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WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

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Aren't you a bit far from Clacton? People push a massive Count Binface through Lyttelton Road, E10 ahead of Leyton Más, the borough's largest annual street carnival. Over 5,000 attended this year's edition, held on Sunday 12th July. See more photos from the festival on page 12 ► Credit Vicki Crouchman

Council buried Whitefield abuse report after school's legal threat

by Marco Marcelline

A Waltham Forest Council commissioned review that raised concerns about the misuse of calming rooms in Whitefield School back in 2016 was buried after the academy threatened the town hall with legal action.

Failure to act on specific calming room misuse concerns raised by the British Institute for Learning

Disabilities (BILD) report in summer 2016 meant the rooms stayed open for a further six months until Ofsted inspected the school.

The revelation comes from the long-awaited Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review (LCSPR), which was published in July.

38 pupils were subjected to physical and psychological abuse while placed in so-called "calming rooms" at the school between 2014

and 2017.

The calming rooms were closed in early 2017 following an Ofsted inspection, and allegations first emerged publicly in 2021 when secret CCTV footage was discovered by new leadership at the school.

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.

The footage also shows children,

many of whom were non-verbal, kicked and hit with force by staff.

No-one who worked at the school during the abuse has been prosecuted or arrested. Six staff were proven to have abused children but were not sacked, and at least one referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) was recommended but not made.

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TfL urged to act on Victoria Line noise

by Kumail Jaffer, Local
Democracy Reporter

Transport for London (TfL) is facing calls to lay out a clear and public plan for dealing with noise levels from trains on the Victoria Line.

Labour London Assembly members have been pushing TfL on the issue, especially on the Victoria, Northern and Central lines where people are particularly affected by high-pitch screeching noise from trains.

Screeching noises on the Victoria Line regularly exceed 100 decibels and occasionally peak above 112 decibels – equivalent to a nearby helicopter taking off.

Elly Baker, Labour's transport spokesperson on the London Assembly, wrote to TfL commissioner Andy Lord last month demanding "consistent, specific data on all works carried out for the purpose of reducing tube noise".

TfL responded to Baker by saying they were unable to provide longer term plans as "approvals are granted only eight weeks in advance".

A TfL spokesperson told the LDERS: "As part of our work to improve noise and vibration issues, we have removed insulated rail joints, which removes a source of noise, and improved the condition of the track.

"We have undertaken a significant amount of noise and vibration-related rail grinding in the last six months and will continue to carry out other targeted interventions to reduce noise, including the removal of redundant rail joints, the maintenance of points and crossings, and re-ballasting track."

NEWS

Council's 'botched' move to new parking system

Problems with the Waltham Forest Council's new parking system MiPermit meant permit-bay enforcement was paused for over two weeks

by Marco Marcelline

The council's "botched" move to a new parking system was sharply criticised by residents. Waltham Forest Council had been due to switch from RingGo to MiPermit on Wednesday, 1st July, with a two-day pause in permit bay enforcement (29th and 30th June) while the changeover took place.

But this pause was extended until Monday, 14th July, while the council attempted to ensure that migration issues were resolved.

Residents using the MiPermit app encountered issues with its map, with their parking zones not appearing, leaving them unable to use it.

One resident writing on social

media called for a "partial refund or permits extended" due to the lack of enforcement, adding: "Paying for a service and not receiving it is not really acceptable".

Some have told the *Echo* they have been put on hold for hours while trying to ring the support number provided by the council.

When the council first announced it was moving to MiPermit, it said the new parking provider would offer "faster approvals and simpler account management, allowing users to apply, pay, renew and track permit usage in one place".

In a statement, Waltham Forest deputy leader Eva Tabassam, sought to assuage complaints. She said: "Many residents are rightly frustrated

about the issues that they have experienced following the introduction of the new MiPermit parking permit system. I share this frustration.

"We are in close contact with MiPermit expressing our concerns about the issues residents have endured.

"When the previous administration agreed with our parking contractor NSL's decision to appoint MiPermit as sub-contractor to handle residential parking permits, council officers were assured the transition would be smooth and easy. In practice, it has been anything but that.

"The change to MiPermit was necessary after RingGo, the previous sub-contractor, decided to exit the residential parking permit market. This meant there was no choice but to find a new sub-contractor to ensure continuity of service. MiPermit is an established provider with over twenty years' experience in this market and already delivers this service to many authorities UK-wide.

"I apologise to residents again for this situation. We will make sure any tickets residents or visitors receive in error related to parking in residential permit bays during the waiver period are withdrawn."

You can access information about using the MiPermit app here: walthamforest.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel



Council to spend £3.6m resurfacing roads and pavements

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council has published its updated list of roads due to be resurfaced throughout the remainder of 2026.

A total of 30 were identified for resurfacing and work has been completed on 16 so far.

Resurfacing the roads will cost the council £3.2million, while repairs to paths will cost £435,300.

The bulk of the remaining work is in the Larkwood and Highams Hill wards, which are each due for two further resurfacings.

The list, however, does not include estimated finish dates.

The essential works, when combined, will set the council back £3.63m.

The remaining road resurfacings are as follows, according to council data: Ainslie Wood Rd E4, Beatrice Rd E17, Colworth Rd E11 (Preston Rd to Poppleton Rd), Coney Burrows E4, Dames Rd E7, Durban Rd E17, Flempton Rd E10, Friday Hill West E4 (Nursery to no 17), Hale End Rd E17 (Heathcroft Gdns to Belle Vue Rd), Inks Green E4, Kings Head Hill E4 (The Ridgeway to College Gardens) and The Ridgeway (Kings Head Hill to 11), Lea Valley Rd E4, Melville Rd E17, Stow Crescent E17,

Warren Rd E10 (A106).

Meanwhile, the following footways are due for refurbishment: Dale View Ave E4, Davies Lane E11, Montserrat Ave IG8, Weale Rd E4 (Withy Mead to 39 Weale Rd).



Town hall 'reviewing options' for closed disabled adults centre

by Sebastian Mann,
Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council is currently reviewing its options for the site of a former centre for adults with special needs.

Top Labour councillors voted to shut the "rundown" Markhouse Centre last June, displacing more than 50 adults.

The future of the centre remains uncertain, and it is currently being used as a temporary base for ServiceStore, the council's property maintenance company.

"Opportunities for the site's permanent use are being reviewed, and an update will be presented to cabinet later this year," a town hall spokesperson said.

The "opportunities" being reviewed are currently under wraps.

The closure caused significant consternation among the service users' families, with campaigners branding it "disgraceful" and "nothing short of a betrayal".

According to a council report written in March, all 52 adults have since been relocated and 48 of those say they are happy with their new circumstances. There had been "difficulties" organising interviews with the remaining four, the report said, but officers are "actively pursuing" an update.

"Feedback indicates that they have settled well and are engaging positively with their new provision," the spokesperson added.

"We continue to ensure that ongoing support is available and that individuals can raise any new or emerging issues."

The majority of service users – a total of 13 – were relocated to Trinity, a home-care provider with bases across London.

Ten each were then sent to Acorn, in Walthamstow, and Eastway, which covers Waltham Forest and Havering.

The former Labour administration said the ageing 1980s building was in poor condition and required up to £1.2 million in repairs, hence why it was no longer suitable.



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NEWS

Two huge co-living developments planned for Walthamstow



The proposed Wood Street development Credit SoCo

by Marco Marcelline

Developer SoCo is pursuing a 310-room scheme in Wood Street and a second 319-room development for the former Wilko building in Walthamstow High Street

A developer is pursuing two large co-living schemes in Walthamstow, with one in Wood Street already awaiting planning approval and a second proposed for the old Wilko site in Walthamstow High Street.

Co-living is a modern residential housing model where predominantly young people rent private bedrooms but share communal spaces, such as kitchens, living areas, and amenities.

It often includes flexible leases, all-inclusive utility bills, and organised events designed to foster community among residents.

But they have also been criticised for being “expensive youth hostels”, with studio rents on average being around £1,400 per month.

SoCo, which has not yet listed its rent charges, plans to build 310 co-living studios on a former industrial site off Wood Street, adjacent to a tennis, cricket, and squash club.

The six-storey scheme would replace ageing vehicle repair sheds and vacant offices with studio rooms, communal kitchens, lounges, co-working areas, a gym, roof

terraces and new green space.

The vision also includes 971 square metres of commercial space and 320 cycle parking spaces. Waltham Forest Council is yet to decide on the proposal.

At the same time, SoCo has begun public consultation on a similar second scheme - a 319-room co-living development proposed for the former Wilko building in Walthamstow High Street, currently operating as indoor market Stow Bazaar.

Stow Bazaar opened in June 2024 with 48 retail units, but struggled to retain traders who told the *Echo* of repeated break-ins, inaccessible and poorly maintained toilets, flooding, and collapsing ceiling tiles.

Last year, clothing trader Princess Caulker said she accrued debts “in the tens of thousands” after low footfall left her unable to cover costs, while perfume shop owner Haris Ahmed said he lost £35,000

worth of stock in a break-in just a week after opening.

While early designs promise to retain ground-floor retail space, it is unclear if that vision includes Stow Bazaar; neither SoCo or the indoor market responded to comment requests.

Like in Wood Street, this development would include shared kitchens, co-working areas, lounges, terraces, and a gym.

Around 10% of rooms would be wheelchair accessible, with SoCo saying the scheme is guided by “inclusive design principles” and promises good lighting around the building.

Outdoor space is a major part of the concept, with more than nine new trees planted, green roofs and a projected biodiversity net gain of “more than 25%”.

Find out more about the High Street proposal here: 115highstreet-walthamstow.co.uk



A view of the proposed High Street development from Willow Walk Credit SoCo

Network Rail to replace four 130-year-old bridges

Work to tear down and replace four Suffragette Line bridges between Leytonstone High Road and Wanstead Park will begin in September

A project to replace 130-year-old bridges carrying Suffragette Line trains between Leytonstone High Road and Wanstead Park will begin later this summer.

Network Rail will be replacing the following bridges: Talbot Road (E7 0DX), Strode Road (E7 0DU), Stracey Road (E7 0HG), and Latimer Road (E7 0LH).

Announcing the project, Network Rail said: “The old bridges are monitored closely to check they are safe, but they are 130 years old and need to be replaced to avoid unplanned disruption and keep everyone moving reliably

in the future. The new bridges are expected to last until around the year 2150.”

All the bridges are on the London Overground Suffragette Line, between Leytonstone High Road and Woodgrange Park stations.

Work will begin at the Talbot Road and



What the bridges will look like once completed, Credit Network Rail

Stracey Road bridges on Tuesday, 1st September, with engineers starting on site at Strode Road and Latimer Road on Monday, 28th September. The road and pavement will be closed under each bridge throughout the project, with other road closures in the area being needed for shorter periods during 2027.

Residents and businesses have been sent letters advising them about the works, and public drop-in sessions are planned in August so people can meet the project team and ask any questions.

These sessions will be held at the Forest Gate Learning Zone on Thursday, 6th August, 10.30am to 1.30pm, and on Wednesday, 12th August, 5pm to 7.30pm.

Network Rail says further updates will be provided as the works progress, with additional drop-in sessions also being arranged in the coming months.

The project is due to be completed by late summer 2027.



Credit Network Rail

Joe Kennedy, infrastructure director for Network Rail Anglia, said: “Thousands of people travel over these old bridges every day by train, passing through residential areas in east London.

“Our project will deliver four brand new bridges that will serve the surrounding community and rail passengers for several generations. We’re really sorry for the disruption and we’ll work very closely with residents and businesses to keep the impact to a minimum while we get the job done.”

NEWS

Credit Maxine, Instagram: @thatsnicehey



Local drag performer Iris Glamorous hosts the closing party of Waltham Forest Pride, held across two weeks in July. This year's grassroots-led iteration of Pride saw several hundred attend talks, workshops, and parties all over the borough.

Row breaks out over new £26k Tory allowance

Labour has accused the Green administration of “wasting” taxpayer money by giving two top Tories special allowances

by Marco Marcelline

The Labour Party has attacked the Greens’ move to afford special responsibility allowances (SRAs) to the Tory leadership and chief whip as “wasteful madness”.

All Green Party and Conservative councillors approved the decision, which will cost the taxpayer around £26,000 per year, at a full council meeting on Thursday, 16th July.

Under the previous Labour-led administration only the leader of the largest opposition party and its chief whip were entitled to special responsibility allowances, which are paid out on top of the basic councillor allowance of £13,085.

May’s local election saw the Green Party seize control of the chamber with 31 seats to Labour’s 15 and the Conservatives’ 14, meaning that there are two opposition parties for

the first time since 2010.

In response, the Greens opted to expand SRA allowances to the leadership and chief whip of both opposition parties, rather than pay these to only the largest (Labour).

It means that Tory leader Emma Best will receive an SRA of £20,528 and Conservative chief whip Mitchell Goldie will benefit from £6,102.

Supporting the rule change, Green Party councillor for Leyton, Rob Gardner, said: “A healthy council needs an effective administration but it also needs organised and properly supported opposition, group leaders and whips carry substantial responsibilities – coordinating members, supporting participation, managing council business and enabling scrutiny and challenge.”

But the move came under attack from Labour councillor for Upper

Walthamstow Caramel Quin who admonished the Greens for “not using taxpayer money properly”.

Cllr Quin said: “I think it should be called out that one of the first acts of this Green-led council is to financially support the smallest opposition with over £26,000. I thought the Green Party was more progressive.”

Unsuccessfully calling on the Greens to change tack, she added: “I don’t know whether you’ve been strong-armed or sweet-talked into this but please explain why public money must be spent this way. Giving away more than £26k needlessly when this money could be better spent on the residents of Waltham Forest is madness.”

Labour’s criticism was quickly labelled “audacious” by Cllr Best, who pointed out the move had saved taxpayers’ money because the administration had opted for

one deputy leader and not two.

She said: “Councillor Quin please get a calculator out. The previous administration had two deputy leaders for no reason. That cost £37,000 – this costs £26,000 – does this not represent a saving to residents?”

Praising the new administration, Cllr Best added: “I welcome the moves that the Green-run council has made to save money on SRAs already on year one; they’re putting more money into the pockets of residents.”

The Greens decided to freeze all salaries paid to councillors, with the basic allowance (£13,085), council leader package (£58,051), and cabinet salary (£29,025) all remaining unchanged.

In 2025, Labour increased councillors’ remuneration by 2.5%, down from the 6% increase pushed through in 2024.

Greens in trans inclusion push

The council passed a motion calling for mandatory diversity and inclusion training and more gender neutral bathrooms

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council will introduce mandatory equality training for staff and councillors as the Green-run administration passed a pro-trans motion that declared “trans women are women and trans men are men”.

The Supreme Court ruled last April that the terms “woman” and “sex” in the Equality Act 2010 refer strictly to biological sex assigned at birth.

Though the act protects transgender people from discrimination, the ruling means that a person born a biological male cannot obtain the same legal protections as women by changing their gender with a Gender Recognition Certificate.

At a full council meeting last month (16th July), the Greens passed a motion that criticised the potentially “invasive” nature of asking people their biological sex and committed to believing “trans women are women”.



Green councillors celebrating their win in May Credit Jamie Woolley

Going forward, the corporate director of culture and workforce development will ensure that trans awareness and inclusion form part of mandatory equalities training for all staff and elected members.

All new and refurbished council-owned buildings and leisure centres will also include non-gendered toilets and changing rooms “where practicable”.

Conservative group leader Emma Best, however, said the Tories could not support the motion.

Cllr Best said she was “unconvinced” it would “stack up legally”, adding the motion “felt like a mish-mash” between the monitoring officer’s advice and the Greens’ position.

She also pointed to constraints on funding that could lead to “money being wasted” on ultimately ineffective policies, adding that “mandatory DEI [diversity, equality and inclusivity] training isn’t something we agree with”.

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NEWS

Buried report was a ‘missed chance’ to close calming rooms

Former Whitefield School student David Gloria (centre) pictured with his father Ricardo and mum
Credit Noel Titheradge



Continued from page 1

The recently published LCSPR reveals that the BILD report identified concerns about the repeated use of calming rooms for a “small number of pupils” in summer 2016 and a review of behaviour support arrangements for two children was recommended. However, following a threatened legal challenge from the academy to the local authority, BILD findings regarding the use of the rooms were “lost”. The LCSPR said evidence

its commissioning was “not prompted by specific concerns” but rather because of a need to provide a plan for the implementation of positive behaviour support (PBS). The council said that after the report was withdrawn, it implemented BILD’s recommendation to review behaviour support plans for two pupils who had frequently been placed in calming rooms. But the rooms stayed open until Ofsted inspected the school in January 2017.

“The local authority has shown a lack of accountability”

of the threatened legal action emerged during the Metropolitan Police investigation, through email exchanges between the school and council, alongside interviews with BILD and supporting material. BILD said it was not aware of the legal action threat, while the council blamed “staff turnover” for its inability to explain why findings about calming room misuse did not prompt wider examination or action until the 2017 Ofsted inspection. Flourish Learning Trust, which ran Whitefield School at the time of the abuse, refused to comment. The *Echo* understands the BILD review looked at four Waltham Forest special needs settings, one of which was Whitefield, and

The failure to act on BILD concerns was identified in the review as “one of several missed opportunities” for agencies in building a fuller picture of the calming room misuse. The LCSPR concludes that information held across different organisations, including the local authority, “was not sufficiently connected to identify a cumulative pattern of risk” and that “greater professional curiosity and challenge should have been applied”. The review also found that while Waltham Forest acted after Ofsted’s January 2017 inspection by carrying out its own review of the school, the response focused primarily on governance and school improvement rather than considering whether

children had suffered emotional or physical harm. Responding to the publication of the LCSPR, Waltham Forest’s cabinet member for children and young people, Daisy Richards, described the events as “deeply upsetting and distressing”. “At the heart of this case are vulnerable children who endured suffering at the hands of the people trusted to ensure they were safe and treated with the dignity and respect they deserve,” she said. Cllr Richards continued: “We will examine the effectiveness of our partnership working arrangements, with an emphasis on implementing clearer escalation thresholds and building stronger links between partners to allow for easier sharing of important information. “All schools in the borough will be asked to review their safeguarding training to ensure that staff are aware of their statutory responsibilities and of best practice guidance. “National guidance around the use of restrictive practices, including the use of

calming rooms, has already been updated in the wake of this case. “The children involved and their families have been offered support including specialist therapeutic support to help them process and heal from the harm they endured. I want them to know how seriously we take this matter and how determined we are to do all we can to prevent any other child from experiencing such harm.” Waltham Forest Labour, which led the council during the Whitefield abuse, declined to comment. Whitefield parents previously complained about delays to the publication of the LCSPR, which was originally due for release in February 2025. Speaking in April, Ricardo Gloria, whose son David was abused in the calming rooms a number of times between 2013 and March 2015, said: “I feel let down by several parties in this investigation. Whitefield School took too long to protect vulnerable children, and the local



authority has shown a lack of accountability.

“The extended delays have been frustrating and have hindered justice for the children who suffered unfair treatment at Whitefield School over the years.”

David stopped being placed in calming rooms after Ricardo visited the school in early 2015 and watched CCTV showing the treatment that his son experienced in seclusion.

His complaint did not progress beyond the school, and according to the LCSPR, no agency outside Whitefield was aware of CCTV showing abuse until 2021.

The *Echo* understands that the Glorias are among several other families who are involved in civil legal action arising from the misuse of restrictive practices at Whitefield, including the use of the rooms, between 2014 and 2017.

Whitefield Timeline	
Date	Event
2015	Parent raises concerns about restrictive practices, including use of rooms — concerns are not escalated beyond school.
Summer 2016	Local authority commissions BILD review. BILD flags potential over-use of “calm rooms” for certain pupils.
Summer 2016	Academy threatens legal action against the council. The BILD report is withdrawn, and its safeguarding findings are lost.
10th–11th January 2017	Ofsted inspection rates school “inadequate”, citing repeated seclusion and locked rooms.
18th January 2017	Council conducts safeguarding review
December 2017	Ofsted rates school “outstanding”.
May 2021	Multi-academy trust discovered CCTV footage showing extent of calming room misuse between 2014 and 2017. Police launch criminal investigation.
July 2024	CPS concludes no charges can be brought: assault offences time-barred and child cruelty threshold not met. Criminal investigation formally concludes.
Present	Families are preparing a civil claim against Whitefield

Representatives from across Waltham Forest civil society and religious community outside the mosque
Credit Waltham Forest Wanted and Loved Alliance



Interfaith show of solidarity after Leyton mosque assault

Residents and activists staged a show of solidarity outside Noor Ul Islam Mosque in response to an attack on a mosque-goer in July

Over 100 people stood in solidarity outside a Leyton mosque last month, after one of their members was attacked in an alleged racially aggravated assault on Tuesday, 7th July. Metropolitan Police officers were called to reports of a racially aggravated assault at Noor ul Islam Mosque in High Road Leyton at around 9.51pm that evening. According to a spokesperson for the force, a man in his 50s had been assaulted and subjected to racist abuse. London Ambulance Service paramedics took him to hospital where his injuries were assessed as “neither life-threatening nor life-changing”. A 42-year-old male suspect who was arrested on suspicion of grievous bodily harm was also hospitalised after suffering a head injury during the assault. In response to the incident, a show of solidarity was organised by Waltham Forest Stand up to racism, and attended by a variety of faith and non-faith organisations from the Waltham Forest Loved and Wanted Alliance. Speaking at the event, Rabbi Richard Jacobi said: “On behalf of the members of my Jewish community of the East London and Essex Liberal Synagogue, I wish to offer my full support to the community of the Noor Ul Islam Leyton Mosque. “We know, from bitter experience, that attacks on one faith community or racial group often lead to similar attacks on other faith groups or communities. We must sustain a zero tolerance of any and all such attacks.”

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NEWS

Devastating Walthamstow blaze raises concerns about railway vegetation

July's blaze destroyed a house as well as numerous sheds and outbuildings across more than 30 gardens

by Marco Marcelline

A devastating fire that tore through homes and gardens in Walthamstow on Sunday, 12th July, has raised concern of fire risks along railways after London Fire Brigade (LFB) confirmed the blaze began when a tree fell onto overhead power lines.

The fire started on the railway embankment behind Vallentin Road, near Wood Street, after a tree came into contact with overhead electrical cables, igniting dry vegetation before rapidly spreading through gardens and properties.

Fuelled by dry conditions, the flames tore through 30 back gardens, destroying numerous sheds and outbuildings, completely destroying one home and damaging several others.

Although no injuries or fatalities were reported, Network Rail later concluded that a property containing two flats in Shernhall Street had suffered such severe structural damage that it needed to be demolished.

Demolition work is understood to have begun late on Tuesday, 14th July, with engineers using cranes, scaffold towers and power tools to safely dismantle the damaged building.

The demolition left two households displaced, prompting an outpouring of support from the local community. St Mary's Walthamstow launched a GoFundMe appeal to assist those affected, raising more than £25,400 within days.

St Mary's and Ghousia Grove Road Hall opened their doors to hundreds of residents forced to evacuate as firefighters tackled the blaze. While most people were able to return home later that evening once the fire had been brought under control, both venues received an overwhelming number of donations of food, clothing and essential supplies.

Speaking afterwards, St Mary's Reverend Vanessa Conant praised the response from local people.



Aerial view of the blaze on Sunday, 12th July Credit Mohamed El Fateh

"It's a real example of how Walthamstow as a community unites in times of crisis; people here are creative and connected and they always find a way to help people in need," she told the *Echo*.

The incident has also revived memories of a fire exactly one year earlier.

On Saturday, 12th July 2025, during another spell of hot weather that saw temperatures reach 31c in London, a small track-side fire broke out in almost the same location between Wood Street and Walthamstow Central stations.

Local resident James Cameron was parking his car in Shernhall Street when he heard what he described as a "loud bang" before noticing sparks flying from the overhead electrical equipment.

"The sparks landed on a patch of grass next to the track, and it caught fire," he recalled. "I immediately rang the fire brigade and two engines were on the scene in less than ten minutes. They put it out pretty quickly and that was that. Looking back, it was really lucky that this was sorted so quickly because it could have been far worse."

His wife, Laura Bouché, believes the growing frequency of hotter summers means greater attention needs to be paid to fire prevention along railway lines.

"I would like to see that these issues are going to be taken more seriously due to the constant increase of the temperature every summer," she said.

"Maybe a quick solution in this case can be putting a fire regulated brick wall as a barrier between the train rail and residential homes."

Network Rail said police records suggested the cause was an "electrical pot" – often known as a pothead, a sealed insulated terminal where overhead electrical equipment connects to underground or protected cabling – although no further details were recorded. The rail operator confirmed it deemed that no repairs to railway equipment were required following the incident.

LETTER

Fire victims: 'We're eternally grateful to the community'

Two households whose flats were demolished say they have been moved by the support that has been offered to them since – here are their words

During last month's fire, our homes were taken from us.

One of us has been a member of this wonderful community for many years, while two of us had only moved in two weeks before the fire.

What followed was an outpouring of support and charity that has been truly overwhelming. From the moment the fire started, neighbours and strangers were there to help – evacuating us from the house, offering places to stay, and dropping off clothing.

Firstly, we'd like to thank the first responders in the police and the fire brigade, thanks to whom there were no casualties.

We'd like to personally thank our wonderful neighbours. In particular, we'd like to acknowledge Emily and Cecilia, Esme and Roz, Danni, Jacintha, Vanessa and the team at St Mary's for their kindness in the first few hours after the fire – donating clothing and other essentials.

We have also been welcomed with open arms by small businesses in Walthamstow and beyond, in particular the teams at Big Penny Social, Wilde, the Hoxton, Word Store, the Good Egg, Wood Street Walls, Forest Eco Cleaners, Optical World, The Pet Vet Waltham Forest, as well as fundraising support from Arvo and East of Eden.

We're overwhelmed by the generosity of the fundraisers that were set up to support us, including by our incredibly thoughtful work colleagues.

The generosity that was shown to us in our time of need has truly shown us the best of people, and this note is a small token of our gratitude which we'll never be able to express in full.

We simply couldn't have managed without MP Stella Creasy and Jess from her office, or our family and friends. We're feeling very lucky and grateful in many ways, during a particularly vulnerable time, because of the support network we've had around us.

Over £26,400 has so far been raised for these residents – you can donate here: gofundme.com/f/75-shernhall-street

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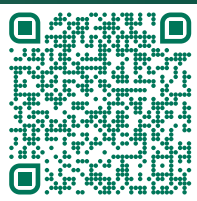
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Wednesday 26 August	10am - 6:30pm
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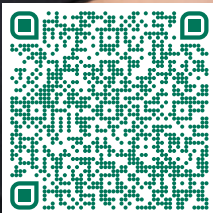
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FEATURE

From lidos to reservoirs: Waltham Forest's renewed search for a place to cool down

Wild swimming enthusiast
Miriam Burke and her son



by Nathan Clarke

After years of discussion, will the Green Party deliver on residents' desire for an outdoor swimming spot?

"My personal ambition would certainly be to have a swimmable River Lea," says councillor Anna Rose Kerr, the new cabinet member for sports and culture.

She speaks to me on the hottest June day ever, a record which is broken again just days later as thousands flocked to lidos, reservoirs and ponds across the capital.

"Outdoor swimming is a huge priority for us," she adds, "not only because of its community aspect, but also when thinking about how we exist safely on this scorched earth."

For years, calls for an outdoor swimming venue in Waltham Forest have fallen on deaf ears.

A key pledge in Labour's manifesto in the 2022 local elections, a new lido at Low Hall Sports Ground was scrapped in 2024, while the council also distanced itself from plans for a new open-water swimming park in Lea Bridge in favour of a secure children's home.

With the Green Party now in power,

campaigners and residents have renewed calls for an outdoor swimming site in the borough – and early talks over a potential new site have already taken place.

In recent weeks, the council has been in "early" conversations with Thames Water regarding proposals for a new wild swimming site at Banbury Reservoir.

The site, which sits on the border of Enfield and Waltham Forest, consists of a large body of open water and three adjacent plots of land and community woodland, all of which is currently inaccessible to the public.

When approached, a spokesperson for Thames Water confirmed it had engaged with the council on Banbury Reservoir and its potential use for leisure activities – but that the safety of residents was their key priority.

News of early discussions was welcomed by the Enfield Climate Action Forum (EnCaf), who want Banbury Reservoir to become part of a 'major' new park to support new housing developments at Meridian Water – but the group said any plans would need to involve close collaboration with the local community around access, safety and biodiversity.

"This is exactly the kind of use EnCaf and CPRE London have been asking to see explored for some time, as part of our broader vision for the area," a spokesperson said. "Our previous community engagement found strong support for wild swimming and water-based activities, and many people saw this as something that could give the area a real identity and provide a much-needed public amenity."

Outdoor swimming is experiencing a boom in popularity. According to Swim England, regular participation in open water swimming has more than doubled since 2016 with around 543,000 people now swimming regularly in rivers, lakes, lidos, seas and other bodies of water in the UK.

Rose Vee is an avid wild swimmer based in Walthamstow – and for her it's not just a summer venture. "I'm not really a winter swimmer, but I have swum up to the end of October in the UK," she said. "When you're in natural water, you get this intense feeling of calm and peace."

"You feel at one with nature. It's a real feeling of connection and it takes all my stress away."

Rose is part of a thriving community of outdoor swimmers in Waltham Forest. "There is a reservoir in Stoke Newington which is lovely, but it's not that accessible from here using public transport," she said. "It's a beautiful environment, and if we could have something like that in Waltham Forest that would be absolutely brilliant."

For years, campaigners at the East London Waterworks Park (ELWP) have been campaigning to convert an old waterworks site in Lea Bridge Road into a wild swimming park.

The group's new CEO, Dr Miriam Burke, is still fighting for the park to be a reality despite plans by London Councils to turn the space into a secure children's home.

Stressing the lack of affordable outdoor swimming provision in the capital, she said: "There's a new outdoor swimming venue in Canary Wharf, but it's very much for the privileged. If you want to go to the West Reservoir in Manor House, it's expensive."

"The reality is not everyone feels welcome in these kinds of spaces. We want everyone, regardless of income or background, to feel like they belong in nature and green space."

In a report published last year, the London Assembly's environment committee set the Mayor of London the target of designating four new sites as bathing waters by 2028, and a further six by 2034.

To Cllr Kerr, the recent scorching temperatures underline the need for more outdoor

swimming opportunities in the borough.

"I am a huge fan of outdoor swimming personally," she said. "While it wasn't something we focused on in our manifesto, it's certainly something we're keen to explore."

"My personal ambition would certainly be to have a swimmable River Lea, as well as other bodies of water which are safe to swim around Waltham Forest."

"We're very new into this administration, so there's work that needs to be done on finding appropriate sites, but I think it's really important we find sustainable ways to cool down, because every summer is only going to get hotter from here."



Banbury Reservoir has been floated as a potential wild swimming site Credit WikiCommons

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PHOTOGRAPHY



Leyton Más

Photography by Vicki Crouchman

More than 5,000 residents and visitors came to Leyton Más People's Parade & Carnival Fête on Sunday 12th July.

Inspired by more than 130 years of various carnival traditions in Waltham Forest, these photographs capture the joyful celebration that is Leyton Más.

The day saw performers, musicians, dancers, schools and community organisations come together in a vibrant procession through the streets of Leyton.

From 12pm to 7pm, Coronation Gardens and Coronation Square came alive with music, performance, workshops and family activities across multiple stages and themed zones – with even a humorous giant “Count Binface” puppet raising quite a few laughs as he trundled around on wooden wheels.

See more photography from the day on Instagram: @Leyton_Mas



ENVIRONMENT

Anti-Edmonton incinerator campaigners celebrate ‘victory’ as Greens take over North London Waste Authority

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

Campaigners against a new incinerator in North London have hailed the appointment of a new Green oversight committee a ‘victory’.

Hackney councillor Jacob Cable, who represents Stoke Newington for the Green Party, was appointed the chair of North London Waste Authority (NLWA) in June.

Enfield Green councillor Made-line Church and Conservative Barnet councillor Peter Zinkin assumed the roles of vice-chair. The



Hackney cabinet member for climate and air quality Cllr Jacob Cable is the new NLWA chair Credit NLWA

authority was previously controlled by Labour, and headed by Waltham Forest councillor Clyde Loakes.

The NLWA manages waste and recycling services for an estimated two million residents across the boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest.

It is currently overseeing the construction of a new incinerator in Edmonton, which has been plagued by delays for years.

Due to construction delays and other woes, it will likely not be finished until after 2030 – three years later than when it was supposed to come into use.

A spokesperson for the Stop the Edmonton Incinerator campaign group called the appointments a “major victory for all of us who have campaigned tirelessly to stop the new Edmonton incinerator for close to a decade”.

“The new Green-led board of the NLWA has already shown it intends to scrutinise the rebuild and its spiralling costs.

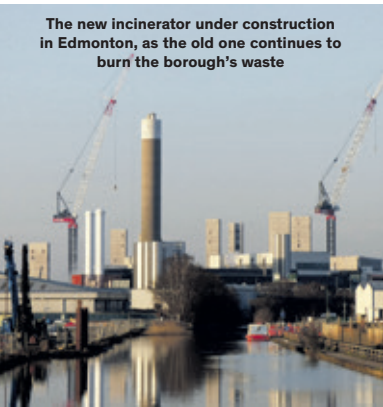
“This gives us confidence that this marks the beginning of the end

of the plans for the new outsized, toxic incinerator for a greener, fairer, less polluting way to manage North London’s waste.”

The NLWA previously argued that the Edmonton EcoPark incinerator was the “best long-term environmental solution for the waste generated by millions of people”.

Former NLWA chief Clyde Loakes said: “Not everything can be recycled, and councils will still need a solution to deal with waste.”

Cllr Cable said he would lead the NLWA “in an open and participatory way and ensure that we work to reduce waste in all its forms”.



The new incinerator under construction in Edmonton, as the old one continues to burn the borough's waste

Thames Water announces hosepipe ban

It came after several weeks without rain across most of London as well as high demand for water during recent hot spells

A temporary hosepipe ban has come into effect for residents and businesses across Thames Water’s supply area, including Waltham Forest.

The heavily-indebted private utility company has imposed the ban after a period of “prolonged dry weather and recent heatwaves”.

Most parts of London have not received any kind of prolonged rain for over a month.

As well as the lack of rainfall, Thames Water says there is higher than normal demand at the present time and that the weather forecast still does not include any substantial rain in the near future.

Nevil Muncaster, Thames Water’s director of strategic water resources, said: “We would not be taking this step unless it was necessary to protect water supplies for everyone and the environment.

“Recent heatwaves and a very dry spring and summer have led to sustained high demand.

“While there is enough water for essential use, we need to reduce non-essential outdoor demand to keep taps flowing.”

However, trade union GMB has pointed out that Thames Water – owned by a consortium including a Chinese sovereign wealth fund and a Canadian pension fund – loses around 570.4 million litres per day through leakages.



Credit K Adams on Unsplash

Cliff Roney, a GMB activist and contributor to Channel 4’s recent exposé *Dirty Business*, said: “Once again, Thames Water’s fed-up customers are the ones paying the price for this company’s woeful mismanagement.

“If Thames Water put as much effort into fixing leaks as into lining their senior managers’ pockets, this ban wouldn’t be necessary.

“It’s not unreasonable for customers paying hundreds of pounds a year to expect to be able to water their garden or let their children enjoy a paddling pool.

“The only way to give customers the service they deserve and protect water workers from a failing employer is to bring it back under public ownership.”

Newly-installed Prime Minister Andy Burnham previously suggested that nationalising utility companies such as Thames Water would be among his priorities, but he has yet to make an announcement to confirm the move since entering Number 10.

Climate crisis could cost London ‘up to £15bn’ a year by 2050

by Kumail Jaffer, Local Democracy Reporter

Climate change could cost London up to £15billion a year by 2050 unless urgent action is taken across all levels of government, a new report has warned.

Research from Central London Forward (CLF), a partnership of twelve central boroughs, says more frequent heatwaves, floods and droughts will hit both the health and finances of Londoners. The capital is already experiencing record temperatures amplified by the urban heat island effect, which can make the city feel up to ten degrees hotter due to dense buildings trapping heat.

CLF argues that the Greater London Authority (GLA) and boroughs must rapidly expand green infrastructure such as parks, trees,

wetlands and planted roofs to cool neighbourhoods and reduce flood risk. But the report notes these spaces are often treated as “soft targets” for cuts because councils are not legally required to maintain them.

The authors highlight Elephant Park in Southwark as an example of high-quality green space that is costly to maintain but delivers significant long-term benefits.

Mass retrofitting of social housing is also described as essential, though more than a million homes need work and funding remains a major barrier. London’s ageing drains and sewers — built over 150 years ago — are another concern, with City Hall warning the capital has “outgrown” its infrastructure.

The GLA’s surface water strategy promotes permeable paving and sustainable drainage systems, but CLF said such schemes are difficult

to deliver at the necessary scale.

The report praised the GLA’s Cool Spaces Network, which designates libraries, leisure centres and shaded parks as public cooling areas, but said awareness remains low.

CLF is calling for legislative duties requiring councils to prioritise climate adaptation in planning decisions, backed by long-term, non-competitive funding.

Charlie Rainsford, CLF’s assistant director of policy, said: “The effects of climate breakdown are already being felt. It is vital we make central London more climate resilient, but responsibility currently falls on local authorities without sustainable funding.”

City Hall said the mayor has planted 640,000 trees since 2016 and last month launched Heat Ready London, a long-term plan to help the city adapt to rising temperatures.

Where to find a ‘cool space’ in Waltham Forest

As the hot weather stays with us, here is a list of ‘cool spaces’ in the borough where you can seek some respite

Cool spaces are indoor spaces for Londoners to shelter from the sun, cool down, rest and take respite on hot days.

They may help reduce health risks from hot weather. However, they are not designed to support vulnerable individuals on hot days, or a medical care substitute if someone is unwell from overheating.

All spaces appear on the Greater London Authority’s cool spaces map, which is live until Wednesday, 30th September.

These spaces are:
• South Chingford Community Library

- (88 Old Church Road, E4 8BX)
- Leyton Library (High Road, London, E10 5QH)
- Holy Trinity Church (4 Holloway Road, London, E11 4LD)
- Leytonstone Library (6 Church Lane, Bushwood, London, E11 1HG)
- CRATE Walthamstow (45 Selborne Walk, London, E17 7JR)
- Walthamstow Library (High Street, London, E17 7JN)
- The Mill (7-11 Coppermill Lane, London E17 7HA)
- The Hornbeam Community Centre (458 Hoe Street, London E17 9AH)

See the London cool spaces map here:
apps.london.gov.uk/cool-spaces

ARTS & CULTURE

The mural depicts Jack James (left), Wendy Loftus (centre), Shannon Crowe (right)
Credit: Mark Clack, Wood Street Walls/ The mural is based on an original image by Owen Harvey



New mural marks 150 years of the Pearly Kings and Queens

Hand-painted portrait of different generations of the Pearlys were unveiled as part of the Leytonstone Arts Trail last month

by Marco Marcelline

A new large-scale mural celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Pearly Kings and Queens was unveiled in Leytonstone last month.

Hand-painted at more than full scale on the wall of The Red Lion pub, the artwork reproduces a

photograph of different generations of the Pearlys, who are based at The Social, Leytonstone Ex-Servicemen's Club.

Rooted in the costermonger communities of the 1870s, the Pearly Kings and Queens grew from London's East End street traders into one of the capital's most beloved working-class traditions.

For 150 years, Pearlys have encapsulated the spirit of charity, solidarity and neighbourhood pride, raising money for good causes while keeping alive a distinctive, hand-crafted visual culture built entirely from mother-of-pearl buttons.

The mural brings that tradition to life through a new collaboration between photographer Owen Harvey and muralist Emma Rubens. Harvey's portrait, taken specifically for the wall composition, was developed over more than a year of conversations between the project team and the Pearlys themselves.

"The Pearly Kings and Queens are not just part of London's history – we are still proudly serving our communities today"

Rubens, who lives close to the mural location in Leytonstone, has translated the photograph into a hand-painted work at full building scale. The different generations of Pearlys depicted are: Jack James – Pearly King of Royal Kensington, Wendy Loftus – Pearly Queen of The Borough, and Shannon Crowe – Pearly Queen of Haggerston.

The project has been funded, produced and delivered by Wood Street Walls, a community interest company specialising in co-designed public murals across East London and the UK, in partnership with Works in Public.

The mural forms part of the Leytonstone Arts Trail 2026.

Muralist Emma Rubens said: "I feel incredibly grateful to have been invited to create this mural. Throughout the process of this mural I have constantly been learning about the history of the Pearlys through the local Pearly Kings and Queens who generously shared the stories, traditions and meanings behind what they do.

"As I learned that every button is hand-sewn, every pattern has its own significance and many of the buttons themselves have been passed from one generation to the next, I realised these weren't simply beautiful suits, they are living family heirlooms.

"Throughout the time I was painting, so many people stopped to ask about the mural, and it was wonderful to see the curiosity about the history of the Pearlys. I hope this artwork continues to spark those conversations for years to come."

Sharon Crowe, from the Pearlys Association, said: "We hope this mural inspires people to learn about our heritage and the values of kindness, generosity and service that continue to define us today. The Pearly Kings and Queens are not just part of London's history – we are still proudly serving our communities today."

'This is a no judgement zone': The Walthamstow venue behind a line dancing resurgence

The Queer Line Dance Club at Walthamstow Trades Hall is drawing in fans of line dancing from across East London, writes Lima Sadiyah

Hiding away in the innocuous Walthamstow Trades Hall, the faint sounds of stomping boots and country music spill out onto the street.

I've come to the Queer Line Dance Club which draws in fans of line dancing from across East London.

Inside, I watch heels stamp in unison on the wooden floor, laughter cutting through the music, as attendees move in synchrony. The idea of a line dance in East London in 2026, much less as an LGBTQ+ event, could seem unlikely.

But, it's a trend gaining momentum worldwide, with roots linking queer communities to line dancing as far back as the 1980s.

I ask Billi and Sinead, who run the sessions together, why they think it's picking up in popularity.

"Over the last few years, there's been a huge resurgence in country, especially amongst queer people," says Billie.

The pair point to groups like the Australian *Saddle Club* and the US-based Stud Country, and explain how the Queer Line Dance Club was brought to London by Nessie Nankivell, a Canadian.

But the appeal isn't just because it's become a trend, it's what the space offers. For the queer community "to feel comfortable in their body, to learn something new, to not be judged is incredibly important," Sinead tells me. "We get to make a space where people feel invited."

"Can you tell we love it?" Billi asks, laughing, and I can. Their passion is clear, and infectious –

which shows in their teaching. The sessions have quickly proved their appeal, drawing a mix of regulars and newcomers. For many, it's the feeling that stands out. "I love laughing, I love getting it wrong – it's the energy," one attendee tells me.

The classes are designed to be open and flexible, welcoming people regardless of experience. "That's why people love it – you can drink or not drink, stay for ten minutes or the whole night. There's no pressure to join in, or to be good," they explain.

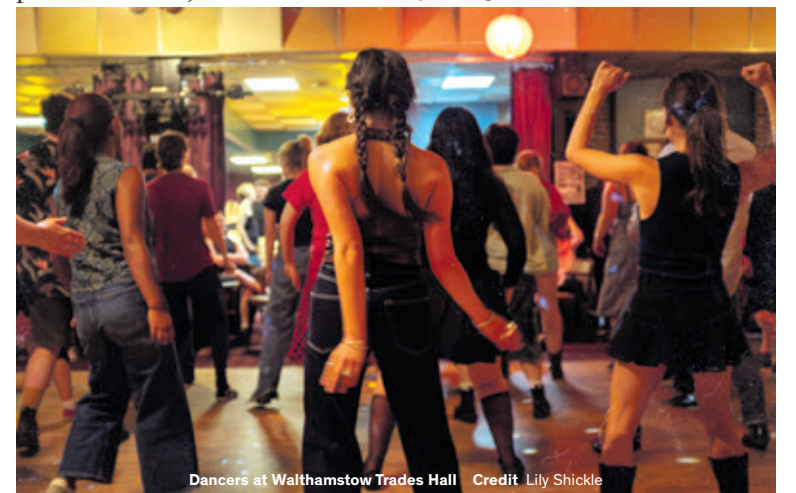
In a space free from judgement, people are encouraged to take part at their own pace, and the moves are broken down so simply that even the dance illiterate like me can follow along.

But these spaces are becoming harder to find. Venues like the Trades Hall are "disappearing" across London, Billi says, and especially ones with a traditional wooden dance floor.

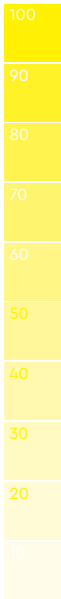
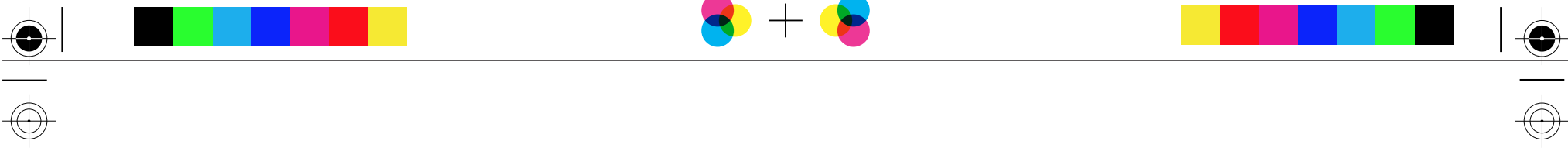
"People love this venue, it feels authentic, and charming," Sinead tells me. "We want to be a part of keeping it alive."

I can understand the sentiment; the space is beautiful, and harkens back to a time when social dances and community gatherings were far more commonplace. But, on a Thursday summer evening, Walthamstow Trades Hall certainly feels alive.

The Queer Line Dance Club is held at Walthamstow Trades Hall on alternating Mondays and Thursdays, 7–11pm, see @queerlinedanceclub on Instagram for upcoming dates



Dancers at Walthamstow Trades Hall Credit: Lily Shickle



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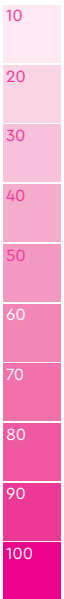


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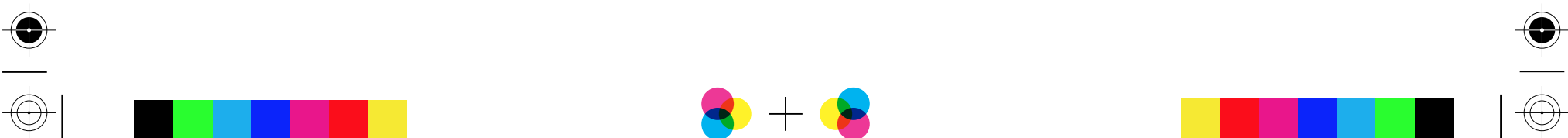
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AROUND THE BOROUGH

WALTHAMSTOW



Young actors taking part in 'A Place of Wonder'
Credit Alastair Fyfe

600 local pupils make theatre stage debut

by Waltham Forest Music Service

An immersive musical theatre production, *A Place of Wonder*, saw over 600 pupils perform on stage at Soho Theatre Walthamstow last month across two shows.

Waltham Forest Music Service's production brought together the Choir of Joy, Funk in the Forest band, and a massed choir formed from 20 Waltham Forest primary schools for a powerful theatrical experience.

Created and directed by Maya Sapone, the show blended original

compositions with works by Romantic and Modernist composers, alongside folk traditions and improvisation.

At its core was Kate Stilitz's evocative *Songs of the Forest*, a song cycle commissioned by Waltham Forest Music Service in 2023 that included young people's ideas and words. These songs provided an atmospheric soundscape that carried audiences through themes of history, nature and a sense of belonging.

The story followed a group of Victorian schoolchildren led by a young William Morris, journeying through familiar local landmarks

under the guidance of the mystical Mother Shipton. As the narrative moved through time, the changing landscapes of the borough were brought to life.

Waltham Forest Music Service said: "*A Place of Wonder* stood as a testament to the strength of community collaboration and the transformative power of music, showcasing the talent and imagination of Waltham Forest's young people while honouring the borough's cultural and natural heritage."

For more information about future projects and musical opportunities, visit: wfmusicclub.org

LEYTON

Shisha bar ordered to turn music down

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

A shisha bar in Leyton has been ordered to turn its music down after neighbours complained to Waltham Forest Council.

Residents living near Duos Lounge, in Lea Bridge Road, complained about "very loud music" coming from the venue on Fridays and Saturday nights until 2am.

Despite being handed an abatement notice by Waltham Forest Council's noise team, the issues persisted and the owner was handed a formal warning in early February.

The issues peaked in mid-April, when council officers made a number of visits to both Duos Lounge and the neighbouring properties.



Duos Lounge Credit Google Streetview

The second time officers visited, music coming from Duos Lounge was "audible" but "not as excessive" as before, according to a council report. They asked the venue to keep the music at the same level, but residents said it was turned back up to an "unbearable" volume once the officers had left.

A week later, on 25th April, officers visited a resident's home and

found the music to be "unacceptably" loud.

Inside the home, "music, song lyrics, and the DJ shouting into the microphone" were "clearly audible" and one officer could feel the vibrations from "heavy bass" music beneath her feet.

At a licensing hearing in July, the licensing committee – made up of elected councillors – ruled that a noise limiter must be installed in the venue.

All amplified music will be run through it, and the operators will not be able to access it or change the settings. Such devices are set and secured by the council and prevent music from being turned up past a certain decibel limit.

Duos Lounge declined to comment when approached.

BLACKHORSE ROAD

Greggs renames store after Harry Kane

Ahead of England's World Cup quarter-final match against Norway, Greggs transformed its Blackhorse Road shop to 'KANES' in tribute to local hero Harry Kane, who was born in Leytonstone and grew up in Chingford.

The shop closed as normal on Friday, 10th July before reopening its doors as 'KANES' the following morning.

The shop was due to revert back to familiar Greggs branding on Sunday, but bosses called extra time on the transformation as England made it through to their fateful semi-final match against Argentina on Wednesday, 15th July.

Lynette Powell, shift manager at Greggs, Blackhorse View, said: "It's fantastic to be able to celebrate a local lad who's gone on to become one of the biggest



Credit Greggs/Hope and Glory PR

names in football.

"Harry's achievements have given local people plenty to be proud of over the years, and we're delighted to be part of marking this special moment. We're used to serving local favourites at Greggs, but this is definitely the first time we've had one named above the door!"

England came third in the World Cup, their best ever-placing since winning in 1966. Captain Kane scored a total of six goals throughout the tournament.

LEYTONSTONE

Parents raise £8k to 'climate proof' school

by Marco Marcelline

Parents at a Leytonstone primary school responded to the July heatwave with a fundraiser that rose as quickly as the temperature, generating £8,000 in just 48 hours to keep pupils and teachers cool.

Following temperatures as high as 36c, which caused many London schools to close, George Tomlinson Primary School put out a plea to parents to donate to "cool the school".

The school had stayed open with reduced hours in a bid to keep children comfortable.



The school was able to buy outdoor shade sails with the money Credit George Tomlinson School

Despite this, temperatures in classrooms allegedly reached over 30c, spurring parents and teachers to act.

Working closely with staff, parents identified the equipment that would be the biggest help – fans, portable AC units, outdoor gazebos and shade sails which are all now in place for the next wave of extreme temperatures.

Headteacher Nicola Wilson said: "It's hard to find the words to fully recognise the kindness, care and support our community has shown. Money is tight for so many at the moment. My staff and I are overwhelmed by the generosity shown to us."

Emily Hughes, parent of year three and year five children who led the efforts to mobilise the parent community, said: "While we hope that the Mayor of London's 'Heat Ready London' plan will equip schools like ours to keep kids safe in extreme heat, we can't wait for that. We had to act fast, and we were blown away by the response."

LOCAL NOTICES

Published: 31st July 2026

**Licensing Act 2003:
Application for the Grant
of a Premises Licence**

**Notice of application for the grant of a Premises
Licence under section 17of the Licensing Act 2003.**

Notice is hereby given that **The Parochial Church
Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Walthamstow**
has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest
on **20/07/2026** for the grant of a premises licence
under Section 17 of the Licensing Act 2003 for use
at the premises known as **St Mary's Walthamstow,
8 Church End, London E17 9RJ**. The proposed
licensable activities are:

**• The Retail Sale of Alcohol (On & Off Sale): Mon–
Sun, 12:00 to 22:30. Regulated Entertainment
(Films): Mon–Sun, 12:00 to 22:30.**

The record of this application is held by the Licensing
Authority and can be viewed on the website www.walthamforest.gov.uk
or inspected at their offices at
Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow,
London E17 4JF by appointment.

Any Person wishing to submit representations to the
application must do so in writing to the Licensing
Authority or by email to Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk,
giving in detail the grounds for the objection.
Representations must be received no later than
17/08/2026.

It is an offence under section 158 of the Licensing Act
2003 for anyone to recklessly or knowingly make a false
statement in connection with a licensing application. The
Maximum Fine on Summary Conviction (Level 5 on the
Standard Scale) is Unlimited.

Beyond the Blue Limited – www.beyondtheblue.co.uk

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Fresh Country Food Ltd. trading as **Fresh Country
Foods of Unit 33, Cromwell Industrial Estate, Staffa
Road, Leyton E10 7QZ** is applying to change an existing
licence as follow:

**• To add an operating centre to keep 2 goods vehicles
and 0 trailers at Unit 33, Cromwell Industrial Estate,
Staffa Road E10 7QZ**

Owners or occupiers of land (Including buildings)
near the operating centres who believe that their
use or enjoyment of the land would be affected,
should make written representations to the Traffic
Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds,
LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this
notice. Representors must at the same time send
a copy of their representations to the applicant at
the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide
to Making Representations is available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-guide-to-making-representations-objections-and-complaints-goods-vehicle-operator-licensing.

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Book your licence advert or notice
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Email for a quote to licences@socialspider.com or call
Klaudia Kiss 07732 000 430 or Mark Brown 07728 520 116
Next publication date: 28th Aug | Booking deadline: 26th Aug

ARTS & CULTURE

Walthamstow kids create TfL art map

Children at Whittingham Primary Academy took part in an art and creative writing collaboration with the artist Michael Crowe

Children at a Walthamstow primary school have contributed to a new Transport for London (TfL) leaflet called the Spaghetti Map, which pinpoints the location of artworks on the London Underground. The leaflet is an art and creative writing collaboration between the artist Michael Crowe and more than 100 children across five London primary schools, including Whittingham Primary Academy. The Spaghetti Map draws on references from sunsets and angels to Greek mythology and Ghanaian Akan symbols to introduce the Art on the Underground commissions, showing how artworks in public space bring imagination into daily life. The leaflet is available online and at eleven London Underground



Whittingham Primary Academy kids with artist Michael Crowe Credit Alastair Fyfe

stations including those where artworks are displayed and stations local to collaborating primary schools, like Blackhorse Road. Seven new posters with original drawings and writing by four primary students are on display in the South Kensington Subway, which

links South Kensington Station to the Natural History, Science and Victoria & Albert museums. Deputy mayor for culture and creative industries, Justine Simons, said: “Art on the Underground is a jewel in London’s cultural crown, bringing world class artwork to millions of Londoners and visitors every day on TfL’s Underground network. “The Spaghetti Map is the latest brilliant example of how this project sparks creativity and imagination in children and young people during the summer holidays. The mayor and I are committed to ensuring everyone in the capital has access to fantastic art and culture as we continue to build a better and more creative London for all.” You can download the Spaghetti Map here: art.tfl.gov.uk/projects/spaghetti-map

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OBITUARY

‘The brightest light’: Tributes paid to Leyton teen

Leyton Sixth Form College student Umar Dumbuya, 18, tragically drowned while on a Duke of Edinburgh expedition in Wales

by Marco Marcelline

Tributes have been paid to a local sixth form student who tragically drowned while on a Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) trip in Powys, Wales on Tuesday, 30th June.

Umar Dumbuya, a student at Leyton Sixth Form College, was found dead by emergency services after entering the River Wye in the evening. He was only 18 years old.

His college organised a GoFundMe on behalf of his family to help raise funds towards funeral costs.

Leyton Sixth Form College said: “Umar will be remembered for their kindness, warmth, and the positive impact he had on his family, friends, classmates, and everyone who had the privilege of knowing them.

“As a community, we mourn the loss of a valued member of our college. Umar will be remembered with great affection, and our thoughts remain with everyone affected by this

tragic event. Umar’s loss has left an immeasurable void in the hearts of all who loved them.”

Friends and classmates left touching tributes to Umar on a memorial page set up by his college. Hannan Abdullahi wrote: “I remember the first time we met on bronze DofE, you had such a positive energy and we all laughed as we messed around on the Fairmead Campsite after setting up our tents.

“The way you never failed to have that spark and that radiant energy will always stay with me and for that I will be forever grateful I got to know you.”

Another friend wrote that Umar was “someone who cares for you through good times and bad, who you can count on to lift your spirits. Umar was unafraid to be himself, and I found myself drawn to his unwavering authenticity”.

Teacher Giulietta De Lissandri also paid tribute to the teenager, writing: “Umar’s smile and enthusiasm will always be remembered. As a DofE student, he shone in every way. During the bronze expedition he helped his



Umar Dumbuya
Credit Leyton Sixth Form College

team mates by carrying another person’s bag who was struggling.

“An example of how generous and kind-hearted he genuinely was. I know that he loved everything about the Duke of Edinburgh award.”

Umar has also been remembered as a talented actor and poet, with his drama teacher Joanne Melville stating: “You were a beautiful soul and a naturally gifted actor who brought joy, kindness and warmth into every drama lesson I had the pleasure of sharing with you. Your enthusiasm, smile, laughter and wonderful spirit lit up the classroom.

“I was so proud of you when you performed Mark’s monologue in year one. It was such a tense and emotional scene, and you delivered it beautifully, with a stillness, honesty and sensitivity that only you could bring. It was a privilege to see your talent grow.

“You were loved dearly by your friends, your teachers, and everyone whose life you touched. Your energy and enthusiasm will never be forgotten. Thank you for every laugh, every smile, and every moment of joy you shared with us.”

Donate to a GoFundMe for Umar’s funeral costs: gofundme.com/f/umar-dumbuya or contribute or read memories of Umar here: forevermissed.com/umar-dumbuya

LISTINGS

MARKET

Sunday Makers Market
Sunday 2nd August, 11am–4pm
Crate, 35 St James St,
Walthamstow E17 7FY

Hosted by Afrobbean Kitchen & SASB Events, this dynamic duo is bringing together local makers, families, and creatives for a day of connection and fun, proudly supported by Waltham Forest Council and Crate St James Street.

Expect rotating workshops and hands-on activities, games and entertainment for children all day, delicious food and drinks from Crate’s on-site vendors, and unique crafts and creations from local traders.

Whether you’re a maker, a market-goer, or just curious – come explore, connect, and celebrate with us.

Free, just come along

TAI CHI

Tai Chi taster event
Saturday 22nd August, 1pm–2pm
St John’s Church, 825 High Road
Leytonstone E11 1HH

As part of this year’s Summer at St John’s Leytonstone event join Tai Lou for this free Tai Chi event.

Take a moment to slow down, relax, and recharge with this free Tai Chi session.

Suitable for all ages and abilities, Tai Chi combines gentle movements with mindful breathing to help improve balance, flexibility, and wellbeing.

Come along for a calm and welcoming outdoor experience and discover the benefits of this ancient practice.

Free, just come along

HISTORY

Walking Tour – The Secrets of Wood Street
Saturday 22nd August, 2pm–4pm
Wood Street Station

Wood Street was known for its early film studios but there is so much more to discover in this area of Walthamstow. On this circular walk which traverses some of the area known at one time as ‘On the Forest’ we will seek out evidence of lost pubs, the lost film studios and several lost mansions – one former mansion still stands. We will walk down a path which dates back several centuries, visit a churchyard with some fascinating stories to tell and find a hidden mural and a hidden garden.

Book tickets (from £12.50) on Eventbrite

THEATRE

A Midsummer Night’s Dream
Sunday 23rd August, 12.30pm–4pm
Big Penny Social, 1 Priestley Way,
Walthamstow E17 6AL

Bursting with mischief, chaos, romance and magic, this joyful, family-friendly outdoor production reimagines Shakespeare’s hilarious comedy with a bold splash of contemporary flair. Escape into the enchanted forest alongside Hermia, Lysander, Helena and Demetrius as they get more than they bargained for, when a vibrant cast of magical woodland fairies take matters into their own hands. With high-energy numbers, slapstick comedy, and audience participation, this is Shakespeare for everyone!

Book tickets (from £4.20) here: bigpennysocial.co.uk/whats-on

POETRY

Poems Not Bombs
Thursday 27th August, 7pm
Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61–63
Tower Hamlets Road E17 4RQ

Poems Not Bombs poetry open mic upstairs at Walthamstow Trades Hall, is a free monthly event – taking place on the last Thursday of every month at 7pm. It is for people of all experiences and levels to come and share their poems. Sign up between 6.30pm and 7pm to read. Time permitting, everyone gets five minutes. Hosted by Paul McGrane from local poetry collective Forest Poets. Although this event is free it’s advised you reserve a free spot in advance to avoid disappointment.

Book a spot on Eventbite, search: ‘Poems Not Bombs’

Submit your listings

For next month’s listings, email the details of your event to wfecho@socialspider.com by Monday 17th August.

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SPORT

World Cup flag dispute breaks out after council chooses Three Lions over St George's Cross



The Three Lions flag flying outside the town hall
Credit Waltham Forest Council

Waltham Forest Council leader Paul Perkins attracted Tory criticism after opting not to fly England's national flag during the World Cup

by Marco Marcelline

A flag dispute broke out between Conservative councillors and the Green Party after the town hall decided against flying the St. George's cross during the World Cup.

Waltham Forest Conservatives leader Emma Best wrote to Waltham Forest Council leader Paul Perkins on Tuesday, 14th July, requesting the town hall fly the England flag in support of the team's World Cup campaign.

Expressing the Conservatives' disappointment that the town hall had not already decided to fly the flag, she added: "Given the team's talisman, Harry Kane, was born in Whipps Cross and raised in Chingford, it feels even more important we show our support."

In response, Cllr Perkins, of the Green Party, opted to fly the Three Lions flag instead, adding the town hall would be illuminated in red and white for the remainder of the tournament.

Speaking before Argentina abruptly ended England's hopes, he quipped: "If England make the final, we should perhaps mark the occasion with a quick penalty shoot-out outside the town hall. It would be a fitting way to settle footballing – and flag-related – matters."

But that wasn't the end of such matters as residents took to social media to ask why the traditional St. George Cross was not flying instead.

One wrote on Facebook: "About time, three weeks late and not St. George." Another said: "An England flag was requested by councillor Emma Best and you fly this? It's not an England flag; this is what being fobbed off looks like, treat requests with respect."

The topic was then brought up by Conservative councillor for Hatch Lane and Highams Park North Siobhan Wing who at a full council meeting (16th July) said: "Why did the leader choose to fly the Three Lions flag instead of the England flag; can the leader confirm that in the future you will fly the flag of St. George?"

A slightly exasperated sounding Cllr Perkins replied: "I thought this might come up. Firstly, commiserations to everyone in the chamber who was left desperately disappointed by last night's match against Argentina. Flags can generate very strong emotions but I think it's important that we recognise that there are a range of opinions on how best to support the England team."

"Some people fly the St. George's flag, some people put up bunting, some people light up the town hall in red and white – we have done two of those. I think we shouldn't fall into the trap of thinking that if we do one thing we are against something else. Let's focus on what brings us together instead on what divides us."

Councils in England are free to fly the St George's cross year-round if they choose. Conservative and Reform UK politicians have strongly encouraged its use as a symbol of national pride, while some Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green councils have been more cautious, citing concerns about the flag's use by far-right groups.

Reacting to the decision to fly the Three Lions flag, Cllr Best told the *Echo*: "I'm grateful for the leader's response and that we are unified in wanting to support our boys; that is the most important thing!"

"There are wider questions around the decision to deviate from flying the St. George flag which I hope are answered in due course."

"If it were down to me I would fly our national flag 365 days a year, but I do hope our new administration will at least be open to flying it on special occasions where it is appropriate to do so."

She also accepted Cllr Perkins' proposal of the (now indefinitely postponed) penalty shootout, joking: "I can't wait, but I don't rate his chances as I suspect he will pull too far to the left."



Waltham Forest Council leader Paul Perkins
Credit Waltham Forest Council



A fan pitch invasion at Leyton Orient's Brisbane Road as they win promotion back to the Football League in 2019 Credit Wikimedia

Leyton Orient unveil museum celebrating 90 years at Brisbane Road

Leyton Orient FC has opened a new museum space that pays homage to the Brisbane Road club's history.

The museum, located in the former home team dressing room, in the East Stand, showcases memorabilia, photographs, programmes, shirts and unique artefacts from across the decades, "providing supporters with the opportunity to explore and celebrate the club's remarkable past".

The former home team dressing room has recently undergone a restoration project, stripping the walls of their 1970s style panelling to take the interior back to its original appearance, when the stand was erected at Brisbane Road in 1956.

The Leyton Orient Museum can be accessed under the 'Only One Orient' sign in Brisbane Road, through the set of red wooden double doors.

The museum coincides with Orient's 90-year anniversary of being based in Brisbane Road, a feat the club will celebrate with Leyton Orient Memories, a programme of special events, each focusing on a different chapter of the club's history.

Themed evenings will "celebrate memorable seasons, iconic matches and players, historic achievements and defining moments that have helped shape Leyton Orient", the club has said.

Orient supporters will also have the chance to hear first-hand stories from former players, managers and

special guests, while enjoying exclusive displays, and question-and-answer sessions.

The first such event was held on Wednesday, 22nd July, and saw club historian Davis Watson speak with support from Leyton Orient Trust CEO, Neil Taylor. Also in attendance was the son of legendary manager Jimmy Bloomfield who coached the team in two separate stints in the 1960s and 1970s.

Leyton Orient Trust CEO, Neil Taylor, said: "We are thrilled to be working with Davis Watson – club historian – on bringing the East Stand home team changing room back to life and filled with Orient memorabilia – kindly donated by Orient fans."

"Given the age of the changing room and the hundreds of Orient players that used it – it is fitting that we celebrate the achievements of the 1956 winning team in the very room where they would have celebrated."

"As the club charity, it is important that the club's history is remembered and shared with new generations, so that they appreciate what previous fans, players, managers and owners have built and something that we can all be proud of."

The club has also urged fans to share their own memories, photographs and treasured items to the museum.

If you'd like to donate to the Leyton Orient Museum, please contact neil.taylor@leytonorienttrust.org.uk

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