



Your independent community newspaper

# WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free  
May 2022, No. 86

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Ashlie Timms (courtesy of family)

## Care company 'contributed' to 'avoidable' fiery death

by Nadoya Reid

A disabled woman who died in a fire was potentially trapped by a "dangerous" lock installed by her care company, a jury heard.

On 12th April, an inquest jury ruled Sequence Care, which runs Conington Court in Chingford, "contributed" to the "avoidable"

death of 46-year-old Ashlie Timms in 2018.

The care home and supported living facility caught fire in the early hours of 20th April that year due to an electrical fault, with a neighbour remarking that the building burned "like a tinderbox".

All other residents and staff members escaped but Ashlie, who suffered from mental and

mobility issues, died in the hallway of her flat after staff failed to evacuate her.

Following the verdict on 12th April, her grieving family told the *Echo* they have still yet to receive any apology from Sequence Care and fear not enough has changed at the home since.

Her sister Maria said: "Ashlie's death could have been avoided

if correct fire safety procedures were in place and followed. We want to prevent this from happening to any other family."

She described Ashlie as a "very friendly, funny, and likeable character", adding that she "loved cooking, baking, going to the shops and going out on the whole."

Ashlie's niece Bryony said:

"Given the number of serious failures that all contributed to Ashlie's death, this was a very difficult hearing to sit through for us but we welcome its conclusion.

"I will never get back the many years of friendship that I had to look forward to with my aunt and, while no verdict can bring

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## NEWS



FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

**MAY 2022**  
**No. 86**

Waltham Forest Echo is the borough's free community newspaper. We publish monthly and distribute 15,000 free copies of each issue – and we will continue to do so during the ongoing public health crisis

**Publisher**  
David Floyd

**Editor**  
Victoria Munro

**Designer**  
Jonathan Duncan

**Head of Advertising**  
Klaudia Kiss

**Salima Sair**  
Advertising Sales Manager

**Local Democracy Reporter**  
Josh Mellor

**Engagement Manager**  
Penny Dampier

**Contributors**  
Darren Law, Mark Baker,  
Sir Iain Duncan Smith MP,  
Dominic Mandrell, Sarah  
Fairbairn, Peter Mallett, Liza  
Fletcher, Mary Burnett, Ruth  
Goldsmith, David O'Driscoll,  
Andrzej Perkins

**The member organisations of WWellComm CIC are:**  
Community Transport Waltham Forest, Social Spider CIC, HEET.

**WWellComm CIC Board:**  
David Floyd, *Social Spider CIC*  
Tom Ruxton, *HEET*  
Helen Tredoux,  
*Community Transport WF*

## Contact

**Call** 020 8521 7956  
**Email** WFEcho@socialspider.com  
**Post** The Mill, 7–11 Coppermill Lane, Walthamstow E17 7HA

## Advertising

**Call** 020 8521 7956  
**Email** salima@socialspider.com



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# Thousands fined for dropping cigarettes

by Josh Mellor,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**W**altham Forest's new enforcement company issued more than 7,500 fines last year but less than half were actually paid.

Last April, Waltham Forest Council awarded the contract for handing out fines in the borough to 3GS, ending its use of previous contractor Kingdom LA.

The new company handed out 7,581 fines for bad behaviour in the borough's public spaces over the following nine months, including littering, spitting and urinating.

By far the biggest source of fines, however, was littering cigarette butts, for which staff handed 5,000 fines.

At a meeting of the council's neighbourhoods scrutiny committee, deputy leader Clyde Loakes said there is "no excuse ever" for the act, which is so common that street sweepers clean the entrance to Walthamstow Central Tube station four or five times a day.

He added: "My view on this is we have thousands of street bins across the borough, we have hundreds of residual waste bins

in front gardens and you can take litter home with you.

"It is horrendous anti-social behaviour, the issue with it is we still have people doing it."

To improve payment rates in future, 3GS staff are now getting "extra training" so they can carry out formal interviews to identify the offenders they are fining.

Councillor Steve Terry asked why Waltham Forest has the "dubious number one spot" of bringing the most prosecutions to Thames Magistrates' Court of any councils in its area.

Head of neighbourhoods, Paul Tickner, responded that the number of cases brought to court are a "good news story" because people understand "we are not going to drop it".

Figures obtained by the Local Democracy Service last month show the council has issued £300,000–£550,000 worth of fines a year since 2016.

Between 2010 and 2015, when enforcement was still handled in-house, the council issued less than 2,300 fines a year.

However, after sub-contracting to a private company, Kingdom LA, for the first time in 2018, it began issuing about 10,000 fines a year.

# Four in five homes pay too much for heating

by Josh Mellor,  
Local Democracy Reporter

**F**our out of five Waltham Forest homes pay hundreds more in energy bills than they should each year due to poor insulation.

About half of the borough's approximately 110,000 homes are more than a century old and leak heat through uninsulated solid walls.

After the energy price cap rose by almost £700 in April, there is a growing concern that more and more local households will be pushed below the poverty line by the cost of bills.

At a housing scrutiny committee meeting on 20th April, Waltham Forest councillors discussed the urgency of "retrofitting" the borough's older homes – improving their insulation to save money and lower emissions.

However, at a "conservative" estimate, bringing all local homes up to a good standard of energy efficiency would cost an average of £13,000 each – and £2.9bn in total.

Head of housing strategy James McHugh told councillors that retrofitting is "the clear and obvious solution to fuel poverty and climate change".

Of the 12,000 homes that the council directly manages, nine out of every ten have an Energy Performance Rating of C or below, on a scale that goes from A to G.

Officers estimate it would cost £82million to improve them and, so far, government grants have only been secured to improve insulation on less than 300.

However, McHugh said he felt "hopeful" the council would secure more funding and that heat pumps, which can replace boilers, will become cheaper.

# 'Urgent decision' made to sell council buildings



The empty properties in Walthamstow Village Credit Google Streetview

**A**n "urgent decision" was made to sell council-owned buildings after an "administrative oversight" saw them sold without approval.

Two semi-detached houses in Orford Road in Walthamstow Village have been vacant since 2014 and were recently the focus of a protest on the borough's empty homes.

Despite their poor repair, the buildings are valued at more than £1million and were sold to an undisclosed buyer in February.

However, it was discovered that the council had accidentally failed to formally approve the sale, leading to a scramble to fix the problem before the deal fell through.

A report prepared for council leaders on 12th April stated the

council initially hoped its own housing company Sixty Bricks could develop the site but that it "could not develop a viable financial plan".

The report reads: "A decision was made to dispose of the properties, which by this time were in significant disrepair... however, due to officer turnover in the property services team, it was discovered that no formal decision had been taken to authorise the disposal."

"The council has asked the buyer to extend the completion date, which they have indicated agreement to, but only in return for a significant reduction in the purchase price."

"However, the buyer has not yet served notice to complete so there is a small window of opportunity to process the necessary approvals and complete the sale."

"The only remaining alternative would be to return to auction, having paid significant damages to the current winning bidder. This would be a disproportionate response to an administrative oversight."

The report also notes that the buildings are in a conservation area, limiting the kind of building work that can be done on the site.

# Leyton snooker club keeps licence after trouble with police

**A** Leyton snooker club has managed to avoid permanently losing its licence despite the urgings of local police.

The Metropolitan Police asked Waltham Forest Council to strip Snooker Lovers Club in High Road, Leyton, of its licence after they were called to the venue 18 times in just six months.

Between September and February, police received ten calls about fights or assaults at the venue, including one where a man was "extremely lucky" not to have received life-threatening injuries.

However, at a licensing committee meeting, owner Abdul Kanat said the problems were caused by a problematic group of customers who had "taken control" of the club after he left it in his brother's hands.

After hearing that his brother Yakub had resigned and that the venue would introduce a member-



Snooker Lover's Club in High Road, Leyton Credit Google Streetview

ship scheme, councillors were persuaded to suspend the licence for three months rather than revoking it permanently.

Councillors also chose to reduce the club's closing time from 1am Monday to Sunday to midnight on Fridays and Saturdays and 10.30pm on weeknights.

The venue will also have to have a member of staff on the door in the evenings, from 8.30pm onwards, and cannot admit anyone under the age of 16.



NEWS



Viv Barrett, landlady of Ye Olde Rose & Crown (courtesy of family)

Walthamstow loses well-loved pub landlady

by Victoria Munro

A huge figure in the Walthamstow community has died after being diagnosed with a brain tumour last year.

Viv Barrett, landlady of Ye Olde Rose & Crown Theatre Pub in Hoe Street, died on 15th April and was buried at GreenAcres in Epping Forest on 26th April.

She is survived by her husband Bun Constantinou, who she met at the age of 18, and her two children Richard and Joanna Barrett-Constantinou.

Inspired by a theatre pub in Islington, Viv, Bun, Joanna and business partners Andrew Yon and Aaron Clingham jointly purchased Ye Olde Rose & Crown in 2008.

The pub became hugely popular after they took over and was named East London’s best pub by the Campaign for Real Ale in 2011 and the best East London theatre pub at the Off West End Awards in 2013.

Joanna told the *Echo* her mother was a “natural” at running a pub, adding: “She was a firm believer that the wider the community you have, the better your life will be. She loved going around from table to table, knowing about people’s lives and families, listening to their worries and struggles and giving advice where appropriate.

“She had such an amazing capacity for love and understanding. She would really give you her time, which is so valuable in a day and age where everyone’s running at 100 miles an hour, and she would give people a chance, whatever their circumstances.

“She had such a zest for life and never regretted anything. She took every moment as it was because she knew without [the bad] she would not have the wonderful things, like my dad and me and my brother.”

Viv and Bun met at University Technical College Tottenham, when she was 18 and he was 19, and were together for more than 40 years.

“From my understanding,” Joanna added, “My dad was all ‘football, football, football’ and my mum saw him and knew she had got to work her way into that crowd. She knew she was going to spend the rest of her life with him.”

Viv “helped rebuild” Bun after he nearly lost his life to Covid-19 in 2020 but received a surprise diagnosis of a brain tumour last November, forcing her to put plans to swim in all 100 lidos in the UK on hold.

Instead, in March, she and friends organised a “Big Dip” at the London Fields Lido in Hackney, aiming to swim 100 lengths in one lido and raise £10,000 for The Brain Tumour Charity. The group actually raised more than £20,000.

Joanna added that mourners who want to honour her mother’s memory are encouraged to donate to the Lloyd Park Children’s Charity with the reference ‘Viv Barrett’, adding that her mother sat on the board of trustees and “believed wholeheartedly” in its cause.

New developer steps up to reopen The Standard

by Victoria Munro

A new company has stepped up to reopen iconic music venue The Standard after the previous developer abruptly folded.

The venue in Blackhorse Lane shuttered after 25 years in 2011 and both residents and Waltham Forest Council are keen to see it return.

However, twice now councillors have granted planning permission for a project on the site and seen something scupper the plans.

Most recently, planning permission for a new venue and 300 “co-living” flats on the site was awarded in 2020 to The Collective, which went into administration less than a year later.

In a press release on 1st April, developer Scape, best known for student housing, revealed it had bought the site and will start work “later this year”.

Its plans show an eight-storey building with a cultural venue in the basement and ground floor, commercial

spaces and around 300 “much-needed purpose-built” flats.

According to their website, the standard studio flat would offer “a minimum” of 24 square metres of floor space, “plus communal dining, living and working areas to each floor”.

They add: “Our plans present an opportunity to bring an iconic music venue back to life for the Walthamstow community while delivering important flexible housing opportunities in a highly sustainable location.

“The new state-of-the-art 350-person capacity venue would be complemented by vibrant public amenities such as a café, bar and restaurant to support the music venue and future residents, along with significant public realm improvements.

“Part of our vision is to create a venue with and for the local community. It marks the start of the Blackhorse Lane neighbourhood and is an important part of its history, culture, and future.”



New plans for The Standard site Credit Scape

Advertisement

LICENSING ACT 2003 Notice of Application for a New Premises Licence

I **Fernando Siyaguna Kosgodage Chanaka** have applied to Waltham Forest Council for a new premises licence for:

- **Sushi Ginger at 748 High Road, Leytonstone E11 3AW. So that the following licensable activities may be provided on the following days and hours: a new premises licence to permit:**
- **Supply of alcohol on sale from 12:00–23:00, Monday to Sunday**

Waltham Forest Council’s Licensing Register is kept at the office of the Licensing & Registration Team, Sycamore House Waltham Forest Town Hall Complex Forest Road London E17 4JF where details of the application may be inspected (Tel: 0208 496 3000).

Any representations against the application must be made in writing and received by the Licensing Team at the above address, by no later than: **23/05/2022**

Residents and businesses in the vicinity of the premises or bodies representing such residents or businesses may make representations. The grounds on which representations may be made are restricted to the licensing objectives of the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance, and the protection of children from harm. Copies of all representations will be sent to the applicant. Persons making representations will have to appear at the Councils’ Licensing Sub-Committee.

Note: It is an offence, liable on conviction to a fine up to £5,000 for a person to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with the application.



# NEWS

Ashlie Timms (courtesy of family)



The burning building in 2018 Credit @LAS\_HART

## Continued from P1

her back to us, we hope desperately that lessons will be learned.”

The decision to install a combination lock on the inside of Ashlie’s front door was the subject of numerous questions during the inquest, with the jury’s verdict noting it “presented additional obstacles for the deceased in an already highly stressful situation”.

While the lock was programmed to automatically open during a fire alarm, two other locks in the building were found to have malfunctioned and a fire expert speculated that it may have re-locked if Ashlie failed to realise it was open and entered her code wrong repeatedly.

Fire expert Colin Todd described the fitting of such a lock to the jury as “dangerous” given Ashlie’s mental and physical

disabilities, adding that it “contravenes building regulations”.

The jury also heard from Ashlie’s social worker at Hertfordshire Council, Peter McVicar, that she complained about forgetting the code only four months before the fire.

When questioned, the home’s then-manager Sonia Sandhu broke down, telling the jury: “I did not think she had issues using the lock. We had done multiple trials... Ashlie responded well and had shown she was good with the keypad.”

However, regarding previous fire drills at the home, she admitted: “If Ashlie was in a low mood or confused, she would not participate and would require encouraging to leave her room.”

Due to her vulnerability, Ashlie had a “personal emergency evacuation plan”, requiring staff

to help her out of her room. However, the jury heard that a series of errors meant no one attempted to reach Ashlie until it was too late.

Howard Elburg, who still works at the home, and Yousouph Abiodun, an agency support worker who said that night was his first overnight shift for Sequence Care, were both working during the fire and gave accounts to the jury.

However, East London Coroner Graeme Irvine expressed concerns about several direct contradictions between the two men’s statements.

Howard claimed Yousouph peered into Ashlie’s room through the window, before telling him he could see her body and she was already dead. Yousouph, meanwhile, was adamant that he remained outside comforting a resident and never told Howard

he had seen Ashlie’s body.

The jury’s narrative verdict describes an “up to 45 minute delay to summon emergency services”, which they felt showed “a significant lack of urgency” from staff.

It continues: “As a result of staff interpreting the address location on the alarm display, which was known by the wider organisation to be incorrect, staff departed from basic fire evacuation procedures.”

“With the additional actions of staff resetting the fire alarm on at least two occasions and the absence of implementing the deceased’s personal emergency evacuation plan, the deceased was not evacuated.”

In a written statement submitted to the coroner, Sequence Care CEO Tony Hegarty insisted fire safety at the home “was properly assessed and planned for”. How-

ever, giving evidence in person, the company’s acting chief operating officer Robert Dalrymple accepted he would not “be comfortable having the same procedures in place now” at the home.

When contacted by the *Echo*, a spokesperson for Sequence Care said: “This was a deeply distressing and tragic event, and our deepest sympathies are with Ashlie’s family.”

“We played an active role at the recent inquest, which included giving evidence on measures we have taken since the incident involving Ashlie and those we are proposing to take having heard the evidence.”

“The welfare and wellbeing of those we care for is our absolute priority and we will continue to do everything we can to provide the best and most secure care that we possibly can.”

# Labour gives away seat by expelling own candidate

by Victoria Munro

**W**altham Forest Labour has given away a possible council seat, expelling one of its own candidates in a ward the party has dominated for more than a decade.

Nominations for this month’s local election were finalised on 5th April, meaning it is too late for

new candidates to enter the race or even to edit the ballot paper.

This means the party now only has two candidates running in Grove Green ward, an area which has consistently elected three Labour councillors at every election since 2006.

However, the thousands of ballot papers prepared for this month’s election will still list three Labour candidates, next to the

Labour party logo, in the race as it is too late for them to be changed.

A spokesperson for Labour declined to state why the party expelled Cllr Anna Mbachu, who was chosen by a vote of ward party members last month.

This is despite a previous attempt to deny her the chance to represent the party in the May election being overturned at appeal only two months ago.

She was one of four current councillors who was initially refused the chance to run for re-election by an interview panel, although the only one to successfully contest the decision.

Also refused by the panel were cabinet member Cllr Liaquat Ali and his two relatives Cllrs Hather and Umar Ali, who all also appealed but were unsuccessful.

Cllr Liaquat Ali was the only person to run against current leader Grace Williams to take over after former leader Clare Coghill resigned, reportedly losing by only two votes.

If elected this month, Cllr Mbachu will sit on the council as an independent councillor, meaning she will not be able to participate in the Labour leadership vote immediately post-election.



## FEATURES

# Women supporting women

by Victoria Munro

**T**ucked away in a nondescript office building, a tiny team of South Asian women do work invisible to almost all residents – but a lifeline to those that need it.

Kiran Support Services, founded in 1989, provides help and housing to South Asian women fleeing domestic abuse, surviving for the last five years without council funding.

Since current chief executive Amtal Rana took over in 2014, the charity has opened its second and third refuges and begun offering immigration support and counselling in Asian languages.

Reliant as they are on “constantly fundraising”, Kiran Support Services was ecstatic to receive a £10,000 donation from Penny Appeal last month, which Amtal said has “been a lifeline”.

She told the *Echo*: “We were set up by local Asian women so that, instead of having to knock on relatives’ doors, women had somewhere safe to go for a bit of breathing space.

“We had a young lady come to us five or six years ago, who had been placed with her son in a mixed hostel room. She was



A £10,000 donation from Penny Appeal Credit: Penny Appeal

so overwhelmed when she arrived because she thought she would have to share everything, she didn’t understand that her room was her own. In the hostel, she’d also had to leave every day and be referred back.

“Now she’s actually picked herself up. She’s living up north, went back to college and is now a qualified teacher, she’s really well settled.”

Back in 1989, Amtal recalls, there was “a lot of opposition” from some older Asian men in the borough, who “didn’t want to admit domestic abuse existed in our community”.

However, she is also keen to correct the misconception that there’s more domestic abuse among South Asians, arguing this notion “has a lot to do with people’s understanding of different communities”.

She explains: “People often think forced marriages only happen in Asian communities but really it is in all of them. I used to use *Pride and Prejudice* as an example – people don’t look at it as being about arranged marriages when, really, what is the difference?

“When I started doing this work in 1992... even general society didn’t have a

great track record. Domestic abuse was not really at the forefront of people’s minds.

“In the last decade, it’s been slow progress but I do think the local Asian community is much more supportive. That’s not to say we don’t come across any barriers... but it’s come a long way, it’s much better than it was.”

Kiran Support Services has also come a long way, even hiring its own part-time immigration worker, who has been “inundated with referrals”.

Amtal explained this was to avoid referring women to other services “where there might be a lengthy waitlist and they will have to keep repeating their story”.

In the last few years, however, they have begun encountering a new challenge: the growing number of women being rehoused out of London.

Amtal said: “What that does is ostracise women further, which places greater strain on our services. We had one woman who went back to her husband within a week because she was housed in the middle of nowhere and didn’t know anyone... she said she felt trapped all over again.”

Find out more about Kiran Support Services at their website [kiranss.org.uk](http://kiranss.org.uk)

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## Divorce

The end of...  
“the blame game”

The Divorce, Dissolution and Separation Act 2020 will eliminate the need for blame in divorce proceedings and help to take the sting from formally ending an official relationship.

Now, after years of having someone take the moral responsibility of the end of a marriage or partnership, a person will be able to obtain a divorce or a judicial separation on the sole fact that the marriage “has irretrievably broken down”. The separation requirement has been removed as well almost eliminates the possibility of defending a divorce.

contact us for more information [www.AronaStJames.co.uk](http://www.AronaStJames.co.uk)



Thanks to everyone who helped raise over **£46,128** for Ovacome, in memory of much-loved Debbie Baldwin, a dear friend and brilliant mentor of the law firm’s founder Arona Sarwar.

**[ovacome.org.uk](http://ovacome.org.uk)**



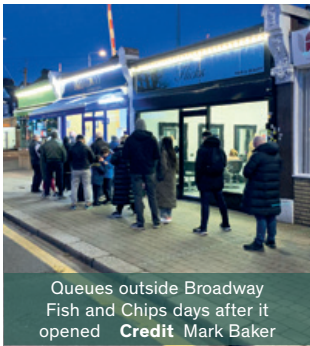
## COMMENT

### Does Highams Park's newest chippie live up to the hype?

### Cornwall transplant Darren Law on a new takeaway with rave reviews

**D**ecent fish and chips are seemingly hard to come by in Highams Park and, further afield, even Walthamstow seems to struggle with what should be a simple affair. After spending my early years in Cornwall, I felt this shortage keenly and was therefore intrigued when The Broadway Fish and Chips opened its doors.

The shop's grand opening was on 22nd February and, just three days later, you could see a queue of customers stretching out the shop and down the road. While initial online reviews were mostly positive, some suggested the food struggled to live up to this considerable hype. Given my upbringing, I would like to think I know my battered sausage from my cod and chips and figured I was the right person to weigh in on the debate.



The décor is crisp and clean with a nautical theme and, upon ordering, the service was transactional and not overly friendly. I went for the classic cod and chips and, when I enquired where they source their fish, I was told they have "a supplier in Gillingham". I've asked the same question of other chippies and often been told their fish is imported from elsewhere, such as Norway, so I considered this answer a definite plus.

After a fairly lengthy 15 minutes wait – especially given I visited in the early

evening on a Tuesday – I was handed my cod and chips (with salt and vinegar obviously!) The batter on the cod was cooked perfectly, not too thick or oily and nice and crispy, while the fish was moist and succulent. As for the chips, they came up large and were cooked well.

While Broadway isn't overly cheap, since my meal set me back £11.70, overall I would give their food a solid 8 out of 10 and will be coming back for sure. For those less keen on fish, there are plenty of other options on the menu, as well as a lunchtime special served from noon to 4pm, which includes fish, chips and a drink for just £7.50.

As the poster on the wall inside rightly points out: 'You can't buy happiness, but you can buy fish & chips, and that's kind of the same thing!'

**Visit Broadway Fish and Chips at 3 The Broadway, E4 9LQ from 11am to 10pm, Monday to Saturday**



## Save our suburbs

*Chingford MP Sir Iain Duncan Smith  
as part of our MP column series*

**M**any of my constituents have told me they're very concerned about the developments planned all over Chingford, with "out-of-character for the area" being the most common complaint about these proposals. The residents I represent are not blind to the need for more homes in London but they deserve to be listened to when it comes to decisions that will impact the communities they call home.

It's clear the current Labour vision for Waltham Forest entails large buildings springing up all over the borough, even in more rural areas like Chingford. For example, early-stage plans suggest hundreds of homes may be built at the Larkwood Leisure Centre, putting established trees and wildlife in harm's way, and the approved addition of new flats on top of the North Chingford Assembly Hall and neighbouring library will create a structure that looms over the surrounding area, including the historic Carbis Cottage just next door.

While this trend is concerning enough, what makes matters worse is the lack of any parking for the future residents of these new homes. Inevitably, the wider

community will bear the consequences of this shortage, in the form of congested streets and the sticking plaster of Controlled Parking Zones, not to mention the additional pressure of extra neighbours using their schools and GP services.

I have spoken to my colleagues in the national government to make it clear that changes to planning laws must not empower local councils like ours to ignore public opinion. Specific and community-led Local Neighbourhood Plans, like the one created for Highams Park, should form the basis of future development, allowing areas with different characters and needs to avoid being lumped together. These documents, once agreed, should not be overridden, as I feel happens too often at present.

For far too long, local people have had their voices ridden roughshod over by those who are meant to speak for them. This is why I am working closely with local councillors in the hopes of opposing developments that fundamentally change the nature of our area. Our neighbourhoods matter: their characters should be preserved and most importantly their residents should be heard.



## We Are Hiring!

PF Events are a Walthamstow based AV company. We are looking for a local crew to work on an ad-hoc basis. If you are looking to get into the technical events industry, this could be the perfect chance for you!

We are a friendly team working on corporate/community events and festivals up and down the country.

Duties would involve loading/unloading trucks, building stages, hanging lights, speakers and more. If this sounds like something you would enjoy, please email [recruitment@pfevents.com](mailto:recruitment@pfevents.com)

[www.pfevents.com](http://www.pfevents.com)



## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

# The party's over

*Walthamstow Garden Party participant Dominic Mandrell on the questions raised by its sudden end*



The Dance Tent at Walthamstow Garden Party Credit Penny Dampier

**A**s a regular participant in the Walthamstow Garden Party, I learned about the cancellation of the festival earlier than most, although with no more fanfare or explanation than the rest of the borough received. After eight years and six well-attended and

much-loved free events in Lloyd Park, an email landed in my inbox on 27th January this year to tell me it was all over.

In the months since, I have had a host of questions about this decision but my efforts to get answers have met with little success. The annual festival was the result of a partner-



Credit Penny Dampier

ship between local creatives, Waltham Forest Council and the Barbican and, as recently as last March, Barbican directors were committed to see it return this July after a Covid-induced hiatus. Subsequent board reports do little to illuminate when this changed, why or even who made the call; a baffling lack of transparency for a publicly funded arts charity.

When I approached the Barbican, they were unwilling to say much beyond the statement published on their website, which states that “the world looks very different now than it did back in 2019 and continues to be a time of real challenge for so many of us”. The statement, issued jointly with the council, insists their “long-term creative partnership” will continue, also giving thanks to Arts Council England for its continued financial support. I, and the local creatives who made the festival what it was, are evidently expected to sit tight and wait while they decide “what will emerge” from its departure.

For me, the “legacy” of Walthamstow Garden Party is perhaps the biggest sore



Credit Penny Dampier

point and unanswered question of the whole affair. In the early days, there was often talk of the community eventually owning and running the festival once the Barbican inevitably stepped away. One of the Barbican's stated aims on its website is “to develop interests, skills, confidence and careers”; surely an exit strategy that empowered local groups to continue the festival would have fit perfectly with this ethos.

I'm sure I'm not the only person unhappy to see this local festival taken away and eager to see if it could be revived, this time by the community itself. I've started a petition to send a message to the council but would also like to meet anyone interested in exploring the feasibility of a community-run event at Ye Olde Rose & Crown pub at 7.30pm on 13th June.

It's impossible to guarantee if we will be able to take this on – the challenge may be too steep – but at least we can have a good crack at discussing it. With enough names on the petition, we might even put pressure on the Barbican and the council to give us some support.

Sign the petition at [change.org/bringbackWGP](https://change.org/bringbackWGP)

# English Magic by Uschi Gatward

Sarah Fairbairn reviews a late Walthamstow author's debut work



**E**nglish Magic is a remarkably apt name for the debut short story collection by the late East End-born author Uschi Gatward. The twelve stories, which range hugely in subject and setting, share a sure-footed rhythm that dances lightly between the earthly and ethereal, leaving you wondering if you can smell wood smoke on your clothes or if you caught a movement

in the room from a corner of your eye.

It's easy to see why The Clinic was chosen as the collection's opener: its depiction of anxious parenthood, outsider status and desperation provides an excellent introduction to Gatward's great skill for restraint, holding back what she wants to disclose. Perhaps one of the most powerful stories addresses the famed Lammas day action of August 1892, when the people of Leyton asserted their rights by forcibly removing the railings that had been illegally installed on public land by the East London Water Company. This story, told in a dreamlike back-and-forth of time and voice, encapsulates the whole collection's interest in tipping points and moments of change. Several stories are interested in the movement of seasons, things come too early or too late and there is a sense of being on the cusp of a new understanding.



One of the most unsettling stories in the collection, and the one that has stayed in my mind for the sheer power of its image, centres around a couple newly returned from their honeymoon, who find a bird trapped in their fireplace. Over the course of eleven pages, Gatward achieves an eerie sense of powerlessness and occupation that holds the reader from the inside out. It can't be a coincidence that the title of this story – The Bird – is so close to that of du Maurier's famous fable of man against nature.

It's a tragedy that this is the only collection we will ever read from this clearly extraordinarily talented writer, who died of cancer aged 49 in December last year. Her work describes both places we know and places we feel we know, and invites readers to understand themselves and the world through a delicate balance of insight and intuition.

'English Magic' is available from Galley Beggar Press



# PHOTOGRAPHY



Big brother by Emily Graham



Walthamstow Marshes in early January by Simon Young



New tattoo, new beginning by Mauro Arena



New tattoo, new beginning by Mauro Arena

## New Beginnings

This month we feature photography and artwork on the theme of ‘New Beginnings’. Thank you to all those who sent in their submissions!

See more images on our website and Instagram.

We want your photos and illustrations! Please send in your images of people and places in Waltham Forest to [penny@socialspider.com](mailto:penny@socialspider.com)



Cherry Blossom by Adèle Lefebvre



Spring Awakening by Anna Alcock



Bluebells by Adèle Lefebvre



New Day by Tim Parker



New tattoo, new beginning by Mauro Arena



Advertisement



# OPEN EVENT

Wed 18<sup>th</sup> May | 4pm - 7pm  
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# HOUSING



## Moving Stories

*Filmmaker Liza Fletcher on telling the story of the Avenue Road Estate*

Last March, two thirds of residents on the Avenue Road Estate in Leytonstone voted in favour of the council's plan to demolish and rebuild their home. At the same time, my work – as a filmmaker and visual anthropologist – began.

I spent twelve weeks filming and working closely with residents on the 1960s estate, some of whom have since become my friends, to create *Moving Stories*. Having grown up in a council estate myself, I was determined to have the Avenue Road community see themselves empowered on screen and have a say in how their stories are told, rather than see them shaped by outside forces. The 20-minute film, created in partnership with the Immersive Storytelling department at UCL and drawing on archive images and years of my own research, is an attempt to tell the decade-long story of their community ahead of dramatic change in the coming months.

While the exact shape of the estate's future will not be fixed until September, when Bellway Homes' plans are expected to appear before councillors

for approval, consultation with residents suggests it will include a mix of social housing and affordable flats rented on the private market. There are currently 90 flats planned for the private block, compared to 125 in the social housing block, creating two unequal communities who will have to live alongside one another in future. During filmed interviews and chats on the balconies of current residents, I could not help but notice the breathtaking view to the estate's south, taking in the Olympic Park and London's financial district. Using drone footage, I was able to capture these high-rises offices that dominate the skyline, a visual reference to the power that sits behind the growing regeneration of urban communities.

Farhan Samanani's book *How To Live With Each Other: An Anthropologist's Notes on Sharing a Divided World* documents the life of an estate not dissimilar from Avenue Road and opens by posing the question of how we can live in community with those who are different from us. The estate in Kilburn that forms the centre of his research has been thrust together through historical events

such as Windrush, recessions and the movement of refugees due to wars abroad and his work explores how close living with diverse neighbours influences the estate residents' view of our world.

Similarly, the residents I met in Leytonstone hailed from a huge mix of global locations and embraced the multiculturalism of their neighbourhood to different extents. Drawing on the questions raised by Samanani, my film further asks how regeneration plans like this one, which threaten to preserve homogenised groups in separate communities, will change how future residents understand the world and learn about differences.

My hope is to raise funding to film the progress of the regeneration project, expected to start late this year, and its impact on the Avenue Road community. Many current residents tell me that they will move on from the estate and, certainly, it is likely the area will never be the same again. The changes set in motion last year will have an untold impact on future generations that grow up there, together and yet apart.

**'Moving Stories' will be screened at the Homerton Short Film Festival on 7th May**

## Council fails bid to 'sneak out of' evicted mother's lawsuit

by Josh Mellor, Local Democracy Reporter

A last-minute attempt by Waltham Forest Council to "sneak out of" a court battle with a single mother they evicted last year has failed.

Izebela Kikosicka, 36, and her three children were forced to sleep in their car last November after being abruptly evicted from their temporary accommodation.

The family, originally from Walthamstow, were housed by the council in Bexley for three years but kicked out after refusing to relocate to Derby.

Izebela is now pursuing a civil claim against Waltham Forest and Bexley estate agent Elliot Leigh over being evicted with very little notice.

At her court hearing on 13th April, it emerged the council's lawyer sent an application to "strike out" her claim against them with less than a day's notice, leaving the estate agent to fight the legal battle alone.

Their lawyer, Michael Mullin, argued: "We cancelled the booking and told the claimant we closed the booking, it seems to me that this is going

to boil down to who sent the bailiffs in and that was not us."

Paul Powlesland, for Izebela, fought to keep Waltham Forest on the hook, arguing: "We should not allow one defendant to sneak out of it unless [the other] defendant accepts responsibility."

Elliot Leigh were only added to the lawsuit on the request of Waltham Forest Council at a hearing last December.

District Judge Beatrice Prevatt said: "I'm of the view that, given the interrelationship between the council and Elliot Leigh, it would not be appropriate to strike out the claim at this time, especially since [Elliot Leigh] were not given notice."

The case was adjourned to a future date.

Speaking after the hearing, Izebela said she has since borrowed money to get a six-month tenancy in Bexley that started in January.

Commenting on the court hearing, she said: "In a weird way, I didn't really expect anything from this hearing."

"After the first one in December I've realised that obviously no one seems to care and I've got no faith in this legal system."



Izebela at a local housing protest



## CRIME

# Chingford restaurants hit by unexplained 'vandalism' spree

by Nadoya Reid

**M**ultiple Chingford businesses saw their windows inexplicably smashed last month, causing thousands of pounds in damage.

Indian restaurant Spice Station in Station Road paid nearly £10,000 in repairs after being damaged on 15th March, only to have their windows smashed again on 8th April.

Only a few doors down, another restaurant, Patpong Thai, was reportedly vandalised on the same night in April, with four dents still visible in the front of the shop.

Spice Station owner Shah Hussain told the *Echo* he is now forced to keep constant watch over his restaurant, in the hopes of preventing future vandalism.

He said: "It's embarrassing. I am on the



Spice Station in Station Road

street having to stand outside all evening to tell people that we are open because there's no other way for them to know with the front of the shop boarded up.

"I don't know what to do. I have to sleep inside at night because it's not safe with a business like this."

However, he added that he was touched by the immense support he

has received from the local community, adding: "I have received many calls from people saying they are sorry for what has happened... If it was not for the support of the locals I could not open."

Writing publicly on Facebook, Endlebury ward councillor Mitchell Goldie said: "It's disappointing the police are still not taking this matter seriously. Chingford Green ward has three dedicated neighbourhood officers so this is not a capacity issue."

Asked to respond, local Inspector Ganesh Rasaratnam said officers are "aware of the incidents" at Spice Station and other businesses.

He added: "They are currently investigating the allegation of criminal damage... and this remains a live investigation. Officers have also been liaising with the local councillor about the concerns raised."



Errol McKenzie

## Huge reward for help to catch Leyton park killer

**P**olice are offering a £20,000 reward in the hopes of catching whoever shot a man dead in a Leyton park for no apparent reason 12 years ago.

On 11th April, 2010, Errol McKenzie was shot three times at close range while walking home through the Seymour Road playing fields.

Errol, 37, had been in Tottenham that night but left at 10.45pm, travelling back to Leyton and purchasing alcohol in a local shop at 11.15pm.

Instead of heading towards his home only a few minutes away, he turned right and headed to the park. Police believe he was there for around half an hour before his death and may have arranged to meet someone.

Errol's daughter Nicole said: "It's been 12 years. These guys are still out there, I could be walking past them, I don't know. We just need some justice and some peace for our family."

Detectives are keen to hear from anyone who was in the park on the night Errol died or who might have seen him in the area or travelling towards Leyton.

Detective Chief Inspector Dave Whelams said: "There remains no obvious motive for Errol's murder. He was fondly thought of locally as 'Cable guy' or 'Cable man', because of his job fixing cable boxes and electrical equipment.

"A £20,000 reward is on offer to anyone who can provide us with information that leads to the arrest and conviction of his killers. Errol's family still grieves for him daily and the information you have could bring them some peace at long last."

Anyone with information should call the incident room on 020 8345 3775 quoting 'Op Trocha', or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

# Black boys handcuffed 'for running'

by Josh Mellor, Local Democracy Reporter

**A** local police sergeant insists officers who handcuffed two black teenagers they saw running in Walthamstow did "nothing" wrong.

A video of the boys being handcuffed and searched outside Nandos in the High Street, filmed last September, was widely shared on social media last month, including by local MP Stella Creasy.

It showed the teenagers being searched for drugs by a male and female officer while members of the public filmed the interaction.

In the video the male officer can be heard telling the crowd one of the boys is detained "under the Misuse of Drugs Act". A Met spokesperson has since

confirmed nothing illegal was found.

Responding to onlookers, the male officer said: "As soon as he saw us he ran away, we had spoken to him and the first thing he said was 'f\*\*k off'. It's an offence to swear."

Giving his version of events, the boy told members of the public he was running to his cousin to "sort something out" when the officer stopped him and began asking questions.

He added: "I don't need to answer him, he pushes me onto the wall saying 'you're detained' and all that. Obviously I shouldn't have used those words but... he's harassing me for no reason."

Speaking to a stop and search monitoring group on 20th April, Sergeant Asad Chaudhary said he thought the boys' behaviour was "not normal".

He added: "If you watch for body worn footage... those young males made off from the police and were swearing. The officers gave them sufficient grounds for stop and search, they were handcuffed to prevent escape."

Stop and search group member Naaman Telfer said he understood the police have a "very, very, very" tough job, but questioned whether they had a "reasonable level of suspicion" in this case.

He added: "You created a hundred other problems, that's the big situation... these are 13 or 14-year-olds, young men, they have gone past actually caring because [being stopped by police] is a normal function of their normal lives."

"The reason they don't complain is because they don't have faith in the complaints procedure."

# Famous boxer 'robbed at gunpoint' in Leyton

**A** former world champion boxer reported being robbed at gunpoint in Leyton last month.

On 18th April, Amir Khan said he was out with his wife Faryal in High Road, Leyton, when he had a "gun pointed in [his] face" by two men.

Amir handed over his custom watch, worth £70,000, and called the police, who said they arrived at the scene at around 9.15pm. No shots were fired and both Amir and his wife were unharmed.

Describing the incident on Twitter, Amir wrote: "I crossed the road with Faryal, luckily she was few steps behind me.



*"The main thing is we're both safe"*

"Two men ran to me, he asked for my watch whilst having a gun pointed in my face. The main thing is we're both safe."

The Met Police confirmed there have been no arrests "at this very early stage" but that police "are following a number of enquiries".



LETTERS

The long game

Dear Waltham Forest Echo  
The new incinerator will have a lifespan of 50 years, making it a hugely long-term investment. It is vital that we look at the arguments made by Cllr Clyde Loakes [issue #84, p5] from this perspective.  
The proposed capacity of the new incinerator is 700,000 tonnes, an increase of 30%. While Cllr Loakes claims the capacity has been designed according to forecast population growth, the waste produced by the seven North London boroughs has declined in recent years. The latest figures published by NLWA show that, in 2020–2021, the area produced 570,394 tonnes of waste, down from 580,656 the previous year, continuing a downward trend that started in 2016. NLWA is also planning to increase recycling rates from the current dismal 30% to 50%, still below the 65% rate demanded by London Mayor Sadiq Khan, which will further lower the need for incineration. While Cllr Loakes insists the facility will not

need to run at full capacity, it will also generate electricity and heat for local homes in the Meridian Water Development. If the NLWA successfully boosts recycling and scales back incineration, how will these residents heat their homes?  
As for air quality, he assures us that particulate matter produced by the incinerator will be 1,000 times lower than the World Health Organisation’s safe limits. However, according to our own DEFRA, there is no safe limit for particulate matter. Cllr Loakes also promises world-class technology to limit harmful gases and particles, as well as the installation of carbon capture in 2035, but I’m sceptical if these will work as promised.  
Cllr Loakes claims that, without the new incinerator, taxpayers will be hit with extra costs because we will have to rely on privately-operated incinerators or landfills but the new incinerator will cost us millions. NLWA did not consult us to find out if we are willing to pay for this expensive and unnecessary project.

Carina Millstone  
Chingford resident

Sins of omission

Dear Waltham Forest Echo  
In his attempt at “setting the record straight” in your March edition [issue #84, p5], NLWA chair Clyde Loakes skirts around the findings from the all-party parliamentary group on air pollution that waste incinerators present a “significant health hazard”. He neither mentions Waltham Forest’s low recycling rates nor the fact that the NLWA’s own data shows most “leftover” waste being burnt is recyclable or compostable. He also does not mention the Committee on Climate Change’s view that incinerator-generated energy is “worse than coal”. He omits London’s projected 950,000 tonnes annual incinerator over-capacity, as worked out by Sadiq Khan’s office. The fact that costs have more than doubled and don’t account for future required carbon capture retrofit have escaped him.

Cllr Loakes has been the chair of the NLWA some 14 years so one would think he knows his stuff by now. Perhaps he is just so personally invested in this project, including through his role on the board at LondonEnergy Ltd, that he prefers to dismiss expert opinion as “misconceptions” in the era of “social-media propelled misinformation”. When the construction contract for the incinerator was awarded, Kate Osamor MP said that “the personal ambition of a few councillors like Loakes has superseded the public good.” Go figure.

Karel Schling  
Walthamstow resident

Advertisement

**Goods Vehicle Operator’s Licence**  
Delenco Foods Ltd of Unit 6 Heybridge Way, Leyton, London E10 7NQ, is applying for a licence to use:  
Units 6-8 Heybridge Way, Leyton, London E10 7NQ as an operating centre for 9 goods vehicles and 0 trailers  
Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre(s) who believe that their use of enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds, LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice.  
Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice. A Guide to Making Representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner’s office.

LICENSING ACT 2003  
Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given **Liber Events Ltd (Trading as The Lacy Nook)** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **Wood Street Studios, 1 Barrett Road, E17 3FU**. The nature of the application is as follows:  
  
• **To permit the sale of alcohol: Wednesday – Sunday, from 12.00PM–10.00PM; Bank Holiday Mondays only 12.00PM–4.00PM**  
  
The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR. 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, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR or via email: [Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk](mailto:Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk).  
  
Representations must be received no later than **11th May 2022**.  
  
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.

Send us your letters

Want to share your view?  
Email your letters (200 words) to us at [wfecho@socialspider.com](mailto:wfecho@socialspider.com) by 20th May

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# HEALTH



## Out of hospital and out of mind

*Whipps commentator Mary Burnett warns elderly patients are being discharged too soon*

**I**n a recent newsletter, the NHS trust behind Whipps Cross wrote proudly of how they're "accelerating the number of patients being discharged more promptly and safely", a shift that is vital to their plans to operate post-rebuild with fewer beds and services on-site.

For those who know the older people of this borough, such boasts may set off alarm bells. I've heard many stories of older people whose discharge was certainly prompt but seemed far from safe. I'll tell the story of two – just the tip of the iceberg – whose names have been changed to protect their anonymity.

Elsie, in her late 80s, was living alone and getting out and about until she was admitted to Whipps after a fall. A few days later, she was discharged back home and left sitting downstairs, with no way of getting to the hastily-installed hospital bed upstairs on her own steam. Despite numerous unsuccessful calls to arrange a visit from a care worker, in the end her elderly brother and his wife took the risk of helping her up themselves and returned late at night to their home over 40 miles away. No rails had been installed to keep Elsie steady around the

house and, though she was on the waiting list for a home assessment, no-one knew how long this would take. Needless to say, a few weeks later, Elsie fell again using the toilet, fractured her hip and was readmitted to Whipps. She is now too frail to live at home.

Dora, in her early eighties, lived alone, struggling with breathlessness after a diagnosis of lung cancer. After several falls, she too was admitted to Whipps and rapidly discharged while still very frail, breathless and unable to move without help. To make matters worse, she was discharged back to a home with no hot water. Though Dora was meant to have four care visits each day, on several days she only received two, some lasting a matter of minutes, despite frantic phone calls by her niece.

As a further indignity, both women, and others we've spoken to, were told to use incontinence pads, despite not actually suffering from incontinence. After a lifetime of using the toilet, how can older people be expected to subject themselves to this? It is unsurprising that they would rather risk falling on the way to the bathroom. Whipps' NHS trust

is very fond of arguing that old people should get home as soon as possible to avoid their muscles atrophying while they lay in a hospital bed. It seems counterproductive to leave them stuck at home, barely able to get around, without rehabilitation to move safely again and sitting in soiled pads.

Hospitals used to be required to assess people's home circumstances before discharge to make sure they were safe at home and had proper support. Now, because of cuts to beds and staff shortages, we have "discharge to assess" or, in plainer English, sending people home regardless. We know that cuts and government policy are the root cause of all this but the pretence that all is getting better in the community adds insult to injury.

Join our campaign at [whipps.cross.campaign@gmail.com](mailto:whipps.cross.campaign@gmail.com).

Offered a chance by the *Echo* to respond, Dr Heather Noble, medical director at Whipps Cross, said: "We deeply regret the events experienced by Elsie and Dora and are taking the issues raised very seriously. We are working with our local community partners, including Age UK, to improve care following discharge."

## Man dies on hospital ward after waiting entire day to be seen

by Josh Mellor, Local Democracy Reporter

**A** 55-year-old man died of heart problems after spending a day in Whipps Cross Hospital without being seen by a doctor.

Muhammad Tariq, from Walthamstow, died at 11.16pm on 7th August last year after being admitted at 4.50am.

He was sent to an acute assessment ward, where he remained without being checked by doctors on their day shift until he was found struggling to breathe at around 10pm.

Doctors fitted a mask ventilator and attempted needle decompression to clear blood they believed had accumulated around his heart but sadly could not save his life.

At an inquest into Muhammad's death, held on 12th April, assistant coroner Dr Shirley Radcliffe ruled that he died of natural causes linked to heart disease.

However, a senior doctor at Whipps could not explain why Muhammad had stayed on the ward all day without being seen.

Dr Simon Green, clinical director for acute medicine, said: "It isn't at all clear why

the junior doctors didn't alert on-duty consultant Dr Fareeha Rizvi about the fact that there was a patient that hadn't been checked.

"My personal practice is to check the list myself and I believe it is now Dr Rizvi's procedure. Furthermore, it's normal procedure for the nurses to flag it to us if a patient isn't being seen.

"Normally there are safeguards against this happening and it really wasn't possible to work out why none of those happened on this occasion."

Giving evidence, Dr Rizvi said she suspected Muhammad was suffering from an angina but that most of his tests had come back as "normal".

She added: "If I had seen him, I would have had a very low suspicion of his level of risk, in my past experience these cases are usually very traumatic."

Summarising her findings, Dr Radcliffe accepted the doctors' evidence that their care would not have changed if they had seen Muhammad earlier and that efforts were made to treat him on the evening of his death.

His cause of death was recorded as hemopericardium, which is an accumulation of blood in part of the heart.

Credit James Cracknell





# AROUND THE BOROUGH

## WALTHAMSTOW

### Nine-year-old bee fan organises charity walk

**A** nine-year-old girl from Walthamstow is organising a charity event to support her favourite animal: the bee.

Bea Burgess, a student at Coppermill Primary School, adores bees so much that she even plans to become a mellitologist – or bee scientist – when she's older.

On 21st May, the day after World Bee Day, she is hosting a Big Bee Walk at Walthamstow Marshes to raise money for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust.

Walkers will be able to hear knowledge about the bee and their vital role in our ecosystem from Curtis Thompson, Walthamstow's own Local Honey Man.

Bea said: "I love spotting bees [in my back garden] and have seen many different types so far, including solitary bees,



Bea Burgess **Credit** Ruth Goldsmith the buff-tailed bumblebee, and quite a few honey bees.

"I'd love to study and learn more about bees and other insects, because I want to protect these animals to save our future. Bees are so important to us humans."

A third of our food is grown

with the help of these pollinators and yet their numbers are declining in the UK due to climate change, disease, loss of habitat and increased pesticide use.

To boost their population, the Bumblebee Conservation Trust runs direct conservation projects, funds academic and scientific research and provides land management advice.

Local Honey Man Curtis added: "What an inspiring young lady! I was really touched when Bea got in contact to invite me along and I jumped at the opportunity to be able to assist in educating people about how important bees are to our environment."

Join The Big Bee Walk, Saturday 21st May at 2pm. Meet behind Coppermill Fields Car Park in Coppermill Lane; suggested minimum donation £2.50 (cash only).

## LEYTON

### Last bid to save popular venue

**A** popular Leyton venue has one last chance to secure its future after going into thousands of pounds worth of rent arrears.

Patchworks opened in Church Road last autumn and has hosted a number of events and exhibitions, some attracting thousands of visitors.

Will Sandy, one of a group of volunteers running the space, explained their vision for the dilapidated building was to create a hyper-local "community hub", while also attracting international artists to "put Leyton on the map".

In a last-ditch chance to save Patchworks, the team has set up a fundraiser in the hopes of raising £20,000, both to secure its future and to allow for improvements like heat and noise insulation.

Will told the *Echo*: "We're going to give it one last push because it would be a shame to waste everything at this stage, especially when everyone's really enjoying what we have put together."

"It's only because we've been stuck in lockdowns and non-



Patchworks in Church Road

lockdowns that caused everyone to stay home [that we're in arrears], we've already got a good role in the local community and we do foresee we'll start to make a profit.

"We've had people saying they've lived here 10 years and this is the first time they've had somewhere to meet and congregate with people."

Once out of their current crisis, the team hopes to secure a 20-year lease for the building, fearing it could otherwise be snapped up by a housing developer, with rumours suggesting one has already made a £1million offer.

Donate to save Patchworks at <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/patchworks-1>

## CHINGFORD

### Former Brexit Party eyeing three council seats

**R**eform UK, once known as the Brexit Party, is hoping to win three council seats in Chingford.

The right-wing populist party did not run in the last local election but, in the 2019 general election, put forward two candidates, who netted more than 700 votes each.

The party has candidates in Chingford Green and Endlebury – both firmly Conservative at the last election – and in Larkswood, where the most popular Labour candidate lost by a margin of only around 500 votes.

Despite this, current Conservative group leader Tim James insists he is not concerned by Reform's decision to run.

He told the *Echo*: "Everyone is allowed to stand wherever they want. It's a shame they're running against us but I think we will win, when push comes to shove."

"Local elections are about very different issues, compared to national elections. We're focusing on those local



Matt Davis, former Conservative councillor, is now running for Reform UK **Credit** Matt Davis

issues, like the cleanliness of our streets."

The party's candidate in Chingford Green, 59-year-old Matt Davis, is a former Conservative councillor and is appealing to Tory voters who are "unhappy with the party" to give him one of their votes.

He added: "If you can see differences between the current government's priorities and New Labour, you're doing better than me."

## LEYTONSTONE

### Pub shut after cockroaches found in storeroom

**A** Leytonstone pub was ordered to temporarily close after cockroaches were found in its storeroom.

Inspectors from Waltham Forest Council discovered signs of a cockroach infestation in The Plough & Harrow pub in High Road, Leytonstone, during a routine visit in late March.

On 6th April, Thames Magistrates Court ordered Foggy Lake Ltd, the company which runs the pub, to pay £1,328 to the council and ordered that no food service can operate from the building until the issue is resolved.

Star of India, a popular restaurant that moved into the pub's kitchen last September, has thus temporarily closed as well.

A spokesperson for Star of India told the *Echo*: "Unfortunately, the company the

landlord had in to do pest control did not do the job we were expecting them to do. We had started to take action by hiring our own pest controller and luckily the cockroaches are already gone now."

They added that, while the situation is "unfortunate", they "are not blaming anyone" and maintain a good relationship with the pub's owner.

A spokesperson for Waltham Forest Council said: "This case underscores the importance of good food hygiene standards and the hard work of our team in protecting our residents from risks to health and safety."

"While the council continues to do everything within its means to remove these risks, we urge customers to check food hygiene ratings before eating out or ordering a takeaway."



## SPORT

# We are the champions

by David O'Driscoll

**W**althamstow FC celebrated the end of a highly successful season on 23rd April, when they were formally crowned champions of the Essex Senior League. In the aftermath, I spoke to co-manager John Mackie, the club's chairman Andy Perkins and a local fan to reflect on their path to victory.

John Mackie took on his role, sharing management responsibilities with Terry Spillane, at the start of the season, a decision he admits "was a risk" given the pair had never met, although luckily they "clicked" almost instantly. After pre-season training sessions, they decided to play a straightforward 4-4-2 formation, as "the players understood their role in that system", and he feels sticking to this formula was one of the keys to their success.

"We were playing several teams with a higher standing than us and did very well, which gave us confidence going into the season", he said, "I knew after five games that we could win the league." The key game for Mackie was a hard-fought 1-0 win over league favourites Enfield, thanks to a last-minute goal. He added that he takes particular pride in the fact that Stow are such a community-oriented club, adding: "I love the rapport the team has with the fans. The fact we are getting crowds of 500-



Credit Andrzej Perkins

plus for this level is brilliant."

At the start of the season, club chairman Andy Perkins was simply hoping the team would earn 40 points, enough to save them from relegation. It was only when they passed this threshold, he said, that he "could relax and start to enjoy the season".

Like John, the club's community feel is a vital aspect for him, which is why Stow FC will continue to offer free season tickets for NHS workers, teachers and social care staff next year, when most other organisations will have quietly dropped their offers for "Covid heroes". Perkins is also keen to

see more kids in the crowd next season, hoping to inspire the kind of lifelong passion and loyalty that led him to chair the club. "I started watching this club as a kid," he said, "This started my love affair." To this end, he has been delighted with the growing number of spectators, which he says has included many families.

Andy Perry, a member of fan group the "Rabble", paints a "warm and welcoming" portrait of the match day experience, adding: "On the terraces, the fans are good natured, sing funny songs from So Solid Crew to Barry Manilow (really!) and let off confetti cannons when we score."

For him, a highlight of the season was not a particular game or goal but a food bank drive organised by the club in December of last year, which resulted in a huge pile of donations and £1,000 raised for Eat or Heat. Perry said: "When we arrived an hour before kick-off, there was already a huge pile of donations from the players! At a time when society is increasingly divided, football is still something that can bring people together and strangers can bond over."

All connected with the club are optimistic about the forward march of Walthamstow FC next season, when they are expected to play in the Isthmian League. Certainly, if the momentum and interest generated this season carry into the next, it could be another successful year.

Bring it on!

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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.

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