performance was released. "[The response] made me feel good. It made me realise that a lot of the worry we have is just in our heads." After *The Voice*, Kenza began getting a lot of management offers but she was patient and wanted to work with people that connected with her craft and understood what she was about musically. After a spell of trialling various managers who didn't fit what she was looking for, in November last year, she signed with Universal Music MENA.

Rejection and setbacks taught her the importance of resilience. "A lot of people said, 'oh you've

been doing this for a while, just forget it'", she reflects, but, it's clear she has a knack for picking herself back up and seeing the positive in what others might see as negative. In fact, in the months following *The Voice* Kenza was invited to do a Ted Talk on resilience in Casablanca, which she admits was nerve wracking, but a critical moment in her self development.

A multi-hyphenate, Kenza doesn't just record music. She's set up a fashion label called 'I Am What I Am', which extols the value of embracing and accepting who you are. And, having had experience working as a mental health nurse for eight years, and keen to advocate for mental health, Kenza utilised her knowledge to write, direct, and film a five-part series of short films on identity and mental health.

Kenza also helps to run E11 Music Studios, which she co-founded six months ago. It is dedicated to platforming the musical talents of Moroccan artists in London, as well as local people with special learning needs and mental health vulnerabilities that aren't typically given the opportunity to make music. Helping other emerging artists is important to her. Anyone

that comes to the studio with the intention to make music and who wants to film a video is connected to a local videographer that can help with that, she says.

Moving forwards, Kenza continues to shine a spotlight on underheard voices and provide empowerment to those who need it. In fact, she's just released a song called *Denya Dwara* which deals with domestic violence especially to women in oppressed cultures where divorce is not accepted, and it's harder to escape from abusive marriages. Her eyes are set on playing festivals and at events this summer and, of course, making more music with the goal of inspiring people to embrace their true and whole selves.

You can keep up with Kenza's music by following her on Instagram: @kenzablanka

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LICENSING ACT 2003 Application for the Variation of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Mez Entertainment Limited**, has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the variation of an existing Premises Licence at: **Mez Lounge, 627-629 Lea Bridge Road, Leyton, London E10 6AJ**. The nature of the application is to Amend the Operational Hours as follows:

- **Retail Sale of Alcohol (On Premises):** Monday to Thursday, 11:00-00:00 Hours, Friday to Sunday, 11:00-02:30 hours;
- **Late Night Refreshment:** Sunday to Thursday 23:00-00:00 Hours, Friday & Saturday 23:00-02:30 Hours
- **Regulated Entertainment (Provision of Film, Live Music, Recorded Music, & Performance of Dance):** Sunday to Thursday, 23:00-00:00 Hours, Friday & Saturday, 23:00-02:30 Hours
- **Hours that the premises is open to the public:** Sunday to Thursday, 11:00-00:30 Hours, Friday & Saturday, 11:00-03:00 Hours
- **Non-Standard Timings:** Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, Day previous to Bank Holidays 11:00 - 04:00 Hours

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: **16th August 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.

ARTS & CULTURE



Angry Dan Credit Laura Martinez

Poets corner

Street artist Angry Dan introduces his new interactive show at 1B Gallery in Walthamstow

If you've ever happened upon a colourful poem painted on the streets of Walthamstow, the chances are you were looking at one of my artworks. There are seven dotted around the town, and together they make a treasure hunt, intended as an amusing, inspiring, and informative activity for the child inside all of us. These poems are all examples of limericks – a variety of short form verse that I have spent five years writing, illustrating, and painting on walls across the UK and overseas. During this time, many people have generously sent me their own compositions. This always brightens up my day – both for the sheer joy of receiving something so thoughtful, and for their often ingenious rhymes, inventive wordplay, or absurd humour. This has inspired the premise for my next exhibition – an open call to all budding poets to collaborate with me on a unique artwork. Throughout August, I will be at the 1B Window Gallery, inviting you all to submit your own limericks. The most commendable entries will be displayed in the gallery for the first two weeks of September, alongside the winning poem, which I will illustrate in my bold, colourful style, creating a one-of-a-kind collaborative artwork, to be presented to the winner on Friday 15th September. The competition is open to all ages and you can enter as many times as you like. Your entries must be your own original compositions, unpublished anywhere before 1st August. So, how do you go about writing a limerick? They must have five lines written in anapestic meter, which means they bounce

on every third syllable – think of *We Went to the Animal Fair*. The first and second line must rhyme, and typically introduce a character, narrative, or concept. The third and fourth lines are a little shorter, rhyme with each other, and often develop the idea to a point of intrigue or suspense. The last line is the most important. It's the closer, the punchline, the resolve, or the reveal – and it always rhymes with the first two lines. This sway of the rhyme scheme, over to the third and fourth lines, then back again, is what gives a well-written limerick the feeling of reaching a satisfying conclusion. I'll be in the gallery every day from the 1st to the 28th of August – do come and say hello. I look forward to reading your poems. You can follow Angry Dan's activities on his Instagram: @Angrydan

LISTINGS

FASHION

The Fashion Flea
Friday 11th August, 12pm–3pm
Orford House, Orford Road,
Walthamstow E17 9QR

The Fashion Flea comes to E17! Join us to shop the wardrobes of your local fashion lovers – preloved womenswear, kidswear and a little sprinkling of menswear too. Shopping sustainably and socially in the heart of Walthamstow Village, what's not to love? At the flea market you'll be able to shop preloved high street and designer fashion, rent a pitch and sell your own wardrobe, and just socialise and be part of our friendly community.

Tickets £2 (£3 on the door)
Visit thefashionflea.sumupstore.com

UKULELE

UkeleE17
Wednesdays 8pm–10pm
The Bell Walthamstow, 617 Forest Rd E17 4NE
Sundays 2pm–5pm
Lloyd Park (Behind the Gallery)
Forest Rd, Walthamstow E17 4PP

UkeleE17 is continuing weekly Wednesday sessions in the back room of The Bell E17. It's a free strumming session, with all welcome to come and play or sing. Come and strum or sing with us as we welcome new and experienced players. If you don't have a ukulele, we can provide one. Songbooks are available on our Facebook page or on the night if you bring a tablet, phone or laptop. We are also in Lloyd Park from 2pm to 5pm on Sunday afternoons behind the gallery. Again, folk are welcome to come and play along or listen.

Free
Visit facebook.com/UkeleE17

JAZZ

Gary Crosby Quartet ft Sultan Stevenson
Tuesday 15th August, 8pm–11pm
East Side Jazz Club, Upstairs at Leytonstone Ex-Serviceman's Club, 2 Harvey Road, Leytonstone E11 3DB

Bassist, band leader, and co-founder of Tomorrow's Warriors, Gary Crosby OBE leads his quartet to East Side Jazz Club. Leader of the acclaimed Gary Crosby's Nu Troop and founder of the mighty Jazz Jamaica and Nu Civilisation Orchestra, Gary's impact and influence on the UK jazz scene spans four decades. Gary is joined by Aleksandra Topczewska (saxophone), Sultan Stevenson (piano), and Eddie Hicks (drums). Sultan Stevenson is one of the fastest emerging young artists on the London jazz scene.

Tickets £12
Visit wegottickets.com/event/586904

POETRY

Poems Not Bombs
17th August, 3.30pm–5.30pm
Red Room at Ye Olde Rose and Crown Theatre Pub, 53 Hoe Street, Walthamstow E17 4SA

Poems Not Bombs is an afternoon open-mic event for poets who like to come out and play during the day. No booking required, just turn up. All you need to do is sign up between 3pm and 3.30pm to get your chance to read. Everyone very welcome! Hosted by Paul McGrane of local poetry collective Forest Poets.

£3 suggested donation – or whatever you can afford
Visit poemsnotbombs.eventbrite.co.uk

KIDS

Summer Kids Art Workshops at The Mill
Saturdays 10.30am–12.30pm
The Mill Community Centre, 7–11 Coppermill Lane, Walthamstow E17 7HA

The Mill is running kids art workshops during the Summer holidays. There are five different workshops, each taking place on Saturdays. These workshops are free and have been funded by St James Community Ward Funding. Please note you can only book one workshop for your child/children. Some workshops are for 4–12 year olds and some workshops are for 7–12 year olds.

Free, booking is essential
Visit themille17.org/events-calendar
Email kidsart@themille17.org
Call 020 8521 3211

FITNESS

Ladies Bollywood Fitness Classes with Mevy
Mondays 5.30pm–6.30pm
Revert2Reality, 736 Lea Bridge Rd E10 6AW

Are you a bollywood film buff? Who said you can't be a fitness buff too! BollyX is a Bollywood inspired dance fitness group exercise programme that combines exhilarating choreography and calorie-burning workout with upbeat music from around the world, from the latest Bollywood, Bhangra and Western music. It's a fitness dance class that inspires participants to smile and dance like a Bollywood star while getting a great cardiovascular workout! Their fun Bollywood fitness sessions create a happy atmosphere empowering women of all cultural backgrounds, religions, and all age groups to be healthy and fit by creating a community of strong independent, like-minded women united by BollyX fitness.

Tickets £5 (cash on door)
Email bollyxwithmevy@gmail.com

Submit your listings

We can include low-cost community events taking place in Waltham Forest. Email wfecho@socialspider.com by Monday 21st August.

AROUND THE BOROUGH

WHIPPS CROSS

Junior doctors go on strike



Whipps Cross junior doctors **Credit** Marco Marcelline

Junior doctors at Whipps Cross participated in their longest strike yet in a bid to get their pay raised by 35%. The strike, which ran for five days from the 13th–17th July,

was called after the British Medical Association (BMA) demanded that junior doctor salaries return to the level they were at in 2008, as increases in pay since then have been eroded by inflation.

Striking junior doctors at Whipps Cross told the *Echo* that increasing workloads, long hours, soaring inflation and under-staffing had affected morale among NHS workers and had pushed them to strike.

On the first day of the strike, about 15 to 20 junior doctors joined the picket line on Whipps Cross Road, outside the main hospital entrance. They stood from 8am until 11am.

Sophie, a Whipps Cross junior doctor who joined in 2019, said that she “does not have a lot of confidence in our current government to be proactive in making offers and communicating that effectively”.

On the day of the first strike the government offered a final offer under-inflation pay rise of 6% which the BMA roundly rejected. NHS consultants went on strike for two days from 20th July. They are set to strike again this month.

CHINGFORD

Council approves ‘car free’ Chingford development

by Josh Mellor,
Local Democracy Reporter

Plans for a “car-free” development in Chingford have been approved despite the nearest train station being more than a 20 minute walk away. The development of the site in New Road, between Larks Wood and Tesco Express, will contain 72 flats in a building reaching up to seven storeys tall.

To discourage car use, there will be almost no parking spaces on the site and the developer, Lindhill, will pay for a public consultation on introducing parking restrictions in nearby roads.

However, a travel plan prepared for the developer claims the site benefits from a “well-connected multi-modal transport network” despite its “poor” public

transport rating and a 1.2mile walk to Highams Park Station.

Speaking against the plans, local Conservative councillor Catherine Suamarez said the development would “never” be car free as residents are likely to reject any proposal for restrictions. She added: “Bad luck if you live here and work in Enfield, because the bus takes over an hour.”

Waltham Forest planning officer Scott Hackner replied that the Mayor of London and the council both promote car-free developments to “ensure step change” towards sustainable transport.

To compensate for the lack of parking the developer will pay £120,000 for local walking and cycling infrastructure and each household will have free membership of a nearby

car club for two years.

Only 27% of the homes in the scheme will be classed as “affordable”, below the Mayor of London’s 35% target, due to Lindhill’s claim that it is £1.7million below “expected net profit values”.

However, the council has not published its own report reviewing that claim. As a result of failing to meet the 35% affordable threshold, the developer’s profit margin will be reviewed during the build to assess whether more affordable housing can be included.

Following the approval, the local Conservative councillors for the area issued a joint statement on Facebook saying they are “devastated” by the decision and are considering asking for a government review.

WALTHAMSTOW

Man charged after Blackhorse Lane shooting

Detectives have charged a man after a shooting in Blackhorse Lane left a man in a critical condition.

Desharn Felix, 21, of no fixed address, was charged in July with possession of a firearm with intent to endanger life, possession of ammunition with intent to endanger life and possession of cannabis. He was arrested on 5th July and appeared in custody at Thames Magistrates’ Court on 7th July.

An investigation was launched after police were called at 10:44pm on 17th June to reports of a firearms discharge in Blackhorse Lane.

Officers attended along with the London Ambulance Service. A 22-year-old man was found with a gunshot wound and was taken to hospital in a critical condition. His injuries were later assessed as not life-threatening, however he remains in hospital.

Following the shooting, a Section 60 was authorised in Walthamstow which gave police the right to search people without reasonable grounds. As the Met describes on their website, this can only happen in a defined area at a specific time when a senior officer believes there is a possibility of serious violence, or weapons are involved.

LEYTON



Transport for London (TfL) is using funding from the government’s Levelling Up Fund in order to make Leyton a step-free tube station by the end of 2024.

Currently, Chingford, Highams Park, and Walthamstow Queens Road have step free access in the borough. Adding Leyton to that list would mean the borough will have a total of four step-free stations.

Colindale Station, on the Edgware branch of the Northern Line in Barnet, will also be made step-free along with Leyton.

Currently one-in-three

London tube stations are step-free. In January, the Greater London Authority was awarded more than £43million by the Levelling Up Fund for accessibility works at both Leyton and Colindale stations.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan said: “I am committed to ensuring London’s world-class public transport network is accessible for all Londoners. While there is still work to be done, I am proud that since I became mayor we have increased the number of step-free stations across London by 20%, meaning there are now more than 200 on TfL’s network.”

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CONEL scoops Women into Construction Partnerships with Purpose Award

The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (CONEL) has been named among the winners in this year's Women into Construction awards.

The college won the Partnerships with Purpose Award in recognition of the success of its five-week programme with employers to support women gain work in the industry.

More than 200 women have taken the programme with CONEL since it began in 2018, with many securing on and offsite roles in the industry, with a record number enrolling this year.

The programme includes five days construction training leading to a Health and Safety Level 1 Award and a CSCS card test, which is needed to work on site, followed by two weeks work placement.

Lisa-Marie Mills, 35, who has just completed the programme, said: "Women into Construction gave me that basic understanding of what working in the industry entails, how a site runs, what would be required of me and what I would need to learn to fill those skills gaps."

This year's programmes have provided skills training and employability support to 60 women looking to work in construction with 17 going on to secure employment in the sector so far.



Find out more at women-into-construction.org/programmes

For more information on Construction courses and apprenticeships at CONEL visit capitalccg.ac.uk

The College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London



LICENSING ACT 2003

Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Libertalia Brewing Company** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **Arch 142 Tilbury Road, Leyton, E10 6RE**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- To permit the sale of alcohol / regulated entertainment: **Monday, 10:00–23:00; Tuesday, 10:00–23:00; Wednesday, 10:00–23:00; Thursday 10:00–23:00; Friday 10:00–23:00; Saturday, 10:00–23:00; Sunday 10:00–23:00**

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Section, 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 Section, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4JF or via email: Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Representations must be received no later than **11/08/2023**.

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

LICENSING ACT 2003

Application for the Grant of a Variation in the Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Deja Brew** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the variation of a Premises Licence at **Deja Brew, 8 Forest Road, London E17 6JJ**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- To permit the supply of alcohol to be consumed on the premises including the forecourt and rear garden area, during the following hours: **Sunday to Thursday 11:00 - 23:00; Friday to Saturday 11:00 - 00:30.**

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 **22nd August 2023**.

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

LICENSING ACT 2003

Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Pallavas Catering Limited** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at: **38 Hoe Street Walthamstow E17 4PH**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- Sale of alcohol consumed on the premises is open to the public: **Monday to Sunday, 11:00–22:00**

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 by email: licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Representations must be received no later than **10th August 2023**.

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

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For a copy of the Trustee role description, please contact the companysecretary@citizensadvicewalthamforest.org.uk asap. To apply, send a copy of your CV with a covering letter explaining your reasons for applying. The closing date for applications is **5pm on Friday 1st September 2023**.



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SPORT

A Walthamstow community football club's success story deserves to be celebrated

David O'Driscoll, manager of the Coppermill Swifts Vet team, spotlights an under-valued local club

Currently England's women's football team are participating in Australia for the World Cup after conquering Europe. There are high hopes that the men's team can follow the same path. It may seem a good time to be involved in football, but for many members of a community-based club, the Coppermill Swifts feel somewhat differently.

Six years ago, I was part of a group of men who wanted to play football locally. Someone suggested using the Low Hall 'cage' – a six-a side pitch at the back of St James Park, in the Coppermill area of Walthamstow. I remember many in the group did not realise that there was a pitch there, as it seems so hidden away and underused.

The group grew organically by word of mouth and we needed a bigger pitch for a twice weekly game, so we moved across



Little Coppermill Swifts playing football on Low Hall Park **Credit** John Mannion

to the nine-a side pitch next door, but the surface was astonishingly poor, with players risking injury. We quickly stopped playing there. Sadly there were no alternatives in the local area, so to get a bigger pitch we had to move outside the Walthamstow area for the second game.

Six years on from these humble beginnings, much has changed with the group now christened 'Coppermill Swifts', and it has developed into a phenomenal community project. In fact if you walk around the local Coppermill community, you will see the distinctive badge of the Swifts.

Today it comprises a men's veterans football team, a female veterans rugby team and eight youth teams, many of whom play to a high standard, beating well-established youth teams due to the high-level coaching they receive. They have managed to fit in two evenings of coaching at nearby Douglas Eyre Sports Centre, and are looking to expand further.

The Swifts today are well organised with an active committee seeking ways to ensure that everyone has access to the coaching and football gear. It has organised a fund-raising night at the Trades Hall in October.

The Swifts chairman, John Mansion said: "Such is the demand we could use football pitches five nights a week. We now have

over a hundred on our waiting list. Low Hall would be ideal for us."

In my day job, as a psychological professional working in the NHS, I know how even a little exercise can have powerful effects on our physical and mental health. This applies to all age groups, but today, nearly 80% of UK kids don't meet the minimum recommended amount of activity, with similar figures for adults.

The Swifts committee has been speaking to the local council about the Low Hall pitch. And I understand there is money from various sporting bodies available to finance a new surface. Yet, nothing happens and discussion has faltered as a proposal for a lido to be built on the site has become a priority for the council's planning.

There have been considerable changes in Walthamstow in the six years that we have been playing football; the council have been involved in huge and complex building projects, which has transformed the area.

But this neglected and sad corner of the borough, which is a great space for football, remains overlooked. There is so much to celebrate in the Coppermill Swifts story and the hard work of this volunteer-led group, which is rare in London.

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