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# WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free  
Sep 2025, N° 126

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A woman experiences the shock of a cold plunge at Community Sauna Baths. The company is opening its new Blackhorse Road space on Saturday 6th, September. Read more at [walthamforestecho.co.uk](http://walthamforestecho.co.uk), Credit Liz Seabrook

## Crime-stricken Leytonstone building tenants hit with £20k security bill

**by Marco Marcelline**

Residents of a Leytonstone apartment block have complained about being charged “extortionate” repair fees for security measures that have failed to properly deter drug users from camping in their stairwells.

Piers Pereira, a resident in Nexus Court, which is located close to Leytonstone Station, said the building’s management, RMG UK, slapped tenants with a bill of over £500 per flat after carrying out communal repairs, installing CCTV and putting up new signage.

The “cosmetic” fixes were only carried out some months after Nexus Court residents first appealed to RMG UK to take action on the constant break-ins, Piers says.

And despite the repairs, intrusions continue, residents say, with doors being wedged open, and drug users still sleeping in stairwells.

Over the past year, those living in Nexus Court say they have regularly encountered people smoking Class A drugs in the stairwell, as well as paraphernalia and human waste in the building’s hallways. Residence told the *Echo* they have also seen knives being carried, causing some to feel too scared to leave their flat at night.

Detailing his “despair” at the situation, Piers said: “There’s a simple expectation we all have when buying or renting a flat, that it would be a home where you can feel secure and sleep safely. Instead, we’re finding ourselves living with anxiety, fear, and now, an unexpected bill of £500.”

Residents say they repeatedly reached out to RMG UK about

Continues on Page-2 ►

## Incinerator faces further delays

Fresh concerns have been raised over progress of the controversial Edmonton EcoPark incinerator  
**by Sebastian Mann,**  
Local Democracy Reporter

Progress on the construction of the new Edmonton incinerator is continuing to drag amid a series of local and international challenges.

The redevelopment at Edmonton Eco Park, which will replace the existing, ageing waste-burning facility has been delayed, its owners say.

They have pointed to Brexit, the war in Ukraine, and high interest rates impacting the cost of raw construction materials.

The incinerator had been intended to be up and running by 2027.

No fresh timelines for the project have been made publicly available, but the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) – which is guiding the project – says “construction progress continues to be made”.

The NLWA is controlled by councillors from Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest, and is responsible for disposing of waste from the seven boroughs.

Construction firm Acciona is still facing “challenges,” NLWA chair Clyde Loakes said. Last year, it was reported the firm had faced “continued” delays in bringing in subcontractors for the next stage of development.

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# NEWS



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the break-ins but have been "stone-walled".

Piers said the "slow, disorganised, and often non-existent" response to their complaints meant residents "took it upon themselves" to temporarily fix broken doors, and secure locks, often at their own expense.

He adds: "We understand that housing rough sleepers is a complex, borough-wide issue. But the residents of Nexus Court are not social workers or security guards. We don't have the power to arrest intruders or provide emergency accommodation. In fact, residents have spoken with the police, the local council, and tried to direct the rough sleepers to local homeless charities.



Credit the blowup on Unsplash

"All have been incredibly helpful, but RMG has seemed to have found our pleas for help annoying, rather than customers desperately asking for help. What we expect is a basic standard of security in the building we pay to live in, and for our management company to act quickly and responsibly when we raise safety concerns.

Instead, we've been left to foot the bill for delayed action."

A spokesperson for RMG UK said the company carried out internal decoration, and fire door safety checks, which contributed towards a larger than expected repair bill.

They said: "We understand unexpected costs can be frustrating, but sometimes unforeseeable issues with the building require investment and on this occasion it's been to help keep people safe.

"We remain committed to being transparent about any spend... for those who may find the additional costs difficult, we will also offer flexible payment plans.

"Our priority remains ensuring that Nexus Court is a safe, secure and well-maintained place to call home."

## Council extends ban on 'aggressive begging'

by **Sebastian Mann**,  
Local Democracy Reporter



Credit Nick Fewings via Unsplash

A crackdown on aggressive begging and public urination across Waltham Forest has been extended until 2028.

A borough-wide public space protection order (PSPO), first introduced in 2022 to tackle anti-social behaviour, will be in effect for the next three years.

Councillor Khelyn Limbajee, the cabinet member for community safety, approved the extension at a private meeting on 18th August.

A spokesperson for Waltham Forest Council said following the meeting: "The PSPO is an important tool for combating anti-social behaviour (ASB), including public urination, street drinking associated with ASB, aggressive begging and vehicle-related nuisance.

"It gives the council and police a targeted, legally enforceable mechanism to address issues and empowers officers to intervene early and consistently, with clear conditions and penalties."

Offenders caught breaching the order can be fined up to £100 on the spot.

Since it was launched in March 2022, more than 2,500 penalties have been issued.

Street drinking was the most frequent antisocial offence, accounting for 344 charges. A further 310 offenders were fined for urinating in a public place, followed by the 306 who were fined for spitting.



Barbel fish  
Credit Environment Agency

## River Lea anglers asked to help spot 'tattooed' fish

by **Marco Marcelline**

The Environment Agency has issued an appeal to anglers along the River Lea, asking them to spot barbels with a blue mark "tattooed" on them.

Last November, fisheries staff from the agency released 1,000 juvenile barbel into the river at Kings Weir and Fishers Green as part of a project to help restore historical populations of barbel in the Old River Lea.

The fish were sourced from the agency's National Coarse Fish Rearing Unit, funded by

rod license income.

However, the agency "tattooed" the fish with a blue mark and requested that anglers report any captures of marked barbel.

This helps gather important information on barbels' survival, growth rates and how far

the fish are moving up and downstream. The agency asks that any photos should be taken on both sides of the fish and a record of the length and weight if possible.

This information will help show how successful the stocking is compared with natural breeding within the river, and, the agency says, it will also help increase the natural stocks of barbel in the River Lea in the long term.



River Lea

If you catch a barbel from the Lea with the blue mark, let the Environment Agency know by emailing [hnlfm@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:hnlfm@environment-agency.gov.uk) with a photo, location and size and weight of the fish



# NEWS

# Popeyes granted late night licence amid resident backlash

The fried chicken joint will shut its Walthamstow store at 1am on weekends after abandoning a previous plan to close at 4am

**by Marco Marcelline &  
Sebastian Mann,**  
Local Democracy Reporter

**A** battle over late-night fried chicken in Walthamstow High Street has ended in compromise – with Popeyes given permission to run deliveries until 1am on weekends, rather than shutting at 4am every day as it had previously planned to.

The fast-food giant, famous for its Louisiana-style chicken burgers, opened its brightly lit orange-and-white branch last April. But when the company applied earlier this summer to keep its Cleveland Park Avenue delivery hatch running until 4am, it sparked significant disquiet from residents living just yards away.

More than 50 objections landed on Waltham Forest Council's desk, with neighbours warning of sleepless nights filled with the buzz of mopeds, the chatter of riders waiting on pavements, and the smell of fried food drifting through their windows.

Those complaints prompted the chain to scale down its request and cook up a new



Popeyes is situated at the corner of Cleveland Park Avenue and Walthamstow Hight Street

plan to close at 11pm to customers, while keeping its Cleveland Park Avenue delivery hatch open until 2am Monday to Sunday.

But residents were still unimpressed.

At a town hall licensing hearing on Tuesday, 5th August, councillors heard Alan Smith, chair of the Cleveland Park Avenue Residents Association, tell the

panel: “Residents already suffer many adverse effects due to Popeyes’ proximity to the High Street. If delivery drivers congregate as they currently do on the pavement outside the delivery hatch, it creates an intimidating environment for those walking past.”

In response, the chain promised a “door

host” to ensure delivery riders are not disturbing neighbours or blocking pavements and roads with their vehicles.

Popeyes also agreed to notify drivers of orders only when they were ready to be picked up, stating its 'Order Ready' system would prevent them from waiting outside the restaurant.

The fast food chain's barrister, Mark Browning, stressed that "Walthamstow is one of the only town centres in the UK where we've agreed to shut early to the public at 11pm – other venues regularly shut at 2am or 3am".

Faced with angry residents and critical councillors, Popeyes eventually decided to agree to even stricter conditions, namely that its delivery service must shut at 1am and only operate on Fridays and Saturdays.

That climbdown didn't convince everyone though, with resident Ralph Meanley telling the *Echo* afterwards: "Delivery riders are third party contractors so Popeyes can't actually control what vehicle they use, where they wait for orders, or where they park — they will do what they want. Ultimately these conditions are just words on paper."

Advertisement

[illegible]



# NEWS



Year 13 students at Higams Park School pose with their A Level results on Thursday 14th August. The school's sixth form celebrated one of its best ever results this year, with 24% of A Level students receiving A\* or A grades, landing it in the top quarter of sixth forms in the country. Read more at [walthamforestecho.co.uk](http://walthamforestecho.co.uk)

## Government deems council's housing plan partially 'unsound'

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**W**altham Forest Council will need to make changes to its plan for new housing after several sites were deemed unsuitable.

The draft Local Plan Part 2, which will guide the development of 27,000 new homes in the borough until 2035, was branded 'unsound' by the government's planning inspectorate last month.

The plan itself does not include formal proposals for new housing and is instead meant as a reference for prospective developers on allocated sites.

Pockets of land across the borough have been identified by the council as suitable for either homes or industry and the plan would include a recommended number of units for each.

After a string of hearings in July, inspector David Troy told the council it would need to 'delete' eleven sites earmarked for housing and seven commercial sites that are not considered developable.

One of the biggest blows to the scheme is the inspector's



judgement that the site of the former Matalan in Leytonstone is not suitable for tall buildings and 190 flats cannot be built there.

Most unsuitable proposals are relatively small, sitting between five and 55 homes.

Councillor Ahsan Khan, the cabinet member for housing and regeneration, said it was a "common occurrence" for the inspectorate to request changes and was generally "anticipated by councils".

He said they were now regarded as "opportunity sites" and may still be used in the future.

130 homes allocated to the Territorial Army Centre, by Whipps Cross Hospital, and

proposals for 20 homes at Cedar Wood House and 15 on the site of a KFC restaurant in Lea Bridge Road are also among those that need to be scrapped.

Elsewhere, unsuitable locations will be developed into different projects.

The Temple Mills site, in Leytonstone, will no longer see 700 new homes but will instead be safeguarded for the development of the proposed Ruckholt Road Station.

Despite more than ten sites being deleted from the plan, the inspector said the council was on track to see 30,300 new homes built by 2035.

While the allocations were branded suitable overall, the

inspector has requested the council make several changes to its guidance for sites in the Leyton Mills Retail Park, which has been earmarked for 700 homes and a new bus depot, and the Montague Road Estate, earmarked for a net increase of 181 houses.

In Leyton Mills, developers will need to enhance the pedestrian and cycle paths to Leyton Station, safeguard land in the Lee Valley Regional Park, and "preserve or enhance the significance, setting and key views" of surrounding heritage assets including the Leyton Town Centre Conservation Area, the library, town hall, and St Patrick's Cemetery.

Developers working on the Montague Road Estate will similarly need to ensure any surrounding heritage assets, including those in the neighbouring borough of Redbridge, are "preserved or enhanced".

The town hall has launched a fresh public consultation that will run until Saturday, 13th October, where residents can share their views on the proposed changes.

Waltham Forest residents can submit their views on the consultation by Monday 13th October to [localplanconsultations@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:localplanconsultations@walthamforest.gov.uk)

## Landlord rapped for 'serious' health and safety failings

by Marco Marcelline

**A** Waltham Forest housing association has been downgraded by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) for multiple failings, such as not conducting asbestos surveys in its buildings.

The North London Muslim Housing Association (NLM) manages a total of 1,000 homes in Waltham Forest, Tower Hamlets, Enfield, Newham and Hackney.

In its report, RSH said the housing association had "serious failings" in its delivery of its health and safety responsibilities, with NLM failing to register all of its high-rise buildings with the Building Safety Regulator.

NLM had also failed to show that it had taken sufficient mitigating actions to manage risks while fire safety remediation work is completed, including ensuring emergency evacuation plans are in place for all tenants.

One of the more damning judgments was that NLM had failed to meet legal obligations to conduct asbestos surveys in the communal areas of its buildings.

NLM has also, over a prolonged period, been in breach of its own treasury strategy rules which require a level of its debt to be at a fixed rate. This, the regulator said, leaves it vulnerable to interest rate rises and "unable to maximise the resources it has for investing in its homes".

In a statement, NLM said it was "hugely disappointed" by the regulator's judgment.

The housing association said: "Our board and executive team take these matters extremely seriously and we are working to address them as a matter of priority, while continuing to deliver homes and services that meet the needs of our residents."

"Work is actively underway to address the identified concerns, and we are actively engaging and working closely with the regulator. We remain optimistic that, through our collaborative efforts and ongoing improvements, we will be able to come out of G3 and C3 within a short period."

NLM was founded in 1988 and rents homes to tenants from all faith and ethnic backgrounds.



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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.



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[daltonlodge@bmcare.co.uk](mailto:daltonlodge@bmcare.co.uk)



## NEWS

# Acrimony as Labour reveals councillor shortlists for 2026 local elections



Councillor Jonathan O'Dea also works as a sculptor and artist, Credit Mark Burton

by Marco Marcelline & Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

## Cathall ward councillor Jonathan O'Dea is appealing the party's decision to deselect him

campaigning record, and an Israel-Hamas ceasefire motion that the Cathall councillor submitted before ceasefire support became wider Labour Party policy.

In documents related to the selection process seen by the *Echo*, candidate assessment panellists "felt [Cllr O'Dea] had not fully appreciated the role of the whip and the need for discipline by submitting a motion at a febrile time".

Additionally the panel stated they "felt [Cllr O'Dea] did not give enough evidence, or show remorse, for why he submitted the motion... despite knowing party rules".

Cllr O'Dea's ceasefire motion was submitted on 3rd November 2023. He withdrew it on 6th November 2023, three days before Labour councillors backed a similar motion calling for a ceasefire submitted by the party leader Grace Williams.

The panellists also alleged he had not attended any formal campaigning sessions. He denies this, stating in an appeal letter that he had been to nine between October 2024 and February this year.

Cllr O'Dea was not available for comment.

Tom Connor, who is generally seen as being on the left-wing of the party, was also not included on the list.

Councillor Connor, who represents the High Street ward and sits on the housing scrutiny committee, was suspended in January after voting against cuts to council tax support.

The controversial scheme, which officials said would save the town hall £2.23 million, changed the tax rules so thousands of residents on low incomes who previously only paid 15% of their council tax bill now pay as much as 43%.

The councillor told the *Echo*, shortly after his hearing: "A decision that would increase the financial hardship of those residents already known to be in poverty is not something I could vote for."

A retired local government worker, he was supported by the socialist pressure group Momentum when he was selected to stand for election in 2017.

Other absences include St James ward councillor Sebastian Salek, while Lea Bridge councillor Gerry Lyons will now stand for election in the Valley ward.



Credit Samuel Regan Asante via Unsplash

No cabinet members have been removed from the ballots.

The party says candidates for the remaining wards will be selected later in the year. Next year's local elections, set for 7th May, will be seen as an indicator for how people feel about the mainstream political parties.

Most seats in the country were last up for election in 2022, when Labour won control of 74 councils against the Tories' 35.

Waltham Forest Council is controlled by a substantial Labour majority, with the Conservatives forming the official opposition with 13 members.

The local Labour group did not respond to request for comment.

### Continued from Page-1

Cllr Loakes, who also serves as the deputy leader of Waltham Forest Council, told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: "The delivery of the energy recovery facility has not stopped – construction progress continues to be made, with over 200 workers on site.

"The subcontractors engaged by Acciona have consistently demonstrated excellent competency throughout the project. The civil works are largely complete and work to install the first two boilers and the steelwork for the turbines and flue gas treatment continues.

"However, as we have consistently reported publicly, there are challenges being faced by Acciona and the programme is delayed.

"Factors such as energy and raw material price shocks following the outbreak of the Ukraine war, high interest rates, and Brexit have impacted the construction industry."

But despite the reassurances, campaigners against the scheme fear it is in "serious disarray".

Carina Millstone, with the Stop Edmonton Incinerator Now Coalition, said: "The



Credit NLWA

NLWA's stubborn refusal to release information about the delays in the building of the new incinerator suggests to us that the relationship with Acciona has irretrievably broken down, no doubt at a hefty cost to the councils.

"We now believe the new incinerator will never be built."

A total of £66.5million has been allocated to the project from the Heat Networks Investment Project, a government-funded scheme aimed at increasing the number of networks in England and Wales.

The budget has already risen from £1.2billion to £1.5bn, with the NLWA citing similar supply issues.

At a cabinet meeting in June, top councillors in Haringey agreed they would shelve their plans to pipe heat from the incinerator, citing "economic turbulence" and the need for "prudent" management.

Concerns have also been raised about the potential impact of the incinerator on air quality in north London.

Waltham Forest Conservatives leader councillor Emma Best said Highams Park

would be "covered in plumes". The Tories claim Chingford "will continue to be exposed to highly toxic ultrafine particulates (PM0.1) from the burning of waste, which 'constitute a significant health hazard'.

They also attacked the Labour-run council for supporting the project despite costs having "spiralled out of control".

North Middlesex University Hospital, which serves Enfield and Haringey, saw 14,587 children with breathing difficulties admitted in 2024. That is 220% higher than the London average.

Cllr Loakes said the NLWA was following the "well-established scientific evidence that modern and well-run facilities do not pose a significant risk to public health".

He said: "By far the biggest source of air pollution is road traffic – even at its absolute peak level, the new facility would be responsible for just 0.52% of local particulates and 2.93% of NOx, compared to 30% from road traffic.

"More than 35 facilities have been given consent since we submitted our application, and only three of them will have emissions cleaning technology as good as ours."



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## NEWS

# Bin workers threaten strike action after rejecting 'poor' pay offer

GMB Union members voted overwhelmingly against a 2.8% and 3.2% pay rise, demanding better pay and working conditions



Lewis Mather

by Marco Marcelline

**W**altham Forest bin workers could potentially go on strike after rejecting two "poor" pay offers.

GMB Union says its Waltham Forest members employed by FCC Environment voted overwhelmingly against both a 2.8% and 3.2% pay rise.

The Spanish company took over waste collections in Waltham Forest in 2024, when it purchased previous contractor Urbaser UK.

GMB member and binman Lewis Mather said he would "absolutely" vote for strike action if it came to it.

Along with his colleagues, Lewis rejected both pay offers from FCC Environment because it excludes London Living Wage (LLW) employees such as himself.

He says he wants the company to agree to lift LLW employees salaries from £13.85 an hour to £15.50 an hour, which would represent a pay rise of 11.9%.

Lewis told the *Echo*: "It's not easy being a binman; you're out in all weather, rain and snow. We worked all through Covid and we don't even get any sick pay. You don't even get bank



The canteen and staff room at FCC Environment's Walthamstow depot  
Credit Veronika Csonki

holidays off – you have to book them as annual leave holidays."

Meanwhile, fellow bin worker Veronika Csonki expressed her concern at the state of staff facilities at FCC Environment's Walthamstow depot, saying: "The women's toilets haven't got any hot water and the only place you can go and sit is the little canteen."

"In the summer the canteen is too hot and in winter it is too cold but if you have to wait for your vehicle to get fixed, it's the only place you can go."

"We also don't have access to a kitchen, only vending machines."



Credit Jay Clark via Unspash

There are basic needs that the company is not supplying."

During last month's heatwave, there was not enough water available on the depot for all 300 refuse workers.

Refuse worker Adam Waclawczyk shared Veronika's disquiet at work conditions, stating that their vehicles don't have air conditioning despite the hot summer weather.

He added: "Our employees have had enough, and we will fight for our pay rises. FCC's offers are not serious compared to the rising cost of living."

A spokesperson from GMB said the union would ballot its members for strike action if FCC didn't come back with a "better" pay offer.

Joining his colleagues in protesting the state of facilities, Lewis also stated that animal road kills were being stored in a freezer in the depot's canteen. He said: "We're having to sit right next to this freezer with dead foxes. From an environmental health standpoint surely you shouldn't be storing roadkill [dead foxes] in the same room where we eat."

FCC Environment said: "We made a fair offer to its employees in Waltham Forest commensurate with settlements made and agreed in many other parts of the country." FCC further confirmed that its door was always open to further direct discussions with the union but that the company "will not negotiate through the media".

The *Echo* understands Unite union members employed by FCC Environment are also considering balloting over strike action.

Deputy council leader and cabinet member for climate and air quality, Clyde Loakes, said: "The council is not involved in any of the pay discussions between FCC Environment and its staff, as that is not within our jurisdiction. We want to see both sides come to a swift resolution, and we understand that discussions are ongoing to reach a settlement."

# Concerns raised over 'ten hour' A&E wait times at Whipps Cross

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) has highlighted how people were waiting up to ten hours after their initial triage before seeing a doctor

**F**resh concerns have been raised about urgent and emergency services at Whipps Cross Hospital following a Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection.

The inspection, carried out in May, was intended to review whether Barts Health NHS Trust had made improvements previously ordered by the regulator. While inspectors found that some progress had been made, they warned that key issues around safety and waiting times remain unresolved.

As a result, the hospital's overall rating for urgent and emergency care stays at "requires improvement". The same applies to the categories of safety and responsiveness and ratings of "good" for effectiveness, caring, and leadership remain unchanged.

Among the most serious findings were the delays patients face after arriving at the hospital's emergency department. Inspectors reported that while initial processing was happening more quickly than before, patients were still not being triaged within the national target of 15 minutes.

In some cases, people were waiting up to ten hours after their initial triage before seeing a doctor.

The report noted that the trust has brought in 24-hour

security to manage incidents linked to people's frustration with delays. Staff also told inspectors the pressure was taking a toll on morale.

The CQC also criticised the continued use of corridor spaces to accommodate patients, despite efforts to improve privacy with curtains. Male and female patients were not separated in these makeshift areas and often had to share toilet facilities.

In addition, the "fit to sit" area – designed for patients with minor injuries – was described as cramped, with chairs tightly packed together and little privacy.

Another concern highlighted was the limited training for nursing staff in dealing with the significant number of patients presenting with mental health needs. Inspectors said the trust had not ensured all staff were equipped with the skills required, though work is under way with external partners to develop a dedicated training programme.

Despite these challenges, the inspection team had some praise for staff who it found were treating patients with kindness and respect, even during the busiest periods.

The CQC has ordered Barts Health NHS Trust to provide quarterly action plans detailing how it is addressing the outstanding concerns.

A spokesperson for Barts said: "Our teams continue to work hard to provide kind, compassionate care, whilst our department faces significant pressures."

"We are proud of the progress we have made which has been recognised in the report, and we continue to take steps for improvement to ensure patients receive efficient, dignified care in our A&E."



Whipps Cross Hospital



## NEWS

# London sees three times more wildfires than usual this summer

Politicians in the capital are calling for a national wildfire strategy after the London Fire Brigade responded to 64 wildfires this summer compared to just 19 five years ago

By Kumail Jaffer,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**M**inisters must publish an effective national wildfire strategy immediately after new data showed the number of wildfires has more than tripled this summer compared to 2020, London Assembly members have warned.

London Fire Brigade (LFB) said they had responded to 64 wildfires this summer compared to just 19 five years ago, representing a 237% increase.

Higher temperatures and below-average rainfall have been blamed for the rise in blazes, with London at particular risk due to the number of residential areas that border green spaces and parks. Most fires are started by members of the public, whether deliberately or accidentally, according to the LFB.

On 19th August, Mayor of London Sir Sadiq Khan said raging wildfires were now an issue on “our doorstep” and said the LFB had received record investment to tackle blazes whenever they do start.



Firefighters put out a huge grass fire in Woolwich Common on 25th August, Credit London Fire Brigade

The revelation also sparked calls for the national government to roll out a comprehensive wildfire strategy to deal with the increasing frequency.

Zack Polanski, chair of the London Assembly’s fire committee, told the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS): “With drier springs and record-breaking hot summers becoming the new normal, every increase in temperature pushes wildfires closer to our doorsteps, threatening our homes and our city’s green spaces.

“The London Fire Brigade and National Fire Chiefs Council have both warned of a heightened risk of wildfires this year, so these figures are sadly no surprise.

“The LFB has learned many lessons since the major wildfire incidents in 2022, but more still needs to be done – which is why this committee is calling for a national wildfire strategy to tackle this growing threat.”

Hina Bokhari, a Liberal Democrat assembly member who sits on the fire committee, told the LDRS: “The threat of wildfires will only grow as the climate emergency deepens, so every Londoner will need to play their part in preventing them and it will need to be a top priority for the London Fire Brigade.

“But this problem is bigger than London and what we urgently need is a national plan for wildfires, alongside proper government funding, to ensure our firefighters have the tools, training and resources they need to address this rising threat and

keep our capital safe.”

Last month researchers at Imperial College London warned that the capital was facing a growing threat from an emerging phenomenon called “firewaves” as temperatures rise due to climate change.

In August, 125 firefighters were needed to safely extinguish a grass fire in Dagenham, East London, and repeated wildfires blighted Wanstead Flats on the edge of Leytonstone.

Sir Sadiq Khan said: “The climate crisis is having a devastating impact on our environment with temperatures rising in London, across the UK and around the world.

“Wildfires are raging across Europe engulfing green spaces, endangering homes, forcing evacuations and posing a genuine threat to life. This isn’t a faraway issue, it’s on our doorstep.

“London continues to experience wildfires during the summer months, and I’m determined to do everything possible to ensure the capital is as prepared as possible for the impact of climate change, wildfires and extreme heat.”

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which has held responsibility for fire and rescue services since April, said: “Increasing wildfires present a real risk to people, which is why we are taking action to ensure fire services and national bodies can manage and respond to risks.

“This includes funding a national resilience wildfire advisor to make sure we can protect communities, alongside giving fire and rescue authorities almost £3billion in the last financial year to help tackle wildfires – and we will continue to ensure services have the resources they need.”

## Council credit union collapses into administration

by Sebastian Mann,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**A** credit union set up to loan money to Waltham Forest Council employees has collapsed.

The Waltham Forest Council Employee Credit Union (WFCECU), which trades as Forest Savers, entered administration on 19th August.

The Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) says that WFCECU has been declared in default, meaning it failed to make payments on time.

It acted as a financial cooperative for its members to save money via payroll deduction schemes or borrow through low-interest rate loans.

Their deposits are protected under the FSCS up to a limit of £85,000 per individual.

Dina Devalia and Terri Mulgrew, with the business advisory firm Quantuma, have been appointed as joint administrators and will wind the service down.

Devalia said in a statement: “Members do not need to worry. Their money is safe and the FSCS will return 100% of members’ deposits, subject to the FSCS limit.

“We are working closely with the FSCS to ensure that all members will receive their money back as soon as possible.”

Any outstanding loans will still need to be repaid in line with contractual obligations, the WFCECU says.

A notice on the now defunct website reads: “You should cancel any direct debits or standing orders you currently have in place in relation to your savings.

“The joint administrators will write to all loan members confirming the administration bank details so that you can set up a standing order to resume your contractual loan repayments.”

A spokesperson for Waltham Forest Council said the Walthamstow-based service was neither owned by the town hall nor underwritten by it “in any way”. If the council had unwritten Forest Savers, it would be liable to cover any losses.

He added: “It was an independent organisation, which was open to staff members to use as well as other residents of the borough.”

The WFCECU office in Billet Road has been closed.

Scorched earth in Beam Parklands, a country park in Dagenham, Credit London Fire Brigade





NEWS

# Councillors slam Met plan to shut Chingford Police Station front desk

Waltham Forest Tory leader Emma Best says the move would disproportionately affect older people in the borough, who are more likely to use the front desk



by Marco Marcelline

Plans to permanently shut the front desk at Chingford Police Station have been slammed by local councillors who say it would disproportionately impact the elderly.

Last month, the Metropolitan Police confirmed that it would shut 18 out of the 37 front counters in London, including Chingford, Edmonton, and Tottenham. Chingford’s front desk is the only one in Waltham Forest.

Justifying the plan, which is billed to save the Met £7million as part of its bid to fill a £260m funding gap, the police has said “just 5%” of all crimes were reported using front counters last year, with “only 1%” of these being made during the night.

But Waltham Forest Tory leader and Endlebury ward councillor Emma Best has said closing the front desk would heavily impact the ability of older people in the borough to report crimes.

Speaking to the *Echo*, she said: “In Chingford we have a demographic which is much more elderly than the London average and in particular this group wants to be able to use a front desk.

“Closing the desk will leave them with a three hour walk or over an hour jour-

ney via public transport to the next nearest station in either Ilford or Stratford.”

Cllr Best, who also sits on the London Assembly, attacked Mayor of London Sir Sadiq Khan for failing on a manifesto pledge to maintain a 24-hour police front office counter in every borough.

She added: “[Mayor Khan] has treated Londoners with contempt on this issue. Firstly, there is no consultation on the plans – we are told it is a done deal. Secondly, he waited until the London Assembly was heading into recess to break the news. Thirdly, when an emergency meeting was called to scrutinise the plans he didn’t come.”

The Met however insists that closing its front desks will save money and “3,752 hours” of police officer time per month spent manning the counters.

After the closures go ahead, a total of 20 front desks will be open across the capital for Londoners to report a crime in person – though even these will be subject to reduced hours.

In place of the front desks, the Met has proposed video appointments, as well as a new digital community engagement platform called Met Engage where Londoners can report crimes.

Waltham Forest Tory and Labour councillors say this isn’t good enough to replace in-person reporting, however.

In a petition against the planned move, the Tories stated: “In the last year in London approximately 50,000 crimes were reported inside a police station. The police front counter is also an easy access point for victims to obtain updates on current investigations of serious crimes they have experienced. They are a refuge for those in danger and a place for witnesses to come forward.”

The *Echo* understands that Waltham Forest Council leader Grace Williams and cabinet member for community safety Khevy Limbajee have met with Met Police to discuss their concerns about what the loss of face-to-face contact would have on some residents.

Meanwhile, Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy said the proposed closure was “the latest in a long line of examples of how local police leadership didn’t want to engage with the public”.

Waltham Forest’s police stations in Walthamstow, Leyton, and Leytonstone shut in 2011, 2012, and 2014 respectively.

A front desk in Walthamstow High Street was then closed in 2017.

Labour have long blamed the Conservatives for the Met’s funding gap, pointing to a £600m funding shortfall for the capital’s police force between 2010 and 2019.

## Labour councillor cleared of charge



by Marco Marcelline

A suspended Labour councillor who faced trial for calling for far-right activists’ throats to be cut at a Walthamstow protest last year has been cleared of encouraging violent behaviour.

Dartford councillor Ricky Jones, 58, was found not guilty of the charge, which he denied, at Snaresbrook Crown Court on Friday, 15th August.

Jones was quickly suspended by the Labour Party after social media footage emerged of him in August last year calling far-right demonstrators “disgusting Nazi fascists” and saying “we need to get rid of them all” while drawing his finger across his throat.

He made the comments at a mass rally against a planned far-right march outside Waltham Forest Immigration Bureau in Walthamstow on 7th August 2024.

Thousands of people had turned up to Hoe Street to show their opposition to far-right rioters who had attacked mosques, asylum seeker hotels, and residences across the country following the Southport murders.

Prosecutor Ben Holt reportedly told the court Jones used “inflammatory, rabble-rousing language in the throng of a crowd described as a tinderbox”.

He added that Jones’ speech happened “in a setting where violence could readily have been anticipated”.

However, Jones said his comment did not refer to far-right protesters potentially in the crowd that evening, but to those who had reportedly left National Front stickers on a train with razor blades hidden behind them.

Before he made the comment, jurors were shown a video where he said to crowds: “You’ve got women and children using these trains during the summer holidays.

“They don’t give a \*\*\*\* about who they hurt.”

Ahead of the acquittal, Jones told the court that he made the comments “in the heat of the moment”, stating that he was “extremely sorry”.

Jurors took around half an hour to deliver their not guilty verdict.



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FEATURES

A guide to Leytonstone’s best boozers

Pallavi Singh uncovers the quirks and charms that make up E11’s finest pubs

Leytonstone isn’t short on quirks, and its pubs are no exception. Here, a Friday night pint might mean dodging prams at the bar, sipping craft beer in a modern boozier, or watching drag queens call bingo numbers in what looks firmly like a traditional old man’s pub. From historic haunts to fresher-faced neighbourhood favourites brimming with personality, these are the boozers that give E11 its charm, character, and a decent excuse for “just one more”.

**The North Star**  
My previous review crowned Papis Munchies, North Star’s permanent pizza residency, the best pizzas in the borough, but this pub holds its own as a charming, vibrant boozier brimming with an eclectic mix of millennial craft beer drinkers, and your more traditional lager lover. If you’re walking over from busy Leytonstone High Road, prepare to be quietly awed by the Cotswold-esque Browning Road Conservation Area, which the North Star sits in the heart of.



**Leytonstone Tavern**  
The undisputed purveyor of the finest burgers in all of Waltham Forest, the most surprising element of the ‘Tavern is the constant presence of children. It is Leytonstone’s premiere watering hole for the neighbourhood dads who love a post school pick-up pint, and one long stroller traffic jam on a Friday night.




**The Northcote Arms**  
A firm favourite of Leyton Orient FC fans, the Northcote Arms is perhaps at first glance, a typical ‘old man’ pub. It leans into its weathered furniture, dimly lit rooms, musty dusty atmosphere, but then turns around and puts on drag queen bingos on Sundays, the occasional oyster and seafood pop-up, and has evenings dedicated just for dogs. It truly reinforces that you truly can’t judge a pub by its outward appearance.




**The Red Lion**  
Before pilates studios, M&S, and trendy Italian restaurants like Forno opened their doors, the Red Lion undertook an ambitious renovation, the first true signal of a new era in Leytonstone. The pub was one of the oldest, if not the oldest, in the area, and it would be untruthful of me not to say there were many occasions where the sticky floors, beaten down couches and food did not appeal at all, so it’s safe to say I’ve welcomed the pub’s facelift with open arms (and wallet).

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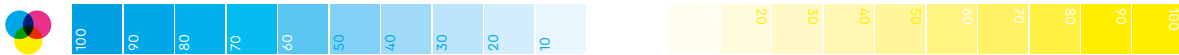
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ARTS & CULTURE

Home is where the art is

A rabid art collector, Walthamstow interior designer Natasha Landers has turned her home into a public gallery



Natasha Landers at home  
Credit Natalie Martinez

by Lucy MacEwan

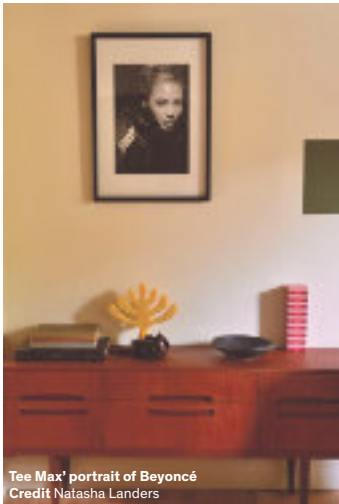
Walthamstow interior designer has turned her art adorned home into a public gallery. By showing art within her home, Natasha Landers says she hopes to create a more inviting and accessible space to view art than that found in traditional gallery spaces. “I go to lots of galleries, lots of private views, and I feel that sometimes people are a little bit intimidated about going into a gallery space,” Natasha says, adding: “Obviously with it being my home, there’s that additional warmth about coming in [and viewing art here].” Natasha’s home is adorned with art collected over the last 30 years, predominantly portraiture by black artists. More than just a gallery, her home is a space where

exhibiting artists can make connections with others in the industry. To do this she hosts private viewings with curators, collectors, buyers and journalists, as well as free public viewings on weekends. She reflects: “For me, it was about giving artists an opportunity too, because we know that with systemic racism in the arts and business world, it can be more difficult for black artists to get space to show their work.” So far, she has hosted two exhibitions in her home. The first, in March, was in collaboration with portrait artist Yvadney Davis. The latest, the *Ascension Years*, took place in July with her friend, the photographer Tee Max. Shot by Max across the 1990s and early 2000s, the *Ascension Years* includes

early career portraits of the likes of Beyoncé, Usher, Busta Rhymes, Da Brat and The Notorious B.I.G. The Busta Rhymes portrait is Natasha’s favourite from the exhibition. “It’s so full of energy; you can just feel it,” she says. Natasha - who has lived in Walthamstow for 25 years - is no stranger to members of the public walking around her home. She’s previously taken part in London’s annual Open House Festival, and her home is available to book for filming and photo shoots. What’s next? In September and November Natasha will host free exhibitions with interdisciplinary artists, Ayesha Feisal and Lauren Little. You won’t want to miss out.



Tee Max’ portrait of rapper Da Brat, as part of the *Ascension Years* exhibition  
Credit Natasha Landers



Tee Max’ portrait of Beyoncé  
Credit Natasha Landers

Find out more about the upcoming exhibitions here: [Instagram.com/havanthouse53](https://www.instagram.com/havanthouse53)

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PHOTOGRAPHY

‘Seen’ by Joshua Bratt



Jessikah Inaba, Barrister



Louise Simpson, Marathon runner



Lord David Blunkett, Home Secretary (2001–2004)



Ben Brees aka SightlessKombat, Professional gamer



Clive Jones, Archer

Walthamstow-based photojournalist Joshua Bratt is set to launch a powerful new portrait exhibition spotlighting the strength, individuality and lived experiences of blind and partially sighted people across the UK.

The exhibition, titled *Seen*, features 22 intimate photographic portraits that share interesting stories of people who navigate the world with sight loss. Bratt’s thoughtful composition invites audiences to see the

person beyond the sight loss, placing their achievements, passions and inner worlds front and centre.

Bratt found inspiration for *Seen* when he noticed a cane user during his regular commute to central London. He commented: “Ignorantly, I would just see him as a blind person rather than a man going to work with a job and a story, and I realised that if I was subconsciously labelling somebody, and just seeing the disability rather than who they were as a person, then other people were likely doing that too.”

Joshua continued: “I came up with the idea of going around the country and finding blind or partially sighted people with interesting backgrounds and stories and taking their picture to help change the perceptions that many people may have about sight loss.”

‘Seen’ is on show from Friday 12th to Sunday 14th September at the Royal National Institute of Blind People’s Grimaldi Building, N1 9JE.

Timed viewing slots can be booked for free at [Evenbrite.co.uk](https://www.evenbrite.co.uk)



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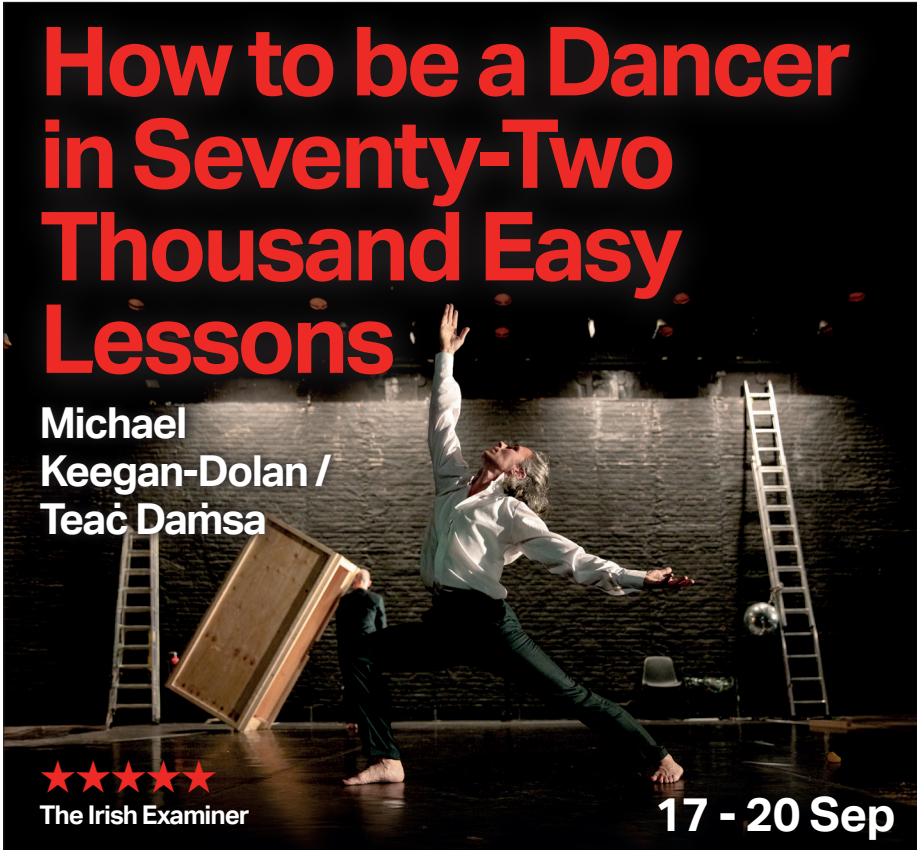
# Get Dance From Every Angle

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The Irish Examiner

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The Herald

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8 - 11 Oct







# AROUND THE BOROUGH

## LEA BRIDGE

### Council asked to build secure children’s home

by **Sebastian Mann,**  
Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council is poised to lead the construction of London’s only secure children’s home, after lengthy delays. London Councils and the Department for Education (DfE) has proposed the authority designs and builds the unit on a former waterworks in Lea Bridge Road. There are currently no plans for the council to handle the day-to-day management of the centre, and the takeover will require approval by top councillors. A spokesperson for London Councils said: “Should cabinet approve this proposal, the council’s capital delivery team will start working with us to deliver this much needed secure children’s home on behalf of London local authorities.” The facility would house 24 vulnerable youngsters. The spokesperson added:



Artist's original impression (subject to continued design development) Credit London Councils

“There is still a national shortage of welfare placements in secure children’s homes and currently there is no service of this kind in London. “This means some of London’s most vulnerable children and young people are still waiting too long for the specialist care they need, or they are placed hundreds of miles away – far from their families, carers, friends and other people that are important to them. Although the government and Waltham Forest Council have indicated support for the children’s home, local residents

have pushed for the land to be turned into a wild swimming park open to the public. The East London Waterworks Park (ELWP) team has shared plans for a natural swimming pool, a ‘forest school,’ an arts building and mosaics on the Metropolitan Open Land (MOL). The charity has so far raised more than £500,000 to transform the land, which rests on the border of Waltham Forest and Hackney, into a place for the community. It maintains a swimming park would be a better use of MOL, and more in line with the policy’s intentions to protect the city’s landscape. A decision on the council taking over the design and development of the home is expected to be made on Tuesday, 9th September.

## CHINGFORD

### School to tear down canteen for more classrooms

by **Sebastian Mann,**  
Local Democracy Reporter

Chingford school is looking to tear down its canteen to make way for more classrooms. Yardley Primary School has applied for permission to demolish its canteen and replace it with a two-to three-storey block of classrooms and a new cafeteria. The scheme has been developed by Waltham Forest Council and its partly-owned developer Norse Evolve in a bid to meet growing demand for places. A formal application was submitted to Waltham Forest Council’s planning department in mid July, after receiving early support from the town hall last May. The council wants the 630-place

school to expand from a two-form entry to a three-form entry school, meaning there will be three classes in each year group. The new classrooms will prioritise indoor air quality, the plans reveal, on the grounds that improving it will also improve pupils’ “health, performance, alertness and ability to concentrate”. They will also be ‘adaptable spaces,’ where tables and chairs



The new building, Credit Norse

can be rearranged to accommodate both teaching sessions and activities. The developers say they will use sustainable building materials in the process and implement natural light to reduce the need for electrical lighting and air conditioning. Even small housing projects have proven controversial in Chingford, with residents expressing deep concerns about the impact on local infrastructure. On top of parking and traffic congestion, locals have formally objected to plans on the grounds that schools will become overstretched. Though the council’s planning department supports the scheme, a decision is yet to be made. It is expected by October.

## WALTHAMSTOW

### Blaze breaks out at ‘cannabis factory’

Twelve fire engines and around 80 firefighters tackled a fire at a suspected cannabis factory at a house on Knebworth Avenue in Walthamstow on Friday, 22nd August. The first floor, staircase and roof were destroyed and half of the ground floor was damaged by the fire. There were no reports of any injuries. The London Fire Brigade (LFB) received the first of two calls alerting them to the fire at 2.52am. They deployed crews from Walthamstow, Chingford, Woodford, Leyton, Tottenham, Edmonton, Home-

nton, Stratford, Enfield and Holloway fire stations. The fire was under control by 4.51am. The fire was accidental and is believed to have been caused by tampering with the property’s electrical supply. An LFB spokesperson said: “Cannabis factory fires can be particularly dangerous because of the way criminals use unsafe wiring to illegally obtain electricity in order to grow the plants. “They’re often in top floors or lofts which means when a fire takes hold it spreads, destroying roofs and damaging neighbouring buildings.”



Credit London Fire Brigade

## LEYTON

### Man charged after alleged Leyton coffee shop rape

A man has been charged with multiple sexual offences after a woman was reportedly raped at a Costa Coffee in Leyton. Oualid Balti, 47, of Walthamstow, was charged with two counts of rape and one count of sexual assault on Sunday, 3rd August. Police received a report that a woman had been raped inside Costa Coffee at Baker’s Arms on Friday, 1st August. They later received reports from two other women. Balti was arrested in

connection with a police investigation into the alleged assaults on Saturday, 2nd August. Following police consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service he was charged and is set to appear at Snaresbrook Crown Court on Monday, 1st September. Costa Coffee did not respond to a request for comment, though its Baker’s Arms store in Lea Bridge Road has since re-opened. Police said the victims are being supported by specialist officers.



LETTERS

Performative gratitude

Dear WFE

LOUISE MITCHELL, THE cabinet member for adult social care, sent an email to Mark-house Centre staff thanking them for their service only after the day centre had closed and staff had vacated their roles.

The message came after months of silence from political leadership and a refusal to attend a farewell event for service users. Many recipients described the gesture as hollow and performative, sparking outrage rather than reassurance.

It wasn't gratitude – it was damage control. Staff felt abandoned throughout the closure process and to receive a message of thanks only after the service was dismantled felt like a reputational afterthought, not a genuine act of recognition.

James O'Rourke, Walthamstow

Bring back free parking

Dear WFE

I HAVE LIVED IN CHINGFORD for more than 50 years and have always considered it to be a great place to live. The local shops are a lifeline to residents like me and we need the shops to remain open.

But for them to stay open, they must have a good footfall. This has seriously decreased due to the introduction of new and rather more restrictive and expensive parking regulations and ending 15-minute free parking.

I have spoken to a number of local shopkeepers who are alarmed at the reduction in customers that has occurred over the last few months due to the parking problem.

I am unable to get my head around the rationale for this change and feel that it could have a serious adverse effect on the area. 15 minute free parking must be reintroduced.

M. Lewis, Chingford

Digital exclusion

Dear WFE

WALTHAM FOREST COUNCIL has sent out a letter asking residents to renew their postal vote.

The letter provides two options for renewal of the postal vote: a weblink, or a form which can be filled in by hand. But the hand-written form has to be returned to an email address!

So the person applying for a renewed postal vote has to be capable of either scanning the form they've filled in by hand, or taking a photo of the form, and then emailing that scan or photo back to the council.

Doesn't the council understand that the vast majority of people who need a postal vote are disabled, or frail older people who can't easily get out of their home? Don't they understand that many older people are not online, don't have an email address, a computer or a smart-phone?

This is probably a mistake made by someone who can't imagine there are any people in the world who don't use email - but they exist and they have just as much right to vote as anyone else. The council needs to recognise this and provide real alternatives to doing things online.

Terry Day, Chingford

Got an opinion on something in Waltham Forest? We accept letters of up to 150 words from people and organisations in the borough. Email [wfecho@socialspider.com](mailto:wfecho@socialspider.com) before the next deadline on Monday 15th September

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LICENSING ACT  
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 **De Essence Restaurant & Lounge Ltd** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **De Essence Restaurant & Lounge 417 Lea Bridge Road London E10 7EA**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- To permit the Sale of alcohol: Sun – Thur 11:00 to 00:30 hrs, Fri – Sat 11:00 to 01:30 hrs
- Regulated entertainment: Sun – Thur 23:00 to 00:30 hrs, Fri – Sat 23:00 to 01:30 hrs.
- Late night refreshments: Sun – Thur 23:00 to 00:30 hrs, Fri – Sat 23:00 to 01:30 hrs.

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am – 5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF. or via email: [Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk).

Representations must be received no later than **12th September 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.

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LISTINGS

JAZZ

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Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61-63

Tower Hamlets Rd E17 4RQ

Walthamstow's premier jazz night featuring London and the UK's finest musicians at 8pm every first Thursday of the month at Walthamstow Trades Hall.

This September, Jazz at Trades is excited to welcome a very special guest, tenor saxophonist Riley Stone-Lonergan to perform at Walthamstow Trades Hall.

Driven by the joy he takes in improvisation, Riley's playing is a powerful presence on the UK jazz scene. Accompanied by a great rhythm section featuring Rick Simpson (piano), Tom Rivi re (bass) and Alasdair Pennington (drums).

**Tickets (from  7):** [wegottickets.com/event/673252](http://wegottickets.com/event/673252)

PUNK MUSIC

Decolonise Fest

Saturday 6th & Sunday 7th Sept,

from 2pm until late

Signature Brew Blackhorse Rd, Unit 15,

Uplands Business Park, E17 5QJ

Decolonise Fest is a music festival created by people of colour in the punk scene. Over the weekend we will host music, panels, and workshops that celebrate the contributions of punx of colour.

Passion, punk and solidarity will be the order of weekend. Performance alums include Nova Twins, Bob Vylan, Big Joanie and Grove.

The festival will also uplift and stand proudly with Palestinians amid the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Tickets from  20 via the Dice app

Find out more: [decolonisefest.co.uk](http://decolonisefest.co.uk)

COMMUNITY DAY

Community Voices: Shaping East London Waterworks Park

Saturday 13th September, 11am – 1pm & Sunday 14 Sept, 1–3pm

Leaside Trust, Spring Lane, E5 9HQ

Join us for a vibrant celebration of the people-powered journey behind East London Waterworks Park, a bold, community-led project to transform a disused industrial site on Lea Bridge Road in Waltham Forest into a biodiverse urban park with wild swimming ponds and community spaces.

This special event honours the voices, ideas, and energy of over 100 local residents and community groups who contributed to our Listening Project.

This event is supported by The National Lottery Community Fund and the Mayor of London, as part of the Mayor's Community Weekend 2025.

**Free entry**

**For more information visit:** [elwp.org.uk](http://elwp.org.uk)

TALKS

Waltham Forest PROBUS Club

Monday 15th September, from 12.15pm

Queen Elizabeth Pub, 95 Forest Side, E4 6BA

The Waltham Forest PROBUS Club is a nationwide social club for retired or near/semi-retired men. We currently have membership vacancies.

The club usually meets on the third Monday of each month at the Queen Elizabeth Pub, Forest Side at 12.15pm

for lunch followed by a talk on one of a number of interesting and varied topics by an experienced and entertaining speaker. Future talks include: The role of the Lysander aircraft and the Special Operations Executive during World War Two; The air bombers Vulcan XL426 and the V Force; Royal Gunpowder Mills; and when horses ran London.

**For more information contact:** Richard Freitag, [richard.freitag@ntlworld.com](mailto:richard.freitag@ntlworld.com), 020 8529 1591 or Alan Costis: [acostis20@gmail.com](mailto:acostis20@gmail.com)

CABARET

The Double R Club

Thursday 18th September, 8pm – 11.30pm

Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61-63

Tower Hamlets Road, E17 4RQ

Cabaret institution The Double R Club, purveyors of award-winning, dark cabaret, inspired, directly or indirectly, by the dark and beautiful worlds of David Lynch (and arguably the longest running monthly cabaret show in London) is celebrating its sixteenth birthday on Thursday, September 18th, 2025 at Walthamstow Trades Hall.

Hosted by Benjamin Louche, the sixteenth birthday show will see a lineup of performers inspired by Lynch, including regulars Heavy Metal Pete, Abnormalik and Jamie Mykela, alongside Double R debuts from some of the UK's very best burlesque, Missy Malone and Donna Poderosa.

For one night only, we will introduce the Red Room Gogo Dancers who will be raising money for Cabaret vs Cancer.

**Tickets (from  10) here:** [the-double-r-club.designmynight.com](http://the-double-r-club.designmynight.com)

FILM SCREENING

The Line We Crossed

Sunday 21st September, 2.30pm

Forest Cinema, 267 High St, E17 7LD

Cinema screenings of The Line We Crossed will continue into the autumn as interest in the film grows on the backdrop of the further repression of protest rights following the recent mass arrests of peaceful protesters.

Among the film's three interwoven storylines is that of Walthamstow resident Trudi Warner, arrested for standing silently outside a UK court with a sign affirming the independence of juries, sparking the movement Defend Our Juries. Defend Our Juries is the group behind the recent Palestine Action sign-holding protests which has resulted in mass arrests on terrorism charges.

**Watch the film trailer:** [www.thelinewecrossed.com](http://www.thelinewecrossed.com)

**Tickets ( 7.95) here:** [forestcinema.co.uk/event100050](http://forestcinema.co.uk/event100050)

We can include low-cost community events taking place in Waltham Forest. For next month's listings, email the details of your event to [wfecho@socialspider.com](mailto:wfecho@socialspider.com) by **Monday 15th September.**

LICENSING ACT

Application for the Variation of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Friends of Lloyd Park** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at: Fellowship Island, Lloyd Park, Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 4PP.

- The applicant is applying for a premises licence for **Sunday 19 October 2025, 12:00-17:00 hrs ONLY**
- To permit **Live Music, Recorded music (Outdoors only), Performances of dance, Entertainment of a similar description, Sale of alcohol (on the premises) and**
- Hours the premises is open to the public: **12:00-17:00 hrs**

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am–5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF or by email: [licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk) Representations must be received no later than **18th September 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.

LICENSING ACT

Application for the Variation of a Premises Licence

Notice of application for the variation of a Premises Licence under section 34 of the Licensing Act 2003

Notice is hereby given that **Nine Food Group Limited** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at Pizza Hut 271 High Road, Leyton. The nature of the application is as follows:

- To permit the sale of late night refreshments **Mon–Fri 23:00–3:00am**

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am – 5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, Waltham Forest Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, London E17 4JF or via email: [Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk).

Representations must be received no later than **12th September 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.

WALTHAM FOREST RACE EQUALITY COUNCIL (WFREC)

We are delighted to celebrate the Mayor of London Community weekend on 12th September 2025 at 1 Russell Road, Leyton E10 7ES from 11am to 4pm.

Our aim is to bring people together through community- led activity. Health and wellbeing and community cohesion. Most particularly older people, Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Immigrants. This event is private by invitation only.

We thank the National Lottery who has given us a grant of  2,000 to make this event possible.

Please contact: Erum Hussain / Chris Arian

Email: [wfrec806@gmail.com](mailto:wfrec806@gmail.com)

Tel: 020 8279 2425

COMMUNITY FUND

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## SPORT

# The unstoppable rise of women's rugby

Esther Firman writes about the joys of being in women's touch rugby team Waltham Forest Foxes

**O**n Wednesday evenings at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre in Walthamstow, a familiar scene once played out: mums huddled on the sidelines with their daughters as their sons darted across the football pitch.

For years, those sidelines were the domain of supportive spectatorship. But for a group of women, watching wasn't enough; they wanted to play.

They wanted to inspire their daughters to see them on the pitch, not just next to it. And so, Waltham Forest Foxes were born – a women-only touch rugby team.

The spark was lit with the help of a few. One, a kind, patient stalwart with roots in rugby-mad New Zealand, took the fledgling Foxes under his wing.

For the next six years, he poured his energy, wisdom and love of the game into these newcomers, teaching not just rules and skills, but the spirit of rugby – teamwork, respect, and a dash of cheeky competitiveness.

The squad quickly became not only mums, but a melting pot of women from different nationalities, ages, and life experiences. For many, rugby was an alien language and some had never played a team sport before.

Some had never even set foot on a pitch. No-one knew the difference between a dump and a dive pass – but what they lacked in experience, they made up for in enthusiasm and courage.

Today, the Foxes are more than a team – they're a family. Life happens – jobs

change, babies arrive, knees give way – but once a Fox, always a Fox.

The Foxes have also used their collective voice, along with the grassroots football club, The Coppermill Swifts, to campaign for improved facilities at Low Hall, where they meet up for picnics and practices, inviting children to join, and sharing the love of the game.

Our latest season is shaping up to be the most exciting yet. With a new kit sponsored by the flathunting website SpareRoom and Dignity Funeral Directors Walthamstow more tournaments on the horizon, the Foxes are ready to show that rugby isn't about age or athletic pedigree, it's about joy, connection, and the thrill of chasing that try line together.

Players drift in and out as life demands, yet the welcome is always warm for anyone ready to lace up and join. Whether you're breastfeeding, menopausal, fresh from the office, or navigating life's curveballs, you can belong here.

Find out more: Forest Foxes (@walthamforestfoxes)



Credit Paul Cowan



Credit Paul Cowan



Credit Paul Cowan

## Fresh beginnings

David O'Driscoll on what to expect from Walthamstow FC's new season

**T**he depressing nature of men's professional football was evidenced by the ridiculous World Club Championship, held over the summer. It was a prime example of relentless money obsession by FIFA, who, like the clubs participating, made eye watering sums from this event with very little of this cash filtering down to the grassroots level.

It was heartening to read then that attendances at non-league games are now at an all-time high, with supporters getting behind teams that offer affordable football.

This is in an era where to see one of the big Premier League teams dotted around our capital city, you are looking at up to £120 for a ticket for the top matches, for which, dear reader, you can get a season ticket at Walthamstow FC (and if you are a public sector worker, it's even cheaper).

Walthamstow FC vice chairman, Andrea Perkins, rightfully says: "Non-league games deliver an atmosphere that feels genuine. There's no corporate gloss, no overbearing stewards, and no sterile concourses. Instead, fans are pitch side with their pies and pints, sharing jokes with the coaching staff."

Starting a new season is no easy matter; Stow has recruited a lot of players and the task is now to find the elusive team mix.

It's been good to have captain Reece Conway back on the pitch and a special shout out must go to Joe Elliot with his extraordinary long throw, who is worth paying an entrance fee to see alone.

I have also been impressed with two younger players, Max Brownsdon, a cultured left-footed centre back, who scored a cracking overhead kick in the FA Cup, and Gassem Benghazi, a tenaciously skilful midfielder.

Walthamstow are still in the Isthmian North League, featuring teams from the south east of England. It is considered a strong league, so it will be a challenge to make the playoffs, but it's clearly where the club should be aiming.

They have some intriguing matches in their fixture list, including local derbies against Redbridge and Waltham Abbey. Among the away fixtures, a curious one will be visiting Stanway Rovers, in the Colchester region, which has a butcher's shop that supplies the club's burger bar.



# Keep The Echo In Print

Waltham Forest Echo is published by Social Spider Community News, a not-for-profit social enterprise. Our mission is to hold authority to account and provide a platform for the community. But because we have no shareholders or wealthy backers we rely on local people and organisations to support our journalism. The number of supporters making monthly contributions is growing steadily — helping us to break even and look at how we can grow as a publication.

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

This month, 320 supporters contributed 31% of our monthly costs. While the paper remains free to read in print and online, every penny of income is reinvested in our local journalism. Can you support us with £5 per month to help us do more?

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

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