



Your independent community newspaper

WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free
Oct 2025, N° 127

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North Chingford Methodist Church
Credit: Mitchell Goldie



FCENS currently operate a winter shelter at the YMCA in Forest Road, Walthamstow



Proposed Chingford homeless shelter scrapped after resident backlash

by Marco Marcelline

A bid to turn an empty North Chingford church into a homeless shelter was scrapped following local anxiety over potential antisocial behaviour.

Last month, Forest Churches Emergency Night Shelter (FCENS) announced it had withdrawn its proposal to transform North Chingford Methodist Church into a new base with 14 bedrooms and a drop-in advice hub

for the homeless.

FCENS has been providing winter shelter and food for homeless people in Waltham Forest for over 15 years, and is currently operating next to the YMCA in Forest Road, Walthamstow.

Speaking to the *Echo*, FCENS director David Hoskins said the charity's board of trustees had long sought to develop a base with year-round accommodation for people experiencing homelessness.

FCENS became aware of an opportunity to move into North

Chingford Methodist Church last year, and in September 2024 it commissioned a design brief from the architectural firm Whittaker Parsons, which set out its vision for the space.

The plan centered around 14 bedrooms for single adults "with low support needs" at the back of the church, while a drop-in advice hub would have been built in the front. The proposal also included a multi-purpose room for workshops, skills training and community activities.

Forest Methodist Circuit which owns the shuttered church building, was understood to have been supportive of the bid and a public consultation meeting in February was attended by around 300 local residents.

One of those attendees was the Conservative councillor for Chingford Green ward, Mitchell Goldie, who expressed his "significant concerns" about the plan.

He told the *Echo*: "I can understand that there is a need and desire for a [homeless] shelter

in Waltham Forest but North Chingford is not the right location for one. What you would have are people with drug and alcohol problems presenting to the shelter and being turned away because they don't fit the criteria for a bed, before being signposted to services that do not exist in the local vicinity.

"Mental health, addiction, and homelessness support provision does not exist in Chingford and there are currently no plans for that provision. The incredible work of FCENS is best done near its current [Walthamstow] location where users who are refused access can easily find additional services that can assist them."

The *Echo* understands that fears around a potential for an increase in open drug use and antisocial behaviour in the area were expressed by residents, while others demanded that the Methodist Circuit consider returning the church to community use.

FCENS however stated that the risk of antisocial behaviour would be minimal, insisting that their services are not for individuals dealing with alcoholism or drug addiction.

Following the consultation meeting, Forest Methodist Circuit announced it would consider different proposals for the site before making a final decision in late September, later extended to December due to the volume of feedback.

A three-month consultation period, which ran from June until 31st August, included an open day at the church on 7th June where hundreds of people shared their views on the future of the site.

The church noted strong support for it becoming a community centre or used by local businesses.

Castle Cinema in Hackney also

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NEWS



FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

OCT 2025
N° 127

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Published on 26/09/25

Advertisement

URGENT FOR NASER MAHMOOD

Please contact Bob Smith on 07990 517 717 about Court Application to force sale, of Unit 12, Imperial Park, Shoburyness, Essex.

LICENSING ACT 2003 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 Monday to Sunday, 23:00-03:00

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: **19th October 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.



North Chingford Methodist Church hall
Credit David Bishop

Continued from Page-1

expressed interest in turning the venue into a filmhouse.

Speaking after FCENS withdrew their bid, Chingford resident Carol Woodward said local opposition was “disappointing”. She told the *Echo*: “We don’t have facilities for homeless people and we need it. North Chingford is just a train or bus ride away from other support services. Any right-minded, kind and considerate

person would have looked at this plan and supported it.

“My family went to this church. Outrage [against FCENS’ bid] smacks of, ‘We don’t want poor, homeless people in the area’. They’re thinking about the aesthetics of Chingford before people’s real needs.”

Waltham Forest Conservatives however believe that the church should be returned to use by and for the local community.

Supporting a plan by E4 Social

which would see dance classes, community events, skills training, and pre-school education at the church, the Tories said: “At a time when North Chingford has a shortage of community space for hire, the opportunity to reopen this site for public use is more important than ever. Restoring this space would meet a genuine need for affordable, flexible venues that serve residents of all ages and backgrounds.”

Forest Methodist Circuit is currently reviewing all submitted expressions of interest in the site, which shut in 2023, until December.

FCENS has since renewed its search for a long-term home, while it continues to provide shelter and homelessness advice at YMCA Walthamstow.



Credit Forest Churches
Emergency Night Shelter

Special needs school staff strike over large class sizes

by Marco Marcelline

Staff at a special needs school in Walthamstow have gone on strike over “unsafe” working conditions and an “increased” workload.

Teachers and support staff picketed outside Whitefield School on 16th, 17th, 18th, and 23rd, 24th, and 25th September in a strike organised by the Waltham Forest branch of the National Education Union (NEU).

In a statement, the NEU said that its members were taking action because of health and safety concerns linked to “increased” class sizes.

One staff member, who requested to stay anonymous, told the *Echo*: “Pupils and staff are not safe – class sizes have increased and are too large; alongside this there are not enough staff in each

class, and the school management is forced to rely on agency staff.

“Management restructured the school just before the summer break, they did not consult with parents and there was minimal input from staff.

“Children do not have adequate spaces to regulate in – our secondary pupils have a car park as a play ground and our large

green outdoor space has been closed indefinitely.”

She added that staff were regularly buying classroom resources, snacks and cooking ingredients “with their own money”.

A Whitefield School spokesperson said: “School leaders are working hard to resolve this complex situation while ensuring a safe and supportive learning



Staff on the picket line last month Credit Waltham Forest NEU

environment for all. Every change we have introduced reflects our ongoing commitment to delivering the very best education and care for our students, and to upholding the highest standards of teaching and support.

“We also had a constructive session at ACAS last week and will follow this up with a further session on Friday, 26th September. Throughout this process, we have worked closely with the NEU and our staff. Our priority remains supporting our students and reaching a resolution as quickly as possible.”

Whitefield School made headlines last year when a BBC investigation revealed at least 39 pupils were subjected to physical and psychological abuse while placed in so-called “calming rooms” at the school between 2014 and 2017.

Pupils were left alone in the window-less calming rooms for up to four hours at a time, sitting in urine, and eating crumbs off the floor. CCTV footage also shows children, many who were non-verbal, kicked and hit with force by staff.

FEATURE

‘This journey has been delightful’: The man waving goodbye to his Wood Street health shop after 35 years

A retiring entrepreneur closed his much loved Wood Street health food shop after more than three decades of service



Robert Clark has run Second Nature since 1990
Credit Penny Dampier

by Leila Davaud

Sheltered beneath majestic chestnut trees, Second Nature Wholefoods feels more like a home than a shop. Its listed 18th Century weather-boarded walls give it a timeless charm, while music escapes through the open door. From the window, a man wearing a black bowler hat bobs to the rhythm.

That man is Robert ‘Bob’ Clark, who for the past 35 years has poured his energy into Second Nature, and speaking to him, it’s clear his enthusiasm is as infectious as ever. “What happens when you love your business is that it makes closing this place even harder,” he says with a smile.

On Saturday, 27th September, Second Nature sadly shut its doors as Bob retired. With no new owner in sight, the shop’s future remains uncertain, but he looks back with no regrets: “If

I were to describe this journey, I’d say it’s been delightful.”

It all began 35 years ago, after Bob was forced to rethink his relationship with food for health reasons in his family. “I was already growing my vegetables in my garden and allotment plot, but I had to take it one step further in my research. Who would have thought it would lead to this?”

The wholefood and health shop first opened in Wood Street Indoor Market in 1990. “We mainly delivered our produce back then, so it was very practical. But when this place became available, we moved in and I’ve been here since 1993.”

Growing up in the neighborhood, Bob always felt a special affection for the building. “As a kid, I used to peep through the mailbox to look inside. It was a butcher and slaughterhouse then, and I was trying to catch a glimpse of the animals in the back room.”

A few years later, a young Robert

trained as a butcher himself. His career path eventually shifted and he found his way back to where it all began. And if passion made it possible to create this health haven, what truly sustained it was the community of regular shoppers who simply adore it.

Wood Street local and repairman Ray Yates will miss the shop when it’s gone.

He says: “I’ve been going to the shop for 24 years and I’ve done minor repairs and maintenance on the building too.

“Second Nature is a community asset, adding character and uniqueness to the area. It’s the oldest wooden building in the area – and it’s where I go for organic carbs and natural cleaning products. Bob, Jenny and Val have served us a gem in Wood Street that must keep sailing on.”

Another regular, Penny Dampier, shares her “love” for Second Nature: “I’ve been a regular customer for well over 15 years now, and will certainly miss it if no one can be found to take it over once Bob retires – plus it’s the only place I can seem to get hold of hemp milk!”

Bob is deeply aware of the loss Second Nature’s departure will have on the area: “I was surrounded by people who believed in human contact, in fellowship and I’ll be forever grateful to them. They are what made this adventure worthwhile. I am very touched by their reaction to me leaving. It’s heartwarming.”

Now, as Bob steps down to focus on more artistic hobbies and his poetry, the question remains: is there nobody who can take Second Nature on?

He says: “I wish I could find someone to take over with fresh eyes and a modern mind to fulfill its potential. Someone who shares our values. I’d be sad to see the shop go, but I understand it’s hard work. Still, this building deserves to keep serving its community. It’s symbolic, it’s the oldest shop on Wood Street.”

Additional reporting by Marco Marcelline

If you’re interested in taking over the shop or building, contact Bob Clark at econat@hotmail.com



Second Nature is housed in the oldest wooden building in Wood Street
Credit Penny Dampier

NEWS



American multidisciplinary artist Katherine McMahon is set to exhibit a collection of neon sign paintings at God's Own Junkyard in Walthamstow. 'Open Late' will run from Friday 10th to Sunday 19th October. Check opening times: godsownjunkyard.co.uk Credit Santhosh Loganaathan

Council leader warns Waltham Forest's financial situation is 'not getting better'

Waltham Forest Council is set to go over budget by £31.4million by next March

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council's financial situation is "not getting better" amid mounting costs, council leader Grace Williams said at a cabinet meeting last month.

The town hall is set to go over budget by £31.4million by next March, based on spending figures from June.

It is also facing a further deficit of £15.3m by 2028, though this figure is likely to change.

Speaking on Tuesday, 9th September, Cllr Williams said: "We really need to be clear. The situation is not getting better and there

are no magic solutions."

Having warned of "tough decisions" since last summer, she said the "actions we take now are going to be vital".

Councillor Paul Douglas, cabinet member for finance, said the two biggest strains on the council were providing housing for social care and providing housing for homeless families, which together makes up 73% of its total spending.

Though Waltham Forest has made internal cuts and reduced agency spending, there were "external factors [it is] unable to control," with Cllr Douglas pointing to "unprecedented demand" for services.

By March, the council expects to have spent £23m on providing temporary accommodation, against a budget of £10m.

Councils across London have struggled with providing temporary housing. A citywide shortage of homes has forced them to rely on expensive hotels and bed-and-breakfast-style accommodation,

which has had crippling effects on certain authorities.

The cost of adult social care has risen by 13% since 2023/24, Cllr Douglas said, and managing services was "proving difficult" as providers were "failing and going out of business," forcing the council to find "expensive" alternatives.

Waltham Forest entered the current financial year with a budget of £309m. In order to avoid

financial peril, the town hall made a string of cuts to council tax support, free parking, and internal job openings.

The council is still looking for "new opportunities" to reduce pressure, but Cllr Williams says the key will be the upcoming fair funding review.

The government uses data from 2010 to determine how much funding councils receive, which has led to authorities losing money in real terms. Critics say it does not take into account major demographic changes that have happened in the past 15 years.

Cllr Douglas said Waltham Forest's core spending power had reduced by 11% since 2010, while services "now cost a great deal more".

Waltham Forest is not alone in its struggles. Councillors in the neighbouring borough of Redbridge have been warned of a budget shortfall of £43m, as the town hall faces similar challenges in social care and housing.



Council leader Grace Williams
Credit Waltham Forest Council

Barts Health ranked 79th in England for NHS Trust performance

by Marco Marcelline

Barts Health NHS Trust has been ranked 79th in England for its performance amongst a range of metrics including A&E wait times.

The rankings are the first time that trusts in England have been ranked in this way based on their performance.

NHS trusts have been handed a category based on a "score" that has been determined by averaging their performance against a range of targets. These targets include reducing waiting times for treatments and for being seen in A&E departments, or improving ambulance response times. The lower the score, the better the performance.

Ranked 79 out of 134 NHS Trusts, Barts Health gained a score of 2.45 and was placed in category three, with category four being the lowest. Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust topped the list with a score of 1.39.

A Barts Health spokesperson said: "Our patients can be assured that they will continue to receive safe and high-quality care in our hospitals. The league tables offer a snapshot of relative performance at any one moment, and our hard-working staff are constantly striving to improve access to treatment and reduce waiting times."

Meanwhile, according to FOI requests, it has been revealed that over 300,000 Barts patients waited more than 24 hours to be seen between 2020 and 2024.

According to requests sent by MattressNextDay, a total of 304,634 patients of the trust waited 24 hours or more to be seen. Barts Health also has the highest figure so far for 2025 (31,581), which is already larger than the combined 2020–2025 total of 67 trusts.

A spokesperson for Barts Health NHS Trust said: "Our three A&Es see more emergency patients than any other NHS trust, and our hard-working staff are constantly striving to provide safe, high-quality care and reduce delays for patients."

Advertisement



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.



020 8016 2357



98 Bisterne Avenue, Walthamstow E17 3QY



daltonlodge@bmcare.co.uk

NEWS

Labour councillor's deselection appeal is rejected

Cathall ward councillor Jonathan O'Dea will not be allowed to stand again in next year's local elections after the Labour Party threw out his appeal

Councillor Jonathan O'Dea



by Marco Marcelline

Labour councillor Jonathan O'Dea's appeal against his deselection as a candidate for the 2026 local elections has been thrown out.

Cllr O'Dea, who has represented Cathall ward since 2018, was not selected to stand in next year's elections due to Labour Party concerns about his campaigning record and an Israel-Palestine ceasefire motion he submitted before it became wider party policy.

The councillor challenged this decision, refuting the selection panel and local party chief whip Steve Terry's claims that he had not attended campaigning sessions as required between October 2024 and February this year.

But a letter from Labour's regional executive committee, seen by the *Echo*, says that his appeal is rejected because he had "not satisfactorily demonstrated that the party had acted irrationally" in not selecting him to stand again.

The *Echo* has seen a data rectification request sent by the Cathall councillor in May, asking that

Labour correct Cllr Terry's "factually inaccurate" claims about his campaigning record.

The correction request prompted the party to clarify that the chief whip meant Cllr O'Dea had not attended any "whipped" campaign sessions, while accepting he had attended nine "non-whipped" group canvassing sessions between 17th October 2024 and 14th February this year.

Labour councillors are contractually obligated to attend campaigning sessions as directed by their borough organiser, however the *Echo* understands they are not regularly described as "whipped".

In further documents related to the selection process, candidate assessment panellists "felt [Cllr O'Dea] had not fully appreciated the role of the whip and the need for discipline by submitting an Israel-Palestine ceasefire 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 to the local Labour party chair Sally Littlejohn on 2nd

November 2023.

The motion read: "Waltham Forest Labour Group call upon the Labour Party to put to parliament that there is an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Palestine.

"The ceasefire should be implemented by all groups and individuals that are involved in armed combat. This ceasefire should be brought about in order preserve the lives of all Israeli and Palestinian citizens."

Cllr O'Dea withdrew the motion on 6th November 2023, three days before Labour councillors backed a different motion calling for a ceasefire submitted by the party leader Grace Williams.

In his appeal, Cllr O'Dea challenged Cllr Terry's assertion that he had made the motion "in spite of party guidance against such motions on the topic".

A memo sent to Labour councillors by general secretary David Evans in October 2023 did not explicitly ban motions on Israel-Palestine, and instead warned against "motions at meetings that are prejudicial or grossly detrimental to the Labour Party and risk infringing the Labour Party's Codes of Conduct on Antisemitism and Islamophobia".

In its response to Cllr O'Dea's data rectification request, the Labour regional executive committee accepted that he had not broken party rules, but insisted that information relating to the motion in the chief whip's report was "not incorrect or misleading as to any matter of fact".

The *Echo* understands that Cllr O'Dea has lodged a formal complaint about Labour's handling of his personal information to the Information Commissioner's Office.

The local Labour group said it would not comment on the appeal decision.

Councillor Justin Halabi
Credit: Waltham Forest Conservatives

Tories call for by-election after Chingford councillor defects to Reform UK

Hatch Lane and Highams Park North councillor Justin Halabi is the first Reform UK councillor in Waltham Forest

by Marco Marcelline

The Conservatives have called for a by-election after Hatch Lane and Highams Park North ward councillor Justin Halabi resigned from the party and joined Reform UK.

The move, first announced in August, means that Cllr Halabi is the first Reform UK councillor in Waltham Forest.

In a post on Facebook, Reform UK's Romford chair Philip Hyde welcomed Cllr Halabi to the right-wing populist party led by Nigel Farage.

Stating he was "pleased" to welcome Cllr Halabi, he revealed he would be standing as a Reform UK councillor in Havering next year, where he has recently moved.

He stated: "I have met with Justin on several occasions and had extensive conversations about the future of Havering Council. He brings ten years experience and will be a fantastic addition to our growing team."

Waltham Forest Tory leader Emma Best told the *Echo* that Cllr Halabi's resignation from the party came after he was deselected as a local Conservative candidate due to his move

out of the borough.

She said: "We wish Jusden (Justin) well and can imagine he has taken a lot of time to consider this decision carefully.

"Jusden resigned on 5th August and was not due to stand for the Conservatives in Waltham Forest at the 2026 local elections due to his move out of the borough and subsequent unsuccessful application to be approved as a candidate here.

"Our belief, as always, remains that if you are democratically elected on a party ticket and no longer wish to serve that party you owe the electorate a say in that matter.

"We believe that Jusden should do the honourable thing and allow the public a say through a by-election."

Cllr Halabi did not respond to a request for comment. He was first elected as a Conservative councillor for Hatch Lane in 2021, replacing the late Geoff Walker. He was re-elected in 2022 with 1,651 votes.

Cllr Halabi's mother is the current councillor for Chingford Green ward Kay Isa and his father Nick Halabi served as a Tory councillor in Chingford until 2022.

Advertisement

Get Dance From Every Angle

A group of dancers in vibrant orange and green costumes are posed in a dynamic, multi-layered formation. The background is dark, making the dancers stand out.

Sadler's Wells
breakin' convention
PRESENTS

Tentacle Tribe

PRISM

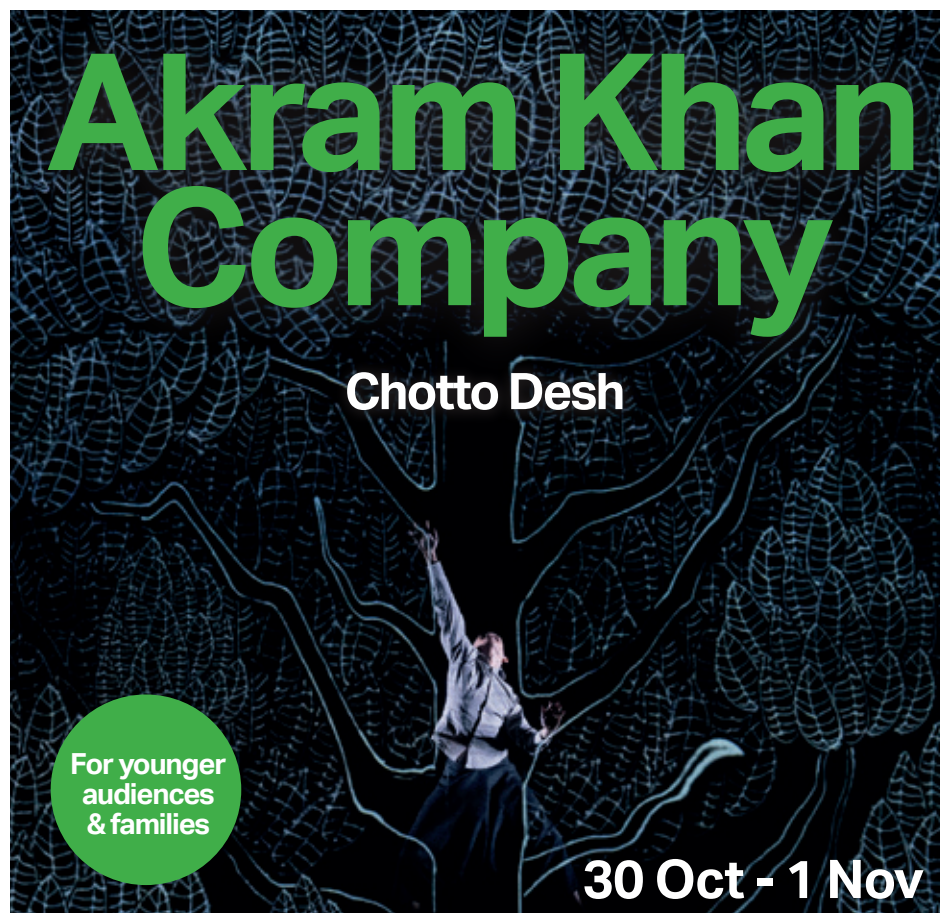
8 - 11 Oct

A group of dancers in dark, flowing costumes are posed in a dynamic, multi-layered formation. The background is dark, making the dancers stand out.

Mimi's Shebeen

Alesandra Seutin & KVS

22 - 24 Oct

A dancer in a dark, flowing costume is posed in a dynamic, multi-layered formation. The background is dark, making the dancer stand out.

Akram Khan Company

Chotto Desh

For younger audiences & families

30 Oct - 1 Nov

A close-up of a dancer's face, looking upwards with a joyful expression. The background is warm and glowing.

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'Free'

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HOUSING

Stroke survivor slams council for ‘abandoning’ her in ‘unsafe’ home

Sophia Aresti, 46, says Waltham Forest Council has left her in an assisted living home in Ilford that is not suited to her needs

Sophia Aresti (left) with her friend Roopal



by Marco Marcelline

A disabled Chingford woman who suffered a severe stroke says she was “dumped” in an inaccessible assisted living facility in Ilford by Waltham Forest Council and then “forgotten about”.

Incapacitated by a severe stroke in 2021, Sophia Aresti, 46, was placed in an assisted living home in Ilford in April 2023.

She says she was initially told she would only be living there for a maximum of two months, but months turned into over two years as the council “relinquished” its

responsibility to re-house her.

The *Echo* understands that Sophia was told to consider applying to Redbridge Council for housing but Redbridge told her she was ineligible because she had been placed in the home by Waltham Forest.

Being a wheelchair user, Sophia says the property the council placed her in is “unsafe and unsuitable” and has repeatedly asked to be moved to a more accessible home in Chingford.

She is the only female in the home, which she shares with four men who have serious mental health conditions, including schizophrenia. Speaking to the *Echo*, Sophia

said she is constantly woken up by shouting, banging, and loud music through the night.

“They’re just so loud, if they’re not banging stuff all night; they’re arguing with the care staff. Just last night, I was up until 5am because there was one guy who was walking around banging all night. I fell asleep for a bit but then another guy started putting his music on and banging.”

She adds: “I’ve been in the shower and they’ve tried to come in because they’re not fully aware I’m in there.”

The issues Sophia faces in the property are compounded by weight gain from a lack of physical activity,

meaning she has now outgrown her wheelchair.

Matters are made worse by the fact that the property’s front door is not wide enough to accommodate a larger wheelchair. Sophia was told by her occupational therapist that she faces the prospect of developing sores if she stays in the same one.

She describes life at the assisted living home as bleak and uneventful, stating she spends the entirety of her day sitting down and by herself.

She said: “I’d wake up, and just be on the commode from 8am to 8pm; I wouldn’t go out or anything.

“There’d be different carers every single day. It was awful. I was just left on the commode – they wouldn’t take me out to the shops, nothing.”

Sophia says she just wants to be re-homed: “I need Waltham Forest to find me a home where I can be more independent. A home that is fully accessible and in Chingford, which is where I’m from. I want them to stop ignoring me.”

Councillor Louise Mitchell, the cabinet member for adults and health, said: “We have been working with Ms Aresti and her family for several years to support her. The level of care required in this case has unfortunately rendered several potential options unsuitable. In July this year, we made a referral for Ms Aresti to benefit from an independent advocate, who has now been assigned.

“We understand the frustration that this is causing for Ms Aresti and her family, and we continue to make every effort to work with them to achieve an appropriate long-term resolution where her needs can be met as soon as possible.”

Homeless family kept in hotels for nine months awarded £7k compensation

The family were stuck in hotels for a total of 41 weeks, which is 35 weeks over the mandated limit

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

A homeless family have been awarded £7,000 in compensation by Waltham Forest Council after they were forced to stay in bed-and-breakfast style housing for nine months.

The family were stuck in various hotels for a total of 41 weeks, which is 35 weeks over the mandated limit.

The father, identified only as Mr X, said the unsuitable accommodation had caused a “great deal of stress, frustration and hardship,” especially for his two young daughters.

They ultimately complained to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman, an independent mediator between residents and councils.

Councillor Ahsan Khan, the deputy leader of Waltham Forest Council and cabinet member for housing, apologised and said the council “had not met the high standards residents would expect of us”.

The council told the ombudsman about the “significant” housing shortage. The arbitrator said it recognised the issue but ruled the council was at fault nonetheless.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance states that families should not be kept in B&Bs unless there is no other option, with a limit on their stay of six weeks.

At first, the family was put up in a hotel without cooking facilities, and then a second outside the borough.

One of the young girls has special educational needs and it was “important” for her to continue attending the same school, but the ombudsman said the council did not appear to consider this.

The family was finally moved to temporary accommodation inside the borough in February 2025, almost a year on from when the family first told the council they were at risk of losing their homes.

The council blamed the delays in handling the case on “having only a skeleton staff at that time, staff illness and staff leaving”.

Cllr Khan said: “We have not met the high standards that residents would expect of us. I apologise to the family for their experience.

“We have paid them compensation in light of these failings, and we accept all of the ombudsman’s recommendations. We will use them to improve the way we work as we continue to do all we can to make our borough a great place to live.”

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CRIME

Theft victim slams ‘negligent’ Highams Park self storage company

Gary Rozanski says his unit at Shurgard in Hickman Avenue was broken into by thieves cracking open ceiling tiles



Shurgard's Highams Park facility
Credit Google Streetview

by Marco Marcelline

An entrepreneur has accused a Highams Park self-storage company of “systemic and ongoing security failures” after discovering his unit had been broken into.

Gary Rozanski had used Shurgard’s Hickman Avenue facility from November 2023 until August this year. He previously ran a business selling imported toys such as Labubu dolls.

Having upgraded to a 30sq ft unit in March 2025, he returned on 13th August to find a ceiling tile cracked in half and several possessions missing, including an Xbox, a Sonos speaker, and two GoPro cameras. Meanwhile, expensive coats from other units had been placed in his one.

He says there was no evidence



A crack in the unit's ceiling tile
Credit Gary Rozanski

of tampering with the lock or door to his unit.

Speaking to the *Echo*, Gary said: “What thieves are doing there is hopping from one unit to the next by cracking open ceiling tiles and breaking into units that way. I never saw any damage to my door or evidence that anyone had broken in through the door.”

While Gary was able to claim back the losses through insurance claims, he accused Shurgard of “negligence” and presiding over “systemic and ongoing security failures” at the Hickman Avenue site.

In email correspondence between Gary and Shurgard seen by the *Echo*, the entrepreneur tells the storage company: “I do not know when my unit was accessed between March 2025 and August 2025. Given your policy of retaining CCTV for only three weeks, this renders police investigations redundant.

“More seriously, it means many customers may have had their units accessed but will not know until months or even years later if at all.

“Insurance is not an answer to negligence... While contents protection may cover some losses, it does not absolve Shurgard of its duty of care.”

In response, Shurgard stated it

took theft “very seriously” but said staff had been unable to alert Gary and others affected by break-ins because “there was no visible damage to doors, locks, or the building structure”.

Other customers appear to have had their units broken into. In a Google review, a customer called Asif Syed claimed his unit had been broken into by thieves “twice”.

Asif wrote: “Their CCTV cameras are too old and useless; [they] can’t recognise a number plate or [a] person’s face and inside the building there is no camera or security alarm system. Police came to investigate the matter but Shurgard staff failed to provide any evidence to them so they closed the case.

“Thieves already have their units inside the building. Most of the time they stay in the car park and keep an eye on people and their stuff. They watch your routines and stock.”

The *Echo* understands that Shurgard has recently strengthened its security measures via remote monitoring of CCTV and access reports after office closure, and has adjusted access hours to 7am–9pm instead of 6am–11pm.

Gary, who is demanding his rent be refunded, says he is now exploring legal action.

Shurgard did not respond to requests for comment.



Gary Rozanski

Two ‘prolific’ Walthamstow phone snatchers arrested

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Two alleged phone snatchers active in Walthamstow have been arrested amid a borough-wide crackdown, police say.

An undercover Metropolitan Police operation throughout August led to the arrests of two “prolific” thieves, according to Superintendent Sarah Jackson, with the Waltham Forest Neighbourhood Team.

She said the pair had been found in possession of numerous stolen phones and had used motorised bikes and scooters. Neither have been formally charged but are in custody, she said.

The force has been focusing its efforts on transport hubs, such as underground and overground stations, in Walthamstow, Chingford and Leytonstone, as these are “where the majority of



crimes are committed”.

There has been a 31% reduction in offences year-on-year, Supt Jackson added.

During a quarterly crime seminar held on Tuesday, 9th September, Supt Jackson said over August the Met had made 40 arrests and £11,000 of drugs were taken off Chingford streets.

Reported drug crime in Leytonstone is also dropping, she added, and is down 39% year on year.

The focus in the south of the borough is on diversionary programmes to deter criminals from becoming repeat offenders.

Alarm after dead dog found in Walthamstow park



Cheney Row Park in Walthamstow
Credit Google Streetview

The RSPCA is investigating the death of a large black and white male dog whose decomposed body was found by a member of the public under a tree in Cheney Row Park, Walthamstow, on Friday, 5th September.

It is understood the body was badly decomposed with maggots feeding on it.

There was no microchip or

collar, nor was the dog wearing a lead or harness, and the animal welfare charity is urging people who may have seen anything to contact their appeal line immediately.

RSPCA rescue officer Nicola Thomas, who is leading an investigation into the incident, said: “We’re grateful to the member of the public who found this poor dog and sounded the alarm.

“Sadly, there were no identifiers at all – no chip, collar, lead, or anything, so we’re urging anyone with information to come forward. The circumstances in which this dog’s body was found are clearly a potential cause for concern, and we are looking into what may have happened here.”

Anyone who has any information about a large bull breed dog in the Cheney Row Park area is urged to contact the RSPCA on 0300 123 8018

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COMMENT

‘This abandoned football ground should be returned to the community’

Nigel West writes about his campaign to return the Hare and Hounds football ground in Lea Bridge to local football teams



The remains of the abandoned football grounds

If you decide to go for a walk from Clapton along Lea Bridge Road towards Leyton, you will eventually come across a pub called the Hare and Hounds and a small alleyway that leads into an abandoned football ground, once the home of a non-league club called Leyton FC that folded in 2011.

Alongside being used by Leyton FC, Arsenal’s women’s team once played there before moving to Boreham Wood FC in Hertfordshire. Now the football pitch is used as a car park for a neighbouring restaurant.

I have decided to set up a campaign to bring local football back to the former Leyton FC ground for the local community. My online petition called ‘Save the Hare and Hounds football ground’ on [Change.org](#) has so far received 3,022 signatures, with a target of 5,000.

The Hare and Hounds football ground campaign has been featured on national newspaper websites, YouTube and on social media platforms. It is also supported by the ward councillors for Lea Bridge and Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy.

There are a number of local grassroots football clubs that are showing an interest in using the abandoned Leyton FC football ground, which has a covenant that states

the land has to be kept as a sports ground.

There had however been plans by the private owners of the football ground to build flats and a health centre on the site, but Waltham Forest Council slapped the proposals down because of the risk of flooding from the River Lea.

My personal ambition is to get Leyton Orient FC, local schools in Waltham Forest and David Beckham, who has a passion for grassroots football, to help and support the campaign to return the ground to its original use.

If you want to help and support the local cause, please sign my petition and share it with others.

To sign the petition: Search ‘Save the Hare and Hounds Football Ground’ on [Change.org](#)



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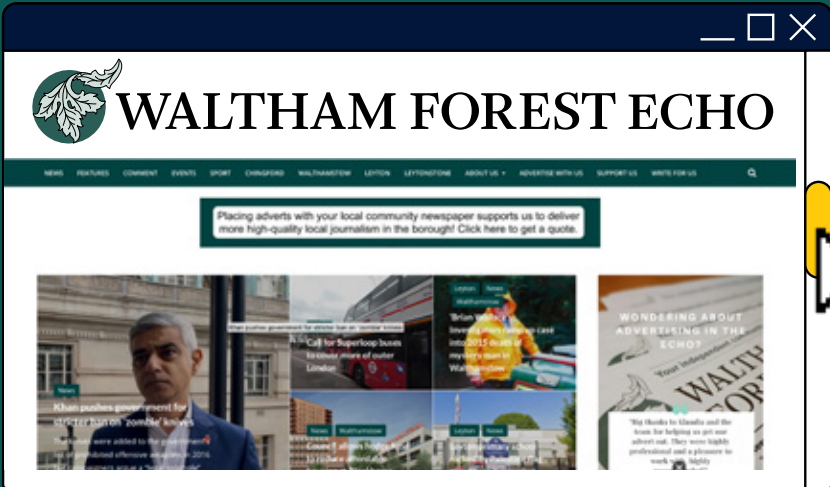
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NEWS

Family’s joy as British-Egyptian activist released from jail

Alaa Abd el-Fattah was pardoned by Egypt’s president after serving close to six years in jail for sharing a Facebook post about police brutality in the country

by Marco Marcelline

British-Egyptian activist Alaa Abd el-Fattah has been reunited with his family after Egypt’s president pardoned and released him from jail.

Abd el-Fattah was arrested in September 2019 and was sentenced in December 2021 to five years in prison for sharing a Facebook post about a death in Egyptian police custody.



Alaa Abd el-Fattah pictured in 2008
Credit: Wikimedia Commons

Despite being due for release last year, his family were told he would not be released until January 2027.

However, on Monday, 22nd September, Abd el-Fattah lawyer, Khaled Ali, writing in Arabic on Facebook, posted: “God is the judge. The president of the republic has issued a decree pardoning Alaa Abdel Fattah. Congratulations.”

Abd el-Fattah’s sister Sanaa reacted to the news on X: “President Sisi has pardoned my brother! Mum & I are heading to the prison now to inquire from where Alaa will be released and when... Omg I can’t believe we get our lives back!”

His sister Mona Seif, who lived in Walthamstow for several years, stated: “My heart is going to stop.”

The pardon comes as Abd el-Fattah’s mother Laila Seif was close to reaching a year of being on hunger strike. She started her protest on 30th September 2024 – the day after her son was supposed to be released from prison.

Speaking to the *Echo* in June, Abd-el Fattah’s sister Mona said their mother was close to death after having lost close to half of her body weight.



Alaa Abd el-Fattah and his mother Leila Seif embrace upon his release, Credit: Free Alaa Campaign

“She’s so frail. We’re at a point where the damage from the hunger strike may have become irreversible. She could go at any point.”

Mona, who lived in Walthamstow from 2022 until January this year, added that her brother had been put in enforced isolation and beaten by prison officers while in detention.

Chair of the foreign affairs select com-

mittee, Labour MP Emily Thornberry, said on X that she was “absolutely delighted” about Abdel-Fattah’s pardon.

She posted: “Laila, Mona, Sanaa and Alaa’s entire family’s tireless campaign for his release has been incredibly moving – their love for him was clear when I met Sanaa last year.

“I am so glad they will get to see him come home.”

Statutory Notice

Sign up to the Echo’s weekly newsletter

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



Sign up: bit.ly/4gHxTAo

We offer licence advertising for local businesses

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NOTICE UNDER SECTION 123(2A) OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 DISPOSAL OF OPEN SPACE LAND

Land at Bowling Green, Higham Hill Recreation Ground, Hecham Close, Walthamstow, London E17 5QT shown edged red on the plan (“the Property”)

- 1. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the London Borough of Waltham Forest proposes, in accordance with s123 of the Local Government Act (as amended by Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980) to dispose of the Property which is public open space to Higham Hill Hub Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to enable the development of a new community centre, including new boundary treatments, hard and soft landscaping, cycle and refuse storage.
- 2. The plan of the Property can be sent electronically upon request. Please contact propertyenquiries@walthamforest.gov.uk to request an electronic copy.
- 3. Before making any further decision of the proposed disposal of the Land the Council will consider any objections or written representations received. All objections or written representations should be in writing to Assistant Director of Property and Asset Management, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Magistrates Court, Town Hall Campus, E17 4NX. Alternatively, representations can be submitted by email to propertyenquiries@walthamforest.gov.uk, quoting reference (Bowling Green) and must arrive no later than 15 October 2025.

PHOTOGRAPHY



Seasons Change

All photos by Robert Kiernander

Walthamstow photographer Robert Kiernander has brilliantly captured how the bright promise of June gives way to the lazy haze of late summer before surrendering to the auburn notes of autumn.

According to Forestry England, the autumn tree display is expected to be even more vibrant this year due to the very warm and sunny weather over the summer.

We want your photos! To feature in our November issue please send in your images to wfecho@socialspider.com by Monday 20th October



We love reporting on local news in Waltham Forest but the business of local news publishing is really hard

Between 2007 and 2022, the number of local journalists employed by major news publishers in the UK dropped by two thirds from 8,847 to 2,830.

And 293 local newspapers have closed since 2005. We make local news freely available to people in Waltham Forest but local journalism is not free to produce.

Last year, the Echo published 1,073 news stories. We printed and distributed 180,000 free copies of the newspaper.

We covered important news stories such as the closure of

The Markfield Centre and its impact on adults with special needs and their families.

We published positive features on local sports, arts and charitable activities, celebrating the amazing creativity and community spirit of Waltham Forest residents.

Our supporters and our advertisers make it possible to continue writing, editing, printing and distributing the Echo. It is never less than a struggle.

We're looking for patrons who can donate £500 or more to support the Echo to thrive and grow.

Email patrons@socialspider.com for more information

AROUND THE BOROUGH

LEYTONSTONE

Residents remove 'threatening' St George cross graffiti



A man removes a cross that had been painted on a wall. Credit: Andy Walker

by Marco Marcelline

Leytonstone residents rallied to remove St George crosses which were graffitied on homes, walls, and street furniture on Saturday, 13th September.

Over 40 crosses were daubed in and around Bushwood, including Mornington, Barclay, Lister, Harvey, and Michael roads in the early hours of the morning.

The graffiti came on the same day that over 100,000 people attended a central London rally organised by the far-right activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, also

known as Tommy Robinson.

Photos shared of the graffiti on social media prompted a backlash from locals, who described it as "racist" and "unsettling".

One Leytonstone resident writing on Facebook, said: "I have no problem with flags. I have every kind of problem with flags used to intimidate other humans. Not here. Not anywhere. Whoever did this needs a bloody good talking to, and keep their tiny kind of England out of Leytonstone."

Another said: "They don't even look good. If it was done artistically then fair enough but these are just idiots defacing our borough."

In response to the graffiti, Leytonstoner Victoria Ireland launched a crowdfunder for anti-racism posters that can be hung in people's windows.

In just one week, the GoFundMe had raised over £2,600.

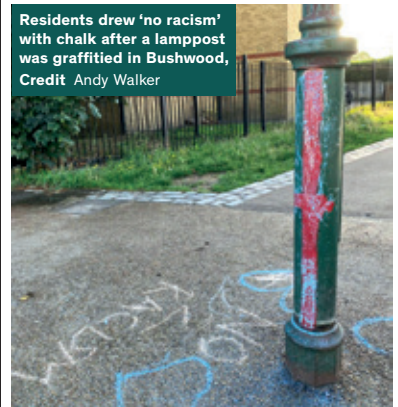
Victoria stated: "After the St George's cross was illegally painted all over Leytonstone, members of the community have come together to act against racism. We are raising money to produce posters that can be hung in windows to show support for our

diverse community. Funds raised will be used to cover the cost of producing the posters."

The *Echo* understands that Waltham Forest Council's graffiti team were on the ground removing many of the crosses over the weekend.

The graffiti comes amid scenes of England flags going up around the country as part of "Operation Raise the Colours". It has seen people paint red crosses on roundabouts and walls and is linked to rising hostility against asylum seekers and migrants.

To report information about these incidents to the police, contact 101 and quote CAD 1881/13SEP25



WALTHAMSTOW

Salvation Army nominated for best charity shop in London award

Salvation Army shop in Forest Road, Walthamstow, has been shortlisted for a prestigious national award.

'Sally in the Stow' is in the running to win the UK's Favourite Charity Shop Award for London.

More than 5,000 nominations were received by the Charity Retail Association this year.

When asked what makes Sally in the Stow so special, one customer said: "The prices are amazing, the stock turnover is fast, there is a great range of toys, a wonderful furniture store, fantastic

window displays, along with lots of vintage clothing. You can even park outside to drop items off. What's not to like!"

Church leader at Walthamstow Salvation Army, Julie Pell, said: "We are delighted to have been shortlisted for an award and would



really appreciate it if people would vote for us. We have a very supportive team here who have worked hard over the years to get Sally in the Stow to where it is today.

"The charity shop is part of our desire at Walthamstow Salvation Army to bring transformation locally and provide a space that people can come into and feel safe, supported and welcome."

If you're reading this before Thursday 2nd October you can vote for Sally in the Stow here: charityretail.org.uk/the-uks-favourite-charity-shop

You can visit the Salvation Army at 434 Forest Rd, Walthamstow, E17 4PY

HIGHAMS PARK

Council approves new development despite local disquiet

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Proposals for 46 new flats in Highams Park have been green-lit by the council as part of a borough-wide push for more housing.

Commercial buildings in James Yard, behind Larkshall Road, will be demolished to make way for two six-storey apartment blocks.

The plans, put forward by Sherrygreen Ltd, were approved by members of Waltham Forest Council's planning committee on Tuesday, 2nd September.

Conservative councillors John Moss, who sits on the committee, and Tim James, opposed the proposals alongside 29 residents.

A representative from Highams Park Planning Group said the blocks would "destroy the



A mock-up of how the flats are expected to look. Credit: Sherrygreen Homes

open and much-loved village feel" of the area. He said the impact on neighbouring homes, which are between two and three storeys in height, would be "overpowering".

The council's planning department did acknowledge there would be a "low level of harm" to locally listed buildings but it was acceptable "on balance".

Residents previously said they would prefer to see office buildings, a 'hot desking' space – where remote workers can rent desks in an office – or a retirement home built on the land instead of new homes.

LEYTON

Domestic violence charity to open 'healing space'

A local domestic abuse charity is to open a "healing space" in Leyton, where visitors can attend workshops, supper clubs, talks, and buy homeware and furnishings.

Furnishing Futures, which is the UK's only charity designing "trauma-informed, healing homes" for domestic abuse survivors, will open The Atrium at Leyton's Mentmore Studios on Saturday, 11th October.

The Atrium will host workshops, supper clubs, talks, and expert panels, all raising funds to support domestic abuse survivors and those experiencing furniture poverty.

Furnishing Futures CEO Emily Wheeler said: "By coming here and becoming part of



Credit: Nikki Hinton

this community and supporting our events, people can be part of a thoughtful, integrity driven conversation, come away with something beautiful for their home and in doing so, support the families who really need it."

Since conception, Furnishing Futures has created 120 healing homes and supported 300 women and children through refurbished refuges.

Find out more: furnishingfutures.org

ARTS & CULTURE

Local filmmaker to debut 'urgent' film about child refugees

Blackhorse Road director Danny Baalbaki is set to release 'Stop Gap' which depicts a young boy's experience in the asylum system

Filmmaker
Danny Baalbaki,
Credit Ellie Page



by Ellie Page

a "raw and unflinching" portrayal of displacement, resilience, and the search for belonging in modern Britain.

Set in a gritty, post-industrial corner of the UK, the film follows Khalil, a mute refugee boy who, after surviving a traumatic journey to England, finds refuge in an abandoned warehouse. There, armed only with imagination and scraps of cardboard, he begins to build a world of wonder.

Having experienced first-hand what it means to flee a warzone while visiting family in Lebanon, director Danny brings lived insight to a subject that too often remains distant and abstract. He says: "This is a story about borders, community, and what it means to find home in a world that too often looks away."

The production has been driven by a local cast and crew, reflecting Walthamstow's wealth of creative talent. The team's ambition is not just to premiere at film festivals, but to share *Stop Gap* in commu-



A scene from *Stop Gap* Credit 'Stop Gap'/Apparition Films

nity halls, schools, and campaign spaces, creating dialogue where it matters most.

Producer Ellie Page said: "This is an independent, not-for-profit project made with heart. We want to tell this story truthfully, but also make sure it reaches people directly – not just in cinemas, but in classrooms and community centres.

The support of our local community is what makes that possible."

Funding remains the final hurdle. The filmmakers are now appealing to the public to help cover post-production costs – editing, sound, and grading – to bring the story fully to life.

To support the project, visit: gofund.me/77fb48ef3

Walthamstow artists behind solar panel project make documentary feature

Dan Edelstyn and Hilary Powell, who slept on their roof for 23 days to raise money for solar panels on their street, will release documentary 'POWER STATION' on Friday, 3rd October

A couple who slept on their roof for 23 days to fund the costs of installing solar panels on every house in their street are releasing a documentary about their activism.

Amid sub-zero temperatures in November 2022, artists Dan Edelstyn and Hilary Powell raised a total of £113,000 in their campaign to install solar panels on 35 homes in Lynmouth Road in Walthamstow.

Now, their documentary *POWER STATION* charts their remarkable efforts from convincing their neighbours to join them, to sleeping on the roof of their home to raise funds and even launching a bid for a Christmas number one single.

The film premiered at Sheffield DocFest this summer and will launch at the Hackney Picturehouse on Friday, 3rd October, followed by a UK-wide theatrical release with Dartmouth Films.

The film presents Dan and Hilary's vision



Hilary Powell and Dan Edelstyn slept on their roof for 23 days in November 2022 Credit Peter Searle

of galvanising a wider movement towards community-owned sustainable energy alternatives across the UK.

Frustrated by the government's lack of action around the urgent need for sustainable energy, and concerned by the cost of living crisis affecting so many people in their neighbourhood, Dan and Hilary took matters into their own hands.

"In the depths of lockdown we wondered what we could do in the world out there. The WhatsApp street group was pinged and it felt like another world might just be possible. We decided to take the community spirit one step further and asked: 'Who's up for taking the street off the grid? Free or highly subsidised solar panels for all!'", says Hilary.

The project aims to expand its reach with a campaign entitled 'Every Street A POWER STATION', taking the film to communities across the country.

Book tickets to the film launch at Hackney Picturehouse on 3rd October: picturehouses.com

LETTERS

Mental health diagnoses

Dear WFE

THE RATES OF DIAGNOSIS of ADHD in children in the borough are exceptionally high and rising week by week. But there is no biological basis to the diagnosis.

Parents in the borough would do well to read Sami Timimi’s latest book *Searching for Normal* in which he sets out all current research. They may then wish to make an informed decision to opt out. And I think they should.

In fact, these findings confirm the work of psychiatrist and psychoanalyst Thomas Szasz who, for over half a century, warned of the tendency by social workers, psychologists and psychiatrists to transform patients’ problems into supposed mental illnesses for which there is no chemical, neurological or physiological evidence.

These supposed mental illnesses are then treated, often for a lifetime, with drugs and therapy, leaving behind dependent or ruined lives in which the patients are seen as not responsible for their behaviours.

While we wait for institutional psychiatry to admit that inattentiveness is not a disease, aren’t we better off encouraging our children to face life’s challenges? The victories there will surely be more satisfying and life-changing than relying on invalid medical diagnoses and false pharmacological cures.

Jan Sheppard, *Walthamstow*

NHS discrimination

Dear WFE

I AM WRITING IN RESPONSE to an article which appeared in the August edition of the *Echo* [‘The Whipps Cross staff taking their NHS trust to court’].

Broadly speaking it is difficult to see how an industrial tribunal will uphold such a complaint – most likely Barts Health NHS Trust’s new uniform policy will be found justifiable.

Barts will no doubt raise the defence of justification, which is a recognised response to claims of indirect discrimination.

As the law stands, the essential character of the NHS should be apolitical and neutral.

The NHS staff raise the trust’s support for Ukraine in their case against Barts, but Ukraine and Russia are not directly comparable as they do not fall within the definition of a racial group.

Indirect discrimination may be justified where the respondent demonstrates that the application of the provision, measure, or criterion is both relevant and proportionate.

That said, I must add that I have enormous sympathy for the Palestinians, who are victims of an inhuman crisis.

Chris Arian, *Waltham Forest Race Equality Council*

Chingford Police Station

Dear WFE

WE, THE WALTHAM FOREST Conservatives, are deeply concerned by proposals to close the front counter at Chingford Police Station. If this goes ahead, Waltham Forest will be left without a single police station open to the public, a situation we believe is unacceptable.

Police front counters are not symbolic; they are essential. Across London, tens of thousands of crimes are reported at stations each year. For victims in distress, vulnerable residents, or those without access to online systems, they provide a vital point of contact and reassurance.

In Chingford, where more than one in five residents are over 65, losing in-person access to policing would hit especially hard. Closing the counter risks eroding public trust and reducing community safety.

We urge the commissioner to rethink this damaging proposal and keep Chingford Police Station open for the community it serves.

Mitchell Goldie,
Conservative councillor
for Chingford Green

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 20th October**

LISTINGS

ART CLASSES

Muse At The Mill Adult Art Classes
Every Tuesday, 1–3pm
The Mill, 7-11 Coppermill Lane,
Walthamstow E17 7HA

Discover your creativity in a welcoming and inspiring space with our artist-led adult art class. Hands-on workshops covering a wide range of techniques, including watercolours, acrylic painting, sketching, mixed media, and collage. Perfect for beginners and experienced artists alike, each week you’ll explore new materials, experiment with colour and texture, and develop your own artistic style in a relaxed, social environment. All materials are provided and there’s free tea and coffee – just bring your curiosity and enthusiasm. Advanced booking is essential.

£20 per session
Call 07478 755 140
Visit bookwhen.com/rachelhoggcreativearts
Email rachelmosshogg@gmail.com

BEER FESTIVAL

Harvestmile
Saturday 4th October, 12pm
Signature Brew, Blackhorse Lane,
Unit 15 E17 5QJ

Our humble beer mile is growing this year, and as you know we’re no longer just made up of breweries. With beer, wine and brandy, there’s one thing we all have in common... harvest season is coming up! We’re getting busy by cooking up recipes with green hops, getting a full year’s worth of grapes in, and collecting apples for a special batch of brandy. This year we’re celebrating Harvestfest on Saturday, 4th October. Expect everything from hog roasts to hoedowns, live music, barn dances, winery tours, lots of cask, perfect pairings and of course, beer, wine and brandy.

Free entry
To book tickets
Visit tixr.com/groups/signaturebrew/events

COMEDY

Good Ship Comedy featuring Maisie Adam
Friday 10th October, 8pm–11pm
The Birds, 692 Leytonstone High Road, Leytonstone E11 3AA

Fresh from Live at The Apollo, OI, A League of Their Own, Mock The Week and The Last Leg, Edinburgh Fringe Best Newcomer nominee Maisie Adam is one of the hottest properties in British comedy right now.

Every set of hers is rammed with witty observations, high-octane energy and some right good jokes. The Guardian has described her show as “thoroughly engaging and bursting with puppyish pleasure”. Plus support from Ben Hill, Bilal Zafar and MC Ben Van der Velde.

Tickets £15
Visit feverup.com/m/138800

TAYLOR SWIFT

‘Life of A Showgirl’ Album Listening Party
Saturday, 11th October, 7–10pm
Leyton Star, 116 High Road,
Leyton E15 2BX

Celebrate Taylor Swift’s brand-new album *The Life of a Showgirl* with fellow Swifties at a one-night-only listening party in Leyton! This intimate event makes it the perfect space to share first reactions, sing along, and soak up the excitement of Taylor’s new era. The night will include a full album listening session with interactive games to keep the energy high (think lyric bingo, reaction cards and more). There will also be a best dressed contest, Life of a Showgirl theme – judged by the audience!

Tickets from £11.55 available on Eventbrite, search: Taylor Swift Album Listening Party Leyton Star

THEATRE

‘Seven Magnificent Egos’
Wednesday 15th–Sunday 19th October
Ye Olde Rose & Crown Theatre, 53 Hoe Street, Walthamstow E17 4SA

‘Seven Magnificent Egos’ has been remade numerous times, but this is the first time the story of the making of the movie has ever been told in a visual dramatic medium, on stage or otherwise. The play is a hyper satirical comedy and to that end the cast not only portray the seven actors, but those seven actors also in turn play the Mexican extras, the film’s director, screenwriters, producers, and all other characters, as they would have portrayed them. Written by the award-winning playwright of ‘False Accounts – Exposing the Post Office Cover-Up’, the latest play from Lance Nielsen is another satirical look at something he is all too familiar with – the workings of the film industry.

Tickets £17/£14 concessions
Visit ticketsource.co.uk/yeolderoseandcrowntheatrepub

TRANS PRIDE

Walthamstow Trans Pride
Saturday 18th October, 7pm
Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61–63 Tower Hamlets Road E17 4RQ

Last year Walthamstow made history with its first ever Trans Pride, filled with love, noise, and unstoppable energy. This year we’re back, bigger and bolder, as we take over the Trades once more, with incredible acts, cabaret, live music, stalls, and DJs. All profits go to The Outside Project, the UK’s first LGBTIQ+ crisis and homeless shelter, community centre, and domestic abuse refuge. Their life-saving work offers safety, advocacy, and community to those most excluded, and your ticket helps make that possible.

Tickets from £13
Visit outsavvy.com/event/29779/walthamstow-trans-pride-2025

MARKET

Maker’s Market
Sunday 19th October, 11am–5pm
Big Penny Social, 1 Priestley Way,
Walthamstow E17 6AL

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

Tickets £3
Visit bigpennysocial.co.uk/whats-on/makers-market

PERFORMANCE

Escape! A Tribute to Phillip Glass
Thursday 23rd October,
7.30pm–9.30pm
St John’s Leytonstone, 825 High Road Leytonstone E11 1HH

Come along for an unforgettable evening dedicated to Philip Glass, the pioneering composer whose hauntingly beautiful compositions continue to inspire audiences worldwide.

This special tribute concert features two exceptional musicians, each bringing their unique voice to Glass’s timeless works, creating a captivating journey through some of Philip Glass’s most iconic compositions.

This two-part concert promises to be a compelling exploration of Philip Glass’s innovative soundscapes. Whether you are a longtime admirer or new to his music, this concert will appeal to lovers of classical, contemporary, and experimental music alike.

Tickets for £16 available on Eventbrite, search: Escape! A Tribute to Phillip Glass

BLACK HISTORY

Alkebulan Tiles workshop
Wed 29th & Thurs 30th October
228 Chingford Mount Road,
Chingford E4 8JL

A creative workshop combining African textile traditions with gel printing, momigami, and slow stitching.

Celebrate Black History Month with a creative workshop that brings together the richness of West African textile traditions and the delicacy of Japanese paper techniques. In this session, you’ll learn about African cultural patterns, experiment with printmaking, and create your own unique mixed-media collage artwork, mounted and ready to frame.

Tickets from £17 available on Eventbrite, search: Chingford Mount Black History Month

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 by **Monday 20th October**.

SPORT

Winners Win by Andrzej Perkins

David O'Driscoll reviews an 'entertaining' book about Walthamstow FC by Andrzej Perkins



Winners Win: A Season with Walthamstow FC is out now Credit Andrzej Perkins

Andrzej Perkins is the vice chairman of Walthamstow FC, yet his responsibilities are extensive.

He regularly takes card payments at the gate on match days and manages the team's X/Twitter account, while writing most of the content on the club's website.

He previously produced match-day programmes until they became too numerous, and even cleans up after games. And if all of that wasn't enough, now he is the author of a candid book about Walthamstow FC.

This entertaining and thoughtful account reveals the reality, challenges and joys of non-league football.

Written in a diary format, *Winners Win* details early morning starts to unfamiliar locations in the south-east of England to support the boys in blue. It has to be said that supporting Walthamstow gives you insight into the geography of this country.

The book also records the significant turnover of footballers at the club, and Perkins provides a helpful index at the back with a list of 44 players who had played during this time. The book also includes accounts of managers being sacked, encounters with opposition fans, opposition committee members and a run through of the general challenges in running a non-league team.

The book begins with Walthamstow FC's most famous victory. The game, a 2-1 win over Stanway Rovers to secure the Essex Senior League title, drew a substantial crowd of over 600, a considerable number for Walthamstow.

However, Perkins notes that was not always the case. At one point, when he was initially involved, the club was on the brink of collapse until a new owner emerged. This owner changed the club's name from Waltham Forest and invested money to begin a new chapter for the club.

While I found some of the off-field encounters more engaging than the extensive match reports, I attended many of the reported matches as a Walthamstow season ticket holder.

Two partially interesting match accounts are when Walthamstow lost very disappointingly in the playoffs to Didcot, and a famous game against Ware which the team won 6-4 despite being 4-3 down in the final minutes.

Perkins provides several anecdotes that illustrate the significant difference between non-league and professional football. He recounts an instance where a Premier League team requested a free ticket for one of its scouts. To his credit, Perkins declined the request, explaining that that club could certainly afford the £8 entry fee. This demonstrates the importance of financial management for the club and underscores the significance of local football fans supporting their local team.

'Winners Win: A Season with Walthamstow FC' by Andrzej Perkins is available on Amazon now (£7.99)



Leyton Orient trials 'low alcohol' beers in stands

The trial will run for a four-matches, having started on the 27th September home match against Stevenage

by Marco Marcelline

Leyton Orient has launched a trial allowing fans to drink "low and zero alcohol" beverages during matches.

Fans with seats in the Community North Stand are being allowed to drink IPA, cider and beer capped at 0.5%, with Leyton Orient chief Mark Devlin stating the trial was an example of the club "trying to improve our supporters' experiences at home fixtures".

Since 1985, fans of top flight men's football have been legally prohibited from drinking alcohol within view of the pitch from 15 minutes before to 15 minutes after the match. This ban applies to the top five tiers of the men's professional game, including EFL League One, which Leyton Orient competes in.

The law has been criticised by some who see it as a factor in half-time bingeing at football matches.

The trial will run for four matches, having started on the 27th September home match against Stevenage.

Alcohol at Brisbane Road is nothing new this season, however, with the Women's Super League allowing fans to drink full strength beer in their seats.

"We have been looking at

the possibility of running a trial of this nature for some time," Devlin adds, "and there was some support for the trial".

The *Echo* however understands that some fans criticised the fact that North Stand ticket holders will be banned from purchasing full-strength beer on the concourse during half time, in a bid to make sure those drinks don't make their way to the stand.

The trial had been due to begin on Saturday, 13th September but was pushed back following a fan consultation.

Devlin stated: "We understand that some supporters may still want to enjoy a more traditional beer before the match or at half time, but I'd ask them to approach the trial with an open mind."

"The low alcohol options will allow fans to take their drinks to their seats and will also reduce the rush of needing to quickly consume drinks before the start of the match and at halftime."

"We're asking supporters to approach this with an open mind. This trial is all geared towards trying to improve fans' matchday experience; we will be one of the first clubs in the country to do something like this and we want to be bold with trying new things. We hope to learn a lot from the trial once it gets started."

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, 319 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

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