

ENFIELD DISPATCH

Nº.42 THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

MARCH 2022



AWARD-WINNING SCULPTOR Mark Beattie unveiled his 'Unity' love knot artwork on Library Green in Enfield Town last month, as part of the Enfield Winter Lights festival, which is continuing with a series of events and light displays around the borough until 26th March. For more information, visit: enfieldwinterlights.com. Credit Natalie Gee

When will government 'level up' Edmonton?

BY JAMES CRACKNELL & SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Community leaders and local politicians in Edmonton have hit out at the government's new 'levelling up' plan, which has yet to allocate any money to one of the UK's poorest areas.

Secretary of state Michael Gove last month launched a long-awaited white paper outlining the government's plans for reducing regional inequality, particularly in northern England, but told MPs it was "not about overlooking the needs of disadvantaged communities in London".

Of the immediate financial help being provided by Gove's

department, twelve of London's 32 boroughs are listed as receiving money from one or more of the government's levelling up funds. Enfield is not among them.

Edmonton is in the bottom 2% of local constituency areas for unemployment and child poverty. Government figures released last month showed that only two constituencies in London, and nine in the rest of the UK, currently have lower employment rates.

Trevor Blackman from Edmonton Community Partnership (ECP), a charity that runs projects supporting local schools and addressing complex needs in the area, said he agreed that "left behind" areas in the north of England needed

investment but that it "didn't make sense" to do that while still ignoring some of the poorest areas in the country.

"You need to invest in communities," Trevor said. "When you talk about 'levelling up' you need to do it fairly, so that has to include all parts of the UK."

ECP works directly with schools in Edmonton, where a large number of pupils speak English as a second language. The charity recently played a pivotal role in exposing a scandal around benefits being unfairly taken away from EU nationals; specifically Edmonton's large Bulgarian Roma population – read the full story on Page 6.

Trevor said it showed that the

government was giving with one hand while taking away with another. "You can see it [the levelling up white paper] is political because they are ignoring areas in the south that are struggling, where there are pockets of absolute poverty [...] It is more about where they will get elected.

"Enfield needs investment to open up opportunities for local people, so they can get it and they can access it. Michael Gove needs to sit down with local employers and look at how best to open up youth employment and opportunities for them in training, education and employment.

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The issues that matter to voters in Edmonton Green

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Voters in Edmonton Green say housing, crime and the environment are the biggest issues influencing their vote in the upcoming local election.

The *Dispatch* spoke to voters at Edmonton Green Shopping Centre ahead of May's local election, as part of a project funded by the Public Interest News Foundation (PINF). The PINF Impact Fund seeks to boost democratic engagement in specific communities and better understand the needs of local residents in those areas.

Two online surveys are being run by PINF for residents in the Edmonton Green and Lower Edmonton wards, which aim to find out more about local levels of democratic engagement, and are now open for people to fill in (links at the end of this article).

Last month ten voters spoke to the *Dispatch* about their priorities for the election on 5th May, which will elect a new council administration at Enfield Civic Centre. Four people mentioned the cost of housing and homelessness as one of their biggest concerns, while four also mentioned rubbish collections and the general state of the local environment, with three mentioning crime. Other issues highlighted include parking, pollution from Edmonton incinerator, and the proliferation of gambling venues.

Jay Jyaward said crime and anti-social behaviour was "the main

issue" for him and said he wanted to see "more police on the streets".

Lydia Henry said there was "waste everywhere" on the streets which "always used to be clean" in years gone by. She said: "In the green space just outside the station I always see rats, even in daylight."

Lydia said she was also concerned about housing. "It is so difficult for young people", she said. "My son is 22 and I would like him to become independent but even though he is working he can't afford it – it's about £700 just to rent a room."

Tony Antonio agreed that "housing is too expensive" but said he didn't know what could be done to tackle it. Trueman, who did not give his surname, was also worried about homelessness. He said: "There are so many homeless people. I don't think enough is being done about it. Nobody should be forced to live on the street."

Finally, Jeremy Cowley raised the issue of gambling venues and said: "You've got William Hill, Paddy Power, and a casino slot machines place, all within five minutes."

Dispatch readers living in Edmonton Green and Lower Edmonton are being encouraged to share their thoughts on the upcoming local election and the democratic process. Eligible voters in Edmonton Green should head to forms.office.com/r/7qvMs26biX and voters in Lower Edmonton can go to forms.office.com/r/ViWLTvSqDR. The survey will take about five minutes to complete and all questions are optional. After completing it respondents can enter their email address for a chance to win £250 for a charity of their choice. This email data will be securely stored separately from the responses and deleted at the end of the project.



Voters in Edmonton Green say they are concerned about housing, crime and street litter

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"These are piecemeal policies, what we need is to bring it all together. We need a taskforce that goes around the country and looks at everything, rather than just throwing a load of dosh at places."

Trevor said that third sector organisations such as ECP, which have already established strong networks in hard-to-reach communities, were often best placed to help support them. "The third sector should be getting these [government] contracts as well."

"We see kids in school who haven't slept because of the poor conditions they are living in at home – they are living with damp and

mould – and they come into school and they can't concentrate."

Meridian Water, Enfield Council's flagship housing development, presents an opportunity for people in Edmonton but, according to Trevor, "the council could do a lot more to make sure it works for everyone".

The government's levelling up white paper focuses on twelve "missions" to level up the UK by 2030, including boosting pay, employment and productivity; narrowing the gap in healthy life expectancy between the areas where it is highest and lowest; and ensuring 90% of primary school children in England achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Edmonton MP Kate Osamor described it as "a damp squib, with little detail about what action the government will take to reduce inequalities and achieve the targets it has set".

She added: "Unemployment in Edmonton is more than double the national average, and this area is as deserving of funding as any in the country. Yet Enfield in its entirety has received absolutely nothing from the four levelling up-associated funds so far."

"We need serious green investment to create the jobs of the future, for education spending to be increased per pupil to what it was in 2010, and the ending of austerity for local councils."

Murder charge

A man has been charged with the murder of 18-year-old Donovan Allen, who was fatally stabbed in Bush Hill Park last month.

Timothy Adeoye, 18, of no fixed address, was also charged with three counts of attempted robbery, possession of an offensive weapon and threatening a person with a blade in a public place. These charges relate to additional incidents on the same day as Donovan's fatal stabbing.

Police were called at 6.10pm on Monday, 7th February to reports of a stabbing at Ayley Croft Estate in Bush Hill Park. Donovan died at the scene. Anyone with information is asked to contact police on 101, quoting reference 5753/07FEB.

Tax bills rising

The civic centre's core rate of council tax is being frozen for the next financial year – for the first time in six years – but average annual Band D bills in Enfield are set to still rise by £46.24.

The rise comes because of a 1% increase in Enfield Council's social care levy, plus a planned 8.8% hike in the Greater London Authority's council tax precept used to fund City Hall services.

Mary Maguire, cabinet member for finance, said: "In setting our balanced budget this year, we have been mindful of the fact that residents are now in the grip of a cost of living crisis."

CCTV to catch fly-tippers

Enfield Council is deploying CCTV to help "name and shame" people illegally dumping rubbish around the borough.

Six mobile cameras are being installed at fly-tipping hotspots, with seven more following shortly. Reports of illegal dumping in Enfield borough have risen seven-fold over the last four years, with 8,719 fly-tipping reports made in 2020/21 – when the council spent £1.25million on dealing with the problem.

Rick Jewell, the council's cabinet member for environment, said: "Fly-tipping is a London-wide, and indeed a national problem perpetrated by a few selfish people. This council has been working hard to find, clear and investigate dumped rubbish."

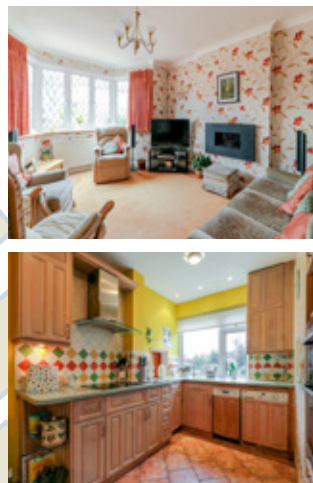
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MODERN PURPOSE BUILT FIRST FLOOR APARTMENT – EPC C
Mallory Court, 58A Valley Fields Crescent, Enfield EN2



UNFURNISHED TWO BEDROOM GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT – EPC D
The Ridgeway, Enfield EN2



TWO BEDROOM MODERN HOUSE NEAR STATION – EPC C
Temptford Close, Enfield EN2



Walking for cancer

Lucy McGinn from The Nightingale Cancer Support Centre invites people to join the charity's big annual fundraising event

It's been three long years since our last 'Night Hike' fundraising event and we couldn't be more excited to be bringing it back this year.

Not only is the Night Hike returning, but it is also our 20th anniversary as a charity, so we plan on making this year's event bigger than ever. On Friday, 20th May, hundreds of people will be walking either our 10km or 15km Night Hike route around our beautiful borough – you guessed it – at night.

We will meet outside Enfield Civic Centre for a welcome reception to get

the party started, where you can pick up your party bag and t-shirt and warm up to get you ready for the walk. It's a great way to spend the evening with friends, raising money for your local cancer centre and helping us celebrate our 20th.

If you don't know who we are, The Nightingale Cancer Support Centre is a local, independent charity supporting the people of Enfield and surrounding areas affected by cancer. This means cancer patients but also their families, friends and colleagues; anyone who has had cancer impact their lives. We provide free

physical and emotional support to help people cope with and come to terms with their new lives after a cancer diagnosis.

One in two people will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, which means if not already, we will all be touched by cancer. It's a staggering statistic and we want to make sure we are there for everyone, providing vital and free support.

That's why we hold the Night Hike, to ask our community to help us so that we can help others. You can walk at your own pace, dressed how you like (though we suggest dressed to party!), with whoever you like. Children over twelve and well-behaved dogs on leads are permitted to join as well. You can walk in memory of someone you love, for someone who has cancer, or to support all those touched by cancer.

So please sign up to walk the Night Hike today – because we can't run from cancer, but we can walk for it.

For more information and to sign up:
Visit nightingalesupport.org.uk/nighthike



The event takes walkers on two different routes around the borough

Back in the loop

John Cole welcomes efforts to improve the New River

Enfield Council is at last forging ahead with a number of projects to improve the general condition of the New River Loop in Enfield Town.

With no natural flow, to be kept in good condition the New River Loop relies on three working pumps, rainfall and regular sensitive maintenance by the council, which is responsible for its upkeep.

Sadly, particularly in warmer and drier periods, the New River Loop has suffered from high levels of silting, low water levels and excessive coverage by pond weed. Together with a high nutrient load, mainly from falling leaves, the loop suffers from very low oxygen levels, resulting in algal blooms, occasional incidents of multiple fish deaths, and poor biodiversity. In addition, there is an almost complete lack of marginal and floating vegetation.

In 1997 a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £1.8million was given towards a £2.4m restoration of the loop. The balance was funded by the council, Thames Water and The Enfield Society. For a while afterwards, the loop was kept in pristine condition. But conditions have worsened over the years, and too often the loop becomes unhealthy, taking on a rather poor appearance at locations including

River Front and River View. This has not gone unnoticed by residents, councillors and the council's own officers.

Following a meeting with senior council officials in August last year, The Enfield Society organised a clean-up at Carr's Basin near Enfield Town Park. Environmental charity Thames21 recruited more than 30 volunteers to help clear a large area of pond weed.

Since then, the council has been working on putting together a New River Loop management plan, detailing the maintenance required and an action plan for improvements.

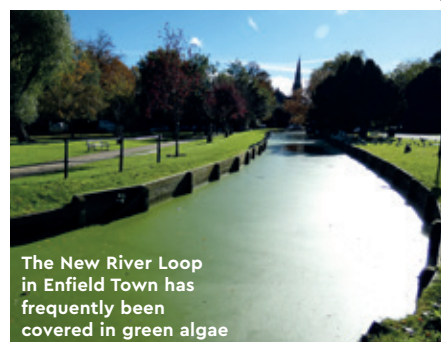
Prior to Christmas, the council cleaned out Thames Water's pollution 'interceptor' which collects and prevents pollution from entering the loop opposite the Crown and Horseshoes pub. This year, the council has committed to installing water level monitors, working with Thames Water to upgrade the pumps at Southbury Road, upgrading the council's own pump at Parsonage Lane, resurfacing the footpath on the west side of Carr's Basin, de-silting the section between the Crown and Horseshoes pub and Church Street, and erecting information boards setting out the story of the loop.

The council has now established regular

chalk treatments which should help breakdown the remaining silt by activating micro-organisms deep in the silt. It has also commenced a feasibility study to create a small wetlands in Chase Side Gardens at the Chase Green Avenue end. If this is feasible, a public consultation will follow. Finally, the council agreed to review the Town Park outfall that feeds the wetlands, to determine its impact on water levels and to raise the training levels of parks maintenance staff.

The council's outline management plan for the New River Loop is due to be published shortly. Continued community and partnership engagement will be enshrined in this document and The Enfield Society will continue to monitor its progress. Let's hope we start to see a real difference this summer.

John Cole is a committee member with The Enfield Society



The New River Loop in Enfield Town has frequently been covered in green algae

In good heart

Jim Yates on how an Enfield exercise group is helping residents maintain good cardiac health



Heart Throbs meeting at St Stephen's Church Hall in Bush Hill Park

Some say that "absence makes the heart grow fonder" but we always say that "exercise makes the heart grow stronger". Those of you who have experienced heart-related issues will know only too well the importance of staying fit and minimising the risk of further heart problems. That is exactly how Heart Throbs, our cardiac exercise and support group, was formed.

We are a local, non-profit organisation, affiliated to British Heart Foundation and with community amateur sports club (CASC) status. Heart Throbs was founded in 1990, with connections to Chase Farm, Barnet and North Middlesex Hospitals. We have more than 100 members, with most engaging in regular exercise and support classes. There is no contract or signing-on fee to join our group and our monthly fees are between £20 and £35, depending on how many classes you wish to attend.

Heart problems can strike at any age and affect people from all walks of life. Amazingly, around 1.4 million people alive in the UK today have survived a heart attack. As a result, many of our members can share stories of similar medical experiences, for example medications, stents, by-pass operations, emergency open heart surgery and replacement heart valves.

The impact of the pandemic in the last few years has taken a toll on the lifestyles of many in our community. Some have been unable to go outside, or even go walking, and so we innovated to overcome the fact that we couldn't congregate to exercise. We started at-home classes via Zoom, with members having a chat before the sessions started, seeing one another on screen and then following up on our own WhatsApp group. Suddenly, members were not so isolated, as jokes, quips and cartoons livened up some dull days. Not bad for a bunch of 'oldies'!

Now back to meeting in person, Heart Throbs offers seven exercise classes run either at Holtwhites Sports and Social Club or St Stephen's Church Hall, in addition to two Zoom classes we continue to run for those who prefer them. All classes are safely supervised by qualified instructors, who encourage our diverse group of members to have a more active and happier lifestyle.

While we are primarily a support group for people with heart problems, we are very welcoming to partners, family members, carers and friends who may be interested. Prevention is better than cure!

Find out more about Heart Throbs:
Call 07938 926 772
Email heart-throbs@hotmail.co.uk
Visit heart-throbs.org.uk

Two of Bloqs' founders, Arnaud Nichols (left) and Al Parra (right)



Bloqs member Mariló Seco, who builds adventure playgrounds for her business Made From Scratch



Building a new home for London's makers

A co-founder of shared workspace provider Building Bloqs talks to James Cracknell about his vision for the future of manufacturing

British manufacturing has been declining for decades, but one Enfield business is determined to preserve and develop some of the skills that once put us at the forefront of industrial innovation.

Building Bloqs sits at the heart of the Meridian Water development zone in Edmonton. The area was once a thriving hub for manufacturing firms but has steadily seen them dwindle and decline, replaced instead by storage units and large shops such as Tesco and Ikea.

Although it has been based here for the last decade, Building Bloqs recently expanded by moving to a new, modern facility beside the River Lea. The former heavy goods vehicle servicing depot is now a shared workspace used by hundreds of makers who run their own small businesses but lack the resources to invest in the machinery they need.

Bloqs – as it is now known since moving to its new home – is equipped with pretty much every manufacturing tool or machine you can think of, from laser cutters and saws to grinders, drills, lathes, 3D printers and the very latest computer-controlled milling machines. The people who use them include furniture makers, interior designers and metal fabricators.

Last month, an official opening was attended by deputy mayor of London Jules Pipe and council leader Nesil Caliskan – with the Greater London Authority and Enfield Council between them having invested £4million in the new facility.

Shortly afterwards I went down to meet one

of Bloqs' founders, Al Parra, as well as the makers who pay to use it. Al explained that it began life as a "community" of creative people who simply wanted to share resources and help each other. But when they were forced to relocate from their original workshop in Haringey, they faced a choice.

"We'd made a beautiful space for ourselves," Al told me. "We had this concept and, although we were limited by resources, it was a community. One option was to leave London, one option was to leave 'making' and go into the service sector, or another option was to do something about the problem. We

wanted to get as big a building as we could manage and fill it with as many different machines as we could, for as many different disciplines, and share it with different people.

"That idea has remained in tact ever since."

The largest space they could afford turned out to be an old warehouse in Anthony Way. Bloqs' five founders – Vinny, Arnaud, Alex, Julien and Al – started with so little money they were even forced to live inside the leaky structure. Al said: "We didn't realise until we started, but we were addressing a systemic need. Because of that we were noticed by policymakers and we became part of a broader conversation about the dearth of affordable industrial land.

"It wasn't possible to start a [manufacturing] business unless you had money. If you

push all of the making businesses out, you end up with a bleached reef – it becomes astonishingly hard to rebuild it. So we stuck a flag in the ground to say that there was an intrinsic value to having this space.

"We [the UK] are churning out students from creative disciplines by the truck load, but there still isn't the economy for them to engage with. So either they join the service sector, or they naff off abroad. Once upon a time we celebrated our manufacturing and we har-

vested it. Now if you are good with your hands, it's no longer celebrated. There are people in this ward [Upper Edmonton] who aren't supposed

to be behind desks – they want to use their hands. What we're building is a valuable and necessary part of a vibrant city."

Al says that by having 350 businesses sharing the same space, Bloqs is helping to "intensify" land use at Meridian Water. At the same time, it removes a large element of risk for start-ups, as budding entrepreneurs can test their ideas before they scale up and invest. "You can reassess and realign if it doesn't work, you can be extremely agile. So it makes sense economically for people, but also, it's more fun. There is a camaraderie."

In addition to its shared workshop space and machinery, Bloqs boasts a kitchen deli and bar run by Marianna Leivaditaki, a former head chef at the renowned Moro and Morito restaurants, which is open to the public.

"Our purpose is to give people the means by which they can earn a living"

There's also classrooms, offices and storage units for hire, plus an outdoor stage set to play host to music events and performances.

One of Bloqs' members is Rob Gunton, a prototype fabricator with design company Make Work Space. He said: "Building Bloqs is a fantastic place. For a start-up business it is brilliant, because we can expand and contract our square footage as we need to and, for the workforce, we can find the people we need."

Another Bloqs member is Mariló Seco, from adventure playground builders Made From Scratch. She said: "We make everything here at Bloqs. It means we spend less time on site because we can flat-pack everything – it makes it much easier. There is a cost to being here but if we had to set up our own workshop, the cost would be three times more."

The other benefit to Bloqs is education. Schools and colleges can arrange visits, helping students learn new skills. An architecture school that forms part of University College London effectively uses Bloqs as a technical campus, while a local school for children with special needs, West Lea, makes regular visits.

With work on the first of Meridian Water's 10,000 planned homes starting last year, Bloqs will soon be surrounded by modern housing. But Al says Bloqs is here to stay, becoming an indispensable employment hub for a new residential community: "Our purpose is to give people the means by which they can earn a living."

Find out more about Bloqs:
Visit buildingbloqs.com

Amal Abdirahman is campaigning to become the first female president of Somalia



Enfield woman on mission to bring peace to Somalia

Amal Abdirahman is campaigning to become president of war-torn state

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

An Enfield woman is hoping to bring peace and prosperity to Somalia as she bids to become president of the African nation.

Amal Abdirahman, who has lived in Enfield Island Village for the past five years, is now leaving to rejoin her family in the Somali capital Mogadishu ahead of an expected presidential election that would come at a critical time for the country.

Somalia's fragile democracy has been under threat in recent years, since the current president Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed illegally extended his term and the government effectively collapsed. The country is currently beset by civil unrest, which Amal is determined to bring to an end.

She told the *Dispatch*: "I want to change Somalia. I want social equality, I want women's rights, I want young people to get jobs. There is an unelected government that is supposed to be holding an election, but instead they want a civil war."

Amal comes from a family of political activists. Her grandmother was part of the Somali independence movement in the 1950s and 60s, while her mother was a shadow minister in the 70s and 80s. But her family fled during the worst

years of the civil war, initially to Finland, before eventually settling in the UK.

Somalia today remains one of the world's poorest nations, something Amal wants to change. She said: "There is no healthcare, no education; you can only live in Somalia if you have money. People are dying but the development money is being stolen. We need international help."

Amal's own political journey began as a member of the Green Party in Finland, before her first bid to become president of Somalia came in 2012, when she was thwarted by age restrictions placed on female candidates. Now aged over 40, she says there is no barrier to her standing, should the election take place.

As well as ending the ongoing conflict, the challenges any new president will face include mass emigration, political corruption, a lack of food and clean water, and worsening climate change which Amal says risks turning the whole country into a desert.

"I can't make this change on my own," she said. "I need a lot of people to help me."

"We want to speak with the international community. We need the UN Security Council [to do something]. We have to remove this regime. We don't want a civil war – the last one lasted 30 years."

Benefit fraud team 'unfairly targeting' Bulgarian Roma people

Government's risk review team accused of singling out specific community

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

The government has been accused of unfairly cutting benefit payments to EU nationals in Edmonton.

Hundreds of families from the Bulgarian Roma community in Edmonton are understood to have been targeted by a new team at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) set up to review benefit claims and investigate fraud.

The UK's departure from the European Union has meant EU nationals granted 'pre-settled status' need to provide more evidence of their claims for Universal Credit, but language barriers and other communication problems have made this difficult for certain groups of people.

Edmonton is thought to have the country's highest concentration of Bulgarian Roma residents. At the end of January, Edmonton MP Kate Osamor led a debate in parliament. She said the DWP's risk review team had suspended more than 149,000 benefit claims, with almost all of them appearing to be EU nationals, despite no evidence of fraud being found in the "vast majority" of cases.

Kate said: "For the last six months, my office has been inundated with constituents, almost all Bulgarian nationals, who have had their benefits suspended without explanation. Despite providing evidence when it is requested, many have not had their benefits reinstated. Having been left without any income, many have faced homelessness and hunger."

"The DWP refuses to explain why it has started this benefit witch-hunt against EU nationals, but we need answers now. Thousands of lives are being ruined and, like the Windrush scandal, many are being left in limbo indefinitely. We need answers now."

Nishan Dzhangozyan founded the Bulgarian Centre for Social Integration and Culture and has been working with Edmonton Community Partnership on helping Bulgarian Roma people in the area navigate the bureaucracy around Brexit. He believes thousands of people in Edmonton are now affected by suspended benefit claims.

Nishan told the *Dispatch*: "It seems that they [the government] are targeting a specific community – Bulgarian GRT [Gypsy, Roma and Traveller]. When their benefits were suspended they weren't told about the reasons for it and what they needed to provide to get them back."

A DWP spokesperson said: "No-one has their Universal Credit benefit suspended without being notified. We have a duty to the taxpayer to investigate a benefit claim where we suspect fraud, including potentially organised crime."

"The risk review team was set up to investigate risks of criminal activity, and it's not linked to nationality. If someone provided us with details to show their claim is genuine, we would urgently put any payment due into place."

Both Nishan and Kate have disputed the DWP's claims. Nishan said: "We have spoken to ten families from a GRT background and what they have all said is they were not informed in advance that their benefits would be suspended."

Kate added: "The story being told by the DWP doesn't match the reality on the ground. The DWP tells us that they are targeting organised crime and that legitimate claims are reinstated 'urgently' and yet in Edmonton, they have suspended the claims of dozens of innocent individuals for months on end."

"How do they explain that discrepancy? Until the DWP come clean and open the risk review process up to scrutiny, they will face accusations of conducting a witch-hunt against EU nationals."

A spokesperson for IMA said: "This is something which has been raised with us and we are currently looking into. The IMA encourages EU citizens experiencing issues to report a complaint to us via our portal. While we can't assist with individual circumstances, complaints help us gain an understanding of issues in order to inform our response."

"It is a big problem in Edmonton – the DWP is targeting this community."

"Having been left without any income, many have faced homelessness and hunger"



OPEN EVENT

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☎ 020 8501 8501 ✉ myfuture@waltham.ac.uk

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Help us defend our NHS

Frances Warboys from Defend Enfield NHS invites residents to get involved with the group's latest campaign work

Most people need our treasured National Health Service at some point in their lives. Without it, many of us would not even be here.

In 2016, when the opportunity arose for Enfield residents to join together as an NHS support group, we didn't hesitate. The main criterion was that we should love the NHS. Defend Enfield NHS (DENHS) was thus born as a small non party-political organisation, led by retired medical professionals and representing a variety of occupations including teaching, finance, the civil service and local government.

We are affiliated to the national groups Keep Our NHS Public (KONP) and Health Campaigns Together (HCT), with the shared aim of supporting and retaining a health service which is publicly-owned, publicly-funded, publicly-accountable and free at the point of need. Never before in the history of the NHS has that support been more crucial.

We attended public meetings of local health organisations, including those of

the Enfield Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) governing body, in order to learn about and share more widely the issues of the day. Sadly, the reorganisation of the NHS in North London, merging borough CCGs into the new North Central London CCG, has limited our ability to scrutinise services in Enfield. The added inability to attend meetings during lockdown meant Enfield patients and the public were denied the chance to hold NHS bosses to account.

A recent example is that of the government's proposed 'data grab' of patients' confidential medical records, with the potential for these to be sold for profit. The proposal was subsequently shelved.

Over time, DENHS members have variously joined NHS marches in London and shown appreciation to frontline staff on NHS birthday anniversaries by providing cards and snacks to those coming off night shifts, and others arriving for work.

In the past two years there have been vast numbers of Covid-related deaths; more than 150,000 nationally, and at least 870 locally in

Enfield borough. Many were care home residents put at risk by the decision to discharge untested hospital patients. This appalling loss of life led to widespread demands for a judicial public inquiry into the government's handling of the pandemic.

"Stealthy privatisation of the NHS has long been a concern"

Those demands were originally rejected by the prime minister, although an inquiry is now due to start later this year. In the meantime, KONP commissioned its 'People's Covid Inquiry' headed by the much-respected human rights lawyer Michael Mansfield QC. The subsequent report, *Misconduct in Public Office*, was published in December 2021. It sets out the findings and recommendations designed to improve practice for the future, using tried-and-tested NHS and public health

resources, rather than private companies with no experience.

The report makes for horrific but essential reading, exposing the late lockdowns; lack of effective personal protective equipment (PPE); the colossal waste of public money in outsourcing the test and trace service to private companies; and the need for the NHS to become the default provider in any future health crisis. The only redeeming feature in this miserable litany of events was the speedy roll-out of the Covid-19 vaccines, but this was organised by the NHS with help from the military and thousands of volunteers, rather than by the government directly.

Stealthy privatisation of the NHS and GP services has long been a concern and the present lack of transparency has made matters much worse. The Health and Care Bill currently before parliament will exacerbate this by handing out even more valuable NHS contracts to unscrupulous private organisations.

A national day of action on 26th February saw 43 organisations, under the banner of HCT, demand the government approve emergency funding of £20billion; invest in a fully publicly-owned NHS to guarantee free health-care for future generations; and pay NHS staff properly. If you'd like to get involved with our future campaigning work, please get in touch.

Read the report from the People's Covid Inquiry:
Visit peoplescovidinquiry.com

Get involved with Defend Enfield NHS:
Email defendenfieldnhs@gmail.com
Facebook [/denhs](https://www.facebook.com/denhs)

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Labour MP Bambos Charalambous has represented Enfield Southgate in the House of Commons since 2017



Special needs and disabled children need more support

Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous is raising awareness about the pandemic's impact on support for children with Send

As a society, we are still coming to terms with the impact of Covid-19. One particular issue that I am deeply concerned about is the pandemic's impact on support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (Send).

The past two years have been incredibly difficult for children with Send and their families. According to the Disabled Children's Partnership, nearly three quarters of disabled children saw their progress managing their condition regress during the pandemic. In the same survey, nine in ten children reported feeling socially isolated.

I have spoken to a number of constituents who face enormous challenges getting their children the support they need. They are having to fight at every stage of the process because of delays and shortages of resources.

For example, children with disabilities often require specialist equipment to meet their needs but, with the lengthy delays in assessment, their conditions can worsen rapidly without equipment. For others, a shortage

in educational psychologists means delays in children receiving education, health and care plans (EHCPs) that schools need to support them.

Some children with complex needs, such as adopted children with adverse childhood experiences, are also being left behind as schools are unable to provide the support they need without more resources and better training for staff.

These are issues I raised in parliament back in September, and again in January, and will continue to press the government on, as I know these delays are causing significant anxiety for families in Enfield.

Once again, like many issues affecting local authorities up and down the country, this comes down to a lack of funding. The Conservative government constantly talks about 'levelling up' but, in reality, it has been starving local authorities of resources and funding for years – and this is the case for everything, from transport to education.

Support and access to health and care services for children with Send is becoming a postcode

lottery, based on limited resources from central government, rather than based on the needs of children and families. This is unacceptable, and I am worried that some of the most vulnerable people in society are being neglected because of government cuts and short-sightedness.

As we recover from the pandemic, I believe more support is needed. Over two years ago, the Department for Education announced a major review into support for children with Send, but it has been repeatedly delayed since. Nevertheless, the review provides an opportunity to upgrade the resources that local councils can deliver and enable a targeted, catch-up plan for children with Send.

To implement this, the government needs to start listening to the concerns of families, like those I've spoken to in our community, who feel let down by inconsistent support for their children.

Bambos Charalambous is the Labour MP for Enfield Southgate. If you are a constituent you can get in touch with him by phone or email:

Call 020 8882 0088

Email bambos.charalambous.mp@parliament.uk

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 **Monday 21st March**.

Bowes loss

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Losing our Bowes ward Labour councillors Yasemin Brett and Achilleas Georgio is like losing a general election to the Conservatives. It brings pain, heartache and disappointment, but most of all rage and disgust for Enfield Labour, who have deselected Cllr Georgiou and driven Cllr Brett to not stand. I would say the behaviour of the leader of the council and her cabinet is no different from the fiasco of the Tory government. They are a disgrace to the Labour Party.

I've lived in Tottenham Road for 30 years, and never have I been disappointed with the work and support Cllr Brett and Cllr Georgiou have provided. They have always been here for the residents and never made any promises that they could not keep. The work they have done has been immense, helping the residents work together to find solutions to anti-social behaviour, street light, fly-tipping, over-filled commercial bins, traffic measures – the list goes on. Most of all, they have helped with proposed residential parking for Tottenham Road and Princes Avenue.

Antroulla Joannou
Bowes Park

TfL in crisis

Dear Enfield Dispatch

An overdue, long-term funding package for Transport for London (TfL) has been held up once again by the government. Londoners deserve better than this. The reason TfL faces a financial cliff-edge is because of plummeting passenger numbers during the pandemic, which are yet to fully recover. Without proper help from the government, we face major cuts to tube and bus services, throwing TfL into a state of managed decline.

Documents released last month show a £1.5billion financial blackhole which could cause widespread travel disruption and gridlocked roads as TfL deals with the repercussions of Covid-19. Delay and inaction is crippling London's economic recovery.

Enough is enough. The government must end the uncertainty.

Joanne McCartney
London Assembly member for Enfield and Haringey

No respect

Dear Enfield Dispatch

I don't normally get involved in politics or follow council meetings, but as I am impacted by the Fox Lane low-traffic neighbourhood, I watched the council meeting on 26th January. I was very saddened to see the way the council leader Nesil Caliskan responds to other councillors who question or debate any agenda items.

On one occasion, [independent] councillor Dinah Barry referred to the increased allowances the Labour group awarded themselves in 2020. The rebuke she received from Cllr Caliskan was that she didn't deserve her £10,000 allowance because she's not living in Enfield any more. Cllr Barry may have moved away and sadly isn't standing in the next election, but this hasn't stopped her supporting residents. She is one of a few very experienced and well-respected councillors in Enfield and she will be missed. Other councillors would do well to use her as an example of best practice.

Cllr Caliskan's leadership style will be remembered for all the wrong reasons. Let's hope the new leadership will be more democratic and employs a spirit of co-operation that benefits Enfield residents rather than themselves.

Christina Hector
Palmers Green

Election asks

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Ahead of the council elections in May, we are asking each party to commit to five 'asks'. These are designed to encourage and support cycling and walking in Enfield – reducing pollution, noise and danger and helping people to get active. They will also help address the council's ambitious climate change goals.

The five asks are: traffic-free streets around every school during school run hours; a complete, coherent network of cycle lanes throughout the borough; pedestrian crossing phases at all signalised junctions; LTNs throughout the borough; borough-wide bike and electric car sharing schemes.

Of course there's many other things we'd like but these are the priorities. We'll be asking parties in Enfield to sign up to these in the coming weeks.

Adrian Day
Better Streets for Enfield

Some of the dishes served up at Chaseside



Cut to the Chaseside

Neil Littman visits a family-run Indian restaurant in Chase Side

There has been a quiet revolution in the Indian restaurant scene over the past 20 years and Enfield has not escaped these changes.

The first Indian restaurant opened in the UK in 1810, located in a coffee house in Portman Square, Mayfair. Two centuries later, there are now at least 3,000 Indian restaurants in London – even more than in Delhi! A Google search throws up at least 40 locations in Enfield borough alone.

My first Indian meal was in Stoke Newington in the 1970s, accompanied by a soundtrack featuring an Indian brass band. It was an experience bizarrely repeated in Dover a few weeks later – same dishes, same music! At least by that time I knew what I was ordering.

Things have improved since then, and Indian restaurants are no longer a post-pub destination. You are now likely to find dishes from across the entire Indian sub-continent, including Bengal, Punjab, Bangladesh and Pakistan, all on the same menu. Presentation and cooking standards have also improved. While the cost of eating out has gone up in the past few years, Indian cuisine still represents good value.

This was demonstrated recently at the award-winning Chaseside

Indian Restaurant on a cold Thursday evening, when I visited with a friend in tow. This family-run restaurant has been serving the area for more than 40 years, with the head chef being at the helm for well over 30 of those years and putting a lot of effort into providing an authentic culinary experience. The menu includes dishes from Goa and Lahore and reflects a creative approach to cooking.



On arrival, we were directed to a table next to a brightly lit aquarium. We noticed the staff have a good rapport with their customers. We ordered a king prawn starter served with a well spiced sauce and vegetable samosas, after sharing several poppadoms with some interesting dips – always a good social icebreaker.

Our main courses included tandoori chicken biryani, fish Balti, saag aloo, pilau rice and garlic naan bread. The fish Balti – which made me feel awkward sitting next to the aquarium – was made with tilapia. The dishes were well spiced and distinct from each other and nicely presented. Portions were generous; I unexpectedly ended up with enough for another meal to take home!

My friend was also impressed and we agreed it was well worth a return visit. While there was background music, it was more Bollywood than brass band. Our bill, which included a beer and glass of wine, came to £50.

Chase Side Indian Restaurant at 135-137 Chase Side, Enfield EN2 0PN, is open every day, 5pm-11pm. A special Sunday buffet runs from 12pm to 4.30pm. For more information and to book a table:

Call 020 8367 9919

Email info@chaseside-restaurant.co.uk

Visit chasesiderestaurant.co.uk

Learn to love cooking

Enfield chef Ela Teague on why she launched an Indian cookery school

I have been cooking since I was about eight years old; I would be in the kitchen with my mum and she would captivate me with our spice box, explaining each of the brightly-coloured spices and their flavours. This was enough – I was hooked!

I learnt to cook as many Indian dishes as I could, specifically from my heritage in the region of Gujarat, but also some dishes from Kenya and Zambia which is where my parents grew up. I wanted to be able to share my knowledge of Indian food, so from 2019 I started Cook Eat Joy, an Indian cookery school.

The focus has been to educate people on how to create traditional Indian food at home and to demystify the spice

box. For many people, cooking with spices seems more complex than the Enigma code, but it really doesn't have to be! My classes breakdown the different dishes and the spices used and

what each spice brings to the dish. The aim is to give people the confidence to cook these dishes at home.

Feeding people is something I love, it brings me so much joy. I also love giving back to the local

community, and I get an opportunity to do this for the memory club run by care provider Home Instead Enfield at St Paul's Centre, Church Street.

I also support Cooking Champions when I can, providing meals that are distributed to families across the borough. During the pandemic I wanted to help support people through food.

A big part of my motivation for starting Cook Eat Joy was education. I feel cooking is a life skill, being able to take a few fresh ingredients and produce a healthy, nutritious and tasty meal is invaluable. My classes teach this skill for anyone, young or old. If you are interested in finding out more, please visit cookeatjoy.co.uk or find me on Instagram and Facebook.

In winter I try to plan for healthy, nutritious and tasty meals to boost my mood.

I need my taste buds to feel the tingle, but I also want the feeling of a warm, comforting hug.

So here is a simple recipe for golden potatoes, which can be made super spicy or mild, but packed full of flavour. The leftovers can even be made into the most fabulous toastie with cheese, onion and mango chutney!



Bateta nu Sak (Gujarati potatoes)

Serves two, cooking time 30 minutes

Ingredients

- Four medium potatoes, cut to mouth-sized pieces
- Three tablespoons of oil; one teaspoon of mustard seeds
- One whole green chilli, sliced finely
- Two large cloves of garlic, grated finely
- 1/4 inch of ginger, grated finely
- 1/2 teaspoon of cumin powder
- 1/2 teaspoon of coriander powder
- 1/2 teaspoon of turmeric
- One teaspoon of salt
- One handful of fresh chopped coriander

Method

1. Heat the oil and add the mustard seeds.
2. Add the diced potato and stir them gently.
3. Add the green chilli, garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, turmeric, salt, and stir.
4. Reduce the heat and place a lid on the pan. Cook for about 15-20 minutes, remembering to stir occasionally to stop the potatoes sticking to the pan.
5. The potatoes should be soft and cooked through, you can then garnish with coriander.
6. Serve with yoghurt and chapatis and enjoy!

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Saturday 19 March
10am to 3pm

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Event Styling



Garden and
Landscape Design



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Saddlery and
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Wildlife and
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Capel Manor College
Enfield

capel.ac.uk

Enfield Choral Society will be performing at St Paul's Church in Winchmore Hill on Saturday, 19th March



Rediscovering our voice

Enfield Choral Society is returning with its first live performance in over two years, writes Ian MacKenzie

Choir membership combines the joy of learning music and singing together – in soprano, alto, tenor and bass parts – with the excitement of performing.

The pandemic devastated both aspects. Before Covid-19, who'd have thought of singing as 'risky'?

To give members of Enfield Choral Society something akin to a routine during lockdown, the internet was our only option.

Thanks to musical director Mark Sproson's technological skills, the choir moved almost seamlessly to Zoom rehearsals in March 2020. The internet delay (different for every participant!) makes rehearsing remotely quite an achievement. Singing to a screen, unable to hear your fellow singers' voices, is not the choral experience we know and love.

But Mark's ingenuity, in providing a varied programme, proved the key to success. Some weeks we learned choral arrangements of well-known songs, others we sang alongside professional recordings of major works. Such sessions were interspersed with a wide range of fascinating talks by

professional musicians.

Within remote rehearsals, we introduced extended breaks, giving more opportunity to chat than during 'normal' rehearsals. We took advantage of Zoom to invite former members back, enabling catch-ups from across the country. Our most notable highlight was our Christmas 2020 concert (still available to watch on YouTube) created from individual voice recordings. Other achievements included a valuable sight-singing course and several much-enjoyed quizzes.

After some 15 months on Zoom, in September 2021 regular live rehearsals – with stringent precautions and live-streaming – recommenced. Happily, since then some members unable to attend remotely have returned. We produced a memorable live 'Opera Choruses' concert in November.

Our celebration of female composers this month was originally scheduled for March 2020. The works included span ten centuries and nine composers, many of whom lacked acknowledgement and survived as musicians against the odds.

Nineteenth century composers

Fanny Hensel and Clara Wieck are known chiefly by their famous male-composer relatives' names (Mendelssohn and Schumann respectively). Compositions by modern composers include *Magnificat* by Cecilia McDowall, who we've featured previously. Perhaps the most unusual piece is Janet Wheeler's *The Ceaseless Round of Circling Planets*, featuring a waterphone – an intriguing percussion instrument!

Our interim musical director, ex-G4 tenor Ben Thapa, will sing Claire Filer's setting for him of Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*. Claire will be our soprano soloist and Mark (despite being on sabbatical) will sing in a quartet and play the waterphone in what promises to be an evening to remember.

Enfield Choral Society performs 'Women Composers: Past and Present' at 7.30pm on Saturday, 19th March at St Paul's Church, Church Hill, Winchmore Hill N21 1JA. Advance booking only; tickets are £14 for adults, £7 under 25s in full-time education. For more information:

Call 07793 082 991
Email tickets@enfieldchoralsociety.org.uk

If you are interested in joining the choir:
Email membership@enfieldchoralsociety.org.uk

Are you a poet who doesn't know it?

Poppy Medenis introduces a local poetry group in Palmers Green

People with Voices was inspired by the weekly writing circles known as 'The Microphone Sessions' which Leila Steinberg hosted in San Francisco's Bay Area in 1989.

I read about these writing circles in the book *The Rose that Grew from Concrete*, which includes all the poems that Tupac Shakur wrote, aged 19, at these events.

When I first discovered this book, I began to write poems, as it changed the way I approached poetry. Tupac showed me that poetry could be accessible, alive, and a tool to process the world around us. I began writing to please myself, using it as a tool for expression and to make my thoughts visible on paper.

This is what I find so liberating about poetry; it is shorter than a story and less hassle than a diary entry. A story seems to have to be a certain length and structure and a diary requires you to include certain details, yet to me, a poem has no rules. The shape of it, sound of it, size of it, are all within your hands. People with Voices champions the idea that there is no right or wrong poem and that the key measure of a poem's success should be what you gained from writing it; release, enjoyment, a shift in your mood, a discovery, a question.

Last month marked the four-year anniversary of People with Voices, which began in 2018 in the community room of Palmers Green Library and built on the hope of creating a space for collective joy through writing. Since then, the club has met most months and continued to develop, with both new and regular faces coming together to create, in response to themes such as belonging, beginnings and balance.

People from the ages of eight to 84 years old, those who have never written before, and those who are published authors, share both the library space and an insight into their minds, ideas, and ways of seeing the world.

My favourite moments are when people realise that there has been a poem sitting inside of them the whole time, long before they stepped through the doors of the workshop. People with Voices is simply the space that exists to begin each person's discovery, whether they come along to listen, talk, scribble, draw or write.

People with Voices runs free sessions on the first Saturday of every month at Palmers Green Library. Find out more on social media: Instagram @wearepeoplewithvoices



Budding poets at a People with Voices session at Palmers Green Library



Organisers and participants of the London Turkish Speakers Theatre Festival meeting in Istanbul ahead of the event, including Saray Karakus (fifth from right)

Tackling social isolation through theatre

Paul Everitt from Love Your Doorstep talks to Saray Karakus about her festival for Turkish speakers and how she hopes to tackle social isolation through theatre

Many people will know Saray Karakus as a strong, community-minded former mayor of Enfield, whose mayoral theme, 'Together We Are Enfield', captured the imagination and hearts of so many community groups who felt that they had found a champion for their cause.

Many others know Saray as a playwright and theatre producer with her own theatre troupe, London Emek Theatre, and for the creation of the first-ever London Turkish Speakers Theatre Festival in Enfield in 2017.

Saray is bringing the festival back to Enfield this spring because she is deeply concerned about the complex mental health issues developing within the Turkish speaking community following the Covid-19 pandemic. Saray thinks that isolation is the biggest driver and she is convinced that theatre, being in an environment where you can have a shared experience with other people, is one of the tools to alleviate it.

She told me: "I am very involved within the community in Enfield, mainly in supporting the Kurdish, Turkish, Bulgarian and Alevi community. There are

so many barriers for our community in getting help for their mental health; lack of knowledge, lack of education, lack of language; and our community is hesitant to share because there is a fear of being stigmatised.

"Through my own play, *Zaman Savrulurken (As Time Flies)*, I am talking about all the professional help that you can get and I'm trying to say you are not crazy if you seek help from professional people, because they are educated in this, they have techniques to help you with your thoughts and feelings.

"I am saying this with comedy because if I say this in a more emotional way, the audience will find the message hard to hear. Through laughter and comedy it is more effective."

Saray's play is also addressing cultural clashes.

"Our young people are having so many issues, seeing something different in school and seeing something else at home, maybe watching a Turkish TV series at home that they won't be able to talk about at school because it's a completely different culture, and then seeing something in school that they won't be able to share with their parents because they

won't understand it.

"My play looks at how our young people are feeling lonely and that there is no culture in which they can exist. And so they have to create a third culture for themselves. That third culture is becoming a gang member [and] being involved in knife crime. So we have to underline it, we have to highlight our young people's inner lives.

"Maybe we can open their parents' eyes and they can speak to their sons and daughters and say 'How can we help you?'"

As well as Saray's own play, the festival will feature some well-known celebrities from theatre and TV in Turkey to underline this crucial message and to momentarily alleviate some of that isolation.

The third London Turkish Speakers Theatre Festival is funded by a grant from Arts Council England and runs from 31st March until 3rd April. It is taking place at Chickenshed Theatre, Millfield Theatre and Salisbury House Arts Centre.

For more information about London Turkish Speakers Theatre Festival:
Visit facebook.com/londonturkishspeakerstheatrefestival

LISTINGS

Submit your listing

We can include low-cost community events taking place in Enfield. For next month's listings, email the details of your event to enfielddispatch@socialspider.com by **Tuesday 21st March**.

BLUES

St Harmonica's Blues Club

Friday 11th March, 7pm
The Southgate Club, 17 Chase Side, Southgate N14 5BP

We are absolutely delighted to welcome Fran McGillivray Band back to St Harmonica's. They have played on more than one occasion at our previous venue as well as for us on the woodland blues stage at Livestock. They are just sublime!

Tickets £10 in advance:
Visit stharmonicas.co.uk

CINEMA

Talkies presents The Blues Brothers

Saturday 19th March, 7.30pm
St John's Hall, Bourne Hill, Palmers Green N13 4DA

This is Talkies Community Cinema's 200th event milestone, when we reprise this cinema classic from back in our early days, with a live music intro from St Harmonica's Blues Club. We expect to see all those black suits, shades and let's not forget the nun's outfits! Bar and snacks will be provided by Brian from My Time Cafe.

Tickets £6.50
Visit talkies.org.uk

THEATRE

Tales from the Shed

Saturday 19th March and Saturday 26th March, 10am and 11.30am
Chickenshed, Chase Side, Southgate N14 4PE

Tales from the Shed are vibrant, inclusive theatre shows that are perfect for young children. They are informal, lively and amazingly engaging as the performers and audience share the same space.

Entry £7, free to babies
Email bookings@chickenshed.org.uk
Visit chickenshed.org.uk

DANCE

Line Dancing for Improvers

Every Wednesday, 11.45am
Enfield Highway Conservative Club, Hertford Road, Enfield EN3 6JF

A class for people who have gone line dancing before but wish to improve.

£5 entry
Email akiddle3@hotmail.com
Visit thesaddlebags.co.uk

VOLUNTEER

Bush Hill Park Community Litter Pick

Sunday 20th March, 2pm-3.30pm
Bush Hill Park, Lincoln Road EN1 1PS

Monthly community litter-picking session organised by Carole Stanley from Friends of Bush Hill Park. Equipment supplied. Children and dogs welcome.

Turn up and go
Email carolestanley@gmail.com

CHILDREN

Walker Children's Club

Every Monday and Friday, 3.30pm until 5.15pm
Walker Hall, The Green, Waterfall Road, Southgate N14 7EG

We are pleased to announce more sessions at our new multi-sensory room. Your children will be able to explore the environment freely, with support from a dedicated team. Each week has a different theme, including space, animals and transport. Suitable for children aged from four to twelve years.

£12 per session
Visit walkerchildrensclub.com

BRIDGE

Bridge Club

Every Tuesday afternoon, 2pm-4pm
Vita Pax Church, Bramley Road, Cockfosters N14 4HE

Bridge is such a life-saver for many who find themselves alone in later years. It gives people something to do and is so good for socialising. Please join us!

Call 020 8245 2587
Email malcolmroberts72@hotmail.com

LITERATURE

Our Child of Two Worlds

Saturday 2nd April, 12-2pm
Waterstones, Church Street, Enfield EN2 6BE

Local author Stephen Cox's new novel 'Our Child of Two Worlds' is published on 31st March. He will be signing copies of the book at Waterstones. Stephen lives in Palmers Green. 'Our Child of Two Worlds' is a sequel to his well-praised debut, *Our Child of the Stars*, which got glowing reviews.

Free entry
Email stephen.cox.pr@gmail.com

AROUND THE BOROUGH

COCKFOSTERS

Tube station towers approved

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON'S PLAN to build four tower blocks at Cockfosters Station was approved despite thousands of local residents opposing it.

TfL and development partner Grainger won permission for their controversial 351-home scheme during a marathon meeting of Enfield Council's planning committee last month.

It will see four blocks rising to between 13 and 14 storeys high built on two car parks next to the Grade 2-listed station, leading to the

loss of 323 public parking spaces, with 47 remaining.

More than 2,800 residents submitted written objections to the Cockfosters scheme, raising concerns over the impact on heritage, local services and infrastructure, public safety, accessibility and other issues. An online petition to save the car parks gained almost 3,900 signatures.

Planning officers at the civic centre admitted the proposed scheme failed to align with local policies on tall buildings and heritage assets, as well as a London Plan policy on open space. They conceded the buildings would harm the station, Trent Park and Trent

Park Conservation Area.

Despite this, officers claimed the scheme's benefits – including affordable homes, reduced air pollution and public realm improvements – would outweigh the negative impacts, particularly given the authority's consistent failure to meet its housing targets.

The build-to-rent development is set to provide 211 one-bedroom flats and 105 two-bedroom units, with the remaining 35 homes containing three bedrooms. The affordable homes will make up 38% of the total units and will include a mixture of London Affordable Rent, London Living Rent and discount market rent housing.

Both Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous and Chipping Barnet MP Theresa Villiers opposed the plans, alongside Barnet Council, which warned of an "unacceptable impact" on the borough's roads.

Five Conservative and independent planning committee members voted against the scheme, plus Labour's Doug Taylor, but it won approval thanks to the backing of the six other Labour councillors, including the casting vote of chair Sinan Boztas.



An impression showing how the TfL development at Cockfosters Station will look when built

ANGEL EDMONTON

Leaky roof 'unfixed for six years'

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

AN EDMONTON WOMAN HAS lived with "horrible" damp problems for six years because Enfield Council has failed to fix a leaking roof.

Maria Sadowska, who lives at Boundary Court on Snells Park Estate, says her son had surgery after experiencing breathing problems linked to dampness in his bedroom. But despite complaining "many times" and receiving compensation from the council two years ago, the problem remains.

"The damp is horrible," Maria said: "It has been going on too long, and I can't get any help. I've tried every-

thing, and nothing works. I can't even explain how bad it makes me feel."

After she complains, Maria says the council sends workers to repaint the affected area in her top-floor flat, but the problem keeps coming back. "They redecorated it on 6th January and, after ten days, all this [damp] came back. It has been like this for six years."

Maria said the council had previously told her the damp was caused by her failing to open the window, but also that she was told to go up on the roof and "pour water on there" to show the repair team where it was leaking.

Boundary Court is set to be demolished as part of a £770million

council-led redevelopment of the Joyce Avenue and Snells Park estates in Angel Edmonton.

A council spokesperson said: "We are sorry we have been unable to find a permanent solution to complaints of flooding at one of the blocks in Boundary Court, Snells Park. Enfield Council regularly provides repair services to properties on the Joyce and Snells estates and will continue to do so as long as residents are living there."

"To address this issue once and for all we have committed to conducting a full survey of the block and carrying out any necessary works to tackle the problem of water entering from the roof."

EDMONTON GREEN

Workstown in progress

PROGRESS IS BEING MADE AT Montagu Industrial Estate with the completion of the first phase of its redevelopment.

A £150million joint venture between Enfield Council and developer HBD – dubbed 'Workstown' – is replacing dilapidated, out-of-date industrial buildings

with modern, energy-efficient spaces for local small-to-medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

The completed first phase comprises nine industrial units totalling 0.5 hectares of new space, equivalent to 28 tennis courts. Two thirds of the completed phase is already let or under offer. One of the new tenants, Hived, is the first mass-market, zero emission parcel delivery provider, offering greener and cheaper solutions from warehouses directly to customers.

Adrian Schofield, senior director at HBD, said: "We have seen strong interest in Workstown from a wide-range of businesses, from start-ups through to larger companies. It is a fantastic regeneration project and we look forward to bringing forward the further phases of the redevelopment."



Councillors met with staff from Hived at the launch of the first phase of the redeveloped Montagu Industrial Estate Credit: Enfield Council

NORTH MIDDLESEX HOSPITAL

Active travel scheme

A £1.25MILLION 'ACTIVE TRAVEL' scheme designed to encourage more people to ditch their cars will be installed on roads surrounding North Middlesex Hospital.

It includes a bus gate, two modal filters, segregated cycle lane and new zebra crossings and is being funded by the government. Enfield Council's deputy leader Ian Barnes said: "It will mean so much to the amazing 4,000 doctors, nurses and staff at the hospital when they walk and cycle to and from work."

The scheme was criticised,

however, for restricting access to the hospital for those who may not be able to choose alternative transport modes, such as disabled and older people. In a consultation, 88% of respondents objected to the measures.

Anyone driving to the hospital from Haringey will be forced to avoid using Bull Lane south of its junction with Wilbury Way and Bridport Road, but emergency services will be exempt from the traffic restriction of the proposed bus gate. North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust did not raise any objection.

ARNOS GROVE

Illegal cigarettes bust

MAGISTRATES HAVE ORDERED A business and its director to pay £14,140 in fines and costs after Enfield Council officers seized thousands of illicit cigarettes.

The trading standards team visited Carpathina European Food in Bowes Road, with partner organisations and sniffer dogs, as part of a crackdown on illegal tobacco sales.

The team had received intelligence and tip-offs and conducted test purchases, all of which indicated that the grocer and off-licence was selling unlawfully imported cigarettes where no excise duties or VAT had been paid, in packaging that did not carry labelling in English, or health warnings about tobacco products and smoking.

Training the stars of the future

Graham Frost invites aspiring footballers to enrol with Enfield Borough FC's youth programme

Enfield Borough FC have linked up with College of North East London (Conel) to provide aspiring footballers with a chance to gain valuable experience.

Players at Conel's academy will receive professional coaching three times a week, play matches in a college football league, work with a sports analyst to review games and have access to supervised fitness training and medical support, among many other benefits.

Links between Enfield Borough and Conel in Enfield Highway are long standing. Club chairman Marvin Walker said: "The club have used the facilities at Conel as a home ground for our youth teams since they were founded.

"We also play our pre-season friendlies at the same location and have partnered with the college in previous schemes designed to give local young people access to free coaching and facilities."

The issue of providing opportu-

nities for talented young footballers with a chance to showcase their talents is something that is close to Marvin's heart.

He said: "When Enfield Borough was founded in 2016, one of the main objectives was to give young players an avenue through which they could transition from youth team football into the men's game, something that many find very difficult to accomplish physically.

"Our success rate has been very good, with three of our players signing contracts with Football League clubs, while a fourth is currently on trial with a Premier League club. Many others have moved to non-league clubs higher



Marvin Walker

up the footballing pyramid where, not only are they paid to play football, but their abilities are in the shop window for professional clubs to look at and assess their potential."

The club acted as a base from which players can move on in their careers, but has also established itself as one of the most successful local youth teams. In 2020/21 Borough's two teams competing in the Eastern Junior Alliance won their respective divisions at under-15 level, losing just one of a total of 32 league matches between them. This season, competing as under-16s, they sit first and third in their respective divisions.

Marvin said: "The Eastern Junior Alliance is a very good standard of football for our young players. The particularly pleasing aspect is that a few have made the transition into the Enfield Borough first team at the age of 16.

"We have never been afraid to give youth its head and that will continue to be our approach in the future."

Taking the next step forward

Andrew Warshaw on how Enfield Town are preparing to expand QE2 Stadium in the event of a possible promotion

The main stand at QE2 Stadium can seat 100 people but is not big enough to meet the standards needed for National League South



It's getting towards the business end of the season for Enfield Town FC and their bid to reach Step 2 of the non-league pyramid for the first time in their history.

By the time you read this, there will be about six weeks of the regular season remaining, during which the borough's leading club will learn its fate in terms of whether a play-off place can be achieved, or even the automatic promotion spot by winning the league.

Planning ahead is all important and last month the club passed a crucial landmark in its bid to be ready for National League South, should he Towners succeed in achieving promotion. Grading officials passed the ground fit for 'entry' level to Step 2, meaning the club could begin life in a higher division without having to immediately undertake any substantial improvements. However, the club has been told that, by March 2023, the stadium would have to undergo considerable upgrading to be allowed to continue playing in National League South.

Vice-chairman Paul Millington outlined the type of work that will need to be put in place. He said: "We'd need a single stand that can house 250 seats," said Paul. "At the moment the main stand can only accommodate 100. We can't do anything with that building, so you're looking at the stand opposite, which right now has 150 seats. So our options are either a brand new stand or, alternatively, add an additional 50 seats each side.

"The next element is that we would need to have an additional three turnstiles in order to facilitate a third area, which is the ability to segregate."

The work does not have to be com-

pleted until 31st March 2023 and the recent ground grading, confirming that QE2 Stadium meets the standard of the Isthmian League Premier Division as far as health and safety is concerned, represented important buying time before putting in place requirements needed to sustain Step 2 football.

Paul said: "We had our latest ground inspection back in the autumn when they identified a number of issues, including perimeter fencing behind each goal.

"Our volunteers were incredibly busy over the last few months and now we've been given the thumbs up. So basically we can continue to play at Step 3 level, and we've also been passed for entry level to Step 2. It's taken a lot of man hours."

Of course, the major works would need paying for, but up to half of the money would come through grants from the Football Stadium Improvement Fund. The rest – somewhere in the region of £20,000 – would somehow have to be found by the club.

That's for the future. More immediately, every point is crucial, with a number of highs and lows likely along the way before the regular season ends in late April. Until then, a string of clubs are battling for the four playoff places, and perhaps even the title itself.

"It's something to look forward to," says Paul. "We've done remarkably well to get where we are. Now we have to get over the line."

Enfield Town FC's remaining league fixtures:
Saturday 5th March: East Thurrock United (home)*
Saturday 12th March: Hornchurch (away)
Saturday 19th March: Corinthian Casuals (home)
Saturday 26th March: Merstham (away)
Saturday 2nd April: Horsham (home)
Saturday 9th April: Brightlingsea Regent (away)
Saturday 15th April: Cray Wanderers (home)
Monday 18th April: Potters Bar (away)
Saturday 23rd April: Bognor Regis (home)
 *Free entry for women and girls to mark International Women's Day

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