

ENFIELD DISPATCH

Nº. 28 THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

JAN 2021

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ENFIELD RESIDENTS queue to enter Carlton House Surgery for their Covid-19 vaccination, after the jabs were approved for use last month. GP practices are urging people to wait until they are contacted before trying to arrange an appointment.

Local MPs team up to stop high-rise development

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Two local MPs have both said they oppose new proposals for redeveloping Enfield Town with a 26-storey tower block.

Palace Gardens owner Deutsche Bank wants to demolish most of the ageing shopping centre and build hundreds of homes on the site to fund the creation of a new mixed retail area with restaurants, bars and a boutique cinema.

But the plans announced in October have been slammed by the two local MPs whose constituencies would be impacted by the proposal. Feryal Clark, whose Enfield

North seat borders the shopping centre and includes much of Enfield Town Conservation Area, said she could not support plans that would threaten the “historic character” of the area.

She told the *Dispatch*: “I have met with the developers a couple of times to look at their consultation and while I welcome some of the proposals to improve the shopping thoroughfares and create a night-time economy, Enfield Town is in a conservation area and it has a historic market – the character of the area does not lend itself to a 26-storey tower.

“You have one of the oldest markets in the country and it can’t be overshadowed by a 26-storey

tower. By all means create a night-time economy, but not like this.”

Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous, within whose constituency the shopping centre sits, is in agreement with his Labour colleague. He told the *Dispatch*: “It is not in keeping with Enfield Town, I think it needs a rework and I don’t think it’s appropriate – I am definitely against it.

“It is in the nature [of developers] to do whatever they can get away with and maximise their profits and that is in their interest. This might be their opening gambit.”

Asked for his reaction when he first heard about the plans, Bambos said: “I was quite shocked and I didn’t expect it. If they had

made an assessment of the area they would know it is not in keeping with it. They need to be a lot more sensitive to what is good about Enfield Town and respect the conservation area. That bit of town around Gentleman’s Row is the core of what makes Enfield Town attractive.”

Feryal added: “I am not anti-towers, in the right spaces you can have tall buildings, but 26 storeys is not right for Enfield Town. I want the developers to come up with alternatives and I am urging constituents to write to them about what they think. We have a voice and people should speak up.”

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Enfield Dispatch is the borough's free community newspaper. We publish monthly and distribute 10,000 free copies of each issue – and we will continue to do so during the ongoing public health crisis.

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Labour councillor resigns

Vicki Pite quits Enfield Council as divisions within Labour group deepen

A Labour councillor has resigned from Enfield Council “with enormous sadness”.

Vicki Pite, who represented Chase ward for more than six years, stood down last month saying she “regrets” no longer being able to serve local residents.

Although Vicki did not elaborate on the reasons for her resignation, the *Dispatch* understands that the decision is related to long-running divisions within the Labour group. Last year, four Labour councillors quit the party to set up a new opposition group, Community First. Vicki has not joined Community First and remains a Labour Party member.

She told the *Dispatch*: “Resigning was a most difficult decision; one I took with enormous sadness. I respect and thank residents who gave me their vote in 2014 and again in 2018. You’re my neighbours and I regret that I’ll not be able to continue working for the ward where I’ve lived for 40 years, as a councillor at least.”

“I hope that as a community activist and volunteer I’ll still have a contribution to make.”

Chase ward councillor Dino Lemonides, one of the four who joined Community First over the summer following a long-standing rift with council leader Nesil Caliskan, paid tribute to his former ward colleague Vicki. Cllr Lemonides said: “Vicki served the local community and Labour Party well during her term of office. She championed various causes, including the lack of GPs and dentists, and poor housing in Chase ward.



Vicki Pite had represented Chase ward since 2014

“She will be sorely missed by residents and myself and I wish her all the best in her political retirement.”

Fellow Chase ward member and Labour councillor Hass Yusuf added: “The residents of Chase Ward have lost a very hard-work-

the council debated and agreed a similar motion six months later.

The resignation means there are now two vacant seats on the council – the other was vacated following the death of Chris Bond in July. All elections and by-elections in the

UK were postponed by the government last year because of the pandemic.

A council spokesperson said: “All elections and refer-

endums have been postponed by the Coronavirus Act until 6th May 2021. Unless there is a change in legislation, the by-election timetable will not start until the notice of election, which must be published around 29th March 2021.”

Cllr Caliskan declined to comment on the reasons for Vicki resigning as a Labour councillor.

“Resigning was a most difficult decision; one I took with enormous sadness”

► CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Last year Enfield Council’s planning committee rejected an application for a cluster of towers up to 17 storeys tall because of the impact it would have had on the adjacent Southgate Circus Conservation Area. However, the same committee later approved plans for the tallest tower in the borough, at 29 storeys, which is due to be built on the site of Col-

osseum Retail Park in Southbury. A 30-storey tower is now also being proposed as part of the large-scale redevelopment of Edmonton Green Shopping Centre.

Both Feryal and Bambos dispute a claim from DWS that a 26-storey residential tower is needed in order to fund the redevelopment of Palace Gardens. Bambos said he believed the plans could be “reworked” without the need for a high-rise tower block, while Feryal

has demanded to see the financial viability report from Deutsches Bank justifying the plans.

A Palace Square spokesperson said: “Throughout our consultation with the local community we have heard that people want an evening economy in Enfield. Palace Square is set to deliver this, alongside high-quality accommodation in the town centre. We look forward to showing our latest proposals in the new year.”

Crossrail 2 ‘paused’

Planning work on Crossrail 2 has been officially paused after the government and Transport for London (TfL) agreed to stop funding it.

The proposed new rail route had been seen as the next major rail infrastructure upgrade for the capital, but rising costs and delays to Crossrail 1 and the pressure of the pandemic on TfL’s finances both contributed to the decision to halt its development. The line would have provided fast and regular services from several Enfield railway stations to central and south-west London and was seen as “vital” to supporting regeneration in the east of the borough.

Crossrail 2 issued a statement which said: “Crossrail 2 will still be needed in future to support London’s growth and we have clearly demonstrated the case for the scheme. The project has been put in good order, ready to be restarted when the time is right.”

Testing for all

Enfield Council has opened three “rapid testing” centres in the borough for residents without Covid-19 symptoms to be tested without needing to make an appointment.

The lateral flow testing (LFT) centres for Enfield residents were set up locally to try and curb an alarming rise in the local case rate last month. The three new test centres are at Klinger Hall, Copperfield Mews, Edmonton N18 1PF; at Kempe Hall, Kempe Road, Enfield EN1 4QS, and at Brigadier Hall, Cedar Road, Enfield EN2 0NL.

All three are open daily from 9am–6pm. Each is capable of delivering nearly 900 tests per day. They complement the five test centres in the borough that offer tests for people who have coronavirus symptoms. There is no need to book ahead with residents without symptoms able to simply turn up during opening hours.

Council leader Nesil Caliskan said: “Identifying those individuals who have this virus and ensuring they self-isolate and do not spread it to others means we can bring Covid-19 under control and get back to a semblance of normality.

“Being able to identify people that test negative allows them to go about their life without having to isolate unnecessarily.”

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark (centre) cut the ribbon on Zebras Hub in December, which has been created by charity co-founders Jamie Ashton (left) and Harriet Piercy (right)



Charity opens new community hub

Boost for local people with learning disabilities

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

An Enfield charity supporting people with learning disabilities has opened its own dedicated community hub after raising thousands of pounds in donations and grants during the pandemic.

Zebras Children and Adults Charity co-founders Harriet Piercy and Jamie Ashton had been looking for a space to call their own for years – finally finding somewhere they could rent at low cost last year.

The disused outbuilding behind an estate agents in Lancaster Road lacked plumbing, lighting and was badly in need of a paint job, but after applying for grants and appealing for donations, Zebras raised £10,000 to support the renovation work.

Zebras Hub was officially opened last month and includes a therapy room, education space, play area, kitchenette and storage shed that doubled as a Santa's grotto over Christmas.

The need for the hub became even more pressing during the pandemic as Zebras began running a food distribution network for dozens of local families. Harriet told the *Dispatch*: “We can do our weekly outreach work from here, like food distribution and arts and crafts. There is a therapy room where we can do counselling and life coaching.

“We will have a timetable of events. There is a lack of community space in Enfield and we have been looking for somewhere for years – when this came up we jumped at it.”

Grants to support the creation of Zebras Hub included £5,000 from The Screwfix

Foundation, £2,000 from Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, and £3,000 from John Atkinson, who owns the space Zebras is renting. There were also donations from individual charity supporters and many even turned up with tools to help carry out the renovation work.

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark cut the ribbon to declare Zebras Hub officially open. She said: “It is amazing to have a service like Zebras that is a lifeline for so many children and their families and I am incredibly proud and pleased they have been able to set up this hub.

“Congratulations to them for doing it at such a hard time. I look forward to working with them to make it a success.”

Zebras had been running a community cafe in Ponders End, where young adults with learning disabilities could learn to cook and gain work experience. But the pandemic forced the cafe to close and that's when Harriet began exploring other ways to support vulnerable people during lockdown. Grant funding of nearly £18,000 from The National Lottery and the government enabled Harriet to run regular online cooking classes as well as launch the food distribution network, delivering fresh fruit and veg to 31 local families in need. A special Christmas appeal also enabled Zebras to deliver presents to 126 local children.

One of the families Zebras helps is Niki Bilgin, her husband Erkin and their six children. Niki, who cannot work because of serious ill health, said: “Without them I don't know what we would have done. The food is incredible, but it's the little things they do that make the difference.”

Tower blocks next to station approved

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Residential tower blocks up to 16-storeys high look set to be built next to Brimsdown Station after the plans were approved by Enfield Council.

Developer Stonegate Homes won council backing to build 148 flats in Green Street, on the site of two abandoned warehouses most recently used for storing radio-controlled model planes.

The flats would be contained in three blocks of up to five, twelve and 16 storeys and, while the developer has vowed to provide 48% ‘affordable’ homes, the blocks would be significantly taller than the two, three and four-storey buildings currently dominating the local area.

Members of the council's planning committee gave the go-ahead, in a narrow vote last month, after hearing a range of concerns. Local resident Sam Nanji said the blocks would be four-and-a-half times higher than its surrounding buildings, describing the planned towers as an “eyesore” that would “significantly alter the character of the surrounding area”.

Sam also highlighted that “only 15%” of the 148 homes were going to have three bedrooms. “Why would you allow that to go ahead?” he asked.

Enfield Highway councillor Christine Hamilton called for the application to be deferred until after the pandemic, to allow for a better public consultation.

In defence of the scheme, Gill Eaton, of planning consultants Icen Projects, described it as a “high-quality development with a high quantum of affordable homes”. She said: “The location for this density of development is supported, and the design addresses all the local considerations, such as daylight, sunlight, overlooking and overshadowing.

“The scheme utilises a brownfield site, thereby reducing pressure on the Green Belt elsewhere in the borough, and provides modern, new, flexible commercial space.”

Gill claimed the height of the towers was what had enabled the 50% ‘affordable’ housing level to be provided.

Several committee members criticised the plans. Conservative councillor Mike Rye said the towers would be “overbearing”, while Labour member Hass Yusuf said they'd be an “eyesore”. Tory councillor Maria Alexandrou added: “We keep accepting one-bed flats. Unless we start building three-bed family housing, we are not supporting residents.”

In total, six residents formally objected to the scheme. Council planning officer David Gittens said many of the two-bedroom homes would be large enough for small families and, added to the three-bed flats, would push the family housing level “close” to the council's target.

The plans were approved by six votes to five, but because the site is currently commercial land of “strategic importance”, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan will need to give the final go-ahead.

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Volunteers from several local groups turned up to help out at Pymmes Park in Edmonton

Festive volunteering

Carole Stanley on how a pre-Christmas litter pick helped spread joy at Pymmes Park

I was saddened to read recently that the Friends of Pymmes Park had only three regular volunteers and were “feeling overwhelmed”.

As a park volunteer myself, I know how this can feel and I wanted to do something to show them that they are appreciated. One of the most dispiriting things of looking after a park is litter, so I came up with the idea of organising a surprise litter pick. Within days

I had promises of help from a number of organisations including Bountagu Big Local, Enfield Climate Action Forum, The Enfield Society, other ‘friends of’ parks groups, two residents’ associations, and two students from Kingsmead School who are doing their Duke of Edinburgh Award!

It was on a chilly Saturday two weeks before Christmas that 35 volunteers turned up at the park. Jenny, Sumishta and Suzanne

from the friends group couldn’t believe it. “Oh, what a lovely thing to do, I am overwhelmed,” Jenny said, beaming. “This is the best Christmas present I could ask for.”

She added: “It doesn’t happen very often but I am lost for words. Thank you everyone from the bottom of our hearts.”

The volunteers headed for the woodland areas and boundaries of the park, where litter is known to gather. In less than an hour, they had collected a total of 28 sacks full of litter. I asked some of the people who gave up their Saturday lunchtime what made them decide to help. John, a school governor who lives in Edmonton, said: “This is a lovely gesture. Many parks struggle to get help so I hope this raises Pymmes Park’s profile.”

“People assume it’s too much of a commitment to volunteer, but an hour here and there can help considerably.”

Alyssa and Daniel from Kingsmead School think that many teenagers are concerned about the environment but don’t know what they can do to help. Daniel said: “Our family have been part of Bush Hill Park’s litter picks since they started. I hope that by coming here today local people see that they can help to improve their environment too.”

I was also pleased that local councillor Ergin Erbil was able to support the event as well. He said: “I was delighted to join the surprise litter pick in Pymmes Park. We must do all we can to keep our parks clean and green.”

“The event was attended by residents from all over the borough and there was a great sense of overwhelming support and solidarity. I am grateful to the Friends of Bush Hill Park for organising this important event.”

Find out more about Friends of Pymmes Park:
Visit friendsofpymmespark.wixsite.com/fopp

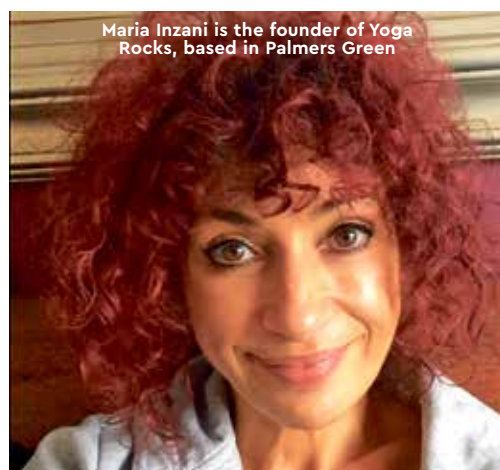
Ready to rock

Olivia Devereux-Evans meets yoga instructor Maria Inzani

At the start of the pandemic last year, Yoga Rocks had been open for nine months. It was launched by Maria Inzani, a personal trainer, who wanted to create an environment where people could work together to become stronger, healthier, and more appreciative of themselves and others.

Like many other businesses, the pandemic created significant financial difficulties for Yoga Rocks. Maria took advantage of both the business rates relief and ‘Bounce Back’ loan schemes offered by the government, but has still struggled. To continue trading during the two national lockdowns, she offered yoga classes online. Although not as beneficial as in-person yoga, it helped keep people engaged.

Maria said: “It is very easy at a time like this to let our fears and anxieties spiral out of control. Yoga teaches you to be calm, to keep focused. It is not just the physical practice; it is the psychological practice that is helping a lot of people.”



“Also, to have the connection, to come online, see some familiar faces, stay in a similar routine.”

Yoga practitioners claim it also helps boost people’s immune systems by reducing stress, while further benefits include improving strength and flexibility, calming the body and the mind, and relieving pain and tension.

Maria believes Yoga Rocks has become a valuable part of the Palmers Green community. She added: “All of our clients are so different. All ages and all backgrounds, and that is what we wanted. We just wanted normal people to benefit and gain from yoga.”

The Yoga Rocks team is also selling tote bags to raise money for North Enfield Foodbank. Maria said: “We want to be part of the community. We are in a difficult position but there are people that are in a much worse position than we are who do not even have the basics. We want to make a real difference.”

Although Maria has faced challenges this year, she is hopeful for Yoga Rocks and said her clients have helped keep her positive: “The messages of support from people telling me it has helped them get through things tells me that people want this and want yoga to be there.”

Find out more about Yoga Rocks:
Facebook facebook.com/YogaRocksLdn
Instagram yoga_rocks_ldn
Visit yoga-rocks.co.uk

Keep a beady eye on local crime

Police constable Neil Rogers introduces a new community service for Enfield residents

Are you interested in being part of a local neighbourhood watch – online? Do you want to have a simple and effective line of communication with local police officers and Enfield Council?

Become part of the future of communication between neighbours and police by signing up to Owl, a new dedicated online neighbourhood watch scheme with various different watches that you can be part of within the borough, including CCTV watch, dog watch and canal watch.

CCTV watch is a great scheme to be part of as it gives the police the knowledge of your private security system in case a crime has taken place nearby to you and can be used to help detect crime and get criminals put before court.

Owl also includes a live chat function which can be used by the police on a specified date and time to speak with you, ward by ward, in the comfort of your own home, to discuss any issues you may have.

Owl is a tool that will be used by police on a daily basis and will allow you to be part of the process of catching criminals and helping shape how local police officers police your area.

So why not join your neighbours in making your very own local watch and share your intelligence, concerns and ideas with the police and make Enfield a better place for it!

When signing up, make sure you click on the ‘neighbourhood watch’ tab and not the ‘community messaging’ tab, as this will get you into your watch where you can meet up with neighbours and form a strong community bond which will help with combating crime in your area.

Just to reiterate; this is not replacing the need to report crime over 101 or 999, but is giving your neighbourhood team the power of knowledge which will help in bringing down crime in your area.

Currently, we have 1,210 Enfield residents signed up. Why not join them?

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Residents remain divided over low-traffic schemes

Council reveals 30,000 fines have been issued in three months

BY JAMES CRACKNELL &
OLIVIA DEVEREUX-EVANS

People living within two new 'quieter neighbourhood' areas installed by Enfield Council remain divided over the schemes, research by the *Dispatch* suggests.

While more local people appear to be against Enfield's low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) than in favour, based on a small sample of residents, a significant minority are supportive and some also remain undecided.

LTNs aim to reduce traffic in residential areas by blocking off certain road entrances to motor vehicles, with the council installing its first such scheme in Bowes Park last summer. A second scheme swiftly followed in the Fox Lane area of Palmers Green. In both areas, a combination of bollards, planters and camera traps are being used to limit road access at certain points.

The two LTNs are being trialled over a six-month period, but while the Fox Lane scheme was subject to a public consultation prior to its implementation – with changes made as a result – the Bowes Park scheme was introduced without views being sought first.

When the *Dispatch* visited Bowes Park in August, just prior to the LTN being installed, five out of ten households – chosen at random – were opposed to the idea. Returning in December, six out of ten were against the scheme. While only two were explicitly in favour, two others said they wanted something to be done to cut traffic but felt changes were needed to the current LTN layout before they could support it.

A key long-term aim of LTNs is behavioural change – encouraging people to walk, cycle or use public transport. A resident of York Road, who wished to remain anonymous, told the *Dispatch*: "It's nice how quiet the road is now, but it [the LTN] adds five or ten minutes coming home during rush hour – it puts me off using the car. I might get a bike."

A Shrewsbury Road resident said: "It's crap. It forces us [car drivers] on to the North Circular – we spend more time in traffic. I wouldn't consider getting a bike."

Laura Leroy, of Highworth Road, said: "It's made the road quieter and safer. I know people are moaning about it but it's people who drive cars who usually complain."

The council acknowledges that, while cutting traffic on residential roads, LTNs increase main road traffic. A spokesperson said this was "expected" but would "reduce over time".

Warwick Road has been among the worst-affected roads in Bowes Park for so-called 'rat running' drivers taking shortcuts to the North Circular. Such journeys have become



The entrance to York Road in Bowes Park has been obstructed by 'box planters' as part of the low-traffic neighbourhood scheme

more common in recent years as drivers use smartphones to find direct routes. LTNs are designed to reduce this problem by making it more difficult to drive through a residential area on the way to somewhere else.

Jose Fernandez, from Warwick Road, told the *Dispatch*: "It [the LTN] is a good idea. It is much safer as it was a rat-run before."

Another Warwick Road resident disagreed and said: "It's been forced on us – it's undemocratic. It solved one street's problem, to the detriment of the community. The area has become lifeless."

"There needs to be genuine local engagement"

Within the Fox Lane LTN, out of the households spoken to at random by the *Dispatch*, five were against the scheme, four were in favour, and one remained unsure. Margaret Gourd, from Lakeside, said: "I don't think this scheme works because we have had a build-up of traffic [on main roads] and it takes longer to get anywhere."

Margaret said it was now taking between 20 minutes and an hour, depending on time of day, to drive four miles to appointments at Chase Farm Hospital. Fellow Lakeside resident Martyn Rowe said: "They have used a sledgehammer to crack a nut. I think there are a core of extremists who have got the ear of left-wing councillors."

Jill Bergot, from The Mall, said: "It has made roads safer. We have stopped using the car so much and I am cycling more – it

is easier to take the kids to nursery."

Andrea and Alex Kyriakou, of The Greenway, were also supportive. Alex said: "I think attitudes will change in time. I know there are some irate voices but for us it has been bliss – we used to have people doing 60-70mph."

Camera traps are being used, but some residents told the *Dispatch* they had been fined for making "honest mistakes" and the signage was "not clear". Asked how many drivers had been penalised so far, a council spokesperson said "in the region of 30,000 fines" had been issued – worth around £921,000. They added: "Any surplus is ring-fenced by law for specific purposes, including meeting the costs of public transport and highway improvements. In Enfield, previous surpluses have funded concessionary travel – it could also be used to improve safety around schools."

Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous is generally supportive of LTNs but wrote to transport secretary Grant Shapps to complain about the limited time local authorities were given to implement them after being offered government grants. The Labour MP told the *Dispatch*: "I think they should be tweaked. There needs to be genuine local engagement and the council needs to listen to people's views."

The success of Enfield's LTNs will be judged using data on traffic volume, bus journey times, walking and cycling, plus views from residents and stakeholders. Air quality monitors aren't being used, however – instead traffic data will be put "into a model to help understand the impact on air quality".

Third low-traffic area planned

Council pressing ahead with latest residential project for Palmers Green

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The borough's third low-traffic neighbourhood (LTN) is being planned for Enfield in its latest attempt to slow down cars and reduce rat-running on residential streets.

The 'Connaught Gardens Quieter Neighbourhood' project in Palmers Green will see some street entrances closed to motor traffic – except for emergency services – and new one-way systems introduced. The aim is to reduce through traffic, also known as 'rat running', between Green Lanes, Hedge Lane, and the North Circular.

It would become the third LTN in the borough after the introduction last year of similar low-traffic schemes in Bowes Park and the Fox Lane area between Palmers Green and Southgate, which have both drawn a mixed reaction from residents.

Enfield Council plans to roll out the measures in two phases; the first, due to be completed shortly, will see a one-way system introduced in Windsor Road, Osborne Road, and short sections of Lightcliffe Road and New River Crescent; the second phase would see Hazelwood Lane closed to traffic at one end and Callard Avenue closed at the entrance to the North Circular.

A possible 'school street' near Hazelwood School could also be introduced, banning motor traffic from using roads outside the school during the start and end of the school day.

According to the council, the scheme is being developed "to address the concerns raised by residents for many years". It is aimed at cutting air pollution and creating a safer environment that will enable people to walk and cycle more from their front doors.

For more information:
Visit letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/connaughtgardensQN

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Is this the death of scrutiny?

In our latest councillor's column, Southgate Green member Daniel Anderson laments the decline of council scrutiny functions

This is my third term as a councillor for Southgate Green ward, albeit with a 12-year gap between my first and second term. I quipped on my return in 2014 that it was my "Sean Connery moment" (referencing the late actor's return to play James Bond for *Never Say Never Again* in 1983).

However, this term has been anything but business as usual. Re-elected in 2018 as a Labour councillor, last summer I joined my two colleagues, Dinah Barry and Derek Levy, as part of a new breakaway group called Community First. Another ex-Labour councillor, Dino Lemonides, joined soon after.

Our reasons for doing so are well documented, so I won't repeat them, other than to say that we remain committed to the Labour manifesto we were

elected on but feel that we are better able to live up to those values outside of, rather than within, the Labour group on Enfield Council.

Nevertheless, we are independently minded, and don't work on the basis of a party whip, so we therefore feel free to disagree with one another when necessary

but do so respectfully and believe that genuine open dialogue is the key to finding the best way forward – something that wasn't previously possible as Labour councillors.

We are particularly concerned over the watering down of the council's scrutiny function. Scrutiny should be about evalu-

ating the work of the executive, influencing and shaping policy, suggesting alternative ways forward, but most of all holding the council's leadership team to account.

A great example of this was the work of the 'Meridian Water Workstream', which had identified major weaknesses in the council's £6.5bil-

lion regeneration scheme, questioning its capacity to deliver genuinely affordable homes that will benefit Enfield's residents, rather than overseas buyers.

Alas, the new scrutiny arrangements introduced last summer are a pale shadow of what we had before. Constitutional changes brought in by the administration have seen the abolition

of workstreams, replaced by committees that meet just four times a year, with the executive having undue influence on the respective memberships of each.

Cllr Anderson has represented Southgate Green since 2014, in his second spell on the council



Agendas are now top-heavy with officer presentations rather than framed first and foremost around the concerns of councillors. We have seen our roles reduced to being little more than paper shufflers with the executive seemingly paying lip service to us, if that. To be frank, it's scrutiny in name only, and is bad for decision-making and worrying for democracy.

It's fortunate, then, that we still have a free press!

You can find out more about Community First and subscribe to our periodic newsletter at our website communityfirstgroup.org.uk.

Cllr Anderson (Community First) represents Southgate Green alongside Claire Stewart (Labour) and Anne Brown (Labour). Ward surgeries are being held online only. To get in touch: Call 07812 673 070 Email Cllr.Daniel.Anderson@Enfield.gov.uk

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The newly-opened 21K Digital Media and Technology Hub at Edmonton Green Shopping Centre aims to help local young people gain new skills



Gain skills, gain hope

Colin Lee-Own urges community leaders to work together to help give young people a brighter future

At a seminar in 2015, Enfield Council's economic regeneration team laid out an employment and skills strategy for the borough, created to address poverty, unemployment, and a lack of educational and training opportunities.

The closure of vocational training providers, career advisors and guidance organisations that were located in Edmonton Green Shopping Centre during the 1990s had left local young people without a focal point where they could go to develop their digital and IT skills, which could prepare them to compete for jobs in the growing digital sector.

While the council's 2015 strategy set out to tackle problems such as this, it remains the case that 30.5% of Edmonton Green ward residents have no qualifications. This statistic has remained static for several years.

As of November, the percentage of Edmonton residents claiming work-related benefits is at 11% compared with 8.5% and 7.5% in the Enfield North and Enfield Southgate constituency areas, respectively. The UK average is 6.3%.

An area's rate of poverty and unemployment can be said to be

linked to its levels of youth violence. Since 2008, 16 people have been murdered in Edmonton because of knife or gun crimes – knife crime in particular rose sharply in 2019, resulting in the area recording the second-highest rate of serious youth violence in London.

Having lived in Edmonton for 53 years, I have witnessed the decline of the area, from a prosperous place to live, to falling into the bottom 10% nationally for deprivation and crime. There

“It is imperative that we set up an employment, training and skills working group”

is very little support for unemployed adults and young people living here, with few after-school activities available.

The failure of the council's employment and skills strategy means that Edmonton has continued a downward spiral of unemployment and a deficit of education opportunities which, in turn, continues to lead to soaring crime levels.

I am incredibly disappointed that the employment and skills

strategy was not prioritised. No wonder its aims were not met. Subsequently, the Covid-19 pandemic and the inevitable impact on the economy have exacerbated these issues as more struggling families are forced to rely on foodbanks.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that we set up an employment, training and skills working group with representatives from Enfield Council, schools and further education colleges, grassroots organisations, vocational training providers, and business group Enterprise Enfield. This will allow us to develop a local employment skills strategy and work in collaboration to implement and achieve our desired outcomes.

I strongly believe we have failed the residents of Edmonton, who have found themselves trapped in severe poverty for the last decade. This can be traced back to the lack of a holistic and collaborative approach between relevant stakeholders. I hope this changes soon.

Colin is the director of 21K Digital Media, a social enterprise that has recently established a digital media and technology hub at Edmonton Green Shopping Centre to offer local young people the opportunity to develop their skills. For more information: Visit 21kdigitalmedia.com

LETTERS

Send us your letters

Got an opinion on something in Enfield? We accept letters of up to 150 words from people and organisations in the borough. Email EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com before the next deadline on Tuesday 19th January.

Help needed

Dear Enfield Dispatch

One in nine households in our capital won't be able to escape the cold this winter as they struggle to meet the costs of heating their homes. Many low-income families and vulnerable Londoners face choosing between putting food on the table or keeping warm. This could be the bleak reality for yet thousands more who are at risk of losing their livelihoods because of the pandemic.

It really doesn't have to be this way and, with its 'Green New Deal', City Hall plans to slash household energy bills through low-carbon heat and energy-efficiency projects. In the meantime, the government needs to repair the holes they have poked in our welfare system over the last decade.

It was disappointing to see the chancellor's spending review fail to commit to keeping the uplift in Universal Credit payments beyond April, or increase the rate of local housing allowance to cover average rents. With unemployment rising, and in-work poverty at an alarming level, government ministers simply cannot put off taking action on making our benefits system fairer any longer.

Joanne McCartney
London Assembly
member for Enfield

Lottery grant

Dear Enfield Dispatch

In Enfield there are more than 2,000 children and young people that have a statement of special educational needs and disability (SEND). This is the third-highest in outer London. Every Parent and Child (EPC) is an Enfield charity providing crucial support, advice and information to SEND children and their families. Since the pandemic the charity has seen a surge in demand for its services, and in order to meet this demand we urgently need to upgrade our website and online facilities. So we are immensely grateful to the National Lottery Community Fund for its £10,000 grant that will make a huge difference to our community and those with SEND.

Jaspal Dhani
Every Parent and Child

Homes crisis

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Nationally, rough sleeping has more than doubled since 2010, according to government figures, rising from 1,768 in 2010 to 4,266 in 2019. And the number of people dying homeless has risen by half in the last five years, to 726 in 2018.

This winter, rough sleeping threatens to be more desperate than ever. They face a fight for survival this winter as Covid-19 restrictions are likely to dramatically reduce the most basic support for people sleeping on the streets. Rough sleeping is not inevitable. Homelessness fell at an unprecedented rate with Labour, but since the Tories have decided to slash investment for affordable homes, cut back housing benefit, reduce funding for homelessness services, and deny protection to private renters, the number of rough sleepers has soared.

Feryal Clark MP
Labour MP for Enfield North

Divided

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Enfield's 'low-traffic neighbourhoods' (LTN) include blocked-off enclaves and outer roads on to which traffic is pushed. Journeys into and out of the enclaves are now longer, slower and more polluting.

LTN supporters such as Adrian Day [*Low-traffic schemes welcome*, Issue 27, Page 9] say the pain and inconvenience will "encourage people who can to make short journeys by walking or cycling". That may work for a few but, for many with busy family lives, mobility issues, or materials to transport, necessary trips will not be manageable in these ways.

In practice, the impacts include tailbacks, lorries reversing dangerously down narrow streets and into outer roads, disruption for small businesses, and longer emergency response times. Confidence in Enfield's 'consultation' has been undermined by poor communication, failure to involve the wider local population, false starts, poor road signage and inadequate monitoring. Tokenistic schemes which suit a few, distress many, and divide the community, threaten what should and could be a shared cause.

Andy Young
One Community



Covid-19 impact on schools revealed

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Dozens of Enfield schools have been affected by Covid-19 cases, prompting concerns over the impact on children's education.

There were 44 cases of the virus among staff and 105 among pupils, spread across 45 different schools, as of early December. This was according to the latest figures presented to Enfield Council's health and wellbeing board last month.

Schools remained open to the children of key workers during the first national lockdown

in spring. Since September, they have been open to all children, but with pupils placed in separate 'bubbles' designed to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

Peter Nathan, the council's director of education, told the meeting there were consistently "relatively high numbers of cases in schools". He added the impact was felt on many more children and staff. "Every time a child or teacher in a bubble has a virus, that means the whole bubble has to self-isolate," he explained.

"What that means at the moment is, approximately 8-9% of children are not in school. That has been a consistent picture

over the last few weeks. Clearly, this has quite an impact on their education."

Pupils who cannot go to school are able to continue their education from home. But in a report to the meeting, Peter wrote: "Although remote learning does work for some pupils, it is apparent that there is a real concern about digital poverty impacting on a large number of pupils who can't access online learning on a regular basis."

"In their visits to schools around the country [education watchdog] Ofsted has commented on the 'lost learning' that is taking place, creating an even greater potential achievement divide between disadvantaged pupils and their peers."

To date this term only one Enfield school has had to close its doors completely because of a Covid-19 outbreak, but Peter added: "A lot of senior staff have been covering classes, we have had classes sent home because there have been not enough staff to teach them, and now virtually every school has had a case or two where they have had to close bubbles down."

Peter also said it was "very likely" that such issues would continue into spring term. Council leader Nesil Caliskan said: "It is my position that there should be regular testing for teachers and support staff in schools. That is not happening, but I think it would be really welcomed by schools. There is a level of anxiety among teachers about the risks they are exposing themselves to."

"But also, I think being able to confirm that teachers and support staff do not have the virus means they can go to work quicker without self-isolating, and there will be less pressure on schools and teaching."

Winter appeal to help elderly

Age UK Enfield launches campaign as pandemic impact continues

BY OLIVIA DEVEREUX-EVANS

Age UK Enfield has suffered a big financial hit during the pandemic while also seeing a huge increase in demand, according to the organisation's boss.

Speaking to the *Dispatch*, chief executive Ben Ingber said the increase in demand for Age UK's services was largely caused by the Covid-19 lockdown and the way the charity changed the needs of the people it supports.

Ben said: "Those issues around physical health, mental health, loneliness and isolation have been driving up demand. We are still getting 150 calls a week through customer services. Previously that may have been 90 but probably less."

"Referrals to our memory services, which are predominately for people who have just been diagnosed with dementia, have also gone up. We had 50 [in one month] whereas previously they would average about 25 a month."

To cope with the increase in demand over winter, the charity has now launched a new winter fundraising appeal – 'Spread the Warmth'. Ben said: "We wanted to recognise the fact it is going to be a difficult winter for



older people, for some of the people that we support with dementia and their carers. We wanted to ask people to support us in order to be able to support them through this period."

Age UK Enfield runs a variety of services, including day care services for people with dementia, exercise classes, walks around the borough, and health and wellbeing services. Before the pandemic, all of these were delivered face-to-face. Since the pandemic, information and advice has mostly been given over the phone and, in the first lockdown, they had to stop running exercise classes.

One positive, however, has been the way elderly people have learned to adapt to new

technology, with services such as the memory club successfully moving to Zoom. After the pandemic Ben wants online services to continue in the future alongside usual face-to-face work, because there are many people with limited mobility who could be more easily reached this way.

Ben praised the staff he works with and the sacrifices they have made over the last year but warned: "It is still a difficult time. Running campaigns like this is one of the only options open to us."

For more information and to support the campaign:
Visit justgiving.com/campaign/AUKEnfield
Visit ageuk.org.uk/enfield

Support for young people

BY OLIVIA DEVEREUX-EVANS

Enfield Council has launched a new signposting service for young people to help them "fulfil their potential".

The youth activities 'portal' aims to provide a safe space for vulnerable children and young adults to develop their skills and will become a dedicated place where information on all youth activities taking place in Enfield can be found.

It comprises two separate initiatives; 'Youth Bubble', which showcases activities run through local youth clubs; and 'Inspiring Young Enfield', a £1.6million project funded by the Greater London Authority.

Inspiring Young Enfield delivers intervention activities and provides support to young people in the borough's most deprived areas. People referred to the programme gain access to free activities, workshops and mentoring opportunities.

Councillor Rick Jewell, Enfield Council's cabinet member for children's services, said: "It has become even more important to support young people at this critical time. No young person should be left behind and we are determined to offer assistance, encouragement and inspiration."

"We will also focus on emotional wellbeing and equipping young people with the skills and character to navigate their way through these difficult and challenging times. This will help to secure a better and brighter future for themselves which will in turn benefit the wider community."

Workshops will include boxing, cooking, art and music making. These will be provided by 20 community organisations "in a Covid-19 safe way". Young people can be referred to the portal to the Youth Bubble or Inspiring Young Enfield by council staff, local teachers, or by community organisations that are working with vulnerable young people.

The move comes after a 2019 London Assembly report highlighted that funding for Enfield youth services had been slashed by 88% since the 2011 London riots – more than almost any other borough.

For more information:
Instagram @Youth_Enfield
Visit enfield.gov.uk/youth

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Going platinum

Leanne Kyte from Platinum Performing Arts on how the Edmonton-based arts school is helping young people

Welcome to Platinum Performing Arts! We are an award-winning performing arts school, offering a wide range of dance, singing and drama classes for young people aged from three to 21 years.

We pride ourselves in exceptional standards of teaching and in-house productions. In September last year, we opened our full-time college, Platinum Academy, for ages 16 and over to study performing arts vocationally and gain a level-four diploma qualification at the end of the two-year training.

Our team of industry experts strive to develop each student's individual strengths, talent and potential, so if you have a passion to perform then get in touch! We are currently accepting applicants for September 2021.

We are also currently running three community projects very close to our hearts; 'Dream Believe



Succeed', 'Power to Make a Change' and 'Making History'. We are so grateful to have received funding from the Community Lottery Fund and Young Londoner's Fund to make these happen. We teach various workshops in schools and community outreach programmes

using creative arts as our tools.

Workshops include photography, zumba, expressing emotion through dance, creative writing, rap, spoken word, yoga and relaxation, pottery and more. Our main focus is to give young people a platform to speak up about challenges

that they are facing and help to build their confidence and ability to choose the right path for them.

We have found there is a real demand for these types of projects, especially after the hardship that so many families in our community have faced this year. We have already been

able to reach out to so many people, listened to their stories, and helped support them through this time.

We are very proud to announce that following this year's Power to Make a Change workshops, we have just released a short film which follows the journeys of four teenagers and explores the social issues and challenges they face on a day-to-day basis. The film will be shown in schools across Enfield to raise awareness of risky behaviour and what other choices can be made instead.

It was so important to us for the film to be authentic and capture the voices of the younger generation in our community, and we wouldn't have been able to create it without the amazing input of the young people we have worked with. We can't wait to share the film with you all and spread our message!

For more information about Platinum Performing Arts and to get in touch:
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Elsyng House care home, nestled in amongst the trees in the residential conservation area

of Forty Hill, is easily accessible from central London and surrounding areas, and located in close proximity to the Enfield's 'Jewel in the Crown' and the historic Forty Hall Manor and Country Park. Our home is the newest addition to the Oakland Care group of homes, which are registered with the Care Quality Commission.

Our homes have been awarded an impressive average score of 9.8 on carehome.co.uk, generated by positive testimonials from our residents and relatives. The home will provide state-of-the-art facilities including a café bistro, cinema room, hair and beauty salon, barbers, multiple air-conditioned lounges, as well as a family room and quiet lounge and garden areas for residents and families to enjoy.

Oakland Care has a reputation in developing and operating exceptional care homes across London and the South East. So much so, our excellent

standards have been recognised nationally by industry bodies including LaingBuisson where Oakland Care was selected as a finalist in three award categories for its management excellence, outstanding response to Coronavirus and as residential care provider of the year. Additionally, Knight Frank selected Oakland Care as finalist for 'Luxury Care Home of the Year 2020'.

All our homes offer quality personalised care, with luxury living facilities and top-quality dining and nutrition. We deliver exceptional care with a real sense of community, allowing our residents to feel at home, and have the freedom to explore and enjoy a range of fulfilling activities programmes to offer an exceptional living experience.

Our Show Suite is now open for visits. For more information about Elsyng House care home, please call 020 8175 5100 or email clientrelations.eh@oaklandcare.com

Education to perform

PQA Enfield vice-principal Xenia McGinley on how the performing arts academy continues to provide tuition for local young people

After providing a whole host of exciting virtual performing arts activities throughout last year's pandemic lockdown, plus a hugely successful virtual cinema screening event, PQA Enfield has been even busier since returning to face-to-face academy sessions.

PQA Enfield is part of *Birds of a Feather* actor Pauline Quirke's ensemble of performing arts academies and is now operating regular weekend sessions for children aged six to 18 years. Since reopening, we have been very busy running our three modules musical theatre, comedy and drama, and film and TV.

In October, students made their own short Halloween films for the PQA 'spooktacular' film project and competition, with two films being selected as winners and one as runner up.

In November, we introduced a new initiative, 'PQA Live', which allowed young people to continue to participate in the fantastic performing arts projects they love, alongside their friends – but virtually!

In December in the run up to Christmas,



In-person classes recommenced in September at Highlands School

students made some more short festive films and also choreographed, performed and filmed their own Bollywood music video.

Will McGinley, academy principle, had this to say about surviving lockdown and what life has been like at the academy since returning to in-person learning: "We

are so pleased to have made it through the worst of these challenging times.

"All organised children's activities are important but performing arts provides children with a vehicle to explore and express their feelings. Never has that been more important than now. Seeing the smiles on

the faces of our students when we reopened in September and how delighted they were to see each other again after such a long time apart, was proof of how important it is that organised children's activities can carry on throughout times like this.

"We are encouraged that the government acknowledged this in the guidelines for the tiered restrictions which allowed us to continue classes even in tier three."

Myself, Will and the PQA Enfield team of fabulous professionally-trained teachers have been working hard to ensure that the academy is as safe as possible. Our safety procedures exceed the current government directives, including socially-distanced classes, group bubbles and adapted sessions to keep everyone as safe as possible.

One thing is for sure though, the PQA spirit is very much unchanged!

PQA Enfield is enrolling now. Classes run on Saturday mornings from 10am-1pm. For more information or to book a free taster session:

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Email will.mcginley@pqacademy.com

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Reaching out to ethnic minorities

Claire Fisher from Healthwatch Enfield on the results of its research into how BAME communities have been affected by Covid-19



Credit: Wikicommons

More than half the people we surveyed from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) groups in Enfield said that they have not received the help and support they need during the coronavirus pandemic.

This sobering statistic is just one of four key findings established as a result of research we carried out during September and October last year. Our report makes six key recommendations to local health services to ensure that people from BAME communities in Enfield are able to access the care and support they need in future.

We reached 195 people from more than 15 different BAME communities, showing us that each community used different services in different ways. As a result, each group had different views about the support they need. Contrary to saying 'one size fits all' it is clear that, in the case of communicating health information, this is not the case.

Comments we received showed that there is a lack of trust in the system, based on people's previous experiences of giving feedback, only to see no action resulting from their efforts.

You can read our recommendations online in full as part of our report *One Size Does Not Fit All: Moving Towards Delivering Culturally Competent Services*. To summarise here, we recommend that investment is needed into culturally competent research; there is a need to learn from good practice

and to link with community radio and television. In addition, an audit of the take-up of translation services in primary care is required, consideration must be given to language and digital barriers to using GP services, and finally there is an urgent need to address concerns and build confidence about vaccines.

We have shared our report with Enfield Integrated Care Partnership; paving the way for the planning of future services includes the voice of BAME residents.

In the meantime, we continue our work to reach out to BAME and refugee communities, to involve them in future research. As a community interest company (not-for-profit) and independent organisation, we rely heavily on the amazing work of our volunteers to help us carry out our research.

We would like to thank our volunteers who helped – if you would like to be involved in this, or any of our other projects, we would love to hear from you. We are grateful to Enfield Racial Equality Council and Enfield Caribbean Association for partnering with us in this work to reach out to local communities.

For more information about Healthwatch Enfield:
Call 020 8373 6283
Email info@healthwatchenfield.co.uk

healthwatch
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Call for 'council heads to roll' as accounts delayed

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Both opposition groups on Enfield Council have called for the Labour councillor in charge of finance to resign after the borough's accounts were late for a third year in a row.

Conservative leader Joanne Laban said it was "appalling" that the council had missed the statutory deadline for the accounts sign-off, despite racking up debts of around £1 billion.

An update provided for the general purposes committee revealed there had been a "delay to council and [external auditor] BDO meeting the statutory deadline of 30th November" for publication of the final, audited accounts from financial year 2019/20.

It came after BDO flagged up several issues with the audit process, including delays in obtaining an acceptable audit trail and accounts analysis, as well as incorrect responses in sample evidence. Cllr Laban said: "The cabinet member for finance [Mary Maguire] should resign over the mismanagement of the accounts. The fact that Enfield Council could not produce an audited set of completed accounts on time for a third year in a row is appalling.

"The council cannot blame coronavirus either, because the government gave local authorities more time to finish the accounts



Mary Maguire has been blamed for the council's failure to submit its accounts on time

this year. The delays that the auditor had with obtaining acceptable audit trails is alarming and unacceptable. Heads should roll for this incompetence."

The Tories are also warning Enfield could suffer the same fate as Croydon Council, which filed a section 114 notice in early November – effectively declaring itself bankrupt – after racking up £1.5 billion of debt.

Community First, the new opposition group made up of four former Labour councillors, is also calling on Cllr Maguire to step down over the delay to the submission of the council's accounts. Chase ward councillor Dino Lemonides, a former cabinet member for finance, said: "Cllr Maguire, the current cabinet member for finance, lacks the experience and understanding of finance to carry out her role effectively. Our residents deserve better."

According to the council's recent update, relatively few local authorities have finished their audits as they are facing a tougher "audit environment" this year. The report reveals the council had lost two employees with specialist local government accounting skills before the Covid-19 pandemic struck and had trouble finding replacements.

A council spokesperson said: "Enfield Council places the highest possible importance on delivering quality financial reports backed up by robust, independent audits. These processes play a crucial role in ensuring that the council responds in the best possible way to the financial pressures and demands we currently face.

"Our statement of accounts for the 2019/20 financial year was completed well before the deadline for submission to the external auditors and published on our website in July.

As a result of unforeseen ongoing staffing resource issues, the significant additional financial and accounting pressures resulting from the council's response to the Covid-19 national emergency and delays caused by pressures being experienced by our external auditors, the final sign-off of our accounts has not yet been completed.

"The delays the auditor had with obtaining acceptable audit trails is alarming and unacceptable"

"Although these issues are affecting many other councils in this extraordinary year, including some other London boroughs, Enfield Council is still doing everything possible to ensure the final stage of the accounts process is completed.

"Our external auditors have commented that we are taking the right approach, support our endeavours, and have indicated that although the audit is still in progress they have been clear with the council that everything looks to be in order for the issuing of an unqualified opinion when the audit is formally completed."

Strategy to make borough 'bluer and greener'

Ambitions for parks and open spaces laid out by council

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A plan to make Enfield the "greenest borough in London" has been launched by Enfield Council.

The ten-year "blue and green strategy" aims to "protect, enhance and maintain" the borough's rivers, lakes, woodlands, parks and other environmental assets.

It states that by 2031, Enfield will be "London's greenest borough, forming the cornerstone of London's national park". The borough already boasts the longest distance of watercourses in the capital, as well as 40% of land designated as protected Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land.

The council has launched a consultation on the proposals to gain feedback from residents. It hopes the strategy will help mitigate the impacts of climate change, improve health outcomes, encourage social interaction and physical activity, contribute to the recovery of nature, and reduce inequalities.

Plans include a "green loop" running from the open countryside into town centres and densely built-up areas along river corridors and strategic links. There will be a particular focus on improving areas that currently lack open

spaces, such as Edmonton and Ponders End.

The 76-page blue and green strategy is linked to the borough's climate action plan, which includes a target of making the borough carbon neutral by 2040. The council has already started a programme to plant 100,000 trees on 60 hectares of Green Belt land in the north of the borough, restoring a part of the ancient Enfield Chase woodland.

Work has also begun to restore up to 350 metres of Turkey Brook within Albany Park and create a flood storage area that will reduce flood risk to more than 200 properties.

Councillor Guney Dogan, the council's cabinet member for environment, said the Covid-19 pandemic had demonstrated the value of blue and green spaces and their importance to physical and mental health. Cllr Dogan added: "As a result of this, and our far-reaching ambitions as a council, we want to expand our blue/green spaces so they are not just confined to remote areas of countryside but are fully accessible, high-quality spaces at the heart of our most densely built-up areas, such as town centres.

"In addition, investing in improving this network helps the borough respond to a changing climate and more extreme weather."

However, residents remain concerned over the future of Whitewebbs Park, with the



Work on planting 100,000 new trees in the north of the borough began in November

council putting Whitewebbs Golf Course and part of its adjacent ancient woodland up for a commercial lease in late 2019. The authority's preferred bidder was due to be announced last year, but a council spokesperson said: "The process was paused while we have been focused on other priorities.

"We are now making progress and expect to make an announcement about next steps

shortly. The bidding criteria and our aspirations for Whitewebbs are in line with those in the blue and green strategy, including those that seek to widen access to water spaces and parks, increase biodiversity and increase levels of physical activity and social interaction."

View the strategy and take part in the consultation before the deadline on Monday 11th January:

Visit letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/blueandgreen

AROUND THE BOROUGH

FREEZYWATER

Sick boy defies odds

BY OLIVIA DEVEREUX-EVANS

A TWO-YEAR-OLD BOY WITH A rare disorder – who was not expected to live past his first birthday – is continuing to defy the odds.

TJ Charalambos has Menkes syndrome, a genetic disorder affecting copper levels in the body. The condition is more commonly found in infant boys and is characterised by sparse, kinky hair, failure to gain weight or grow, and a deteriorating nervous system.

TJ was born prematurely at 30 weeks, weighing 1.4kg – little more than a bag of sugar. Mum Victoria Charalambos said one day he flicked his fist and twitched his eye and she thought something was wrong. Doctors at Great Ormond Street, where TJ was intubated and sedated to stop his seizure, initially thought he had meningitis. By chance, a metabolic



TJ has Menkes syndrome and was not expected to live past his first birthday. A consultant noticed his hair was kinky and sparse, and tests were done to confirm TJ had Menkes.

Victoria said: “They told us to prepare [for his death]. They didn’t think he’d make it to his first birthday.”

But TJ defied this prediction and

is now aged two. Since his diagnosis in 2018, his symptoms have progressed, and he is now blind and cannot move his muscles. Victoria wants to raise awareness of Menkes because it is a condition not many people know about. It is not tested for in newborns, but Victoria said it should be. When the condition is found at birth, copper histidine can be administered to give a baby a chance at a prolonged life. She has now set up a GoFundMe page to raise funds for Menkes Foundation UK and help other families.

Victoria is hoping to throw a big party for TJ’s third birthday in June to celebrate him defying his prognosis. “I think I should do a superhero theme because he has beaten all the odds”.

Donate to Menkes Foundation UK:
Visit uk.gofundme.com/f/raising-menkes-awareness-for-tj

MERIDIAN WATER

Creative workspace expansion

How the newly expanded Building BloQs warehouse will look when complete



CONSTRUCTION HAS BEGUN on a new workspace facility that will support up to 1,000 “makers and creators” in the fields of engineering, carpentry, metalwork, digital technology and fashion.

A social enterprise that has been providing flexible workspace at Meridian Water since 2012, Building BloQs is now expanding into an adja-

cent warehouse, the former VOSA vehicle testing centre in Anthony Way. It is already the largest open access workshop in London but the new facility, around the size of ten tennis courts, will quadruple its existing capacity. The new space will also include skills training facilities, a café by the River Lee Navigation, gardens, shop and event space.

The expansion is funded by the Greater London Authority and Enfield Council and is due to open later this year. Council leader Nesil Caliskan said: “This scheme enables us to develop a skilled creative industries cluster in our borough which has the potential to be regionally significant for makers and creative communities.”

PONDERS END

Feeling the heat

A DISTRICT HEATING NETWORK that uses low-carbon heat and hot water generated by Edmonton Incinerator is set to be expanded along South Street.

Energetik, owned and run by Enfield Council, received a £1.2million grant from the Mayor of London as part of a £10m investment in green infrastructure projects across

the capital. Around £450,000 of this money will enable Energetik to finance a retrofit project connecting existing homes to its Ponders End heat network, which was initially created for supplying new homes at the Alma Road Estate redevelopment. It would be the first time existing properties have benefited from the scheme.

FORTY HILL

Care home opening

A NEW CARE HOME IS OPENING in Forty Hill, creating nearly 100 new jobs.

Elsyng House will provide residential, nursing, memory and respite care for up to 75 residents when it opens this month. Jobs will be created across a number of roles including care, nursing, administration, catering, laundry

and maintenance.

The purpose-built care home will be run by Oakland Care. Chief executive Joanne Balmer said: “Elsyng House will be a great addition to the community. As well as providing a safe and caring environment, it will also offer local people the chance to build a career with us.”

EDMONTON

Broken boiler apology

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

ENFIELD COUNCIL HAS APOLOGISED to a man who went without heating or hot water for almost nine months after his boiler broke down.

Steven Akintewe, who lives at Shropshire House in Cavendish Close, faced a “stressful” time as he was forced to heat water in pots. He called Enfield Council to report the broken boiler in March, shortly before the first coronavirus lockdown.

“No-one came,” Steven said. “I was phoning every week and they were saying ‘we are working on it’. I didn’t know where to turn.

“It was stressful being without hot water and not bathing properly. It’s cold. I’ve been getting pots [of water], putting them on the oven, heating them up and pouring them into my bath – back and forth.”

Steven emailed Edmonton MP Kate Osamor and council leader Nesil Caliskan in October, finally prompting the council to arrange for the boiler to be repaired.

A council spokesperson said: “We are very sorry to hear Mr Akintewe was dissatisfied by the service provided by Enfield Council and for the delay in resolving the issues in his home.

“The delay was exacerbated by Covid-19, which caused unexpected and severe disruption to our repairs schedule and issues getting access to the property.”

Since 2019 housing repair services have been directly carried out by an in-house council team, rather than an external contractor. The spokesperson added: “We will always seek to improve and better this service to make sure tenants and leaseholders have decent homes in a good state of repair.”

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Our newspapers are a growing and valued part of the local community – loved by readers who want to read about what matters to them. Be part of that and advertise with us!

Our publications *Waltham Forest Echo*, *Enfield Dispatch*, *Tottenham Community Press* and *EC1 Echo* cover a wide area of North-East London and part of The City.

We distribute 37,500 free copies to readers via local newsstands, community venues, and door-to-door, with a total estimated readership of 120,000 people.



Example full page advert

<p>N.5 AUG/SEP 2020</p> <p>NEWS</p> <h3>Streets ahead</h3> <p>The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward</p> <p>On a recent morning, the streets of the City of London were transformed. The usual sight of cars parked along the curbside was replaced by a sea of bicycles. This was the result of a new initiative called 'Streets Ahead', which aims to make the city's streets safer and more accessible for cyclists. The initiative was launched by the City of London Corporation and the London Cycling Campaign. It involves the installation of new cycle lanes and the removal of car parking spaces. The initiative is expected to have a significant impact on the city's cycling culture, and is hoped to encourage more people to cycle to work and school.</p> <p>NEWS IN BRIEF</p> <p>City of London Corporation has announced a new initiative to make the city's streets safer and more accessible for cyclists. The initiative, called 'Streets Ahead', involves the installation of new cycle lanes and the removal of car parking spaces. The initiative is expected to have a significant impact on the city's cycling culture, and is hoped to encourage more people to cycle to work and school.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>EC1 Echo moves forward</p> <p>With such changes in our area following lockdown, we are looking at a new environment. Opposite this page we look at the changes to the area, and how the EC1 Echo is adapting to the new environment. The paper is expected to have a significant impact on the city's cycling culture, and is hoped to encourage more people to cycle to work and school.</p>	<p>"This place is something of a gem in an unassuming part of town"</p> <p>"It keeps all the charm of being the neighbourhood's best pub"</p> <p>Quoted from Evening Standard's 50 Best Pubs in London</p> <p>THE SEKFORDE The Sekforde, 34 Sekforde Street EC1R 0HA 0207 250 0010 info@thesekforde.com Instagram: @the-sekforde</p> <p>Starters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Korean Fried Cauliflower Fish Cakes with Tartar Sauce Scotch Egg Crab Mollus with Garlic Mushrooms Spiced Butte Tomato & Basil Soup <p>Main</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pipers Farm Duck Leg Terrine with Grapes Duck Skin & Peach Confit Best Baked Haddock & Chips with Mashed Potatoes Thobaldi's Aged Beef Ribs with Roasted Potatoes & Onion Burrata, Heirloom Tomato and Summer Flowers Free Range Roast Chicken with Root Vegetables & Sweetcorn House Burger, Bacon, Cheese, Tomato, Gratin Sauce with Chips <p>Desserts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savory Toffee Pudding with Ice Cream Raspberry Pavlova with Lime Cord & Vanilla Cream Vegan Chocolate Brownie English Artisan Cheesecake, Clammy & Crackers (V/V) <p>FOR TWO COURSES MON-WED</p>
<p>CONTACT</p> <p>EC1 Echo, 34 Sekforde Street, London EC1R 0HA Tel: 0207 250 0010 Email: info@thesekforde.com</p>	<p>ADVERTISING</p> <p>Call 020 821 7956 Email: info@thesekforde.com</p>	<p>Action on clean air</p> <p>As the city's streets are transformed by the new initiative, the City of London Corporation is also taking action to improve the air quality. This involves the installation of new air purifiers and the removal of car parking spaces. The initiative is expected to have a significant impact on the city's cycling culture, and is hoped to encourage more people to cycle to work and school.</p>

"I feel now, more than ever, it is essential local, ethically-minded businesses advertise and support social enterprises such as *Enfield Dispatch*. The communities of Edmonton and Enfield need a platform for its voice to be heard. The *Dispatch* champions great community works and most importantly does not shy away from challenging social and economic injustices."

Andrew Ryde, Chamberlains Estates

Call Klaudia 07732 000 430
Email klaudia@socialspider.com

Paying the penalty

Andrew Warshaw witnesses the agony of another shocking shoot-out



Maldon & Tiptree celebrate winning a penalty shoot-out at Enfield Town last month Credit Tom Scott

To be knocked out of one cup competition on penalties may be considered unfortunate. For the same fate to strike twice in a matter of weeks is heart-breaking. Just ask fans of Enfield Town.

With no sign of a resumption of league matches – more on this later – the Towners' recent FA Trophy fixture against Maldon & Tiptree could hardly have been more crucial – both for the prize money on offer and to keep confidence and momentum among the players amid such uncertainty caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Yet, just as spot-kicks decided the Towners' fate in the FA Cup at Peterborough Sports back in September, so they went out of the FA Trophy the same way on a night of high drama and no little emotion.

The game had finished 2-2 after 90 minutes, but the scoreline did not tell the whole story. Manager Andy Leese and his team can consider themselves desperately unfortunate, with both players and fans looking utterly shell-shocked after the Towners totally dominated their opponents, only to concede a late,

late equaliser in normal time – and subsequently exit the tournament in the cruellest possible fashion.

Maldon & Tiptree may be from a division below, but only a few days earlier they had taken on League Two Morecambe in the FA Cup and lost only by a single goal. To suggest that the Towners would have fully deserved the £3,000 prize-money that went to the winners of the tie is an understatement, and the defeat was all the harder to take given the much-needed revenue at stake and the fact that no-one knows when league fixtures might resume – or how the season as a whole might pan out.

At one stage there were tentative plans to perhaps start again in January, but that now seems unlikely as so many Isthmian League teams are now within (at time of going to press) the government's Tier 4 coronavirus restrictions. In a clear state-

ment of intent, league organisers confirmed before Christmas the 'pause' to the season would be maintained until further notice.

The league statement said: "Since the initial survey on 2nd December the infection rate has deteriorated in the geographical

footprint of member clubs, which has resulted in a much larger number of Isthmian League clubs being placed in high tiers.

"In reaching this decision the board considered several factors, such as the lack of income from secondary spend revenue, the reduced attendances at high-tier clubs and, more importantly, the duty of care the league has to layers, club officials, volunteers and supporters during this current pandemic.

"The board will continue to monitor the situation in line with the government review dates and/or any decision that

allows government grants to become available to member clubs. The board has not yet set a formal re-start date, but clubs will give at least 14 days' notice of the recommencement of the 2020/21 season, allowing them preparation time to stage league matches."

A number of options will now be considered, including a shortened version of the season, or extending the regular campaign into June. The Towners, like everyone else in their division and beyond, are struggling to work out when the situation will improve for all concerned – the board, management team, playing staff and fans alike.

Just before Christmas, club chairman Paul Reed issued a statement saying the club remained supportive of the decision to pause the league season. He added: "I know that there is still a strong feeling among many of you wanting to see Town back out on the pitch sooner rather than later, but of course health and safety is the overriding concern at the moment, as it has been for many months."

"It was a night of high drama and no little emotion"

Support independent local journalism

What we do

Here at *Enfield Dispatch* 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:

enfelddispatch.co.uk/join

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£5 per month upwards:

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

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

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