



Your independent community newspaper

WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free
July 2026, N° 136

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American actress Jinkx Monsoon and Adam Filipe in the critically acclaimed Soho Theatre Walthamstow production *End of the Rainbow* which depicted the final years of Judy Garland's life. Read our review on page 14 ► Credit Danny Kaan

Woman found dead in Walthamstow reservoir

Police are appealing
for next of kin amid
mystery death

The Metropolitan Police has issued an urgent appeal more than two months after a young woman was found dead in Banbury Reservoir, Walthamstow.

No next of kin have been identified or come forward since the woman, believed to be in her twenties, was found in the reservoir on Monday 13th April.

The woman is described as being five foot eight inches, of Afro-Caribbean descent, with a medium to large build, and was wearing black clothes and size eight shoes.

The police have urged anybody who may know the deceased woman or who has information to urgently speak with them.

The circumstances of the woman's death are unclear – the Met has not stated whether it is being treated as suspicious or unexplained. The cause of death has also not been revealed publicly.

Banbury Reservoir is an artificial storage reservoir that forms part of the Lee Valley Reservoir Chain. Managed by Thames Water, the 28-hectare drinking water basin is currently closed to the public.

If anyone has any information, please call police on 101, quoting CAD2255/13APR



Banbury Reservoir Credit Wikimedia Commons

Parents slam 'rushed' consultation on school closure

by Marco Marcelline

The Lammas School has announced a consultation on proposals that could see the Leyton secondary close by August 2027, with the school citing financial pressures related to long-term declines in pupil numbers.

According to the school, falling rolls across Waltham Forest have

created "sustained reductions in intake" that directly affect government funding, which is allocated on a per-pupil basis. The school adds this has made it "increasingly difficult to maintain staffing levels, curriculum breadth and wider provision".

Announcing the consultation via their website, The Lammas School told parents and carers: "[We have] experienced a significant reduction

in pupil numbers in recent years. Since 2021, year seven admissions have reduced from 141 to 51 in 2025. Current local authority data indicates that admissions for September 2026 are expected to remain below 60 pupils."

The borough's demographic shifts, including lower birth rates since the early 2010s, rising housing costs and families moving to outer London, are highlighted in

the Lammas consultation notice as key factors behind falling demand for places.

No final decision has yet been made regarding the future of Lammas. If the closure proposal proceeds, the school says it would adopt a phased approach. This would mean that current year six pupils due to join Lammas, and

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NEWS

Empty homes up 81% since 2016

by Kumail Jaffer, Local Democracy Reporter

The number of empty homes in London must be reduced to solve the capital's wider housing crisis, the London Assembly has been told.

In 2025, there were 105,138 empty homes in London – 2.7% of the total number of homes in London as a whole. This represents an 81% increase on 2016, when Sir Sadiq Khan took office at City Hall.

Around 12% of these empty homes are owned by local authorities directly – a higher proportion than any other UK region – with the number of council-owned homes left empty up by 66% since 2016.

This appears contrary to the aims of the 2021 London Plan, which states that “boroughs should promote efficient use of existing housing stock to reduce the number of vacant and



Credit Huy Phan via Unsplash

under-occupied dwellings”.

Last month, London Assembly's housing committee was told that City Hall must intervene more directly to help councils acquire, retrofit and fill empty properties.

While not a “silver bullet”, Bloomer said, bringing empty homes back into use would be an effective method in chipping away at the mayor's goals.

Tara Clinton, an associate at

consultants Arup noted that bringing just 5% of empty homes back into use would be equivalent to the current national construction rate for social housing.

City Hall declined to comment, but pointed to the expansion of the mayor's Homes off the Streets programme, in which he vowed to refurbish up to 500 empty homes as part of his wider strategy to end rough sleeping in London.

Increase in parks and libraries upkeep

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

Maintaining cultural services, libraries and parks are among the main challenges

facing the Greens in Waltham Forest, a new council scrutiny report says.

Published last month, it revealed that cultural venues in the borough are threatened by an “increasing reliance on external funding in a

highly competitive landscape” alongside the increasing costs of upkeeping listed heritage sites.

Meanwhile libraries are struggling with “rising demand alongside sustained high footfall and increasingly complex resident needs” which is further exacerbated by growing demands for one-to-one digital services.

According to the report, improving biodiversity – the variety of wildlife and plants – is proving a challenge due to the relatively small size of Waltham Forest's green spaces. Increasing habitat areas will have a knock-on effect of reducing space for playgrounds and sports, the report adds.

There is also a lack of suitable planting spaces for trees, while the waiting list for an allotment space is currently more than 1,500.

At the same time, the new Green administration will also need to make sure it secures funding to refurbish sports buildings and pitches before they reach the end of their lives.



Walthamstow Library

Rise in ‘complex’ antisocial behaviour

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

Antisocial behaviour cases in Waltham Forest are becoming more complicated to deal with, a new report warns.

Pressure is being put on Waltham Forest Council's resources by “increasingly complex cases” that involve mental health issues, substance abuse, homelessness and exploitation.

Additionally, there is a “small number” of people and shops that generate a “disproportionate” amount of antisocial behaviour, the council says. Repeat reports have led to “escalation and pressure on services”.

The report says environmental health officers – who deal with noise complaints and other such issues – have proven “extremely difficult” to hire and retain.

Meanwhile, the council says it is working to “maintain and modernise” the CCTV systems through introducing deployable cameras and upgrading equipment, but this will require investment.

The town hall says it is also being swamped by licensing applications and is struggling with processing them. It dealt with 3,856 in the first four months of the year – an “unprecedented” number, it says – compared to 999 in the same period last year.

New parking system

Waltham Forest Council switched its parking system from RingGo to new provider MiPermit this month.

Ahead of the switch on Wednesday, 1st July, residents were not able to buy or renew permits on Monday, 29th June or Tuesday, 30th June, as the council migrated accounts to the new platform.

During this period, permit-bay enforcement was suspended, though all other parking restrictions continued as normal.

The council says MiPermit will offer “faster approvals and simpler account management”, allowing users to apply, pay, renew and track permit usage in one place. Visitor permits will also be available instantly, including virtual books.

All active RingGo permits will remain valid until they expire and scratch cards can continue to be used as normal. After MiPermit goes live, renewals and any amendments will be handled through the new system.

MiPermit apps will also be available for Apple and Android devices.

Residents without internet access can apply for permits by calling the council's permit team on 0203 092 0112 (option 3).

For further support, residents can email wfp-shop@nsl.co.uk



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NEWS

Owners of ex-pub ordered to stop using it as Buddhist temple

by Sebastian Mann, Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council ordered the Confucius and Tao Association (CTA) to stop using Lord Brooke in Walthamstow as a temple

An unlicensed Buddhist temple operating out of a former pub in Walthamstow has been ordered to close by Waltham Forest Council.

The Confucius and Tao Association (CTA) bought Lord Brooke, in Shernhall Street, in 2014 but was refused planning permission to convert the building into a place of worship the following year.

Contemporary reports described its purpose as promoting the teachings of Buddhism, Confucius and the Great Tao through public seminars, while working to tackle poverty and racial tension.

The council's planning committee refused the charity's application in early 2015, saying the use of the building as a pub was a "valued



The Confucius and Tao Association bought the Lord Brooke back in 2014 Credit LDRS

part of the social infrastructure of the area".

Despite the town hall's decision, the TCA appears to have gone ahead with the conversion.

It is unclear when the venue began being used as a place of worship. There is no formal signage for the temple, only for the associated Lotus Bloom Café, and some historic remnants of Lord Brooke are still in place more than a decade on.

Waltham Forest lodged a planning enforcement notice in late April, demanding the charity stop the "unauthorised use of the land and buildings as a place of worship, associated community centre, and ancillary café" and ceases "all gatherings, events and educational classes".

It has also been ordered to remove "all fixtures and fittings" associated with the temple

and, once that step has been completed, to clear all debris and waste from the site.

The CTA has appealed to the Planning Inspectorate, a national government body that adjudicates on the planning system. It handles cases that range from home extensions to plans for thousands of new houses.

A council spokesperson said: "Planning laws are designed to control the development and use of buildings to benefit the public. We enforce these regulations to maintain and enhance the unique character of our town centres and neighbourhoods as well as to protect the integrity of the planning system."

"The council served an enforcement notice at 47 Shernhall Street on Thursday, 30th April after identifying a breach of planning control regarding the building's usage. We are aware an appeal has been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate and as such the notice is currently suspended until they have come to a decision."

Lord Brooke – branded a "drug haven" in 2014 by the Metropolitan Police – was shuttered after evidence of drug use was found all over the venue.

The CTA was approached for comment.

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NEWS



Waltham Forest Twinning Association chair Mervin Caesar-John and delegation with Antigua Governor General Sir Rodney Williams earlier this summer. Since 1999, Waltham Forest has been twinned with Antigua and Barbuda and Dominica, and the recent visit to build future educational, cultural and community partnerships marked a "major milestone" for the association. Credit: WFTA

Council to convert more empty buildings into homes

Waltham Forest Council is consulting on converting two former offices in Walthamstow and Leytonstone into temporary housing units

by Marco Marcelline

Waltham Forest Council is planning to convert two more vacant council-owned buildings into temporary accommodation, as the borough continues to grapple with a deepening housing crisis.

The plans, currently out for consultation, would see Cedar Wood House in Walthamstow and 90 Crownfield Road in Leytonstone refurbished and brought back into use as short-term homes for local families who have become homeless. Both buildings are currently empty and were previously used for council services.

According to the council, Cedar Wood House would be turned into 16 self-contained flats, while the conversion of 90 Crownfield Road would provide 14 housing units, eleven of which will be "larger family homes".

As with earlier schemes, the focus is on internal refurbishment rather than major external alterations, with upgrades including "new windows, doors, heating systems,

CCTV and secure entry".

In its consultation Q&A, the council says the buildings were chosen because they are already in council ownership, currently unused, and can be converted "relatively quickly" without the need to purchase new land.

It adds that the homes would be managed directly by the council and used as temporary accommodation until families can move into

longer-term housing, usually in the private rented sector.

The move follows similar proposals earlier this year to convert Rowan House in Leytonstone and a former adult social care home in Trumpington Road, Cann Hall.

Those schemes, if approved, will create 31 self-contained homes between them, with the council arguing that reusing its own buildings is the "quickest and most cost-effective

way" to increase housing supply.

At a consultation meeting for the previous proposals, residents raised questions about safety, anti-social behaviour and the impact on local services.

The council has in turn assured residents that homes will be managed by a dedicated housing team, have CCTV, and will be regularly inspected. The council has also stressed that households placed in the homes will be local residents who have already been assessed by the council as homeless.

The number of Waltham Forest households living in temporary accommodation has almost doubled in three years, rising from around 900 in 2022 to 1,700 by last autumn. The previous Labour administration warned the council faces a £14.4million overspend on temporary housing this year, driven by rising rents, shrinking supply and increasing homelessness.

Consultations on both Cedar Wood House and 90 Crownfield Road are open until Monday 20th July, with planning applications expected to follow in the autumn.

Have your say here: talk.walthamforest.gov.uk



Cedar Wood House in Fulbourne Road, Walthamstow. Credit: Waltham Forest Council

Call to pause airport expansion

by Kumail Jaffer, Local Democracy Reporter

London City Airport's expansion should be paused until "robust, independent real-world assessments" are undertaken to see how local communities will be affected, a London Assembly member has said.

In 2024 ministers green-lit a proposal to increase capacity from 6.5 million to nine million passengers a year by putting on more weekend and early morning flights, despite opposition from residents and climate change groups.

London City Airport's flight-path passes directly over Waltham Forest and contributes to local air and noise pollution.

Leonie Cooper, who chaired the London Assembly environment committee last year, has now written a letter to the airport's CEO Andy Cliffe to lay out her cross-party group's concerns around the expansion.

They centre around the impact of aviation noise on Londoners due to the larger planes set to come into operation as part of the airport's plans, and a perceived increase in the overall number of flights accentuating this.



However, airport officials hit back at the latter characterisation, suggesting that having aircraft with larger capacity would actually reduce the number of flights taking off and landing at the East London hub.

Should the airport's proposals be accepted, planes will fly over City Hall more than 90 feet lower than they currently do.

Two members of the environment committee – Reform UK's Keith Prince and the Conservative assembly member Thomas Turrell – chose not to support the letter.

Turrell said he believes London City Airport's proposals are reasonable, and could result in a reduction of noise and disruption to residents. He is also conscious of the impact refusing this could have on the airport's long-term future.

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NEWS

Zack Polanski cleared by GLA over houseboat tax row

The Green Party leader and London Assembly member had been accused of breaching the Greater London Authority's code of conduct over a tax issue

by Kumail Jaffer, Local Democracy Reporter

Green Party leader Zack Polanski has been cleared by the Greater London Authority (GLA) after a complaint about his tax affairs – but is still facing a probe on the matter by Waltham Forest Council.

Zack Polanski
Credit: Green Party/
Creative Commons



Conservative London Assembly member Neil Garratt submitted a formal grievance in May after allegations surfaced that Polanski had failed to pay council tax for a houseboat moored at a marina on the border between Hackney and Waltham Forest boroughs.

He suggested that the Green Party assembly member had breached the Nolan Principles and the GLA code of conduct by

failing to pay the council tax while a London Assembly member.

However, on Thursday, 18th June the GLA monitoring officer concluded that “no further action” needed to be taken.

This is because the complaint “relates to the member’s personal living arrangements” and “does not have a sufficient

The initial complaint came following news reports that Polanski may have avoided paying council tax despite being registered to vote at the marina address in East London.

In a witness statement, the Green Party leader said the “geographical uncertainty” of the marina basin, which he said falls between both the boroughs of Hackney and Waltham Forest, was partly to blame.

However, he admitted that he did “not undertake further enquiries at the time regarding the specific council tax implications” of his living arrangement, in which he had a leisure mooring agreement and was paying mooring fees. He also accepted that “greater care could have been taken in understanding the practical implications of my unconventional housing arrangements”.

“I believed that any applicable charges associated with the mooring such as council tax were being appropriately managed through the fees I paid,” he added. “I wish to make absolutely clear that there was never any intention on my part to evade council tax, avoid legal obligations, or obtain any improper financial advantage.”

A spokesperson for Polanski told the LDRS: “The monitoring officer for the Greater London Authority has conducted an independent inquiry into the complaints made against Mr Polanski and decided to take no further action. We therefore consider this matter closed.”

The council has not yet finished its investigation into whether Polanski owes tax.



Lammas School
Credit: Griffin School Trust

Leyton school could shut amid falling pupil numbers

Continued from page 1

current year nine pupils would transfer to other schools from September this year.

Meanwhile, current year seven and year eight pupils would move in September 2027, while current year ten pupils would remain at Lammas to complete their GCSEs with “full pastoral and academic support”.

However, some families say the consultation has placed them in “an uncertain and rapidly changing position”. One parent, whose child was due to start at Lammas in September 2026, told the *Echo* they were advised during the normal admissions process that Lammas was a viable option and reassured there were no plans for closure.

“Only later were we informed that closure was under consideration, by which point we had already made decisions about secondary school placement,” they said.

They added that families are now being encouraged to seek alternative school places before any final decision has been made, creating the impression

that the outcome may already be effectively decided.

There is also concern among parents about whether the council’s pupil-place forecasts fully account for major housing developments planned in Leyton, including at Leyton Mills, Coronation Gardens and Lea Bridge Station.

“Many families are questioning how future demand has been modelled, and whether removing secondary capacity now could create shortages in the coming years,” the parent said.

The Griffin Schools Trust, which runs Lammas, says it has already taken steps to respond to falling numbers, “including financial planning, staffing adjustments, collaboration across its schools and changes to post-16 provision”. It also “explored partnerships and merger options” before launching the consultation.

As previously reported by the *Echo*, schools across the borough are struggling with declining pupil numbers, rising costs and growing deficits.

In Waltham Forest, the number of year seven pupils fell 5.38% last year, while

nursery pupil numbers have dropped 27% over the past decade. Several primary schools have already reduced their Published Admission Numbers (PAN) to remain viable, and around 90 schools across London have closed or merged in the last five years.

The challenges at Lammas come recently after teachers at Henry Maynard Primary School staged a three-week strike over proposed redundancies linked to a £500,000 budget deficit, caused by a shortfall of 137 pupils.

A recent council report also warned that children’s services are “hugely costly” and that schools are “increasingly struggling to achieve a balanced budget” as rolls fall. Rising special needs costs and transport pressures are adding further strain.

There are 44 maintained schools in the borough, of which 19 ended the 2024/25 financial year with shortfalls totalling £3.2m.

According to Waltham Forest Council, current forecast closing balances for 2025/26 show an even starker position, totalling a potential £7.3m shortfall.

Some schools have only filled places up to 26% of their full capacity, while 13% of reception class spaces in the borough are empty. This has resulted in a reduction of over £2m of central government funding for schools in Waltham Forest, the council has stated.

In a bid to temporarily manage their deficits, several schools have requested council support through “consolidated cash advances”, essentially interest-free loans that must be repaid in three years.

Parents, carers, staff and other stakeholders can share their views until Tuesday, 7th July here: lam-mas-gst.org



Staff on strike outside Henry Maynard Primary School in May Credit: Tim Cole

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NEWS

Green council revoked housing support from homeless mum



A homeless mother says Waltham Forest Council 'pushed' her to find accommodation in just days before ending its support

by Lola Cook

A homeless mother-of-one was given just days to find a privately rented flat before Waltham Forest Council ended all offers of housing support.

Maya* and her ten-year-old son became homeless on Tuesday, 2nd June when bailiffs enforced a warrant to remove them from their privately rented Waltham Forest flat.

Maya's landlord had initially issued a 'no fault' Section 21 notice in September 2024, explaining that he could no longer afford mortgage payments on the property and wanted to sell it.

In the months following the notice, Maya attempted to find new accommodation through the council's housing team but says she was offered homes that were either not suitable, were too distant, or both.

One of these offers was a two-bedroom flat in Edgware, which Maya thought was unsuitable because of its distance from her support network and her son's Waltham Forest primary school.

According to emails from January seen by *Echo*, Waltham Forest's

housing team marked her as 'intentionally homeless' because she failed to attend a viewing for the property.

If a local authority decides someone is 'intentionally homeless', it means they are not legally required to offer a permanent council property or long-term housing.

Maya disputes the council's categorisation of her as being 'intentionally homeless', stating: "I never once said that I did not want the property. At the time, my focus was on caring for my son while dealing with an extremely stressful housing situation. "I was forced to cancel a viewing for the [Edgware] flat because my son was unwell and I could not find childcare."

Maya was given the opportunity to arrange a new viewing of the property but says she did not see an email from the council warning her that any subsequent non-attendance would be marked as a property 'refusal'.

In April, the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman found Waltham Forest had delayed progressing Maya's homelessness case while she remained in her property. The watchdog found the council had caused her "avoidable

stress and anxiety" and ordered the council to apologise and pay her court fees.

Maya and her son remained in the property while the landlord sought repossession through the courts. She eventually left the flat after bailiffs enforced a warrant on 2nd June.

Maya then contacted the council's children's services, which agreed to provide emergency hotel accommodation in Walthamstow.

But she was told that unless she secured privately rented accommodation by Wednesday, 17th June, all support would be withdrawn.

Speaking before the deadline, Maya said: "Children's services have not made any direct offers of accommodation. They have been sending me links to privately rented properties and arranging viewings for properties advertised on the open market, including one-bedroom flats and studio flats.

"These are not housing offers; they are private rental advertisements that I am expected to pursue myself.

"I have been informed that if I do not secure accommodation by the deadline set by Children's Services, the support currently being

provided will come to an end.

"As a result, I feel under significant pressure to accept accommodation that may not be suitable, as the alternative is the risk of homelessness for myself and my son."

Private rented properties that have been suggested to Maya include some in Southend and Luton, but she says she cannot move this far because of the impact it would have on her son, who is due to sit his SATs next year and has already experienced "significant disruption" to his education.

"Waltham Forest is where my son's school is," she said. "If I could pick up the school and take it with me, I would move, but I can't."

As part of a housing suitability review, the school's leadership submitted evidence warning against another move.

In a letter, the primary school said: "For a child who has already experienced two school moves, being required to transition to a third primary school, particularly during such a sensitive stage, would very likely have a negative effect on his mental health and educational progress."

Maya's housing support was revoked after she failed to secure any housing in the time period that was given. She has said she will file a fresh complaint with the Housing Ombudsman over the council's handling of her case.

A council spokesperson insisted

Waltham Forest had worked with Maya and Acorn to achieve a resolution, saying: "Our immediate focus is on working with the resident to find a safe and stable home for her and her child. We have made several offers, including options within London, in line with both our statutory duty and our accommodation policies.

"Like many London boroughs, we are experiencing a very challenging housing market. Demand for local housing far outstrips supply – and this is exactly why we are working to increase the availability of genuinely affordable homes and subsequently reduce the need to consider out-of-borough placements in urgent cases such as this.

"The council is determined to work in partnership with local residents, charity organisations, and housing associations to develop a firm response to the ongoing challenge of the housing crisis."

For Maya, the priority remains ensuring her son's education is not disrupted in the event of a move, telling the *Echo*: "I had a troubled education and I'm not having the same for my son. I just want the best life for him. I will do everything in my power that I can to provide that."

*Names have been changed

Additional reporting by Marco Marcelline



Renter's rights' union Acorn staged a protest outside Waltham Forest Town Hall in June Credit Acorn

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FEATURES

‘Fix the system not the student’: A Chingford teen’s fight to champion neurodivergent pupils



Courtney with signed t-shirts
bearing the names of teenagers
who dropped out of school
Credit Courtney Pemble

by Antonia Vlad

Courtney Pemble made the decision to drop out of school when she was 15 due to severe mental health struggles – since then she’s started a campaign calling for better support for neurodivergent pupils

Last month, 16-year-old Courtney Pemble from Chingford would’ve been celebrating year eleven leavers’ day, a

hugely significant chapter in anyone’s education that is traditionally celebrated by students signing their classmates’ school uniforms.

But Courtney left secondary school in year ten shortly after being diagnosed with autism; she was struggling with her mental health and said her school failed to adequately support her.

Not wanting to feel shut out from her peers, Courtney launched the campaign ‘Fix the System Not the Student’ to raise awareness of how the UK education system “overlooks the needs of neurodivergent students”.

Initially, she started the campaign with the intention of meeting fellow students with similar experiences who could sign her shirt and share their stories.

So far, over 2,500 young people have reached out to share similar experiences they faced in secondary school, and the campaign has gone viral – something Courtney was not expecting but is extremely grateful for.

She said: “I felt a mix of emotions knowing that people feel the same and that I wasn’t alone.”

Everyone who shared their stories asked to have their names added to her collection of shirts.

While she was at school, Courtney struggled severely with her mental health, which eventually began to affect her attendance and made going to school an “anxiety-inducing” experience.

When she tried to raise her concerns with her teachers and asked to be assessed, they rejected her request because they didn’t believe she exhibited “concerning behaviour”.

Naturally, this response led Courtney to feel marginalised, as her peers and teachers “didn’t take the time to understand that everyone has different ways of learning”. She believes that a one-size-fits-all system is flawed.

While at school, her academic performance deteriorated until she made the decision to remove herself completely due

to mental struggles that she says were not acknowledged.

Reflecting on her time trying to navigate her mental health difficulties at school, Courtney said: “What would’ve helped me was a little recognition and understanding, it was clear they weren’t willing to help.”

Courtney is now developing talks with schools to educate teachers and students about neurodiversity and foster inclusion.

She hopes that this campaign will set an example for schools and policymakers by showing them that “listening to the voices of young people can positively impact their mental health”, as well as encouraging them to see students as “more than just attendance figures”.

You can follow the Fix the System Not the Student campaign on Instagram.



Credit Courtney Pemble

Fundraiser launched to save Leyton Más

by Marco Marcelline

The organisers of Waltham Forest’s largest free community carnival say it is facing a significant funding gap

A public fundraising campaign has been launched to help secure the future of Leyton Más – Waltham Forest’s largest free community carnival.

Each year, Leyton Más brings together carnival arts, steel pan, choirs, sound systems, schools, artists, volunteers and local communities in a vibrant celebration of culture, creativity, identity and belonging.

But following unsuccessful funding applications and dwindling public arts funding, the organisers of Leyton Más 2026 say it is now facing a significant funding gap that threatens its future.

In a bid to save it, GB Carnival CIC has launched a crowdfunding and sponsorship campaign inviting the public, businesses and supporters to “help protect and sustain the festival for future generations”.



Produced by GB Carnival CIC and community partners, Leyton Más celebrates African-Caribbean carnival traditions

alongside contemporary community arts, music, creative learning and environmental action. The programme supports chil-

dren and young people, artists, schools, volunteers and local residents through inclusive cultural participation and skills development opportunities.

Frank Sweeney, Leyton Más director, said: “Leyton Más has become an important cultural platform for creativity, participation and community celebration in Waltham Forest.

“We are determined to keep the festival free, accessible and community-led, but we now need support from the wider public, local businesses and partners to help make that possible.”

Supporters can donate, sponsor a festival zone, share the campaign or become regular supporters of Leyton Más 2026.

The programme for this year’s event includes schools and community workshops, volunteer and creative skills development, the People’s Parade: Led by the Windrush Parade, the Pan Yard Steel Pan convention, and more.

For more information or to support the campaign:
Visit leytonmas.uk

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ARTS & CULTURE

‘Magical tapestry’ of Walthamstow unveiled during E17 Art Trail

More than 1,600 people visited a unique community exhibition in June celebrating Walthamstow through a large-scale collaborative textile map created by local residents aged from eleven to 90.

Over many months, 120 contributors came together to answer the question ‘What makes Waltham-

stow special’, through stitching, embroidery, knitting, crochet and textile art, creating a vibrant map filled with landmarks, memories, stories and personal connections to the area.

Created by The Walthamstow Welcome in partnership with Frederick Bremer School, the project brought together over 70 year seven

students and teachers alongside more than 50 members.

The Walthamstow Welcome is a volunteer-led community group founded by knitwear designer Debbie Bliss MBE to tackle loneliness and social isolation through craft.

The finished artwork was exhibited at Orford House and later at Mother’s Ruin as part of the E17 Art Trail. Visitors explored the map, shared their own memories and celebrated the creativity and diversity of the local community.

The exhibition also welcomed the mayor of Waltham Forest Marcelo Hart-Camus, and High Street councillor Lisa Bryan.

The visit provided an opportunity to showcase the artwork and meet many of the contributors whose stories, memories and creativity are stitched into the piece. During his visit, Cllr Hart-Camus added his own stitched contribution to the map, becoming part of the artwork’s continuing story.

Writing in the exhibition visitors’ book, the mayor said: “This map of stories, places, landmarks and landscapes is a quilted and sewn magic

tapestry that beams with the beauty of our corner of the world. I am honoured to visit and even contribute a stitch; thank you.”

Debbie Bliss said: “This project exceeded all our expectations. It brought our community together in ways we could never have imagined and gave local children the opportunity to feel involved and have a voice in the place they call home.

“The response has been wonderful, with more than 1,600 people coming to see the exhibition. Everyone who has viewed the map has found something that connects with their own experience of Walthamstow.”

Jacquie George, also of The Walthamstow Welcome, said: “Bringing together 120 contributors aged eleven to 90 has been an extraordinary journey and, as one of my colleagues observed, it is not often you see a piece of work that spans so many generations and includes people from such a wide range of backgrounds.

“We were honoured to welcome the mayor and councillor Bryan, and delighted that the mayor chose to add his own stitch to the map.”



Members of The Walthamstow Welcome with mayor Marcelo Hart-Camus Credit Nicola Tree

Community-led rebrand for Waltham Forest Pride

Taking place from Monday 6th to Saturday 18th July, Waltham Forest Pride 2026 will feature a borough-wide programme of workshops, exhibitions, film screenings, and discussions

A new community-led LGBTQ+ festival is set to launch across Waltham Forest this month, bringing artists, charities, and residents together for two weeks of events celebrating queer culture, creativity, and community.

Waltham Forest Pride 2026 will be a new borough-wide celebration of LGBTQ+ culture, bringing together communities, artists, venues and organisations in a grassroots initiative that organisers hope will become a lasting annual fixture in the borough’s calendar.

Taking place from Monday, 6th to Saturday, 18th July, the event will feature a borough-wide programme of workshops, exhibitions, film screenings, discussions, drag,

cabaret, community events, and nightlife across Walthamstow, Leyton, Leytonstone, Highams Park, and Chingford.

The festival has been organised by the Waltham Forest Pride Collective in partnership with Walthamstow Trades Hall and local organisations including ELOP, CADOS, Walthamstow Wetlands, Forest Cinemas alongside local artists, independent venues, and community groups.

Waltham Forest Pride 2026 has said it is a grassroots alternative to “centralised and corporate”, larger Pride events.

Events include opening and closing celebrations at Walthamstow Trades Hall, a community photography and storytelling exhibition, a queer botany walk at Waltham-

stow Wetlands, zine-making and art workshops, poetry and spoken word, LGBTQ+ film screenings,



Walthamstow Trades Hall will be hosting several Pride events this month Credit Waltham Forest Pride

drag cabaret and live performances, community workshops and discussions, and family-friendly activities.

One of the flagship projects within the programme is a community-led photography exhibition celebrating the diversity, creativity and experiences of LGBTQ+ people across the borough.

Residents, photographers and community members are invited to submit photographs that capture and reflect local LGBTQ+ journeys, identities, and moments of joy, resilience and everyday life.

Selected works will be showcased in venues across the borough, creating a vibrant public celebration of local stories. Filip Glatz from Waltham Forest Pride Collective said: “We wanted to create something that genuinely reflects Waltham Forest, local, community oriented, creative and inclusive.

“This initiative is about celebrating LGBTQ+ culture across the borough, while providing spaces for thoughtful and constructive dialogue around current issues affecting our communities. We also hope to support local venues, artists, and communities and mark the beginning of something long-term for Waltham Forest.”

Further programme announcements will be published throughout June 2026 on Waltham Forest Pride Collective’s Instagram page (@wfpriidecollective) and wfpriidecollective.co.uk



Soho Theatre welcomed 130,000 visitors in first year

Since opening in May 2025, the 960-seat theatre has staged over 100 shows spanning comedy, theatre, cabaret and music

Soho Theatre Walthamstow has welcomed more than 130,000 audience members in its first year, as the restored former Granada cinema emerges as a key cultural venue in East London.

Since opening in May 2025, the 960-seat theatre has staged over 100 shows spanning comedy, theatre, cabaret and music, featuring artists including Jinkx Monsoon, Tim Minchin, Reggie Watts, Rosie Jones, John C Reilly, Sindhu Vee, Harry Hill, Patti Harrison, the Philharmonia Orchestra and many more.

A total of 17,000 Waltham Forest residents have enjoyed reduced-price £15 tickets, while more than 10,000 children have taken part in shows, festivals and creative programmes such as Primary Playwrights and the Children’s Literature Festival.

Some 70% of front-of-house staff were hired locally, and more than 13,500 pints of its locally brewed Neon lager have been served across its four bars, while a new Soho Theatre Pub has opened next door.

Looking ahead, the programme includes previews of Grayson Perry *The Musical*, appearances from Dame Meera Syal, Sir Lenny Henry, Sue Perkins, Richard Ayoade, Ruby Wax, and rising stars such as Paddy Young and Larry Dean.

Family shows this summer include *Alice in Wonderland*, *The Cat in the Hat*, and *The Palestinian Circus: Step and a Half*, with festive highlights including *Taylor Mac: Holiday Sauce*, *Jonny Woo’s Un-Royal Variety*, *The Gruffalo* and the *Philharmonia Brass*.

See what’s on and book a show: sohotheatre.com/walthamstow

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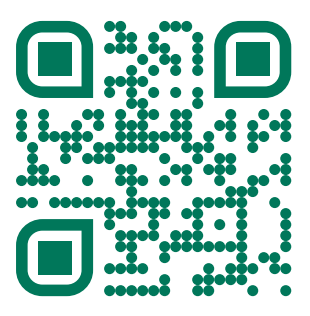
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REVIEW



Monsoon on stage with actor Adam Filipe Credit Danny Kaan

Theatre review: 'End of the Rainbow'

Jinkx Monsoon delivers a 'mesmerising' performance as a troubled Judy Garland navigating the sad final chapter of her life in this Soho Theatre Walthamstow production

by Mina Hanson

Peter Quilter's *End of the Rainbow* at Soho Theatre Walthamstow tells the story of The Wizard of Oz star Judy Garland in a dramatised version of her final years before she died in 1969.

Set in the Ritz Hotel, Garland is preparing for a five-week residency and, in between shows, is battling substance abuse, financial constraints, relationship chaos, and her own inner demons.

Jinkx Monsoon, who came to prominence after winning season five of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, plays a 47-year-old Garland, who is worlds away from the little girl with pigtails in *The Wizard of Oz* in 1939 that most of us might think of when we hear the name Judy Garland.

Monsoon, known for her eccentric and vintage-inspired style, brought life to the Walthamstow stage with her mesmerising performance.

Her comedic acting skills and character impersonation came as no surprise, but some of us were blown away by her previously hidden vocal abilities as she took on Garland classics such as *Come Rain or Come Shine* and *Over the Rainbow*.

It wasn't until later in life that the world finally learned how much a young Garland suffered and was painfully used by the

industry she grew up in.

The industry execs around her heavily critiqued her on just about everything, and she was forced into reliance on pills and alcohol to stay in shape and in form for her career as the portrayal heavily touches on.

Amidst the uncomfortable topics, Monsoon's performance managed to balance sadness with humour in true Garland form,



Jinkx Monsoon delivered a stellar performance as Judy Garland, Credit Danny Kaan

whilst confronting the audience with the reality of the intense pressure Garland had on her since she was little Dorothy clicking her ruby shoes together.

Monsoon wowed the audience by her performance in tackling Judy's multilayered personality, showing all shades of the star from the hilarious highs to the crashing lows.

Monsoon shared the stage with Jacob Dudman and Adam Filipe who gave real and jolting portrayals of their characters: Anthony, Judy's pianist for the show, and Mickey Deans, her then-fiancé.

The intimate cast helped add weight to the heavy script and story, including a live band that aided in bringing Garland's classic hits to the Walthamstow stage.

It is touchingly apt that this updated retelling of Peter Quilter's 2005 production, set in London, was brought back to the same renowned stage (Granada Theatre) that once hosted other worldwide greats such as The Rolling Stones and Buddy Holly.

End of the Rainbow is a stunning success that further earns Soho Theatre Walthamstow's growing reputation as a leading theatre destination in East London, capable of attracting star talent. Congratulations to all involved.

'End of the Rainbow' ran from Friday 15th May to Sunday 21st June

FOOD & DRINK

The art of a summer aperitivo

Wood Street Bakery's Jennifer Moseley says an aperitivo is one of life's great pleasures – a moment to pause, gather with friends and enjoy the long summer evenings

There's something we've always loved about an aperitivo: taking a bit of time at the end of a long day to slow down and be with friends. Unlike a formal dinner, it's light, relaxed and centred around sharing.

A few snacks, a glass of wine and no pressure to be anywhere else. The best aperitivos are the ones that stretch on as the conversation flows, turning a quick drink into an evening spent together.

That idea feels particularly relevant today. In a world that can often feel busy and disconnected, we've always wanted Wood Street Bakery to be a place where people can slow down and spend time together.

Whether it's friends catching up, neighbours meeting after work or families gathering around a table, there's something special about sharing good food and conversation without feeling rushed.

It's also something that feels very true to Walthamstow. One of the things we love most about the area is its strong sense of community. People genuinely support local, independent businesses, know their neighbours and make time for one another.

Bakery Lates grew out of that spirit – a way of extending the bakery into the evening and creating another opportunity for people to gather, catch up and enjoy some fantastic food and drink.

If we had to recommend one aperitivo pairing for a summer evening, it would be our boquerones



Boquerones over Bonilla a la Vista crisps Credit Jennifer Moseley/Wood Street Bakery

from La Ribera, supplied by Pratt Schneiders. These MSC-certified anchovies are caught in the Bay of Biscay off the Cantabrian coast during the spring months, then hand-filleted and preserved in oil and white wine vinegar.

We serve them simply on Bonilla a la Vista crisps. It's a classic Spanish combination and one of those dishes that reminds you how delicious simple food can be when the ingredients are exceptional.

To drink, we'd pair them with a glass of Ewa from Renegade Winery. This Pinot Blanc has bright notes of apple and nectarine alongside savoury hints of vanilla and flint, with a gentle salinity that works beautifully with the boquerones.

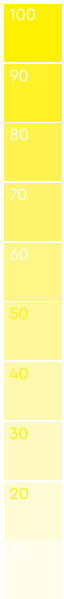
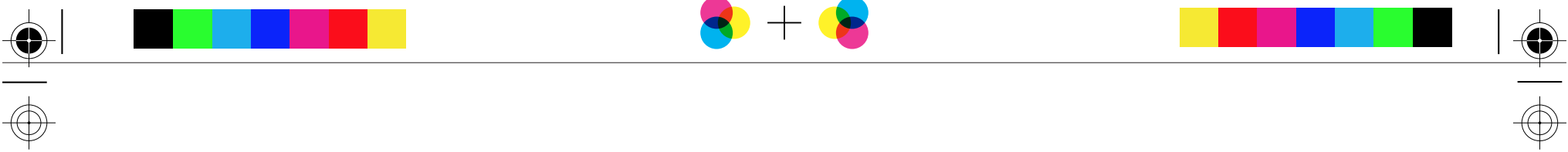
It's fresh, easy-drinking and exactly the sort of thing we want to be enjoying on a warm evening on Wood Street with our friends and neighbours.

Wood Street Bakery is staying open late every Friday and Saturday for aperitivo evenings

Find out more: woodstreetbakes.com



Buon aperitivo Credit Jennifer Moseley/Wood Street Bakery



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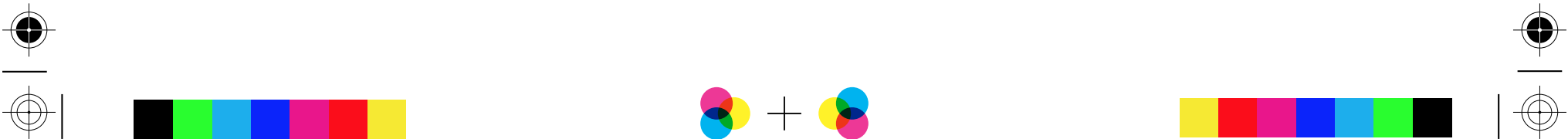
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AROUND THE BOROUGH

WALTHAMSTOW

Walker treks 700km to raise funds for community centre



Richard Bennett with his wife and daughter Credit: The Mill

by Marco Marcelline

A long-time trustee of a Walthamstow community centre has raised £5,500 for The Mill Community Centre by walking 700km across the country. Richard Bennett, 70, undertook the challenge to raise funds for The

Mill in Coppermill Lane, which has been operating for over 14 years.

The adventurer arrived at the Mill on Sunday, 31st May, after weeks on the road raising money and awareness for the community organisation.

After setting off from Walthamstow on 13th April, he returned on Sunday 31st May at 1.30pm, where he was

greeted by fellow trustees, volunteers, and members of the local community.

Richard was presented with a handcrafted rosette and medal, while the children's Lego Club honoured him with a one-of-a-kind Lego trophy.

Speaking about his fundraising attempt, Richard said: "I've seen the impact The Mill makes – giving people of all ages and backgrounds a place to connect. Turning 70 felt like the right moment to celebrate the community spirit at The Mill and our belief in 'People Making Things Happen'."

The first week of his walk saw him taking on the Thames Path all the way to Staines, Windsor and finally Maidenhead, before eventually making it to Oxford at the end of his second week, and to the source of the Thames in Gloucester at the end of week three.

From there he passed through Cirencester, Chippenham, and Bath before starting the Ridgeway National Trail through the Chiltern Hills.

His final week saw him take on the Lea Valley Walk from Leagrave to Tottenham Lock before making it back to The Mill on 31st May.

LEYTONSTONE

Café has license reinstated after successful court appeal

Café Lounge's licence had originally been revoked by the council in April 2025 after four staff members were found to be working illegally

A Leytonstone café has had its alcohol licence reinstated after successfully appealing a council decision to revoke it over illegal workers and unlawful indoor smoking.

The licence for Café Lounge, in Church Lane, was revoked by Waltham Forest Council in April 2025 after immigration officers

arrested four people without the right to work during a raid that January.

Officers from the Home Office and Metropolitan Police were reportedly sworn at and told to leave by staff during the visit.

At the original hearing, the council argued the venue had shown "five years of non-compliance", including a previous conviction for the venue's manager Meriman Spahui.

Licence holder Halit Matraxhi told councillors he should not be punished for the actions of Spahui, who ran the café day-to-day under a management agreement and has since been dismissed. Matraxhi said he acted only as landlord, visited infrequently and had no knowledge of the illegal workers.

Councillors were unconvinced, saying Matraxhi had failed to

properly supervise the premises and the licence was revoked, with the café given 21 days to appeal.

But at a Stratford Magistrates' Court appeal hearing, District Judge Sher overturned the council's decision after hearing that the café had operated without incident for seven months following the raid.

During that period, the licence holder removed the former tenant, took direct control of the business and appointed a new, experienced manager. No smoking was permitted on site and no further issues of crime or disorder were recorded.

The judge ruled that while the council's decision had been justified at the time, the "passage of time" and clear change in management meant licence revocation was no longer appropriate.

HIGHAMS PARK

The aftermath of the blaze Credit: London Fire Brigade



Six fire engines and around 40 firefighters were called to a fire on The Hale in Highams Park last month.

A garage, an outbuilding and two motorbikes were destroyed in the fire on Wednesday, 3rd June. A small part of the ground floor of two houses were also damaged. There were no reports of any injuries and the cause of the fire is currently under investigation, the London Fire Brigade (LFB) has said.

The LFB took the first of

more than 60 calls to the fire at 8.47pm and used GoodSam to live stream incident footage from smartphone cameras to provide better situational awareness.

When a 999 call is received by the LFB, the caller may be asked if they would like to provide a live video stream of the scene using their smartphone. The control officer will send a text message with a secure, one-time-use link that opens a live stream direct from the phone to the control room.

CHINGFORD

Chingford Leisure Centre celebrates £170k refurb

Chingford Leisure Centre recently celebrated the completion of a £170,000 refurbishment.

The centre's new health and fitness offering include a newly extended gym, refurbished changing facilities, upgraded lighting and refreshed branding.

A range of activities and engagement sessions took place during an event especially held to celebrate the refurbishment, including gym taster sessions, strength and conditioning and cardio masterclasses, table

tennis activities in reception, as well as free health checks and advice.

Daniel O'Connor, GLL partnership manager, said: "Chingford Leisure Centre is now an excellent place for our community to train, grow and achieve its goals, so we were delighted to welcome so many local residents to experience the upgraded facilities first hand."

"I would like to thank everyone who attended and joined in the activities, making the day so special."



GLL's Marco Coppola with local councillors John Moss and Sam O'Connell Credit: GLL

LOCAL NOTICES

Published: 26th June 2026

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

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

We **Two Flints Brewing Ltd** have Applied to London Borough Of Waltham Forest for a New Premises Licence for: **Two Flints Brewing Ltd, Unit D, 101 Blackhorse Road E17 6DJ.** Licensable activities and accompanying hours applied for are:

SALE BY RETAIL OF ALCOHOL
(on and off the premises):

- **Sunday to Thursday: 09:00 – 23:00**
- **Friday and Saturday: 09:00 – 00:00**

LIVE AND RECORDED MUSIC:

- **Sunday to Thursday: 09:00 – 23:00**
- **Friday and Saturday: 09:00 – 00:00**

Full details of the Application sought can be viewed at:- Waltham Forest Licensing Section, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4JF

Interested parties or Responsible Authorities can make written representation to: - Waltham Forest Licensing Section, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4JF or Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

WITHIN 28 DAYS: From 25/06/2026 TO 22/07/2026

It is an offence knowingly or recklessly to make a false statement in connection with this application, the maximum fine on summary conviction is unlimited.

**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 **Devendra Bungaradu** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **RnR Lounge 221–223 Chingford Mount Road London E4 8LP** Full Variation. The nature of the application is as follows:

- **To permit the sale of alcohol / regulated entertainment / late night refreshments from 11:00 to 23:00 Monday to Wednesday, Thursday from 11:00 till 01:00, Friday and Saturday from 11:00 till 04:00 and Sunday from 11:00 till 01:00**

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 **13/07/2026.**

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with this application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on conviction should such a false statement be made.

**Licensing Act 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 **Libertalia Bar Group LTD, Arch 1, Station Approach, Hitchcock Business Center, Leytonstone, London E11 4RE** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest Licensing Authority for the grant of a variation to the premises licence in respect of **Calamity Tank, Leytonstone, London E11 4RE.** The proposed variation is as follows:

- **Add Live music: Tues & Wed 16:00 - 00:00, Thurs - Sun 19:00 - 22:30.**
- **Increase Sale of alcohol (on the premises & Opening hours: Tue & Wed 16:00 - 00:00, Thurs & Sun 13:00 - 02:00.**
- **Increase Late Night Refreshments indoors: Tues and Wed:16:00 - 00:00, Thurs - Sun 13:00 - 02:00**

Representations
Any person wishing to make representations to this application must do so in writing to: Licensing Authority London Borough of Waltham Forest Town Hall, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4JF Email: licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Representations must be received no later than: **13th July 2026**

Inspection of Application
The application may be inspected at the Licensing Authority offices during normal working hours. Important It is an offence under Section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with this application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on summary conviction.

Date of Application: 15 June 2026

**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 **One Point Eight Bar Ltd** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest to vary the Premises Licence at **One Point Eight, Arch 146, Tilbury Road, Leyton, E10 6RE.** The nature of the application is as follows:

- **Add and extend sale of alcohol (on the premises & increase opening hours: Sunday to Wednesday, 10:00–22:00; Thurs–Sat, 10:00–00:00.**

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Section, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, 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 Section, London Borough of Waltham Forest, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London E17 4JF or via email: Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Representations must be received no later than **23/07/2026.**

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.

London Borough Of Waltham Forest Special Treatment Licence: Notice Of Application

Notice is hereby given that **The Sona Space London Ltd** has applied to Waltham Forest Council for a Special Treatment Licence at: **350 HOE STREET E17 9PX**

- **The application covers: Massage (Swedish, Sports, Deep Tissue, Remedial), Reflexology, Dry Needling, Medical Acupuncture, Wet Cupping (Hijama), Dry/ Moving Cupping, Energy Healing, and Reiki.**

Objections must be sent in writing to: LICENSING OFFICER, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, London, E17 4JF, or emailed to licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk by **21st July 2026.**

NOTICE

The Registrar General has cancelled the registrations Woodford Green United Free Church (United Reformed Church), High Elms, Woodford Green; Highams Park United Reformed Church (Congregational-Presbyterian), Malvern Avenue, Highams Park, Walthamstow; Fountain of Peace Ministries, 1st Floor, 3 Staffa Road off Argill Avenue, Leyton and Walthamstow National Spiritualist Church, Vestry Road, Walthamstow as a place of religious worship in accordance with the Marriage Act 1949.

Allyson Jones for the Registrar General
June 2026

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CONCERT

Daylight Music: Lost Map: Dominie Hooper, Isa Gordon + Clémentine March
Saturday 4th July 2026, 12pm–2pm
St John the Baptist's Church, High Road E11 1HH

This July we once again join forces with our friends at the Hebridean Lost Map label to present our summer showcase of songwriters and storytellers in word and sound. We plan to transport a trio of solo artists from across the length of the country to Leytonstone with voice, cello, synthesizer, guitar and digital processing collaged together to create something magical in the ever-welcoming space of St John's.

This event today is part of Leytonstone Festival and Leytonstone Arts Trail and we are inviting artists and audiences to leave their mark on the afternoon. Everyone who comes into the space will be invited to join in various activities: drawing or making alongside contemplating the music.

Pay what you can entry (children free)
Book tickets: tickettailor.com/events/artcticcircle/2175541

PRIDE

Waltham Forest Pride 2026
Monday 6th–Saturday 18th July
Across Walthamstow, Leyton, Leytonstone, Highams Park and Chingford

A brand-new borough-wide LGBTQ+ festival launches this July, bringing two weeks of workshops, exhibitions, film screenings, drag, cabaret, spoken word, community discussions and nightlife. Events take place across multiple venues including Walthamstow Trades Hall, Forest Cinemas, Walthamstow Wetlands and independent spaces.

Highlights include a queer botany walk, zine-making sessions, art workshops and opening/closing celebrations at Trades Hall.

Free and ticketed events; programme details on the Waltham Forest Pride Collective website

MARKET

Walthamstow Farmers' Market
Sundays in July, 10am–2pm
Walthamstow Town Square E17 7JN

The borough's long-running farmers' market continues through July with biodynamic produce, organic veg, unpasteurised milk, local honey, artisan bread, vegan cakes, game in season and more. A staple of the Sunday high street and one of the borough's most popular weekly fixtures.

Free entry

FESTIVAL

Leyton Más – People's Parade & Carnival Fête
Sunday 12th July, 12pm–6.30pm
Coronation Gardens, Buckingham Road, Leyton E10 5NG

Waltham Forest's largest free community carnival returns with a full day of colour, music and movement. Expect vibrant masquerade, steel pan, sound systems, choirs, dance, workshops and a family play zone. The People's Parade brings together schools, artists, musicians and community groups to fill Leyton's streets with creativity and celebration.

Free entry; donations encouraged to support #SaveLeytonMas

FUNDRAISER

Eat or Heat Quiz and Raffle
Thursday 16th July, 7pm
Walthamstow Trades Hall, 61–63 Tower Hamlets Road E17 4RQ

You are all invited to a quiz and raffle happening at Walthamstow Trades Hall raising money for the Eat or Heat food bank on Thursday 16th July.

Doors open at 7pm, and the quiz starts at half past. Tickets are £8 per person in advance or £10 at the door with all proceeds going towards the work that one of our amazing local food banks - Eat or Heat- do to support local residents.

Visit peoplesfundraising.com

REVIEW

'Street Sweeper' by Bren Gosling

Bren Gosling's debut novel tells the story of a "tender and complex" romance between Almir, a former boy soldier now working as a street sweeper, and Roland, a Jamaican man grieving his late mother

by Sarah Jones

It's a rare pleasure to open a debut novel and find your own borough quietly cast as a living, breathing character.

Yet, it feels entirely fitting for Wilcumbestowe – recorded in 1075 as “the welcome place” – a town with a centuries-old tradition of embracing strangers and those in need.

Street Sweeper by Bren Gosling, a former member of the Forest Writers' Group, is at its heart a love story that bridges borders, cultures, and a generational divide.

Though darkly difficult and brutal in places, it gently celebrates Walthamstow's historic spirit of sanctuary, with a warm, transformative LGBT+ romance.

Set in 2002 against the backdrop of the Golden Jubilee, the novel's sense of place is remarkably vivid – a world within worlds.

The glamorous Orford Road, bedecked in festive bunting, sits just minutes away from the unapologetically raw High Street.

More than just a portrait of a neighbourhood, this is a masterful examination of beautifully realized characters making sense of a world they didn't ask for and don't fit into.

The narrative feels profound, remaining grounded without veering into sentimentality or sensationalism.



Author Bren Gosling

Gosling is a master at depicting emotional isolation. Much like his recent play, *Invisible Me*, his fragile characters feel powerfully authentic and richly drawn.

While *Street Sweeper* can be a challenging read – with casual racism and homophobia serving as persistent motifs – the exploration of love remains measured, and never graphic or gratuitous.

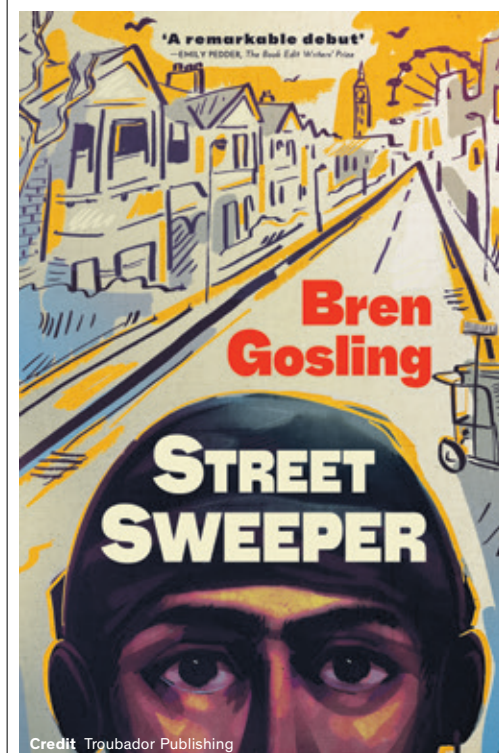
We first meet Almir, a 21-year-old deeply-traumatised former Kosovan boy soldier. Barely subsisting with the help of voluntary support groups, he is plagued by horrific flashbacks of the Balkan conflict, he is nevertheless determined to build a good, independent life.

For now, home is a shabby bedsit in the market, and his days are spent sweeping the streets of the upmarket Village where he becomes captivated by Roland, a gay man of Jamaican heritage who has recently moved to the Village.

Separated from his family and grieving the loss of his Pentecostal mother, Roland is searching for a fresh start to live openly. He relocates from Brixton, rents a stunning flat above The Old Village Bakery, and acclimatises by shooting hoops at the local basketball court.

Desperately shy, Almir watches Roland from afar – until the terrifying, triggering roar of the infernal neighbourhood helicopters causes him to collapse unconscious. The relationship that sparks from this moment forms the emotional core of the book: Can their connection withstand the immense weight of their pasts?

Meticulously researched, the book seamlessly interweaves Almir's harrowing



wartime flashbacks – of lost limbs, red snow and severe PTSD – with a tender, complex romance. Thoughtfully paced, this poignant debut truly offers something for everyone – whomever you love and wherever you live.

Bren Gosling is a writer and playwright whose play *Invisible Me* was recently performed at Southwark Playhouse, Borough.

He will be speaking about Street Sweeper at Waterstones Walthamstow at 7pm on Friday 3rd July. Tickets are free, but please contact a bookseller in store, by phone, or by emailing walthamstow@waterstones.com to book your place

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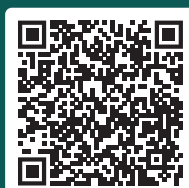
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SPORT

Sports and culture cabinet lead Anna Rose Kerr, winner Max Bell and GLL CEO Peter Bunday
Credit: Steve Bainbridge via GLL



Young athletes win at sports awards

Sixty-eight local athletes have been given a GLL Sport Foundation (GSF) award following a record number of applications to the scheme this year. The awards were presented at a special event on Monday, 15th June at Waltham Forest Town Hall.

Young athletes were very well represented, with 37% of the awards going to under 16s. This year's youngest recipient is karate competitor Edward Turchyn who trains at Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre.

Edward won a silver medal at the Copenhagen Open karate competition last year.

Edward said: "I am proud to get this funding. It helps me do my best and represent England at international competitions. My aim is to train really hard and win gold."

BMX competitors Harry Holmes, aged 13 and sister Erin Holmes, aged eleven also received awards, along with eleven-year-old sailing champion Jude Baldock.

The awards event was attended by GSF Chair and GLL boss, Peter Bunday, new Waltham Forest cabinet member for culture, sport and communication Anna Rose Kerr, and strategic director for neighbourhoods and environment, Debbie Porter.

Local triathlon athletes Lucy Charles-Barclay and her husband

Reece are both GSF recipients and Lucy participated in a Q&A at the event in her capacity as a GSF ambassador.

She said: "We cannot thank the GLL Sport Foundation enough for their ongoing support. Without their help, we couldn't have dreamt of reaching the level we have so quickly and we have stayed loyal to the support programme since to help inspire more athletes."

The largest independent athlete award programme in the UK, GSF supports athletes through financial bursaries, access to physical rehabilitation and mental wellbeing support. In addition, all athletes are given access to over 250 sport and leisure facilities across the UK operated by GLL under its Better brand. This year, a record number of applicants were received from athletes across the UK.

Daniel Bank, GLL community sport manager, said: "This year, GSF will be providing £45,000 of support to local athletes, 96% of whom receive no other financial backing."

"Without this scheme, many would be self-funding their training and competitions or relying on family support via the bank of mum and dad. We gave awards to nine new athletes aged under 14 this year and the support is particularly key for this age group."



Award winners outside Waltham Forest Town Hall Credit: Steve Bainbridge via GLL

Coppermill Cup

Veteran footballers from across the borough took part in a lively six-a-side tournament at Douglas Eyre Sports Centre last month, writes David O'Driscoll

The world is now enthralled watching what is generally considered one of the world's greatest sporting events, the World Cup.

But a world away from that tournament was a recent football event in Walthamstow which was very much focused on bringing football back to its basics; straightforward competitive fun.

The first Coppermill Cup was held at the Douglas Eyre Sports Centre on Saturday, 2nd June. This tournament featured over 140 footballers in the veterans category (age 35 and up).

It was a six-a-side competition and there were 16 teams, the majority of whom were from local areas in addition to a guest team from Portugal who were particularly unlucky as they reached the semi-final without conceding a goal

but were knocked out on penalties.

The format for the day was similar to the World Cup, with groups of four battling it out for a place in the knock-out rounds. The games were very short, sharp and com-

petitive and the teams were held in check by four local lads who had recently completed refereeing qualifications and did a sterling job.

The main competition was won by City of London Vets while the 'losers plate' (a side tournament played between the teams that didn't make it out of the group stage) was won by local side Coppermill Swifts who had been the main organising force behind the initiative.

Participants are already enthused and excited about next year's event, and it provided an antidote from the rampant commercialisation and monopoly of the World Cup.

The Coppermill Swifts Credit: David O'Driscoll



Leytonstone man sentenced for role in paralympian's death

Athletics UK's ex-head of sport Keith Davies 'rushed' the assembling of an unstable metal cage that fell on top of para-athlete Abdullah Hayaye in 2017

UK Athletics has been fined £350,000 after admitting corporate manslaughter over the death of para-athlete Abdullah Hayaye, who was killed when a throwing cage collapsed during training in Newham in 2017.

Hayaye, 36, was struck on the head by the five-metre-high cage at Newham Leisure Centre on 11th July 2017 while preparing for the World Para Athletics Championships. He died at the scene.

Hayaye was a former UAE serviceman who took up discus after a serious head injury. He had competed at the Rio Paralympics in 2016 and hoped to qualify for Tokyo.

At the Old Bailey on Tuesday, 2nd June, the governing body was fined £350,000 plus costs after pleading guilty earlier this year. Its former head of sport, Leytonstone resident Keith Davies, 79, was given a community order with 175 hours of unpaid work for a health and safety offence.

A joint Met Police and Newham



Abdullah Hayaye was a talented Paralympian Credit: Met Police/family

Council investigation found that ten metal base plates designed to stabilise the cage had been missing or unused for around five years. The cage, donated after the 2012 Olympics, had repeatedly been erected without these components at UK Athletics events. It had been assembled the day before the incident by Davies and assistants work-

ing "in a rush" and in poor light.

Experts told the court that high winds and uneven ground contributed to the collapse, and highlighted UK Athletics' lack of effective safety processes.

Colin Gibbs, senior CPS prosecutor, said the death was "wholly avoidable".

In a statement issued after sentencing, Hayaye's family said: "Abdullah was not just a person who passed away. He was a father and a husband with responsibilities, dreams and a future. What happened was not just a simple mistake but the result of gross negligence that could have been avoided had the required safety procedures been adhered to."

Detective Chief Inspector Lucie Card said the case showed the Met's determination to secure justice "no matter how long it takes", and described the incident as "a tragedy waiting to happen".

UK Athletics apologised and said it had made "substantial changes" to its safety and governance procedures.

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