



Your independent community newspaper

# WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free

Jun 2025, N° 123

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THE TENTH EDITION of Laff-Ucino, a comedy night with big names performing alongside refugees, promises to bring belly laughs to Big Penny Social in Walthamstow on 19th June Credit Teodora Andrisan Find out more on Page 14 ►

## Gangs 'acting with impunity' in Leyton

by Marco Marcelline

Local gangs stealing phones, bags, and bikes on a near daily basis are acting with "impunity", Leyton residents have said.

The rampant thefts have fueled a sense of frustration with the Metropolitan Police, who locals say don't act to stop or find thieves.

Atanas Angelov, who lives with his partner in Leyton, said the theft of two of his bikes and the lack of police follow up has shattered any confidence he previously had in the Met.

Atanas said one of his bikes was

stolen the very first time he left it outside overnight in Dunedin Road. "The second was taken from the underground storage area in our apartment building. The thieves had a master key."

He quickly shared CCTV footage he had of the second bike theft with cops but says they never arrested anyone nor kept him updated on their investigation.

Phone snatching has however caused the biggest concern among Leyton residents, with some victims having been physically assaulted by masked assailants during the snatching attempts.

The robbers typically wear

balacavas and hoodies to conceal their identities, making it harder for police to identify and find them.

The stolen phones are often quickly sold for cash, sometimes exported overseas, or used to access sensitive data for fraud.

Leyton resident Jessica Alagapan, who started an online petition calling for more police action on the issue, told the *Echo*: "I haven't had my phone snatched but I'm scared everyday; I'm always looking over my shoulder and I try not to have my phone out anytime that I'm out now."

"The thieves are young men

and they're always on bikes, either push or electric. They surround people and look at them closely to see if their phones are out. I've seen them especially target women walking by themselves and I've witnessed them going close to bus stops where people often have their phones out."

According to Jessica and other residents who shared their experiences, the thieves have recently started to operate in groups of five or even seven at a time, which has created further concern among locals.

Recalling one phone snatching she saw, Jessica said: "Some

months ago, I saw two boys on bikes swerve into a woman and steal her phone. She was in shock and couldn't speak much English so I called the police for her. The police officer came and said he couldn't help because the thieves weren't identifiable."

One resident, who asked to stay anonymous, said their mum was left "crying and shaking" after her phone was stolen from her pocket in April.

The *Echo* understands that the thieves follow a route passing busy bus stops and train stations from 7am to 9am nearly every day. Streets and stations repeatedly mentioned by residents include Leyton Midland Road Station, Leyton Underground Station, Church Road, Lea Bridge Road, and Markhouse Road.

Frustrated by the lack of deterrence, Jessica has called for more radical action from the police to tackle the issue. Aside from increasing the number of police officers on the street, she suggests an increase in plain-clothed officers carrying GPS devices disguised as phones that track gang member movements.

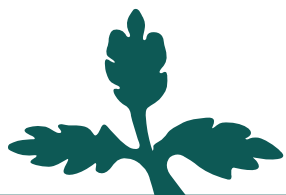
Leyton and Wanstead MP Calvin Bailey previously said he wanted more community support officers in the local area and a reduction in officers being taken out of the borough to police major events in central London on weekends.

A spokesperson for the Met said: "We undertake patrols in hot spot areas at peak times to take a proactive approach towards targeting offenders whilst supporting the community."

"There is a current policing operation in place where officers are attending phone swap shops to ensure that the necessary checks are being completed when they purchase a mobile phone [from walk-in sellers]."



## 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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Published on 30/05/25

# Town hall vows to improve social housing

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**W**altham Forest Council's housing department generally meets consumer standards but there are "some weaknesses," a review revealed.

The town hall was awarded a 'C2' rating by the social housing regulator, following a lengthy inspection. C2 is the second highest rating.

Between December 2024 and April 2025, government officials reviewed hundreds of documents, spoke with senior officers and councillors, and observed public scrutiny meetings.

The council was told it needs to make "faster, more efficient repairs" and communicate better with "hard to reach residents," according to deputy leader Ahsan Khan.

On top of that, around 20% of the council's social housing stock does not meet the government's

Decent Homes Standard. The policy sets a minimum standard for all social housing in the UK, mandating that all homes are free of safety risks and are comfortably warm.

Some of the areas highlighted as examples of good practice were compliance with health and safety and the council and police's work to tackle anti-social behaviour.

Cllr Khan, who also oversees housing in the borough, said: "While achieving a C2 rating demonstrates real progress, we know our work isn't done."

"We've listened carefully to the regulator's findings and have already developed a targeted improvement plan to address every area requiring attention. We're determined to secure that C1 rating because Waltham Forest residents deserve nothing less than excellent housing services."

The majority of London councils inspected received a 'C3' rating after "serious failings" were identified.

The only council to receive a C1 rating – "meeting all consumer standards" – was Westminster, and the only other council to receive a C2 rating was Lambeth.



# Council slashes financial help for home care recipients

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**W**altham Forest Council will look to cut extra help for people receiving home care as it struggles with its finances.

Over the next two years, the council will reduce a discretionary boost it offers to residents receiving the minimum income guarantee (MIG).

The guarantee is offered to all people receiving home care and with savings below £14,250 to ensure they can afford food, utilities and personal costs.

People aged between 18 and 24 receive a weekly £89, while

those between 25 and 64 get £112. Pensioners receive £232 per week.

Waltham Forest Council, however, metes out an extra 25% for its residents – a weekly boost between £34 and £58.

Under new proposals, the amount would drop to 10% in the coming year before being cut completely by 2027. The council says a phased removal would help "mitigate the financial impact" on residents.

The changes will not affect the base rate of the MIG, which is a statutory requirement under the Department of Health.

Councillor Louise Mitchell, the cabinet member for adult

social care, said it would affect roughly 50% of people receiving care.

The cabinet agreed last month to consult residents on the planned changes. The consultation will last twelve weeks and focus on the "financial and personal effects" of the cuts.

Waltham Forest is one of just nine boroughs to offer an uplift, and it offers the highest amount alongside the City of London and Lambeth.

The town hall is facing increasing budget pressures across a range of services and will need to make at least £25million in cuts over the next three years to maintain a balanced budget, officials say.



## Councillors elect new mayor

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**W**altham Forest councillors have elected the new mayor for 2025/26.

Tony Bell, a Labour councillor in the Hale End and Highams Park South ward, was appointed to the top ceremonial role at a meeting in May.

He succeeded fellow Labour councillor Sharon Waldron, who was nominated for the position last May.

The role of borough mayor is largely ceremonial. He will act as Waltham Forest's 'first citizen' when meeting dignitaries, royals, and other guests in the borough.

Cllr Bell said he wanted his mayoralty to be centred on two themes: fellowship and nature.

Throughout the year, he will raise money for three chosen charities.

They include the Highams Park Food Hub, which offers free food and drink to people struggling with loneliness. The new mayor called it an "incredible charity that addresses food aid throughout Waltham Forest by championing sustainable, nature-friendly growing practices".

He will also support children's hospice Haven House and Walthamstow Wetlands, a 211-hectare site and Europe's largest urban wetland.

Cllr Bell previously served as the chairman of the climate scrutiny committee, overseeing monthly meetings about transport and the environment in the borough.

He has worked as a teacher, teaching A-Level history.



## NEWS

# Fox cub rescued after being glued to Leyton road for hours

Workers at a Lea Bridge construction site found the cub covered head to paw in a thick layer of the black, tar-like substance

by Marco Marcelline

A young fox cub who was completely coated in bitumen and stuck to a road in Lea Bridge for hours has survived what has been described by a wildlife hospital as one of its “most horrific” cases in over three decades.

The male cub was discovered on Thursday 22nd May after workers heard distressed cries coming from near a



The fox cub was coated in bitumen when he was found by vets  
Credit: South Essex Wildlife Hospital

construction site in Lea Bridge Road, close to Hackney Marshes.

According to South Essex Wildlife Hospital, the workers had found the cub struggling, completely glued to the surface of the road and covered head to paw in a thick layer of the black, tar-like substance.

The bitumen, a petroleum-based material, had been inside a discarded container the cub had become trapped in for more than four hours. After managing to free himself, the fox collapsed onto



The cub is now making a “good” recovery  
Credit: South Essex Wildlife Hospital

the road before becoming stuck again.

Specialist vets eventually found him at around 7pm.

“He was so stuck, it took more than 30 minutes just to free his limbs,” the hospital said in a post on its Instagram, adding: “One wrong movement could have broken a leg or worse.”

After being safely transported back to the hospital, the team began the process of removing the bitumen, not finishing until 2am. They used baby oil and WD-40 to soften and dissolve the tar-like substance, though the hospital said his coat was so matted in some places that parts of his fur had to be cut off.

Stress and hypothermia meant cleaning had to be done gradually. Despite the trauma he had endured, the hospital said the cub showed “remarkable resilience” throughout.

A hospital spokesperson told the *Echo* that the cub was showing “good progress” from the treatment. He said: “The young cub still has a long way to go, but we are pleased with how things are going at the moment. All of the bitumen has been removed and there are no signs of toxicity or internal injuries, but he did have a rather nasty leg injury that required complex surgery.

“We will likely need several months



Vets attempt to clean the cub  
Credit: South Essex Wildlife Hospital

more work and nothing is 100%, but we are hopeful he has a bright future ahead.”

The hospital has thanked the public for their overwhelming support and encouraged donations to aid in the cub’s ongoing recovery.

Advertisement

## Drought fears for London’s trees

by Noah Vickers,  
Local Democracy Reporter

London’s trees are suffering from droughts and diseases as the impacts of climate change are worsening, experts warned at a City Hall meeting last month.

This spring is currently on course to be one of the driest ever recorded in London, testing the resilience of the capital’s trees.

Craig Ruddick, of the London Tree Officers Association, told City Hall: “We’re seeing [the] decline of birch, decline of rowan, and we’re seeing [a] prevalence of sooty bark disease affecting sycamore, which is of concern, because that follows a period of dry weather.

“If we have consecutive dry summers, I’m concerned about what the overall impact is going to be on sycamore, which is a significant contributor to London’s canopy.”

Kevin Martin, head of tree collections and arboriculture at Kew Gardens, said fresh approaches to urban planting may be needed to help maintain that canopy.

“From a lot of the research we’ve done,

a lot of the species that we’re currently planting in our urban environments are just not suited to be planted in urban environments,” he said.

“We have to think really carefully now about getting the species selection right, trees that we know have the plasticity to deal with drought stress like we’re seeing now.”

He suggested that London learn from cities like Malmö in Sweden, which has started creating their own soils which can hold rain moisture for a lot longer.





## STAY HEALTHY

### WALK WITH WEST ESSEX RAMBLERS

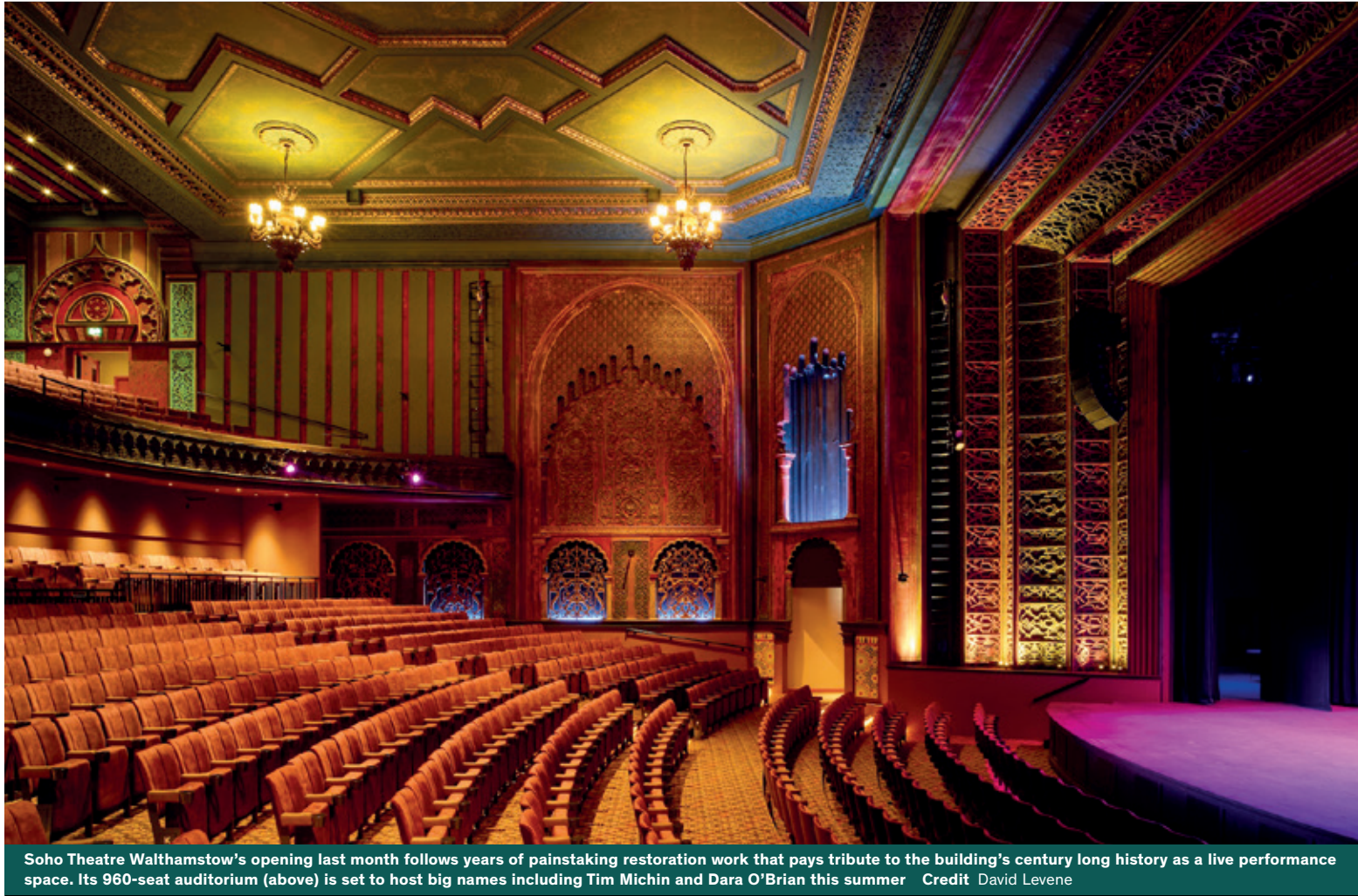
Walking regularly delivers a host of health benefits, lowering the risk of several conditions including heart disease, strokes and a number of cancers.

So maybe you should consider joining a West Essex Ramblers guided walk. We organise 4-5 walks a week – every week – in London, Essex and Hertfordshire. Friendly groups will make you very welcome and we vary the length of our walks to ensure they cater for all abilities.

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Or visit [www.west-essexramblers.org.uk](http://www.west-essexramblers.org.uk)



# NEWS



Soho Theatre Walthamstow's opening last month follows years of painstaking restoration work that pays tribute to the building's century long history as a live performance space. Its 960-seat auditorium (above) is set to host big names including Tim Michin and Dara O'Brian this summer Credit David Levene

## Thames Water announces £400m Coppermills Treatment Centre upgrade

The multi-million upgrade project, due to commence next year, comes after a water contamination incident in March 2023

by Marco Marcelline

**T**hames Water is to carry out a £400million upgrade of Coppermills Water Treatment Works in Walthamstow following a serious contamination incident in 2023.

The water company said the work, which includes the replacement of Coppermill's 1960s pumping station, will begin in spring 2026 and finish in summer 2032.

In a press release, Thames Water adds the "significant" upgrade will "enhance the site's efficiency, reliability and ability to serve London's growing population".

In addition to replacing the pumping station, Thames Water is set to build a new electricity substation, implement a new slow sand filter recirculation system, and install new pipes, chambers and control structures both above and below ground. These efforts will reportedly make it easier for the company

to get the site back in operation in case there are issues with water quality.

The multi-million cash injection comes after the company recently recorded "single points of failure" at the Walthamstow centre, which, if not dealt with, could result in "a prolonged water supply interruption" to hundreds of thousands of customers.

Coppermills serves up to three million customers and is regarded as one of the UK's most important pieces of infrastructure.

The *Echo* understands that there was a microbiological incident in March 2023 caused by untreated water entering the contact tank. The water contained cryptosporidium, a microscopic parasite that can cause a potentially dangerous illness called cryptosporidiosis. The parasite thrives in the intestines of infected humans and animals and is passed out in their faeces.

According to the UK Health Security Agency, cryptosporidiosis

symptoms include severe watery diarrhoea, vomiting, stomach cramps, nausea, fever, and loss of appetite.

In response to the contamination incident, the Drinking Water Inspectorate issued Coppermills Treatment Centre with an enforcement notice demanding that it continuously samples water for cryptosporidium. The notice additionally mentions the centre must check for any "animal ingress" into any exposed open-air treatment stages, and carry out "appropriate analysis and disposal of any animal carcasses".



Mark Gelinski, senior project manager at Thames Water said: "As custodians of important infrastructure, we need to ensure that our sites are resilient to the pressures of London's growing population and climate change."

"Upgrading and investing in our assets is essential to this and this project will mean improved water security for Londoners as we continue to deliver a secure supply of high-quality drinking water for customers across the capital."

A multi-million pound upgrade is also planned for Hampton Water Treatment Works. Both upgrades will be carried out by Acciona, which describes itself as a "global leader in providing regenerative solutions for a decarbonized economy".

Thames Water is due to submit a planning request for the works to Waltham Forest Council this summer.

**Find out more about the planned works:**  
[thameswater.co.uk/about-us/projects/improvements-in-your-area/coppermills-advanced-water-treatment-works](https://thameswater.co.uk/about-us/projects/improvements-in-your-area/coppermills-advanced-water-treatment-works)



Firefighters used a 32-metre turntable to tackle the blaze, Credit Clair Cook

## 100 firefighters tackle flat blaze near Blackhorse Road Station

The 'ferocious' fire tore through two floors of a seven-storey building and partially destroyed its roof

by Marco Marcelline

**1**00 firefighters and 15 fire engines tackled a fire at a block of flats near Blackhorse Road Station in Walthamstow on 15th May.

Two flats on the fifth and sixth floors of the block on Collendale Road were alight, as well as the roof of the building, which was left partially destroyed.

A woman and baby were treated at the scene by paramedics and the entire seven-storey building was evacuated.

London Fire Brigade (LFB) said it received the first of around 50 calls about the fire at 1.53pm.

Crews from Walthamstow, Tottenham and Hornsey fire stations were sent to the scene, with firefighters using a 32-metre turntable ladder to extinguish the fire from above.

Collendale Road resident Clair Cook told the *Echo* that the "ferocious" fire started on the sixth floor of the building, before quickly spreading to the roof. "At least three flats were affected by the fire – it was bad. It looks like part of the roof has collapsed," she said.

The fire caused closures to surrounding roads and businesses. The LFB said the fire was brought under control by 4.26pm.

The cause of the fire remains under investigation.



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NOW OPEN



## Dalton Lodge Care Home

### Innovative Dementia Care in Walthamstow

**D**alton Lodge Care Home, now open in Walthamstow, is setting a new benchmark for exceptional dementia care. Specialising in support for individuals with advanced dementia, Dalton Lodge employs a multi-faceted approach that combines innovative techniques, advanced technology, and compassionate care to deliver an unparalleled quality of life for residents.

Operated by B&M Care, a family-run business with 50 years of experience, Dalton Lodge offers a personalised, dignified approach that redefines excellence in dementia care.

#### Homes Designed Specifically for Dementia

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.

Our bespoke wayfinding signage, unique to B&M Care, has been developed by our expert team and designed by an illustrator to be both beautiful and highly functional, ensuring they are easily seen and

understood by people with dementia. Visual cues, such as familiar pictures and nostalgic objects, are thoughtfully placed to help residents navigate the home with confidence and comfort. Our aim is to reduce confusion, allowing residents to feel more in control of their environment.

#### Advanced Technology for Enhanced Care

For individuals with advanced dementia, communication challenges can make identifying discomfort or pain difficult. To address this, Dalton Lodge utilises PainChek® software, a pioneering tool that combines artificial intelligence with other pain indicators to assess discomfort. This innovative technology ensures residents' comfort and wellbeing by enabling



accurate and timely pain management.

Dalton Lodge incorporates a range of technologies to enhance sensory engagement and ensure residents' safety, such as silent call bell systems replacing loud alarms to maintain a calm environment.

#### Specialist Training

Every team member at Dalton Lodge has completed a minimum of Level 2 Dementia Training, an accredited, in-depth course developed by B&M Care. Team members also participate in the Virtual Dementia Tour, an immersive training experience that simulates the challenges faced by those living with dementia.

#### 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.



#### A Legacy of Trust

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



98 Bisterne Avenue, Walthamstow E17 3QY



daltonlodge@bmcare.co.uk



## NEWS

# Local parents call for more paternity leave in babygrow stunt

New dads say the UK's 'inadequate' two week paternity leave is having an impact on their mental health

by Marco Marcelline

A North Chingford mother and father organised a stunt at the William Morris Gallery in Walthamstow last month to highlight the “inadequacy” of the UK’s statutory paternity leave.

Joined by several other parents at the stunt which took place on Sunday 11th May, Soren Chargois and Dominic Ebbasi hung babygrows spelling “two weeks isn’t enough” on a washing line outside the gallery. They also hung babygrows at other locations including the Wetlands.

The UK currently allows new fathers to take either one or two weeks of paid leave, which can be taken either as a single block or consecutive weeks. Statutory paternity pay is also available for this time, though the amount has been criticised for being less than half the minimum wage.



Credit Soren Chargois

Alex Lloyd Hunter, co-founder of paternity leave campaign group The Dad Shift, who supported the stunt, said: “The UK’s rubbish paternity leave is trashing dads’ mental health. Fathers are being forced back to work before they’re ready and when they’re needed most.

“These men are caught between the stress of keeping their families afloat financially, trying to be there for their

partners and new babies, and the demand to perform at work as if nothing has changed. They have little choice but to suffer in silence and try to soldier on, even if it breaks them.”

He pointed to research by the group that shows that the average British father spends 57% fewer waking hours with their child in the first year of life – 1,403 hours compared with 3,293 for the

average mother.

George Gabriel, from The Dad Shift, concluded: “From day one, most fathers face an impossible choice: earn or be present. The stress of carrying these competing expectations is breaking tens of thousands of dads each year. We can’t carry on like this. The UK’s paternity leave is broken, and it’s well past time the government fixed it.”

The group is calling on a ‘DadStrike’ on Wednesday 11th June, where fathers will form a “family-friendly picket line” at the Department of Business and Trade to call for more paternity leave.

To find out more about The Dad Shift’s activism: Visit [dadstrike.com](http://dadstrike.com)



Dads with their infants at the stunt  
Credit Soren Chargois

# Labour-run town hall distances itself from government’s immigration stance

by Marco Marcelline

Waltham Forest Council leader Grace Williams urged the government to “reassure” the borough that the government will not abandon its



Co-chair of the Waltham Forest Borough of Sanctuary, Averil Pooten-Watan

commitment to “diversity and openness” amid its drive to cut net migration.

In a joint letter published on 13th May with fellow co-chair of the Waltham Forest Borough of Sanctuary, Averil Pooten-Watan, the council leader said the government must not turn its back on values of “internationalism, diversity, openness, generosity and respect”.

The open letter came one day after Prime Minister Keir Starmer unveiled the government’s white paper on immigration which includes a significant tightening of visa requirements, and tougher English proficiency tests.

The policy announcement was accompanied by a critical tone towards immigration, with Starmer saying high levels of it had caused “incalculable damage” to society while a lack of integration risked the UK turning into an “island of strangers”.

In a clear distancing from the government’s nascent tone, Cllr Williams told

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper that diversity and migration had “enriched” Waltham Forest and made it a “stronger borough”.

She additionally warned the government that “communities like Waltham Forest are on the sharp end of language which causes division and recent public discourse has led to real fear and worry”.

Speaking to the *Echo* following the publication of the letter, Averil, who runs a refugee drop in space at St Barnabas



Council leader Grace Williams  
Credit Waltham Forest Council

Church in Walthamstow, said she was “deeply concerned” by the government’s new immigration approach.

She affirmed: “We need to unlock pathways to support those seeking safety and belonging and we must pursue constructive dialogue and policies that support all members of our communities to thrive with dignity and hope.”

Meanwhile, Shahid Mahmood, who runs support services for migrants and asylum seekers via the Togetherness Café in Leyton, sharply criticised the government’s recent language.

He told the *Echo*: “Even if the tone is softer than [Enoch] Powell’s, the feeling is familiar and the message is clear: Immigrants are still seen as a problem to manage, not people to value. The truth is we have built businesses, created jobs, and worked day and night in hospitals, care homes, factories and farms.”

Letter on immigration page 12



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# NEWS

Targeted flats and businesses in Lea Bridge Road Credit Emily Rayner



## Police investigate borough's ninth red paint attack

*Vandals daubed red paint and scribbled 'brothel' graffiti on several Walthamstow flats and businesses last month amid reports of Chinese Triad gang involvement*

by Marco Marcelline

**T**he police are investigating another red paint attack on a property in Waltham Forest, the ninth such act of vandalism in the borough since the start of the year.

At around 4am on Friday 16th May, vandals daubed red paint and scribbled "brothel" graffiti on a residential property in Lea Bridge Road, Walthamstow.

CCTV of the incident that was shared with the *Echo* shows a hooded young woman lobbing the paint at the property before using a sponge to smear it on neighbouring businesses including a barbers shop, a William Hill, and a café.

After vandalising the properties and businesses, she is then seen to throw two tubs of paint on the pavement.

A second young woman is also seen carrying a tub of paint before quickly walking out of view.

A shopkeeper, who asked not to be named, said the incident had left him "distressed". The shutters on his shop were almost completely coated in red paint from the attack, and it was not possible for him to clean all of it off, he said.

He added that staff from Waltham Forest Council had attended the scene and jet sprayed some of the paint off from the pavement and affected residences.

The *Echo* understands this isn't the first time there has been vandalism in the street; in December red paint was thrown at the same residential property, but adjacent businesses and flats left unscathed.

The 16th May attack is the fourth in Walthamstow since 13th March, when attackers vandalised homes in Cazenove Road. A follow-up attack in Chingford Road the following week was then seen in

Hoe Street in mid-April.

Several identical incidents in Leyton and Leytonstone in February also left residents there shaken. In every single incident, vandals graffitied "[House/Flat X] is a brothel" on a property before smearing red paint on surrounding homes or businesses.

The Metropolitan Police has stated there is "no firm evidence" that any of the targeted properties have been brothels.

Daubing red paint on doors is reportedly a tactic currently used by Chinese Triad gangs to intimidate debtors.

The gangs also target the debtor's family, friends or neighbours in a further attempt to intimidate them into paying back their debts.

Oliver Chan, an associate professor in criminology at the University of Birmingham, told the *Daily Telegraph* that red paint is often used by gangs in southern parts of China and Hong Kong, as well as in Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore.

He explained: "Traditionally the use of red colour symbolises anger and impulsion. It can serve two primary purposes – to intimidate rival gangs who seem to operate in their territory or turf ... and to threaten debtors who are unable to pay up."

A Met Police spokesperson told the *Echo*: "On Friday 16th May at 2.11pm, officers attended an address on Lea Bridge Road, Walthamstow, after reports of vandalism. An investigation is underway and no arrests have been made at this stage."

"This is the ninth similar incident of vandalism in the area. Officers are exploring whether they are all linked. We understand the concern in the community and are increasing patrols."

Anyone with any information is encouraged to call 101 referencing CAD 3584/16MAY25

## Council seeks to extend antisocial behaviour measures

*Waltham Forest is consulting on its public space protection order (PSPO), which gives enforcement officers the power to fine people £100 for antisocial behaviour*

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**M**asures to tackle antisocial behaviour and street drinking in Waltham Forest could be extended for a further three years after positive signs.

The council introduced a protection order in 2022 that covers every public space in the borough.

It gives enforcement officers the power to fine people £100 on the spot for problematic street drinking, aggressively begging, or being threatening or insulting.

Since March 2022, some 2,500 fines have been issued to offenders. Street drinking was the worst antisocial offence, accounting for 344 charges.

A further 310 were fined for urinating in a public place, on top of the 306 who were fined for spitting.

Stopping on zig-zag markings outside schools made up the bulk of fines, however, with 1,540 people being slapped with a fixed penalty notice (FPN).

The public space protection order (PSPO)

is due to end in early September, though the town hall says there is a "strong case" for continuing it through to 2028.

On 20th May, the council launched a lengthy consultation for residents and business owners to share their views on the PSPO. It also wants to hear concerns about any specific types of antisocial behaviour that can be tackled by the order.

The town hall has warned that if the PSPO is not extended, it could lead to an increase in crime and antisocial behaviour.

Enforcement officers are also encouraged to refer offenders to drug and alcohol rehabilitation or other social services before taking action.

Antisocial behaviour is a "persistent challenge" in Waltham Forest, according

to the town hall.

Last year, 44% of respondents told a council survey they were worried about it, which is 5% above the London-wide average.

The consultation will remain open until 16th June.

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## NEWS

# Chingford residents urge council to tackle 'speeding' near primary school

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

**R**esidents are pushing for road safety measures near a Chingford primary school to tackle "speeding" and "dangerous" drivers.

Those living near Ainslie Wood Primary School, in Ainslie Wood Road, say drivers often use the narrow road as a cut-through between Chingford Mount and Highams Park.

Cars mount the pavements and drive at 40mph despite the 20mph limit, one resident told the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS).

The council says it is aware of residents' concerns, which are caused by a "triple whammy" of poor driver behaviour, the excessive use of Ainslie Wood Road as a shortcut, and large numbers of parents and carers driving their children to school.

Deputy council leader Clyde Loakes said the town hall would "continue to look at ways that we can improve our neighbourhoods



Cars regularly mount the pavements in Ainslie Wood Road, causing what residents call a 'dangerous' situation Credit Alan Kelly

for all road users and ensure local children can travel to school safely and confidently".

Alan Kelly, a local resident, said: "Every morning and afternoon, pedestrians primarily going to and from school have to navigate the perils and hazards of dangerous driving."

He continued: "There are near misses and potential accidents – and all so commuters can

continue to use this narrow residential street to shave a few seconds off their commute."

Fellow resident Jack Driver, who has lived in the area for two-and-a-half years, said the situation meant people would also park on side roads, which could "exacerbate" the issues.

He said that just one driver needed to "park badly" for there to be a knock-on effect in

the neighbourhood.

He proposed a width restriction at the end of each road, which he called "plausible and affordable," in lieu of "proper" traffic calming measures to "do away with the rat run".

The council carried out four consultations with residents between December 2021 and May last year, taking suggestions on how to make the area safer, in particular for school children and their parents and carers.

Residents, however, feel they were too broad to produce a clear solution.

Alan told the LDRS the council "cast too wide a net" with its proposals, so residents "without a vested interest in the street" would shoot them down.

He said blanket policies, such as an area-wide controlled parking zone to limit on-street parking at certain times, did not fit and were attacked by locals.

Conservative councillor Catherine Saumarez said residents had raised the issue of road safety in the area with the council "countless times".

She said: "The rigid refusal to think of a solution that doesn't involve charging residents, or even to simply install bollards to prevent reckless drivers mounting the pavement next to the school is extraordinary."

"A one-size-fits-all solution clearly won't work here, so we urge the council yet again to work with residents to find a solution and install basic measures before a child is seriously injured or worse."

However, Cllr Loakes said residents did not seem to accept that change was needed.

He said: "Feedback to these consultations suggest that whilst residents agree there are issues, they aren't yet prepared to concede that bold action and some change to their parking and travelling status quo is required to help protect the children of Ainslie Wood Primary School."

"Only the idea to extend the existing waiting restrictions that was put forward in the May 2024 consultation received overall support, and this has subsequently been implemented."

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HEALTH



St James Health Centre

Dismay at plans to merge practices in Walthamstow health facility

Patients at St James Health Centre have expressed concern at NHS plans to ‘truncate’ their GP practice by including other health services in a yet-to-open facility

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

Patients at a Walthamstow health centre say they are frustrated by plans to share their dedicated new facility with another practice, as part of a long-rumbling saga.

Those registered with St James Health Centre were temporarily relocated to the Firs Medical Centre in Stephenson Road once their contract with the NHS ended in October.

NHS North East London (NEL), the integrated care board (ICB) that oversees the practice, initially said they would move into a purpose-built centre in Jazz Yard – but the fit-out is yet to commence, and the move has been pushed back to “early 2026”.

After a series of delays, patients say they are now “dismayed” by fresh NHS proposals for them to share the new facility with another practice.

Philip Herlihy, a longstanding patient at St James, said: “A practice is more than a random collection of people in a space. It’s an organisation, and one that hasn’t come about by chance.

“It’s the outcome of years of thought and work by the partnership team – in our case [owners] Prakash and Shalini Kavar – who are the core of the St James practice. And it’s their vision that’s being cruelly truncated, to their own detriment, and to the detriment of the people of Walthamstow.”

A spokesperson for NHS NEL said it was “exploring other options” to ensure the new building was utilised entirely.

He said: “Unfortunately, due to St James Medical Practice being unable to take all of the primary care space at Jazz Yard, we have had to explore other options to make this development financially viable.

“We believe that increasing the primary care presence at Jazz Yard will ensure that space is used effectively while widening the range of services available to patients in the west Walthamstow area, in line with the NHS neighbourhood model of care.”

He added that the ICB was “aware” of patients’ concerns about the move and would be responding directly to them.

He continued: “We understand that delays to the move have

caused uncertainty, but we have been working closely with the practice, including providing resilience funding, to ensure any disruption is kept to a minimum and that its patients have continuity of care.”

Meanwhile, Louise Mitchell, the council’s cabinet member for health, said she would “raise concerns directly with the NHS”, adding: “We would expect [NEL] to lead work to fully engage with the practices concerned, as well as the patients they serve, to demonstrate that the plans meet the clinical needs of the community.”

St James Health Centre closed the doors to its previous practice in October after 30 years. The Kawars had been unsuccessful in negotiating a lease extension with Waltham Forest Council, the NHS and landlord YourTribe.

YourTribe plans to turn the site into student halls, comprising 224 rooms in buildings between three to six storeys tall.

Work is currently underway and the former health centre, which dated back to the 1950s, has been demolished.

Local NHS trusts massively overspending

NHS North East London, which oversees Barts Health Trust among four others, has spent £91.5m more than planned so far this year

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

NHS trusts across north-east London are falling short of the cuts they need to make, according to a new report.

Healthcare providers across eight boroughs were a combined £80million in the red in February, and were behind on mandated cuts by around £32.3m.

The report was published by NHS North East London (NEL), the integrated care board (ICB) that oversees the finances of the area’s five NHS trusts. They cover Barking and Dagenham, City of London, Hackney, Havering, Newham, Redbridge, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest.

Hospitals are struggling with expensive treatments and high costs of critical care, according to the report, which was published in May.

Meanwhile, mental health services face challenges in paying for external beds and the intensifying needs of patients.

The report states that NEL has spent £91.5m more than planned so far this year. The target was to only be £5.4m in debt, but it is £86.1m worse off than expected.

Trusts are required to break even by the year’s end and produce cost improvement plans

showing their intended methods.

At a minimum, they must include a 40% reduction in the amount being spent on agency workers and a 15% reduction in bank staff, who work temporary shifts.

All trusts were anticipating breaking even, except for Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

In order to do so, the whole system needs to find £367.7m in ‘savings’. However, £79m of that still has not been identified.

They will also need to produce cost improvement plans, outlining what they intend to chop.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting announced in March that he would merge NHS England with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), and ICBs would be cut in half.

In the report, the NHS said NEL was facing an “extremely challenging time”.

An official wrote: “The ICB will need to look very different by early 2026 – and this will go substantially beyond just a reduction in size. It is a very difficult period for our staff, and many will be deeply worried about what it means for them personally.

“When we have more clarity about the future and have worked through the changes in more detail, we will be clearer about the impact on local people.”



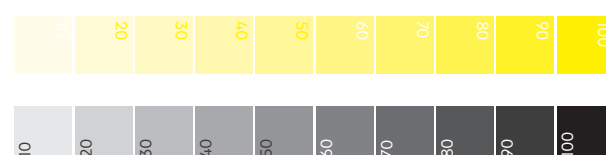
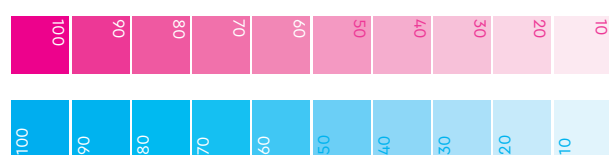


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LETTERS

School strike

Dear WFE

I AM WRITING ON BEHALF of a growing number of deeply concerned parents whose children attend Connaught School for Girls. Our children have now missed over 30 days of education in the past academic year due to repeated strike action.

While we understand and respect the right of teachers to take industrial action, the scale and persistence of this disruption is unacceptable. The quality of education is suffering, student morale is low, and parents are being forced to make difficult decisions – some have already withdrawn their children from the school, and others are considering doing the same.

Many have now written to local MPs, and a petition demanding a formal review of the school’s leadership and industrial relations has begun circulating among the parent body.

The school leadership’s repeated statements about commitment to resolving the dispute ring hollow when there has been so little progress over such a long period. It is not enough to set work online or arrange occasional enrichment activities; our daughters deserve consistent, high-quality,

uninterrupted education. The situation cannot be allowed to drift on any longer. A formal review of the school’s governance and the handling of staff relations is now urgently required to restore trust, stability, and focus on the students’ futures.

Husain Hosany, Leytonstone

Immigration debate

Dear WFE

OUR COMMUNITY HAS LONG believed that migration makes our borough stronger. From market stalls to hospitals, care homes to classrooms, migrants power our public services, strengthen our economy, and enrich our borough with culture, language, and generosity.

This borough has a proud tradition of standing up to hate. Last year, when far-right extremists targeted Walthamstow, it was local residents who showed up to send a clear message: refugees are welcome here. It was a powerful moment of unity, driven not by politicians but by community courage.

That’s why it was deeply disappointing to read Labour Prime

Minister Keir Starmer’s recent comments – describing Britain as an “island of strangers” and claiming that immigration has caused “untold damage”. This language stirs up anger and drives us all further apart and that it has come from a former human rights lawyer is shameful.

Waltham Forest is a better place because of the people who come here to make a life. Immigrants are our friends, our teachers, our neighbours. We know that the strength of our community lies in our diversity – and that’s something worth defending.

Charlotte Lafferty, on behalf of Waltham Forest Green Party

Welfare not warfare

Dear WFE

I TRIED TO LOBBY MY MP Stella Creasy in parliament on 21st May to vote against any legislation that will be introduced in the House of Commons this month to cut billions from welfare spending.

Unfortunately Stella did not meet with me in the lobby at Westminster Hall to hear about the Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) campaign which

I am supporting. The cuts will include tightening the criteria for personal independence payments (PIP) for people with disabilities and to limit the number of people who can claim it.

While scapegoating disabled people the Labour government is proposing increases in military expenditure by £6bn per year for the next four years (funded by cuts to overseas aid) and by a further £15bn per year in the next term.

As a member of DPAC I oppose all cuts to welfare, especially those affecting disability benefits and PIP, to justify huge increases in defence spending. Instead of wasting billions on more weapons and foreign wars, the government should be righting the wrongs of Tory austerity by protecting the most vulnerable in our society, funding the NHS and schools properly, building council homes and saving our broken social care system.

I call on Creasy to join the list of Labour MPs voting against the legislation to be put before parliament that will result in cuts to disabled people’s welfare benefits and to oppose increases in military spending put forward in 2025, including in the government’s ‘Strategic Defence Review’.

Saul Catlin, Walthamstow

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 16th June.

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I, **Muhased Safaa Sangour Al-Baidhani**, born on 12/07/1988 in Baghdad, Iraq, have lost my Iraqi passport (**G1259982**). If found, please contact the nearest Iraqi embassy or consulate.

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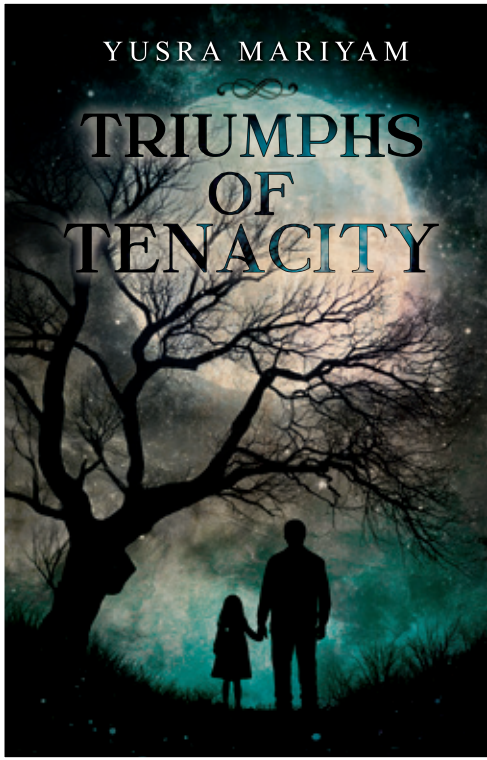


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A new book has been published by a resident of Waltham Forest, London—Triumphs of Tenacity, a compelling memoir of resilience, faith, and the enduring strength of heritage. In this deeply personal narrative, Yusra Mariyam reflects on the wisdom of her father’s teachings, the richness of Bengali culture, and the guiding principles of faith that have shaped her journey. As a mother, full-time employee, and lifelong learner, she has overcome challenges and defied expectations, proving that education has no age limit. More than just a memoir, Triumphs of Tenacity offers a profound exploration of identity, tradition, and the strength found in navigating life’s many roles. Inspiration. Legacy. Tenacity. Her journey, her story.



To order visit <https://amzn.eu/d/7FC0Akp> or search ‘Triumphs of Tenacity’



## FEATURES



## Smoking up a storm

New Walthamstow barbecue burger joint Smoke & Bones has been opened by 22-year-old Waqas Mir – here he shares the highs and lows of being a young business owner

**D**id you always want to start your business?

From the age of 16 I knew I wanted to start my own business. I knew it would be hard, so I set myself a realistic goal that if I save my money wisely I can have a shop by the age of 24 or 25 – but it ended up happening at 22!

My colleagues at my first job always had faith in me having my own shop, which really motivated me.

**What has running a business as a young person taught you in terms of life skills?**

Running a business has helped me in many different ways in terms of life skills. One skill it has taught me is communication and how to deal with different types of customers.

When you work in the food industry you have to be very quick to make a decision and doing that teaches you how to trust your instincts and take risks.

**What would you say to another young person who wants to start a business?**

One thing I would tell them is don't rush; don't have it in your head that you need to start your business at a certain time, don't

be afraid to make mistakes and more importantly don't be upset when you make them.

I'll also remind them that starting a business requires you to make sacrifices; I sacrificed a lot of family time so I can work to save for the shop I have now.

**Running a new business can be tough – what gets you through the difficult moments?**

It's very hard to switch off when you have your own business but spending time with my family helps me more than anything. Even though Manchester United are rubbish, watching football helps me relax too!

**What do you recommend we eat at Smoke & Bones?**

I recommend going for our beef brisket, spare ribs or the Big Smoke burger. The brisket is very soft and tender, given it's a combination of lean meat and fat which creates the 'melt in your mouth' flavour.

The Big Smoke burger is very unique as it has burnt ends inside the burger. No one in the area does it so it's a must try!

*Interview by Marco Marcelline*

Smoke & Bones is located at 444 Forest Road E17 4PY

For more information:  
Visit [smoke-and-bones.com](http://smoke-and-bones.com)

# Pilates power

Pallavi Singh takes us inside Studio M, Leytonstone's newest pilates studio – where a reluctant promise turned into a lasting routine

**I**'ve never been one for new year's resolutions. In fact, I've often found quiet amusement in strolling down a high street in January, peering into gyms packed with highly motivated individuals – bloated from weeks of merriment – embracing the 'new year, new me' ethos.

Like clockwork, Easter rolls around, resolve falters, and the cycle begins anew. But this year, as part of maid of honour duties for my best friend's wedding, she somehow roped me into joining her mission to get 'wedding ready'. And so, during the first week of January, I found myself at Leytonstone's reformer pilates space Studio M, feet in straps, toning muscles I hadn't felt in years.

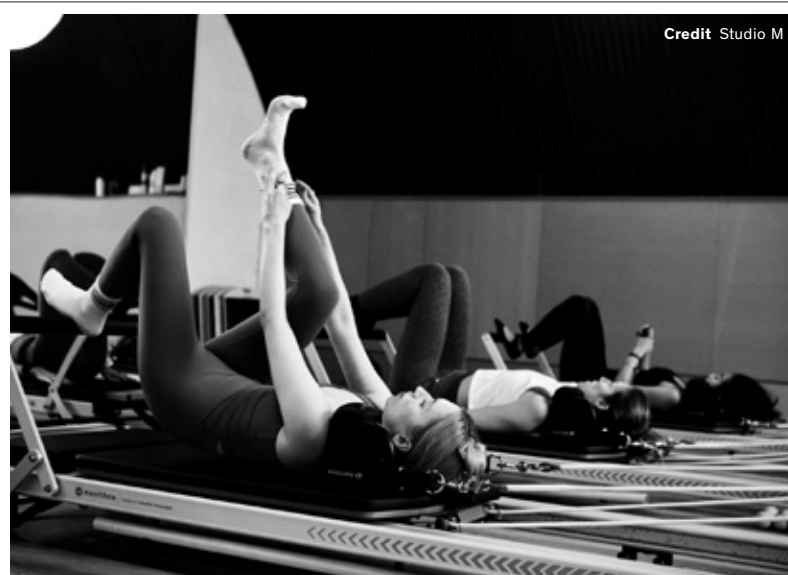


Studio M's founder Victoria Rock  
Credit Studio M

Studio M was founded by Victoria Rock, a long-time Leytonstoner, whose persona is the heartbeat of the studio. Victoria, who exudes a genuine warmth that is both striking and lingers, says she wanted to ensure her yoga studio was not intimidating to the wider community. "I wanted people to feel like there's no excuse – movement should be easy to choose," she tells me over a cup of tea.

Excuses I had not, as Studio M was a short walk away from my home. On dark, depressing days in February, I forced myself to wake up, fighting every fibre of my body to confront the reformer machine at 8am. In the beginning, it looked extremely daunting; I was worried I'd fail, or worse, hurt myself.

But my very first class, under Victoria's watchful eye and a calming green ceiling, erased most



Credit Studio M

of my anxieties. I quickly noticed how welcoming and inclusive the foundation class was, catering to everyone from complete beginners like me to seasoned professionals keen to revisit the basics and fine-tune their form.

Reformer pilates isn't easy but it isn't as hard as I imagined either. It blends yoga, strength, conditioning and flexibility into a surprisingly soothing flow. Over the course of the first month, I noticed the back pain I carried from hunching in front of a computer nine hours a day disappeared.

Upon telling Victoria, she smiled widely, saying: "A client told me he hadn't been able to play snooker in years. After five private sessions, he could bend again and play. I love stories like that."

At the start of this year, the walk to Studio M was a grudging one; today, my feelings have

completely shifted.

When I ask Victoria if she has a message for anyone hesitant to give reformer pilates a try, her response is immediate and sincere: "If someone feels anxious, I urge them to drop me a message on email or Instagram."

It's what she says next, though, that really resonates and encapsulates my pilates experience: "Consistency doesn't have to look like seven perfect days. Some days it's 80%, some days it's 20%, and that's still showing up."

What started as a reluctant promise to a friend has become a quiet, consistent reminder that showing up for yourself, even imperfectly, is more than enough.

Studio M is located at 2, The Hitchcock Business Centre, Station Approach, Bushwood E11 4RE

For more information:  
Visit [studiom.london](http://studiom.london)



Credit Studio M



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# The story of Walthamstow's 100-year old Greek amphitheatre



The theatre today  
Credit The Greek Theatre Players

Theatre director Mark Greenall tells the fascinating history of Walthamstow's open air theatre which celebrates its centenary this summer

Imagine the excitement pupils at Walthamstow School for Girls felt when they found out they were getting an outdoor swimming pool in their school grounds back in the 1920s. Then imagine how they felt when the new headmistress decided they would get a replica of an Ancient Greek theatre instead. Actually, they were thrilled. And that theatre, a secret idyllic venue and part of our social

history, turns 100 years old this summer.

Back then, replica Greek theatres were a status symbol for some of the most famous public schools. However, as far as we know, this 1920s theatre was the only one at the time to be constructed at a state school. Having been built by a dozen unemployed men of the borough, the theatre was part of the public works that created jobs to combat the terrible recession that followed the First World War.

Funding and labour was provided by The West Ham Board of Guardians who were responsible for administering the Poor Law. This system, including workhouses, was how a parish (and later, a borough) provided for its own poor and unemployed at the time. However, the theatre was one of the West Ham Board's last projects.

Parliament took over the board in 1926 because it had overspent while helping

one of Britain's poorest boroughs. However, this action had the unexpected consequence of ending 400 years of the Poor Law which meant the government now accepted that dealing with poverty was its national responsibility.

The theatre opened in June 1925 with the performance of the ancient Greek tragedy *Medea* starring the famous theatre and film actor Sybil Thorndike. Dame Sybil would still recognise today this oasis of calm and greenery hidden in the heart of Walthamstow Village.

The Greek Theatre Players group was founded in 1958. Their aim is to provide good quality local drama while keeping ticket prices as low as possible. The group draws actors from across London to produce an annual summer Shakespeare play.

This year's 100th anniversary production is *Antony and Cleopatra*, often called one of history's greatest love stories told by history's greatest writer. The Roman Empire is on the rise as Marc Antony and Cleopatra are torn between passion and duty; Rome, meanwhile, wants to destroy them both. With the glamour of Roman and Egyptian costumes, it's Shakespeare as intended; outdoor, pacy, colourful and up-close to the audience.

*Antony and Cleopatra* is running between 23rd–26th July 2025. Find out more by visiting: [greektheatreplayers.co.uk](http://greektheatreplayers.co.uk)



Dame Sybil Thorndike as Medea in 1925  
Credit The Greek Theatre Players

## Big name comics to share stage with refugees

Credit Teodora Andrisan



Seasoned comics including Shappi Khorsandi and John Kearns will perform alongside aspiring refugee comedians at Big Penny Social this month as part of Refugee Week.

The tenth edition of Laff-Ucino, which promises to bring laughs to the Blackhorse beer hall on 19th June, will also include comedy workshops for asylum seekers.

The founder of Laff-Ucino is Waltham-

stow coffee shop founder and Pakistani refugee Usman Khalid.

He told the *Echo* the event was aimed at "challenging false narratives around refugees in society". Adding that the night will also include a free raffle with "great prizes" to be won, Usman said his mission with Laff-Ucino was also to nurture and platform refugee comic talent.

Comedians Selam Amare, Ed Night, Ania Magliano, will join Khorsandi and Kearns on the night while MC Sam Williams hosts.

Laff-Ucino is at Big Penny Social on Thursday 19th June from 8pm–10pm. Get tickets here: [bigpennysocial.co.uk/whats-on](http://bigpennysocial.co.uk/whats-on)



## The quiet joy of people watching

Sometimes we all need a gentle reminder to slow down and notice the regular moments of our day-to-day lives. In her second book *The Place I'm In*, Walthamstow author Miranda Keeling shares observations that she has collected from years of doing just that. Told through the lens of location – ranging from cafés to the countryside to the intangible feeling of coming home, this collection of short stories reveals the beauty in the everyday.

### In A Café

Cafés are more than places to eat or drink: they are offices, date venues, confessionals, somewhere to have a break while a baby finally sleeps.

I take in the layers as I approach. First, the outside – can I see my reflection in the glass? I look inside – is it full or empty? Are the tables close together? I zoom in.

A baby sleeps in a pram. A pigeon has wandered in through the open door. I head in too, and choose a place to sit.

More intimate moments capture my attention: a person types on a laptop, their face lit by the screen. Someone puts a layer of ready-salted crisps inside their cheese sandwich. Someone buys a take-away coffee and runs out again. Their interaction is fleeting.

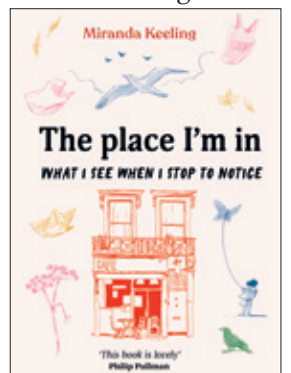
A regular wanders in. She leans on the counter and asks the owner about his kids. She isn't going anywhere for a while. Under it all is the sound of the drinks machine and the smell of coffee and toast.

I zoom out. I notice the room again. It's a bit cold by the window. Wet trails from umbrellas cross the floor.

A man talks to a friend. He emphasises his points with his hands, positioning them like tall ships cutting through deep water.

A woman waits for a coffee in a coat that makes her look like a polar bear who has forgotten to put its head on.

As my toast arrives, the waitress asks: 'Miranda?' A woman opposite me also says, 'Yes.' We exchange a both-being-called-Miranda smile.



'The Place I'm In' by Miranda Keeling will be released by Leaping Hare Press on 19th June. It is available for pre-order (£14.99) at all good bookstores



## FOOD & DRINK

# In search of Waltham Forest's best pizza

Leytonstone resident and culinary connoisseur Pallavi Singh tours the borough on a quest for the perfect slice



Dodici in Walthamstow uses a wood fired Neapolitan oven for its pizzas Credit Marco Cauli

**O**ur borough doesn't get nearly enough city-wide credit for its burgeoning pizza scene; we are sitting on a goldmine of proofed dough, tomato sauce and bubbling cheese in these parts of East London.

So, with summer here, I simply had to come up with a guide to the best pizza across Waltham Forest. Buon appetito!

### Walthamstow

#### Dodici

It shocked me that every time I'd meet someone who lived in the remote vicinity of Walthamstow or adjacent, I'd receive a blank stare when I mentioned Dodici. It's a spot I stumbled across on a walk back from the Walthamstow Wetlands, tucked away in the corner of a large new build complex in Blackhorse Road. The pizza blew me away and took me back to sitting along the Arno River in Florence. Do me a favour and head over here the next time you're in the area – it won't disappoint.

1 Wickford Way E17 6ZH

[Dodicipizza.com](http://Dodicipizza.com)

#### Sodo Pizza

Tucked away in an unassuming alley off Hoe Street, the candle-lit and intimate Sodo is a perfect date night destination. In terms of the pizza, it's a satisfying bite for sure, and nails all the elements of a high calibre Neapolitan style pizza. Best accompanied with a standout bottle from their impressively curated wine list, you won't go wrong heading to Sodo for an extra special night.

21 Hatherley Mews E17 4QP

[sodopizza.co.uk](http://sodopizza.co.uk)



Sodo Pizza can be found in Hatherley Mews near Hoe Street, Credit Laura Martinez

### Leytonstone

#### Papi's Munchies



Credit Papi's Munchies

I'll caveat this by admitting what follows is absolutely drenched in garlic-and-herb bias but Papi's Munchies is, hands down, the best pizza in the borough. It'll take a lot to convince me otherwise. Yes, it's one of my locals so the convenience may be blinding but the conviction is very much real. If you're after the perfect blend of traditional Neapolitan style with just the right modern crisp, this is the slice that's nailing it right now. It doesn't hurt that it's being served inside the North Star, a beloved pub in the area, which also boasts a Thai food menu. Feeling adventurous? Ask for a side of Thai sweet chilli sauce with your pizza.

North Star Pub, 24 Browning Road, Leytonstone E11 3AR

[papismunchiespizza.co.uk](http://papismunchiespizza.co.uk)

#### Bocca Bocca



Bocca Bocca's Zucca Nduja pizza Credit Bocca Bocca

The charming ambience of a sit down meal at Bocca Bocca earns it a spot on this guide but the sheer brilliance of its Wednesday buy-one-get-one-free deal truly seals it. In this economy, two top-tier margherita pizzas for £10.50 is practically unheard of. Great value aside, the pizza is delicious and a delight – think Franco Manca but a refined, superior version without pools of oil on top, and none of that floppy undercarriage.

Bocca Bocca, 781 High Road

Leytonstone E11 4QS

[boccabocca.co.uk](http://boccabocca.co.uk)

### Leyton

#### Slice 'N' Dough



A takeaway pizza from Slice 'N' Dough Credit Pallavi Singh

A new kid on the block of Leyton's pizza scene, Slice 'N' Dough impressed me enough to earn a spot on this list among more seasoned names. Operating from a small shop at the top of Leyton High Road, it's primarily a takeaway and delivery joint with a couple of dine-in tables.

I tried it as a takeaway and after a proper reheat, it truly delivered. The pizza's structural integrity rivalled, and in some cases exceeded, that of more established local favourites. While my sample size is limited, Slice 'N' Dough shows real promise in an increasingly competitive pizza market.

Slice 'N' Dough, 572 High

Road Leyton E10 6RL

[slicendough.co.uk](http://slicendough.co.uk)

### Northcote Arms



A funghi pizza at Northcote Arms Credit Pallavi Singh

Fans of Leyton Orient will be all too familiar with the Northcote Arms; a slightly weathered watering hole before the big game.

The pub isn't reinventing the pizza wheel, but it doesn't need to. A cheap pint and a piping hot slice from the Northcote Arms is sometimes what the day calls for. What's more, Northcote offers a buy-one-get-one-free offer on pizzas every Friday from 12pm to 3pm. So if you want a no-frills, satisfying, and undeniably tasty pizza, Northcote is for you.

Northcote Arms, 110 Grove

Green Road E11 4EL

[northcote11.com](http://northcote11.com)

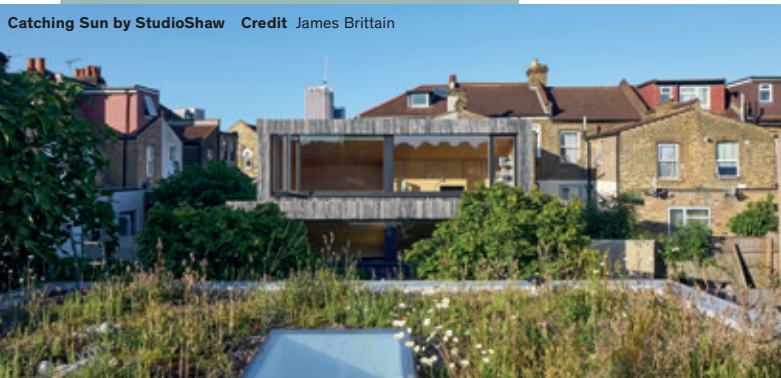




# AROUND THE BOROUGH

## WALTHAMSTOW

### Church and garage-turned-home win prestigious architectural award



Catching Sun by StudioShaw Credit James Brittain

by Marco Marcelline

A garage-turned-home and a Walthamstow church have both won a leading architectural award.

St Mary's Walthamstow, and a new-build courtyard house called 'Catching Sun', also in Walthamstow, were both given The Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) London Awards on 13th May.

Judges praised St Mary's "triumph" of a renovation effort. In awarding Matthew Lloyd Architects, the jury said they found its new building extension, which contains the parish office and an exhibition space, "warm, bright, uplifting and full of life".

The jury added: "The conserva-

tion works and new enhancements successfully extend the life of St Mary's Walthamstow and offer a new hub for the whole community. That they have been executed with such subtlety and control is a tribute to the architects' skill."

Meanwhile, the transformation of a disused Walthamstow garage into a low energy home designed to capture the sun at all times of the day and year, was also given a RIBA London Award.

Described by developer StudioShaw as "a series of boxes connected by glazed screens", judges were particularly impressed by how the boxes were "individually manipulated to angle up to reach for the sky and claim daylight".

The reinvention of the former Royal London Hospital, the

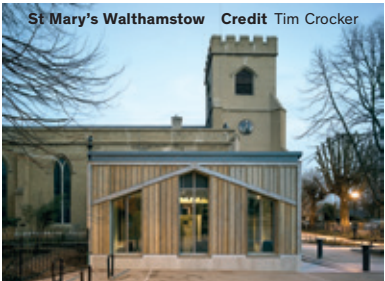
restoration of Westminster's Elizabeth Tower, and an almshouse designed to reduce social isolation for older generations, were also among the 38 winners of RIBA London Awards this year.

Presented since 1966, the awards are seen as amongst the most prestigious architectural recognitions in the country.

St Mary's and Catching Sun will now be considered for a highly coveted RIBA National Award, which will be announced on 10th July.

Last year, developer GS8's "exemplar" carbon-negative Walthamstow housing scheme The Arbour won a RIBA National Award.

At the time, RIBA's judges said: "With their exemplar ten-house, carbon-negative development on a former industrial site, Boehm Lynas and GS8 prove homes made from 'waste' and bio-based materials can be beautiful, and win."



St Mary's Walthamstow Credit Tim Crocker

## LEYTONSTONE

### Pub fire caused by discarded cigarettes

A fire which damaged hotel rooms above the Red Lion pub in Leytonstone was caused by discarded cigarettes.

Six fire engines and around 40 firefighters attended the blaze at 4am on Saturday 17th May.

The London Fire Brigade (LFB) said a section of the fourth floor, which houses several hotel rooms, was damaged by the fire.

Seven people left the building before crews arrived, and there have been no reports of any injuries.

The fire was brought under control by 6.46am. Firefighters from Leytonstone, Leyton, Walthamstow and surrounding fire stations

attended the scene.

A spokesperson from the LFB said the "accidental" fire was caused by the "unsafe disposal" of smoking material.

They advised the public to always make sure cigarettes are put right out and disposed of properly.

The *Echo* understands that the



Red Lion pub in Leytonstone High Road Credit Urban Pubs & Bars

pub's 350-capacity ballroom, which is sandwiched between the ground floor pub and the hotel rooms, suffered water damage.

The Red Lion recently underwent a £750,000 refurbishment.

The renovation was at the behest of owners Urban Pubs & Bars (UPB), which took over in September 2024 when its previous owner fell into administration.

Aside from also doubling up as a ten-bedroom boutique hotel, the pub has a large beer garden, which now features new covered booths and street-art inspired murals.

UPB did not respond to a request for comment.

## CHINGFORD



An illustration showing how the planned homes will look Credit Omni Architecture

### Three new homes draw local opposition

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

Three new homes in Chingford have been approved – despite objections from neighbours.

Plans to knock down two houses in Larkwood Road and build three new ones in their place were green-lit by Waltham Forest Council's planning committee on 6th May.

The three-bedroom homes would be designed for six people, replacing a 1930s-style bungalow and two-storey home. The new houses would also sit behind a newly installed gate.

The plans also include new bin areas and parking spaces.

A total of 22 residents living nearby formally objected to the scheme, expressing concerns about noise and a loss of privacy.

They also raised issues with potential overdevelopment of the area, arguing that more residents in the area would

mean a greater strain on parking and amenities.

However, the council said the net increase of one home was not considered to have a "significant impact" on either street parking or local utilities.

The town hall's highways department, which oversees roads and transport in the borough, also did not object to the scheme. However, it did ask the developers to contribute £3,000 towards sustainable transport in the local area.

Additionally, people should be able to keep their privacy as the new homes are between 31m and 50m away from the pre-existing residences, the council said.

Other locals criticised the three-home scheme for not including any 'affordable' housing.

Despite the social benefits, developers are only required to include 'affordable' homes in estates of ten or more, under the London Plan.

### Sign up to the Echo's weekly newsletter

We have a weekly newsletter to keep readers up-to-date with the latest news, features and comment from the Echo website

Sign up:  
[bit.ly/4gHxTAo](https://bit.ly/4gHxTAo)





OBITUARY

# Tributes paid to printmaker who ‘saw the artist in everybody’

Celebrated artist Anna Alcock was known just as much for her ‘incredible’ artwork as for her altruism in the local community



by Marco Marcelline

**T**ributes have been paid to a much loved and “fearless” Walthamstow artist and printmaker who passed away on Saturday 26th April.

Anna Alcock, originally from Johannesburg, South Africa, had lived in Walthamstow for more than two decades before her death. She was diagnosed with secondary breast cancer in 2023.

Anna is survived by her two children, Joshua and Isabella Alcock-Reeve.

The South African artist was known for her charged prints that explored complex issues from environmental catastrophe, political and social upheaval, and personal trauma.

She was regularly inspired by iconic paintings that she would turn on their head.

One such artwork *Triumph of Death*, described as a “meditation on death”, borrows from the composition of Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s painting of the same name.

Meanwhile, her work *The Bathers* was a feminist reimagining of Cezanne’s *Les Grandes Baigneuses*. Shown in the Royal Academy in summer 2024, her print subverted the original’s objectifying focus, instead showing nude female bathers at peace with and in support of one another.

Anna regularly exhibited her work at venues in the borough.

Her 2022 show, *Spring Awakening*, was inspired by the over 50 varieties of wildflowers at Walthamstow Wetlands.

At the time, Anna had told the *Echo*: “I hope it might serve as a reminder and wake up call to us all of just how important it is for us to protect the natural world which surrounds us.”

In November 2024, Anna and her children held a debut family exhibition at Winns Gallery which platformed prints they had made over the years. Called *Threads That Bind*, the exhibition centered around the “timeless” threads of family.

Isabella, 20, says she has been inspired to follow in her mother’s

footsteps in becoming a printmaker.

She told the *Echo*: “My mum was the greatest artist I’ve ever met. She was massively inspiring. Growing up, we used to sit and do lino in the living room and it was very meditative. She used to take me and my brother with her to the studio, to exhibitions, to her classes all the time.

“You could ask her anything to do with art; she knew everything. Her mind was filled with so much knowledge and she loved learning. She was a teacher to all.”

Sharing was an intrinsic aspect of Anna’s artistry, friend and collaborator Kirsten Schmidt said.

Those efforts were exemplified through the workshops she delivered for children and young people, and the low-cost health and wellbeing group she led from her Blackhorse Road studio, where people from all walks of life would come together and learn printmaking.

Kirsten and Anna set up their Blackhorse Road studio Inky Cuttlefish in 2007, which Anna continued to run after Kirsten moved on professionally.

Anna’s passing prompted an outpouring of tributes from all corners of the Walthamstow artistic community. Laura Kerry, from Artillery CIC, said: “Anna did some big stuff, like building creative resources for the whole community to use including Inky Cuttlefish Print Studios and Gnome House Community Centre, but she also quietly did thousands of things out of kindness and humanity behind the scenes.

“She did the stuff that glues us together, which we can often feel too busy for these days.”

Friend Martin Adams said simply: “She was a wonderful person who wanted to release the inner artist in everybody.”

**To donate to a fundraiser for Anna’s family:**  
Visit [gofund.me/8207f939](https://gofund.me/8207f939)

NEWS



## Charity to continue serving housebound older people after council funding loss

**A**ge UK Waltham Forest has said it will continue to run its befriending service for housebound older people through charitable donations after the council stopped funding it.

In February, Waltham Forest Council announced it would cease funding the 20-year-old service, having financially backed it since 2022.

The average age of the 165 service users of Age UK’s befriending service is 83, and 75% have poor mobility.

At the time of the announcement, the council said it would roll out a new service run by Dagenham-based Lifeline that caters to all residents experiencing loneliness regardless of age.

The council said the new service would however do away with home visits, instead replacing them with in-person events where residents could learn

life skills. The service, which came into effect in April, is only accessible for six months unlike Age UK’s indefinite program of home visits and support.

The *Echo* understands that all of Age UK’s 200 volunteers refused to transfer to Lifeline’s programme because they specifically preferred to work with older people.

Age UK responded to the council’s decision by launching a community fundraising appeal, which it says has received an “overwhelming response”.

Terry Day said: “We have no choice but to keep going, to retain this wonderful community resource. “The friendships supported by our service have deep meaning for the older person and the volunteer. To lose that would inevitably cause distress and exacerbate loneliness.”

**To donate to Age UK Waltham Forest:**  
Visit [cafdonate.cafonline.org/27644#/](https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/27644#/)  
DonationDetails



# NEWS

## Nationalisation date for Waltham Forest rail operator confirmed

*The government says the transition to a publicly-owned railway will “improve reliability”*

Greater Anglia will come back under public ownership on 12th October, the government has confirmed.

The company, which operates trains on the branch line to Stratford via Lea Bridge in Waltham Forest, will become the third rail operator to be nationalised as part of the Labour government’s pledge to bring the railways back under direct public control.

South Western Railway’s services will be the first to transfer into public ownership later this month, while C2C, which operates services in and around Essex,



will next month become the second to be nationalised.

The Department for Transport says the transition to a publicly-owned railway will “improve reliability” and encourage more people to use the railway, although there isn’t expected to be any immediate reduction in ticket prices.

Greater Anglia is the UK’s most punctual train operator and has won multiple awards for its performance.

The rail operator is also the

fastest-growing in London and the south-east of England, with 82 million passenger journeys across the network in 2024/25.

The nationalisation of Greater Anglia will not alter train services, timetables and station facilities, with no changes to ticket validities or conditions of carriage. Employees’ roles are also unaffected, as they will all transfer across into the publicly-owned company.

Martin Beable, managing director of Greater Anglia, said: “I am very proud of what we have achieved here in East Anglia over the past thirteen years, significantly improving standards, investing in a complete fleet of new trains, and working closely with the local community.

“As we transition to a publicly owned railway, we remain focussed on delivering outstanding levels of service for our passengers.”

## LISTINGS

### PILATES

**Mat Pilates**  
Every Thursday in June, 12pm–1pm  
Lees Spiritual Healing Shop, 38 High Street, Walthamstow E17 7LD

Suitable for all levels, whether you’re brand new to pilates or returning to movement. We’ll focus on mindful breathing, core strength, and fluid movements to support posture, mobility, and overall wellbeing. Expect a welcoming and non-intimidating environment where you can move at your own pace and build confidence. No experience necessary! Mats will be provided

**Tickets (£11.50)**  
**Visit** [eventbrite.co.uk/e/1370821537119](https://eventbrite.co.uk/e/1370821537119)

### FESTIVAL

**The Chingford Village Festival**  
Saturday 7th June, 12pm–7.30pm  
Chingford Green, Carbis Close E4 7EW

Get ready for an exciting day experiencing the ultimate community music festival! With wonderful music from headliners and groundbreaking new artists performing in various venues. Whether you’re here for the anthems, the energy, or to meet up with friends, you don’t want to miss this event. The festival promises dance, children’s entertainment, food, stalls.

**Free**  
**Email** [irenebull@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:irenebull@hotmail.co.uk)  
**Call** 020 8559 4500

### CHARITY GIG

**Stoned on Love**  
Saturday 7th and Sunday 8th June, from 1pm  
Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61–63 Tower Hamlets Road E17 4RQ

A two-day festival raising money for War Child, featuring music from some of the best Third Wave bands, with DJs until late, beat poets, comedians, and acoustic artists. Artists include Another Day, The Deniros, The Station, Altermoderns, MCQ Rock ‘N’ Roll.

**Tickets from £15**  
**Visit** [walthamstowtradeshall.com/whats-on](https://walthamstowtradeshall.com/whats-on)

### EXHIBITION

**Measured Response**  
Thursday 5th–Sunday 29th June  
The Stone Space, 6 Church Lane, Leytonstone E11 1HG

‘Measured Response’ is a meditation on the interconnectedness of human existence and our environment, an exploration of how we creatively respond to a world in flux. In ‘Measured Response’, artists Esther Neslen and Lucy Chapman navigate creative practice in a time of crisis. The Stone Space is open to the public on Saturdays 10am to 4pm and Sundays 12pm to 4pm, but is visible from the street every day.

**Visit** <https://stonespace.gallery>  
**Email** [eneslen@outlook.com](mailto:eneslen@outlook.com)

### THEATRE

**Shakespeare's As You Like It**  
Thursday 19th–Sunday 22nd June, 7.30pm  
Lloyd Park, Walthamstow E17 4PP

‘As You Like It’ follows the success of last year’s ‘Much Ado About Nothing’ and the company’s Offie Award-nominated ‘A Midsummer Night’s Dream’ and ‘Romeo & Juliet’. This joyful, family-friendly outdoor production blends contemporary London culture with the Bard’s wit, romance, and secret identities.

**Tickets from £7.50**  
**Visit** [elsf.uk/booktickets](https://elsf.uk/booktickets)

### POTTERY

**Summer Solstice Social**  
Saturday 21st June, 10am–5pm  
Turning Earth Leyton, 11 Argall Avenue E10 7QE

To honour the Summer Solstice, this event celebrates the ancient art of pottery and its power to bring people together. Whether you have some previous experience or you are a complete beginner, you’ll find something to spark your creativity. There will be flower sculpting workshops, free claymaking, vase glazing, as well as live music and drinks from local brewer Neckstamper.

**Tickets from £20**  
**Visit** [bookwhen.com/turningearthsummersolstice](https://bookwhen.com/turningearthsummersolstice)

### QUIZ

**Eat or Heat charity fundraiser quiz**  
Thursday 26th June, 7pm  
Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61–63 Tower Hamlets Road E17 4RQ

You are all invited to a quiz and raffle night happening at Walthamstow Trades Hall raising money for the Eat or Heat food bank. All proceeds going towards the work that one of our amazing local foodbanks Eat or Heat does to support local residents. Teams of up to six people.

**Tickets from £8**  
**Visit** [peoplesfundraising.com/event/eat-or-heat-quiz-trades-hall-26th-june-2025](https://peoplesfundraising.com/event/eat-or-heat-quiz-trades-hall-26th-june-2025)

### PHOTOGRAPHY

**Summer Photography Course**  
Mondays 8pm–10pm, over six weeks starting 30th June  
Quaker Meeting House, 1a Jewel Road, Walthamstow E17 4QU

Our summer photography course has been a popular event for years. It’s a great opportunity to meet like-minded people, learn new skills through hands-on sessions and talks, and boost your confidence behind the camera. By the end of the six-week course, you’ll not only understand the key elements of photography but also gain confidence in capturing stunning images. This course caters to all.

**£68**  
**Visit** [wdps.org](https://wdps.org)

Advertisement

**LICENSING ACT 2003**  
**Notice of Application for a 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 **Mr Florenc Sadiku** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **Orient Lounge 389 High Road, Leyton E10 5NA.**

**The nature of the application is as follows:**

- **Sale of alcohol:** Sun to Wed, 11:00–01:00, Thurs to Sat, 11:00–02:00
- **Regulated entertainment Recorded Music/ Anything Similar Description to Live/ Recorded Music or Performance of Dance:** Sun to Wed, 13:00–01:00, Thurs to Sat, 13:00–02:00
- **Late night refreshments:** Sun to Wed, 23:00–01:00, Thurs to Sat, 23:00–02:00

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 **Friday 13th June 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 on conviction should such a false statement be made.

**Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence**

NOTICE IS GIVEN THAT **IMPERIAL LONDON HOTELS LTD TRADING as Imperial London Hotels Ltd of Royal National Hotel Directors Office, 38–51 Bedford Way London WC1H 0DG** is applying to change an existing licence as follows:

- **To add an operating centre to keep 6 goods vehicles and 0 trailers at 48 and 65 Cromwell Estate, Staffa Road, London E10 7QZ**
- **To change existing conditions or undertakings applying at the operating centre from SINCLAIRS LAUNDRY, Brettenham Road EDMONTON N18 2HE**
- **To: 48 and 65 Cromwell Estate, Staffa Road, London E10 7QZ**

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice. Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice.

A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.

**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 **Makeila Estelle** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at: **Fellowship Island, Lloyd Park, Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4PP.**

- **The applicant is applying for a premises licence to run from Saturday 12th July– Sunday 13th July 2025.**
- **To permit Live Music, Recorded music (Outdoors only): 12:00-19:00 Sat, 11:00–18:00 Sun**
- **Performances of dance: 13:00–18:00 Sat**
- **Entertainment of a similar description: 12:00–18:00, 11:00–17:00 Sun**
- **Sale of alcohol consumed on premises, Hours the premises is open to the public: 12:00–19:00 Sat, 11:00–18:00 Sun**

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 **19th June 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 on conviction should such a false statement be made.



SPORT



Credit Sue Redpath



Credit Stella Fox

# Tears as Leyton Orient fall at last Wembley hurdle

Over 30,000 fans turned out in red and white to see the O's just miss out on promotion to the Championship at Wembley

by Marco Marcelline

Leyton Orient fans were left bitterly disappointed by their club's failure to make the final leap into the Championship following a dramatic League One play-off defeat at Wembley Stadium on 25th May. Despite a promising end to the season, it was heartbreak for fans who witnessed Orient lose 1-0 to Charlton Athletic.

It had been over a decade since the Brisbane Road club last reached the League One play-offs and more than 30,000 fans turned out in red and white to support their team in what was the biggest crowd the O's have ever played in front of.

Speaking to BBC Radio London after the match, Leyton Orient's manager Richie Wellens reflected on a gruelling campaign: "I'm tired, this week has taken a lot out of us. It's been a long season. I need a few weeks off. We'll dust ourselves down and try to recruit. The plan was always to be a top, top League One club. We are still not there yet, but this is a good step."

Wellens, who has managed the club since 2022, additionally praised his players, saying: "It's been an unbelievable group of players – both on the pitch and character-wise they are a pleasure to work

with every day. We just couldn't go to the last step and I am gutted for them."

Wellens also admitted promotion to the Championship could have come too soon. "I am more gutted than anybody. It's the first time I have ever lost a final, ever," he said.

"If you'd said to us at the start of the season you're going to lose in the play-off final we'd have taken it. But now it's important we grow and develop the club. We're still not there. If we'd been promoted today we'd still fall short in a lot of areas which are required for a Championship club. We have to try and grow from it."

He continued: "I came here and we were 20th in League Two. Charlton are ready to go up. Are we ready? As a club we probably need more time."

Despite the defeat, Leyton Orient has remained optimistic. In a statement released on 27th May, the club's board underlined its long-term vision for Brisbane Road: "We have made it clear that our aim is to become a football club that can compete sustainably at Championship level and we believe that we are well placed to achieve that in the coming years. We will not put a timescale on when we hope to accomplish this but we can guarantee you that all of our energies are focused on achieving it."

Advertisement

**AFC LEYTON 1ST TEAM 18+**

**TUESDAYS 8PM STARTING 22ND APRIL**  
**OPEN TEAM TRIALS**  
**GLWFL PREMIER LEAGUE 25/26 SEASON**  
**COACHING@AFCLEYTON.CO.UK**



# Support your local paper during Indie News Week

In June last year, Public Interest News Foundation launched the UK’s first awareness-raising and crowdfunding campaign for independent news publishers, using the slogan ‘no news is bad news’.

Indie News Week 2024 helped raise the profile of community publications, while the Indie News Fund supported the sector financially by doubling the funds raised by participating news providers during the month of June.

We at Social Spider Community News, publisher of *Waltham Forest Echo* and four other London media outlets, were one of 40 independent news providers that signed up for the campaign – spanning the full length of the country, from Shetland to Eastbourne.

Last year, the *Echo*’s not-for-profit publisher, Social Spider CIC raised over £9,000 during the month of June as part of the celebrations. This year we’re aim-

ing to increase that to £12,000.

The campaign came at a crucial time for us as we struggled financially last year, so we’d like to thank all of our supporters and patrons who helped us reach our target. Since the start of this year, our financial situation has been improving, and we hope to have some good news to share in the near future.

Indie News Week 2025 will not be supported with a match-funded crowdfunding campaign this time around, but there will be events held up and down the

country by local news providers to raise awareness of what they do and encourage people to support independent media outlets in their area.

The week itself runs from 9th June to 15th June but we are raising money towards this target throughout the month of June. All money raised from *Echo* reader will support us to continue and grow our local journalism in Waltham Forest

Please donate via this link: [paypal.com/ncp/payment/GEMR8CFNC3YTE](https://paypal.com/ncp/payment/GEMR8CFNC3YTE) or the QR code below.

**To support us, scan the QR code or visit the link**



**paypal.com/ncp/payment/GEMR8CFNC3YTE**



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