

# ENFIELD DISPATCH

No.53 THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

FEB 2023

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A NEW SOCIAL ENTERPRISE, The Family Bike Club, is now offering Enfield residents a range of cycling services, including tandem bike hire for families and advice on how to get around the borough on two wheels. Founded and run by Luke Balnave (pictured right, alongside company director and cycling instructor David Hilliard) The Family Bike Club is now open at Enfield Chase Station and new members can sign up via [thefamilybikeclub.com](http://thefamilybikeclub.com). Read the full story on the Dispatch website at [enfielddispatch.co.uk](http://enfielddispatch.co.uk).

## Anger as Enfield misses out on 'levelling up' cash

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield borough has again been ignored in the latest round of 'levelling up' funding announced by the government – prompting local leaders to slam the scheme.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities last month doled out £2.1 billion of money from its much-touted Levelling Up Fund, after local authorities had been invited to bid for a portion of the cash. While neighbouring boroughs Haringey, Barnet and Waltham Forest all received something from the pot of money – including £20 million going towards

a Tottenham community centre – Enfield Council received nothing, after failing in both of its bids.

The council had requested £16.1 million to regenerate Angel Edmonton town centre, which would have seen Boundary Hall Community Centre redeveloped, Florence Hayes Recreation Ground redesigned and new workspaces created. The civic centre had also hoped to win more money for its flagship environmental scheme, Enfield Chase Restoration Project, with £18 million requested to help deliver a "leading outdoor cultural destination" by transforming an old farm building into a visitor centre and creating a wild swimming pond, plus other facilities throughout the

new woodland.

Across England, only half of the areas receiving cash from the government scheme were listed among the 100 most deprived areas of the country. One successful bid was for a £45 million road improvement scheme in Kent.

In London, just seven out of 32 borough councils won bids to the Levelling Up Fund. The capital was allocated £151 million out of the total £2.1 billion, representing the lowest amount per head of any UK region – a fact that didn't stop many media outlets criticising Prime Minister Rishi Sunak for giving "too much money" to the capital.

In Enfield, council leader Nesli

Caliskan reacted angrily to the government's snub. She said: "How can it be right that Edmonton, the 71st-most deprived constituency in the country, misses out on a transformational £16 million plan, while Rishi Sunak's constituency, the 450th-most deprived, gets £19 million?"

"It's time communities weren't forced to go cap-in-hand for crumbs while our budgets are cut every year thanks to the government crashing the economy. These 'bidding bingo' rounds [are] not a helpful approach. We need long-term sustainable funding and powers to help deliver deprived areas success."

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# Plea to save last pub in Ponders End

BY JAMES CRACKNELL  
& SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL  
DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Edmonton MP Kate Osamor has called for Enfield Council to designate the last pub in Ponders End as an 'asset of community value' (ACV) after fresh plans were submitted to turn it into a restaurant.

Campaigners are battling to save The Goat in Ponders End High Street as freeholder Ponders End Properties claims its attempts to market the venue to pub operators has been unsuccessful.

If the council approves the change of use application, it will leave the area without a single local boozer. The proposals come amid fears over the decline of pubs nationally, with a report by the Campaign for Real Ale (Camra) revealing long-term pub closures doubled to reach 485 during the first half of 2022.

Designating The Goat as an ACV would give the local community a right to bid to buy the property – if they can raise the necessary cash.

Kate said: "The Goat has been part of the Ponders End community for hundreds of years, to see it close now would be a preventable tragedy. We don't need this historic building to be turned into yet another restaurant. This short-termism is toxic for our communities. Enfield Council needs to step in and save the Goat by designating it an asset of community value."

Although the current building dates back to the 1930s, the earliest known reference to The Goat was in 1778.

Paul Ainsworth, Camra's national planning policy advisor, said: "There's no doubt that pubs are

currently facing a perfect storm of rising prices (particularly for energy), reduced customer spending power and staffing shortages. Sadly, we can expect many pub businesses to go under in the coming months as a result of these pressures.

"We're now starting to see 'opportunistic' planning applications to change the use of pubs. Applicants argue that the pubs concerned are no longer viable because of the difficulties facing the trade.

"The message that Camra is trying to get across to planners is that these problems, real as they are, will largely go away as better economic times inevitably return. When that happens, we must ensure that pub buildings haven't been lost and that new operators can take advantage of something that will never be permanently lost – the British public's love of the British pub."

Pubs are protected by several local and national planning policies. The London Plan states that the loss of public houses with "heritage, cultural, economic or social value" should be refused unless "authoritative marketing evidence" shows

there is "no realistic prospect of the building being used as a pub in the foreseeable future". A similar policy is included in Enfield's draft Local Plan, yet to be adopted.

Ponders End Properties bought The Goat from brewer Greene King in 2018, and in November 2020 it instructed real estate agency AG&G to market the property. According to a report submitted by AG&G as part of the plans, "no offers were received and no interest was expressed".

But Philip Ridley, from the Enfield and Barnet branch of Camra, sent a detailed objection to the council claiming the change of use would fail to comply with local and national policies. He alleges there is "no evidence" that "the current pub lease is unviable".

One regular at The Goat, Darren Aylott, told the *Dispatch*: "It is where we socialise. It is family really – people come here with their problems and talk, I think if it wasn't here a lot of people would suffer with their mental health."

Both Ponders End Properties and Enfield Council were approached for comment.

The Goat in Ponders End High Street

**CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

Edmonton MP Kate Osamor was also critical. In a letter to Secretary of State Michael Gove she wrote: "It is disheartening to see that the announced funding includes projects that have little to do with levelling up [...] I urge you to re-evaluate the allocation of funds through the Levelling Up Fund and ensure that funding is directed towards the communities that truly need it."

Gove, announcing the launch of the second round of levelling-up

funding last month, said: "We are firing the starting gun on more than a hundred transformational projects in every corner of the UK that will revitalise communities that have historically been overlooked but are bursting with potential.

"This new funding will create jobs, drive economic growth, and help to restore local pride. We are delivering on the people's priorities, levelling up across the UK to ensure that no matter where you are from, you can go as far as your talents will take you."

Sunak added: "Through greater investment in local areas, we can grow the economy, create good jobs and spread opportunity everywhere."

Enfield Council had also previously launched a bid to win 'investment zone' status for its flagship housing project, Meridian Water, but the government scheme was quietly ditched following the resignation of former prime minister Liz Truss, who had tried to claim it as one of the few highlights of her shortest-ever premiership.



## War memorial fenced off

A civilian war memorial dedicated to those killed in air raids and bombings between 1939 and 1945 has been fenced off by Enfield Council after becoming "dilapidated".

The memorial at Lavender Hill Cemetery had been partially covered in ivy, while the stonework is cracked and falling apart.

During the Second World War, 109 people in the former Enfield district of Middlesex were killed by air raids and flying bombs. The civilian war memorial was erected specifically for those residents – including many children – killed while going about their daily lives during the war.

The memorial inscription reads: "Erected by the citizens of Enfield to the memory of all those who lost their lives during the attacks from the air upon the town and of whom 25 lie in the two communal graves in this cemetery."

David Carter, a local resident who often visits the cemetery, told the *Dispatch*: "I have got relations up here and I just noticed it [the memorial] was in a dilapidated state. I came here before Christmas and it had been fenced off.

"It was clearly unloved."

The metal fence surrounding the memorial has been in place since December, but there is nothing to explain why it was erected. A council spokesperson explained the memorial was now unsafe but that work to restore it should be finished in 2024. They said: "The council commenced renovation of the memorial following an independent inspection last year. The inspection focused on the structural integrity of the memorial, which found significant dilapidation due to ground subsidence over the years. Based on this information, the memorial has been removed from public access, due to health and safety implications.

"We are working with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and the War Memorials Trust to find the best solution, whilst exploring potential sources for funding. The aim is to have the memorial back open by next year."



Protestors opposing the lease of Whitewebbs Park to Tottenham Hotspur make their voices heard outside Enfield Civic Centre



## Whitewebbs campaigners protest against council's 'terrible' Spurs deal

*Around 100 people gathered outside Enfield Civic Centre to vent their anger at proposed lease of Whitewebbs Park*

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

**R**esidents, councillors and campaigners staged a protest against Enfield Council's proposed lease of Whitewebbs Park to Tottenham Hotspur – with a local MP also later saying she had “no confidence” in the civic centre’s approach.

The Premier League football club is set to take over the running of half of the parkland in northern Enfield so that it can establish a new women’s football academy next to its existing training complex in Whitewebbs Lane – but the decision has angered local people who say it should remain public open space.

Prior to the decision in 2021 to award a 25-year lease to Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC), the eastern half of the park was occupied by a public golf course, but Enfield Council said it was losing too much money and closed it down. Campaigners in turn claimed the cost of running the golf course was exaggerated and that the total £2million value of the lease to Tottenham Hotspur – similar to the sum Spurs paid for reserve goalkeeper Fraser Forster – represents a bad deal.

At the protest last month, around 100 people braved wind and rain to wave placards outside Enfield Civic

Centre. Tory councillors representing Whitewebbs stated their opposition to the Tottenham Hotspur lease, including David Skelton who said: “As your councillors for Whitewebbs we will be fighting this horrendous deal every step of the way – all of Whitewebbs must remain open to the public.”

Andrew Thorp, a Conservative councillor for neighbouring Ridgeway ward, added: “All of us here have been campaigning for year after year against this ridiculous and outrageous deal.

“We know this is a terrible deal for Enfield and a terrible deal for residents. It makes no sense on any level. We must keep fighting.”

The protest was organised by the Friends of Whitewebbs Park group which, in recent months, has joined forces with the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) to launch a legal challenge against Enfield Council, citing laws protecting open space. Group chair Sean Wilkinson said: “We love our parks and we’d love our council to obey the law and support us – not a multi-billion pound company.”

The latest controversy concerning Whitewebbs has centred around the council’s publicising of its proposed lease to Spurs, with notices posted around the area stating that the local authority intends to “grant a lease of

the property for a term of 25 years to Tottenham Hotspur Limited”. Campaigners say this breaks a promise to not commence the lease until planning permission has been granted, but the council claims it will keep its word and has “categorically not entered into a lease with THFC – the council’s position has not changed”.

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark has since added to the criticism of the council by writing a letter to her constituents, saying she’s “lost confidence in the council’s ability to involve local residents in its plans”. Feryal adds in her letter that she is “disappointed” the council was proceeding with the lease notice before the full details of the THFC plan emerge. She wrote: “I completely understand and share the anger and frustration of residents who feel like their voices have been ignored.

“The lack of clarity that residents have received on all stages of this project, could have been averted by a more rigorous and meaningful engagement and consultation process [...] Local communities must be at the heart of decisions that affect them.”

A council spokesperson said: “Proposals were submitted by THFC in response to a call for experienced sports and leisure operators to suggest proposals for the site. The club’s proposals ranked highest overall

against the council’s criteria.

“THFC’s bid would significantly enhance public access to Whitewebbs compared to its previous use as a golf club. The proposals would see improvements to the wider park, carrying out repairs and renovations to paths, bridleways and fences, as well as improving the existing café and toilet facilities to serve public users of Whitewebbs.

“Their proposals would also enable the council to invest £100,000 a year extra into grassroots sport for young people.”

At a full council meeting on 25th January, councillors debated a Conservative opposition proposal to cancel the lease of Whitewebbs Park to THFC and conduct a “full and proper consultation” on the park’s future, but this was rejected by the ruling Labour group.

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## Paedo cop

**A** Met Police officer who worked in Enfield has admitted a string of child sexual offences.

PC Hussain Chehab, aged 22, pleaded guilty four counts of sexual activity with a girl aged 13–15, three counts of making indecent photographs of a child, and one count of engaging in sexual communication with a child.

The sexual activity with a child offence took place in 2019, before Chehab began at the Met. Chehab worked as a safer schools officer for three months in 2021, working at an Enfield secondary school, but the offence was unrelated to this role. Chehab was released on bail for sentencing at Wood Green Crown Court on 17th March.

An accelerated police misconduct process has been initiated and a hearing will be held “as quickly as possible”. Detective Chief Superintendent Caroline Haines, lead for policing in Enfield, said: “These offences are made all the more sickening by the fact that some of the image offences were committed while PC Chehab was in a role as a safer schools officer attached to a secondary school in Enfield between May 2021 and his arrest in August 2021.

“Once the initial allegations against PC Chehab were made, he was immediately removed from his role. We have worked closely with the school concerned, and Enfield local authority, to ensure that there were no further unreported safeguarding incidents or missed opportunities.”

## Rise of the renters

**T**he number of people living in the private rental sector in Enfield has shot up over the last decade, new Census 2021 data reveals.

The latest tranche of statistics to be published from the 2021 Census of England and Wales looks at people’s housing circumstances and shows that there has been a nationwide drop in home ownership.

In Enfield in 2021, 53.4% of people either owned their home, had a mortgage on their home, or were living in a shared ownership property. This figure is down from the 58.8% recorded in 2011. The fall in home ownership mirrors the rise in private renting, with 29.5% living in the private rental sector in 2021 in Enfield compared with 22.2% in 2011.



## Fighting for a fairer world

Bill Linton looks ahead to Fairtrade Fortnight following the revival of Enfield's Fairtrade group



Then-mayor Lee Chamberlain receives a certificate confirming Enfield's official Fairtrade status in 2008, which it has since lost

**M**ost people believe in fairness and many also look outwards towards a world that could be a whole lot fairer than it is.

One opportunity to put these ideas into practice locally comes in the form of the Fairtrade movement, which has been growing

steadily within the UK since it started in the late 1990s. Products bearing the Fairtrade logo guarantee that a co-operative of poor farmers somewhere in the developing world have been paid a fair price for what they have produced – a price that permits the farmers and their families to live a dignified existence with at least the minimum of life's

necessities, and for their community to begin to develop.

So how does it work? For each commodity – such as tea, coffee or bananas – a Fairtrade price is set, sufficient for a diligent small farmer to make a decent living. The farmers get the market price or the Fairtrade price, whichever is higher. This frees farmers from the

whims of the New York or London stock markets. Additionally, there is a small premium for community development, which the whole community must decide democratically how to use – perhaps for a school or local health centre. The whole process is minutely inspected by an organisation called Flocert, to insure against cheating either by farmers or by companies labelling produce as Fairtrade when it isn't.

Garstang in Lancashire declared itself the world's first 'Fairtrade Town' in April 2000, and the idea caught on. Regulated in the UK by the Fairtrade Foundation, which sets the criteria for a 'Fairtrade Community' (as they are now called), there are now more than 600 such communities in the UK and 2,000 worldwide, across at least 20 countries.

The campaign to add Enfield to that number started in early 2005 and reached fruition in September 2008 when we were declared a 'Fairtrade Borough'. Enfield's success was mirrored by London's

– the declaration of London as the world's largest 'Fairtrade City' came just days before ours.

Once that target was achieved, the local campaign sadly faltered and eventually our Fairtrade status was lost. Now I'm pleased to say we have a steering group in action again, we are aiming eventually to recover our former Fairtrade status and, in the meantime, to encourage you as the people of Enfield to keep buying Fairtrade products with their distinctive logo – you can find it sometimes in quite surprising places!

Fairtrade Fortnight runs from 27th February until 12th March. There will be a launch event with the Enfield mayor at Lancaster Road Co-op on Monday 27th from 10am–12pm, so please join us! There will likely be other events at local places of worship and maybe schools, which will be advertised closer to the time.

**Find out more about Fairtrade Enfield:**  
Email [bill.linton@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:bill.linton@blueyonder.co.uk)  
Visit [ftenfield.webstarts.com](http://ftenfield.webstarts.com)

## Fuelling creativity in Edmonton

Award-winning chef Marianna Leivaditaki explains why she loves working at shared manufacturing workspace Bloqs

**I** remember the day I first met the founders of Bloqs years ago – they were wholeheartedly devoted to their mission to create an open-access workspace.

They wanted something that I thought was fascinating and exciting, as well as inclusive and thoughtful. They had a vision and they were doing everything to achieve it.

Going forward about ten years, they approached me to help them set up their café in their incredible new space. They found me at a point where I had decided to step away from the life of head chef at the busy Morito restaurant in Hackney; I had recently become a mama, I had published my first cookbook and was looking for new adventures.

I took Bloqs up on their offer and joined one of the most amazing teams I have ever worked with. My passion and love for good food is

what guides every project I embark on and even though this was far from running a busy restaurant kitchen, my core values and goals are the same.

My background in Greek and Eastern Mediterranean food inspires me to create dishes in a space that feels homely, fun and approachable.

A bit more than a year since opening, Bloqs Kitchen has developed and become a space open to all. We are a small team of five and everyone has something great and refreshing to bring to the table. Our days are busy, creative and full of good encounters.

We start each day baking homemade bread, while making an enormous amount of tea and coffee to fuel productivity! Our mission is to offer food that is delicious, made using fresh ingredients, season-focused and is sold at affordable prices. Our



Hailing from Crete and known for her Greek cuisine, Marianna Leivaditaki has previously written a cookbook, *Agean*. Credit: Claudia Agati

suppliers are small businesses with good products and ethically-sound practices. We want to make sure that everyone using Bloqs as their workspace has access to food that is nutritious

and evocative, while the passers-by that come through our door leave with a satisfied smile.

People are at the centre of Bloqs kitchen. We love meeting all the makers, we love greeting the

cyclists that come to recharge, we love the families that come with their kids for a lunch, and we love our regulars that come from further away for a friendly chat. There's banter and gossip, there's moaning and laughing and there's lots of brainstorming; All things we need to make Bloqs kitchen feel like a family.

We also open every Thursday evening for food and some fun, be it board games, karaoke or quiz nights. We host workshops, special gatherings, pop-ups, talks, music events, exhibitions – even weddings!

We would love to become a destination for locals and would love to hear your ideas. We are open to trying new things and want to continue growing into something really inspirational.

**Bloqs is based in Anthony Way, beside the River Lea. For more information:**  
Visit [buildingbloqs.com](http://buildingbloqs.com)



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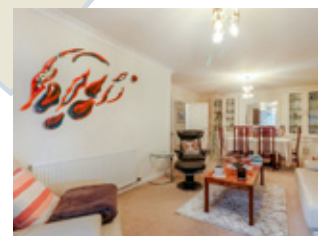
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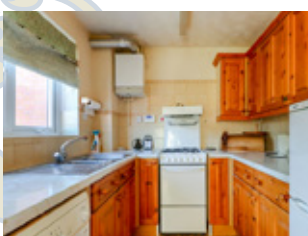
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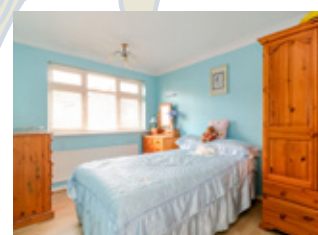
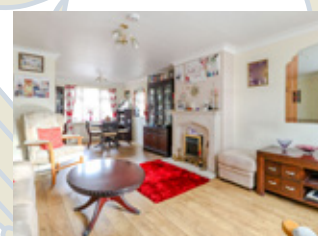
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Tenniswood Road, Enfield, Middx EN1 £525,000 Freehold





The Cracknell family picking fruit from their orchard  
Credit Enfield Local Studies Library and Archive



The Cracknell farmhouse, demolished in 1952 and now occupied by a school  
Credit Enfield Local Studies Library and Archive



# Discovering the Cracknells of Enfield

Dispatch editor James Cracknell finds out more about the history of his namesakes in Enfield

Since I've been editing this paper, I've occasionally been asked by readers whether I'm related to someone else they know in Enfield with the surname Cracknell – one lady even thought I'd gone to school with her son.

With my curiosity stoked, I've since discovered that there is in fact a long line of Cracknells in the Enfield area going all the way back to the 16th Century. A farm that until the 1950s occupied what is now Chace Community School was run by the Cracknells for two centuries. A residential street in Bullsmoor was even named Cracknell Close in honour of this family of “market gardeners” who clearly made an impression on the local parish in years gone by.

The first thing to say is that, sadly, I am not a descendant of the Cracknells who ran the farm and had a street named after them. I grew up in Bristol and my father's side of the family hail from Suffolk (where I understand the Cracknell name originated in the Middle Ages). Nonetheless, on a rainy day last month I decided to spend an afternoon digging deeper into the history of the Cracknells in Enfield.

The results of my research – conducted with the kind help of John Clark from Enfield Local Studies Library and Archive – proved far more fascinating than I could

have dared imagine. The Cracknells are mentioned in a volume of the history book series written by David Pam of what was then called Enfield Preservation Society (now The Enfield Society), while several newspaper articles have been written about various members of the Cracknell family, including an entire history piece dedicated to them in the now defunct *Enfield Gazette* which describes them as “one of the oldest families in Enfield”.

My discoveries include the story of Ernest Cracknell, a local club singer from the 1970s who claimed that “the fresh country air”



James visits a Bullsmoor street named after the Cracknells of Enfield

of Hilly Fields where he grew up “helped him to acquire his fine tenor singing voice”. Then there's Eileen Cracknell, a talented athlete who competed in amateur sprint races in the 1930s and often featured in the sports pages of the local papers.

Among the quirky stories, however, I also found tragedy. Elizabeth Cracknell, a mother to a boy called Thomas, “drowned herself in the New River in 1872” according to a researcher who studied the family in the 1990s.

As for the farm, it existed for centuries and was one of the last bits of Enfield Town



The newspaper article in *Enfield Gazette* which details the history of the Cracknell farm

to remain truly rural before inevitably succumbing to urbanisation. The history article in *Enfield Gazette* (a paper which, ironically, I wrote for as a freelance reporter prior to its closure in 2017) describes the Cracknell farm as “a venerable relic of the borough's rural past until modernity swept it away in a cloud of dust in the 1950s”.

According to the article – which does not carry a date but was likely published in the 1970s – the farm in its heyday contained “an extensive orchard” as well as meadows which “were cropped by the Cracknells”. As their business expanded, buildings on the farm included “barns, a granary, cartshed and a cowshed” plus “a very old and very large bakery oven”.

The Cracknells sold their produce from a stall at Covent Garden Market “occupying a prominent position in front of St Paul's Church”. The article also says that “the upper part of Tenniswood Road was then a lovely drive approached by way of a stile from Churchbury Lane” which “led between trees, roses, peonies and daffodils”.

But by 1952, according to *Enfield Gazette*: “The Cracknells had left the old home to the demolition men, the orchard was uprooted, every trace of a busy past removed and nothing was left of the family's long association but a solitary tree.”

After reading about the Cracknells of Enfield in these old history books and newspaper articles I feel satisfied that, while I cannot claim to be directly connected to them, I do at least now have a colourful answer to give to the next *Dispatch* reader who asks me whether I went to school with their kid.

***"The Cracknells had left the old home to the demolition men, the orchard was uprooted, every trace of a busy past removed and nothing was left of the family's long association but a solitary tree"***





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# The government's approach to the NHS isn't working



Defend Enfield NHS members joined a picket line at Chase Farm Hospital's ambulance station last month, when Unison members walked out on strike in a dispute over pay

Frances Warboys  
from Defend Enfield  
NHS hits out at the  
government amid an  
ongoing crisis affecting  
the health service

Not only did our late Queen honour the NHS with the George Cross shortly before she died, but also our new King spoke movingly in his Christmas address of the invaluable service given by nurses, medics and indeed all public sector workers during the past year.

Despite this level of recognition for those demonstrating the highest standards of public service, NHS staff have now been driven to take strike action by a government which steadfastly refuses them a fair and reasonable wage award, sufficient to tackle the huge rise in inflation, resulting in hospitals being forced to provide foodbanks for their hungry and exhausted workers.

Not only is this poor reward for a job well done but also completely ignores the impact which a properly funded pay award would have on the recruitment of much-needed new staff to fill the 132,000-plus existing vacancies in NHS England and also the retention of highly-trained and experienced members of the medical and nursing professions and their non-medical support staff – who are leaving the NHS in droves because of the sheer pressure of work.

All this comes at a time when, as well as the usual winter increase in demand, the nation faces a new influx of Covid-19 from China. The government has not learned the lessons from the earlier coronavirus outbreak, as evidenced by the fact that the promised judicial public inquiry will only start taking witness statements later this spring. It has also not heeded the conclusions of the People's Covid Inquiry [conducted independently by Keep Our NHS Public in 2021]; one of which was that there had been misconduct in public office.

With strikes either having taken place, being planned or being balloted for among nurses, midwives, paramedics, ambulance staff and junior doctors, our latest prime minister has promised to fix things but has not said how or when. Thank goodness, then, for campaign leaders Keep Our NHS Public (KONP) which, at its conference in November, stated: "As we approach the 75th anniversary of the NHS, we will no longer tolerate the destruction of our health and care system. We affirm that the founding principles of the NHS are as relevant today as they were back in 1948 and that the NHS – rated as the best healthcare system in the world just five years ago – has been failed by politicians who have repeatedly refused to listen as both patients and care workers suffer.

"Given the current crisis, the government should now show support for the NHS through massive long-term investment and heed our coalition's expert advice. We will enthusiastically endorse strike action by health and care workers in pursuit of pay justice and as a means to defend vital public services for current and future generations."

KONP's nine headline demands encompass emergency and long-term funding; looking after NHS and care staff, including pay and conditions, recruitment, retention and social care; providing more beds and infrastructure; supporting general practice; tackling mental health; proper pandemic planning; supporting dentistry; ending privatisation; and

remembering and learning from Covid-19.

A government's first duty is to keep its people safe – the above approach is the way to do it. The wrong approach is seeking to bring in legislation which threatens to sack key workers who ballot to go on strike. After the worst flu season for a decade and with ambulance handover delays at record levels, how will the government's current approach help?

Defend Enfield NHS (DENHS) has continued its campaigning over the past year, leafleting in Palmers Green, Southgate, Cockfosters, Enfield Town and Winchmore Hill. We have written to Mike Cooke, chair of North Central London Integrated Care Board (ICB) requesting they pledge to discontinue attempts to privatise the NHS. And locally we have been supporting union picket lines where and whenever possible throughout January.

On 25th February, DENHS members will be at a demonstration being organised by campaign group We Own It. We are now in the 75th year of the NHS. If you, like the King and our late Queen, together with 80% of the population, support the NHS, now is the time to act.

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

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# Enfield Council needs to start listening to local residents

*In our latest councillor's column, Oakwood's Conservative representative Julian Sampson laments the council's slow response to local complaints*

All politics is local; so says a well-worn phrase, telling us that no matter how high-minded our political views, what really matters to people is what happens at street level.

Since I was elected in May last year, I've received more than 300 emails from Oakwood residents. Of those, approximately 20% were about bin collections, another 20% about trees and verges and 12% about local planning issues. These are the local issues which are on residents' minds every day and these are the local issues that politics is about. But that doesn't make them easy to resolve.

Another 20% of the emails I have received were about an outbreak of Japanese knotweed in an area maintained by Enfield Council. This invasive plant species can cause significant damage to property and people were understandably concerned. Residents first brought this to my attention in July, when I raised it as a formal enquiry with the council. But we didn't

get a substantive response from the council until late September, and that was only after we'd highlighted the issue in a story published by the *Dispatch*.

Sadly this isn't the only issue on which the council has been slow to act. A resident also contacted me in July to say the grass verges opposite his house had not been cut. No big deal, you might think, and a typical western Enfield issue. But these verges had grown so much that they were trapping litter, obstructing sight lines and causing a hazard to traffic and pedestrians. After we got involved, it took a further six months for the council to carry out this relatively straightforward task, and this only took place after an exhaustive chain of formal enquiries, correspondence with relevant officers and finally an email to the very top of the council.

In both of these cases, residents told us that they'd been trying to get the council to take action for ages, to no avail. Why does it happen like this? Why do issues like these take so long

to resolve? It's as if local residents' concerns don't matter to the council. You can also see this in the Labour administration's persistence with plans for tower blocks at tube station car parks, to lease Whitewebbs Park to Tottenham Hotspur for a pittance, and to continue with its low-traffic neighbourhoods, all in the face of clear local opposition.

To try to avoid debating these local issues, Labour councillors often submit emergency motions on national issues, be it Boris Johnson (full council on 13th July) or Liz Truss (full council on 12th October). While they are subjects on which Enfield residents may have an opinion, they are not issues on which the council can do anything other than virtue signal.

Going back to those 300 emails, can you guess how many mentioned Boris Johnson or Liz Truss? That's right, none of them.

Julian Sampson is a Conservative councillor for Oakwood, alongside Tom O'Halloran. If you live in the ward you are welcome to get in touch:

Call 020 8132 1081

Email [cllr.julian.sampson@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.julian.sampson@enfield.gov.uk)

Julian Sampson has represented Oakwood ward since last May's election



# 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](mailto:EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com) before the next deadline on **Monday 13th February**.

## Dirty streets

*Dear Enfield Dispatch*

Enfield's streets are filthy, residents must weave around the debris and lift knees over the trash. They risk slipping on piles of wet leaves, tripping on broken paving stones and their homes are threatened by overhanging trees, uncontrolled tree roots and weeds growing among the unswept paving stones. The weeds cannot grow if the roads are swept; their existence serves as proof of the failure of the council's street cleansing arrangements.

There are dead animals, food waste, dirty nappies, bags of rubbish, discarded white goods, empty cans and bottles, among other things. If cleaning teams attend, they merely litter-pick – this is not cleaning. In fact, even the litter-pickers do not attend. During the last 20 days of careful monitoring, not one person has swept any of the streets in this area. Some bin bags have been lifted, but no cleaning has been effected. Why?

Enfield has become derelict and Enfield Council seems not to care, nor to be taking any action to improve.

Rebecca Cruickshank  
Southbury

## Messy roads

*Dear Enfield Dispatch*

Walk down almost any street in Enfield borough and you'll see discarded household items, from furniture to food, dumped by residents on the streets and pavements – even outside their own property. Any one of you could identify half-a-dozen 'favourite' local dumping spots within a short distance of your own home.

This eyesore activity is now normalised, as councils focus on commercial fly-tipping, while your neighbours know they can dump locally on a weekly basis with a miniscule chance of being caught. Why? Because Enfield Council have treated the problem rather than the cause for the last decade.

Scratch the surface and you'll uncover consistent gross incompetence both with the council's people and their reporting systems. On 6th October 2022 I submitted a formal complaint to Enfield

Council, including eleven real-case examples to demonstrate these failings were not isolated cases. My evidence shows that the council's appetite and competence to make offenders accountable is woeful; despite video evidence handed to them on a plate, showing the perpetrators dumping at their home address, including their vehicle registration, I was advised they were unable to pursue the matter.

There is gross negligence within the management of their online reporting system; I know three fly-tipping witnesses who reported issues in May 2022 and have still not been contacted. The cleansing team rarely look through bin bags for evidence – they just pick it up. Their evidence management is woeful; they ignore, lose or miss blatant physical evidence.

The warning of heavy fines or even a jail sentence for offenders has no teeth – in reality the council chooses instead to issue warning letters.

Gary Stock  
Oaklands Avenue, Edmonton

## Pubs need protecting

*Dear Enfield Dispatch*

Recent articles on redeveloping The Station Tavern in Brimsdown have failed to report that one of the reasons for refusal is that the planning application fails to satisfy pub protection policies from the London Plan (policy HC7) and Enfield Council's own draft Local Plan (policy CL7). These policies state that any planning application to demolish or change the use of a public house must be refused unless a rigorous and realistic marketing exercise is undertaken proving that the pub is unviable. With this being the only pub for the entire Brimsdown area and, in light of it previously being a thriving community asset before the pub tenant was evicted, we believe that the viability of the pub is unquestionable and that there is no possible justification for the demolition and change of use of this characterful and popular local pub.

Philip Ridley  
Pub protection officer, Campaign for Real Ale (Camra)



## Nearly half of Enfield children in care moved outside borough

Shortage of available care placements and cost-of-living crisis blamed for problems

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Children are being placed into care miles away from friends and family in Enfield as a nationwide shortage of placements is exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis.

A council report revealed almost half of looked-after children were placed outside of the borough as of September last year – and officers said some were living around 100 miles away “in the Midlands and beyond”.

The report, which was presented to a meeting of the children, young people and education scrutiny panel last month, shows that in September there were 212 looked-after children placed within the borough and 181 in other local authority areas.

A shortage of placements, which is affecting the whole country, is also pushing up costs for councils. The report revealed that the average weekly fee in Enfield for residential care has increased from around £3,000 per week to £5,000 per week during the past three years.



Credit Jess Zoerb via Unsplash

Ramasasi Ramasubramanian, the council’s head of access to resources integrated services, told the meeting that the majority of the local authority’s placements were within the borough “but the children that go into externally commissioned placements are being placed out of borough”.

Under questioning from panel member Suna Hurman, Ramasasi

said some children “are going as far as even the Midlands and beyond, 100 miles away, which is worrying”.

The report warned that placing young people a long way from their parents, school and social networks “consistently leads to poor outcomes for children”. Anne Stoker, the council’s director of children and family services, said the civic centre’s

priority was to place children “as close to Enfield as possible”, although she pointed out that it is sometimes beneficial for children to be placed outside of London for safety reasons.

As well as a shortage of children’s homes, one of the most significant problems affecting the sector is a lack of foster carers, which officers warned was being exacerbated by the

Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis. Anne said a “significant number” of foster carers had been resigning this year “because it is a struggle for them to continue to deliver as a foster carer”.

Officers detailed a range of measures being taken by the council to help tackle the shortages. These include increasing allowances and fees paid to Enfield foster carers, expanding children’s home provision, and helping high-risk care leavers to access council tenancies sooner.

Foster carers are also set to benefit from one-off payments of £300 to help with fuel costs, grants to build loft conversions that will allow them to take on more children, and ‘golden hello’ payments of £1,000 for those switching from agencies to the council.

The council is planning to advertise and promote Enfield’s fostering service on buses and billboards in the borough. In addition, existing foster carers have been asked to host recruitment events in their homes for people in their network or their friends’ networks who may be interested in fostering.

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EDMONTON GREEN

ENFIELD COMMUNITY HEROES

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## Bringing the community together

*Imam Adam Kantar wants to bridge the divide between different faiths*

Providing opportunities to bridge the gap between different faiths and backgrounds can help stitch a community together – and one mosque leader in Edmonton Green has made this his mission.

Imam Adam Kantar, who is the manager of Rumi Mosque in Fore Street, understands there is far more which unites the local community than which divides it. The award-winning mosque runs many charitable events and activities, making sure to invite and include everyone in the community regardless of faith.

The mosque’s weekly interfaith breakfast has been running for around eight years and has become a focal point for its community work. Adam, who joined Rumi Mosque in 2016, told the *Dispatch*:



Imam Adam Kantar (front) with visitors to Rumi Mosque

“We open our doors regardless of faith, gender, language, colour; we welcome everyone and show goodwill to the whole community. Each week [at the breakfast] there is a different theme, and we have a professional who comes in to promote their project and talk about what is

available for the community.”

Numerous local charities and voluntary groups have been invited to speak at the weekly event, as well as police officers, teachers and other professionals. In addition, the mosque runs activities such as English classes, a cycling programme and various fundraising events, all open to everyone. During the pandemic it also offered a befriending service and Adam was at the forefront of efforts to promote the Covid-19 vaccination programme, particularly among communities which had low uptakes.

Adam adds: “It is about bringing people together regardless of colour or faith. We are trying to show we can coexist as we are – it is not about bringing people into Islam, but about accepting each other as

brothers and sisters. We can live together in peace and harmony.

“We try to promote Rumi as a solution maker and that is why we open our doors to anybody.”

Rumi Mosque was the first in the UK to appoint a female head of mosque and has also won several accolades from the British Beacon Mosque Awards in recent years, including best madrasa (educational institution) and best charity project for its humanitarian relief work in Myanmar.

### Nominate your heroes

Dispatch readers are welcome to nominate their own ‘Enfield Community Hero’ – someone who you think has gone above and beyond to help support the local community. Simply email your nomination to [EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com](mailto:EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com)



# ADVERTISE WITH US

Enfield Dispatch is 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!

Placing adverts with your independent community newspaper supports us to deliver more high-quality local journalism in the borough.

We distribute 15,000 free copies to readers via local news stands, community venues and door-to-door, with a total estimated readership of 45,000 people.

## According to our reader's survey:

- 88.6% of Dispatch readers feel more engaged with the local community as a result of reading our community newspaper
- 91.9% of our readers say that the Dispatch informs them about local issues and campaigns they wouldn't otherwise know about
- 66.7% of readers say that the Dispatch tells them about local organisations they wouldn't otherwise be aware of
- 33% of our readers attended a local event in response to seeing it in the Dispatch

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Jane Mace, Jane Mace Family Mediation

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Email [klaudia@socialspider.com](mailto:klaudia@socialspider.com)



Enfield rock act King Cujo first formed in 1998 Credit Jamie Taylor/Homble Photography

## Enfield's kings of rock return

King Cujo bassist Ben Keep on how the band ended up back in the studio after a 15-year break

**W**hen my Enfield-based band Cujo split up over 15 years ago we left behind an impressive list of achievements from our nine years of blasting audiences with loud-and-proud alternative rock at blistering, sweat-filled gigs.

In that time, singer/guitarist Kevin Dawson, drummer Jamie Hook and myself as bassist shared stages with Jet, Razorlight and The Subways. We also won both the Virgin Radio Unsigned and ITV London Tonight Unsigned competitions, culminating with a slot at the O2 Wireless Festival.

We initially formed as a four-piece (with then-bassist James Norton and myself on guitar) and played our first gig at The Laurel Tree in Camden in 1998. We enjoyed two years of growing our fanbase before tragedy struck in summer 2000 when James was killed in a motorbike accident.

After a step away from playing, we decided to move forward as a three-piece as I switched to bass. We used playing together to push us through our grief, while honing our sound across three albums over the next few years.

By 2007, feeling our chance had passed, Cujo disbanded. Other than a handful of anniversary gigs for James, no new music or

***"Lockdown, Brexit, middle-age and anger at the government led us to create some of our most vitriolic, anxiety-induced songs and lyrics yet"***

gigs came along. Then, in 2020 during lockdown, Kevin suggested we record an at-home version of *Summer Song*, a track originally penned for James. We put it online, the fires reignited, and we soon returned to the rehearsal room together. At first, we had no

real agenda, but as new material began to surface, it wasn't long before there was talk of recording new music.

Now back with the new name King Cujo, we are about to release our third single in as many months, before releasing our first album in 18 years – *Lost Inside The Landfill* – in February.

With over 1,000 plays across 200 radio stations already, the music has our trademark edge, vitality and impact – while pushing our sound to greater, more layered depths.

Many bands reforming in their 40s dampen the urgency and high-octane energy with their new output, but the mix of lockdown, Brexit, middle-age and anger at the UK government has led us to create some of our most vitriolic, anxiety-induced songs and lyrics yet!

Find out more about King Cujo:  
Visit [kingcujo.com](http://kingcujo.com)

## Chickenshed has plenty to offer this spring

Susan Jamson introduces the Southgate theatre's spring programme

**A**s we look forward to spring, there is no better place to start than Chickenshed. Our spring season is packed full of different events and activities and there really will be something for everyone to enjoy.

We have some brand new writing to look forward to at our studio theatre this February, with a bit of a twist! *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Theatre* will be an evening of short monologues, duologues and small cast pieces, based on the theme of storytelling. Our annual spring show in March, *Rush*, focuses on imperialism, migration and gentrification and is told through the eyes of three women. This powerful new musical – combining music, movement, dance and multi-media – tells their stories as they are connected in ancestry, united in spirit, but divided by experiences of oppression echoing across the centuries.

For our younger audiences, *Tales from the Shed* and *Planet Play* return for a new season, and our friends at Baby Broadway are back with a new show, *Baby Gospel*, as well as their much-loved family concert.

Our music events include an evening with our Chickenshed co-founder Jo Collins, who, together with various musical friends, invites you to join her for a set of eclectic covers, from rock to soul, funk, folk and more. Our popular comedy evening, *Friday Night Funnies*, serves up a host of top comedians helping warm you through laughter even on the coldest of evenings.

We also have an amazing selection of workshops for children and adults – whether dance, acting or performance, there's sure to be something that takes your fancy. And why not come along to our community choir and sing your way through the start of the year?

Finally, please take a look at The Lost Records Project, exploring how we connect our stories to music. With an opportunity to join any or all of nine exciting creative sessions this spring term, joining means you'll become a part of Lost Record's cast, crew, and creative team. The project will culminate in a performance in the summer and is created by Chickenshed's 'Space Between Us' community.

We know that our uncertain financial climate at this time can make it difficult to plan outings, so we have frozen our ticket prices for another year and we really hope that Chickenshed can be the place you come to for some all-important arts and culture. We have also launched a spring season offer of 15% off ticket prices when you book for more than one event – simply book two different events online and your discount will be applied at the checkout (please note the offer excludes workshops and events must be booked at the same time to qualify for the discount). The offer applies to bookings made up until the end of February.

We really look forward to welcoming you to Chickenshed this spring season and we hope to see you very soon.

For more information and to make a booking:  
Visit [chickenshed.org.uk](http://chickenshed.org.uk)

Chickenshed's 2021 spring show





Salmon fillet with mash and samphire



# Loving La Vida local

Neil Littman continues his tour of the borough's best restaurants with a trip to newly-opened La Vida Café and Bistro in Enfield Town

**W**elcome to my first eating-out review of the year after a bout of flu in December – which prevented me going anywhere for nearly three weeks in the run up to the festive season!

Since returning to health I've travelled into London a few times (between the rail strikes) and had some interesting meals, including a greasy spoon 'caf' in Soho that is probably one of the last of its kind, and a Malaysian street-food restaurant in Euston. What they had in common was good value for money, which is what we are all looking for at the moment and is something I want to focus on.

The problem venues with rising costs face is whether to raise prices or to serve smaller portions and risk losing customers. One local pub I visited recently seems to have done both – serving a meal that disappeared in three mouthfuls and charging me £15.50 for it!

More positively, at the end of last year the BBC published the results of a survey of London boroughs reporting how

businesses had been affected by the cost-of-living crisis and the result for Enfield was a 4% increase in the number of restaurants (it may have included coffee shops as well).

One local restaurant that has opened recently is La Vida Café and Bistro in the centre of Enfield Town, at the location previously occupied by The Art Town. It fills an important gap as an all-day bistro offering an excellent breakfast menu as well as lunch and dinner.

In early January myself and a companion visited La Vida on a rainy evening, when we had a great view from our table of Enfield Town's glittering Christmas tree despite it being after the Twelfth Night. Arriving to find we were the only diners in the whole venue, I felt a bit



Both starters

foolish for reserving a table!

The restaurant is surprisingly large with a nice interior and an interesting choice of rock-orientated background music that wasn't overly loud. Whatever La Vida lacked in atmosphere from its empty tables, it more than made up for with its customer service.

We ordered two gin and tonics and starters to share; salt and pepper squid and spinach and feta filo parcels. While the squid was a disappointment (it tasted like scampi), the main courses were a vast improvement in terms of both taste and portion sizes. We had lamb kofte with bean salad and harissa hummus and salmon fillet with mashed potato and sautéed samphire and asparagus.

We didn't realise La Vida closed early on a Sunday so we had no time for dessert, but our bill still came to £61 plus service – not the cheapest in Enfield Town but enjoyable nonetheless.

**La Vida Café and Bistro can be found at 29-30 The Town, Enfield EN2 6LU. It is open on weekdays from 8.30am until 10pm, Saturdays 8.45am until 10pm, and Sundays 8.45am until 8pm. To book:**

**Call** 020 8363 6584  
**Visit** [lavidabistroenfield.com](http://lavidabistroenfield.com)

# 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](mailto:enfielddispatch@socialspider.com) by **Monday 13th February**.

## FILM

### Talkies Community Cinema presents 'Honeyland'

Thursday 2nd February, 7.45pm  
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

Honeyland is a miraculous film shot over three years after beginning as a nature conservation video. It follows the life of Hatidze, an amazing middle-aged woman, who lives with her ailing mother in an otherwise abandoned village in the mountains of North Macedonia and harvests honey from wild hives.

**Tickets £6.50**

**Visit** [talkies.org.uk/events/honeyland](http://talkies.org.uk/events/honeyland)

## COMEDY

### Electric Mouse Comedy

Friday 3rd February, 7.30pm-10.30 pm  
The Southgate Club, 17 Chase Side, London N14 5BP

On the first Friday of every month we bring you the best in stand-up comedy. Three top comedians are hosted by Gary Colman. See social media for updates on acts.

**Tickets £10**

**Visit** [monkeysbloodproductions.com/comedyclub](http://monkeysbloodproductions.com/comedyclub)

## BRUNCH

### Free Sunday Brunch

Sunday 5th February, 10am-12pm  
CRM Agape House, Raynham Primary School, Raynham Terrace, Edmonton N18 2JQ

A free Sunday brunch, open to everyone with no restrictions. We provide a hot meal, drinks and sandwiches.

**Free entry**

**Call** 07951 881 991

**Visit** [cragapehouse.org.uk](http://cragapehouse.org.uk)

## WORKSHOP

### Budgeting workshop

Wed 8th February, 10am-2.30pm  
Community House, 311 Fore Street, Edmonton N9 0PZ

This is a workshop for those who are not finance specialists but need to be able to deal with the financial aspects of running an organisation. Training covers budgeting techniques, monitoring and the basics of full cost recovery.

**£15 per delegate**

**Visit** [enfieldva.org.uk](http://enfieldva.org.uk)

## KARAOKE

### Karaoke and Cocktails

Saturday 18th February, 7pm  
Millfield Theatre, Silver Street, Edmonton N18 1PJ

Let loose and have a great night at Millfield! Enjoy singing your favourite songs, alongside our brand-new cocktail menu. Dance to the tunes of our resident DJ, while you spend time with friends or make new ones. You'll find something for everyone here – no matter what kind of music you love!

**Tickets £5**

**Visit** [millfieldtheatre.co.uk](http://millfieldtheatre.co.uk)

## TREES

### Enfield Chase Restoration Project

Fridays and Saturdays, 10am-2pm  
Rectory Farm, The Ridgeway, Enfield EN2 8AA

This is now the third year of Enfield Chase Restoration Project, one of London's biggest tree-planting schemes. Sign up for volunteering via Thames 21 and join us for one of our twice-weekly sessions. Wellies will be provided but bring your own lunch!

**Free to volunteer**

**Visit** [thames21.org.uk/events](http://thames21.org.uk/events)

## KIDS

### Mammoth movie meal deal

Every Saturday in February, 10am  
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

Join us at the Dugdale for a mammoth movie meal deal! In celebration of the Enfield mammoth skeleton now being put on proud display in our new museum, we are putting on a special kids club with a workshop, mammoth-themed movie and, for those aged under twelve, a free hot lunch.

**All tickets just £5**

**Visit** [dugdaleartscentre.co.uk](http://dugdaleartscentre.co.uk)

## WALKING

### Active Enfield's free walks

Every Tues, Weds and Thurs  
Jubilee Park, Broomfield Park and Enfield Town Park

Active Enfield is running regular walks every week, in three different Enfield borough parks. No booking necessary.

**Free to join**

**Visit** [activeenfield.uk](http://activeenfield.uk)



## AROUND THE BOROUGH

## ENFIELD TOWN

## Blue 'plaques' reveal hidden histories of high street businesses

BLUE 'PLAQUES' HIGHLIGHTING the history of local business premises have been unveiled.

The Enfield Society has funded the creation of ten stickers – which resemble the familiar blue plaques erected by English Heritage on buildings of historic interest around London – for display in the windows of businesses in Lancaster Road. They tell a variety of stories about the history of particular premises, including a former pub run by the same family for nearly a century and a greengrocer who killed her husband.

The 'plaques' were created by Simon Warren, who runs an organisation called Here Before Us and has created 215 such plaques around the country to celebrate the forgotten lives of long-gone local residents.

Alison Yates, who helped co-ordinate the installations along Lancaster Road, told the *Dispatch*: "We had this project to try to cheer up the road and we are trying to do something to increase the footfall."

Last year colourful flower pots and decorations were hung from items of street furniture in Lancaster Road after being created by gift shop owner Kerrie Bullen, but later mysteriously disappeared. Alison said: "We want people to use their local shops a bit more, and this was an idea to do something



Next to one of the new blue 'plaques' adorning a former pub in Lancaster Road are (from left) John Cole from The Enfield Society, Simon Warren from Here Before Us and Philippa Gardener, whose great-grandfather Benjamin once ran The Holly Bush pub

that could not be removed."

Simon said the project was also about trying to "keep people in the high street instead of going to out-of-town shopping centres".

One of the plaques celebrates the history of a former pub, The Holly Bush, that was closed around a decade ago and is now a small supermarket. It was run by the Chandler family between 1871 and the mid-1950s and the great-granddaughter of former publican Benjamin Chandler, Philippa Gardener, told the *Dispatch*: "It is part of our family history and we still talk

about it. Benjamin was quite a character, he used to take people to the races in his charabanc. He was very well known around here because of how kind he was and his good deeds for local people."

Not all of the blue plaques tell such heart-warming stories, however. The one that now adorns Kerrie's shop, Boho Flo, recounts the tale of greengrocer Mary Ann Dearman, who killed her alcoholic husband in 1907 and was convicted of manslaughter – but was only imprisoned for three days because of "extenuating circumstances".

## EDMONTON

## Call for action over water pollution

BY FRAN DI FAZIO

A WATER POLLUTION INCIDENT in Pymmes Park sparked renewed calls for action to fix long-running problems.

The Friends of Pymmes Park voluntary group raised the alarm after a faulty boom across a lake in the Edmonton park – fitted by Thames Water – floated away. It allowed rubbish and "gunk" to flow into the lake unimpeded for several days. The booms have since

been replaced but the incident led to renewed calls for action.

Water pollution is a big problem along the whole course of Pymmes Brook, which flows into Pymmes Park, often because of foul water contaminating surface pipes and misconnected domestic drains. Voluntary group Pymmes Brookers wants more co-ordinated efforts to solve long-running pollution problems. Its co-chair Alison Archer told the *Dispatch*: "Often property owners aren't aware their drains

are misconnected, but they're effectively draining their sewage water into rivers. This has a massive impact on health and biodiversity."

Regarding the Pymmes Park incident, a Thames Water spokesperson said: "The booms are a temporary measure and are checked to ensure they remain in place. We continue to work with local stakeholders and the council to support businesses and ensure misconnections are resolved as swiftly as possible."

## PONDERS END

## Cycle lanes installed

NEW CYCLE LANES HAVE BEEN installed along Ponders End High Street, finally completing a 4.5-mile continuous segregated route along the A1010.

The first stage of 'Cycleway 1' in Enfield was completed in 2018 between Edmonton Green and Ponders End. The second stage joined Ponders End and Freezywater in 2020. However, not until now have segregated cycle lanes been provided for Ponders End itself. As part of the work, two new zebra crossings have been installed and the road layout has improved to allow vehicles to pass buses when at

bus stops. The speed limit has also been reduced to 20mph.

While the bus stops have been upgraded, the use of 'bus stop boarders' that force passengers to disembark directly into the cycle lane have previously been criticised for their impact on people with a visual impairment.

Rick Jewell, Enfield Council's cabinet member for environment, said: "I am delighted the work has now been completed and I can already see how the improvements will enhance the journeys of people walking and cycling in the high street."

## ENFIELD WASH

## Postal worker gets the sack over dumped mailbags

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A ROYAL MAIL POSTAL WORKER has "left the business" after at least seven mailbags of undelivered post were dumped at a housing estate.

A resident of Kettering Road Estate, Mark Bellas, first raised the alarm in December after the estate's caretakers told him they had found mailbags dumped inside communal bins. While some were sent for incineration, other bags were retrieved and found to contain post addressed to homes in Walthamstow.

Complaints to Royal Mail went unanswered at first, but two

weeks after an article about the mysterious mailbags appeared on the *Dispatch* website last month, a spokesperson admitted that one of the company's employees had been behaving in an "unacceptable" way.

They said: "The security of customers' mail is a high priority for Royal Mail. We have investigated this incident and identified an employee who was behaving in an unacceptable manner. The employee has left the business. We are working hard to make sure that all affected post is redelivered as soon as possible. We apologise for any inconvenience caused."

## SOUTHGATE

## Shop's licence suspended

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A SHOP HAD ITS ALCOHOL licence suspended after illegal cigarettes were found on the premises.

Councillors imposed the three-month ban on Maxi Food and Wine in Chase Side after trading standards officers seized 50 packets of illegal cigarettes during an inspection last year.

The discovery came after two packets of cigarettes that breached regulations were bought during a test-purchase exercise in March. During the August inspection officials also found 343 vapes and e-cigarettes, 202 packets of Viagra and 15 packets of Sildenafil – all breaching regulations. Drug paraphernalia was displayed for sale and cannisters of nitrous oxide, or laughing gas, were found on the premises.



Queen Elizabeth II Stadium, a listed building, does not currently provide all the facilities needed to take Enfield Town FC to the next level



## Towners reveal plans to upgrade QE2 Stadium

BY ANDREW WARSHAW

As they drive towards their goal of reaching step two of the non-league pyramid – National League South – Enfield Town FC are exploring the possibility of expanding their home ground.

The proposed new facilities would provide improved matchday facilities, additional classrooms for the club's burgeoning academy and a centre for community activities.

The club has made great strides since its formation 22 years ago, but remains fully aware that the infrastructure at QE2 Stadium needs to support the ambition of playing at the highest sustainable level.

The first step has been to commission property consultants Pellings to provide drawings for a prospective new facility to complement the current clubhouse, which is a listed building. If approved, the new structure will be sited in an area adjacent to the turnstiles and behind the current cabins used by the academy. It is anticipated to include an enlarged clubhouse, enabling the current one to be used for as-yet undecided alternative purposes.

Towners chairman Paul Reed says: "It is essential for our future success that we align our growth both on and off the pitch.

"Given the progress of our football and community activities it is vital that we have the right infrastructure in place to support the development of our club moving forward.

"With aspirations for our first team to be playing at step two and with a thriving education programme, youth, ladies and community development sections, we feel that now is the right time for new facilities to enable the club to continue to thrive."

Pellings' support has extended to sponsoring the club's community sports development-run specialised coaching sessions for children with disabilities who are specifically recommended by the NHS. The firm also sponsored the home game against Carshalton on 28th January.

Mark Brown, managing director of Pellings, says: "We are extremely proud to

have had the opportunity to support such a fantastic charity and to work with Enfield Town Football Club."

Asked more about the club's long-term plans, Paul Millington, Town's vice-chairman and trustee of Enfield's community sports development, told the *Dispatch*: "It's early days and we obviously need to look at how to finance the project. But it's potentially a hugely exciting development and shows how ambitious we are.

"Pellings' involvement has been hugely helpful, as is their support for our disability sessions. Providing the opportunity for children of all abilities to enjoy the game is so important. We have seen at first hand the benefits these sessions have."

Local councillors have also praised the work the club is doing in the community. Ayten Guzel, who represents Southbury ward where QE2 Stadium is situated, said: "I am proud to have the UK's first fan-owned football club in my ward, and I am pleased that they are looking for ways to contribute to the community and make the club more sustainable.

"Grassroots sports are valued and supported in Enfield – they provide great opportunities for our residents to come together and stay active."

Fellow Southbury councillor Mahmut Aksanoglu added: "We are actively involved with the club and have a great working relationship with them. We will continue to work with the club in their future plans."

The importance of the club's work with children with disabilities cannot be over-emphasised according to Tony Gibbs, a regular Town fan who acts as the liaison link between the parents, the club and the NHS at three six-week sessions per year staged at the club's 3G training pitch. "I'd never been involved in anything like this before, but I thrive on it," Tony, who turns 80 this month, told the *Dispatch*.

"When you are doing voluntary work, it's so rewarding. You get back far more than you are able to give. It's extremely positive not just for the children but also the adults and carers."

## School pupils get a touch of world cup glory

World cup winner Cristian Romero surprised children at Suffolks Primary School in Enfield Highway when he dropped by last month – along with his winner's medal.

The Tottenham Hotspur defender featured in all seven of Argentina's matches in Qatar as he helped his nation lift the biggest prize in world football, with a dramatic penalty shootout eventually seeing them over the line after a thrilling final against defending champions France.

In January Romero visited Suffolks to share a piece of the team's glory, and even took part in a football session delivered by Tottenham Hotspur Foundation, taking time to give students some football tips, sign autographs and take photos.

His visit forms part of the wider work the club and its charitable foundation is doing to create "life-changing opportunities and experiences for young people".

Speaking at the event, Romero said: "It was great to come to Suffolks Primary School

and have the chance to meet the students and share my winner's medal with them. It's important to give back to our community and hopefully, I've inspired the children and given them a day to remember."

James Wheeler, deputy headteacher at Suffolks Primary School, said: "It has been brilliant having world cup winner Cristian Romero come in and surprise the children today. Having him bring in and show his gold medal is incredibly inspirational to the students and helps to remind them that hard work pays off. A big thank you to Tottenham Hotspur for making this happen."

One student added: "I loved watching the world cup so to meet Romero was a dream come true. He helped us learn some great new football skills and it was really cool to see his gold medal."

Spurs have relationships with local primary schools across Enfield and pupils are often invited to the club's Hotspur Way Training Centre in Bull's Cross to take part in football sessions.



Cristian Romero, with his world cup medal, on his visit to Suffolks Primary School Credit Tottenham Hotspur



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