



Your independent community newspaper

WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free

July 2025, N° 124

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THIS SIX-STOREY HIGH mural is the first permanent public artwork in Walthamstow Priory Court estate's 80-year history and one of the biggest animated murals in the UK. It was created by artist INSA alongside local residents who shared their stories and memories of living on the estate. Credit: The Digital Story Company

Whipps Cross staff slam 'discriminatory' dress code

by Marco Marcelline

Two Whipps Cross Hospital staff members are taking legal action against Barts Health NHS Trust over a "discriminatory" uniform policy which prohibits shows of solidarity with Palestine.

Senior nurse Ahmad Baker, and Dr Aarash Saleh, a respiratory consultant at the Leytonstone hospital, say an updated dress

code policy discriminates against their anti-Zionist views, which were found to be a protected characteristic under the Equality Act last year.

The policy, which was introduced in March, bans staff from wearing clothes or symbols that display support for a "particular nation, political party, one side in a conflict or causes that are not directly linked to and supported by the trust of the NHS".

This includes badges, lanyards, clothing, digital backgrounds, or any visible symbols perceived as politically or nationally affiliated.

Ahmad, who is British-Palestinian, says he was prompted to take legal action after his bosses reprimanded him for using a background on his video calls that showed a fruit bowl containing a watermelon.

Watermelons have become sym-

bols of Palestine because of its similar colours to the Palestinian flag.

Ahmad and Aarash are seeking the removal of key provisions of the policy, a declaration from the employment tribunal that discrimination has taken place, and compensation for injury to "feelings they have suffered and continue to suffer" as a result of the policy.

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Council incorrectly billed social care users

230 residents were affected
by the 'serious error'

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council has apologised after incorrectly charging residents for social care.

Some 230 people, who had been means-tested and were eligible to pay for their care, had not been receiving the proper bills.

They include people who receive extra care and day care, those in supported living, and people receiving direct payments.

The residents have now been sent letters from the town hall, outlining how much money they owe.

Councillor Louise Mitchell, the cabinet member for adult social care, apologised "wholeheartedly and sincerely" for the mistake.

She said in a statement: "This is a serious error that will cause concern for those impacted. It should not have happened – I apologise wholeheartedly and sincerely for the distress caused."

"I want people to know that we will work with them to find a reasonable, manageable resolution to this mistake."

The issue was discovered after a resident flagged to the council they had not been correctly charged for a family member's care.

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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 27/06/25

Council to spend £29m buying more than 60 homes

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council will spend almost £29million on buying more than 60 new homes, in a bid to take the pressure off its housing sector.

The 64 houses will be turned into temporary accommodation, aimed at residents who are at immediate risk of becoming homeless.

The cost of temporary accommodation is one of the biggest strains on the town hall, alongside social care, which led to the council overspending by £17m last year.

There are currently more than 8,000 people on the council's housing register, waiting to be allocated a permanent place to live, according to data from February. Around 200 people apply each month and 88% of cases are accepted.

In 2022, the council was allocated £15.4m from the Greater London Authority (GLA)'s Affordable Homes Programme to build or purchase 77 social rented homes.

The council will use the

remaining £8.6m, alongside a loan of £20m, to pay for the new homes.

The £8.6m was originally earmarked to convert private and socially-rented homes in Marlowe Road and Priory Court, but this proved "unviable," deputy council leader Ahsan Khan said during a cabinet meeting on 3rd June.

The scheme will save the council £6.1m over the next decade. As per an agreement with the GLA, the council will need to

buy 40 homes by March next year and the remaining 24 by September. All 64 will be within the borough of Waltham Forest.

The acquisitions will begin "immediately," according to Joe Garrod.

As part of a similar scheme approved in April, the council will buy 53 new-builds in Hepworth Place, part of the 'Fellowship Square' development at the town hall complex, using revenue raised from Right to Buy sales.

Credit: Tierra Mallorca via Unsplash



'Half' of boroughs could face bankruptcy over Send costs

Almost half of London's local authorities are at "heightened risk" of bankruptcy because of insufficient schools funding from the government, according to London Councils.

The cross-party group, which acts as a representative body of the 32 London boroughs and The City, warns that grants to councils for supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (Send) have not kept pace with rising pressures, leading to severe budget deficits.

London Councils forecasts that boroughs' deficits for Send provision will total £500m by the end of 2026/27 – destabilising town hall budgets and undermining investment in

schools' resources and support for pupils.

Boroughs are lobbying the government for improved funding to address the crisis.

The government has extended its 'statutory override' through to March 2026 for councils running deficits on their Send spending. London Councils says that boroughs would seriously struggle to meet these deficits if the statutory override was removed, with up to 16 unable to meet their projected deficit and at risk of issuing a Section 114 notice, which is effective bankruptcy. It has not named these boroughs.

Recent government data shows a 9% increase in London children with education, health and care plans (EHCPs)

in just one year, from 85,601 in 2023 to 93,487 in 2024.

Ian Edwards, London Councils' executive member for children and young people, said: "Boroughs are determined to provide high-quality support for all young Londoners with Send, but we're extremely concerned by the unsustainable finance pressures we face.

"The sums don't add up. Government funding has failed to keep pace with rising levels of Send support need in the capital, leading to major deficits.

"We are calling for funding that reduces the deficit and reflects London's fast-growing Send numbers, enabling us to boost inclusion in schools and continue meeting the needs of all children in the capital."

Continued from Page-1

Despite the council's financial assessment, their account details indicated they did not need to pay towards it.

The authority has since discovered the issues stemmed from workers incorrectly entering data into an internal management system.

"We have given all staff who use this system extra training to make sure the issue cannot be repeated," Cllr Mitchell said.

She says the council has also referred itself to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO), a third-party organisation that investigates complaints about councils in the UK.

She added: "We will cooperate with the LGO in every way that we can and will share their findings if they deem an investigation is necessary."

Responding to the news, Waltham Forest Conservatives leader Emma Best said: "This is the last thing residents and their families need when dealing with the emotional and physical stress of care. The council needs to be honest about the cost of their failure and make sure affected residents are given grace and not put under undue stress as a result."

The council has previously been penalised for failures relating to its services.

Most recently, in April, the Housing Ombudsman ordered Waltham Forest to pay £1,000 and apologise to a vulnerable resident after they were left homeless due to months-long delays in processing a claim.

There are around 3,000 people receiving adult social care support from the council in total.

Advertisement

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 **Aperitivo Club Limited** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **Aperitivo Club, Arch 273, Lancaster Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3EH**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- To permit the sale of alcohol off-sales (online sales only): Monday to Saturday, 10:00-18:00

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.

Representations must be received no later than **11th July 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.

NEWS

Cycling metalheads raise £60,000 for kids charities

The Heavy Metal Truants set off on a 150-mile cycle from Walthamstow to Download Festival last month



The Heavy Metal Truants at Big Penny Social before they set off Credit Heavy Metal Truants

by Marco Marcelline

A 30-strong crew of heavy metal aficionados who cycled 150 miles from Walthamstow to Download Festival last month have raised over £60,000 for children's charities.

The group set off from Big Penny Social near Blackhorse Road on Wednesday, 11th June and arrived at the famous rock festival two days later.

Called the Heavy Metal Truants, the group is aiming to raise a total of £100,000 for four charities: Nordoff & Robbins, Teenage Cancer Trust, NSPCC, and Save The Children.

The cycling group was founded in 2013 by Walthamstow resident and ex-music magazine editor Alexander Milas, and Iron Maiden manager Rod Smallwood.

Speaking to the *Echo* ahead of the ride, Alexander highlighted the generosity of metalheads, stating they'd raised a total of £1.5million since 2013. He explained: "Heavy metal is a community that is in many ways a family for people as well."

The first stretch of the route spanned from Walthamstow to Milton Keynes, where they camped for the night before heading up to Leicester on day two,

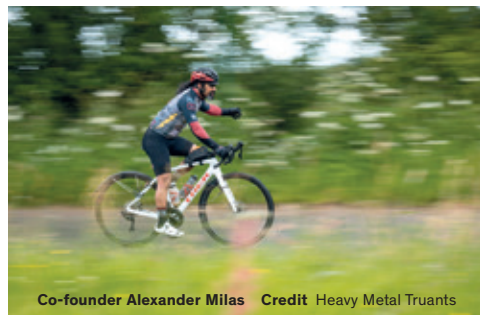
eventually making their way to Download Festival in Donington Park on Friday, 13th June.

In a bid to keep everyone in the group cycling through the year, Alexander also runs the Heavy Metal Cycling Club, which sees metalheads cycle across London, before regularly ending up in breweries across Blackhorse Road.

As Alexander explains: "We decided to start the Heavy Metal Cycling Club as a way of keeping us loosely together year round because the joy and freedom of riding a bike can't be overstated."

He added: "It's a functional mode of transport, it's a social activity, and it does just kind of make you feel like a kid again."

To find out more about the Heavy Metal Truants and donate to their ride: Visit heavymetaltruants.com



Co-founder Alexander Milas Credit Heavy Metal Truants



Credit Heavy Metal Truants

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NEWS

Credit Mance Communications/Big Penny



Friends playing shuffleboard at new games hall Flukes in Walthamstow. The venue, which opened in May, boasts six interactive darts oches, two interactive shuffleboards, four pro-standard American pool tables, and three karaoke rooms. Find out more about Flukes at: bigpennysocial.co.uk/flukes

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In a letter sent to Barts Health on the claimants' behalf by legal firm Leigh Day, Ahmad says the policy unfairly targets those with pro-Palestinian views, and highlights Barts Health support for Ukraine.

Since March 2022, the trust has issued several press releases in support of Ukraine, in addition to sending vital medical equipment to struggling health centres in the country.

The trust, which manages several hospitals in East London including Whipps Cross, say their policy reflects their aim to be "completely apolitical and non-biased in our care".

The claimants additionally state that lobby group UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) had sent a formal complaint to the trust in early March 2025, asserting that pro-Palestinian symbols worn by staff could be deemed offensive or even unlawful.

In March, UKLFI published an article announcing Barts' new policy eight days before it was officially implemented and communicated to staff. The claimants say this shows the trust "inappropriately consulted with an external body while sidelining internal staff voices".

In their article, UKLFI highlighted the case of a Jewish woman who felt "extremely vulnerable" after seeing three Whipps Cross staff with "Free Palestine" badges, while she was giving birth.

A Barts spokesperson told the *Echo*: "We recognise the distress that global conflict has for our diverse workforce and continue to support their wellbeing as they serve our patients. However, as an NHS organisation our primary responsibility is care for patients."

They added the policy aimed to "uphold political neutrality, creating an inclusive culture at work, and a safe space for patients in their time of need".

Councillor starts job partially based in Greece

Wood Street councillor Victoria Ashworth says she will continue to serve her constituents 'as usual' despite taking on a job as a chaplain in a Greek port

by Marco Marcelline

A Labour councillor will split her time between the Mediterranean and Walthamstow after accepting a job as a chaplain in Greece.

Victoria Ashworth, who has served as Wood Street councillor since 2018, is set to be a port chaplain in Piraeus with Mission to Seafarers, a Christian organisation that supports people who work at sea.

A Waltham Forest Labour

spokesperson told the *Echo* that the part-time and hybrid job "requires some business travel to Greece", and she had decided to step down as a cabinet member for stronger communities as a result.

However, Ashworth will continue to represent her Wood Street ward until her term as a councillor ends in May 2026.

Ashworth earned £29,025 for her role as a cabinet member on top of her current councillor salary of £13,085.

The Waltham Forest Labour

spokesperson stated: "[Ashworth] will be continuing her role as usual in the local ward, attending surgeries, ward meetings and council meetings and getting involved in local initiatives as she has done since election in 2018. We strongly encourage diverse experiences away from the town hall as we know this benefits the decision making made in the town hall."

Since September 2020 Ashworth has worked part-time as a panel member on the Ministry of Justice's judicial appointments commission.

In 2019 Ashworth unsuccessfully stood as the Labour parliamentary candidate (PPC) for Epping Forest, and last year she failed to be selected as the Labour PPC for Birmingham Northfield.

Ashworth has publicly referred to being raised as a Catholic.

Though a Christian-based

organisation, Mission to Seafarers describes itself as dedicated to supporting seafarers (people who work in ships) regardless of their religious background.

According to Mission to Seafarers' website, a port chaplain is expected to visit ships that call into the ports, or "make provision for their visitation", as well as provide "spiritual support" to seafarers.

Port chaplains are supported by chaplaincy workers, who are more junior in comparison. A recent job advertisement for a part-time chaplaincy worker role in Southampton lists a pro-rata salary of "£35,000 to £40,000 per annum".

The Mission to Seafarers said: "We can confirm that Victoria Ashworth has been appointed as [our] new port chaplain in Piraeus, Greece. We look forward to her taking up this important role in supporting seafarer welfare."



Councillor Vicky Ashworth

Credit X/Twitter



Piraeus, Greece
Credit Karol Chomka
via Unsplash

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Dalton Lodge Care Home

Innovative Dementia Care in Walthamstow

Dalton 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

Carers criticise council's 'shambolic' closure of disabled adults centre

A farewell party for carers and service users was held last month Credit James O'Rourke



Families say they were asked to part-fund costs of alternative provision, and were not allocated new placements in time

by Marco Marcelline

Families of disabled adults who attended a Walthamstow day centre that was shut by Waltham Forest Council last month have called the transition process a “shambles”.

When the council's cabinet voted to close the Markhouse Centre in March, Louise Mitchell, the member for adults and health, said the town hall opted for “people-based services” over “building-based services”.

But a “chaotic” transition that left families in the dark about where their loved ones will go has seen carers slam the council's approach as neither “people-based” nor “building-based”.

Families told the *Echo* they had been forced to chase council officers for information on where their loved one would be placed, despite Waltham Forest having promised “individual and personalised transition plans” when it consulted on the closure.

One carer said she was asked by a social worker if she could partially fund the costs of her preferred replacement day centre.

In March, senior councillors agreed to shut the Walthamstow building at the end of June, citing its “poor condition” and repair costs totalling close to £1million.

Open from the early 1980s, the day centre was most recently attended by 48

borough residents with moderate to severe learning difficulties.

Catherine Tokens, whose son Paul attended the centre for 30 years, called the transition process a “total and utter shambles”, saying she felt “outraged” by how it has been handled.

While Paul was eventually allocated his family's preferred centre, the council arranged his first “transition visit” – meant to help service users adjust – just one week before his start date of 23rd June.

The “minimal” breathing room and support caused Catherine to feel that Paul was being “shunted” from one unit to the next.

Catherine said she was “forced to fight” for the centre she wanted Paul to



Tony O'Rourke has attended the Markhouse Centre since the 1980s Credit James O'Rourke

be placed in.

Stating that the council had presented her with “no contingency plan” if appropriate accommodation for Paul wasn't found, she added: “We were told that social workers would provide support, yet I had to make three separate phone calls before finally making contact with them.”

Catherine was additionally asked by her dedicated social worker if she could supplement – or “top up” – the costs of her preferred centre, despite it being included in the town hall's list of alternative day services.

While she has since received confirmation that she would not have to part-fund Paul's new placement, the “unacceptable” experience left her dismayed with the council.

This feeling was echoed by Nus, who said her severely autistic 23-year-old daughter Zaynah was yet to find out when she will begin her placement at an alternative site.

She told the *Echo*: “It's appalling how they are handling this. They said the transition process would be smooth but none of it has gone accordingly. We've been constantly chasing the council and it's been nothing but silence.”

Friday, 13th June was Zaynah's last day at the centre, and with no start date at the new site confirmed, Nus faces having to keep her daughter at home for an extended period – a prospect which she finds “heartbreaking”.

Another promise Nus says the council has broken is its declaration it would consider service users' friendships when placing them in a new centre.

She said: “I was having tea with some other carers when I found out all of Zaynah's friends at Markhouse except one were going to a different centre to her.”

In a statement, Cllr Mitchell said: “No formal requests for top-ups have been made for any placements that have been arranged. There have been some discussions about fair and proportionate costs as we strive to arrange secure placements that provide a high-quality of care at a reasonable, affordable cost. As it currently stands, no resident or family is required to pay a top-up.”

“We remain fully committed to our responsibilities under the Care Act 2014. All care and support arrangements have been made in full compliance with statutory requirements. We have ensured that families have access to an allocated social worker who can provide the advice and support that they may need in the first instance.”

Meanwhile, campaigner and ex-councillor James O'Rourke, whose brother Tony has attended the Markhouse Centre for



Paul's family were asked to 'top-up' cost of new centre Credit Provided by family

close to four decades, criticised Waltham Forest for shutting the centre, which he described as a “lifeline” for many.

Following a farewell party for families and service users at Markhouse on 11th June, he said: “For nearly 40 years, Tony attended Markhouse. Today, after much thought, I supported him to take the microphone and he simply said: ‘Markhouse closed.’ A powerful statement from someone who understands far more than politicians give credit for.

“To those making these heartless decisions: Where is your so-called ‘person-centred’ approach now? This isn't just a building. This is people's lives. Their routines. Their community. [It has been] torn away without dignity or respect.”



Zaynah, 23, is waiting to find out when her new placement will begin Credit Provided by family

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NEWS

Parents slam 'reckless' NHS trust found guilty of not caring for their daughter

North East London Foundation Trust and a mental health ward manager were found to not have done enough to prevent Alice Figueiredo's death in 2015



Alice Figueiredo
Credit: Provided by family

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

The parents of a young woman who died during her stay on a mental health ward say the NHS' "complacency" was "reckless and indefensible".

Alice Figueiredo died at the Hepworth ward of Goodmayes Hospital in July 2015, having been sectioned under the Mental Health Act. She was 22 years old, with a history of depression, bipolar and an eating disorder.

She had used a bin bag, taken from a communal toilet. Her fatal attempt was the 19th time she had used such a means to harm herself during her five month stay. Despite the repeated incidents, the bags were not removed from the ward.

Her death led to North East London Foundation NHS Trust (NELFT), which oversees healthcare in Barking & Dagenham, Havering,

Redbridge, and Waltham Forest, being charged with corporate manslaughter.

It was the first time an NHS trust had been charged in relation to a patient taking their own life, and the second time a trust had been charged with corporate manslaughter.

Jurors in the Old Bailey deliberated for a total of 24 days – the joint-longest deliberation in UK legal history – to reach their verdicts on 9th June.

They found the trust and Benjamin Aninakwa, the ward manager at the time of Alice's death, did not do enough to prevent her death. Both were convicted under the Health and Safety at Work Act.

However, both were cleared of the more serious charge of manslaughter. Aninakwa was facing charges of gross negligence manslaughter, but was acquitted.

NELFT has said it will "reflect on the verdict and its implications" as it "continues to develop" its services.

Alice's mother Jane Figueiredo and stepfather Max Figueiredo regularly attended the trial, which lasted seven months between October and June.

Speaking after the trial, they said the trust's "complacency" was "reckless and indefensible".

Jane said: "the verdicts have come after almost ten years of a relentless uphill slog, pursuing justice, accountability and truth for the five months of deplorable failings in Alice's care at Goodmayes Hospital, which directly led to her death in 2015."

She said "Alice's light and life shone so brightly" and everyone who "knew and loved her" has spent the last decade "devastated by the immeasurable loss of her luminous, kind, thoughtful, generous, warm, humorous and deeply loving presence, always feeling her absence at every occasion and in our everyday lives".

She added: "Nothing, including these verdicts, will ever bring her back to us and we will never stop thinking of her and missing her. There's always one place empty at our table, one very special



Jane and Max Figueiredo
Credit: Provided by family

voice silent that we long to hear in our conversations."

The night before Alice died, she texted with her boyfriend about Bob Dylan's music. They had attended a Fleetwood Mac concert in June, at the O2 Arena, which Alice had been given night leave for.

She stayed at home with her family, and it was seen as a sign she was making improvements.

In the early hours of 7th July, Alice was found unresponsive in the communal toilet by a nurse. Two nurses on the ward were slow in calling an ambulance, and Alice died at another hospital.

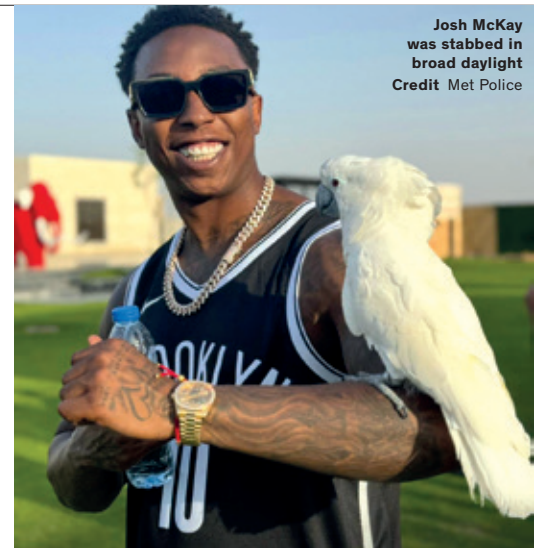
Max said: "During these last six months, we have had to painfully endure listening to both defence teams' characterisation of Alice as a hopeless case with a long-term prognosis that was terminal and that her life would be inevitably short. Nothing could have been further from the truth.

"Alice died because of negligence and indifference from a number of the staff at NELFT who failed to keep her safe. There is scant consolation for me in this verdict because nobody can give us Alice back."

A spokesperson for NELFT said: "Our thoughts are with Alice's family and loved ones, who lost her at such a young age. We extend our deepest sympathy for the pain and heartbreak they have suffered this past ten years.

"We will reflect on the verdict and its implications, both for the trust and mental health provision more broadly as we continue to work to develop services for the communities we serve."

Sentences are expected to be handed down in September.



Josh McKay
was stabbed in
broad daylight
Credit: Met Police

Rapper guilty of murdering dad in Leyton barber shop

Josh McKay, 33, was stabbed in the neck by rapper Renai Belle last July in front of his young child

A rapper has been convicted of murdering a father in front of his young child at a Leyton barbershop.

Josh McKay, 33, was stabbed in the neck by Renai Belle in a targeted attack and died from his injuries at the scene in Lea Bridge Road on 6th July last year.

Belle, 30, was convicted of Josh's murder at the Old Bailey last month. A man and woman from Leytonstone were also convicted of separate offences in connection with the murder.

The court heard that the father-of-two was at the barbershop with his young child before Belle entered the shop at around 3pm wearing a balaclava.

Josh's barber reportedly spotted a man wearing a balaclava creeping through the door and initially thought it was a "joke", until he saw the large kitchen knife he was holding.

Josh was stabbed in the neck just as he swivelled round on his chair to see what was going on. The knife fell to the ground as the pair fought each other, before Josh picked it up and chased Belle out of the shop.

Josh's child had seen the attack unfold, and was heard by witnesses saying "that's my dad" while visibly upset.

Belle was driven to the scene by his partner, Tenika Parker. Having seen Josh enter the barbershop, the pair drove to the address of a man called Daniel Cooper who provided Belle with the balaclava and knife that would be used minutes later to murder Josh.

In the days following the murder, Josh was described by those who knew him as "a young Black man who did good for his community and looked after his children".

Detective Inspector Chris Griffith, who led the investigation, said: "This was a savage and pre-planned attack, committed in broad daylight and with scant regard for passers-by.

"My heart goes out to Josh's family and friends. He was a loving parent, whose life ended in the most horrendous way."

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NEWS

Time ‘running out’ for jailed activist’s mother on hunger strike

Laila Seif is on the ninth month of her hunger strike in protest against the imprisonment of her son Alaa Abd el-Fattah by the Sisi regime



Laila outside Downing Street in February
Credit for all photos Huw Jordan/Free Alaa campaign

accept an intervention when a monitoring device found her glucose levels had dipped to almost zero.

Despite her critical condition, Mona says her mother Laila remains “extraordinarily cognitively present” and “stubborn” as she pursues the hunger strike from her central London hospital bed.

Alaa has himself begun a full hunger strike from his maximum-security jail in the Nile Delta, where Mona says he has been put in enforced isolation and beaten by prison officers.

She said: “My family are only allowed to visit him once a month and we can only speak to him through a glass divider. He is really worried for Laila and he’s going crazy.”

Mona moved to London three years ago to escape severe state hostility towards her campaigning work to free Alaa.

At first she stayed with a friend in Tottenham but after falling pregnant, Mona decided to raise her young daughter in Walthamstow.

Now living in Cambridge with her young family, Mona still feels a deep connection to the E17 home where she lived from 2022 until January this year.

“I fell in love with it; Walthamstow became my home and it was where I found community,” she adds.



Laila, Mona and Sanaa meeting with Keir Starmer



Laila in hospital last month

The home also became a base for the family’s activism, allowing them to lobby Westminster directly for Alaa’s release.

In February, the family met with Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer in Downing Street and were left feeling assured that he was “emotionally invested” in the case.

However, Mona says that she doesn’t believe the government is “working with the urgency that is required” for his release.

The UK government has thus far only deployed soft diplomacy towards Egypt, a tool which Mona and her family have long since lost patience for.

Mona says Britain could instead summon the Egyptian ambassador, sanction politicians, or pause specific trade deals and arms sales to the country.

She adds: “There’s been no tangible change or action despite affirmative and compassionate pronouncements; If I lose my mother tomorrow, what am I going to do with a letter from Keir Starmer?”

To find out more about the Free Alaa campaign:
Visit freealaa.net/take-action

Protesters outside Bailey’s office last month Credit We Demand Change



Campaigners call on MP to oppose welfare reform plans

Several dozen people protested outside Leyton and Wanstead MP Calvin Bailey’s constituency office last month

by Marco Marcelline

Disability and anti-cuts campaigners have called on Leyton and Wanstead MP Calvin Bailey to oppose welfare reform proposals.

At a protest organised by the left-wing umbrella group We Demand Change outside the Labour MP’s constituency office in Leytonstone last month, several dozen activists chanted slogans such as “When they say cut back, we say fight back!” and “No more money for war and death! Spend it on the NHS!”.

In a bid to make savings of up to £5billion by 2030, the Labour government has proposed tightening eligibility criteria for personal independence payments (PIP), slashing incapacity benefits for new claimants by 50%, and reducing out-of-work payments to under-22s.

MPs are due to vote on the Welfare Reform Bill this month amid widespread disquiet on Labour backbenches about the announced proposals.

Bailey responded to the protest by expressing concern about the “speed and scale” of the welfare reform, telling the *Echo* he had “raised questions with both Downing Street and ministers”.

Speaking at the protest, Stella Ouriache, from Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC), said that the “most marginalised and vulnerable” were “again being attacked and used to pay for Labour’s warfare and austerity choices”.

In a statement to the *Echo*, Bailey said: “I completely understand the fear and anger around proposed changes to social security. After 14 years of damaging Tory policies, it’s no surprise people are deeply concerned. Any reform must protect the financial stability of disabled people and those who need support most.”

He added: “Reform is needed but it must be compassionate, fair, and not force people further from work or stability. I will continue to raise these points and I encourage residents to share their views with me and get in touch if they need assistance.”

To contact Calvin Bailey:
Email calvin.bailey.mp@parliament.uk

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ARTS & CULTURE

NEWS

For the love of loaves

Bread lover and local artist Lucy Harrison’s latest project tells the stories of Waltham Forest bakeries past and present



Chingford's James Crown bakery in the 1990s
Credit Alan Crown



Baker brothers F. Day & E. G. Day at Clock House Bakery in 1915
Credit Vestry House Museum

A new arts project and exhibition called *Breaking Bread* is telling the stories of Waltham Forest’s bakeries. Created by artist Lucy Harrison, *Breaking Bread* spans historic family bakeries like Robert Brooks and James Crown to today’s mix of independent bakers crafting everything from Italian focaccia to traditional naan and Turkish gözleme. The year-long project has produced a free bakery map available in cafés and bakeries across the borough, while local bread makers are being showcased on Instagram and TikTok. Lucy spent months filming bread being made and speaking to bakers about their craft, visiting during night shifts and early morning openings to capture the skill and passion behind the borough’s bakery scene. 27 bakeries were selected to

feature on the free printed map, which is also available at Lea Bridge Library. Lucy explains: “The project started as a way to document today’s amazing bakery scene, but what emerged was this fascinating story of continuity. Whether it’s German bakers in the early 1900s or the Syrian, Mexican and Bulgarian bakers I met this year, Waltham Forest has always been shaped by people bringing their food traditions from around the world.” “Spending time in bakeries at dawn and during night shifts, filming bread being made, really showed me the skill and passion behind Waltham Forest’s food culture,” she adds. “From Lucky Yu’s Cantonese-inspired sourdough made with congee to traditional Turkish gözleme, the diversity is incredible – and it connects to a much longer history of immigrant

bakers shaping the area.” Lucy added: “Bread is something that people across the world have in common even if they speak a different language and live in a different culture.” The map was designed by local designer Sandra Zellmer, with assistance from local content creator Victoria Dove. Breaking Bread was funded by Arts Council England and London Borough of Waltham Forest’s Make It Happen 2024 Grant. For further details and an online version of the map visit: lucy-harrison.co.uk

Lucy’s favourite bakeries

Adam’s Naan
Great value, freshly made naan, cooked in the tandoor in front of you as you wait. As well as being a good option to go with your takeaway, they are amazingly stuffed with all sorts of fillings if you take them home straight away while still hot. 369 Lea Bridge Road, Leyton E10 7EA



Chocolatine Bakery Credit Lucy Harrison

Bassem and Almahdi are passionate about French baking, and you can tell how much care has been taken over their range of sourdough bread and pastries. The wholemeal sourdough is my favourite, and the cinnamon buns are fantastic. Their open kitchen allows you to see what is happening and share in their enthusiasm for baking. 131 Wood Street E17 3LX

Lucky Yu
This unique bakery pops up every two weeks or so, the list is

published on Instagram, and a queue forms along Hamilton Road as people wait for their Cantonese inspired breads and buns. The sesame soy congee bread is delicious and not like any other bread I’ve tasted; the flavours of the buns change each time, but I still think about the red bean and clementine custard one I had a few months ago. 12 Hamilton Road, Walthamstow E17 6EH



Lucky Yu Credit Lucy Harrison

Ozan Bakery
This is a great option for freshly made gözleme – the stuffed flatbreads that are often made in the windows of Turkish bakeries – but behind the café, they also have a bakery making various types of breads which are supplied to shops across the borough. Spot their name on bread bags in your local Turkish and international supermarket. 15 St James Street, Walthamstow, E17 7PJ



Today Bread Credit Lucy Harrison

Today Bread was the first sourdough bakery in Walthamstow, and as well as their classic large loaf, they also now have several new ones, including a delicious Ukrainian Rye, inspired by the owner Alex’s trips there for the ‘Bake for Ukraine’ project. 6–10 Central Parade, 137 Hoe Street, Walthamstow E17 4RT



Francis Road

Leyton streets to embrace al-fresco dining

Leyton’s Francis Road has been designated an al-fresco dining and drinking hotspot in the capital this summer by Mayor of London Sadiq Khan. £50,000 from Khan’s £300,000 Summer Streets Fund has been allocated to Waltham Forest Council for the scheme. The money will be used to extend Francis’ Road car free hours, with the Mayor’s Office saying it intends to build on its status as a “hub” for street trading by launching a new market. The funding will additionally support the Leyton Más carnival on 13th July, as well as the creation of more outdoor dining as part of an as yet unannounced summer event in Leyton Midland Road. Mayor Khan said: “I’m delighted to announce the first of many new al fresco hotspots across the capital to help Londoners and visitors make the most of our summer this year. With new car-free, al fresco dining in Westminster, Shoreditch, Brixton, Leyton there will be new and fantastic spaces to bring people together.” Council deputy leader Ahsan Khan [no relation] added: “I’m really pleased that Waltham Forest is one of the first four boroughs to benefit from the Mayor of London’s Summer Streets Fund. The money will be used for several fantastic projects in Leyton, including a new street market in Francis Road where residents will have opportunities to support great local traders, and this year’s Leyton Mas carnival in mid-July. “Giving small local businesses more freedom to open longer will help them thrive as we create an economy that works for everyone.”

REVIEW

APUS, Leytonstone: Dim sum and then some

Joe Paisley checks out one of the newest arrivals to E11’s growing East Asian food scene



‘Food is the first necessity of the people’. That’s what Helen, the manager of APUS (Authentic Hong Kong Tea House), said when asked about the importance of food to Hong Kong’s culture. APUS, she goes on, “is about sharing this culture.” The restaurant is tightly packed into a row of shops between the High Road and

Leytonstone Station that more often serves as a thoroughfare to other destinations than is one itself. But like Hong Kong, its diminutive size belies what is within. APUS serves authentic food that can only be found in a small but growing number of Hong Kong restaurants across London, their emergence largely attributable to arrivals under the British

National (Overseas) visa scheme. “That’s a hard question,” Helen responds when asked to describe Hong Kong’s cuisine, which draws on and often fuses Chinese, European, and Southeast Asian cooking. A paradigm of that fusion is the baked pork chop rice: egg-fried rice layered with soy and sesame marinated strips of pork, then smothered with tomato sauce and topped with melted cheese. The child of an East – West marriage, it is delivered on the sort of casserole dish by which cauliflower cheese or boiled vegetables are served in pubs, and looks decidedly like lasagna. Whilst hugely popular with Hong Kong customers, it otherwise divides opinion. If in a group, give it a try. Also not to be missed is the beef curry, with its rich coconut-based gravy and tender brisket. A surprise addition to the curry is beef tendon: in texture like a flump marshmallow but with a bit more bite; the perfect vehicle for sauce. Another revelation is the braised pork: slow-cooked belly in an aromatic sauce and combined with crunchy fermented vegetables. I’d recommend accompanying them with freshly bundled dim sum, before washing it all down with lemon iced tea. The APUS team spent over a month

experimenting with different tea leaves to achieve an authentic taste. After drinking, you can never return to the masquerading shop-bought varieties. The menu is filled with treasures waiting to be discovered over multiple visits. It is not so extensive, however, that you question the freshness of the ingredients, as may be the case at restaurants where egg-fried rice is item number 289. There are, of course, many classic dishes on the menu that diners will be familiar with. But, above all, APUS provides opportunity for adventure and greatly rewards those who take it.

Find APUS at 10 Church Lane, Leytonstone E11 1HG. For more information about APUS including opening: Visit the-apus.co.uk



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ARTS & CULTURE



Reimagination

Walthamstow gallery space Artsnug has already held two sold-out runs of exhibition *WalthamStories*, and this autumn's edition – its third – is set to explore the vibrant colours of the borough.

Artsnug wants to hear from Waltham Forest artists. Anyone interested in submitting their work is invited to do so from Monday, 7th July.

For more information:
Visit artsnug.com/open-call
Email elina@artsnug.com

We want your photos and illustrations! Please send in your images of people and places in Waltham Forest to wfecho@socialspider.com by Monday 21st July.



OBITUARY

‘Deeply caring’ former local journalist remembered

Pat Stannard, who covered Waltham Forest as a reporter and editor for more than two decades, died in June

by Marco Marcelline

Tributes have been paid to a “deeply caring” former local journalist, Pat Stannard, who edited the *Waltham Forest Guardian* from 2000 to 2008.

Pat, 78, originally from Scotland, passed away last month shortly after being diagnosed with stage-four cancer.

She and her husband Adrian met in Muswell Hill in 1970 through their local church drama group, with Pat helping with props, and Adrian assisting the lighting. They went on to marry and have two daughters.

Speaking about his wife of 52 years, Adrian said: “What attracted me most to her was her brains; she was very inquisitive of everything around her – it’s what made her such a fantastic journalist.”

Pat started her journalism career straight out of school, taking on an apprenticeship with a local newspaper in Largs, Scotland.

Eventually moving to London after a stint living and working in Glasgow, Pat reported at titles including the *Hornsey*



Pat Stannard
Credit: Adrian Stannard

Journal and *Camden Journal*.

She eventually joined the *Waltham Forest Guardian* as a reporter in 1987 and hit her stride; in 1997, Pat was recognised at the Press Gazette Awards for being the best news reporter in the country in the paid-for weeklies category.

Her time as editor from 2000 to 2008 was defined by regular community campaigns including one against the closure of the Walthamstow Stadium, and one for the Granada Theatre to be brought back to full community use.

Pat would often send her reporters out of the office as part of those campaigns, Adrian recalls. After the NHS floated a plan to move vital health services from Whipps Cross to Havering, Pat asked her team to get on varying means of public transport from Walthamstow to Romford to see how long the trip would take.

Colleagues say she didn’t have a romanticised view of local journalism, and saw it for what it was; a means to educate the public on what was really happening in their local area.

Speaking to trade journal *Hold The Front Page* in 2005, Pat said: “People often talk disparagingly about local newspapers. We have proved many times that life on a local newspaper is not all fetes and flower shows – in fact in London boroughs like ours, the opposite is true.”

Sarah Cosgrove who worked under Pat while she was editor of the *Waltham Forest Guardian* fondly recalls Pat’s “deep care” for the local community she covered and to those who were disadvantaged and mistreated.

Conscious, “clear-headed” reporting that



A clipping from the *Waltham Forest Guardian* in July 1997. Credit: Adrian Stannard

gave context and clarity rather than outrage and division defined Pat’s approach to telling a story.

This was seen when the world’s attention turned to Walthamstow when it was revealed three Al-Qaeda recruits had planned to bomb transatlantic flights from their Forest Road flat.

Sarah remembers: “Pat was at pains to understand and explain, not simply condemn. She wanted the story behind the story, she wanted context and community cohesion; a 360-degree view. She favoured future prevention over punishment.”

As an editor, Pat was the “epitome of firm but fair”, Sarah said, adding: “She saw it as her job to most effectively nurture and use [her team], rather than to turn out a series of identikit news robots.”

Sarah continued: “I remember her intelligence and humour, the fantastic way she said murder in her beautiful Scottish accent, the way she would go for a walk to clear her head, and come back with a clear and creative plan of action, her excitement when a reporter found a great lead, more so an exclusive, her extremely strong work ethic, her love of Scottish shortbread and, of course, tea.”

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AROUND THE BOROUGH

CHINGFORD

Eight-storey tower block approved



A mockup of how the flats are expected to look
Credit Hickman Estates

by **Sebastian Mann**,
Local Democracy Reporter

A block of flats up to eight storeys tall in Chingford has been approved by Waltham Forest Council. The Hickman Avenue tower will comprise 87 homes, 35 of which will be ‘affordable’ housing aimed at poorer buyers. It will be split into two parts: an eight-storey block connected to a

six-storey block, complete with a rooftop garden. Waltham Forest councillors called it a “sustainable” development, though residents living nearby said it would constitute overdevelopment. At a planning committee meeting last month (3rd June), councillor Jenny Gray said it was “good to see an application for something that isn’t student housing, which hasn’t happened much recently”. She said building new homes in the borough was important “in the midst of a housing crisis”. A total of 35 formal objections were lodged against the plans after they were shown to the public in 2024. Residents called the height “excessive” and said the tower would have a detrimental impact on the skyline, while also expressing concern about a potential loss of privacy.

A representative for developers Hickman Estates told the committee that plans to fill the bottom floor with shops had been scrapped in favour of building eight additional homes, which has “undoubtedly resulted in a more successful scheme”. However, Conservative councillor Catherine Saumarez criticised the subsequent loss of employment space, which she said would harm the local workforce. Fellow Tory councillor John Moss was the only committee member to vote against it. The other five Labour councillors voted to approve the plan. In response to the formal objections, the council’s planning department said: “The proposal is surrounded by existing built development so would not lead to any significant loss of views of open spaces.”

LEYTON

Ex-pub to stay as flats despite local campaign

by **Sebastian Mann**,
Local Democracy Reporter

The upstairs of a former pub in Leyton will remain as housing, despite residents’ concerns about the venue’s future. More than 80 objections were submitted to Waltham Forest Council over the plans for The Antelope, which closed in 2014. In the years since, the first and second floors have been converted into a house in multiple occupation (HMO), where residents live together but are not members of the same household. Each floor contains five rooms, complete with en-suite bathrooms and a communal landing. At a planning committee meeting on 3rd June, the landlord successfully sought permission to keep the HMO in operation and retrospective permission for the en-suites. In 2015, the council ruled that converting the rooms into self-contained units without the

appropriate approval had been unlawful, and a subsequent appeal to the Planning Inspectorate came in the council’s favour. During a visit in June 2022, enforcement officers found the building was again being used as an HMO and not a collection of private flats. An application was submitted earlier this year to formalise its use. At the meeting, residents living nearby said the conversion had led to an increase in disorder – including the alleged use of drugs – but the council said these were civil matters and not the responsibility of the planning department.



The Antelope pub in Church Road, Leyton
Credit Google Streetview

A representative for the landlord argued the formal conversion would give the council “greater power” to manage the HMO, which meant improved security and overwatch. He said using the upstairs for housing “prolonged” the historic building’s existence and “gave it purpose”. During the meeting, residents also lamented that the ground floor of the building, which houses the pub, had “deteriorated” over the years. Another said residents wanted to see The Antelope, which dates back to the late 1800s, brought back to life as a social hub. A total of 85 people lodged formal objections against the scheme. However, they were told the future of the pub was outside the council planning committee’s current scope. The application specifically referred to the HMO on the first and second floor – the ground floor was excluded from the plans.

WALTHAMSTOW



Granada Theatre restoration nominated for top award

Waltham Forest Council has earned three nominations at a building awards supported by the Mayor of London. The restoration of the former Granada Cinema into Soho Theatre Walthamstow and the Wood Street Families and Homes Hub development are both in the running at The Building London Planning Awards, to be held on 14th October. Waltham Forest’s Heritage List has also been nominated

for the community engagement award. The list is a comprehensive record of unique buildings, structures and public artworks which have been voted for by local residents. The former Granada Theatre reopened in May as Soho Theatre Walthamstow after years of painstaking restorative work. Meanwhile, the Wood Street Families and Homes Hub opened in full last year. It includes a ground floor council services centre and above floor housing called Precision House.

LEYTONSTONE

Cop pursuit ends in A12 crash



A police car was totalled by the crash
Credit Suzie Read

Five people including two cops were hospitalised after a police pursuit through Leytonstone ended in a serious car crash last month. Pictures from the 10th June A12 crash near the Green Man Roundabout showed a severely

damaged police car with its front end crushed. Two police officers, as well as the driver and two passengers of the chased car were taken to hospital with “non-life-threatening injuries”, the Metropolitan Police said. The London Ambulance Service, London Fire Brigade, and a helicopter attended the scene, with the first call coming at around 4.22 pm. The *Echo* understands the car pursuit began in Cathall Road, Leytonstone, before ending on the A12. The driver of the chased car was also arrested on suspicion of dangerous driving.

LETTERS

Supermarket fall

Dear WFE

I'M STILL TRYING TO PROCESS what happened at a Lidl in Walthamstow last month.

Sometime after paying for my shop, I found myself on the floor after slipping on a large, loose promotional poster discarded near the self checkouts. I instinctively grabbed onto a customer in front of me to soften the fall. The shock was immediate, but so was the sinking feeling that no-one around truly saw me.

I stayed seated where I landed, asking a nearby staff member to call a manager. I snapped a photo of the remaining two posters and the third empty holder, which confirmed what I already knew: the setup was careless, and CCTV would back that up entirely.

Eventually, a staff member came over and tried to pull me to my feet. I declined; my instinct told me it wasn't safe to move yet. His reaction wasn't overtly dismissive – but there was a noticeable air of irritation, as if my caution somehow inconvenienced him. That energy lingered.

When their colleague arrived, their first question wasn't "are you okay?" but "where is the poster?"

That stuck with me. It felt like an accusation cloaked in indifference. I wasn't someone who'd just fallen in a major supermarket – I was an inconvenience. She walked off mid-scene, spoke quietly to another staff member, and never returned to check in. No apology. No glass of water. No basic care.

The layout of that store is a hazard in itself: bottlenecked, chaotic, and unsafe. Add in the indifference of staff, and it's a disaster waiting to repeat itself.

I wasn't physically injured – thankfully – but the experience left a mark. Not on my body, but on my trust. The way I was treated – dismissed, scrutinised, silenced – was inexcusable. This wasn't just a health and safety failure. It was a failure of care.

Salim Issimdar, Walthamstow

Social care bills

Dear WFE

FOR A VULNERABLE OLDER person to receive a large unexpected bill for their social care, completely out of the blue, is extremely distressing. Many older people are just getting by, and

don't have savings or disposable income to pay off unexpected bills.

I'm glad the town hall is acknowledging the seriousness of their mistake [*Council incorrectly billed social care users, #124*]. I just hope the way they go about recovering money is sensitive and allows people to pay off any debts in very small amounts over the longest possible time period. Any older person who needs support in dealing with the council about unexpected bills can contact our Information and Advice Service on 020 8558 3404.

Terry Day on behalf of Age UK Waltham Forest

Vehicle collisions

Dear WFE

I RECENTLY APPRECIATED your article on the planned works at the Coppermills water treatment site. Later in the piece it was reported that "a vehicle" reversed into a Thames Water worker in 2010. It's important that when talking about a driver, one references the presence of the driver.

This approach is covered on page six of the recently published Road Collision Reporting

Guidelines that has been developed for those who communicate on motor vehicle collisions.

Dan Kelly, Walthamstow

Editor's note: The online version of the article *Thames Water announces £400m Coppermills Treatment Centre upgrade* [*Echo #123*] has been updated to reflect this guidance.

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 before the next deadline on **Monday 21st July.**

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LISTINGS

CARNIVAL

Leyton Más
Sunday 13th July, 12pm–7pm
Along Francis Road, Leyton

Welcome to Leyton Más – the People’s Carnival! Join us in celebrating 125 years of vibrant carnival tradition in Waltham Forest. This family-focused festival showcases culture, creativity, and community. Enjoy a spectacular display of music, dance, and masquerade as we come together to celebrate the diverse heritage of our borough. From parades to workshops, there’s something for everyone. Let’s make memories and celebrate our community spirit!

Free
Visit gbcarnival.co.uk/leyton-mas

CABARET

Party Like It’s 1899
Thursday 17th July, 8pm–10pm
Ye Olde Rose and Crown Theatre
Pub E17 4SA

Welcome to London’s finest music hall, the Walthamstow Palace of Earthly Delights. Cluster Cabaret Theatre conjures a turn-of-the-century variety show, as time slips its leash, and secrets sing. Witty, wild and joyfully anachronistic – light up the shadows because tomorrow may never come. This musical cabaret is brought to life by performer Lizzy Renihan and members of her choir, Natural Voices. Star of stage and screen Ian Burfield is our host. This is an open dress rehearsal. We may need to stop and start or make tweaks as we go.

Tickets £3
Visit tickettailor.com/events/cluster/1694580

LIVE MUSIC

Summer Disco Picnic 2025
Saturday 12th July, 12pm–7pm
Sunday 13th July, 11am–6pm
Lloyd Park, Walthamstow, Forest Road E17 4PP

Last year, the Summer Disco Picnic filled the gap left by the cancelled Walthamstow Garden Party. Despite funding and time challenges, the event drew over 4,000 people to Lloyd Park’s Fellowship Island. This year, the organisers are doubling the fun with a two-day event.

Saturday features DJ-led entertainment, headlined by Simon Lee (Faze Action) - a pioneer in modern Disco, House, and Balearic music, known for tracks like ‘In the Trees’. Co-headlining is Lex (Athens), bringing his deep, soulful psych-disco/house sound to a UK festival for the first time. Both will also play an exclusive evening after party at Soho Theatre, Walthamstow (with a warm-up at The Collab) alongside DJs from our amazing local talent pool. Sunday is a chill-out day with live acoustic music, fitness classes, family activities, expanded food and drink from local businesses, and plenty of community spirit.

Visit friendsoflloydpark.org/summerpicnic2025

EXHIBITION

Industrial Ghosts Shaded by Nature
July until 31st September,
Sundays 10.30am–4pm
Walthamstow Pumphouse Museum,
10 South Access Road E17 8AX

A solo exhibition by local artist and long-term pumphouse museum volunteer Jaiminee Patel, running until September 2025.

The exhibition features mixed-media artworks capturing the transformation of industrial structures along the River Lea, where nature gradually reclaims man-made environments. Patel’s work explores the subtle beauty found in overlooked spaces, from the museum’s Victorian pumping station to the changing waterways of Walthamstow Marshes and Wetlands.

Visitors are invited to submit their own interpretations of local industrial heritage. Winning entries will be displayed from September through December 2025, creating a dialogue between established and emerging artists.

Visit walthamstowpumphouse.org.uk

FOLK

Lost Map with Owen & The Eyeballs
Saturday 12th July, 12pm–2pm
St John’s, Leytonstone 825 High Road Leytonstone E11 1HH

This July we once again join forces with the Lost Map label to present our regular summer showcase of marvellous music makers. A trio of artists will present beautiful, bewildering and bewitching sounds as well as storytelling for all the senses. For this special afternoon we are inviting artists and audiences to leave their mark on the afternoon. Everyone who comes into the space will be invited to join in various activities: drawing or making alongside contemplating the music.

Pay what you can
Visit buytickets.at/arcticcircle/17075885

DIY

Reuse and Repair Fair
Sunday 6th July, 12pm–4pm
Lea Bridge Library, Lea Bridge Road, London E10 7HU

Do you have a growing pile of things that you keep meaning to repair but just can’t find the time? If your pile includes toys, textiles, bikes or household electricals, why not bring them to The Reuse and Repair Fair?

Find out more here:
artillery.org.uk/reuse-repair

COMMUNITY

Leyton Midland Collective Festival
Saturday 26th and Sunday 27th July
Venues around Leyton Midland Road Station E10 6JT

The first-ever Leyton Arts Festival will bring a weekend of creativity to venues around Leyton Midland Road Station, between Skeltons Lane and Hainault Road. Organised by local volunteer group Leyton Midland Collective, the festival will transform neighbourhood spaces such as cafés, shops, studios and community venues into pop-up galleries, creative stages and workshop spaces. The aim is to celebrate local talent, encourage collaboration and make art accessible to all.

Free
Email leytonmidlandcollective@gmail.com

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DISCOVER.ORG.UK

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SPORT

Community football clubs are reclaiming the ‘people’s game’

Despite extremely limited resources, small East London clubs are thriving thanks to the passion of their fans, writes David O’Driscoll

The famous Old Spotted Dog football ground in Forest Gate is one of London’s oldest organised grounds.

Long out of action, in 2020 it was brought back to life by the Clapton Community Football Club (CCFC), a vibrant football community catering to all those who want to play the ‘beautiful game’.

The community at Clapton want a return to the roots of the sport, to what they call the “people’s game”, away from the relentless commercialisation of the sport.

The Old Spotted Dog is certainly not the easiest to find, being tucked away behind the back of a derelict pub across the road from a Costcutter.

Clapton’s first team regularly plays here to crowds of over 1,000 and to a backdrop of the ‘ultras’ singing anti-fascist songs and odes while drinking Polish beer.

Clapton has recently expanded its football portfolio, starting several boys’ and girls’ teams, as well as a newly formed men’s veterans team for those over 35.

The Coppermill Swifts, community-based club in Walthamstow with a similar set of values, operates a successful veterans team and 14 children’s teams.

Times are tough for community clubs. A recent meeting, organised by Stella Creasy MP at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre, heard concerns from various clubs about the lamentable state of sport facilities in Waltham Forest.

A particular case in point is Low Hall

in Walthamstow, where the Swifts play their home games. During the past football season both the showers and toilets were not working, despite the team paying full fees for access to the sports ground.

This episode highlights the broader problem of the lack of facilities in grass-roots football, but also how little money trickles down from the professional game.

And yet amid the financial hurdles that community clubs are having, they are showing remarkable resilience; the Swifts recently finished runners-up in a prestigious veterans tournament in Portugal.

Due to their limited resources, fans often are forced to take things in their own hands, a challenge they take on without further questions.

After the Old Spotted Dog was closed for a period due to a dispute with the site’s then owner, Clapton fans responded by establishing a charity trust to bring the neglected pitch back to the community.

Need another reason why we should save community clubs? They play some cracking football.

On a recent balmy evening at the Old Spotted Dog, the Coppermill Swifts played Clapton and came back from 2-0 down to dominate the second half.

But despite Swifts’ attacker Chris Sloan scoring an incredible hattrick, Clapton held out for a 5-4 victory. One of the Clapton Ultras next to me said: “That was probably the best game of the season.”

To support the Coppermill Swifts:
Visit coppermillswifts.co.uk



Credit Garry Strutt

Advertisement

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TUESDAYS 8PM STARTING 22ND APRIL

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The Coppermill Swift veterans team play Clapton Community FC at the Old Spotted Dog in May
Credit Garry Strutt

COMMUNITY

Bringing art back to the people



Credit
Artillery CIC

Over 650 people attended the first ever edition of Yes! Art 2025 at Big Penny Social last month

The debut edition of an experimental art fair showcasing the “best” of East London artistic talent has been hailed a “resounding success” by its organisers. Held at Big Penny Social on Sunday, 22nd June, Yes! Art 2025 featured over 60 local painters, ceramicists, sculptors, illustrators and creative businesses. 650 people turned up to Yes! Art, and it saw strong sales despite many art fairs reporting a muted economic climate in recent years.

“There’s so much creative energy rooted in Walthamstow,” said co-organiser Laura Kerry, of Artillery CIC. “People are hungry for connection. Not just to buy art, but to have real conversations with the people who make it. That’s what this event was about. “Art links us to ideas, to emotions, to



each other. People came for the art, the energy, the conversations, the atmosphere. They left with prints, paintings, and excited plans to reimagine their interiors. There was no pressure, no hard sell; just a really good day for the artists and visitors alike.” Artillery’s next event is The Reuse and Repair Fair at Lea Bridge Library on Sunday, 6th July from 12–4pm. Guests will be able to meet a host of skilled repairers ready to help work out what’s repairable, how to do it and, in many cases, get the fix done there and then.

Find out more about Yes! Art here:
Visit yes-art.london
For more Reuse and Repair Fair information:
Visit artillery.org.uk/reuse-repair

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