



Your independent community newspaper

WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

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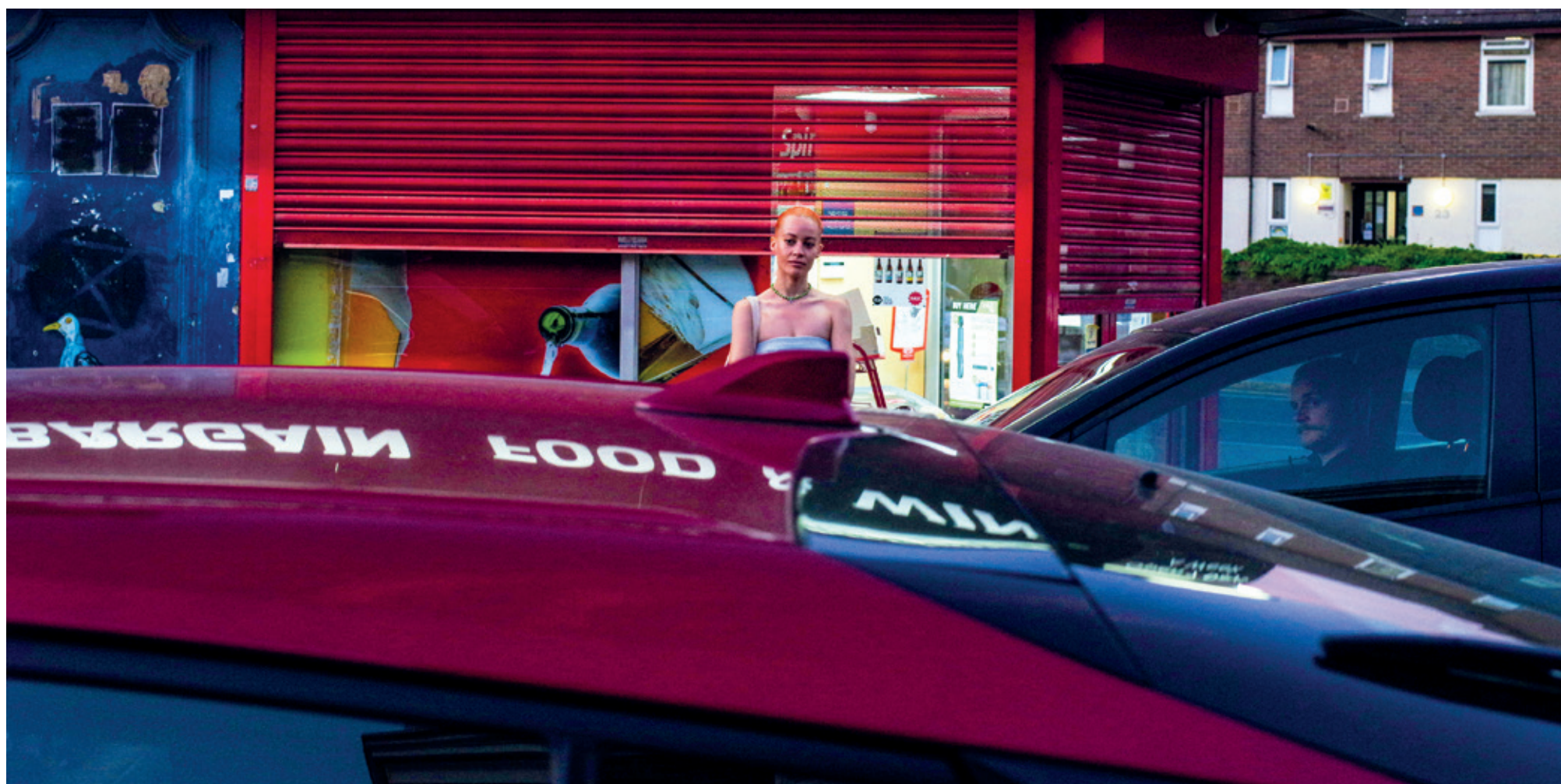
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The E17 Street Harassment Photo Project and accompanying film was created by three local women to provide an "honest and visceral" account of how harassment makes women feel, interviewing them about their experiences in the same spots they were harassed Credit Hannah Starkey

Outline of new Whipps Cross agreed

by Victoria Munro

Plans to rebuild Whipps Cross on a smaller area and sell more than half its current land for housing were agreed last month.

After the planning committee unanimously approved the "outline" for the new hospital and up to 1,500 homes, campaigners said they were "disappointed, saddened and concerned".

At a rally before the meeting

on 24th November, they argued selling off the bulk of the land was a decision that could not be taken back and was why some services in the current hospital may move elsewhere.

Waltham Forest Council's principal planner Matt Duigan said in the meeting that, because the hospital was "developed in a piece-meal fashion", its current layout is "inefficient" – one of many issues the rebuild hopes to fix.

Barts Health NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, also insist improving out-of-hospital community care will mean fewer people need to be treated in the new Whipps Cross in the first place.

Those opposed to the plans regularly erupted with outrage as councillors discussed the plans, resulting in one campaigner dramatically leaving after shouting over the debate.

While most meetings have at most three public speakers, in

this instance chairwoman Jenny Gray allowed 12 people to give their thoughts.

The first, Robert Gay from the Waltham Forest Civic Society, told councillors that if they agreed to sell off NHS land for housing "then in 30 years time, your successors will be cursing you".

He added: "The design is vastly too dense and too out-of-keeping with the area. It will provide an awful setting for the historic buildings being retained, which

will be overshadowed.

"We urge you to ask Barts Health to come back with a better application with different land use, they should still have time before they start building."

Most concerning to health campaigners who spoke was the potential loss of five services: the Margaret Centre, Connaught Day Hospital, Tomswood Unit, Woodlands Day Unit and Pine Lodge.

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NEWS



FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

DECEMBER 2021

No. 81

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These respectively provide end-of-life care, care for elderly and frail patients, rehabilitation, treatment for blood-related diseases and a psychiatric liaison for patients with mental health needs.

Current plans suggest these services could either move elsewhere in east London or be dotted around the new hospital, rather than located in a discrete unit.

Concerned speaker Adrian Stannard told councillors: "These five services are integral to and supportive of the clinical function of the hospital.

"If there's no space for them in the new hospital, it will not be a replacement, it will represent a reduction in services.

"More land should be kept for health services until the new hospital is up and running and the NHS have a better idea of how much land they actually need."

Councillors also heard from Dr Ken Aswani, a Leytonstone GP of more than 25 years and the chair of Waltham Forest's clinical commissioning group, which decides how NHS funds are spent in the borough.

He insisted community care was "the care that patients really want, at the end of the day" and "was always going to be preferable", where possible.

He said: "One of the things about hospital care is that not all of that needs to be provided within the hospital itself.

"Clearly a hospital just standing alone is not sustainable without the support and infrastructure in the community."

The hospital's redevelopment director, Alastair Finney, said



that, regardless of disagreements about how to proceed, he hoped the "case for a new hospital is agreed and understood by all".

He told the meeting: "We have facilities that are not fit for the 21st century. Our patients and communities deserve better, as do our staff.

"We have 3,500 staff who do their best, day in and day out, in the face of crumbling infrastructure and badly laid-out departments.

"Consolidating the building onto a much smaller footprint gives the opportunity... of locating the new hospital at the heart of a new neighbourhood. The plans envisage a hospital site that is greener and better connected."

Principal planner Matt Duigan added that "good quality housing" is a "key component of good health" and that there was "good logic for wanting to build housing

on the remainder of the site".

Ultimately, however, many of the finer details of the new hospital have yet to be decided and a more detailed application will come before councillors again at a later date.

Committee member and Conservative councillor Alan Siggers reminded those opposed that councillors "need to remove the emotional aspect" and "can't comment on clinical care that will or will not be delivered".

He said: "The clinicians driving this application are saying the space we have here is sufficient, it's more than sufficient.

"I understand why people want to know what's going to happen but that's not what's going to be [decided] at this committee. I have absolutely no objection to this plan whatsoever."

He also insisted he was "going

to leave the politics to one side", before launching into a criticism of the council's 'Whipps Won't Wait' campaign, which calls on the government to speed up allocating funding for the project.

Calling the campaign "the most bizarre thing [he has] ever seen", he asked: "Why start a campaign like that before the planning application is approved?"

"We will get the money once we have got the scheme, you can't go into a bank and say 'give me £2million to build a housing estate' – they will want to see the scheme."

The first step in the project will see a new six-storey car park built on-site, allowing existing parking to be relocated to free up space to build.

Work on the new hospital is due to start next year and finish in 2026, with the new hospital finally becoming operational the following year.

Work to build up to 1,500 new homes, some of which will be located in the iconic red-brick buildings most associated with the hospital, is expected to start in 2027 and end in 2038.

The "panhandle", a stretch of public land that runs from the hospital almost to Lea Bridge Road, will be opened up and used as a pedestrian and cycle route for the new hospital.

However, according to Matt, "no decision has been made" yet about neighbours' concern that the land will be used as an access route for construction vehicles while the hospital is built.

Campaigners who spoke at the meeting all insisted that their fight over the new hospital is far from over.

Editor's letter

by Victoria Munro

What is a newspaper? The answer seems obvious – a written report of recent events, possibly with some commentary and a Sudoku thrown in – but in practice it is more complicated. There are numerous blogs, websites and Facebook groups dedicated to Waltham Forest, many of which write about recent or upcoming events. None of them claim to be newspapers.

What does claim to be a news-

paper – "the largest local newspaper" in the borough, in fact – is *Waltham Forest News*, a propaganda pamphlet of around 30 pages published by Waltham Forest Council. It is pushed through the letterbox of every household in the borough and allows the council to publicise its own good work and campaigns, which I'm sure is very helpful to however many residents read it before tipping it straight into their recycling bin. Calling it Waltham Forest's largest newspaper is an insult to both Waltham Forest and news.

Years ago, the government told local councils to stop printing these publications more than four times a year – and for good reason. *Waltham Forest News* sucks up money from advertising and public notices that would otherwise support real local journalism. In defiance of government guidelines – and both the High Court and the Court of Appeal slapping down attempts to overturn the decision – the council has printed *Waltham Forest News* seven times so far this year and has more issues planned for December and January.

The council's decision to do this threatens the future of legit-

imate newspapers and the scrutiny, balance and nuance they offer readers. In this month's edition alone, we have printed stories that hold to account not only the council but also the Home Office, the police and a local GP. These are the kinds of stories you will never find in *Waltham Forest News*.

Clearly the council thought no one would notice them do this but, unfortunately for them, this borough still has an independent local press paying close attention to what they do. If you'd like to support our work, please consider becoming a member by visiting walthamforestecho.co.uk/membership

ARTS & CULTURE

Award-winning poet Joelle Taylor
Credit Roman Manfredi



Walthamstow poet up for UK's most valuable prize

by Victoria Munro

A Walthamstow poet's collection celebrating butch lesbian culture could win the UK's most valuable poetry prize next January.

Joelle Taylor, who moved to Wood Street in 2006, is an award-winning spoken word performer and this year's judge of the borough's annual poetry competition.

In October, her collection *C+nto & Othered Poems* was shortlisted for the coveted T.S. Eliot Prize, previously awarded to Ted Hughes and Carol Ann Duffy and now worth £20,000.

Speaking to the *Echo*, Joelle said the honour felt like "validation and recognition", particularly as spoken word performers "generally do not get shortlisted for major literary awards".

She described how the collection was a response to the rise in homophobic violence both in the UK and worldwide, particularly the stories told by documentaries like HBO's *Welcome to Chechnya*.

She said: "We're in an interesting place in history and this book is a warning as well as a celebration. A lot of the elders say the same thing, that they can

feel something coming and it's time for a call to arms.

"Queer poetry is really necessary to own and tell our narratives, it's a way of bringing us together and recognising what could happen. [The LGBT community is] weak at the moment because we are distracted and atomised, we need to come back to the nucleus."

C+nto highlights how the LGBT community has suffered due to the closure of its special-

Looking back on her experiences in the 80s and early 90s, which inspired *C+nto*'s poems, she said that one of the biggest differences was the sense that LGBT people had their "own eco-system" separate from straight people.

She said: "None of us at the time described ourselves as lesbian separatists at all but none of us had any relationships with males or straight people. It was very natural, that's what happens when people are excluded, they come together.

"The sense that we had of an outside threat was so real... and we all ended up in the same pubs at night.

"That doesn't seem to exist anymore and it's making us vulnerable. When you are more accepted into wider society, you also have the danger of losing the things that made you a radical movement."

Joelle is currently working on a stage adaptation of *C+nto* and will also perform it as a one-person show in Australia next year.

The T.S. Eliot Prize will announce which of the shortlisted collections will win the £20,000 grand prize in a ceremony on 10th January.

"We're in an interesting place in history and this book is a warning as well as a celebration"

ist venues, including both nightlife and sober spaces.

Last year, popular LGBT pub The Victoria had to leave its Hoe Street home to make way for the redevelopment of the Granada cinema site into a new theatre.

However, Joelle, who says she was attracted to Walthamstow in part because of its "left-wing, arty community", highlighted Walthamstow Trades Hall as a local venue that has stepped up to fill this gap.

Christmas comes early to Walthamstow

Penny Rutterford on the return of Walthamstow's festive High Street celebration

The annual Christmas celebration is returning to Walthamstow High Street this week.

High Street ADVENTures will take place on 4th December from 3pm–11pm and stretch from Central Parade to CRATE in St James.

Shops will stay open later and the street will see performances from drummers, spoken word poets, Colombian dancers, a drag bingo cabaret and a pop-up panto.

The event was commissioned by Waltham Forest Council to support High Street businesses and put together by Artillery, who also run the E17 Art Trail.

Artillery co-director Laura Kerry said: "We know from so many of our neighbourhood projects that culture can have an enormous impact on how people feel about the place in which they live, shop and play.

"We are excited by the response of our local creative community to work with us and local busi-

nesses to develop an exciting programme of free events.

"We would particularly like to thank all the local businesses who, in spite of the exceptional strains on their business due to the pandemic, have embraced this event and we hope people will come out to support them."

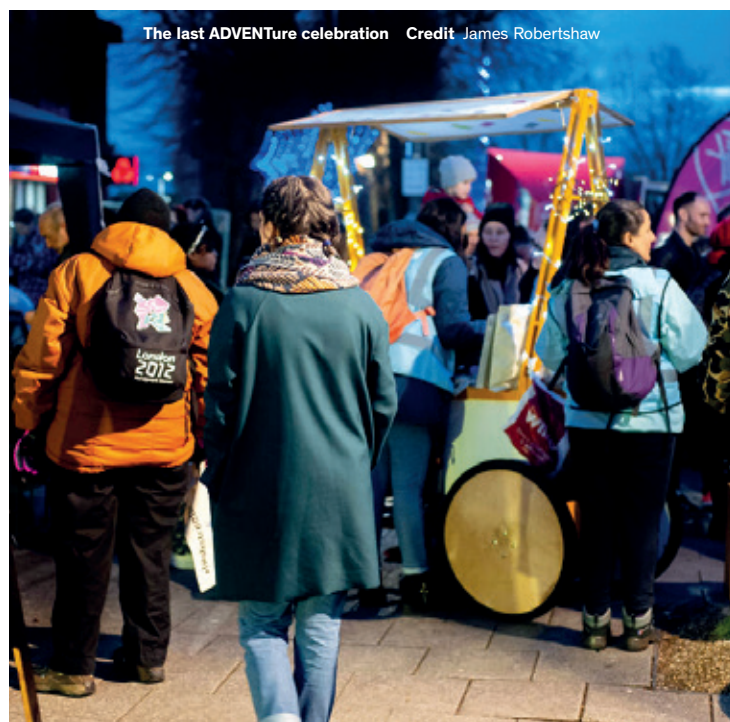
One artist getting involved is Alisa Ruzavina, in charge of creating a shop window trail.

She said her linked displays will honour the "diverse homelands and cultural heritage" of the variety of international businesses along the High Street.

She said: "As a local resident, I love the High Street because it's an authentic cultural melting pot and a place for our community to enjoy the city together.

"Being an immigrant myself, I am inspired to use storytelling to celebrate the incredible diversity of our area."

Find the full programme online at www.highstreetadventures.info or at the Town Square information hub



NEWS



Clyde Loakes celebrates the start of the borough's polystyrene recycling service Credit NLWA

Borough blazes green trail

by Victoria Munro

Waltham Forest residents are now among the first in London ever to be able to recycle polystyrene.

Last month, the North London Waste Authority (NLWA), chaired by Waltham Forest Council's deputy leader, started recycling polystyrene at its centre in South Access Road, Walthamstow.

Polystyrene, of which more than 10,000 tonnes is binned across the UK each year, will be reused as house insulation or turned into hard plastic for hangers, toys or frames.

NLWA chair Clyde Loakes said: "Expanded polystyrene is a challenging material to dispose

of because it is extremely lightweight but also takes up a relatively large volume.

"Up until now our only solution was to dispose of it through energy from waste (incineration), but this new recycling infrastructure will enable us to manage it efficiently and with less impact to the environment.

"In our fight to tackle the Climate Emergency, we all have a part to play. We call on residents to make full use of the recycling services available to them, both at home and through local collection points."

To find out more information about your local recycling centre, visit the NLWA website nlwa.gov.uk/PlacesToRecycle or check what you can recycle here northlondonrecycles.com

Council facing £13million budget gap

Waltham Forest Council must find more ways to cut corners as it faces a predicted budget gap of £13million this year.

Despite making £11m in cuts so far this financial year, the council revealed at the start of November it was already £9.5million over-budget.

Announcing the news to cabinet, council leader Grace Williams repeated her recent call for the Government to give the bor-

ough a "fair deal" in funding.

She said: "The last 18 months have been really tough for people in Waltham Forest and we know that has affected people in different ways.

"It's important to underline the impact the pandemic is having on children in the borough, we now have almost half our children living in poverty."

Despite the "financial exposure", officers said the council is "unlikely" to be in danger of going bankrupt as it has savings it can fall back on.

The kids are alright

Walthamstow student Franky Misku on what happened at the borough's Youth Climate Summit



Franky Misku, Willowfield School student

Last month, I and a big group of other young people from nine of the borough's schools made our way to the town hall to show up for what we believe in.

The Waltham Forest Youth Climate Summit took place on 12th November, at the same time as world leaders debated the fate of the earth in Glasgow at COP26. It was organised by the council and the borough's environment education centre - the Suntrap Forest Centre - and I and eight other students from Willowfield School were excited to take part. Determined to do our bit to reduce emissions, we made sure to walk the half-hour journey to the town hall instead of using our school's minibus.

The panel of speakers included council leader Grace Williams and Carolyn Axtell, from We Are Possible climate

action group, who shared ways we can all reduce our carbon footprint. I learnt that a person from the UK produces an average of 10 tonnes of CO2 a year, which is over double the world's average! It really drove home for me how we should all try to do more - avoiding car journeys, recycling instead of throwing things away and thinking all the time about how much we consume.

Our group of 40 dedicated young people then split into groups to brainstorm ambitious ways to help the environment. My group worked on a plan to make food shopping more eco-friendly, reducing how far produce has to travel and getting rid of unnecessary packaging. From my own experience in going to supermarkets, I have seen fruit and vegetables like bananas covered

in plastic packaging, which is completely unnecessary and often cannot be re-used, meaning it will inevitably end up in a landfill.

Supermarkets could choose to get their fruits and vegetables from local farmers, while individual people could try to grow their own food if they can. Given an opportunity to ask questions of the panel, I asked the council and other organisations to consider supporting the borough's schools, teaching students how to grow fruit and vegetables and even creating their own in-school allotments.

The summit was a very enjoyable experience and one I found really worthwhile. I and my fellow attendees will now be working hard to raise awareness amongst other students about climate change and how young people can do their bit.

NEWS

Local ex-police who mocked murdered sisters face jail

by Victoria Munro & Josh Mellor,
Local Democracy Reporter

Former Waltham Forest police who shared photos of murdered sisters while referring to them as “dead birds” face jail later this month.

Sacked PC Jamie Lewis, 33, and his recently resigned colleague Deniz Jaffer, 47, were assigned to guard the bodies of Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman in a Wembley park in June last year.

The former officers entered the cordoned-off crime scene to take photos, which they shared on WhatsApp along with “disrespectful and derogatory terms”.

At the Old Bailey on 2nd November, where both pleaded guilty to misconduct in public office, it was revealed they were in a WhatsApp group of more than 40 officers called “the A-team”.

In the early hours of 8th June, Lewis sent a message to the group reading: “Unfortunately I’m sat next to two dead birds with stab wounds”, the hearing was told.

He later sent Jaffer a superimposed “selfie-style” image of his own face on one of the sister’s bodies.

Jaffer also wrote a message that read: “I’m here now. Will try to take pictures of the



Sisters Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman Credit Met Police

two dead birds”.

When formally interviewed two weeks later, Lewis told officers from the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC): “I’m really confident that I didn’t take such pictures.”

Jaffer deleted the photographs from his phone when he heard Lewis was being interviewed by “people in suits”, who he believed to be from the IOPC.

He then told the officers: “It would be underhand to lie, but the photos have been deleted.”

In WhatsApp messages unrelated to the sisters, Jaffer referred to a group of Asian

men using a racial slur for Pakistanis.

Lewis was also found to have replied “exactly” after another officer used the same slur.

At their police misconduct hearing on 24th November, assistant commissioner for professionalism Helen Ball called their behaviour “shameful”.

She added: “I would like to say how sorry I am personally, and on behalf of the Metropolitan Police, that the officers behaved in such a hurtful, dishonest and unprofessional, criminal way”.

She dismissed Lewis from the force immediately and said she would have dismissed Jaffer if he had not already resigned in August.

The hearing heard Jaffer joined the Metropolitan Police from the financial sector in 2018, while Lewis joined in 2019.

Both men will be sentenced at the Old Bailey on 6th December and are barred from re-joining police forces in the future.

A Met spokesperson said officers in the North East Command, which covers Waltham Forest and Newham, had since been reminded “of their responsibilities in using WhatsApp and other social media”.

They added: “Local senior management spoke to officers on the command to outline what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour, as well as encouraging anyone who has a concern about a colleague’s behaviour to come forward.”

IOPC regional director, Sal Naseem, said instances of officers “falling below the standards of behaviour expected of them are not one-off events”.

He added: “A culture where some officers do not see anything wrong with sharing deeply offensive messages, and where others feel unable or unwilling to challenge this, has to change. And it has to change now.”

Three officers who received pictures of the crime scene and did not report the incident are now facing misconduct proceedings.

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FEATURES

New children's book deals with Covid grief

Walthamstow resident Naomi Elfred-Ross on how the struggle to grieve in lockdown led to something new

The Covid-19 pandemic left millions of people throughout the world, including myself, struggling to deal with bereavement under sudden and unusually traumatic circumstances. Due to the restrictions of lockdown, many families were unable to be with their loved ones during their final hours or to carry out the rituals of grieving in the usual way.

My own mum died from Covid-19 in April last year. It came as a tremendous shock to me and my family, one we are still trying to process, and forced us to grieve in isolation. Under such restricting circumstances, I and many others were forced to turn to more creative ways of processing loss.

In my case, soon after my mother died, I began using cat illustrations to deal with some of the traumatic memories I had in relation to her death. Doing this enabled me to begin to process what had happened and freed my mind to access happier memories through drawing, as well as expressing the extremes of emotions I felt, which could and continue to feel so overwhelming. Somehow, the cats became company to me, a source of comfort and something that, ultimately, felt like they brought me closer to her.

I never intended to create a book out of these illustrations but a story slowly emerged. It is my hope that this book may bring comfort to families who are grieving and help them feel less alone in their heartbreak and profound sadness. *Goodbye Mama Cat* is written as a children's book because I think we all become children when our parent dies and I also hope it might enable parents to have conversations with their children about death, so our younger generation are less afraid of this inevitable part of every life.

“Under lockdown, I was forced to turn to a more creative way of processing loss”

As winter approaches and brings with it the festive season, feelings of grief and loss are likely to feel all the more acute. While it remains difficult to be together, there is a need to find alternative ways to connect and to take care of ourselves and each other.

Half of all profits will go to vaccine charity Vaccinaid. You can buy ‘Goodbye Mama Cat’ online at naomielfredross.com



Naomi and her book 'Goodbye Mama Cat' Credit: Maeve McCaffrey

The haunting of Leytonstone Tube station

Leytonstone podcaster Aiden Lonergan reports his local Tube station may offer a service to the beyond

Standing on the platform in the bracing cold and with hands wrapped tightly around a cup of coffee, one could be forgiven for seeing strange forms or shapes through bleary, sleep-starved eyes at Leytonstone Tube station. The latest figures suggest the station plays host to over 9 million commuters annually – unsurprising considering its convenient position on the Central line. This statistic, however, only accounts for passengers from the land of the living. If the recorded history of hauntings at the station is anything to go by, then perhaps the Old World-style chap standing next to you is less suave socialite and more spooky

spectre. At least he'll save money by not having to purchase an Oyster Card.

The station's most tragic ghostly resident dates back to the Second World War – more precisely just a month before it ended. During the war, tunnels connected to the station were used as an aircraft components factory, while the section closest to Leytonstone itself acted as a public air raid shelter. The station saw its fair share of action, most notably a bomb in January 1944 that decimated part of the station buildings. Another such raid, in the summer of 1945, tragically resulted in the death of a serviceman, whose ghost is said

to haunt the station, unaware that the conflict has long since ended. He has been seen briskly walking along the platform before seemingly vanishing in the oncoming headlights of a carriage.

However, by far the most famous ghost allegedly spotted at the Tube station is famed director Sir Alfred Hitchcock, who reportedly prowls the Leytonstone area in general, perhaps not content with his fill of terrifying audiences during his life with the likes of *The Birds* and *Psycho*. To honour the centenary of his birth in 1899, the station was adorned with mosaics depicting iconic scenes from his body of work, unveiled slightly late in 2001. In addition to visiting the entrance to the Leyton flats opposite the hotel that bears his name, Sir Alfred has supposedly been spotted in the sloping hallway containing the mosaics at the station, perhaps enjoying a bit of post-mortem self-admiration.

I spoke to Humphrey (not his real name),

a TFL worker in the ticket hall of the Tube station one evening. He looked at me incredulously when I asked him if he had been a witness to any of these paranormal entities but said he would “love to”, if only to make his shift more interesting. A worker in a nearby shop was also sadly bereft of any spooky sightings, although she was keen to tell me about a karaoke competition between some drunken citizens outside the station recently – surely a terrifying sight in its own right.

So the jury is still out on whether Leytonstone Tube station is truly haunted but, given its history, perhaps you should look again if you see a commuter in clothes not from this decade. They may be a visitor from the other side – or just a purveyor of the vintage markets in Mile End.

For more paranormal, unexplained and true crime tales, listen to Aiden's podcast John Doe & Co, available on most major platforms, with new episodes every Monday. You can also follow the podcast on Instagram or Twitter at @johndoeandco

FEATURES

Highams Park pub among UK's best despite lockdown launch

A Highams Park micro-pub that opened in lockdown has already been listed among the UK's best.

The Stag & Lantern in The Broadway was picked for next year's Good Beer Guide, created by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).

Every neighbourhood in Waltham Forest is represented by at least one pub, although the neighbourhood most featured is Leytonstone, home to three pubs that made the cut.

Stag & Lantern owner Rob said that, as a CAMRA member, it was "one of his dreams" to be included in the guide but not one he expected to fulfil so soon after opening in April last year.

He said: "Hopefully it's a sign we are doing something right. I'm a big beer fan so we were

always going to have good beer.

"We heard whispers that we were in it but I only got the book in my hands an hour ago to confirm. I imagine we'll have a celebration."

The micropub was finally ready to open just after the country went into the first Covid lockdown, forcing it to rely on once-a-week deliveries for months.

However, since being able to actually open, Rob said the pub had received a wealth of support from the Highams Park community.

He said: "I'm a Highams Park resident and had been to a few micropubs over the country and it just seemed like this area was in need of something like that.

"We knew we wanted to become a hub for the community, like old pubs used to be. We've started doing music events and having local artists perform."



Rob and the Stag & Lantern team celebrate their success Credit Stag & Lantern

A number of the other Waltham Forest pubs included in the guide credited their inclusion to a community ethos and ever-changing selection of beers.

Kieran, manager of Leytonstone's North Star, in Brown Road, said the pub "tries to keep it pretty simple" by focusing on serving beer in the best condition possible.

Dave, from the Northcote Arms in Grove Green Road, noted the pub he manages is "in it every year", which he said was hopefully thanks to its "amazing atmosphere".

He added: "It's the sort of place where, if people have just moved here and don't know anyone, they can come here and they are bound to meet people."

Find the full list of featured pubs and how to buy next year's guide on the Waltham Forest Echo website



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NEWS

Tfl says 'never again' after Tube station immigration raid

Walthamstow Central Tube station
Credit James Cracknell



by Victoria Munro

There will be no more immigration raids at Walthamstow Central Tube station after a controversial operation earlier this year.

On 13th October, eight people were arrested after being stopped just outside the station during an early-morning

raid by the Home Office and police.

Witnesses said they saw police stop Eastern European tradesmen, ignoring more smartly dressed pedestrians.

Many were angered by the raid, including local MP Stella Creasy, who told the *Echo*: "Stopping people without prior knowledge of them to check their immigration status whilst travelling

through a station is not only deeply discriminatory and divisive, its also a poor use of resources.

"The Home Office urgently needs to come clean to Walthamstow residents on what basis they took over our local train station for this action, and why they chose not to tell TfL about their work either."

Campaign group Waltham Forest Anti Raids Network reminded residents that they can refuse to give their personal details to police unless under arrest.

A TfL spokesperson confirmed the operation on their property "was not authorised" and won't be repeated.

They added: "We have had discussions with our policing partners to help ensure this doesn't happen again."

"The Home Office urgently needs to come clean to Walthamstow residents"

At the time, a Home Office spokesperson confirmed there were eight arrests.

They said: "The government is tackling illegal immigration and the harm it causes, often to the most vulnerable people, by removing those with no right to be in the UK.

"We continue to work with law enforcement agencies to tackle illegal migration in all its forms. Our New Plan for Immigration will speed up the removal of those who have entered the UK illegally."

The Home Office was contacted about the statement from TfL and did not respond.

International uproar after disputed flag raised at town hall

by Victoria Munro

Furious residents are calling for the council leader to resign after a flag raised outside the town hall sparked international uproar.

On 15th November, members of the borough's large Turkish Cypriot community raised a flag outside the town hall to mark the 38th anniversary of North Cyprus declaring itself separate from the rest of the country, which is mostly Greek.

The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus is currently only recognised as a legitimate state by Turkey, with the EU decrying the Turkish army's continued presence there as an occupation.

A few hours later, following an outcry, Waltham Forest Council took down the flag and council leader Grace Williams put out a statement insisting it would never be raised again.

Her statement read: "Waltham Forest Council apologises for the offence caused by the raising of the flag of Northern Cyprus which has now been removed. We accept this remains a disputed territory not recognised by the UK Government and will not be raising it in future.

"We realise that cultural and historic sensitivities must be fully considered when putting on a cultural programme. We will commit to fully review our processes for any flag raising requests.

"We will consult more widely to avoid causing offence and ensure all communities are included. Our intention is to celebrate our communities, not cause division."

Following criticism that the council previously allowed the flag of Tibet - also not recognised by the UK Government - to be flown, it was clarified this was a decision made by former leader Clare Coghill and



The controversial flag being raised outside the town hall
Credit Allen Windsor

will not take place again.

The flag was raised following a request from Conservative councillor Nick Halebi, who represents Chingford Green.

Speaking to the *Echo* the following day,

Cllr Halebi said the community was "really upset at not being treated in a fair way" and argued the council should not have bowed to pressure to remove the flag.

He said: "The council should not be getting involved in external affairs when this event was a community thing.

"I'm worried if this will become a precedent. The community is asking why they are being singled out, particularly as the majority are from the Muslim community.

"It's a shame because the council has done an awful lot of work to promote cohesion. The current leader is a lovely lady, I feel she's been either misled or pressured."

A petition calling for Cllr William's resignation was signed almost 1,500 times in one day.

Petition creator Arkin Oksuzoglu wrote that it was "beyond comprehension" that the leader considered the flag "so 'offensive' that an apology [was] needed".

FEATURE

Take back the High Street



All film stills courtesy of Hannah Starkey

by Victoria Munro

Three Walthamstow women have created a powerful record of the street harassment experienced by women on a daily basis in E17.

The photo series and accompanying film was created by producer Ruth Board, director Liz Biggs and photographer Hannah Starkey following the death of Sarah Everard in March.

The trio were furious to see that women discussing their experiences in the wake of the shocking murder were still being shut down or mocked online.

In an effort to convey how harassment feels, they began interviewing women about their stories in E17, often in the very locations the incident took place.

Liz told the *Echo*: “One of the things that almost all the women we spoke to said is that they see Waltham Forest as worse [for harassment] than other places they have lived.

“However, we are not saying this is specifically a Waltham Forest or Walthamstow issue. This happens on every high street and thoroughfare in every town in Britain.

“Whether it’s true or not that Waltham Forest is worse, there’s something more intimidating about being harassed on your

doorstep. Women said they were afraid to go home because they didn’t want the guy to know where they lived.

“People would talk about taking longer routes home rather than have to walk past certain cafes or parts of the High Street.”

“It’s not bashing men, it’s just a really honest and visceral attempt to articulate how women feel”

Almost all women interviewed for the project recalled their first experience being harassed on the street happened when they were less than 13 years old, with some being as young as nine.

Ruth said: “We wanted women to talk about how it made them feel because I think some men do it and don’t realise how hurtful and annoying it is.

“Women experiencing harassment do not have a voice. If you try to talk about it, you get trolled or people tell you to get over it but it’s not banter and you

shouldn’t have to put up with it.

“A few women spoke about men using their cars to intimidate them, you can’t fight back against somebody in their car. One pregnant woman was followed all the way down Markhouse Road.”

However, Ruth noted that a lot of harassment was now harder to spot than the wolf whistles and jeering of her youth because men were deliberately being less “audible and visible”.

She said: “You’ll hear someone saying something to a girl and, when you look around, he will be looking in the other

direction. You can also see men pretending they know a girl, in a way that passers-by might not realise they’re being harassed.”

Photographer Hannah said she hoped letting people know how common harassment is would help women “support each other and maybe stamp it out”.

She said: “When you realise how many women have similar stories at some point in their life, there’s a real power to that collective experience.

“Our film in a way is holding the people that do this accountable in a way women can’t in the street. It’s not bashing men, it’s

Liz and Ruth introduce the film at the E17 Art Trail
Credit Jack BarnesStella Creasy and Grace Williams at the film's premiere
Credit Jack Barnes



just a really honest and visceral attempt to articulate how women feel.

“There’s a point in the film that talks about what men can do... even if it’s just to support and listen. We didn’t want to leave men feeling powerless, we wanted them to feel included.”

An early version of the film was shown at the E17 Art Trail in July, followed by a panel with speakers that included MP Stella Creasy and council leader Grace Williams.

MP Creasy also recommended the film to the House of Lords last month as they prepared to debate whether to make misogyny a hate crime.

She told the *Echo* she felt the film was a “powerful and compelling call for action” that would hammer home the need to change how misogyny is policed.

She said: “As soon as I saw it I knew we had to make every parliamentarian voting on this legislation see it.

“Treating misogyny as a hate crime wouldn’t create any new offences but makes plain the risks women face in daily life.

“It’s a policy that builds on evidence from across the country of how this helps to tackle violence against women and sends a strong message across society that targeting women isn’t acceptable.”

The council’s cabinet member for community safety, Ahsan Khan, told the *Echo* the council is “honoured to support a worthy and thought-provoking project like this”.

He said: “We want women and girls in our community to feel safe, in their homes, and on our streets. And to do this we need men to step up, to challenge misogyny, and to play a leadership role in changing the culture that allows street harassment to happen.”

He added that the council has also been working with Communities Inc to deliver ‘Stand by Her’ training for men, teaching them to support women and challenge harmful behaviour.

The E17 Street Harassment team plan to continue working on the film and have submitted a bid for funding to create a billboard campaign in the borough’s harassment hotspots.

They also hope to create education packs for local schools, teachers and parents to help them teach young people about street harassment.

Liz added: “I’d love people to share the film and watch it with the men in their lives. This is not behaviour we can change as women, it has to be from men.”

Watch ‘Hoe Street – Tales of Everyday Harassment’ online here: leytonstonelovesfilm.com/watch-and-listen



HOUSING

Developer wants to add even more homes to estate rebuild



Marlowe Road Estate Credit Penny Dampier

by Victoria Munro

The developer rebuilding a Walthamstow estate has been given permission to change their plans midway through the project.

Waltham Forest Council leaders agreed on 5th November to let developer

Countryside submit a new planning application for the Marlowe Road estate.

The original plan, approved in 2016, was to replace the 298 low-rise flats that surround Northwood Tower with 448 new homes.

However, Countryside “approached the council with a proposal to increase the density”, adding an extra 141 new flats.

If agreed, the new planning application will deliver 13 more social rent flats, compared to 85 more for private sale and 43 more shared ownership flats.

On the council’s website, officers wrote that refusing could mean the latter half of the project is “delayed for an indefinite period” as the developer currently expects to lose money.

They added that not continuing the rebuild is “not considered to be an option”.

The council appointed Carter Jonas to review Countryside’s “financial assumptions”, which concluded the developer would not make “an enhanced profit” by adding the new homes.

However, a number of documents considered by council leaders when making their decision were redacted from public view.

Countryside are also the developer building new homes on the town hall site, after winning planning permission recently.

Countryside expects to submit a new planning application later this year and start work on its updated design by next spring.

Embattled single mum saved from eviction again



Nadia's supporters outside the town hall Credit LDRS

by Josh Mellor, Local Democracy Reporter

Protestors gathered outside the town hall last month to support a single mum who has become a symbol of the borough’s housing crisis.

Nadia Zamin, 38, has faced eviction three times in the last six months and made national news this summer for her fight against Waltham Forest Council.

Her family has so far been moved from Walthamstow to Leyton and back again since June and even told to move to Stoke-on-Trent, which she refused.

On 11th November, after she was again told to leave her temporary

accommodation with nowhere to go, protestors implored councillors to help.

A week later, she was granted another temporary reprieve from eviction until January next year, by which time she hopes to be able to support herself.

Responding to the news, Nadia said: “We recognize that housing officers are bound by all kinds of laws but they found some heart and a way round this one for the moment and, for that, we are all pleased.”

In a written statement, Waltham Forest Housing Action Network added that her case is far from isolated in the borough.

Their spokesperson said: “There are probably hundreds of Nadias.

This is... a political fight for housing to become a social service, not an investment opportunity.

“Property developers are building masses of flats in the borough, but not for the 10,000 households on the housing waiting list. Where is the help for Nadia, and all others in her position?”

Responding the day after the protest, the council’s cabinet member for housing Louise Mitchell said the council will “continue to work with Ms Zamin and her family to understand her circumstances”.

She added: “Waltham Forest Council works hard to provide accommodation for residents who request assistance.

“Our preference is to house every household locally. However, demand for housing in London far outstrips supply and we regret it is not always possible to place people in the borough.

“We understand it is a very difficult time for households that find themselves at risk of losing their home, and we work hard to find the most appropriate ways that we can support them.”

NEWS IN BRIEF

Council tenants face likely rent hike

Council tenants across the borough are likely to see their rent increase by the maximum amount possible next year.

At a meeting of Waltham Forest Council leaders on 4th November, a 4.1% increase in council rent next April was proposed.

If agreed at the full council meeting this month, the rise would be more than double the 1.5% increase that came into effect this April.

The council’s cabinet member for housing, Louise Mitchell, said the hike was necessary to allow more new homes to be built and to fund the maintenance and repair of existing homes.

Current government rules on council rent rises will allow maximum increases linked to inflation until April 2024, when councils must limit themselves to more “prudent” 1% rises.

Filthy water flooding council flat for years

Filthy water regularly floods a family of six’s Leytonstone flat due to a “blocked pipe” Waltham Forest Council has spent years failing to fix.

Abdul Hashem, 42, lives in a council flat in John Walsh tower with his wife and four children and says the problem has been ongoing since 2016.

During mornings, evenings and weekends – when other residents are likely to be washing – dirty water fills his kitchen sink and runs over the floor.

He said: “This dirty water is going over my pots, pans and plates. From a hygiene perspective, it’s not right.

“When you enter the flat, it smells terrible inside and my five-year-old is very ill so I worry about him catching an infection from the water.

“On 29th October... it flooded three times in one day. Sometimes we just can’t manage.”

Responding on 10th November, the council’s cabinet member for housing Louise Mitchell said the council believed it fixed the problem “earlier this year” but then “had to carry out further investigations”.

Despite her claim work had already “begun to fix the fault”, which she hoped would be sorted “within a fortnight”, Abdul told the *Echo* on 25th November that no one had visited his home since.

CRIME

Teenager, 14, denies murdering Chingford dad



James Markham (provided by family)

The 14-year-old charged with murdering a Chingford father-of-three this summer has pleaded not guilty.

The teenage boy, who cannot be named due to his age, appeared at the Old Bailey on 2nd November.

James Markham, 45, was stabbed to death on 9th August, reportedly after confronting a group of young people shouting at his daughter outside the family's Churchill Terrace home.

The suspect, charged with murder, possessing a knife and breaching a criminal behaviour order, is due to stand trial next June.

Speaking shortly after the shocking death, Waltham Forest Council's cabinet member for community safety, Ahsan Khan, said his heart "goes out

to" James' grieving family.

He added: "Your pain is our pain and the people of Waltham Forest grieve with you.

"Incidents like this should never happen in our city. Waltham Forest Council works hard with a range of partners to tackle at the root the factors that draw some of our young people into violence.

"However, we know there is more to do. We are determined to use all the resources we have available to us to achieve it."

A second boy, also aged 14, was arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to murder but later released under investigation.

A 16-year-old girl, who was arrested on suspicion of assisting an offender, was also released under investigation.

Chingford siblings jailed for pimping women online



Claudia and Vasile Anca Credit Met Police

A Chingford brother and sister who pimped women online were jailed for six years each.

Older sister Claudia Anca, 27, was "the boss" of the operation and insisted the women advertised on the site "respect her rules".

Her 24-year-old brother Vasile Anca, who lived with her in Garfield Road, assisted in running the business and drove women to meet customers.

After initially pleading their innocence, the siblings confessed to controlling prostitution and supplying cocaine and were jailed at Snaresbrook Crown Court on 17th November.

Speaking after the sentence, Detective Inspector Nigel Penney said they showed "absolutely no regard for the welfare or safety of the women they exploited for their own greed".

Claudia had sent messages to the women working for her dictating

how they should look – insisting they dress elegantly and straighten their hair – and threatened them with losing work if they did not obey.

Drivers who dropped women off were expected to take a photo of them for her approval before they went to meet customers.

Their Redbridge accomplice, 51-year-old Mihaita Strat, who also drove women to jobs and helped with the website, was jailed for two years at the same court.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Man caught with drugs after accepting lift from police

A Waltham Forest man was caught with 14kg of weed after accepting a lift from police.

Jesse Winsborough, 30, confessed last month to moving drugs between London and Perthshire, Scotland, in January last year.

The self-employed flooring worker was caught after crashing his car in a blizzard late at night and being spotted by Perthshire police pulling two suitcases along a busy road.

Winsborough accepted a lift from the officers, who noticed a "strong smell" of weed when loading his luggage into their car.

Inside they discovered 14kg of vacuum-packed weed, worth an estimated £140,000.

Winsborough will be sentenced later this month at Perth Sheriff Court.

Leyton man's suspected killer caught

Three men stand accused after a 33-year-old from Leyton was stabbed to death in September.

Mohamed Ensser died on 21st September after reports of a street fight in East Ferry Road on the Isle of Dogs.

Police were called to the scene shortly before 8.30pm that night and found Mohamed bleeding out from multiple stab wounds, including a fatal wound to his neck.

Despite treatment from paramedics, he died at the scene less than half an hour later.

On 11th November, police finally arrested 20-year-old Kwabena Boateng from Poplar, charging him with murder.

He is next due to appear at the Old Bailey in February.

Two other men – also both from Tower Hamlets – are accused of assisting an offender and will appear in court on 10th December.

Seven teens arrested after Chingford shooting

Seven teenagers were arrested for their suspected involvement in a drive-by shooting in Chingford.

On the evening of 13th September, two 17-year-olds boys were fired at twice with a shotgun by someone driving past in a stolen car.

Luckily, both boys ducked for cover and narrowly missed being injured.

After a lengthy investigation, officers carrying out a dawn raid on 11th November arrested seven boys, all aged 16 to 18, in connection with the incident.

All seven were taken to an east London police station and remain in custody. Officers who took part in the raid also seized around £1,000 in cash.

LETTERS

Great news

Dear Waltham Forest Echo
I just want to say I've been loving the content in the *Echo* the past few weeks.

I'm a journalist who worked on the *Waltham Forest Guardian* for several years a while back and the most recent print edition of the *Echo* was superb, a great mix. Feels like we have a proper paper back in Waltham Forest.

Keep up the good work.

Carl Brown
Walthamstow resident

Street safety

Dear Waltham Forest Echo

Yesterday [15th November], my son was targeted by two young men, who said they had a knife and forced him to hand over his phone. This happened at 9:45am on Forest Road while he was walking to college.

I have lived in Walthamstow my whole life and this has never happened to us or anyone close to us before so it has shaken us up, especially my son. It just upsets me that so little money is invested into policing our roads, I don't think there are enough CCTV cameras in order to deter thieves.

I know this happens everyday but I feel our council is not doing enough to prevent it. They invest so much in things like enforcing parking fines but do not seem to care about the muggings that are taking place.

Kevin Rego
Walthamstow resident

Climate hypocrisy

Dear Waltham Forest Echo

I'd like to thank deputy leader Clyde Loakes for writing to me and many other residents on 8th November. However, I deeply disagree with his claim in this letter that the council's policies are enough to tackle the Climate Emergency.

The council has cut down a lot of trees and is planning to remove even more, with the prime example being the Lea Bridge Orient Way Park [issue 79, p18]. A substantial number of dead newly-planted trees can be seen around the borough and even thriving new trees will take 30 years to mature.

Cllr Loakes also neglected to mention the Edmonton Incinerator rebuild, over which he presides, a project I fear will

make our air the dirtiest and most dangerous to health in London. The new incinerator will be extremely expensive and over-capacity, meaning waste from elsewhere in England will be brought here to be burned.

All in all, I will not be reporting positively to the Labour doorstep campaign.

Eva Turner
Walthamstow resident

Lest we forget

Dear Waltham Forest Echo

This time the council's behaviour has gone a step too far. Ever since the town's war memorial was unveiled in 1921, it has been the assembly point for everyone to pay their respects to the fallen.

However this year, instead of bearing poppy wreaths around its base, it is devoid of any such display whatsoever, suggesting this borough has totally ignored their sacrifice. Those wreaths that remain are instead around the base of a non-descript flagpole. The council should cease this arbitrary change at once and issue an apology to alleviate any further distress.

Yours in disgust,
Keith Foster
Walthamstow resident

MP sleaze

Dear Waltham Forest Echo

I am extremely concerned by the MP sleaze scandals of recent weeks. I simply don't believe these issues exist in a bubble.

When politicians openly and knowingly fail their constituents, this is a symptom of something far more rotten at the heart of our political system. Several bills are passing through parliament at the moment which threaten to undermine our democracy.

The Elections Bill will remove the independence of the Electoral Commission and undermine its ability to monitor elections. Other bills, such as the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill and the Judicial Review and Courts Bill, take power out of the hands of ordinary people and our democratic institutions and concentrate it in the hands of the government.

The fact that this government is so happy to take liberties with public trust is, I fear, a sad sign that we are heading towards a future where it cannot be held accountable.

Anne McHale
Walthamstow resident

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HEALTH



Mary (front) with other Whipps campaigners
Credit Waltham Forest Save Our NHS

Who consults on the consultants?

Whipps commentator Mary Burnett asks if the millions paid to consultants on the rebuild could be better spent

Between the start of 2019 to September this year, Barts Health NHS trust, which runs Whipps Cross, paid more than £1million to a single company, whose name will be unknown to most: Currie & Brown. This company had a hand in creating the Strategic Outline Case for the new hospital, the vital document that made the case for government investment and sketched initial plans for the hospital's size and shape. You'd thus be forgiven for assuming Currie & Brown work in the health sector. In fact, their specialism is far more nebulous, with their website boasting they "add value to the construction, management and use of physical assets the world over". Undeniably, I suppose, a hospital is a physical asset, although so is a postbox.

Over the same period, as revealed by the careful work of health campaigners poring through the trust's "monthly financial transparency documents", Barts have paid an even greater sum – totalling more than £1,840,000 – to another obscure company, named Carnall Farrar. This firm does at least specialise in healthcare, according to their website, and provided Barts with "demand and capacity modelling". It was this modelling – and strategies for both the new hospital and community

health services that the company also helped create – which Barts until very recently insisted proved the new hospital would need 51 fewer beds than it has now.

Currie & Brown and Carnall Farrar work in the same field: management consultancy. The use of consultants by the NHS has mushroomed of late, a trend that has sparked controversy about the millions spent and whether it represents value for money. These are questions, I would argue, the public has a right to ask, particularly when we look at their output in Whipps' case.

Carnall Farrar helped develop Waltham Forest's Integrated Care Strategy in 2019, a plan for how to improve community health services, which is the lynchpin of Barts' aim to reduce hospital admissions. However, I and other campaigners would argue that the strategy they helped produce has significant discrepancies and omissions.

For example, a headline claim in this document was that Waltham Forest disproportionately focused on reactive care compared to other boroughs, spending more on hospital care than its peers. In fact, it only spent a higher percentage of its health budget – the borough has a smaller budget and thus actually spent less than many of its peers on hospital care. This financial imbalance

for some reason seemed almost irrelevant to the strategy created.

Also concerning was the strategy's mention of the North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), who are responsible for a number of services across our borough. Perhaps best known for providing mental health care, NELFT also provides community nurses, community occupational therapists and physiotherapists. Over the course of 166 pages, the strategy promises to save £23m through an investment of less than £7m in staffing. However, on page 127, it admits that "assumptions have been made for workforce and estate modelling due to the absence of community data", conceding that "to establish a baseline, NELFT community workforce data will be required".

Earlier this year, after months of opposition from the community and Waltham Forest Council, Barts finally backed down on their plan to cut beds in the new Whipps, although – as my column in October argued – there's still some cause for concern. In a letter to worried MPs sent in September, they promised to "continuously review" bed capacity and report annually on their findings. It remains to be seen whether this will entail spending even more money on consultants – and what conclusions they may reach.

Walthamstow mum died after GP missed cancer

by Josh Mellor, Local Democracy Reporter

A Walthamstow mother who died after suffering from undiagnosed cancer for six months was "failed by her GP".

Hadia Girshab, 61, visited The Firs Medical Clinic in Walthamstow 21 times before her death in April, complaining of a persistent cough and chest pain.

At her inquest on 2nd November, coroner Nadia Persaud said the mother-of-three should have been urgently referred to a cancer clinic as early as September 2019.

In May last year, Hadia was finally diagnosed with a rare form of cancer linked to asbestos exposure, which likely happened while she was working in a Leeds toy factory in 1979.

Speaking after the inquest, her grieving daughter Waffa said Hadia "could have had a better quality of life" in her final months if diagnosed earlier.

She said: "There would have been more pain management and it would have been before Covid so she would have been able to see [us].

"They should have referred her much earlier to a lung cancer clinic, there are other cancers that could have a much better outcome."

A family statement read to the court described Hadia as someone who "lived for her family" and did "anything she could to make [their] lives easier and joyous".

Hadia's medical notes showed she first complained of coughing and chest pain to her GP in January 2019 and returned with the same concern repeatedly.

Dr Terry John, partner at the surgery, told the court: "I accept that something more could have been done, looking at my notes it seems that my colleagues would have been reassured by various x-rays that were done."

He added that there had been "lessons learned" from Hadia's case and agreed to write to his local NHS clinical commissioning group.

The Firs, which serves almost 8,000 patients, was inspected in August this year and rated as "inadequate" by the health watchdog Care Quality Commission.



Beloved family woman Hadia Girshab Credit Moneera Girshab

AROUND THE BOROUGH

LEYTON

Primary school still 'outstanding', says Ofsted



Barclay Primary School students celebrate their excellent Ofsted report (provided by school)

A Leyton primary school has once again been judged "outstanding" by Ofsted inspectors.

Inspectors visited Barclay Primary School in Canterbury Road at the start of October and described it as a "friendly school where pupils and staff know one another well".

The school became the founding member of the Lion Academy Trust, which runs ten schools, in 2012 after being deemed 'good' by Ofsted.

Responding to the news last month, headteacher Justin James

told the *Echo*: "I am extremely proud of every member of the team at Barclay, who continue to work tirelessly to make every lesson, in every setting, the very best that it can be."

School head Tom Mitchell added that the "real stars" were the pupils, whose "ability to talk compellingly about their learning... is a hallmark of the independent, highly confident learners we are developing."

The report on the school reads: "Adults and pupils treat each other with kindness and respect. This makes pupils feel safe and

confident to share with adults if they feel uncomfortable.

"Pupils understand what bullying is and say that although it is very rare, they know staff would sort it out if it did happen.

"Pupils like coming to school and working hard. The curriculum is well designed and organised to ensure that pupils learn an ambitious range of knowledge and skills.

"Staff enjoy being part of the team at Barclay. They are well trained and value the detailed guidance that is available when planning their teaching."

CHINGFORD

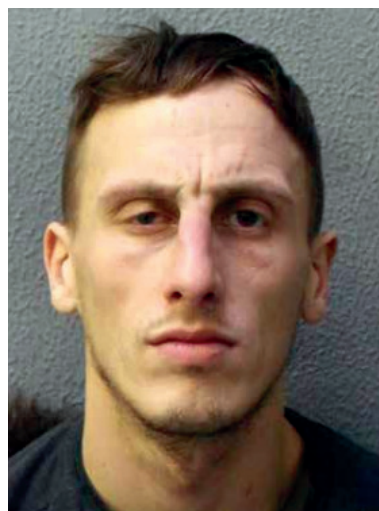
Man jailed for Alexandra Palace heist

A Chingford man who helped steal almost £50,000 during a heist at Alexandra Palace was jailed last month.

Jason Hardcastle, 35, of Withy Mead, was found guilty of conspiracy to commit burglary after a trial in September and sentenced to three years and nine months in jail.

He and his five accomplices were finally sentenced – more than two years after pulling off the crime – at Wood Green Crown Court on 29th October.

The court heard that, in the



Jason Hardcastle Credit Met Police

early hours of 19th August, 2019, three of the gang used bolt cutters to open the palace's main doors.

Using power tools, they were able to sever the connections to two cash machines and load one into the back of a van, later returning for the second.

The group were able to make off with £46,590 in cash from the two machines, later found discarded by members of the public.

The vans used in the crime were found by police during a routine patrol near The Croft in Chingford.

HIGHAMS PARK

Chicken shop can open late despite police's gang fears

A Highams Park chicken shop can now open late despite police fears of stoking gang activity.

Wings Hut in The Avenue was granted a licence to open until 1am on weekends and midnight on weeknights.

This is despite warnings from the Metropolitan Police that the shop is located in the stomping ground of the Selrack gang.

Speaking before the licensing

committee on 10th November, police officer Kerry Ann Tilley said the new hours were "very likely to increase groups congregating" outside.

She added: "I can see [the potential for] large groups... including opposing gangs, therefore increasing the likelihood of crime and disorder."

Explaining the committee's decision in writing, officers cited a lack of evidence of crime "directly linked" to Wings Hut.

WALTHAMSTOW

New bar opening despite legal agreement

A new bar is opening near St James Street Station in a space neighbours believed "would never and could never" sell alcohol.

The bar at 2 Station Road has permission to open until 10.30pm on weeknights and 11.30pm on weekends.

Opposed residents insisted the building was subject to a legal agreement preventing the sale of alcohol but Waltham

Forest Council officers insisted this was not a reason to refuse.

Upstairs neighbour Lucy Kelly wrote: "This is a residential block, cheaply built, which has thin walls and floors. This will significantly affect the quality of life for all residential tenants in the building."

Explaining the decision, officers wrote that councillors were "satisfied that the applicant was professional" and "would listen to and work with the residents".

LEYTONSTONE

New girls group open to build pre-teen confidence

A 150-year-old charity has opened a new after-school club for girls in Leytonstone.

Girls Friendly Society (GFS) held its first event, aimed at primary school girls, on 9th November at St John the Baptist Church.

CEO Laura Sercombe said the charity is "incredibly excited to have opened a new group in Leytonstone and

can't wait to welcome more girls into the GFS community.

"We know it can be tough for girls growing up. There is so much pressure to look and behave in certain ways.

"GFS groups exist to be an antidote to that kind of pressure. A safe, friendly space where girls can be who they are and feel valued."

For more information see: girlsfriendlysociety.org.uk/group-finder/leytonstone/

PHOTOGRAPHY & ARTS



A11 'Home' - Collagraphic challenge 9 April 2020 A Alcock



Home

For this month's photography/arts page we asked you to respond to the theme 'Home'. What does home mean to you? Here are some of our favourite images. To see more head to our Instagram [@walthamforestecho](https://www.instagram.com/walthamforestecho)

We want your photos and illustrations! Please send in your images of people and places in Waltham Forest to penny@socialspider.com

Top left Anna Alcock

Top right Alison Stirling

Middle right Duncan Holmes

Bottom right Elizabeth Salazar

Bottom middle
Christina Marshall

Bottom left Helen Jackson



HISTORY



Gill and Maurice, Colby Lodge's first residents Credit WCAC

The original social housing

Liz Abbott from the Walthamstow and Chingford Almshouse Charity on the borough's almshouses past to present

A recent government survey showed more than two thirds of respondents had no idea what the word "almshouse" means. Yet, if you've ever stopped and admired a sociable arrangement of pretty cottages enclosing a colourful garden, it is very likely you've come across one. Almshouses were something like the council houses of yesteryear, built by generous benefactors for the local poor, and the first almshouse dates all the way back to 990 AD, built by St Oswald in Worcester.

There are at least seven almshouses in our borough, with perhaps the most notable being Sir George Monoux's in Walthamstow Village. This Grade II listed building now serves as the office of the Walthamstow and Chingford Almshouse Charity, which has taken over running five almshouses in the borough and is itself one of the oldest charities anywhere in the country.

George Monoux, born and buried in Walthamstow, was a big fish in a big pond, who built up his wealth as a merchant venturer in Bristol in the 1480s, trading

wool and cloth on the continent and returning with cargos of silks, spices and other exotic goods. After relocating back to London, his career only continued to flourish and he was elected as Lord Mayor of the city on two occasions, although on the second in 1523 he refused to serve and was fined £1,000 for contempt.

Eager to put his wealth to good use, Sir George purchased church land and set to work building 13 almshouses for eight poor men and five poor women of the parish, completed in 1527, plus a school. The Monoux School still exists today, albeit in a different location, as the Sir George Monoux College in Chingford Lane. The 500-year-old almshouses, meanwhile, still provide homes for older people, surviving despite partial decimation by a WWII bomb in 1941.

But it wasn't just men who made provision for those in need. Mrs Mary Squires' almshouses, also in Walthamstow Village, were built in 1795 for widows of 'Decayed Tradesmen' and offered each woman a "bedstead, stove and large water tub" of her very own. About half a century later, Mrs Jane Sabina Collard created almshouses for ten men in Maynard Road, Walthamstow, stipulating that the inhabitants must not only be "poor and deserving" but also never previously "employed as a domestic servant" or given charity by their local parish church.

The creation of almshouses in Waltham Forest, however, is not confined to the south of the borough or even to days long past. In the 1950s, the sale of property owned by rich Chingford woman Nellie Ridgers was invested - as stipulated in her will - towards housing the poor. In 1958, this money enabled the Walthamstow and Chingford Almshouse Charity to buy enough land to build six new almshouses in Templeton Avenue, paying Chingford Borough Council what now seems a laughable sum of £850.

In September 2018, Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy unveiled a plaque to commemorate the official opening of Colby Lodge, the charity's fifth and newest almshouse. The development, which has 20 flats, a hairdresser and a laundrette, is named for Thomas Colby, a former schoolmaster at Sir George Monoux School who died of the plague in 1609 and left 12 acres of land to the charity. This land was bought in the 1990s by the Secretary of State for Transport, enabling the widening of the North Circular Road.

Husband and wife Gill and Maurice were the first residents to move into Colby Lodge and are still there today. They told me they feel not only safe and protected but also "part of the community" and "valued" in a way they hadn't in their previous home.

Gill said: "The building is so very beautiful and the flats are comfortable and well-designed especially for people who are, shall we say, a little less able to get around than they used to be!"



A blue plaque for Sir Monoux, former London Mayor Credit Spudgun67/Wikimedia

"We feel privileged to be a part of this community and know that, because of the help and support given by the staff, we shall be able to continue with our happy lives for, hopefully, many years to come."

In addition to providing homes for those in need, the Walthamstow and Chingford Almshouse Charity is also able to offer grants to people in the two areas to help out in times of crisis, like replacing a broken cooker or buying essential furniture. We're also happy to help other charities or organisations supporting the poor, such as those that help people into work, provide debt advice or offer other vital services.

To apply for housing or a grant, get in touch via our website wcac.org.uk by calling 0208 520 0295 or email office@wcac.org.uk



Colby Lodge, the charity's most recent almshouse Credit WCAC

SPORT

New hope for Leytonstone sports centre

Andrew Shields on big plans for a hidden community gem

Hidden behind a high brick wall in a quiet cul-de-sac, the Pastures Centre has long been one of Leytonstone's least-known community assets.

The site is a boon for sports clubs—offering courts for netball, badminton, basketball, cricket, football—and was once home to a much-loved youth club.

Unsurprisingly, when Waltham Forest Council announced last year its plan to replace the centre and grounds with housing, Pastures Action Group (PAG) found the local community eager to protect it.

In March, the popular 'Save Our Pastures' campaign scored a big win, as the council decided not to take its proposed housing development forward.

Since then, PAG has been working on its own plan for the site to secure a viable long-term future for its unique combination of buildings and safe, biodiverse grounds.

Peter Ashan, local author and historian, said the centre is an "important place, not only for its history but as a hub for the

Leytonstone community".

He added: "The Pastures youth centre was a warm and welcoming place for me, and many more like me, when I was growing up. It helped me make something of myself.

"In recent years it has pained me to see such excellent facilities become under-used and run down. Now, with so many people asking how they can make bookings, I'm optimistic for the future. One day we may even bring a youth club back to Pastures."

To help promote the opportunities available, more than 250 local residents attended the inaugural Pastures Centre open day in October.

Visitors including Cann Hall ward councillors Sally Littlejohn and Keith Rayner enjoyed a wide range of family-focused activities, such as boxing, football, cricket and candle-making.

The sports centre can be booked at www.playfinder.com/london/venue/pastures-youth-and-sports-centre.

To find out more about Save Our Pastures visit saveourpastures.org



The first Pastures Centre open day in October Credit PAG

New big sister for Leyton team

A grassroots girls football club in Leyton is now "sister" to the women's arm of a professional squad.

Nutmeg East London FC, based in Drapers Field, are one of five clubs to partner with West Ham United Women.

The club's girls, aged four to

12, will receive tickets to West Ham Women's home matches in Chigwell, as well as visits and coaching sessions.

Nutmeg head coach Dawid Juzaszek said the news was "enthusiastically welcomed" and "will definitely motivate our players and coaches further to continue with their fantastic work".



Walthamstow FC Credit Chris Evans

Why I joined the rabble

David O'Driscoll on how Walthamstow FC won his heart

For modern football fans in our corner of London, devotion to the sport often comes at an extraordinary cost, in a very literal rather than emotional sense, thanks to the eye-popping price of match tickets. It's a common complaint that professional football in this country is nowadays motivated more by profits than a commitment to the sport. As the late England manager Graham Taylor once said: "People think there must be a lot of thinking in this Premier League, there is none ... I think a lot of this is based on greed."

Dissatisfied with the lack of any real connection with fans at league level, I – like many others – have turned to non-league football, which is how I came to support our own Walthamstow FC. What I found in Stow was a welcome and innovative club, determined to engage with the local community, who are also at the current moment shredding

the Essex Senior League like it was wrapping paper.

Stow, formerly Pennant, are nine points ahead of their nearest rivals, despite having played fewer games, which is an unsurprising achievement for a team of fit and skilful players. In the games I have watched, they've played an aggressive game with two wingers, thanks to the competent joint-management of ex-Orient stalwart John Mackie and long-standing manager Terry Spillane, who has extensive knowledge of the non-league scene. While it may be the ninth tier of non-league, this means they are just eight promotions away from the premier league!

You don't need big pockets to watch the Stow. In fact, as an NHS worker, I am the proud owner of a free season ticket, one of the many fine local initiatives by the club. This has also included recent free coach travel for supporters to a game

in Essex and their efforts to drum up donations for a local food bank. Thanks to sponsorship from Walthamstow brewery Exale, the games always have an excellent range of beers available and, fingers crossed, in the future there will be an opportunity for a local company to provide a selection of food too. As an old punk, I also appreciated the quirky choice of half-time entertainment, which included classic bands from the late 70s.

I'm proud to join the 'Waltham Rabble', a group of fans of all ages that have a great bond with the players and truly get behind the team, who come over to celebrate with them at the end of the match. For this particularly disillusioned modern fan, watching the 'Stow' is an antidote to the often soulless modern game.

Find out more about the team at www.walthamstowfc.com or follow fans on Twitter at @WalthamRabble

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What we do

Here at *Waltham Forest Echo* we do things differently. We combine professional journalism with voluntary contributions from people who live and work in the borough and create content which is responsive to and reflective of the community.

These are challenging times for print media with many newspapers closing and advertising revenue in decline, but our not-for-profit model offers a new approach to creating local journalism which is inclusive and accountable.

How you can help

As a not-for-profit publication we rely on the generous support of our community. We look to our readers, who recognise the value of independent journalism, to help support us.

You can do this by becoming a member either as an individual or as an organisation. See the rewards opposite and once you've decided what package you would like, visit our website:

walthamforestecho.co.uk/join

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£3 per month upwards:

Name in print and online, pin badge

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Name in print and online, pin badge, tote bag, paper posted to you every month

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Name and logo in print and online, 20% discount on advertising

£50 per month:

Name and logo in print and online, 40% discount, six free small adverts per year

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