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# WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free

Apr 2025, N° 121

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## News

Red paint vandalism causes alarm among residents

► P.4

## News

Council failed to check three 'high risk' contaminated land sites

► P.6

## Comment

Why we need the right to grow our own food locally

► P.11

## Feature

The borough's longest standing jellied eel and pie shop

► P.14-15

## Crime

Leytonstone man jailed for murdering top chef

► P.16



A REVELLER PARTIES during The Ravenswood Collective's annual fundraiser for the foodbank Eat or Heat on 1st March. The event, held across seven Walthamstow venues, raised a total of £16,608 Credit Penny Dampier

## Walthamstow Central Station entrance plans revived

Plans for a new station entrance at Walthamstow Central appear to have been revived, according to a fresh planning application submitted to Waltham Forest Council.

A letter sent by HTA Design LLP on behalf of Tide Construction outlines the company's intention to begin the first phase of construction on the entrance.

These initial works include the construction of a portion of the "station box", which is an underground concrete box-like structure which the new entrance will be encased in.

This portion, effectively a slab of concrete, will be supported by a series of "temporary piles" that will act as plunge columns, the letter adds.

Tide Construction says the plan, if approved, will "safeguard" future works on the 'station box' and the ultimate completion of the entrance.

Transport for London (TfL) has said there is a planning permission deadline of "mid 2025" for these works.

The Walthamstow Central upgrade project has faced significant funding troubles since it was first announced as part of the redevelopment of The Mall.

In 2018, TfL said funding it had committed towards the new entrance was no longer

## Concern at 'culling' of local breweries

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

Breweries across Waltham Forest have expressed alarm at what has been described as a "culling" of breweries and late night spots in the borough due to rent chasing from Waltham Forest Council.

Two breweries in the Blackhorse Beer Mile shut last month; Beerblefish Brewing Co. closed on 9th March, while Hackney

Brewery was due to shut the High Hill Tap on 30th March.

While Beerblefish did not offer a reason behind its sudden departure, Hackney Brewery said it was due to the council's refusal to agree to a settlement on Covid-related debt.

This follows the council's repossession of Wild Card Brewery's Lockwood Way taproom for rent arrears in October 2024.

Sisters Verity and Sharmaine Cox, who run Blondies Brewery expressed their solidarity

with the shut taprooms, saying: "This issue goes beyond just us, almost 200 music venues in the last two years and 100 breweries in the last year have shut down in the UK, three of them in Walthamstow's Beer Mile alone.

"Those businesses too far from foot traffic suffer from low sales, while those closer to residential areas face noise complaints. It's a lose-lose situation. If this continues, London's independent venues, creative spaces, and world-renowned music

scene will disappear."

Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy has asked the council to consider how it can secure its finances while ensuring local businesses do not suffer.

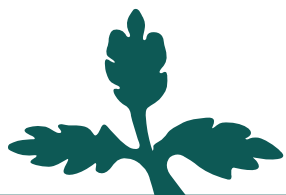
She added that the council's approach – which includes a "lack of responses" before a "sudden escalation" in rent demands – was "deeply counterproductive" to "ensuring a thriving local economy".

Read more on page 2

Read more on page 11



## NEWS



FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

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

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## Blackhorse Beer Mile future in doubt amid brewery closures

*The closure of two breweries in a matter of weeks has prompted a wave of public criticism directed at their landlord, Waltham Forest Council*

**by Sebastian Mann,**  
Local Democracy Reporter

**T**he closure of two breweries along Walthamstow's iconic 'Beer Mile' has left residents worried about its future.

Beerblefish Brewing Co. closed down on 9th March, while Hackney Brewery was due to close its taproom High Hill Tap on 30th March.

The two venues are the latest to close their doors after neighbouring Wild Card Brewery shut its tap room last October, having accrued "significant rent arrears".

In a statement posted online, Hackney Brewery said the situation with Waltham Forest Council, its landlord, had become "untenable".

A spokesperson said: "Despite having a fully licensed tap room and consistently paying our rent, the council will not grant the necessary permission for us to continue running the bar."

He said the brewery had "honoured our rent payments without

fail" over the past two years.

"In June 2024, we entered into a voluntary agreement to settle post-Covid debt with our creditors over an extended period," he continued. "However, this was not acceptable to the council in respect to arrears due to them, and despite nine months of communication and attempts to resolve the situation, we have been unable to come to a satisfactory agreement."

As part of the voluntary arrangement, Hackney Brewery was required to form a sister company to re-apply for its taproom license under its own name, the spokesperson said.

He added: "While the licensing department approved our application, the council's property department withheld the necessary permission, which has resulted in the closure."

Waltham Forest Council said the decision by Hackney Brewery to close their Walthamstow taproom "was the business's and theirs alone".

The Labour-run council "did not ask for it to close" and was

"surprised" by the announcement.

Council leader Grace Williams said the council "works hard" to support local businesses but "expects them to act in good faith and operate according to the terms of their property contract".

She continued: "We must collect the rent that is due to us to fund essential services. If we did not, the only alternative would be to allocate other money from council tax receipts or our reserves."

Beerblefish did not offer a reason behind its sudden departure. In a brief statement posted to its website, a spokesperson confirmed the closure of both the tap room and online store.

He wrote: "We closed the doors of the taproom to the public on [9th March]. Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the last ten years, from our tiny operation in a co-operative space, through our slightly less tiny brewery in Edmonton to our final home in Walthamstow. We've had a blast, and we hope you have too."

## EDITOR'S LETTER

**by Marco Marcelline**

**T**he sudden closure of two Walthamstow breweries has caused much upset and anger – most of which has been directed at Waltham Forest Council.

In March, we reported on Mornington Hall's fight with the council over a threatened 254% rent hike. While Waltham Forest was open to negotiations in that case, its often heavy-handed actions towards venues providing vital community spaces is concerning to say the least.

With the closure of three breweries in the Blackhorse Beer Mile, it begs the question; what exactly is the council's endgame?

The town hall's funding struggles are well-known, and it must do what it can to pay for essential services.

But businesses and community centres I have spoken to say the council has been unforgiving and relentless in its pursuit of rent. They say the issue is not with Waltham Forest fulfilling its landlord duties, but rather how it is performing those duties.

The council must have a strategy for making money but culling local businesses and community spaces cannot be part of one.

Elsewhere in these pages, you can read about the council's failure to inspect three high-risk toxic land sites in the borough [pg.6] and traders who have deserted an ailing Walthamstow indoor market [pg.8].

We also hear from the Waltham Forest Right to Grow Campaign which is calling for the council to make it easier for locals to start allotments [pg.11]. Pointing to the possible transformation of 'grot spots' into vibrant community gardens, the campaign says food growing is not only beneficial for the environment but for people's mental and physical health too.

You'll also be able to tuck into a delicious feature by Pallavi Singh on the iconic Noted Eel & Pie House, which has been serving jellied eels and pies in Leytonstone since 1976 [pp.14-15].

And on page 19, our sports writer David O'Driscoll speaks to a talented young filmmaker who is releasing a documentary on the story behind Walthamstow FC's William Morris inspired kit.

I hope you enjoy this issue!



NEWS

# Council approves ‘reimagination’ of St James Street railway arches

16 railway arches under St James Street Station in Walthamstow will be turned into a series of shops, cafes and restaurants

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

Plans to turn derelict railway arches in Walthamstow into a trendy eating, drinking, and shopping destination have been approved.

The 16 railway arches in Courtenay Place, next to St James Street Station, will be turned into a series of shops, cafes and restaurants.

The proposals describe a series of ‘glazed’ shopfronts with new art projects, signage and lighting. One of the middle arches would be turned into an accessible toilet.

It was first proposed last year and forms part of the council’s wider ‘Walthamstow Culture for All’ project. It will be paid for using the dedicated

£17million Levelling Up funding given to the council in January 2023.

The proposals were approved at a planning committee meeting on 4th March, where it faced little scrutiny from councillors.

Labour councillor Jenny Gray said it was a “really good idea” and one that would “bring life to a dead area”. Committee chair Andrew Dixon said he echoed her thoughts.

A decision on the plans was reached after around 13 minutes, with all five councillors voting to approve them.

The council held a public consultation last July and received three objections to the plans.

One resident said it would block their view, though the council argues the structure will remain “largely the same” and there would be no adverse impact.



Others said they wanted to know more about the types of business that would move in, but no specific shops have been identified.

As part of its regeneration of the town centre, the council hopes to turn Courtenay Place, which connects St James

Street Station and Walthamstow High Street, into a “green link” with a new ‘pocket’ park.

Julia Feix and Tarek Merlin, from architecture firm Feix&Merlin, previously told the *Echo*: “We love to work on this kind of community regeneration project, and we saw a strong and pioneering vision from the council team at Waltham Forest.

“This is a shared aim to take what is a slightly forgotten backland space and transform this into a new exciting and activated place, forging connections back into the lively high street and St James Street Station.”

Renovating the archways would also mean removing the “unfriendly” security fencing and overgrown shrubs, the council says.

Similar schemes have been successfully launched across London, including in nearby Leyton Midland Road.

The units beneath the Suffragette Line include a ‘hotpod’ yoga studio, a popular smokehouse, a cocktail bar, and several metalworks.

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## NEWS

# Alarm grows at wave of mystery red paint vandalism

Attacks on Walthamstow homes last month mirror incidents seen in Leyton and Leytonstone in February



Several homes were daubed in red paint on Chingford Road in Walthamstow on 13th and 18th March

by Marco Marcelline

**C**alls for more police action have been made following a wave of vandalism that has seen homes across the borough daubed in red paint, motor oil and “brothel” graffiti.

Attacks on Walthamstow homes in the early hours of Thursday 13th March and Tuesday 18th March came after identical incidents in Leyton and Leytonstone in February that left residents there shaken.

On both days, vandals splashed red paint and motor oil on several homes along Chingford Road before putting handwritten notes through letterboxes that alleged a house on the street is a brothel.

Neighbours whose homes were struck by the paint included elderly people and families with small children.

Hannah, who preferred not to share her surname, said she first became aware of what had happened when she was attending to her young daughter at 5am on 18th March, stating: “I heard

something come through the door which I thought was odd because it couldn’t have been mail at that time.”

Her husband then saw red paint had been splashed on their new home, which they’d moved into in February.

Hannah told the *Echo*: “When I saw [the paint], I just cried. We thought we were so lucky when we weren’t one of the homes affected on Thursday. I’m at a loss. People on this street are really upset. My neighbour’s child

thought the red paint was blood.”

She said fixing the damage to her front door, windows, and front patio will leave her family out of pocket due to high claimant fees charged by her insurance company.

She however added that she had been touched by “lovely” offers of help from concerned locals.

The Metropolitan Police closed Hannah’s case shortly after she reported it, citing a lack of any available CCTV footage to

identify the vandals’ faces.

Cops were previously criticised for not attending homes that were targeted in Leytonstone. Footage captured by residents’ Ring cameras on 19th February showed two hooded males carrying buckets and walking into front gardens.

There is no evidence that any of the homes that have been targeted in any of the attacks are brothels.

Responding to the attacks, Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy wrote a letter to the policing minister Diana Johnson, asking for assistance in an investigation.

She wrote: “Strikingly similar crimes have been repeated elsewhere [in the country].

“Despite this open-source information, this pattern and the possible connection between these attacks does not as yet appear to have been made [...] given the pattern of evidence of these incidents across the country I am writing to you as the policing minister to seek your assistance to as to how to ensure this matter is escalated for national attention.”

## Incident timeline

- 31st January: Calderon Road, Leyton
- 6th February: Calderon Road, Leyton
- 19th February: Norman Road, Leytonstone
- 26th February: Frith Road, Leyton
- 13th March: Cazenove Road and Chingford Road, Walthamstow
- 18th March: Chingford Road, Walthamstow

A spokesperson from the Met said: “We are aware of a number of incidents whereby addresses in the area have been criminally damaged with red paint in the last month. These incidents are being investigated by the local safer neighbourhoods team to ensure all investigative leads are explored and support is provided to the victims of these incidents.

“At this stage there has been no arrest and enquiries into the circumstances continue.”

**Anyone with information is asked to call police on 101 or message @MetCC on X quoting CAD 1081/19FEB**

**Have you been affected by these incidents or have any information to share? Please get in touch: wfecho@socialspider.com**



Teachers on strike at Leytonstone School, Credit NEU Waltham Forest



## Teachers agree new pay terms with council

Educators had been on strike due to the “continuation” of performance-related pay at Leytonstone and Willowfield schools

**S**triking teachers at two Waltham Forest secondary schools ended their dispute after agreeing new pay terms with the council.

National Education Union (NEU) members at Leytonstone and Willowfield schools had participated in a total of four days of strike action in March and had planned five further days of walkouts.

The strike action stemmed from concern about the “continuation” of performance-related pay (PRP).

Robin Talbot, NEU Waltham Forest assistant secretary, previously told the *Echo* that despite Waltham Forest Council’s decision to abolish PRP following government guidance, wording in the council’s official policy was “unclear” on whether progression is automatic and annual for all pay scales.

The NEU had asked that the council explicitly state that pay progression is “automatic and annual” for all teachers regardless of seniority.

An amended pay policy now means staff who are subject to underperformance and capability reviews are no longer excluded from pay progression.

Kizzy Gardiner, cabinet member for children and young people, said: “We are pleased that upcoming school strikes have been suspended following productive meetings between the union, the schools involved, and the local authority.”



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A key feature of enhanced dementia care at Dalton Lodge is the creation of purpose-built spaces designed for those with advanced dementia. These environments are smaller and more intimate, creating a homely atmosphere that helps residents feel safe and at ease. The design of our spaces is intentional, using soothing colours, avoiding harsh patterns, and incorporating natural elements like plants to provide a tranquil setting.

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accurate and timely pain management.

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#### Person-Centred Care Through Dementia Care Mapping

At Dalton Lodge, care is tailored to each individual's unique needs through an evidence-based approach called Dementia Care Mapping (DCM). This method involves observing residents' quality of life and interactions, with a focus on psychological wellbeing.

Feedback from these observations helps the care team continuously refine their approach, ensuring residents' needs are met with dignity and respect. Regular reviews and action plans support ongoing improvement.



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Dalton Lodge Care Home represents the future of dementia care. By integrating advanced practices, cutting-edge technology, and highly trained staff, it offers tailored solutions for individuals living with advanced dementia. Supported by the extensive experience of B&M Care, Dalton Lodge provides a trusted environment where residents can thrive.

Whether you are seeking care for a loved one or exploring options, Dalton Lodge is here to provide high-quality, compassionate care designed to meet your family's needs. Contact our friendly team today to learn more about how we can support you.



020 8016 2357



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# NEWS

Waltham Forest is responsible for ensuring public and private land is not contaminated with toxic chemicals and metals. The picture below is of an unrelated site



The Oliver Close Estate pictured in 1988. Since redeveloped, it has been earmarked by the council as a “high risk” site Credit Miles Glendinning



## Council leaves three high-risk toxic sites unchecked

Waltham Forest is one of just twelve councils in the country that have not carried out a ground inspection on sites deemed to have a ‘high risk’ of toxic soil

by Marco Marcelline

**L**and deemed to have a “high risk” of being contaminated with toxic chemicals has never been checked by Waltham Forest Council.

A total of 405 sites across the borough have been identified as “potentially” contaminated, while three sites have been flagged as having a “high risk” of being contaminated.

Of the three “high risk” parcels of land, one is used for housing, a second is an allotment, and a third is green space near a housing development.

Contaminated land is a site that might have been polluted with heavy metals or chemicals from its previous use as an old factory, power station, railway line, petrol station or landfill site.

The revelation comes after the BBC’s Shared Data Unit sent freedom of information requests about contaminated land handling to all UK local authorities.

The BBC found that of 13,093 potentially toxic sites that councils have identified as high risk, only 1,465 have been inspected.

Waltham Forest was one of just twelve councils that stated they had not carried out a ground inspection on any of their

high risk sites since 2000.

Health experts say a lack of soil testing could leave people at risk from contaminants including lead, arsenic and asbestos.

Lead poisoning can cause developmental delays, brain damage, and even death, while arsenic, in its inorganic form, poses significant health risks, including cancer, skin lesions, and liver damage.

A Department for Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs (Defra) report has said most sites posing health risks are contaminated by chemicals like arsenic, lead, nickel, chromium, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) found in soil or water.

In 2000, nascent government legislation required councils to list all potential contaminated sites, and inspect the high-risk ones to make sure people and property are not at risk.

The *Echo* understands the three “high risk” sites are Oliver Close in Leyton, Suffield Hatch Allotments in Chingford, and land off Riverhead Close in Walthamstow.

From 1967 until 1995, Oliver Close was home to five 20-storey tower blocks. Waltham Forest demolished the towers individually starting with the first in 1995, with the last remaining tower coming down in 2001.

330 Peabody Trust managed homes

have been built on the site since, with the council stating it is “likely” that the land was remediated by developers during construction.

Peabody Trust was contacted for comment.

The *Echo* understands that residents living on the Oliver Close Estate before it was demolished were never told that site had a “high risk” of being contaminated.

Likewise, current allotment users at Suffield Hatch in Chingford told the *Echo* they were “blindsided” by the news that the site may contain contaminated soil.

Council deputy leader and cabinet member for housing Ahsan Khan, said: “Waltham Forest takes a risk-based approach to land that has a higher risk of contamination due to historical uses, and always acts according to statutory guidance.

“It is important to note that sites designated as high-risk are not necessarily contaminated, but that there is a higher risk due to their previous usage.”

A council spokesperson told the *Echo* it had decided a detailed investigation of each site would be a “disproportionate approach” to take. This decision was made after weighing up the sites’ contamination risk and the financial costs of an investigation, the spokesperson added.

The council says it has no current plans

to inspect any of the sites, though this will be “kept under review” in light of any new information.

Between 2000 and 2014, councils had the ability to apply for funding to test and clean up contaminated land.

The coalition government however cut funding access, meaning councils have had to pay for testing and remediation themselves since 2014. In the same year, Defra issued guidance urging councils to fix sites through the planning system and via private developers.

Planning laws cover contamination issues for people living in property constructed after 2000.

A Defra spokesperson said: “Local authorities have a statutory duty to inspect potentially contaminated sites, require remediation, and maintain a public register of remediated land. Any risk to public health from contaminated land is a serious matter.

“That’s why we’ve recently commissioned the Environment Agency to produce a new state of contaminated land report, which will help provide the best possible baseline of data to measure future policies related to contaminated land against.”

Are you living near or on one of the “high risk” sites? Get in touch: [wfecho@socialspider.com](mailto:wfecho@socialspider.com)



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## NEWS

# ‘I thought I could make money here. I was wrong’: The traders who have left an ailing indoor market behind

Business owners have deserted Stow Bazaar since it opened, citing poor facilities, consistently low footfall, and repeated break-ins



Princess Caulker left Stow Bazaar in December. She says the venture left her with debts amounting to £20,000

by Marco Marcelline

Located on the site of a former Wilko in the middle of Walthamstow High Street, Stow Bazaar is home to 48 retail units, many of which have remained empty since it opened in June 2024.

Stow Bazaar describes itself as “more than a market” and a “celebration of culture, a gathering of community, and a destination for those who seek something special”.

The retail spaces on offer include stores selling world foods, music records, perfume, and clothing.

But current and former traders have told the *Echo* that they’ve battled repeated break-ins,

unkempt toilet facilities, and a management that has failed to advertise their businesses.

Consistently low footfall meant trader Princess Caulker, was forced to take out loans to keep her clothing business GlitzGlamBoutiqu3 afloat. Princess says she eventually accrued crippling debts that run into the tens of thousands.

Princess had at first been “thrilled” to sign a lease for the space, she says, having been enticed by a relatively low rent for a large shop at the front of the market.

Believing it would become a bustling shopping destination, she says she soon realised things were “not right”.

Princess said: “We were told, ‘Oh you’ll have WiFi; you’ll have

heating, you’ll have lots of people coming in all the time’. But it was always quiet and cold inside, and I had to buy my own WiFi router.”

When the *Echo* visited Stow Bazaar in March, traders said that the site still had no internet.

Before moving into Stow Bazaar, Princess occupied a small shop that faced onto the High Street.

She said: “My [first] shop was a lot smaller but I had more customers. I was just about paying the bills. I thought that by having a bigger shop in Stow Bazaar, and near the entrance I would be able to make a profit. I was wrong.”

Princess says Stow Bazaar’s management never sought to remedy the “consistent” lack of footfall with advertising or decent social media promotion.

The market’s rarely updated Instagram page has a total of twelve posts and 54 followers, while its website still advertises businesses which have long departed, such as Princess’s.

After growing tired of a lack of support from management, Princess announced her intent to leave in December. She’s not the only one to have done so, she says, adding: “I know at least 15 traders who have moved their businesses since Stow Bazaar opened.”

Other traders, like Rob\*, told the *Echo* that the market’s only toilet was poorly maintained, leaving him and others unable to use it while at work. He also complained that it is located in an ex-office space above the market floor, meaning it is inaccessible for mobility impaired customers.

“They don’t clean the toilets enough. Sometimes I’ve walked in and seen the toilet seat covered in excrement. The floor is always wet. It’s disgusting. I’ve had to use the neighbouring shop’s toilets instead.”

The *Echo* understands that flooding in the upstairs toilet once caused a floor tile to col-

lapse into the market due to the weight of the water.

Traders said it was “lucky” that the tile didn’t fall during the market’s opening hours.

Theft has also blighted the market for months. According to Rob, the market lacks a security guard that can adequately protect retail units from shoplifters and thieves.

He said: “The ‘security guard’ they employ is an older man [in his 60s] who cannot pose a threat to anybody. I feel like the responsibility is on us as traders to ensure our units aren’t broken into. Some people have had to spend hundreds of pounds on solid doors and locks to protect themselves.”

Princess says she was targeted by thieves who broke into her shop and stole £600 in cash in November.

Meanwhile, Luxmist Perfume, run by Haris Ahmed, had been open for just one week when a thief broke in and stole “£35,000” worth of perfume.

In a bid to recoup his losses, Haris offered generous discounts on his perfumes of up to 75%. He eventually packed up his shop to move to a location opposite 17&Central in Walthamstow.

Stow Bazaar did not respond to a request for comment.

Not everyone the *Echo* spoke to shared such pessimistic perspectives. New business owner Blossom Godino, who runs Filipino and Korean food shop Uyy, said she had not experienced the same low footfall that had afflicted others, and was managing to reach her financial targets.

But longtime Walthamstow Market shopper Mark Costis spoke of how his initial excitement at Stow Bazaar gave way to bitter disappointment. Speaking next to Princess’ new stall opposite Sainsbury’s, Mark said: “I first thought it had the potential to emulate the success of Stratford Market Village.

“But it doesn’t look like the landlord is actually serious about making it work. I mean why would you still have the old Wilko signage for months after opening for a start?”

He continued: “I’m usually not a cynical person, but it seems to me that he doesn’t want to spend any more money on this venture, and while he is getting a fortune in rent, that suits him fine. I feel very sorry for the business owners. They have spent a lot of money getting them up and running. I hope their fortunes change for the better soon.”

\*Names have been changed



Harsh lighting, uninspired flooring, and empty retail units in Stow Bazaar last month



# NEWS

# Homeless mum slept in park after rejecting council's Grimsby home offer

## A young Walthamstow mum-of-two was offered housing in Grimsby but turned it down citing isolation, distance and mental health worries

by Marco Marcelline

A homeless young mother says she slept in a Walthamstow park with her two toddlers after she declined an offer by Waltham Forest Council to house her in Grimsby.

Sabrina\* became homeless in November 2024 following domestic abuse that she alleges was perpetrated against her by her mother-in-law.

Before she became homeless, Sabrina lived at her in-laws' home in Walthamstow with her two children, now 18 and 36 months old, and her husband.

Speaking to the *Echo*, Sabrina said her home life was “tense” and “difficult” because of how her mother-in-law treated her.

She was expected to continue birthing children despite her struggles with postpartum depression, and was stressed by “overcrowding” at her in-laws’, who were also hosting three teenage foster children.

Serious disputes and arguments regularly took place between Sabrina and her mother-in-law, with some involving physical assault, she alleges.

One such argument stemmed from the gifting of a cat to Sabrina by her husband. Sabrina says she quickly developed a strong emotional bond with the cat, but her mother-in-law wanted the cat removed from the house. A “heated” argument ensued over the issue, leading to police almost being called, Sabrina said.

The young mother was then told she would have to leave the house if she was not intent on having more children.

She and her young children became homeless on 15th November, and were promptly put up by the council in an Ilford hotel room where she stayed until 5th March.

The council wrote to Sabrina on 27th February informing her of an offer of accommodation in Grimsby, adding that it would no longer have a duty to house her if she refused it.

Sabrina refused the offer because it was disruptive to her eldest's nursery education, and was far from her sister who lives in a Bournemouth army barracks.

Explaining her decision to reject the council's only offer of housing, Sabrina said: "It is not the cost of the property

**The young mum slept in a local park with her two small children**



but where it is that the issue lies.

"I cannot afford to travel anywhere south nor can any of my family or my children's father travel up to me [in Grimsby]. It costs too much and takes up almost half of the day commuting. It is not realistic at all."

She continued: "If I become ill [with depression] then I have no support network around me to help."

After she was evicted from the Ilford hotel on 5th March, Sabrina says she spent two nights sleeping rough with her children in two Walthamstow parks, before staying in homeless shelter accommodation.

The *Echo* understands that the council has since re-offered the Grimsby accom-

modation, and promised Sabrina emergency housing in the meantime.

The council's housing lead Ahsan Khan, said: "[Our policy] is that when someone rejects an offer of suitable accommodation, we will not owe them any further duty. As a property previously offered to her was still available, we were happy to re-offer that property again.

"Unfortunately demand for local homes far outstrips the available supply. We only offer out-of-borough placements when there is simply no suitable or available alternative in the local area."

\*Name has been changed to protect anonymity.

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LETTERS

Benefit cuts

Dear WFE

I AM CONCERNED BY THE impact that the government’s massive cuts to benefits will have on the disabled. While I completely agree that any person who wants to work is given the opportunity to succeed, the government is going about this the wrong way.

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is not a work-related benefit. It is intended to help working-aged people 16 and over with the extra costs of living with a health condition or a disability.

Nothing is as clear cut as Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall’s speech in parliament last month seemed to make out.

The government’s attitude should not be “you can work or you can’t work”; there are plenty of people who can work but only for a short period at a time.

Meanwhile, Health Secretary Wes Streeting’s comment on mental health overdiagnosis is not only an insult to the medical professionals but to anyone diagnosed.

The fear the benefits announcement has instilled into so many people with disabilities, their families and carers is unforgivable and unnecessary. The knock-on effect means many charities and volunteers are inundated with people asking questions, adding

to their already heavy workload. People with disabilities and health issues are some of our most vulnerable residents and deserve far better.

Gail Penfold, Chingford

Nationalise our water

Dear WFE

PROFIT-DRIVEN corporations have betrayed our trust and polluted our rivers. Water privatisation has failed – it’s time to put people and the planet before profit!

For too long, essential services like our water supply have been managed by profit-hungry companies, resulting in a system that consistently puts profits over the welfare of our communities. Recent measures, such as Sadiq Khan’s roundtable discussions and the City Hall’s modest £7m funding, only scratch the surface, leaving the systemic issues unaddressed.

The failures of water privatisation are part of a broader pattern, echoed in the struggles of our NHS, the dominance of big energy companies, and a widening wealth gap that leaves ordinary people in Waltham Forest at risk.

Waltham Forest Green Party is calling on the council to lobby both the Mayor of London

and the Labour government to bring about the nationalisation of Thames Water. We stand with our community in demanding a robust, accountable water system that prioritises public health and the environment over corporate profit.

Martin Edobor,  
Waltham Forest Green Party

E-bike safety

Dear WFE

THE OFFICE FOR PRODUCT Safety and Standards has stated that at least ten people have lost their lives in fires started by lithium-ion batteries powering e-bikes or e-scooters. London Fire Brigade has also attended nearly 200 fires related to these devices with experts now urging riders to take safety concerns seriously.

In 2023, 52 pedestrians were seriously injured by e-scooters and 134 were slightly injured and from reports it is regularly reported that these and e-bikes are seen being ridden on the footpath and even in one case a large bike was ridden into a local store.

We are also aware of incidents of council cargo bikes being ridden on the footpath and due to their size they create an even more significant danger to pedestrians and especially children.

There have been comments

by some of the older members of the population being reluctant to go out due to the dangers posed by the illegal use of the footpaths and alleyways by pedal cycles, e-bikes and e-scooters plus cargo bikes.

We hope that the council will now put in place an action plan to make footpaths and pavements safe for all pedestrians.

Chingford Residents Association

Got an opinion on something in Waltham Forest? We accept letters of up to 150 words from people and organisations in the borough. Email [wfecho@socialspider.com](mailto:wfecho@socialspider.com) before the next deadline on Monday, 14th April.

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LICENSING ACT 2003  
Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence

Notice of application for the grant of a Premises Licence under section 17 of the Licensing Act 2003

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **Asha Phillips and Leia Davies** have applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **Art Works East Ltd, 32 Osier Way E10 5SB**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- To permit the sale of alcohol and regulated entertainment, Monday to Sunday, 11am–11pm

The licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, Waltham Forest 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, Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF or via email: [Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk)

Representations must be received no later than 25th April 2025.

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 or conviction should such a false statement be made.

LICENCES FOR SPECIAL TREATMENT PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT **Robert Simigla** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for a Special Treatment Licence for:

- Tattoo Parlour
- Licence for the premises: **R&E Tattoo, 424 Hoe Street E17 4PG**

Anyone wishing to oppose the application must give notice in writing to the Licensing Officer, Licensing Services, Public Control Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4JF

**WITHIN 28 DAYS OF PUBLICATION** specifying the grounds of opposition.

Persons objecting to the grant of a licence must be prepared to attend in person before a Committee of the Council.

LICENSING ACT 2003  
Application for the Variation of a Premises Licence

Notice of application for the grant of a Premises Licence under section 17 of the Licensing Act 2003

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that **Liber Events Ltd** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the variation of an existing Premises Licence at: **The Lacy Nook, Wood Street Studios, Barrett Road, Walthamstow E17 3FU**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- The sale of alcohol consumed on premises: **Wed-Sun 12:00–22:00**
- The hours the premises is open to the public: **Tue 10:00–17:00, Wed–Sat 10:00–23:00, Sun 11:00–23:00.**
- Plan update showing licensable area.

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).

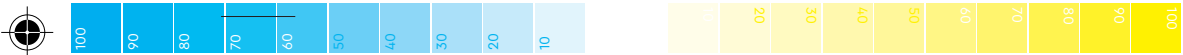
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**Representations must be received no later than Wednesday 23rd April 2025.**

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.

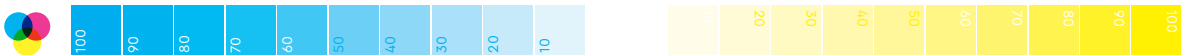
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## COMMENT

# Why Waltham Forest needs a 'Right to Grow'

A new campaign is seeking to push the council to free up its land for allotments and cut red tape around community gardens



Green shoots at Cheney Row community garden in Waltham Forest. Waltham Forest is home to over 50 organisations committed to food growing. Credit: Holly McGratten

## by The Waltham Forest Right to Grow Campaign

A few years ago, Donna, in her 50s, recovering from breast cancer, was in a very dark place. Estranged from her family, disconnected from her community, hers was just one story among the 700,000 Londoners who experience 'severe loneliness', or the 2.5 million who experience loneliness regularly.

To see Donna now makes it hard to believe she was suffering so much so recently. She is a pillar in her community, active in her local church again, and a warm, kind presence towards everyone. What happened? For one, she joined a local community garden.

Community gardens can change people's lives. They connect people with wildlife, neighbours and teach us that we can change the world for the better. The combination of light physical activity, low-stakes sociability, and the feeling that you are needed rebuilds self-esteem and rekindles hope for the future. For every £1 spent on community gardening, it saves the NHS £5.

This connection to land, people and self is not a luxury but a right. Everyone deserves the

right to grow food on public land which is not otherwise in use. This is the core demand of the national 'Right to Grow' campaign and a key part of the Waltham Forest Right to Grow Campaign.

We have a particular context here. With over 50 community food growing projects in the borough we already have a thriving movement. There are plenty of supportive voices in the council, who have helped many of these projects get off the ground, but there is a lack of an overall strategy to support food growing.

As a result, many projects have suffered at the hands of distracted, or simply obstinate, council officers across departments. Because community food growing does so much, from addressing health inequality, access to food, to climate resilience and biodiversity, this is an own goal for the council.

That's why over the next year, the Waltham Forest Right to Grow campaign will be stepping up pressure on the council to take food growing seriously and remove bureaucratic obstacles. What we want is a commitment to a food growing strategy which includes: a process for community groups to access land to grow food on, a small start-up pot of funding for those groups, and a

community food growing officer to be a point of contact.

Peculiarly, the council spent thousands developing a food strategy in the last few years, only to shelve it once it was completed. The plans to help people grow food in their homes, in small parts of local parks and in schools were ambitious and necessary.

However, because there has been no coordinated plan, many community food growers have had to navigate confusing relationships with the council. From the residents at Tenby Court randomly losing funding the council had awarded them, to the Our Pastures community garden being repeatedly stonewalled over their efforts to improve a water feature in their garden. Meanwhile many growing sites have faced confusing and uncertain conditions over their leases.

Yet, despite this lack of coordination, there has clearly been intention to support people to grow food. The council has made important steps, from partnering with local growers to develop the food strategy, to administering grant funding to some local food projects. Waltham Forest Right To Grow Campaign is calling for the council to keep its promises, and trust communities to take care of their own land. With allotment waitlists numbering over 1000, people are clearly ready, spades in hand.

Researchers at Lancaster University found that cities could produce as much as 40% of their own fruit and vegetables. Long term, a right to grow could transform Waltham Forest. Unloved 'grot spots' and disused green spaces could become vibrant community gardens that connect people and provide access to free fruit and veg. Rather than waiting years for allotments, people like Donna could just start growing food without red tape and waitlists.

If you also believe in a Right to Grow in Waltham Forest get involved by visiting: [wfrtg.co.uk](http://wfrtg.co.uk)

## NEWS



An illustration showing what the new entrance is expected to look like. Credit: TfL

Continued from page 1

available "due to budget constraints and other factors".

Then, in 2021, the government rejected the council's request for £20million to "enable construction" on the project, though the council has since stated it is hopeful it can secure funding through "future capital funding settlements from the government".

In 2020, the council estimated the full cost of constructing a new station entrance would come to £41.5m. For its part, the council has raised

£5.3m towards the ticket hall and committed a further £3.9m "backstop" if alternative funding cannot be found.

Capital and Regional (C&R), which won planning permission for the The Mall redevelopment before it was bought by Long Harbour in 2021, has put £1.5m towards the station entrance.

A planning condition attached to the redevelopment states that construction of the new entrance must begin before work on the second phase of The Mall, which includes new retail space, is completed.

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ARTS & CULTURE

Young people set to design ‘People’s Pavilion’ at Walthamstow gallery



Young people designed a public pavilion for Lea Bridge Library in summer 2023  
Credit Luke O'Donovan

Young people are being given the opportunity to co-design and construct a public pavilion at the William Morris Gallery in 2025, as the Walthamstow art institution celebrates its 75th year.

The ‘People’s Pavilion’ will serve as a hub for workshops, talks, community events, and creative play. The project, led by creative agency Beyond the Box, will give 16 to 18-year-olds from

Waltham Forest and across London, the chance to design the pavilion under the mentorship of leading architects and creatives including talent from Zaha Hadid Architects. Now in its third iteration,

this marks the second time Waltham Forest has hosted the initiative, following the successful 2023 collaboration with Lea Bridge Library. The 2023 effort culminated in the People’s Pavilion Festival, which saw an eclectic line up of experimental poetry, virtual reality and artificial intelligence workshops, films on gentrification and displacement and a DJ set all held within the pavilion. Hadrian Garrard, director of the William Morris Gallery said: “I can’t think of a better place for the People’s Pavilion than the former home of William Morris. His advocacy for community and craftsmanship aligns perfectly with the ethos of this programme.” Rosalind Doré, Waltham Forest cabinet lead for libraries, culture and sports and leisure said: “We’re delighted to see the people’s pavilion return to Waltham Forest in 2025. This initiative truly reflects the borough’s commitment to creativity and collaboration, offering young people a unique opportunity to influence and shape their surroundings.”

Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum,  
Credit Wikimedia Commons/Elektrolux2



Industrial heritage museums merge to form trust

Two north-east London industrial heritage museums have merged to form a new umbrella organisation that promises “improved facilities and enhanced programming”. Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum and Markfield Beam Engine and Museum in Tottenham have merged to form the Heritage and Communities Trust. The merger, which was finalised on 31st January and announced last month, means both museums will benefit from “shared resources and expertise” while retaining their individual names. By merging into a trust, the Heritage and Communities Trust becomes the largest dedicated industrial heritage charity within Greater London in terms of public benefit and multi-site operation. The museums, both two Victorian-era sewage pumping stations, will continue to offer free entry to visitors. “By joining forces, we’re creating a stronger, more resilient organisation that can better preserve and celebrate our shared industrial heritage,” said Abdullah Seba, chief executive of the Heritage and Communities Trust. “Our visitors will benefit from enhanced programming, improved facilities, and a more comprehensive understanding of London’s industrial past.” Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum, which welcomes 17,000 visitors annually, is also home to community maker space The Tool House and Supperclub. tube, a pop-up dining experience in a decommissioned Victoria Line carriage.

Clubbers raise thousands for charity

Stow-Ho House brings big-name DJs to Walthamstow while raising money for good causes

The charity club night Stow-Ho House returned to Walthamstow Trades Hall for a fifth time last month, thrilling 250 people. Stow-Ho House is the brainchild of music-minded Juliet Cromwell and Sam Potts who met while queuing to pick up their kids at nursery, and quickly decided to create a party that they could walk to and that finished at a reasonable time. A play on the private members club Soho House, Juliet and Sam have managed to sell out consecutive events by securing big name DJs thanks to their contacts in the music industry. A key aim of the club night is to

raise as much money for local causes as possible amid the cost of living crisis. To date, the duo have raised nearly £20,000 for local charities, including Eat or Heat, Success Charity and Waltham Forest Hub. Previous editions of Stow-Ho House have seen Fatboy Slim, Groove Armada, and Arctic Monkeys producer James Ford on the decks. This time around Underground dance DJ Secretsundaze (James Priestley) helmed the turntables. Priestley, who originally cut his teeth as a drum ‘n’ bass DJ and warehouse rave promoter, was later joined by 90s house connoisseur and ex Radio 1 DJ Lottie for a party that thrilled sweat-drenched revellers until the early hours. Sam told the *Echo*: “Once again the Walthamstow community were out dancing and raising money for the charity Sound and Music. We were overwhelmed with demand for tickets and so

grateful for Secretsundaze and Lottie playing outstanding sets at our local club.” The event, which sold out in about 30 seconds, was in aid of

charity Sound and Music, which has worked with thousands of music creators and hundreds of organisations to boost musical creativity, careers, and communities.



Stow-Ho House threw their fifth bash at the Trades Hall on 6th March Credit Sade Mia Sangar



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FEATURE

# The best jellied eels in town

Noted Eel & Pie House has been a Leytonstone staple since 1976, and as they prepare to hit their 50th anniversary, we find out why people are still queuing up

by Pallavi Singh

On a quiet corner of Leytonstone High Road, a striking green awning stands out. Embossed in distinctive and clean gold lettering, the Noted Eel & Pie House is an East London institution that has been a beloved Leytonstone landmark since relocating from Bow in 1976.

For loyal customers like Sandra Cole, who has been coming here for nearly 60 years, there’s simply no substitute. “There’s no other taste like it. There are other pie and mash shops, but this one – for me – is the best,” she tells me.

Started by the Hak family in 1926, the shop has seen three generations of Hak men serve up the iconic East End dish for nearly a century; a recipe which, I’ve been told, has remained meticulously unchanged and consistently excellent.

I’ve lived in London for nearly a decade, yet (shamefully) I have never tried pie and mash. So, on an unexpectedly sunny Tuesday afternoon in March, I find myself sitting on the historic



Alfie Hak, 28, is set to take over the family business this month Credit Jake Green



*Pie and mash is engrained in us, in our memories, and always will be*

red benches of the shop, alongside owner Alfie Hak and Sandra herself.

Tucking into steaming plates of pie, mash and liquor, we talk about all things tradition, taste jellied eels, and guess the future of this East End staple.

Born and bred in Poplar to a long line of East Enders from the Docklands, Sandra remembers lining up as a 15-year-old in Bow, when people would travel from all over to eat at Noted Eel & Pie House.

“We used to queue around the block to get into the pie shop – unheard of! People would come from miles to eat there,” she says. After getting married, Sandra moved to Leytonstone, which she notes was a very different place back then. “The High Street had a department store called Bearmans of Leytonstone, and even a cinema across the

road. It’s changed so much, but it’s starting to build up again now.”

She was delighted when the Hak family moved the shop to Leytonstone in 1976 – incidentally, the same year her eldest child, Wesley, was born. “He makes a beeline for this place whenever he visits me,” she giggles. Recollecting the deep significance the shop has had for her and her family, she shares: “My children were all weaned on it as babies. It’s one of their first solid foods. Honestly, it’s a big thing in my family – we’re all East Enders.”

When I ask how she intends to pass down her love for pie and mash to the younger generation – her grandchildren – she offers me some beautiful words about legacy: “It’s important to carry it on. I don’t need to try with my family because they love it – pie and mash

Credit Noted Eel





FEATURE



Credit Jake Green

Credit Jake Green



is ingrained in us, in our memories, and always will be.”

At just 28 years old, Alfie Hak is preparing to take full ownership of his family’s pie and mash shop this month. “We started in 1926 – my great-granddad opened it after coming over from the Netherlands. Then my granddad took it over in the ‘50s, my dad after him, and now it’s mine,” he tells me. Despite his age, Alfie has nearly 17 years of experience at the shop. “I started coming in when I was about eleven years old, just helping out,” he says.

His commitment to tradition is unwavering. “Consistency is everything,” he tells me, emphasising the pride in keeping the quality high. “We still bone the meat ourselves, so we know exactly what goes in it. You won’t find that everywhere these days.”

Today, Alfie carries on his great-grandfather’s legacy and is determined to dispel the notion that pie and mash is fading into obscurity. “People think it’s a dying trade, but I’ve actually seen an increase in the last few years. You get people coming in, taking photos of their food, trying it for the first time, and then coming back the next week.”

When I ask if he always intended to take over, he smiles and admits: “I’ve always wanted to run my own business, whether it be selling stuff online or something else. I’ve got two brothers, and they both did their time here, but they went into office jobs – one’s an accountant, and one’s in America now. So, it all kind of fell on my lap.”

I ask Sandra how best to eat pie and mash. “Just dive straight in!” she laughs. “But try not to spill the gravy!” It hadn’t quite occurred to me until mid-way through the interview that my plate was completely wiped clean. I was honestly astonished at how good the pie was, especially the rich gravy that oozed onto the mash. The welcome addition of their homemade chilli vinegar gave it an extra kick (you can buy a massive bottle at the counter for just £2.50).

A part of me wanted to go up for another round – at around £4 for a plate of pie, mash, and liquor, it was an absolute bargain. As I sit there contemplating a second helping, Alfie gets up and brings



A jellied eel Credit Pallavi Singh

over an original newspaper clipping from August 1976.

“I’ve got an old newspaper comparing the prices of popular British food at the time – fish and chips had gone up to 27p, which people thought was expensive!” he grins. Reflecting on the ever-rising cost of a chippy tea today, it’s clear that pie, mash, and liquor has stood the test of time – not just as a hearty meal, but as unbeatable value for money.

Alfie then brings over a plate of jellied eels personally and stands patiently, smiling as he waits for me to try it.

“You either hate it or love it,” chimes in a fellow diner from a nearby table, peering over as I gingerly spoon a small amount of quivering jelly into my mouth. It is... interesting, to say the least. The eel itself is astonishingly tender – almost like a soft, white fish in texture.

“Our eels always come from Ireland, mostly from Lough Neagh,” Alfie tells me. “There was a time when we had to use Canadian eels, but people

noticed the difference straight away. The skin is thicker, and the meat isn’t as white or tender.” For Sandra, however, jellied eels are a beloved tradition – a taste she inherited. “My mother loved eels,” she beams. “But she used to have them stewed, whereas I have always loved them in jelly.” I wonder aloud if I might prefer stewed eels instead, like Sandra’s mother did. She smiles knowingly. “Maybe you would. We’ll have to do this again so you can try them properly!”

As the afternoon winds down, customers scrape up the last morsels of mash before heading out. I ask Alfie how he plans to bring pie and mash to the next generation.

“We’ve introduced a few new things; delivery, social media, even a vegan pie. You have to evolve while keeping the tradition alive. Even just little things, like serving tea and coffee – we never used to, but now we do. It just makes it feel more welcoming, more in tune with the times.”

I ask if he’s embraced TikTok. “Yes, we are on TikTok,” he chuckles. It will be exciting to watch Alfie lead Noted Eel & Pie House into its next phase, all while keeping one foot firmly planted in East End tradition.

After my visit, one thing is certain: I’ve been completely won over. If you haven’t yet experienced the Hak family’s exceptional contribution to Leytonstone’s food lore, I highly recommend stopping by – and tucking in.



Loyal customer Sandra Cole, who has been coming to Noted Eel for many decades Credit Pallavi Singh



AROUND THE BOROUGH

LEYTON

Documentary profiles Leyton’s best culinary spots



Documentary presenter Jono Yates Credit Scran Away

Some of Leyton’s best restaurants have been profiled in a YouTube documentary series that looks at the connection between food and football culture. Documentary presenter Jono Yates celebrates the “grafters, immigrants and diehard locals of Leyton”, while hearing from the great grandson of Noted Eel & Pie House’s founder, sampling The Macbeth at Deeney’s and enjoying pints at the Leytonstone Tavern.

Jono also gets stuck in at E10’s halal Texas-style barbecue spot, Burnt Smokehouse, taste-testing their unmatched beef links, corn

ribs and melt-in-the-mouth brisket. Jono, a Mancunian, experiences his first jellied eels, uncovers the north-south culinary divide, and shares bitterness towards the

food service at his local football ground, Old Trafford. The documentary also hears from the Leyton Orient FC supporters, and those who work in the busy stands, exploring their multi-generational relationships, deep-rooted traditions and enduring passion for the club. Jono said: “Football in Leyton isn’t just about the 90 minutes - it’s about the people, the traditions, and the shared experience that brings everyone together. With Scran Away, I loved meeting the incredible people behind these spots – Leyton’s warmth, diversity, and community spirit make its matchday culture something truly special.”

To watch the Scran Away episode: Visit [bit.ly/4iHzAz6](https://bit.ly/4iHzAz6)



Burnt Smokehouse in Leyton Credit Scran Away

WALTHAMSTOW

Pub shut due to ‘mouse infestation’

The Bell pub in Walthamstow has been indefinitely shut due to a ‘widespread’ mouse infestation. According to a Waltham Forest hygiene emergency prohibition



The pub remains shut Credit Sebastian Mann

notice issued on 11th March, the Forest Road pub was shut because of an “active and widespread mouse infestation” and a “lack of cleanliness”. Meanwhile, a poster which was placed on the pub’s doors this afternoon told customers it was shut “due to circumstances beyond our control”, adding that they hoped to be “up and running again very soon”. The Bell’s general manager Dave Morrish declined to comment when contacted by the *Echo*. The closure comes less than a

fortnight after the pub experienced a fire that destroyed its front doors. Morrish, who lives above The Bell, previously told the *Echo* that the destroyed doors, which had cost the pub “thousands”, had been fitted just two months prior. Despite the fire damage, The Bell re-opened hours later on Saturday 1st March. Morrish has managed the Bell since autumn 2022, when long-standing manager Andy Potter was forced out by landlord Stonegate Group after his lease came up for renewal.

LEYTONSTONE

Leytonstone man who murdered top chef jailed for life



Mussie Imnetu was a top chef working in Dubai and was visiting London when he was attacked Credit Met Police



Omar Wilson will serve at least 18 years in jail for murdering Mussie Credit Met Police

by Marco Marcelline

A Leytonstone man has been jailed for the murder of a top chef in August last year. Omar Wilson, 31, was sentenced to life, with a minimum jail term of 18 years, for punching Mussie Imnetu, 41, to death in Queensway, west London, on 26th August 2024. Mussie, who was head chef at an exclusive member’s club in Dubai, had been visiting London on business before he was fatally attacked. Emergency services found him unconscious with a head injury at around 11.22pm on 26th August. He was taken to hospital but sadly died on 30th August from a catastrophic brain injury. Early reporting of the murder suggested Mussie was attacked at Notting Hill Carnival, which he had attended earlier that day. However, he was found unconscious outside the carnival area near Dr Power restaurant in Queensway, hours after the carnival had finished. Wilson was initially charged with causing grievous bodily harm (GBH) but his charge was upgraded to murder after Mussie died. During court hearings it was heard that Wilson had head-butted an intoxicated Mussie, before punching him several times to his head and continuing to punch him repeatedly after he fell to the floor. Wilson then kicked the defenceless chef in the head. Detectives were able to use

CCTV footage alongside DNA from a pair of sunglasses to prove that Wilson had killed Mussie. Wilson claimed that he attacked Mussie in self-defence, and alleged that Mussie had hit him over the head with a broken bottle and was harassing women. However the jury found him guilty of murder, with Judge Phillip Katz reportedly calling the bottle claim a “deliberate lie”. After the attack, Wilson quickly left the area and travelled across London to attend a nightclub on Gaunt Street, in Elephant and Castle. He was arrested on 28th August and charged the following day. According to his LinkedIn profile, Mussie was executive head chef at The Brasserie at The Arts Club Dubai and had worked with celebrity chefs like Alain Ducasse and Gordon Ramsay during his career. In a pre-recorded victim impact statement played at the Old Bailey, Mussie’s wife Linda Imnetu described him as “respected, admired and loved”. She said: “Mussie didn’t just leave behind a legacy for his family, he left an indelible mark on his workplace and community. “Nothing can undo what has been taken from us. I ask the court to remember the man Mussie was: his character, his integrity and the life he built; not just the circumstances of his passing.” An audio recording of Mussie’s young son was also played to the court, where he said: “I love you. Bye bye Daddy.”



## COMMUNITY

## Tools for all

Greg Dickson reflects on the growth of the much-valued Walthamstow Tool Library



The Walthamstow Tool Library team

**W**althamstow Tool Library (WTL) is one of very few genuine tool libraries in London. Our 553 members get unlimited borrowing access to 560 household tools, ranging from basic DIY equipment to large power tools.

We have just surpassed 10,000 loans since we started during lockdown, which we estimate has saved 111 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions from the unnecessary purchases of new tools. In this financial year alone we have made 3,960 loans and saved 44.3 tonnes of carbon dioxide.

We are very proud of the use of our lovely little site which we're very grateful to Waltham Forest Council for providing us with.

WTL is managed by the Forest Recycling Project and run by Maria who welcomes our fantastic volunteers to help with opening days, tool maintenance days, tool sharpening, and social media.

Our model is based on three principles: great value, accessibility and being embedded in the community. Under this model we have a large tool inventory that is ever-improving, including a lot of popular tools such as drill drivers, sanders, tools you only need occasionally or large tools that would take up a lot of space at home.

It really enables many people to do DIY jobs they wouldn't be

able to attempt otherwise, saving money and reducing waste. Tools are made to make things and WTL helps realise this and people's untapped potential. It demonstrates how reusing and recycling can have a positive environmental impact while also bringing people together to work on collaborative projects.

The original vision for the library came from William Morris Big Local, which provided our initial pilot funding.

When this came to an end, support from the North London Waste Authority through the North London Community Fund helped us move to become financially self-sufficient.

Recently we have received some fantastic donations of new tools from our wish list to go on the inventory over the next few months, including an array of Makita tools and a Karcher professional carpet cleaner.

We've also received a new sharpening system and jigs for our workshop that will allow us to greatly improve our sharpening service and hopefully increase our income. We're expecting these to be available for loan soon – members can keep an eye out for announcements in our newsletter.

**The library in Priory Court is open on Tuesdays from 3-6pm and Saturdays 10am-1pm. You can also sign up as a member or find details to contact WTL at: [walthamstowtl.myturn.com/library](http://walthamstowtl.myturn.com/library)**



Tool Library volunteers maintain and repair tools for loan

People taking part in Nbam CIC's Magical Monday art class  
Credit: Neesha Badhan



## Everyone is an artist

NBAM CIC is a Walthamstow based arts organisation that helps adults with special needs unlock their inner artist

by Neesha Badhan

**W**e are a small not for profit social arts organisation using the power of creativity and communication to forge social gaps and create a sense of community and connectivity for those living with mental health problems and other disabilities.

We are based in the offices upstairs at The Mill community centre in Walthamstow and have a small team that look after the day-to-day running of the project.

The main purpose of NBAM CIC is to spread kindness through creativity and increase people's sense of self worth and confidence.

We ensure there is an inclusive form of teaching through verbal, written and kinaesthetic methods and we encourage self exploration through the creative endeavours we put on.

For the past year we have been lucky enough to be able to put on a regular workshop at The Mill with funding from

the National Lottery. However this funding is now coming to an end and we'd love your support to help us continue the good work we have been doing.

One of the members of the group has been able to return to work feeling better, another has gone into full time education and one has gone on to start their own special needs social network.

We believe everyone can make art given the right environment and support.

There has been a lack of projects for adults with special educational needs in the borough and, as such, although we started mainly in the mental health sector we now have participants who come to us with various different disabilities and have integrated into the group in a really lovely way.

If you'd like to help us continue doing our work, please consider donating to our crowdfunder.

**You can donate to NBAM CIC's crowdfunder here: [gofund.me/2f58f1c7](https://gofund.me/2f58f1c7)**



# LISTINGS

## JAZZ

**Jazz At Trades**  
Thursday 3rd April, doors 7pm  
Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61–63  
Tower Hamlets Road E17 4RQ

Walthamstow’s premier jazz night featuring London and the UK’s finest musicians. Jazz at Trades presents vibraphonist Nathaniel Steele. Nat will be joined by an exciting trio, featuring pianist Matyas Gayer, bassist Asaph Tal and drummer Mark Hale.

**Tickets (£7/10)**  
**Visit** [wegottickets.com/event/654400](http://wegottickets.com/event/654400)

## TALK

**News From Nowhere Club**  
Saturday 5th April, 7.30pm  
St John’s Church Hall, 829–837  
High Road Leytonstone E11 1HH

Eileen Turnbull, the secretary of the Shrewsbury 24 Campaign, formed in 2006 to overturn a miscarriage of justice. The 24 were North Wales building workers, prosecuted in 1973–74 for alleged picketing offences during the national building workers’ strike. Six received prison sentences ranging from four months to three years; 16 were given suspended prison sentences. In 2021 three judges quashed all the pickets’ convictions. Eileen will recount the manipulation of the original trials by the judiciary, politicians and media, which came to light only in the course of her research.

**Free, just turn up.**  
**Donations welcome on the day**

## MARKET

**Maker’s Market**  
Sunday 6th April, 11am–5pm  
Big Penny Social, 1 Priestley Way,  
London E17 6AL

Shop small and shop local at Craft and Flea’s authentic twist on the traditional craft market with a huge selection of products from illustration to vintage bric-a-brac, plants to jewellery, sustainable products to food, ceramics to candles and so much more! This is not a typical craft fair. Stalls have been handpicked based on their high quality, on-trend products.

**£3**  
**Visit** [bigpennysocial.co.uk/whats-on/makers-market](http://bigpennysocial.co.uk/whats-on/makers-market)

## DRAG

**Drag Idol Heats at Walthamstow Trades Hall**  
Wednesday 9th April, 9pm  
Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61–63  
Tower Hamlets Road E17 4RQ

The Trades Hall, in collaboration with Pixie Presents, is organizing Drag Idol Heats this April! Drag Queen Victoria Sponge will be hosting each heat and the heat final. Who will impress the judges and earn the chance to represent Walthamstow Trades Hall in the Drag Idol Semi-Final? The only way to find out is to join us on the night.

**Free**  
**Visit** [bit.ly/4j6Hsk8](http://bit.ly/4j6Hsk8)

## CHILDREN

**Discovering Minds presents:**  
**The Magic of Heuristic Play**  
Friday 11th April,  
10.30am–11.30am  
Wanstead Quaker Meeting House,  
Quaker Meeting House, Bush  
Road E11 3AU

Explorative and creative play sessions for ages 6 months to 4-year-olds. Heuristic play is all about providing a safe and stimulating environment filled with intriguing objects. These items are carefully chosen to be engaging, encouraging your child to explore.

**£8.50 (for first session)**  
**Visit** [bit.ly/43mkCda](http://bit.ly/43mkCda)

## FESTIVAL

**Here Comes The Sun: Start of Spring Festival**  
Saturday 12th April, 1pm  
Signature Brew, Unit 15, Blackhorse Lane E17 5QJ

Celebrate the beginning of spring at Signature Brew where we will host a variety of music from Alice SK, Candar, Easy Tears, George Erith, JW Paris, Liam C, The Ovines, Rolla and The Slates with more bands still to be announced.

**£15 entry**  
**Visit** [tixr.com/groups/signaturebrew/events/here-comes-the-sun-start-of-spring-festival-london-136219](http://tixr.com/groups/signaturebrew/events/here-comes-the-sun-start-of-spring-festival-london-136219)

## WORKSHOP

**Self Portrait Workshop at The Mill**  
Thursday 17th April, 6:30pm–8pm  
7–11 Coppermill Lane,  
Walthamstow E17 7HA

Drop in to this friendly and laid back one off self-portrait workshop at The Mill where we will be drawing self-portraits using a mirror. We’ll start with some fun, quick exercises to take the pressure off where no previous experience is required. Materials provided but if you would like to bring your own supplies to work with please do. 1.5 hour class with a tea break in the middle.

**£2 donation to The Mill**  
**Visit** [bit.ly/3XZmPrq](http://bit.ly/3XZmPrq)

## FILM

**‘Made in Walthamstow’ documentary**  
Monday 21st April, 2pm–5pm  
Orford House, 73 Orford Road  
E17 9QR

Xaymaca Awoyungbo’s ‘Made in Walthamstow’ documentary tells the story of Walthamstow FC’s unprecedented kit collaboration with the William Morris Gallery (the first between a museum and a football club). Through it, Awoyungbo highlights the history of football kits, the significance of William Morris and the importance of community. Join him to celebrate the special project!

The film will be followed by a Q&A, a football kit customisation art class and a William Morris inspired photoshoot. Whether

you’re a family looking for a fun day out or creative, this event offers a unique blend of history, design and football.

**Free, reserve a spot on Eventbrite.**  
**Search: ‘Made in Walthamstow Film Screening & Art Class’**

## CONCERT

**Farrenc Nonet in Waltham Forest**  
Friday 25th April, 7.30pm–9.30pm  
All Saints Church, Church Avenue,  
Highams Park E4 9QZ

The Tailleferre Ensemble will present a full-length evening concert for the Waltham Forest Music Society. The programme will include works for wind and string ensembles by Irene Britton-Smith, Alyssa Morris, Cecilia McDowall, and will culminate with a performance of Farrenc’s celebrated nonet.

**Free**  
**Visit** [bit.ly/42h6fFW](http://bit.ly/42h6fFW)

## MARKET

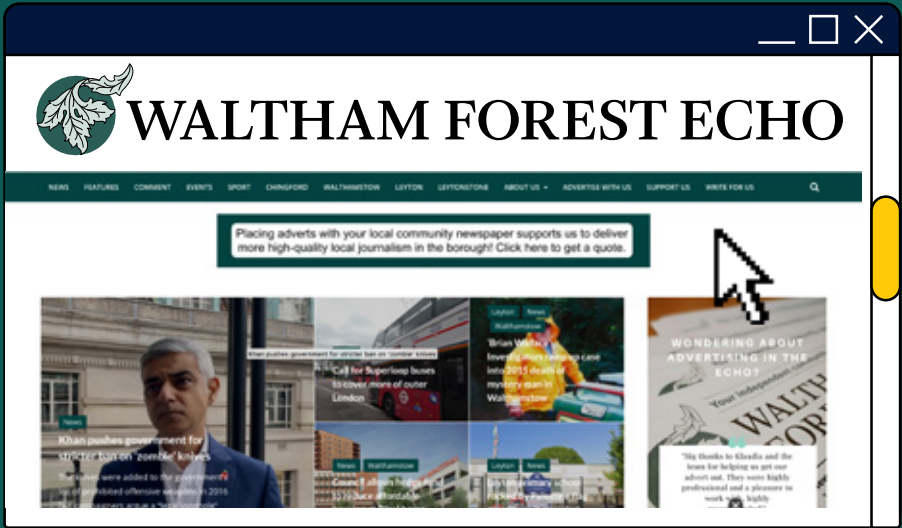
**Chingford Green Jumble Trail**  
Sunday, 27th April, 10am–2:30pm  
Chingford Green E4 7AZ

A day of community fun and active recycling. Sell jumble, crafts, food or plants. To host a stall, please simply pay the £5 to Eventbrite, fill in the form in full when you checkout, and you will be added to the map. The £5 charge will go towards Jumble Trail fees and marketing, and any excess will be donated to CADOS.

**Free**  
**Visit** [bit.ly/4j2gt2D](http://bit.ly/4j2gt2D)

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## SPORT

# The story behind the William Morris kit

A talented young local filmmaker has captured the story behind Walthamstow FC's William Morris kit. He speaks to us about his film and career so far



Filmmaker Xaymaca Awoyungbo Credit Talia Woodin

by David O'Driscoll

**W**hen you leave Blackhorse Road Station, you come face-to-face with a sign welcoming you to Waltham Forest telling you how it is full of creativity.

Xaymaca Awoyungbo is a clear example of the homegrown creativity in this neck of the woods. He is a local young man, making his way into the world and making a name for himself.

After finishing his degree at Warwick University, he is forging ahead with a career in journalism and documentary filmmaking and has started building up an impressive CV.

Xaymaca has done a lot of work as a *Guardian* sports writer. He specialises in live blogging of sporting events, mainly the Premier League.

He recently covered several Chelsea games and has also done cricket blogs. Xaymaca has branched out and written a number of opinion pieces in the *Guardian*; one on defending the humanities catches the eye.

His first major documentary work was on the challenging subject of racism in football and at Chelsea FC in particular. He won a competition to direct this for Chelsea, and he learned a lot about the craft of documentary filming here.

Since then, Xaymaca has also done a couple of short films for the new Victoria and Albert Museum East, which is to open in May.

I caught up with him to discuss his recent excellent documentary on the story behind Walthamstow FC's William Morris kit.

It was a lovely film that covered the story of replica kits and how they became

popular, looking at the famous England World Cup-winning kit of 1966 and the Leeds kit of the 1970s.

But at the heart of it was the story of the Walthamstow FC William Morris kit, which became a bit of an internet sensation and was sold in large numbers across the world.

The film is a real labour of love for Xaymaca, for which he did not get any funding, but it's very much a local film with contributions from the William Morris Gallery and Wood Street Walls, the people behind the idea of the kit.

Xaymaca says he is very open to exploring other local Walthamstow projects.

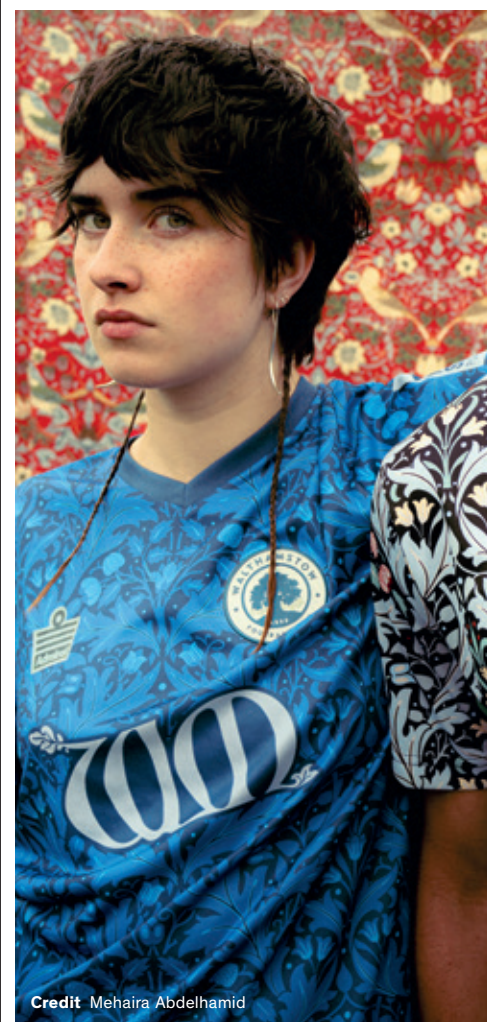
To that end, he is setting up a website and YouTube channel called Stow Stories and is keen to connect with the local community for future documentary work.

He is planning a number of events for the film. The main one will be at the William Morris Gallery, but he is also planning another one in Orford House on 21st April.

The event will feature a kit customisation art class and portrait photography. There will be three screenings for Waltham Forest schools in April and May. Do catch it, as it is an outstanding film.

You can keep up with Xaymaca's work by following Stow Stories on Instagram, and visiting his website: [xaymacaawoyungbo.com](http://xaymacaawoyungbo.com)

Turn to page 18 for details of Xaymaca's film screening event



Credit Mehaira Abdelhamid

Advertisement

## JOIN US

### YOUTH PLAYERS WANTED!

AFC Leyton are a dedicated female-only football club in Walthamstow, we currently have 8 female-only football teams that play in the JPL, BCFA, ECGL and GLWL Leagues across London and Essex.

We are looking for players for the 2025/26 season across all age groups from 7 to 17.

Please get in touch for more information by emailing: [coaching@afcleyton.co.uk](mailto:coaching@afcleyton.co.uk)

@AFCLeytonClub

WINNING ISN'T EVERYTHING, BUT MAKING THE EFFORT TO WIN IS

SCAN THE QR CODE TO BOOK

OR VISIT [AFCLEYTON.CO.UK/YOUTH-TRIALS-2025](http://AFCLEYTON.CO.UK/YOUTH-TRIALS-2025)



# Why we still believe in print newspapers

Print newspaper sales have been declining for decades and, with the rapidly changing media habits of younger generations, talk of “the death of print” is rife.

We can't deny this reality – but we do think print newspapers continue to play an important role for local communities and will do for years to come.

If we published online and nowhere else, we would be limiting our audience. Social media algorithms are constantly changing and unpredictable, making it difficult to know how to reach users, while search engines incentivise ‘clickbait’ headlines and stories that provide little value to readers. Then there are the older, often more vulnerable people, who simply don't have access to the internet or find it too bewildering to navigate.

Publishing a print newspaper, on the other hand, enables us to reach people that we'd be unlikely to reach otherwise. We distribute *Waltham Forest Echo* via many different methods, including at railway stations, in supermarkets,

via cafes and pubs, places of worship, hospitals and GP surgeries, care homes and more.

People who might not otherwise seek out local news online might find a copy of the *Echo* in their local cafe or pub and decide to give it a read – maybe that's how you picked up the copy you're holding now!

Our print edition has always been free, so we're not under pressure to shift copies by running more and more sensationalised headlines. Our only goals are to provide a useful and reliable local news service for the community, hold local power to account, and offer a platform for local people to share what matters to them.

If you agree with us that producing local news in print is important, and will continue to remain so even as we move deeper and deeper into the digital age, please consider setting up a direct debit donation with us. Becoming a supporter from as little as £5 helps to secure our long-term future and ensures Waltham Forest will continue to benefit from having a local print newspaper for many more years to come.

# Become a patron

We're looking for people or organisations who can contribute £500 or more to securing the *Echo's* long-term sustainability and help us to negotiate the unpredictable landscape for local news. We have moved from 16 to 20 pages and support from patrons will help us sustain this.

## CHOOSE THE NEWS. DON'T LOSE THE NEWS.



If you can help, email [patrons@socialspider.com](mailto:patrons@socialspider.com), or support us using the QR codes above

With continued support from *Echo* readers we aim to:  
Produce more local journalism | Expand the size of the paper | Distribute to more locations

This month, 313 supporters contributed 31% of our monthly costs. While the paper remains free to read in print and online, every penny of income is reinvested in our local journalism. Can you support us with £5 per month to help us do more?

Find out more at: [walthamforestecho.co.uk/support-us](http://walthamforestecho.co.uk/support-us)

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We also thank our patrons for their generous support: Steve Coles, Graham Larkbey, Sue Grant, Carmen Trachenko, Co-Op Funeral Care, Ros Kane.

WOOD STREET WALLS



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