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WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free
Aug 2025, N° 125

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News

Council pushes back against local demand for Lime bikes

► P.3

News

‘He was too young’: Chingford reacts to fatal stabbing

► P.8

Comment

‘We must act to save our common swifts’

► P.10

Photography

A documentation of life and love on Lea Bridge Road

► P.12

Arts & Culture

The forgotten genius of Walthamstow painter Cyril Mann

► P.14

The former Walthamstow dog stadium was redeveloped into a 294-home site called Stadium Place in 2017 but construction issues have blighted it since



Hundreds left without water at botched dog stadium redevelopment

by Marco Marcelline

More than 200 households at the former greyhound racing track in South Chingford have repeatedly been without water and heating since the start of the year. Last month residents, including

families with young children and others who are disabled or critically ill, were forced to cook, bathe themselves, and flush toilets with bottled water. The iconic racing track Walthamstow Stadium was redeveloped into a 294-home site called Stadium Place by London & Quadrant (L&Q) in 2017.

However, faults in its construction have meant residents have had to be temporarily relocated for five to six months at a time while remediation works take place. This multi-million pound remediation project, which is due for completion next year, has included replacing all windows, retrofitting sprinklers, and improving

firestopping between flats. But residents returning to remediated flats have complained that the site’s communal hot water and heating system repeatedly cuts off. In July, tenants were left without any water on three separate occasions, twice during the evening and overnight. Meanwhile, in December 2024 and January 2025, the first residents who returned to their homes suffered recurrent losses of heating and hot water. In all of those outages, residents say that L&Q had failed to inform them it was going to happen, and then did not update them on when their water would be turned back on. Sebastian, who preferred not to share his surname, told the *Echo* he had encountered numerous issues since he and his young family moved into their Stadium Place flat in 2017.

Accusing L&Q of presiding over a “culture of negligence”, he said: “It’s terrible how they treat us. Whatever L&Q touches, they leave it in a much worse position afterwards. Contacting them is like having a full-time job; whenever there is an outage, we have to wait in a queue and re-explain what the issue is. “Their staff don’t even know that Stadium Place has communal boilers, so they think it’s just individual flats that are experiencing problems rather than many of us at the same time.” An L&Q spokesperson said the housing association supported residents in July by “delivering bottled water and checking on households with additional needs”. L&Q’s support is however challenged by Stadium Place Tenants and Residents Association (TRA) chair Sarah Chaney, who said “multiple complaints” remain outstanding despite the TRA’s repeated efforts in raising them.

She said: “The TRA has done our best to work with L&Q, raising issues with hot and cold water immediately and in detail, as well as notifying them of problems with the provision of other services and supporting resident feedback on the works programme. However, multiple complaints remain outstanding, with issues lingering for many months. It is not clear that L&Q is taking their responsibilities as a landlord seriously.” The *Echo* understands that L&Q delivered bottled water to residents on Saturday, 12th July, having failed to during previous water outages on the 2nd and 5th. Furious tenants have also pointed to their rents having gone up by as much as 30% despite the ongoing issues. Vicky Savage, executive group director for development and sales at L&Q, said the water outages were caused by a switch problem in the water system, which prioritises supply for sprinklers during periods of low water pressure. A pipework leak and an error by contractors when testing a dry riser were also identified as issues, she said. In a statement to the *Echo*, she continued: “We’re deeply sorry for the repeated water outages at Walthamstow Stadium. We recognise how difficult this has been and have worked to support residents. We identified and fixed the cause of the problems in July and have carried out a review to ensure this doesn’t happen again. “In December and early January, an issue within the building’s heating system stopped some boilers from starting. We reached out to residents at the time and resolved the issue. We also installed a new monitoring system to help detect future faults more quickly and are planning further upgrades to improve resilience.”

NEWS



FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

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Published on 01/08/25

Palestine activists criticise 'excuses' amid divestment delay

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Pro-Palestine activists have continued to mount pressure on Waltham Forest Council to divest from companies linked to Israeli military interests, amid a lack of apparent progress.

Waltham Forest for a Free Palestine (WF4FP) have been protesting at quarterly meetings of the council's pension committee since March 2024.

The responsibility for where the council's pension funds are invested lies with the London Collective Investment Vehicle (LCIV), which manages a pool of funds belonging to the capital's 32 borough councils.

Though councillors say they are committed to moving on to more "ethical" investments, the LCIV says the fund has to remain "politically neutral" and consistent with messaging from the central government.

Following a committee meeting on Wednesday 2nd July, a WF4FP spokesperson said: "Despite the popular London and nation-wide movement for



Around 100 people joined a protest outside Waltham Forest Town Hall last year to call for arms divestment Credit WF4FP

[Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS)] divestment, it seems LCIV representatives will only do what the UK government or the capitalist companies they work with tell them to."

Currently, the LCIV is assessing its investments in twelve companies. At the meeting, an LCIV representative said she could not name them when asked by councillors, who called the lack of apparent progress "frustrating".

She said some discussions had been subject to non-disclosure agreements (NDAs), while other

companies were concerned about reputational harm and potential action from pro-Israel lobby groups. They are "international companies," though she could not specify where they were headquartered.

The WF4FP spokesperson said: "Millions are still invested in companies that enable genocide and occupation in Palestine and elsewhere. Questions about the twelve most complicit companies the LCIV works with were met with excuses and evasions."

The Whipps Cross staff taking Barts NHS Trust to court, Page-6

Council urges developers to install 'swift bricks'

by Marco Marcelline

Waltham Forest Council is set to encourage developers to include "swift bricks" in new homes in order to protect endangered birds that rely on holes and cavities in buildings to nest.

The provision forms part of the council's upcoming Nature Recovery Plan and

is billed as a means to protect the future of endangered swifts, house sparrows, starlings, and house martins.

Swift bricks are built discreetly into a wall of a new building, and are designed with a hole for birds to enter and rear their young.

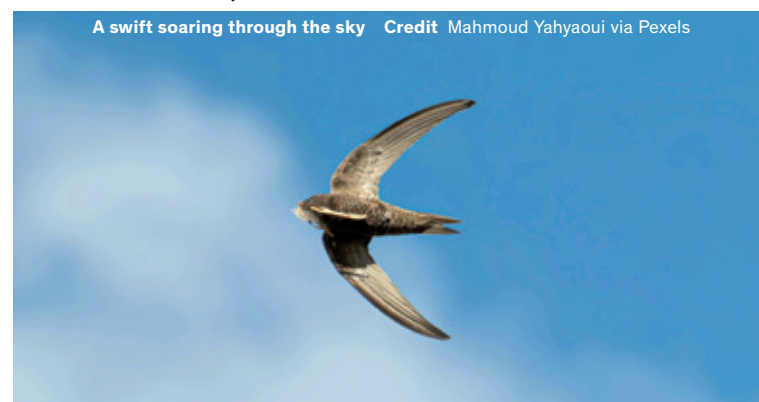
Swift's national population has plummeted by more than 66% between 1995 and 2022,

with their endangerment being partially blamed on the rise of new developments without any nesting space.

Announcing the move, deputy council leader Clyde Loakes, said: "We are strengthening our planning framework to ensure that swift bricks will be included in new developments, which in the long-term will create vital nesting spaces and give us a chance of creating a stronghold for swifts in Waltham Forest.

"Swift bricks come at almost zero extra cost and are backed by conservationists and developers alike. They are an easy, proven and uncontroversial way of addressing the staggering loss in populations of not just swifts but other birds of the highest conservation concern."

Comment: 'Save our swifts' Page-10



A swift soaring through the sky Credit Mahmoud Yahyaoui via Pexels

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Notice of Application for the Grant of a Special Treatment Licence

NOTICE IS HEREBY given that **Shumaila Iftikhar** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Special Treatment Licence at: **71 Church Road, Chingford E4 6ST**. The nature of the application is to carry out the following treatments:

- Laser
- Waxing
- Intense pulse light
- Facials

Anyone wishing to oppose the application must give notice in writing to the LICENSING OFFICER, Licensing Services Public Control, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4JF specifying the grounds of opposition.

Representations must be received no later than **28th August 2025**.

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

LICENSING ACT 2003 Application for the 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 **Verity Cox** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **258 Church Rd, London E10 7JQ**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- To permit the sale of alcohol / live music / recorded music / films / plays – Monday to Sunday 08:00–23:00

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 **18th August 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 **DYNAMIC AUTOMOTIVE LTD** of **28 Cooper Avenue, Walthamstow, London E17 5PN** is applying for a licence to use **28 Cooper Avenue, Walthamstow, London E17 5PN**:

- As an operating centre for goods 1 vehicle and 0 trailers

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 Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, 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.

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NEWS

Council pushes back against growing demand for Lime bikes

Hundreds have signed a petition calling for dockless hire bikes in the borough, but the town hall says theft and pavement clutter are major concerns



Credit: Dominic Marley

by Marco Marcelline

Some see the bright green dockless e-bikes as a godsend that allows for spontaneous travel across the capital, while for others, they're a pesky nuisance clogging up our pavements.

Whatever your view, Lime's popularity is undeniable. But try cycling to Leyton from Stratford or Walthamstow from Clapton and your green rental will suddenly beep, before slowing to an absolute stop.

While nearly half of Londoners aged 18 to 34 jump on a Lime bike weekly, Waltham Forest remains one of 15 boroughs not to allow Lime bike use, a position the town hall says is due to pavement dumping and bike theft concerns.

But now 750 people have signed an online petition calling for the council to change its gears and allow Limes in the borough.

Carmen Christensen, a Leytonstone resident of five years, said she was moved to create the petition after constantly chatting with her friends about how "frustrating" it was that there were no Lime bikes in the area.

She told the *Echo*: "The south of Leytonstone is a bit of a public transport black-spot – it's quite a long walk to Maryland and Leytonstone High Road Overground, so I rely on Lime bikes to get around, especially if I'm coming back from a friend's place at night."

Carmen says she finds Limes to be safer

than night buses or even Ubers, but for the most part, she values the "freedom" and "accessibility" of Limes; the dockless bikes can be picked up and left just about anywhere in the boroughs that allow them.

She also states that Limes would improve footfall to local businesses, because it would mean "more people can conveniently bike to shops and restaurants".

It's a view that fellow Leytonstoner Lily Goulding shares. She says: "I love Lime – if it were in Waltham Forest I'd be getting one to work in Liverpool Street every day. It's healthy, good for the environment – and if there are delays, it's even quicker than getting the Central Line."

Leanne Gaffney-Berkeley, Lime's public affairs manager, told the *Echo* the company was "excited" to hear about the petition gaining traction.

The company has openly expressed its desire to expand to outer boroughs, including Waltham Forest. Meanwhile, amid concern at pavement dumping, in January Lime unveiled a £20million London Action Plan to create 2,500 more dedicated parking spaces and grow its street team who remove faulty or damaged bikes from service.

But the council remains unconvinced that Lime would be a good idea for the borough, with deputy leader Clyde Loakes pointing to previously trialled dockless hire schemes with now defunct companies that were "unsuccessful".

He said: "Operators found it difficult to maintain the bikes in an outer London borough and prioritised their inner-city service. We also experienced problems with dockless bikes being poorly parked and often blocking pavements, which especially impacts older residents, parents with prams, and disabled people.

"Following our trials, we have been closely monitoring other boroughs' dockless schemes and note the widespread issues around theft of these cycles."

The council currently offers residents the opportunity to borrow electric, manual, or cargo bikes for a small refundable deposit. However, the number of bikes on offer is limited and often subject to a waiting list.

As Lime expands to outer boroughs like Hounslow, Merton and Barnet, it remains to be seen if mounting pressure will cause the council to eventually stop hitting the brakes on dockless hire bikes.

To find out more about the council's bike borrow scheme:
Visit walthamforest.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/walking-and-cycling/access-cycles

To sign the petition:
Visit change.org/p/expand-lime-bike-access-to-leystonstone-and-waltham-forest-london

Carmen Christensen is a fan of Lime bikes



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NEWS

Credit Penny Dampier



Actors on stage during Cluster Cabaret's production 'Party Like It's 1899' which took over Ye Olde Rose & Crown in Hoe Street, Walthamstow for two nights last month. You can read our review on walthamforestecho.co.uk and check out more photos at [Instagram.com/pennydampier](https://www.instagram.com/pennydampier)

Council slammed for cutting tree branches during summer heatwave

Residents say tree pollarding meant 'direct hot sunlight' was streaming into homes and there was 'no shade' at bus stops

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Residents have slammed Waltham Forest Council for cutting trees bare during the July heatwave.

The council has been cutting leaves and branches off trees – a process known as pollarding – in a bid to keep them healthy and growing.

However, locals fear the process could harm the trees, while depriving their neighbourhoods of shade and natural beauty.

Speaking to the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS), Leyton resident Melissa Nisbett said there was a “real lack of understanding” of what humans and trees need to survive, while others said it showed a lack of “joined-up thinking”.

Melissa said the pollarding meant “direct hot sunlight” was streaming into houses and there was “no shade” at bus stops.

She added: “The community should have access to shade

and have somewhere to stand waiting for a bus or sit under in a park.

“[Pollarding] during a heatwave is inexplicable. It’s pretty appalling.”

She also expressed concern about the future health of the trees. While pruning can be carried out in the summer, drought and exposure to the heat can slow regrowth and put the tree

at risk of disease. In severe cases, the tree can die.

According to the Royal Horticultural Society, the UK’s leading gardening charity, the best time to pollard and prune trees is during their dormant season – typically late winter.

Fellow resident Emma Woodcock, who lives in Park Road, said: “What we object to is not the pollarding, but the time of year.”



A tree in Manor Road, Leyton before and after it was pollarded Credit Emma Woodcock

She called the pollarding “quite brutal and unnecessary,” especially at a time of year when birds and insects relied on shrubbery for both shade and food.

She added that locals had also not heard from their local councillors when asked, which was “frustrating” and “upsetting”.

Contractors trim the borough’s trees every four years, on behalf of the council, and have done so since 2010.

Deputy council leader Clyde Loakes said: “While pruning, which we carry out once every four years where necessary, may result in a temporary reduction in shade and habitat, it is essential to keep the tree in a safe condition and promote growth.

“Contrary to popular belief, [national legislation] does not prevent works on trees during certain months of the year but instead insists on extra stringent criteria and responsibilities on those undertaking the work, including checks for active nesting birds and other wildlife.”

Town hall ignored domestic abuse victim for two months

The council has been ordered to pay the man £1,600 in compensation after homeless claim went unheard from January to mid-March

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

A man fleeing domestic abuse was left homeless on the streets for five weeks after Waltham Forest Council failed to properly help him.

The man, publicly identified only as Mr X, approached the town hall for help in January and February, saying he could no longer live with relatives who were physically abusing him.

The council did nothing to help him until mid-March when it was under the threat of legal action, according to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Though Mr X was eventually offered a hotel placement, the council’s failure to confirm a room meant he spent three nights sleeping rough on the street.

He was assaulted during this time, he told the Ombudsman.

Mr X was also told he would need to pay the council £500 upfront to store his belongings while he was homeless, which was money he did not have.

Ombudsman Amerdeep Somal said Waltham Forest Council “let this man down”.

She continued: “This should not have happened, and I am pleased the council has acknowledged the gravity of its errors and accepted the recommendations I have made. I hope other survivors of domestic abuse will be treated better in future.”

Councillor Ahsan Khan, deputy leader of the council, apologised to the resident for the ordeal.

He said: “We apologise to the resident for their experience – we know that we did not reach the high standards that we set ourselves in this case.”

The council has agreed to pay him £1,600 to acknowledge the distress caused, and remind staff about the low threshold for offering residents help with housing.

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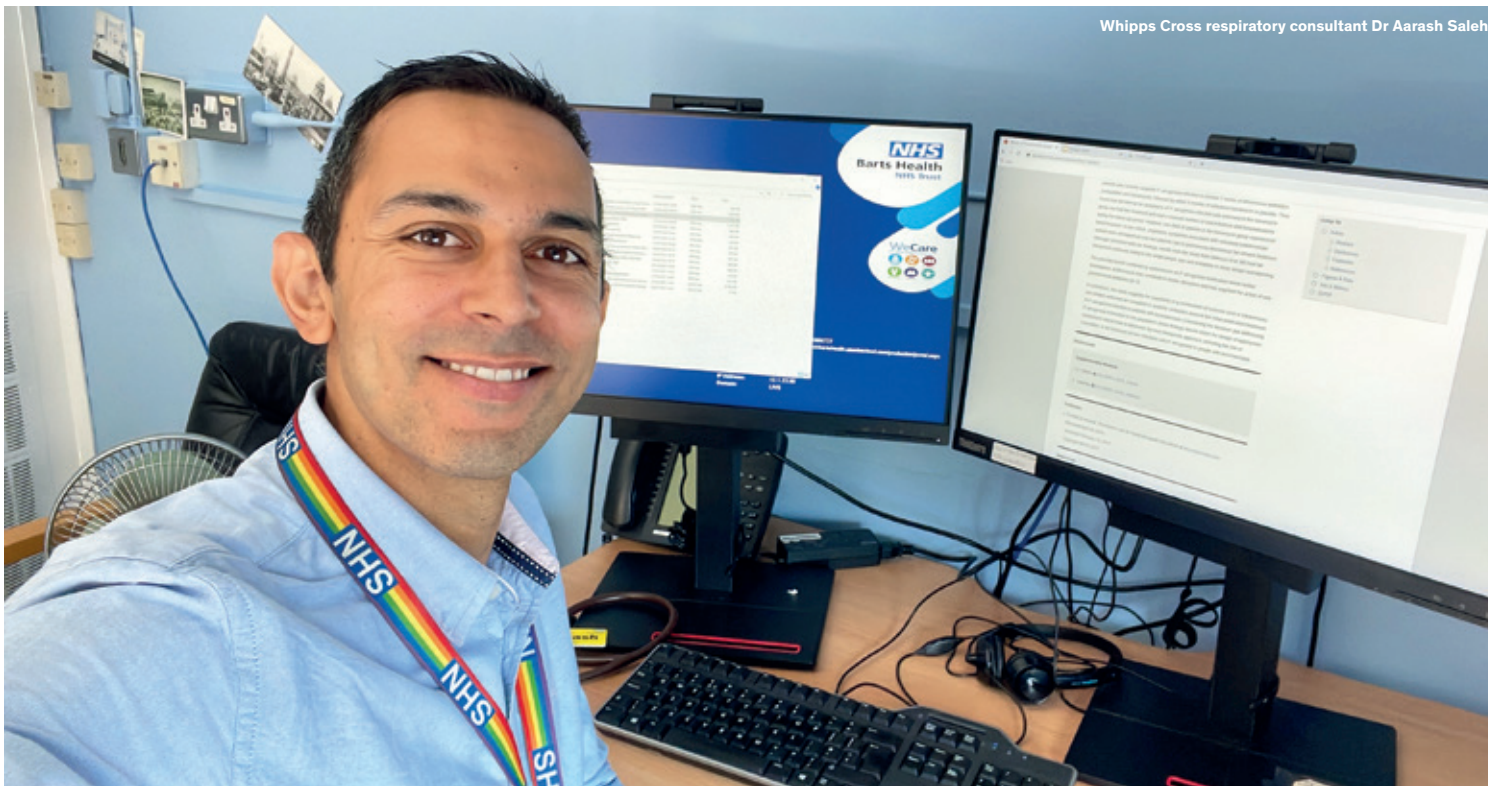
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NEWS

‘We want to show we oppose genocide’: The Whipps Cross staff taking their NHS trust to court



Whipps Cross respiratory consultant Dr Aarash Saleh

Respiratory consultant Dr Aarash Saleh and senior nurse Ahmad Baker say a uniform policy which bans shows of solidarity with Palestine is ‘discriminatory’

by Marco Marcelline

A Whipps Cross Hospital consultant who is suing Barts Health NHS Trust for banning staff from wearing Palestine solidarity pins has accused the trust of “racism”.

Aarash Saleh, a respiratory consultant, is taking Barts to an employment tribunal for changing its uniform policy to ban staff from wearing clothes or symbols that display support for nations, or causes that the trust does not back.

Joined in making the claim by Whipps Cross senior nurse Ahmad Baker and Royal London Hospital doctor Sarah Ali, Aarash said the policy “deliberately” targets Palestine support “under the guise of being neutral”.

Speaking to the *Echo*, Aarash said the uniform policy change, enacted in March, had created a sense of “fear” among staff who felt it was not safe to openly express their opposition to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

He says he had been troubled for some time by the trust’s lack of vocal concern for what was occurring in the besieged strip. “When Israel’s bombing campaign against civilians started, and there were initial reports of hospitals being bombed, the only sort of comments that were coming out from the trust executives were com-

ments about antisemitism or Islamophobia.

“There was no recognition of this humanitarian crisis unfolding. And we wrote to our trust leadership and asked them to say something and they basically refused.”

Aarash details several incidents where staff had attempted to hold talks about Israel’s assault on Gaza’s medical system and the resultant humanitarian crisis there.

“One staff member was extremely careful, balanced and factual in what they were saying during a talk but they were taken into an office afterwards and given a warning because it was potentially offensive or upsetting to colleagues to talk about the Gaza humanitarian crisis.”

A further attempt by Whipps Cross staff to run a bake sale for the charity Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP), saw an

unnamed “senior trust executive” try to stop it from going ahead.

Barts Health directed the *Echo* to a statement where the trust said it aimed to be “completely apolitical and non-biased”.

The pending court case comes after international and Israeli human rights groups have called the ongoing disaster a genocide.

In a 65-page report released on 28th July, Physicians for Human Rights Israel (PHRI) found that Israel had targeted Gaza’s healthcare infrastructure in a “calculated and systematic” manner, through “the killing and detention of hospital staff, and obstruction of medical aid”.

PHRI’s director Dr Guy Shalev has pressured for “urgent action” from the global health community to assist struggling

medical staff in the region.

Barts Health, Aarash says, is not only missing from the conversation, but had directly engaged with the pro-Israeli lobby group UK Lawyers for Israel (UKLFI) to “help mould” the trust’s new uniform policy.

The policy change came around when UKLFI sent a formal complaint to the trust late last year, asserting that pro-Palestinian symbols worn by staff could be deemed offensive or even unlawful.

Later on in March, UKLFI published an article announcing Barts’ new policy eight days before it was officially implemented and communicated to staff. Aarash and his co-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.

Aarash, who is Iranian and Jewish, said: “It’s not a Jewish group by any means. It’s simply a pro-Israel group. Their main goal is to essentially ban any expressions of support for Palestine in a number of different institutions and companies.”

Documented successes of the group include getting Chelsea and Westminster Hospital to remove artwork produced by Palestinian children, and forcing out the director of a Manchester art gallery over a 2022 statement where he showed support for the Palestinian liberation cause.

UKLFI received headlines in May after its head Jonathan Turner suggested a reduction in obesity due to the Gaza aid blockade “may increase life expectancy” there.

UKLFI was contacted for comment.

Barts Health said: “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.

“Around the time the policy was approved and prior to it being published on our staff intranet, we were contacted by UKLFI to ask for an update on the policy review.

“In response to this letter we confirmed that we had completed the review of the policy and that it would contain a statement on political neutrality. UKLFI then published the letter on their website ahead of us publishing the policy to our workforce.”



Hospital staff in Ukraine receive medical equipment donated by Barts Health in 2022 Credit Barts Health NHS Trust

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NEWS

Residents speak of 'rising crime' after fatal stabbing rocks Chingford Mount

As flowers and tributes lay on the street where Tyler Hayward, 26, was fatally stabbed, locals share their fears and concerns



Flowers at the scene where Tyler was stabbed in Chingford Mount Road Credit Leila Davaud

by Leila Davaud

Dozens of bouquets lie at the foot of a tree in Chingford Mount Road in a scene that is as heart-warming as it is heartbreaking.

This improvised memorial has been set up for Tyler Hayward, 26, who was on his way to meet friends when he lost his life on Sunday, 6th July.

Among the flowers, one note stands out: "A great loss for our community. His smile, his care." Passersby pause to read those few words, shaking their heads. "What is happening around here?" murmurs one onlooker, letting out a sigh before crossing the street to enter The King's Ford Wetherspoon pub.

When Tyler was fatally stabbed in the heart on the evening of 6th July, staff from the pub rushed out to assist him with a defibrillator before emergency services arrived.

Peshman Ahmedi, 22, was arrested 48 hours later while aboard a ferry departing Dover for Calais. Ahmedi has since been charged with murder and will face a plea hearing

on 29th September.

It's a quiet Tuesday lunchtime in The King's Ford when the *Echo* visits. Several tables are occupied, and the atmosphere is subdued. It grows even quieter when the subject of Tyler's death is brought up. Some, perhaps still processing the incident, decline to comment.

Mary Clark, having her usual weekly lunch with a friend, offers a short reflection: "He was too young. It was too violent. What happened is tragic... Even if we didn't know him, we feel the loss."

A few tables over, Jacky and Terry are reading newspapers over a pair of cocktails. Asked about the local community's reaction to Tyler's death, the couple exchange a look before Jacky responds: "We've seen horrifying gossip on social media. It's a frenzy out there. What's even more disturbing is how people are describing Chingford, as if this tragedy defines the whole area. It doesn't."



Tyler Hayward Credit Met Police

As Jacky mentioned, criticism of Chingford's safety has intensified online and in some local conversations. A recent poll on a community Facebook page saw hundreds of residents say that the biggest issue facing E4 was its "rising crime".

Chingford Mount Square was repeatedly singled out as a key hotspot of gang crime in the poll. One resident wrote: "Crime is getting worse by the day", while another stated: "Lived here since 1978, the crime level is unacceptable and the drugs."

At the library further down the street, Marie, a volunteer in her eighties, offers a more balanced outlook: "The community's changed a lot. People are more individualistic now, it's sad to see. But I wouldn't say I feel unsafe. I do realise I'm vulnerable because of my age, and I'm more careful in the evening with all the commotion around the square. But it's not catastrophic, is it?"

Later in the morning, Elif, a teacher, shares her concerns as she sips her coffee at a nearby café. "I moved here five years ago from Epping and I'm already planning to move again," she says.

"I have a 13-year-old daughter, and I'm genuinely scared as a mother. What convinced me to stay so far is the real community which acts during the day and tries its best to erase what happens at night."

A crowdfunder for Tyler's funeral has already exceeded £11,000.

In a post promoting the funeral fund, Tyler's father Matthew wrote: "He wasn't part of any gang, just a young man with a future he was looking forward to, and a beautiful, caring soul who touched everyone he met."

Additional reporting by Marco Marcelline



Women take to Walthamstow streets to protest sexual violence

Over 150 people turned up to a protest march last month after a woman was attacked in Walthamstow Town Square

by Marco Marcelline

More than 100 people turned out to march against sexual violence and harassment of women and girls in Walthamstow last month.

Marchers, who were mainly women, gathered at Walthamstow Town Square on Sunday, 6th July before walking up Hoe Street, passing the town hall, reaching Wood Street, and then cutting through Orford Road in the Village.

The protest, called Stow Sisterhood, was organised after a woman in her thirties was violently attacked while walking through Walthamstow Town Square in the early hours of Sunday, 29th June.

Police have since launched a rape investigation, though it is understood there has not yet been an arrest.

Stow Sisterhood co-founder and local teacher Jez King said she was enraged after reading about the reported rape.

"I personally felt really angry about it; how can it have happened in such a public space? It was so horrific."

"I took my anger out in a post on a local community page on Facebook and that was when Alex [co-founder Alexandra Sarney] replied to me and said we needed a march. We had a call about

it and then I obtained the necessary permissions from Waltham Forest Council and we got it going."

Local Labour councillors participated in the march on the day, while Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy made a speech in the town square.

Speaking to the *Echo*, Jez said there were known hot spots in Walthamstow that many women and girls avoid for fear of harassment.

"After dark, I don't go down the High Street at all; I just don't feel safe there at night and never have. Lots of women I know avoid Hoe Street, particularly around Walthamstow Central Station. I've heard of people getting stared at, touched up, and followed. A lot of women are scared. Going out, there's just a constant worry of 'what might happen to me'."

The march has however given Jez and Alexandra some "hope" that things can change.

Jez said: "It feels like the start of something bigger and more sustainable. I would hope that what comes out of this is better street lighting, CCTV, police officers, more preventative action and teaching of young men and boys on toxic masculinity and changing how they see women and girls."

Follow the Stow Sisterhood on Instagram @the_stow_sisterhood

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Dalton Lodge Care Home

Embracing Culture and Diversity at Dalton Lodge Care Home



At B&M Care, we believe good care starts with understanding the individual. Everyone who comes to live in one of our homes brings their own life story, shaped by their culture, community, language, beliefs and traditions. Recognising and respecting this is a vital part of how we provide person-centred care, especially for those living with dementia.

Dalton Lodge in Walthamstow is a specialist dementia care home that reflects the diversity of its local community in every part of daily life. From the staff team to the residents, this is a home where people from many different backgrounds come together, and where every culture is valued.

A Familiar and Comforting Environment
For someone living with dementia, familiar sights, sounds, and routines can bring comfort and reassurance. This includes familiar food, language, music, and the chance to celebrate important cultural or religious events. At Dalton Lodge, residents are supported to continue these traditions in a way that feels natural and personal.

Our team takes time to get to know each resident's background, including what matters to them and how they like to live. We understand how important it is to have food that reflects your culture, or to mark religious festivals in a meaningful way. From Diwali and Eid to Christmas and Windrush Day, we celebrate a wide range of events throughout the year. These are not just activities, but opportunities for residents living with dementia to feel a sense of familiarity and connection.

Culturally Sensitive Dementia Care
Dalton Lodge is purpose-built to support people living with dementia. Every space has been carefully designed to feel calm, homely and easy to navigate. Our staff are trained in B&M Care's accredited dementia care programme, with a focus on understanding the needs of each individual and supporting wellbeing in a meaningful way.

Cultural sensitivity is a key part of this approach. For someone with dementia, speaking in a first language or hearing a familiar song can unlock memories and create a strong sense of belonging. We work closely with families to make sure that care reflects all needs, including personal history and identity.



Welcoming All to Dalton Lodge
Many of the staff at Dalton Lodge come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, bringing with them valuable experience, empathy, and insight. We are committed to creating a workplace where everyone is treated with dignity and respect, and where teamwork is built on open communication and shared values.

Across B&M Care, our homes are shaped by the people who live in them. That means that we listen and adapt to each resident's needs. Whether it's through food, festivals, faith, or simply the way care is delivered each day, we aim to make everyone feel at home. If you're looking for a dementia care home that will respect your culture, support your family, and offer expert, individualised care, Dalton Lodge is here to help.

COMMENT

We need to act swiftly to save this beloved summer migration bird

Common swifts nest their young in Waltham Forest every summer but their numbers are declining due to a lack of nesting sites, writes David O’Driscoll



A swift soaring through the sky
Credit Pau Artigas via Wikimedia Commons

It’s now the sad part of the summer when the most amazing birds leave Waltham Forest to make the long journey back to Central Africa. I feel that when they leave, they take the summer with them. The bird is, of course, the common swift.

They are only here for about twelve weeks, from May to early August. There are several nesting sites in Waltham Forest; you can see them on certain days flying over the Coppermill Treatment Centre, swooping and diving, gorging themselves on insects, a truly wonderful sight. There are few birds that are so entertaining to watch.

As the *Echo* reports [pg.2], the national population of swifts has plummeted by more than 66% between 1995 and 2022.

There are several reasons, one of which is the corresponding decline in insects, their primary food source.

They feed exclusively on aerial insects, which is why they live in the more tropical and subtropical regions of the world where insects are readily available during the rest of the year, but they come here to breed. The other reason for their decline is the lack of nesting sites. This is something we can address.

Their main nesting sites in Walthamstow are specifically located on the Warner Estate, between Lloyd Park and Billet Road, as these buildings feature an open-eaves style of architecture that allows swifts to nest.

Swifts keep coming back to the same nesting sites every year, but the problem

is that many of these nest sites have been destroyed, and an increasing number of homes are installing PVC boards, which prevent the swifts from accessing the eaves.

However, swift bricks are low-cost, last the lifetime of the building, have no maintenance requirements, and can be aesthetically integrated with the building. And with the climate crisis in mind, swift bricks are better at regulating building temperature than external boxes.

It would also help with other birds on the danger list, who can nest there when they are vacant. Many scientific and conservation experts and organisations such as the RSPB are behind this campaign.

The Labour Party, when in opposition, claimed they would make swift bricks mandatory for all new buildings. So, like many swift lovers, I was optimistic when they got back into power.

However, the Labour government recently slapped down a proposed amendment to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill that would have made planning permission for building conditional on the provision of such bricks.

The government’s housing minister, Matthew Pennycook, told the House of Commons planning committee in May: “We are not convinced that legislating to mandate the use of specific wildlife features is the right approach, whether that is done through building regulations or a



A swift brick
Credit Ben Andrew

freestanding legal requirement.”

The government has the power to make this mandatory but they evidently sadly lack the moral impetus to support this wondrous bird.

The great poet Ted Hughes wrote in a famous lament to swifts: “Look! They’re back! And they’re gone.” Unless we find a way to help them they will be gone forever.

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LETTERS

Council 'greenwashing'

Dear WFE

WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL often presents itself as a progressive, environmentally conscious authority – championing cycling, increasing low-traffic neighbourhoods, reducing residential parking, and implementing green infrastructure projects. But for residents living between Leytonstone and Forest Gate, particularly near Wanstead Flats, the lived reality and experience is quite different.

In less than a one-mile stretch, there are approximately 60 vehicle repair garages operating – many within close proximity to homes, schools, and protected green spaces. On and just off Harrow Road alone – which leads directly into Dames Road – there are an estimated ten to 15 garages, creating a hotspot of industrial polluting activity in what should be a quiet residential area.

While small businesses should be encouraged, there are simply too many garages in what is clearly a

residential zone, and the impact is now impossible to ignore.

The constant emission of harmful gases and pollutants most likely has a detrimental impact on air quality. This directly contradicts Waltham Forest's public-facing green agenda. How can the council claim leadership on climate action while enabling the very activities that degrade public health and the local environment?

Michelle Morgan, *Leytonstone*

Transport plaques

Dear WFE

I AM THE CHAIRMAN OF the Lea Valley Heritage Alliance, which was founded to celebrate and preserve Lea Valley's industrial heritage.

Waltham Forest has several important transport achievements, some with plaques and others with nothing.

We are looking to install plaques for The Associated Equipment Company, the builders of London

buses and commercial vehicles, in Walthamstow, in 1912–1933. The first automatic Underground in the world, the Victoria Line, opened in Walthamstow in 1968 and the first battery-powered vehicle in Britain was a tram constructed in Leytonstone back in 1882.

It is a shame that our local authority is struggling to fund these important transport achievements with heritage plaques.

Lindsay Collier, *Chingford*

Immigration raids

Dear WFE

IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT officers and members of the National Crime Agency have been carrying out raids on a number of retail premises and cafés on Walthamstow High Street and Hoe Street.

Members of the public who spoke to us during outreach two days later said they experienced hostility and intimidation

perpetrated by immigration enforcement officers separate from businesses raided.

The climate of fear and hostility these raids have created in our community flies in the face of the council's commitment to Waltham Forest being a 'Borough of Sanctuary' for migrants and asylum seekers.

Waltham Forest
Anti-Raid Network

Women's football

Dear WFE

I WANT TO DRAW ATTENTION to Leyton Orient Walking Football Club's women's sessions.

Walking football is exactly what it sounds like: all the thrill of the beautiful game, but at a slower pace. The rules are adapted – no running, minimal contact – making it perfect for those who want a safer, joint-friendly way to stay active.

For many women, especially those in middle age, traditional

sports can feel like a closed door. Time pressures, family responsibilities, or even a lack of confidence might have kept you off the pitch in the past.

Walking football breaks those barriers down. Leyton Orient is an inclusive and welcoming club. You don't need to have played before – just a pair of trainers and the willingness to give it a go.

Len Cheston,
Leyton

Leyton Orient Walking Football Club run their women only session on Thursdays at 6pm at Wadham Lodge. For more details: Visit leytonorientwalkingfc.teamapp.com

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 18th August.

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For details and a list of items you can bring, scan the QR code or visit nlwa.gov.uk/EcoPark-RRC



PHOTOGRAPHY

Zubair and Haji Ashraf bag up food parcels in the Jamia Masjid Ghousia Mosque in preparation for iftar



Friends Denzil and Jemma hanging out in Lea Bridge Road



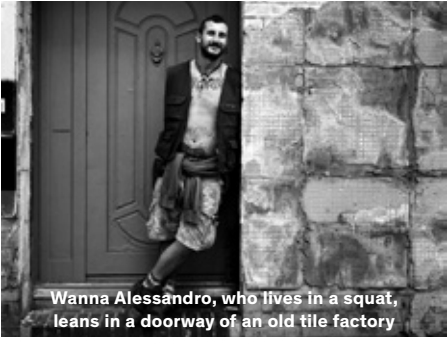
Rozerin Colak and her mother Fadime inside their laundrette business Solis



Awa Tangara with her dog Loue



Kim Crooks smiles as she poses for a picture



Wanna Alessandro, who lives in a squat, leans in a doorway of an old tile factory



Barbara Miller, who has lived in Malta Road just off Lea Bridge Road for over 31 years

PHOTOGRAPHY

Worshipper Jennifer Frances sings and prays on the balcony during Sunday prayers at the Christian Fellowship Church in Potters House



Living the Changes by Russell Boyce



Yasmine poses in front of a shuttered shop on a Sunday

Living the Changes is a long-term documentary project by photographer Russell Boyce that archives life as it is today along Lea Bridge Road.

The River Lea was first bridged in 1745 as the road grew into one of the main commercial routes into London. Today a journey down the same route offers a visual wealth of diverse culture, food, social change, faith, industry, commerce, migration and leisure.

As a documentarian Russell wanted to photograph people who belong to this community, listen to their stories, ask them what they most like about Lea Bridge Road, what they least liked about it and what changes they had noticed.

Russell uses vintage cameras, shooting black and white film. He then video records the opinions of those photographed to capture

their voice and thoughts.

The goal is to create a body of work that offers future generations an insight into the community of people living and working on Lea Bridge Road who might otherwise go unheard and unseen.

Living the Changes will be on show at Lea Bridge Library from Sunday, 3rd August until Saturday, 1st November. It was made possible due to support from The Stow Brothers and Lea Bridge councillor Shabana Dhedhi.

Follow Russell on YouTube: [@russellboyce-photographer](#), find out more: [russellboyce.com](#)

We want your photos! To feature in our September issue please send in your images to wfecho@socialspider.com by Monday, 18th August

ARTS & CULTURE

Beauty in the benign: The forgotten genius of Cyril Mann



Nocturne, Walthamstow
Credit Estate of Cyril Mann,
courtesy of Piano Nobile, London

The figurative painter and sculptor lived in Waltham Forest for two decades, and possessed an underappreciated ability to see beauty in the everyday, writes Claire Weiss

More than 50 local history and art enthusiasts at Leyton & Leytonstone Historical Society's meeting at St Johns Church Hall last month heard author Renske Mann's spellbinding presentation illustrating the life and works of renowned artist Cyril Mann (1911–1980), her late husband.

Recalling that Cyril, Renske and their daughter Amanda had spent two decades in Waltham Forest, first in Lynmouth Road, Walthamstow, and later in Goldsmith Road, Leyton, Renske enthralled the

audience with slides showing examples of Mann's immense repertoire of figurative oil paintings and glimpses of his life history.

Renske referred to Cyril's keen sense of historical relevance, remarking particularly on his paintings of the post-war bomb sites in Shoreditch. She went on to state Cyril Mann's constant quest was to portray the striking effect of sunlight and the dynamic shadows created even where the subject matter may not have been considered at the time to be a thing of beauty.

While these pictures may not have suited the taste of the post-war capital, Renske

remarked, they comprise a unique body of work that witnesses the spirit and topography of those years.

In 1933, a young Cyril secured a place at the Royal Academy but he was not in line with their teaching; his art was figurative while most painters had turned towards abstract styles at that time. Renske threw her hands up as she exclaimed how he had abandoned that opportunity.

Moving to Walthamstow in the 1960s offered Cyril Mann's artistic imagination a view of industrial and cottage suburban life that contrasted sharply with his and Renske's earlier residence in dense inner London.

He produced landscapes of the local environment, portraits of his immediate family and still-life renderings of vegetables, plants and homely objects to hand, always exploiting to the full the dynamic effects of sunlight in his striking paintings.

Renske spoke of how Cyril's artistic eye was mesmerised by structural surroundings in Walthamstow such as in his paintings *Railway Bridge Over the Culvert* (1963) and *Walthamstow Gas Cooling Towers* (1963), the latter being a view of the massive coal-fired power station's five giant wooden cooling towers dominating the skyline of his and Renske's modest terraced cottage.

Artistically and historically too, this work has great significance as Renske described, since Walthamstow's power station was demolished very soon afterwards to prepare for the coming of the Victoria Line.



Renske Mann, Claire Weiss of L&LHS, Pat Gough, chair of L&LHS, actress Natalie Ava Nasr, and Renske's daughter Amanda Mann Credit Karl Weiss



Self portrait Credit Estate of Cyril Mann, courtesy of Piano Nobile, London

Moving to Leyton in the late 1960s where daughter Amanda spent her childhood, attending the then Church Mead primary schools, Cyril and Renske had the benefit of a larger house with a long garden filled with large standard rose trees.

Renske reminisced that this gave Cyril all the studio space he could dream of. There, Cyril found inspiration in Leyton's marsh and forest land, producing masterpieces including *Epping Forest Gravel Pits* (1965), known locally now as Hollow Ponds, and *Metropolitan Water Board* (1967) a stunning landscape with jewel-like colours featuring the River Lea.

This painting provides a record of the historical Engine House before its demolition in 1970.

Just three of Cyril Mann paintings are held within the borough at William Morris Gallery, which shows that we desperately need greater recognition of Cyril Mann's artistic genius in Waltham Forest, the place where his talents flourished.

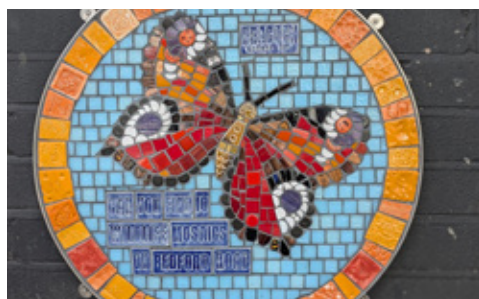
'The Girl in the Green Jumper: my life with the Artist Cyril Mann', by Renske Mann and published by Pimpernel Press, is available at all good bookstores

Keep up to date with Leyton & Leytonstone Historical Society's events here: leytonhistorysociety.org.uk

Mosaic trail celebrates local wildlife



Angela McDermott with a funghi mosaic



Peacock butterfly mosaic Credit Angela McDermott

A vibrant new mosaic trail celebrating urban wildlife in Waltham Forest has appeared in Bedford Road, Walthamstow.

Created by local resident Angela McDermott in collaboration with acclaimed mosaic artist Maud Milton, the project invited over 100 residents to contribute to a series of ten mosaics inspired by urban wildlife.

Funded by William Morris Big Local and Waltham Forest Council, the trail makers say their work aims to "reconnect people with nature and encourage exploration of the green spaces right on their doorstep".

"There's all kinds of nature right on our doorstep if we stop and look," Angela said. "How exciting is that? And we can nurture more of it."

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AROUND THE BOROUGH

WALTHAMSTOW

600 pupils take part in iconic opera

Credit Waltham Forest Music Service



by Sophie Mitchell

More than 600 pupils from Waltham Forest schools came together to celebrate the 150th anniversary of *Carmen* by Georges Bizet.

On 2nd and 3rd July, young talent from the Little Choir of Joy, Waltham Forest Youth Orchestra, All the Young Dudes Guitar

Group and a choir of local primary school students performed a special production titled *This Is Carmen* at Big Penny Social in Walthamstow.

The production was born out of a collaboration between the Royal Ballet and Opera and Waltham Forest Music Service (WFMS), and was directed by Italian soprano Maya Sapone.

Introducing young people to the storytelling tradition of opera, the retelling of *Carmen* explores Georges Bizet's life and his 1875 masterpiece.

The children performed classic pieces like *Habanera* and the *Toreador Song*, but in addition to this, the cast were encouraged to bring forward their own ideas throughout rehearsals. New music, like Flamenco Dance, was also composed for the production, which was described by organisers as "truly unique".

WFMS provides music educational opportunities to children across Walthamstow. This is the third opera project that WFMS has brought to life in partnership with the Royal Ballet and Opera. WFMS says the success of *This Is Carmen* speaks to their efforts in creating an appreciation for opera among young people.

CHINGFORD

Flats approved amid 'overdevelopment' claims

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Plans for eight new flats in Chingford have been approved after Waltham Forest councillors disagreed with residents that it constituted overdevelopment.

A row of 29 garages to the rear of Chingford Mount Road will be torn down and replaced with a two-storey and three-storey building, each comprising four flats.

Some 86 residents lodged formal objections against the scheme, while more than 100 signed a local petition.

Around a dozen were in attendance for the planning committee meeting on Tuesday, 8th July where it was passed by three votes to two.

One resident, living in nearby Field Close, told the committee it was "clear overdevelopment".

She said the new buildings

would "sit awkwardly between existing homes" and "disrupt [the area's] existing character".

The scheme was also criticised by Conservative councillor Catherine Saumarez, who said eight homes was a "large number" for a street where people "live in close proximity" with one another.

An officer from the council's planning department said people's privacy would be maintained through screens blocking the view into residents' gardens and detailed construction plans would be pro-



How the flats are expected to look
Credit Stephen Davy and Peter Smith Architects

duced in a bid to mitigate noise, dust and congestion on the roads.

While some felt it was overdevelopment, Tory councillor John Moss said the development did not "maximise [the area's potential]".

He said the council was "actually stymying" further development and said up to 16 terrace houses could fit in the lane, which was more in line with the town hall's wider ambitions for more housing.

Labour councillor Keith Rayner unsuccessfully lobbied for a disabled parking space to be provisionally added to the car-free development, warning it may be difficult for disabled people to either live there or visit. He said the option should be there if residents need to designate one in the future.

However, it could be "difficult to implement" and was not a "practical" suggestion, according to Justin Carr, the assistant director of building control.

LEYTONSTONE

M&S open foodhall in Leytonstone

M&S opened a new foodhall at the former Matalan site in Leytonstone last month.

The new 2,000 square metre supermarket opened on Thursday, 17th July and sits next to Aldi, which opened last year.

M&S says a total of 55 staff have been hired, 14 of whom are part of Marks and Starts employability scheme for young people.

The scheme is run in partnership with The King's Trust and is designed to help 16 to 30-year-olds who are disadvantaged in their job hunt gain retail experience.

Minnie, 20, who lives in Highams Park, is one of the store's new customer assistants.

She said: "I finished college last July and took up an electrician's course but was struggling and ended up at the job centre.

"My favourite part of my job is speaking to customers, we get so many different people coming in to shop, but also I've been so lucky to make really good friends with other people



The inside of the store Credit M&S

on Marks & Start!"

Waltham Forest Council deputy leader Ahsan Khan, said: "Residents of Leytonstone will be delighted to see their brand-new M&S store open its doors.

"This is a huge show of confidence in Leytonstone and the local community, and we're very excited to be helping make it such a great place to live."

You can find the M&S foodhall at 829-837 High Road Leytonstone, and opening hours are 8am-9pm Monday to Saturday and 11am-5pm on Sundays

LEYTON

Metalsmith fined £80k for health and safety offences

A Leyton metal gate manufacturing company has been fined £80,000 for repeated health and safety violations.

Research and Development in Opening Gates Limited, in Lea Bridge Road, pleaded guilty to breaching two sections of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. The court action followed several visits by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) to the company's Grantham, Lincolnshire work site.

The company was fined £40,000 for each offence, totalling £80,000. It was also ordered

to pay £7,495 in costs, along with a £2,000 victim surcharge.

During their visits, HSE inspectors identified unsafe storage of flammable gases, inadequate control of welding fumes, and poor structural integrity in workplace areas.

Follow-up inspections revealed continued non-compliance despite the company having been served enforcement notices.

Compliance deadlines were extended but not met on two occasions, according to HSE.

Research and Development in Opening Gates did not respond to a request for comment.

HISTORY

How Waltham Forest led the way for gay ballroom dancers

Veteran ballroom dancer Jacqueline Logan recounts how the borough hosted the first ever UK Gay Sports festival in 2000

As a lesbian ballroom dancer, I've been campaigning for over 30 years to make the visual expression of queer friendship and love acceptable in all ballroom dance venues across the country, and I was subsequently awarded a British Empire Medal in 2020 for this very important mission.

Back in 2000, the East London Out Project (Elop) put together the first Waltham Forest pride event in Lloyd Park, Walthamstow. It was a fantastic coming together of people from across the LGBTQ+ community and their allies but what many people may not know is that same year our borough was also the venue for one of the very first same-sex dance competitions in the world.

It means Waltham Forest was 20 years ahead of Strictly Come Dancing when it came to recognising the importance of celebrating and accepting

LGBTQ+ dancers on the ballroom and latin dance floor.

Dancers from the LGBTQ+ community started reclaiming the dance floor in 1989 when ballroom and latin dance classes were established at the then London Lesbian and Gay Centre in Farringdon.

Then, in 2000, Waltham Forest took



Amanda Greenwood and Stephanie Goy
Credit Jacqueline Logan

up the mantle of hosting the UK Gay Sports festival as part of the national millennium celebrations.

More than 3,000 participants took part in sports events held at leisure centres, and in Chestnuts Field behind Waltham Forest Town Hall.

The sports on offer included football, netball, karate, chess, swimming, table tennis, and much more.

The UK Gay Sports festival was launched with a Venetian masked tableau in an opening ceremony in Hollow Ponds, along with a packed performance from the Beverly Sisters in Chingford Assembly Hall.

The closing ceremony attracted a large crowd on Chestnuts Field, with an invite to all residents to enjoy performances from Bucks Fizz, The Real Thing, and Heatwave.

The international dance competition took place in Lloyd Park theatre, on the same ground as the venue for this year's pride events.

The dance competition attracted participants from Germany, Holland, the United States and Denmark and it was a sell-out event.

Champions who won this event went on to claim UK titles in the same-sex dance world for many years.

For example, winners George Tzoulas and Michael Hall (pictured), are now placed in the top three mainstream latin couples in the UK in the over 50s category. Same-sex dancers like them are now welcomed, to a certain extent, in mainstream ballroom and Latin dancing.

Waltham Forest was ahead of its time in sticking its neck out to support these dancers at a time when they were being banned for dancing together in professional and amateur ballrooms across the country. Let's celebrate that!



George Tzoulas and Michael Hall at the UK Gay Sports festival in 2000
Credit Jacqueline Logan

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Greek Food: 5pm to 10pm

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Greek food includes hot and cold starters, Gyro wrap, Gyro Merida meal, traditional meze, traditional kebabs, on the grill, salads, sides

We also provide hot drinks, cold drinks, milkshakes, fresh smoothies, juices, mineral water, soft drinks, premium soft drinks, alcohol and cocktails... and beers.



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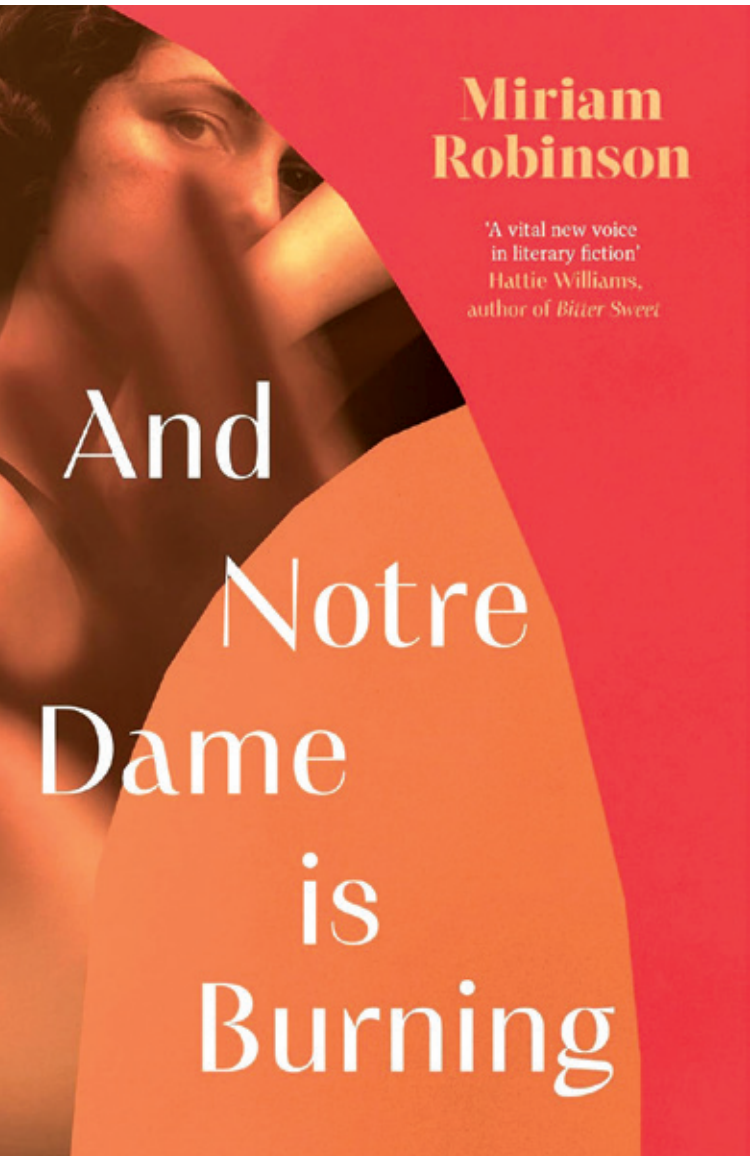
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REVIEW

And Notre Dame is Burning
by Miriam Robinson

Sarah Fairbairn reviews a “blistering” debut novel about a Walthamstow woman facing divorce



you have told yourself about your life turns out to be only part of the truth? How do you push yourself into the future when taking that step will mean abandoning, changing or rejecting everything that has made you feel safe and comfortable?

The story is gripping because it is so ordinary. It doesn't reach for spectacle but unflinchingly documents the kind of slow unravelling that is probably familiar to all of us; the kind of desperation and uncertainty that is all the more devastating because normal life mercilessly carries on around it.

There are some great single scenes and motifs that recur throughout – the narrator returns again and again to a police station where she learns she has unwittingly been part of a major crime – but the real magic of the book is in its descriptions of being stuck in a moment of disbelief, of not knowing who you are or how you will make yourself whole again.

This debut novel is accurately described on its back cover blurb as “blistering”.

Miriam Robinson explores grief, anger, family legacies, the history of humankind and the mysteries of motherhood with a clear voice that cuts through the confusion of her main character.

If you're looking for a holiday read that you can't wait to pull out of your bag every day then grab yourself a copy when it comes out on Sunday, 3rd August.

'And Notre Dame is Burning' is available from all good book stores from Sunday, 3rd August

Esther is lost. Her marriage is finished, having crashed down around her ears with the news of a devastating betrayal. She frets over her relationship with her ex, with her daughter, and – most inescapably – with her own body as she tries to sort through her feelings of rage and impotence.

She walks, as she writes in the journal she is keeping, in the marshes and along the canal. “But I cannot disappear”, she reflects, because she can see the Overground train rushing by on its way to Walthamstow Central. “There is the pylon. There are the wires... There are the families and the couples and the people on their own”.

How do you put yourself back together when the story

LISTINGS

YOGA

Yoga & Pints
Monday 4th August, 6.30pm–8pm
Signature Brew, Unit 15,
Blackhorse Lane E17 5QJ

A space for men to pause, connect and build a happy relationship with their masculinity – one stretch and one honest conversation at a time. Each workshop follows a customised 90 minute flow. Get stretching: The yoga instructor will take you through a 30 min flow (fit for newbies to even the most expert yogi). Our facilitators will then guide you through a 50 minute discussion based on the many facets of masculinity and self. A total of four sessions, every Monday.

Price per session, £6, full four week-term is £20
Tickets here: yogaandpints.com

JAZZ

Jazz at Trades
Thursday 7th August, 8pm–10pm
Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61-63
Tower Hamlets Rd E17 4RQ

Walthamstow's premier jazz night featuring London and the UK's finest musicians, every first Thursday of the month at Walthamstow Trades Hall.

Our two tier pricing system aims to strike a balance between making our event accessible for all and trying to ensure we can pay the musicians a fair wage for their performance.

This August, Jazz at Trades is excited to welcome rising star vocalist Annie Majin to perform at Walthamstow Trades Hall. Accompanied by a swinging rhythm section featuring Rowan Hudson (piano), Tom Riviere (bass) and Mark Hale (drums).

Tickets (from £7): wegottickets.com/event/670055

LIVE MUSIC

Ese & The Voodoo People
Friday 8th August, from 9pm
Ye Olde Rose and Crown Theatre
Pub E17 4SA

South Londoner Ese Okorodudu has seen it all, done most of it. Graduating from London's most demanding performing arts school - the streets, as a busker - songwriter Ese (vocals, guitar) is backed by the incendiary Voodoo People: ex-Noisette Pharoah Russell (drums) and Basile Petite (bass) plus Sheena Ross (backing vocals) and Jackson Baird (keyboards).

She and her band are inspired by a range of legends, from Jimi Hendrix to Amy Winehouse via The Isley Brothers, Led Zeppelin, Bowie, Prince, Alice In Chains, Skunk Anansie and Erykah Badu.

For more information visit:
yeolderoaseandcrowntheatrepub.co.uk/whats-on

EXHIBITION

Industrial Ghosts
Shaded by Nature
August 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 from 1st June through 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.

Find out more:
walthamstowpumphouse.org.uk

FITNESS

Move Build Grow LND
Saturday 30th August, 12pm–3pm
CrossFit Dawn, Unit 253 Joseph Ray
Road London E11 4RA

This event is about bringing women together in a space that feels safe, real, and empowering. We'll start the morning with a high-energy workout designed to challenge your body and mind, followed by time to connect with other women over conversation that matters. Whether you come alone or with a friend, this is for you if you've ever felt out of place in female spaces. We're here to change that. No cliques. No toxicity. Just accountability, honesty, and connection.

Tickets (£22): Search 'Move Build Grow LND' on Eventbrite

KIDS

Myths, Maps & Monsters
Summer Day Camp
Wednesday 20th August,
9.30am–3.30pm
Good Shepherd Studios 15A Davies
Ln, Bushwood E11 3DR

It is the year 1200BCE and Odysseus and his army find themselves trapped in a Cyclops' cave! Our brave young warriors must use teamwork, cunning and skill in order to complete a series of tasks, outsmart the Cyclops and return home to victory! An immersive, interactive summer holiday activity camp, where young adventurers must complete a series of super-fun challenges in order to defeat famous, mythical beasts from Greek Mythology. Warriors-in-waiting can expect to try their hand at Cyclops archery, have a water fight with Poseidon and play the Minotaur at basketball! Only for children aged five and above.

Tickets (from £20): tickettailor.com/events/mythsmapsmonsters/1740979

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SPORT

Plans to replace Olympic Park tennis courts with padel shelved after outrage



Padel fan Marcus Lange
Credit: Samuel Hopper

Four indoor tennis courts at the Lea Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre were set to be ripped up

by Marco Marcelline

A controversial plan to replace every indoor tennis court at the Lea Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre in the Olympic Park with padel courts has been put on hold amid backlash from tennis players.

In June, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) approved plans which would see its four indoor tennis courts turned into seven double and two single

padel courts.

The LVRPA expected construction on the courts to start this month, before opening to the public on 1st October this year.

In its business case promoting the move, the LVRPA said it expected monthly padel users to be more than double the 4,000 tennis players who currently use the venue each month.

The move prompted backlash from tennis court users who say they were not consulted, with a petition against it gaining

over 1,000 signatures.

In response, the LVRPA paused the project while a rushed consultation with the tennis community was undertaken.

The *Echo* understands that the LVRPA are now considering a hybrid approach which sees two of the indoor tennis courts being converted to padel, leaving two courts for tennis or converting some outdoor tennis courts for padel.

The executive team are also contemplating completely stepping back from the scheme it approved back in June.

The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) previously slammed the plans, describing them as “particularly disappointing”.

A spokesperson told the *Echo*: “The LTA and Tennis Foundation invested £500,000 in the original tennis facility which is an important legacy from the London 2012 Paralympics. The courts are still heavily used with over 700 children on the programme, 100,000 players accessing the facilities each year, a thriving disability programme and links to local schools.

“We will be engaging with LVRPA and the operator GLL to encourage them to consider other options that can see both tennis and padel played on site.”

Julian Wharton lives just a five minute cycle from the Lea Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre and plays tennis there every week.

He said the “unnecessary” decision to close the indoor courts would mean he would instead go to a private tennis club located a 20-minute drive away from him.

LVRPA’s move would essentially make playing tennis unplayable during winter months, he said, adding: “I seriously injured myself playing on a wet court in February so playing indoors is one of the only ways to continue to train at a good level properly and safely through the winter.”

Speaking before the project was paused, the LVRPA said it had created a fund to help community groups to “transition to the outdoor courts, learn padel or, if needed, to find alternative facilities”.

Defending its plans, a spokesperson said tennis would still remain “well catered for” with “at least 90%” of coaching programmes moving to the six outdoor courts.

Keen padelista Marcus Lange, who started playing the sport two years ago, said padel’s popularity owed itself to it being “more accessible” to people of all abilities.

He told the *Echo*: “It’s much more inclusive; you can start a padel match feeling quite inept but finish it feeling like you’ve really got to grips with it. It’s definitely more addictive that way. It’s also more sociable [than tennis] because it’s mainly played as a doubles game.”

Agreeing with the LVRPA’s assessment that there is growing demand and need for more padel courts in the capital, Marcus said: “London needs more courts to drive the price down a bit; padel is expensive at the moment because of how ‘trendy’ it is. If prices don’t go down it could become seen as a privileged sport, much like tennis is.”



The Lea Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre,
Credit: Diamond Geezer via Flickr

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