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# WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

**Free**
Nov 2026, Nº 140

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## Council 'illegally' using brewery's name

**CRATE Brewery co-founder Neil Hinchley says Waltham Forest Council is breaching copyright law by still using his brand's name for the St James Street food and drinks venue, run by the town hall ever since CRATE relinquished ownership in January 2024.**

**Read the article on** walthamforestecho.co.uk ►

# Parents allege continued use of seclusion rooms at Whitefield School

**by Marco Marcelline**

Families have raised fresh concerns about the ongoing use of seclusion rooms and injuries sustained by their children at Whitefield School in Walthamstow.

The parents' concerns come amid the ongoing fallout from an abuse scandal which saw 38 pupils subjected to physical and psychological abuse in so-called 'calming rooms' between 2014 and 2017.

CCTV footage discovered in 2021 showed children, many of whom were non-verbal, being kicked and hit by staff. Pupils were left alone in windowless rooms for up to four hours, with some sitting in urine and eating crumbs from the floor.

In July, the *Echo* revealed that a council-commissioned review raising concerns about the misuse of calming rooms in 2016 had been buried after the school threatened legal action against the town hall.

The failure to act meant the rooms remained open for a further six months, until Ofsted inspected the school in January 2017.

And now one parent, who asked to remain anonymous, has told the *Echo* that her partially verbal daughter, then aged eleven, was placed in a calming room as recently as September 2025.

She said: "My daughter came home from school to tell me she had been put in a room at school – I asked if she was alone and she said yes.

"I asked if the door was closed behind her and she said yes. I asked if there was anything in the room and she said no."

The mother quickly arranged a meeting with the headteacher where she was allegedly told no such rooms existed in the school.

"I pushed back and was then told every classroom has a room – deemed sensory spaces – off them, all with no doors.

**Continued on page 6** ►

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# NEWS

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# Greens remove unpopular Chingford Mount LTN

**by Marco Marcelline**

Waltham Forest Council has removed a traffic restriction at Cherrydown Avenue in Chingford Mount, following feedback from residents, local businesses and ward councillors.

The restriction, introduced by the former Labour administration last year, was designed to test the impact of limiting vehicle access between Cherrydown Avenue and Albert Crescent.

But after a statutory consultation period which started in June 2025, the new Green-run council said concerns about "congestion, accessibility and knock-on traffic effects in surrounding streets" were central to its decision to remove the restriction.

"We have listened to those concerns and taken direct action as a result," the council said in a Facebook post about the move last month.

Local Conservatives had opposed the move to implement a traffic restriction at Cherrydown Avenue for some time, and Chingford and Woodford Green MP Sir Iain Duncan Smith celebrated the news of it being lifted.

In a post on his Facebook page he said: "After months of campaigning against this revenue-driven [restriction], I am pleased that the council has finally listened to our concerns and reopened Cherrydown Avenue to traffic.

"The temporary closure of Cherrydown Avenue from Albert Crescent led to longer journey times, reduced footfall for businesses on the Mount, and significant disruption across the wider community. It was clear that this scheme did not work.

"Together, we have stood up for our local high street. Reopening the avenue will help ease congestion, improve access for residents, and support businesses in Chingford Mount."

Although the traffic restriction is being lifted, wider improvements to Albert Crescent will continue. Funded through the Local Regeneration Fund, the council will deliver new planting and green landscaping, additional seating, improved signage, and repairs and resurfacing across the area.

Further design details will be shared with residents, businesses and ward councillors ahead of construction, with completion expected in 2027, the council has said.

Existing fines issued under the Cherrydown Avenue restriction applied until Monday, 12th October, when enforcement was ended.



**An aerial shot of Chingford Mount** **Credit** Waltham Forest Council

# Councillors criticise 'Zionism is racism' motion

**by Sebastian Mann,**
Local Democracy Reporter

A national Green Party motion declaring that Zionism is a racist belief will have "no impact" on Waltham Forest Council, the leader says, amid cross-party criticism from Labour and the Conservatives.

The motion, passed at the annual Green Party conference last month, is currently under review by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and top Waltham Forest councillors were pressed on the issue at a full council meeting on Thursday, 22nd October.

Councillor Paul Perkins, council leader since May, said the motion had "no impact on or the capacity to impact local policy".

He said it "did not relate" to the council's own policies, which he said was "not a comment on the motion itself but a reassurance to Jewish residents and anyone else that we continue to stand against antisemitism, Islamophobia and all forms of racism".

He added that it was important for politicians to differentiate between a view on Zionism and antisemitism.

Labour group leader Kizzy Gardiner told the chamber the party had been contacted by "deeply concerned" Jewish residents, who worried about what it meant for their "safety and ability to practice their faith".

Meanwhile, Conservative councillor Catherine Saumarez, who represents Larkswood in the north of the borough, said Jewish residents in her ward were "terrified".

She called on Green councillor Charlotte Lafferty, the cabinet member for community safety, to "repudiate" the motion, but the Grove Green representative said she would prefer to "answer after the meeting" as it "needs the attention it deserves".

The motion will remain Green Party policy until 2028 at the earliest.

# Hundreds offered housing outside borough

**by Sebastian Mann,**
Local Democracy Reporter

More than 200 households facing homelessness have been offered accommodation outside Waltham Forest since May, new council figures show.

Waltham Forest Council offered 212 at-risk households – which includes adults living alone and families – housing beyond the borough due to a shortage of homes locally.

Just 38 were given the chance to stay in the borough.

Green councillor Eva Tabbasam, the cabinet member for housing, said this was due to "severe pressures" in the borough's housing sector.

She said: "The administration is committed to reducing the need for homeless households, particularly families with children, to be placed outside the borough.

"However, severe pressures within the local housing market continue to limit the availability of suitable and affordable accommodation in Waltham Forest."

Of the 38 families and single people offered housing in Waltham Forest between May and September 2026, just two declined.

The vast majority of homes were classed as 'zone-B,' which extends to Greater London and the Home Counties.

Nineteen singles accepted the relocation, while ten refused. The majority of the 154 family households took up their offers, with 34 declining.

A further 29 families were offered 'zone-C' housing, described as "everywhere else" – 14 accepted and 15 refused.

At a full council meeting on Thursday, 22nd October, Labour councillor Andrew Dixon pointed out that the Greens had made a manifesto commitment to house residents in the borough "wherever possible".

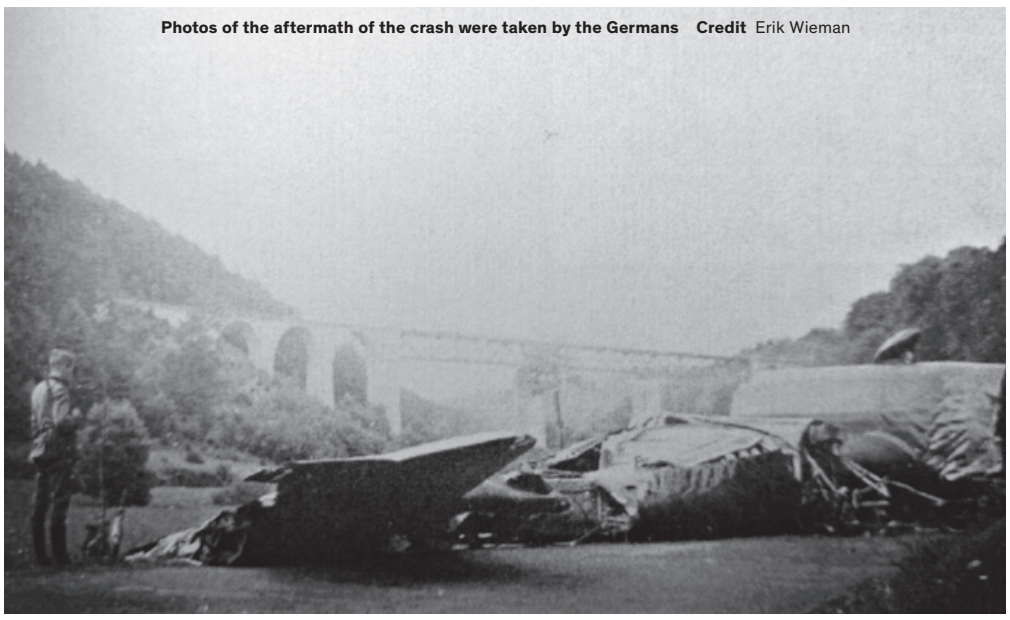
Cllr Tabbasam responded: "We still, in principle, rely on our manifesto commitment to reduce placements outside the borough.

"Ourselves, along with the five Green administrations in London, wrote to the prime minister to think about increasing the local housing allowance so that we can be able to afford the private market rent for family-sized homes in the borough."

She said the market rent was "simply unaffordable for us".

NEWS

# Search for family of Highams Park airman killed in Second World War



Photos of the aftermath of the crash were taken by the Germans **Credit** Erik Wieman

## Crash site investigators are searching for the family of RAF airman Sydney Vivian ahead of a memorial in Germany next year

**by Marco Marcelline**

Crash site investigators are searching for the relatives of an RAF pilot from Highams Park who was killed when his Halifax bomber crashed in Germany during the Second World War.

Flying officer Sydney Vivian, 26, was co-piloting the plane when it was shot down near the German town of Ramsen on 11th August 1943, during a night-time bombing raid.

Now, 83 years later, crash site investigators in Germany are appealing for surviving family members to come forward ahead of plans for a memorial at the site next year.

Historian and crash site investigator Erik Wieman told the *Echo*: "We have found and excavated the crash site where Sydney Vivian died. He was the son of Clarence and Rosina Vivian from Highams Park and I am looking for any surviving descendants and relatives to inform them of the planned memorial."

Sydney was killed alongside five fellow RAF servicemen. They were flight engineer John Irving, air bomber Ronald Chapman, tail gunner William Davey, turret gunner Raymond Shaw and Australian airman Guy Ward.

Only two crew members survived: navigator McLearnon and radio operator Sgt. Bostle.




A dial fight instrument retrieved from the crash site **Credit** Erik Wieman



An RAF Halifax bomber **Credit** Wikimedia Commons

Sydney was flying one of 653 RAF bombers sent to attack Nuremberg, targeting infrastructure vital to the Nazi war effort.

His aircraft, Halifax JD369, took off from RAF Pocklington in Yorkshire at 9.25pm on 10th August. According to Erik, the first bombs fell on Nuremberg shortly before 1am.

The raid caused extensive damage, with 585 people killed and 1,732 homes destroyed.

Halifax JD369 was one of 17 RAF bombers that failed to return from the mission.

According to Erik's organisation IG Heimatforschung, the plane was struck down by German pilot Hans-Georg Birkenstock while it was flying at a low altitude and its proximity to the ground likely prevented the crew's parachutes from fully opening.

**Anyone related to Sydney Vivian is asked to contact Erik Wieman at** erik.wieman@gmail.com

**More information about IG Heimatforschung and its crash site investigations can be found at** ig-heimatforschung.de

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# NEWS



Revellers partying last month at the tenth edition of Stow-Ho House, a charity rave that brings big-name DJ acts to Walthamstow Trades Hall for good causes. Hacienda legends Mike Pickering and Graeme Park were revealed as surprise headliners at the latest event on Thursday 8th October, with money going towards Sarcoma UK **Credit** Rebecka Slatter

# Greens to make it easier to grow food on public land

## The commitment towards implementing a 'Right to Grow' means underused public land could be repurposed to support food growing, orchards, edible planting, or wildlife

**by Marco Marcelline**

Green-run Waltham Forest Council has announced its support for the 'Right to Grow' movement, which gives communities the right to plant food and flowers on unused land.

Announcing the move at the annual Food Growers Network Harvest Fair at Leytonstone's Good Shepherds Studios on Sunday, 11th October, the council said it would hire a 'community growing officer' who will work with a network of local growers to implement the Right to Grow scheme.

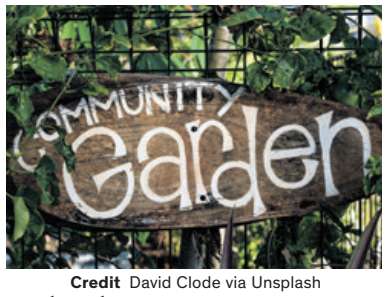
The move means underused public land could be repurposed to support food growing, orchards, edible planting, or wildlife.

Councillor Sarah Bentley, who is cabinet member for climate and air quality, said: "Affording enough nutritious food is difficult for many and it's being made even harder by the climate crisis.

"Through Right to Grow, we'll work with residents to boost local food resilience while enhancing opportunities for nature connection, mental wellbeing and improving our local neighbourhoods."

Pressure group Waltham Forest Right to Grow (WFRTG) has been campaigning on the issue for 18 months, with hundreds of people taking part in public protests and guerilla gardening activities across the borough.

The *Echo* understands that the exact implementation will be evaluated after a pilot period, but is likely to follow similar models as elsewhere.




**Credit** David Clode via Unsplash

In other boroughs such as Southwark, groups of residents are invited to apply for tenure over a piece of unused land, before a working group led by a community food growing officer then negotiates that tenure with the council and funding is granted.

The borough already has over 60 community food growing sites, including OrganicLea which acts as a regional training hub in organic horticulture.

A spokesperson for WFRTG said: "The Right to Grow could be just the start of an ambitious food strategy in Waltham Forest. The opportunities to work with schools, to change council procurement practices, to subsidise training, and to better channel existing resources are enormous.

"Members of the WFRTG want to see Waltham Forest as a flagship for how starting to transform the food system locally can not only provide immediate benefits to residents but be part of building the confidence of communities to mount a serious challenge the social forces causing climate collapse, genocide, and a global economy built on exploitation."

**Credit** Mark Owen Wilkinson Hughes via Unsplash



# Extent of borough's fly-tipping problem revealed

**by Marco Marcelline**

Waltham Forest recorded 10,246 fly-tipping incidents in 2024/25, including 793 involving construction, demolition and excavation waste, according to government data.

The figures come from the UK government's fly-tipping incidents and actions dataset, which records reports of illegal dumping made to local authorities in England.

Lewisham recorded 33,471 fly-tipping reports overall, the highest total among London boroughs listed in the data.

At the other end of the scale, the City of London reported a total of 1,655 fly-tipping incidents.

Construction-related incidents accounted for 7.74% of Waltham Forest's total fly-tipping reports during the year.

The borough recorded 28.35 construction-related fly-tipping incidents per 10,000 residents, placing it eleventh among London's 33 boroughs for this type of illegal dumping.

Meanwhile, Merton recorded the highest rate in London, at 130.96 construction-related incidents per 10,000 residents.

Waste management expert Mark Hall, from *BusinessWaste.co.uk*, said construction waste fly-tipping poses particular risks because of the size and nature of the materials involved.

He said: "Large incidents can require specialist vehicles and equipment to clear, increasing the cost to councils and the public. Improperly dumped waste can also contaminate soil and water, damaging the local environment.

"Householders and businesses have a responsibility to check that anyone taking their waste away is authorised to do so and has provided correct documentation."

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# NEWS

## *'We don't want the school to close, we want it to flourish'*

### Families have raised fresh concerns about the ongoing use of seclusion rooms and injuries sustained by their children at Whitefield School in Walthamstow



Melanie Rinaldi with her son Kristian

Continued from page 1

"I then asked to be shown this space with my daughter present; the room off her classroom that I visited had a door on it. A chair and a poster were in the room. The walls were painted blue and the paint was still wet.

"When we left the room my daughter took my arm and dragged me into the opposite classroom. She pulled me to the far corner to show me a calming room with a door and padded interior with stains, and the ceiling was caving in. I asked her if this was the room she was placed in and she said yes. I had chills."

The mother said she subsequently reported the incident to police and gave a statement lasting almost two hours. She said officers interviewed her daughter at home, but that she was not allowed to be present and the questions were "complicated", with her daughter appearing "confused".

The case was subsequently closed because her child's statement did not match hers.

"I wonder how many other parents have got as far as I did with logging a police report only to fail as the key witness in every case will be a disabled child unable to articulate themselves," she said.

Another parent, Melanie Rinaldi, removed her non-verbal autistic son Kristian from Whitefield after he came home with bruises on his left arm on 15th January.

She said the school initially described his injuries as "superficial" and "nothing to worry about", adding that staff told her he had allegedly bitten a teacher.

"When I saw the actual extent of his injuries I was shocked. I could not believe the school had minimised the situation. He had significant scarring and scabs on his arm," she said.

The school explained that Kristian, 16, had briefly bitten himself and staff were unable to stop him quickly enough.

Melanie said she did not believe this explanation, arguing that the injuries were too severe to have been inflicted over a short period of time.

"At the very worst he was harmed, and at the very best he was neglected by staff who, intentionally or not, let him bite himself unattended for a significant period of time. That's the only way to explain those injuries."

The incident was reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), whose investigation agreed with the school's interpretation of events, and recommended that no action be taken.

Documents seen by the *Echo* show staff "did not respond immediately" to an incident of "dysregulated behaviour" exhibited by Kristian. The documents attributed the delay to staff managing multiple responsibilities, including supporting other pupils with high needs and responding to "another safeguarding and first-aid requirement".

Melanie also reported the incident to police, who subsequently told her they would not press charges and recommended that she complain to the Waltham Forest safeguarding board, which agreed with the LADO report.

"Whitefield is trying their best to gaslight me and downplay the severity of this," Melanie said. "The members of staff responsible for this carry on with their day-to-day lives and my son was out of school for ten months, left with a scar from his injuries."

She added: "I know a number of parents whose children have suffered bruises at Whitefield – many are scared to speak out for fear of retribution from the school."

The mother of the child who was placed in a calming room last year said: "As parents we are frightened, and we don't want to feel that way. We don't want the school to close – we want it repaired; we want it to flourish for our children."

No staff who worked at the school during the documented abuse scandal from 2014 to 2017 have been arrested or prosecuted. Six staff members were found to have abused children but were not dismissed, and at least one recommended referral to the Disclosure and Barring Service was not made.

Learning in Harmony Trust, which runs the school, did not respond to a request for comment.



The arm injury that Kristian sustained at Whitefield School
**Credit** Melanie Rinaldi

**You can read the full version of this article at** walthamforestecho.co.uk

# Chingford thief jailed for stealing antique map from museum



A copy of the 'Nova Orbis Tabula', which West stole.
**Credit** Wikimedia Commons

A Chingford art thief has been jailed for stealing a 350-year-old map from the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich.

Melvin West, 73, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment at Woolwich Crown Court on Thursday, 22nd October after pleading guilty to theft, criminal damage and possession of a bladed article.

The judge also imposed a ten-year criminal behaviour order preventing West from being alone in any reading room of a museum or library in England and Wales.

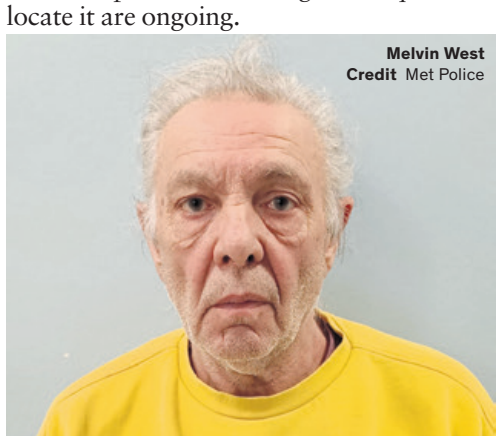
Police were called at around 3pm on 26th February 2025, after staff in the Caird Library at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich found a small knife on the floor under a desk.

Staff quickly identified that a 350-year-old atlas, printed in 1684, that was being viewed by West earlier in the day had been cut – and was missing one of its twelve maps.

The missing page was a celebrated example of a double hemisphere world map, called *Nova Orbis Tabula*, by 17th Century Dutch cartographer Frederick de Wit.

A Royal Museums Greenwich spokesperson said: "We are pleased the criminal case, on which we co-operated closely with the Metropolitan Police, has been brought to a close."

The map remains missing and enquiries to locate it are ongoing.



Melvin West
**Credit** Met Police

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NEWS

# Alarm as falling pupil numbers trigger school closures

## The Lammas School in Leyton will shut next August, while Waltham Forest Council is considering closing Edinburgh Primary School which is operating at just 17% capacity

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

A secondary school in Leyton will shut next year and a Walthamstow primary could also close amid falling pupil numbers.

The Lammas School in Leyton will close at the end of the 2026/27 academic year, while Waltham Forest Council is considering closing Edinburgh Primary School.

Griffin Schools Trust, which runs Lammas, confirmed the school will close on 31st August 2027, following a consultation with its community and agreement from the Department for Education.

The decision follows a sustained decline in enrollment, with year seven admissions falling from 141 in 2021 to just 51 in 2025.

The trust said the falling numbers were "increasingly affecting its ability to provide pupils with a broad curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities", despite efforts to address the financial shortfall it was facing.

These included staffing adjustments, changes to post-16 provision and exploring partnership and merger options.

Parents of children at local primary schools have reacted with dismay at the closure.

Melissa Nesbitt, who has two children at fellow Griffin Schools Trust school Riverly Primary, told the *Echo* the news meant it left the Lea Bridge area without any secondary school provision.

She said: "Me and my family moved to Leyton from Walthamstow in 2022 because we were priced out – now I'm fearing we may have to move again because there isn't enough secondary school provision here, and I already know other families who've done so."

The situation was especially "sad" because she and other families were of the view Lammas was an improving school, with GCSE results in August being its strongest for several years.

Local mum Olivia Power was so moved by the pending closure she launched an online petition against it.

Arguing that local demand for secondary places in the area was still strong, Olivia said: "The closure of Lammas should not be mistaken for a lack of need.

"Many families, including my own, cannot simply move into another catchment area.



Credit Mchg Lee via Unsplash

We love Leyton, have put down roots here, and want our children to grow up in this community.

"Yet without adequate local secondary provision, families may increasingly face the prospect of moving away simply to secure a school place."

The announcement comes amid wider concerns about falling school rolls across London. In Waltham Forest, year seven pupil numbers fell by 5.38% last year, while nursery numbers have dropped by 27% over the past decade.

Low pupil numbers means schools missing out on funding, which is distributed by the government based on enrollment.

Across the borough, Waltham Forest has capacity for 4,020 primary school pupils. The actual number of pupils on roll is 3,158 – 472 places below capacity – which results in an annual funding loss of around £2.54million.

Meanwhile, the council has launched a six-week consultation on the possible closure of Edinburgh Primary School in Walthamstow.

The school currently has 109 pupils, equivalent to around 17% of its capacity. Its roll has fallen from 521 in 2017/18 to 239 in 2023/24, with just eight children currently in reception.

The council reduced the school's published admission number from 60 to 30 for this academic year, following an earlier reduction from 90 in 2022, in an effort to manage falling enrolment and staffing costs.

No final decision has been made on Edinburgh's future. Councillors have said any closure proposal would be subject to a "meaningful consultation" with families, staff and the wider community.

Councillor Daisy Richards, the cabinet member for children and young people, said the council "needed to respond to changing patterns of need" and would "listen carefully" to those affected.

If Edinburgh was to close, the site could be used to provide education for children with special education needs (SEND) – the number of which is steadily increasing – subject to a consultation.

The proposal forms part of the second phase of the council's Creating Stronger Schools programme.

The first phase, already under way, aims to increase SEND placements by 150 over four years.

Labour group leader Kizzy Gardiner questioned the council's claim that four nearby primary schools – Barn Croft, Coppermill, St Patrick's and Stoneydown – could accommodate Edinburgh pupils and were all within half-a-mile.

Google Maps only lists Barn Croft as half-a-mile away.

St Patrick's, however, is one mile away, Coppermill 1.3 miles away, and Stoneydown 1.1 miles away.

Cllr Richards said she would ask for the distances to be reviewed, although she remained "confident" the proposals were "appropriate".

**The council is running a consultation on closing Edinburgh Primary School until Friday 27th November. To take part: Visit** talk.walthamforest.gov.uk

# Council reveals designs for sinking cricket pavilion



**A sketch of how the pavilion is planned to look**
**Credit** Waltham Forest Council

**by Marco Marcelline**

Waltham Forest Council has revealed design plans for a closed cricket pavilion at Rolls Sports Ground, Chingford.

The design comes six years after the pavilion shut because it was sinking into the ground.

The redesigned clubhouse will follow the old building's design but offer more internal open space for community use, improved kitchen and catering facilities, and accessible toilets with baby-changing facilities.

The council also promises it will provide "better views" of the cricket ground from a covered terrace area, which will have seating for people wanting to watch sports.

Back in 2023, the council announced it would use a £1.17million insurance award payout to tear down and replace the sports pavilion.

However, the project was delayed and then scaled down to just a third of its original size after the council ran into construction inflation and identified a Thames Water main near the pavilion.

The delay prompted harsh criticism from pavilion users West Essex Sports Club which said the ongoing lack of a proper clubhouse was severely limiting the club's appeal to new members.

But in a surprise move earlier this year, the council committed fresh funding to the project.

West Essex Sports Club has welcomed the new design, saying: "We are delighted that everyone is fully supportive of delivering a replacement clubhouse for the benefit of all the local community."

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NEWS

# Council pushes ahead with ‘neglected’ Leytonstone estate regeneration

## Work on Avenue Road Estate, which is plagued by disrepair, flooding, and antisocial behaviour, will begin in mid-2027

**by Sebastian Mann,** Local Democracy Reporter

Waltham Forest Council has secured a deal with Legal & General Affordable Homes to redevelop Avenue Road Estate after years of delays.

The previous contractor, Bellway Homes, pulled out of the scheme in 2023, arguing it was no longer financially viable.

Green councillor Eva Tabbasam, the cabinet member for housing and deputy council leader, said the new scheme with Legal & General offered a “viable route” to regenerating the neglected estate.

She said the current buildings were “at the end of their lives” and the council had a “responsibility to address challenges and create homes fit for the future”.



Avenue Road Estate residents feel ‘neglected’ Credit Google

They will be cheaper to heat, better for residents’ wellbeing and more environmentally sustainable, she said.

The first phase – which will cost around £3.8million – will see the construction of 116 social homes and a new community space.

Work will begin in mid-2027 and residents can expect to move in by early 2030.

The second phase will see a further 501 homes erected, including 126 social homes, and an additional communal space. These plans are expected to go before the council late next year.

Avenue Road Estate residents have long pushed for regeneration, saying their homes need modernising.

At a cabinet meeting on 6th October, Cllr Tabbasam read out a statement on their behalf to top councillors.

It described an estate plagued with “overcrowding, leaks, disrepair, sewage, drainage, pipework and flooding problems”. They also face issues with antisocial behaviour, and some residents are “embarrassed about where they live”.

Their community has been “left behind,” said Cllr Tabbasam, and this was affecting people’s mental health.

# TfL fined £2m for Walthamstow Bus Station death



Don Mecaley’s mother Grace was killed by a 212 bus in Walthamstow Bus Station in 2023

**by Marco Marcelline**

Transport for London (TfL) has been fined £2million after retired nurse Grace Mecaley, 74, was fatally struck by a double-decker bus at Walthamstow Bus Station in December 2023.

At Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Friday, 25th September, it was ruled TfL had failed to ensure pedestrians and vehicles could circulate safely at the station for nearly 20 years.

Grace was walking home after shopping in Walthamstow High Street on 15th December 2023 when she was struck by a 212 bus while crossing the station’s northern crossing. She suffered catastrophic head injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene.

The court heard the crossing’s layout created “blind spots” for drivers and ambiguity over right of way, increasing collision risks. TfL also failed to risk-assess the crossing after a similar incident in April 2022. CCTV captured five near misses in the two days before Grace’s death.

Her death prompted the installation of permanent pedestrian crossings in December 2024.

Speaking ahead of sentencing, Grace’s son Don Mecaley said her death had caused “significant emotional distress”, describing it as the “most traumatic experience of my life”.

Don said: “I now avoid the bus station altogether and every time I board or see a bus I am reminded of what happened to her. I still feel there are unanswered questions.

“The lack of closure has made it more difficult to move forward. Her death has created an absence that cannot be replaced and I want appropriate accountability to follow.”

TfL was ordered to pay the £2m fine and £5,081 in legal costs by Wednesday, 25th October.




Walthamstow Bus Station

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## Woman hit by bus in Leytonstone

A woman was hospitalised after being struck by a route 66 bus in Church Lane, Leytonstone on Saturday, 17th October.

The Metropolitan Police and Transport for London (TfL) are investigating the collision.

The woman was treated at the scene by paramedics and then rushed to a major trauma centre by road.

In November 2024, Carol Wright, 79, was fatally struck by a route 66 bus in the same street. She died three days after being taken to hospital for her injuries.

## Reporting ASB ‘waste of time’

**by Sebastian Mann,** Local Democracy Reporter

Residents feel reporting antisocial behaviour (ASB) to the police is a “waste of time”.

Speaking at a citizen panel on crime and community safety, group chair Philip Herhily said: “ASB is widely complained about in local meetings, conversations and social media. Yet the number of formal reports shown in police briefings to ward panels don’t reflect this at all.

“Many residents feel that the effort of making a formal report is not reflected in changes they see, and many say it’s a waste of time.”

August saw the Metropolitan Police receive 23 formal reports, up from ten the previous month. Nine incidents were reported in September, bringing the total to 42.

## Leyton Leisure Centre gets £40k refresh

Leyton Leisure Centre embarked on a £40,000 programme of improvements this autumn.

The popular aqua-play area was upgraded with a new interactive water play station. The feature opened just before autumn half term on Monday, 26th October.

And following the success of the women’s only gym which launched in September, a new toilet and changing area was created on the first floor of the centre.

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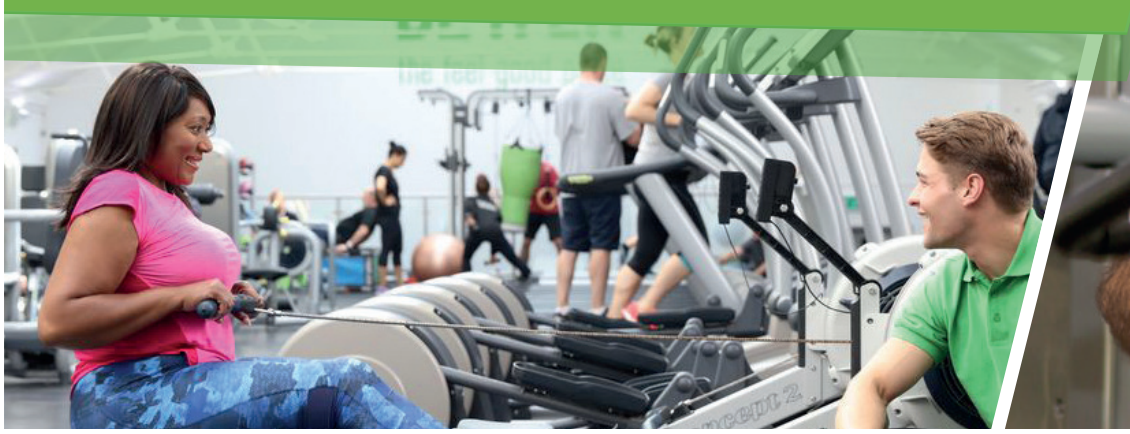
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BETTER

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# ARTS & CULTURE

## 100 paintings for 100 years

### Elly Davies, who is shortly set to celebrate her 100th birthday, will exhibit a lifetime of paintings at Winns Gallery



'Sunflowers' by Elly Davies

**by Marco Marcelline**

Local artist Elly Davies is exhibiting 100 paintings at Winns Gallery in Lloyd Park, Walthamstow, to celebrate her 100th birthday.

Titled *100 Paintings for 100 Years*, the exhibition runs from Saturday, 31st October until Sunday, 8th November.

Elly Davies, who celebrates her 100th birthday on Wednesday, 4th November, has been one of Waltham Forest's most active painters since she moved to her Lloyd Road Warner flat in 1963.

Her wanderings to well-loved spots in the borough are reflected in her landscape sketches and watercolours, including Walthamstow Wetlands, Church Hill, Epping Forest and Whipps Cross.

Elly was born in the then German city of Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland) in 1926. A war refugee in her teens, Elly married a British serviceman after the Second World War and she eventually set up home in Walthamstow.

Over the years, Elly has contributed to countless local group exhibitions with The Essex Art Club, The Wanstead Art Group, alongside having solo exhibitions at The Barbican, Bankside Gallery, The South Bank, and William Morris Gallery.

Elly has opened her flat every year during the Walthamstow Art Trail, with visitors always "pleasantly taken aback" by her home gallery with paintings covering all the walls.

Her repertoire includes beautifully detailed large paintings of colourful flowers, nostalgic dark winter landscapes, vibrant townscapes with some of London's well-known sites, kitsch hats and teddy bears, front doors and back yards from the Warner flats she has lived in – and lately, collages with stones, wood, broken pieces of pottery, and other found materials from the banks of the River Lea and Thames.

Davies has also mixed local views with the cityscapes of Dublin, Berlin, Venice, Copenhagen – and, of course, her birthplace, Gdansk.

The exhibition at Winns Gallery builds on this collection of work across various artistic formats and styles.

Davies told the *Echo*: "I've been so lucky to be able to devote my life to doing what gives my life meaning – my paintings. Whether I'm pruning my bushes and flowers in my tiny garden or painting flowers in vases, flowers are life-giving.

"I love exploring places, and I'm still down on my knees at low tide along the Thames picking up materials for my work."

**Keep up to date with exhibitions at Winns Gallery here:** Instagram.com/winns_gallery



Elly Davies pictured in her garden
**Credit** Trevor Davies



**Credit** Karen St Hill

## Inside Altar, Leytonstone's new live music venue

### A late-night bar, basement music venue and record shop all under one roof, Altar opened its doors to the public last month

A new live music venue has opened in Leytonstone, almost two-and-a-half years after the closure of the much-loved Luna Lounge.

Altar opened its doors at 7 Church Lane on Friday, 23rd October, bringing a late-night bar, record shop and 100-capacity basement performance space, all under one roof, to E11.

The venue is run by a team of music and hospitality specialists, including Simon Singleton, founder of the local Shake The High Road festival, Jon Clifford of Dreamhouse Records, music industry veteran Toby L, and the team behind Leyton bars Leyton Calling and Chop Shop Tavern.

Luna Lounge closed for good in July 2024, having operated for close to 20 years as a popular grassroots music venue in the area.

Under founder Suja Khaled, it became known for its eclectic programming, spanning genres from jazz and metal to folk, punk and DJ nights.

Khaled died in 2021, and the venue subsequently faced financial difficulties and licensing disputes before closing following an unsuccessful £75,000 crowdfunding appeal in 2024.

When the new operators were appointed by Waltham Forest Council earlier this year, they outlined plans to transform the council-owned building into a cultural hub, combining live music with opportunities for local residents to engage with the arts.

Downstairs, Altar's basement venue has an industrial-style interior and a new sound system, with plans for live gigs, club nights, film screenings and arts events.

Upstairs, the bar features 1970s-inspired decor, bespoke cocktails and a hot dog menu, including banh mi and currywurst variations.

A small record shop, run in partnership with Leytonstone's Dreamhouse Records, stocks new and second-hand vinyl alongside merchandise. It will also host new-release events and listening sessions.

The Altar team has pledged to support emerging talent, with plans to offer free rehearsal space for young local musicians at selected times, alongside recording and podcasting facilities and mentoring opportunities.

The new operators previously told the *Echo* they want to "retain Luna's openness and musical diversity" while building a financially sustainable business.

Speaking ahead of the opening last month, the team said: "Leytonstone has had music in its bones for years.

"Altar is about giving that a proper home, somewhere you can pick up a record, catch a gig, or just settle in with a drink, and always feel part of something."

**Find out more about Altar's exciting line-up of events:**
**Visit** altar-east.com

NEWS

# Walthamstow Trades Hall warns plans for flats threaten its future

The venue fears that future residents could make noise complaints about live music and late-night events, raising concerns over its ability to operate

by Antonia Vlad

Walthamstow Trades Hall has warned that current plans to replace an adjacent petrol station with a block of flats could be a death knell for the venue.

The social club and grassroots music venue has urged local residents to object to plans for 20 flats while calling on Waltham Forest Council to consider the potential impact on its future.

The venue fears that future residents could make noise complaints about live music and late-night events, raising concerns over its ability to operate as it currently does.

Current plans, submitted by Astro Development Ltd, comprise five one-bedroom flats, ten two-bedroom flats, and five three-bedroom flats.

Speaking after the venue's social media campaign against the development attracted a wave of public support, Trades Hall's



Walthamstow Trades Hall **Credit** Dean Brannagan

treasurer Sarah Brown said: "It's been so humbling and touching to see how much backing we've received, and it's truly helped us get our feelings heard."

While stating Trades Hall was not against any housing being built on the petrol station site, Sarah said a "re-think" to the development was needed so that the venue is protected from any noise complaints.

She did, however, add: "If there are any special measures we can take, and if someone wants to help us identify them, we'd be more than happy to follow. We're one community and we all need to coexist together."

Waltham Forest Council will consider the potential impact of noise as part of its assessment of the planning application. Its Local Plan follows the 'agent of change' principle, which means new developments should take existing businesses and activities nearby into account and minimise potential conflicts, including noise from music venues.

The council says measures such as sound insulation or restrictions on operating hours can be considered where noise could cause a conflict. Trades Hall mentioned that they would be happy to comply with these changes, as long as they are reasonable.

In December 2025, the council's environmental protection service objected to a temporary event at Trades Hall after receiving a number of local complaints about noise and music from a previous event.

A spokesperson for the developer stated that they are due to have a meeting with Trades Hall and the council to discuss the proposal.

The developer added that the application is supported by a noise impact assessment, which has considered the potential noise breakout from Trades Hall. The noise survey was carried out on the site to establish the surrounding noise levels, including those from Trades Hall.



A sketch of how the proposed flats will look **Credit** Beau Architecture

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# ARTS & CULTURE

## ‘I want to be the next Dynamo’: A Walthamstow magician’s journey from TikTok to playing theatres

Dawud Hussain’s mindblowing magic tricks saw him blow up online during lockdown – and now he’s set to play his first live theatre show



Dawud Hussain
**Credit** Zain Idrees

**by Antonia Vlad**

With more than 500,000 followers across social media and millions of views, 24-year-old Dawud Hussain has attracted fans including Jack Grealish, Anthony Joshua and Ed Sheeran.

And on Friday, 18th December, Dawud is set to take his talents from social media to the stage with his debut live theatre show, *BEYOND*, at Tramshed in Greenwich.

Dawud’s journey into magic began at just 14, after watching fellow magician Dynamo walk on water.

Massively inspired, he quickly developed his passion by practising tricks with playing cards and coins before showcasing his talents through TikTok livestreams during the Covid-19 lockdown.

As his online following grew, so did demand for his performances, with bookings for weddings, corporate events and celebrations involving the Premier League, Chelsea FC and Manchester City.



Dawud with Jack Grealish
**Credit** Jonathan Townsley

Dawud said: “I think people often see magic as simply fooling people. For me, it’s about creating memorable moments. Even a simple card trick can brighten someone’s day, and that’s what makes magic special to me.”

But his career has brought challenges beyond mastering the art of illusion. In a February 2025 profile for *Hyphen*, Dawud discussed how some people within the Muslim community have viewed his work with suspicion, associating magic with sorcery.

He maintains that his performances are about sleight of hand and entertainment, rather than anything that conflicts with his religious beliefs.

His repertoire goes far beyond card tricks. Dawud performs some stomach-churning stunts, including pushing a needle through his hand and inserting a nail into his nose – skills he has described as “not for the squeamish”.

His biggest ambition is to take his magic to an international audience and bring smiles to people around the world.

He said: “I’m now taking a big step towards that dream and after years of people watching my magic online, I want to bring that experience to life on stage, with the ultimate goal of touring worldwide.”

One celebrity reaction has particularly stuck with Dawud. After watching him perform a trick, Nigerian singer Burna Boy reportedly exclaimed: ‘He’s not human, is he?’ – a reaction that captures the sense of astonishment Dawud hopes to inspire in audiences everywhere.

**To purchase tickets to ‘BEYOND’ at Tramshed in Greenwich on 18th December:**
**Visit** dawudmagic.com

## Leyton’s Tilbury Road set for Palestinian arts festival

PalEASTine Fest will celebrate Palestinian art and storytelling while raising money for children in Gaza

**by Marco Marcelline**

A new community-led arts festival is set to bring music, food and creative workshops in celebration of Palestinian culture to Tilbury Road in Leyton.

PalEASTine Fest, taking place on Saturday, 5th December from 4pm until late, is being organised by a local collective which seeks to celebrate Palestinian heritage, art and storytelling while raising money for children in Gaza.

A crowdfunder has been launched to cover the festival’s upfront costs, including printed materials, workshop supplies, artist fees and merchandise, with organisers estimating they need £2,000 to deliver the event.

The day-long programme will feature live music, dance workshops, film screenings, visual arts and Palestinian food stalls, alongside merchandise including T-shirts and tote bags.



Palestinian teenagers performing the traditional Dabke dance at the unveiling of a Palestine mural in Tilbury Road back in February **Credit** Dave Gilchrist

“We believe Palestinian culture deserves to be celebrated loudly and proudly in our community,” the collective wrote on the crowdfunder for the festival, adding: “Events like this build awareness, connection and a sense of togetherness.”

A number of artists, performers and activities have been confirmed. These include a Dabke workshop led by Jumana from Step Station, introducing participants to the traditional Levantine folk dance in a friendly, accessible session open to all backgrounds.

Meanwhile, there will also be a photography and visual-storytelling event showcasing work by photographers in Palestine and across the diaspora, with Q&A, on top of music from the local community choir Natural Voices.

A selected performance from a collection of short political plays examining Palestine, censorship and artistic freedom will also take place.

Further activities are expected to be confirmed, including children’s block-printing workshops.

Money raised on the day will go to Shadows Children’s Performing Arts Club, a grassroots initiative providing children in Gaza with access to music, theatre and dance.

# REVIEW

## Heartache and humour in Leytonstone

Sophie Wenban reviews country artist John Miller’s dry-humour laden set at Leytonstone Social Club

Some artists learn the language of country music; John Miller aka ‘The Lonesome Blues Boy’ seems to think in it.

At *What’s Cookin’*, Ramblin’ Steve’s weekly Americana gathering at Leytonstone Social Club, the return of Miller offered a welcome reminder that heartache and humour have often shared a country barstool.

The low ceiling, tiki touches and a framed Hank Williams presiding over proceedings would have you believe you’d wandered into a southern honky-tonk rather than a mid-week East London gig venue.



John Miller performing with his band
**Credit** Sophie Wenban

Miller deserves a wider hearing. In an era when country and pop increasingly share production values, he remains interested in the essentials: a good tune, a sharp lyric and the difficult business of being human.

Miller’s dry humour and self-deprecation was part of the pleasure – after the interval, he promised “some more rubbish” – which of course it wasn’t.

Miller’s latest album, *Loser’s Hall of Fame*, makes a compelling case for being one of the best-kept secrets in modern country music. If you like your country full of wry observation, bruised romance and just the right amount of twang, give him a listen.

**You can catch live music at Leytonstone Social Club every Wednesday in November. Find tickets here:**
wegottickets.com

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# AROUND THE BOROUGH

## LEYTON

# Council reveals revamp plans for local parks




An artists' sketch showing proposals for Sidmouth Park **Credit** Waltham Forest Council

### Waltham Forest Council has unveiled sketches of what it wants Coronation Gardens and Sidmouth Park to look like

**by Marco Marcelline**

Waltham Forest Council has revealed how it plans to improve Sidmouth Park, Coronation Gardens and the alleyway between Francis Road and Dawlish Road.

The plans follow earlier public engagement in 2025 and include a wide range of upgrades reportedly shaped by what residents said they wanted to see – including more planting, "improved safety", more seating, and informal "play-on-the-way" features for children and young people.

At Coronation Gardens, the council is proposing refreshed perennial flowerbeds, selective shrub clearance to open up views, and new plaques celebrating notable trees.

The pergola would be restored with "climate-resilient planting", while the ornamental pond would be improved through habitat enhancements and better visibility.

The maze is set for a full restoration, including new hedgerow planting and a playful structure at its centre, while the park keeper's hut would be reimagined as a small community focal point, with seating, planters, rainwater collection and drinking fountains.

Sidmouth Park would see similarly significant changes. The alleyway linking Francis Road and Dawlish Road would be resurfaced with "climate-resilient materials", new planting and playful markings, alongside a raingarden to help manage water.

The Dawlish Road entrance would be redesigned to be "more visible and welcoming", and a rock garden inspired by the hidden Fillybrook Stream would introduce "new opportunities for exploration and nature-based play". Side entrances would be improved with woodland planting, wall decorations and sensory play routes, the council states.

## WALTHAMSTOW

# Local leisure centre named best in London

### Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre – which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary – beat five other category finalists at the UKactive Awards

Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre has been named London's best leisure centre for the second time at the UKactive Awards 2026, one of the country's largest awards ceremonies for the fitness and activity sector.

Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre – which recently celebrated its tenth anniversary – beat five other category finalists at the award ceremony, which took place on Thursday, 8th October at the International Convention Centre (ICC) in Birmingham.

Danait Tsegaye, general manager at Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre, said: "Winning the 'Regional Public Club/Centre of the Year' award for London for a second time is a fantastic achievement for our entire team. As we celebrate our tenth anniversary, this recognition makes the occasion even more special.

"The whole team works incredibly hard to provide a welcoming environment and deliver great experiences for our members and the local community. We're really proud of what we have achieved over the past decade.

"We would like to thank our members, the local community, GLL and Waltham Forest Council for their continued support and partnership. This award belongs to everyone who has helped make the Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre such an important part of the borough."

Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre offers a wide range of active leisure opportunities, including gym and fitness facilities, swimming and group exercise.



Staff from GLL and Waltham Forest Feel Good Centre at the awards last month **Credit** GLL

## ST JAMES

# Bus rams into tech repair shop

### A W19 bus collided with a car before ploughing into a tech repair shop in Markhouse Road on Monday, 19th October

**by Marco Marcelline**

Traffic drama ensued last month, when a W19 bus collided with a car before ploughing into a shop in Markhouse Road, Walthamstow.

The incident, which occurred at around 7.30am on Monday, 19th October, saw the road shut for over an hour while emergency services dealt with the situation.

No injuries were reported, though a patient was assessed by paramedics before being discharged at the scene.

The crash caused damage to a wall and signage of a tech and mobile phone repair shop, with owner Nadeem telling the *Echo* the incident meant he was unable to open his shop that morning.

He said: "I can't enter because the shutters won't open fully and the shop floor is full of broken laptops and tech because shelves fell."

While the cause of the incident is under investigation by the bus operator Stagecoach and Transport for London (TfL), Nadeem said the driver of the car involved in the crash "attempted to overtake the bus" when it was turning into Markhouse Avenue from Markhouse Road.



A W19 bus crashed into a shop on Markhouse Road

A Transport for London (TfL) spokesperson said: "There was a collision involving a car and a bus where the bus then made contact with a nearby shop.

"Fortunately, there were no reported injuries. Safety is our top priority, and we are currently working with the operator, Stagecoach, to establish what happened."

## CHINGFORD

# Community hub opens in South Chingford

A new community hub has opened in South Chingford, with its founders describing it as a "permanent space for local people to meet, take part in activities and get involved in their community".

Salisbury Manor Community Hub is based at Salisbury Manor Primary School in Burnside Avenue.

The open-plan, multi-use space now includes kitchen facilities, toilets and office space and has been fully redecorated and fitted out for community use as a permanent hub.

Alongside a youth club, a programme of activities for all ages is set to take place at the hub, including tai chi, yoga, performing arts, dance, boccia, Zumba and karate.

Headteacher of Salisbury Manor Primary School, Emily Curtis, said: "From the very beginning this has been about listening to and working with our community.

"As a school, we see every day the difference that strong relationships, support and opportunity can make to families, and this hub is an extension of that commitment."

# LOCAL NOTICES

**Published:** 30th October 2026

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

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

Notice is hereby given that **L & E Foods Ltd** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises License at **Bottega 372 Grove Green Road E11 4AP.** The nature of the application is as follows:

- **To permit the sale of alcohol / regulated entertainment / late night refreshments Monday to Sunday 9am to 10pm.**

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 **12/11/2026.**

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.

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## Licensing Act 2003: Notice of Application to Vary 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 **Bulstock Limited** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest on **22/10/2026** to vary the premises licence under Section 34 of the Licensing Act 2003 for use at the premises known as Bulstock, Unit 1a, b, c & d, 10 Argall Avenue, London E10 7QE. The proposed variation is to:

- **Change the Associated Plans of the Premises to extend the area covered by the licence to include Units B, C & D.**

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 **19/11/2026.**

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**

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## Licensing Act 2003: Notice of Application to Vary 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 **Casper Kitchen Ltd** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the variation of a Premises Licence at **Epic Burgers, 4 Crown Buildings, The Green, Chingford, London, E4 7EX.** The nature of the application is as follows:

- **To add late night refreshment (hot food) for takeaway and delivery every day from 23:00 to 04:00, and to extend the premises opening hours to 10:00–04:00 daily. The existing permitted hours for the sale of alcohol are not proposed to change.**

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Section, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, 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, Town Hall, Fellowship Square, Forest Road, Walthamstow, E17 4JF or via email: Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk. Representations must be received no later than **20/11/2026.**

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

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## London Borough of Waltham Forest Massage & Special Treatments License: Notice of Application

Notice is hereby given that **The Eades** has applied to Waltham Forest Council for a Massage and Special Treatment Licence at: **The Eades, 11 Selborne Rd, London E17 7GD.**

- **This application covers: Massage, facial, manicure and pedicure, hair and makeup**

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 **27th November 2026.**

ADVERTISE YOUR LICENCE HERE

**Book your licence advert or notice with your local community newspaper!**

**Email for a quote to licences@socialspider.com or call Klaudia Kiss 07732 000 430 or Mark Brown 07728 520 116**

**Next publication date:** 27th November | **Booking deadline:** 25th November






# HISTORY




An iconic red telephone box stands in the suburb's principal square **Credit** Google Streetview

# Chingford's forgotten French twin town

## Local historian Joanna Moncrieff uncovers the surprising history of Chingford's twinning with the quaint Parisian suburb of Saint-Mandé

Are Chingford residents aware that back in April 1956, before the creation of the London borough of Waltham Forest, Chingford was twinned with the Paris suburb of Saint-Mandé?

Bi-lingual World, an organisation based in France dedicated to the improvement of international understanding, had suggested that Chingford might want to twin with a town of comparable size and character. From 20th to 23rd April 1956 there was an official visit to Saint-Mandé headed by the mayor of Chingford, Aubrey Austin.

The visit was followed in 1957 with Saint-Mandé gifting Chingford a Limoges style vase. This vase is currently residing in a corner of the foyer at Waltham Forest Town Hall.

In the early days of the twinning there were regular exchange visits and Chingford residents were very much involved and interested in the arrangement.

*The Evening News* of 18th January 1960 reported that those who had hosted French families from Saint-Mandé would be able to do a return trip there in June 1960 "when a mayor-led delegation spends a long weekend in Saint-Mandé".

The report went on to say that a strong tennis team would accompany the delegation and that many other Chingford residents would make arrangements to spend the same weekend in the town.

This was at little cost to the people of Chingford with most of the funding coming from the French government.

In *The Evening News* on 13th May 1961 the then town clerk of Chingford said that "criticism of Chingford Council's expenditure on town twinning… was unfounded.

"Since 1957 the annual visits to and from Saint-Mandé have cost the ratepayers of Chingford nothing." For extra context, the inaugural 1956 visit had cost them a grand total of £30 (about £700 today).

Chingford Historical Society says that in 1956 a family from Saint-Mandé arrived to camp for ten days but it was too wet to pitch their tent; thankfully they found other accommodation.

By 1964 there had already been five visits to Saint-Mandé and four return visits to Chingford with a fifth planned at that time.

There were of course other gifts back and forth. In 1996 Waltham Forest's gift was a red telephone box. This wasn't as unusual as it sounds. A quick sweep of old newspapers in the British Newspaper Archive during 1995 and 1996 reveals a whole host of red telephone boxes going over the channel to various towns in France often taken there in the back of a van driven by a member of the twinning committee.

The telephone box from Waltham Forest can still be seen on the south-east corner of Place Charles Digeon in Saint-Mandé.

According to Waltham Forest's website there have continued to be school exchanges, most recently with schools in Highams Park, but not Chingford.



**In 1957, Saint-Mandé gifted Chingford a Limoges style vase which now currently resides in the foyer of Waltham Forest Town Hall**
**Credit** Joanna Moncrieff

**Do you have any memories of exchange visits to Saint-Mandé? Chingford Historical Society would be very interested to hear from you:**

**Email** enquiries@chingfordhistory.org.uk

**Author Joanna Moncrieff leads local history walks in Walthamstow and Chingford and monthly tours of Waltham Forest Town Hall. To see her upcoming walks here:**

**Visit** linktr.ee/joannawestminsterwalks

# LISTINGS

## JAZZ

**Andy Davies**
Sunday 1st November, 4pm
All Saints Church, Church Avenue, Highams Park E4 9QZ

We are excited to welcome back the fantastic trumpeter Andy Davies to Highams Park Jazz Club for our monthly jam session and an evening of outstanding live music. Andy Davies is one of the UK's most respected and versatile trumpet players, known for his expressive tone, creative improvisation and exceptional musicianship. A highly sought-after performer, Andy has built a strong reputation across the jazz scene and beyond, bringing together a deep knowledge of the jazz tradition with a fresh and distinctive musical voice.

**Tickets (from £11) available here:** wegottickets.com/f/23836

## COMEDY

**Stamptown**
Monday 2nd & Tuesday 3rd November, from 8pm
Soho Theatre Walthamstow, 186 Hoe Street E17 4QH

Fresh from taping their debut Netflix special, the incredible Stamptown returns to Soho Theatre Walthamstow for more nights of mayhem. A raunchy, chaotic, totally one-of-a-kind spectacle, Stamptown features the most anarchic and wildly entertaining performance from around the world. Hosted by Zach Zucker, this show has packed out venues and events such as Lincoln Center, Edinburgh Fringe, Soho Theatre, Melbourne International Comedy Festival, the O2 Arena and Off-Broadway in New York City.

**Tickets (from £25) available here:** sohotheatre.com

## WORKSHOP

**Introduction to Metalworking**
Sunday 8th November, 10am–5pm
Blackhorse Workshop, 1-2 Sutherland Road Path E17 6BX

Introduction to Metalworking Techniques is an informative, engaging and exploratory course where you will be able to learn the basics of steel fabrication, welding and gain a better understanding of how to bring your ideas to life in metal. In the first half of the course you will learn how to cut, bend and form cold metal and how to weld using mild steel. For the second half of the course, you will be given the opportunity to come in with your own idea and, with support and guidance from your tutor, you will make a personally directed project in metal.

**To book your place call:** 020 8531 1612

## FILM

**Giggle Film Festival**
Thursday, 12th November, 8pm to 11pm
Big Penny Social, 1 Priestley Way, Walthamstow E17 6AL

London's biggest comedy short-film festival – Giggle Film Festival – is back at Big Penny Social for its third hilarious year. An unforgettable one-night-only evening of incredible comedy short films from some of the most original UK and international filmmakers. Our carefully curated programme is designed to surprise, provoke and delight, with a wide range of original and award-winningly funny short films. Book now to reserve tickets for an amazing experience of comedy short films that will put a smile on your face!

**Book your tickets (£10) here:** bigpennysocial.co.uk

## AFRICAN DRUMMING

**West African Djembe Drum Circle**
Monday 16th November, 7.30pm
Flukes, 1 Priestley Way, Walthamstow E17 6AL

Join us for an evening filled with rhythm, music, and community. Bring your own djembe drum or hire one of ours – all skill levels are welcome! Led by Seneke Sillah, a master drummer from The Gambia, you'll be guided through traditional West African rhythms in a fun and accessible way. Learn call-and-response patterns and djembe accompaniments step by step with Seneke's expert instruction. We have a limited number of free tickets for local residents on low incomes.

**Book tickets (from £13.70) on Eventbrite, search: 'West African Djembe Drum Circle'**

## LIVE MUSIC

**Von Burl**
Thursday, 26th November, 7pm
Altar, 7 Church Lane, Leytonstone E11 1HG

Von Burl is the musical project of Leytonstone based singer-songwriter Karen Crum, originally from County Antrim, Ireland. Her earlier music attracted support from BBC Radio 6 Music and a session at Abbey Road Studios. After several years away, she spent 2025 and 2026 making her debut album, 'Fault Lines'. This show at ALTAR marks the first live performance of 'Fault Lines', ahead of its 2027 release. Original clay artwork by Northern Irish ceramic artist Martin McClure forms the album's visual world, with handmade ceramic merchandise available on the night.

**Book tickets (£12) on the DICE app**

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Stratford Campus
Sat 14 November
10 am - 1 pm

Newham Sixth Form
Sat 14 November
10 am - 1 pm

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NEWHAM COLLEGE LONDON

East Ham Campus
Sat 21 November
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**With continued support from Echo readers we aim to:**

Produce more local journalism | Expand the size of the paper | Distribute to more locations

This month, 332 supporters contributed 33% of our monthly costs. While the paper remains free to read in print and online, every penny of income is reinvested in our local journalism. Can you support us with £5 per month to help us do more?

**Find out more at: walthamforestecho.co.uk/support-us**

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