

ENFIELD DISPATCH

No.55 THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

APRIL 2023

PHOTOGRAPHY

A new book captures life on the Hertford Loop railway line

P. 8-9

NEWS

Housing chief rejects calls to resign over estate "failures"

P. 10

SPORT

Tough run-in for Enfield Town FC as season reaches climax

P. 15



WHEN THE MORNING bell goes at Brimsdown Primary School, it's not just the children who start making their way to class. A group of parents (including Uthaya Ramanan, Stacy Manderson and Flutur Shegaj, pictured above) have been on a six-week maths course, designed to teach them skills such as budgeting and helping children with homework, while also opening the door to future opportunities. It's the first in a series of free training courses Brimsdown headteacher Matthew Clifford is offering to parents and is being run with help from the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (Conel). Matthew explains: "We know that childcare responsibilities and cost are barriers to adult learning and we wanted to address this by offering parents the chance to access free courses during the school day, when their children are in lessons."

Council spending £500k per month on hotels for homeless families

BY JAMES CRACKNELL & SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Enfield Council is now spending more than half-a-million pounds per month on hotel rooms for homeless families amid a rapidly escalating housing crisis in the borough.

Far fewer private rented homes being available in Enfield combined with a rise in demand has seen the council forced to drastically increase the use of commercial hotels to meet its statutory duty to house families made homeless – often after they are evicted by landlords.

A council finance report published last month revealed the full scale of the problem, showing that approximately 200 families were now holed up in commercial hotel accommodation with a nightly cost to the council of around £100 per room. It showed the monthly cost surpassed £500,000 in February this

year – a more than ten-fold rise in under twelve months.

This has led to a total net spend on temporary accommodation of nearly £12million for 2022/23, twice the budget that was set at the start of the year and something forecast to rise further. The report states: "On average, the use of a single hotel room for one year represents £20k more cost than traditional temporary accommodation options."

"The deteriorating market conditions and the inevitable increase in demand [...] mean that without further actions, the budget pressure for 2023/24 could well be greater than we have seen in 2022/23."

The council has struggled to cope with one of the highest rates of homelessness in the country in recent years but had managed to slightly reduce the total number of households in temporary housing between 2019 and 2022. However, homelessness is now again on the

rise, with the council's over-reliance on hotels said to have arisen amid a "perfect storm" of rising evictions and rents.

The most recent figures show more than 3,000 Enfield households are still living in temporary accommodation, against a target to cut this to 500 in five years.

At a housing scrutiny panel last month, Richard Sorensen, head of the civic centre's housing advisory service, said the council had been forced to renegotiate with landlords to lease their properties at a higher rate. He added: "Over the past two years we have seen a 90% decrease in the supply of affordable private rented accommodation in Enfield."

"That is driven by landlords exiting the market. People are selling. For the first time since the post-war period, the private sector is shrinking."

The council is now considering using modular homes as a way of relieving homelessness.

The impact on families left to live in hotel rooms was made clear last month with the case of the Ramazani family, who spent four months living in Travelodge hotels – nearly three times the six-week legal limit for councils using 'bed and breakfast' style accommodation – before being found a flat two days after their plight was highlighted by the *Dispatch* (full story on Page 3). Writing on Page 6, Edmonton MP Kate Osamor also slams the way such families are being treated by the council, describing an "epidemic of apathy" at the civic centre.

Matt Burn, from campaign group Better Homes Enfield, said: "Issues in the private rental market have been exacerbated by Enfield Council's poor record for building new social rent homes that are genuinely affordable to local people, and made worse by a lack of investment in the existing council housing stock."




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Demands to reverse axe of rush-hour rail services at Edmonton Green

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

The leader of Enfield Council has called on the government to reverse a decision by a train company to axe all national rail services at Edmonton Green Station.

In the letter, Nesil Caliskan tells Conservative transport minister Huw Merriman that Greater Anglia's decision to no longer run any trains via Edmonton Green – ending its current two-trains-per-hour service at peak times – “will mean a longer and more difficult journey” for commuters.

Greater Anglia confirmed in March that its new timetables being introduced in May will see all existing Edmonton Green national rail services axed, with all services on the Hertford East branch going via Tottenham Hale instead. The move will significantly reduce rush-hour capacity at Edmonton Green, which is one of the busiest on the London Overground network, but Transport for London (TfL) has since insisted it is “confident there is sufficient existing capacity on our routes to meet this additional demand on our services”.

Cllr Caliskan also criticises the apparent lack of co-ordination between Greater Anglia and TfL and lack of “oversight” by the Department for Transport (DfT), with no plans in place to mitigate

the impact of the decision.

The council leader said: “While local people may be well-served by London Overground services, the additional two trains per hour on weekdays provided by Greater Anglia provides more capacity and a faster link to and from Liverpool Street.

“The cancelling of this service will mean a longer and more difficult journey for Enfield commuters into central London.

“Under Greater Anglia's new timetable, there will be two less trains per hour thanks to DfT's oversight.

“We are calling on you to step in and reverse the planned changes to this route or provide Transport for London with the resource to increase London Overground services, so our residents do not lose out.”

Asked whether TfL had plans to provide more services via Edmonton Green as a result of the new timetable gap, Rory O'Neill, TfL's general manager for London Overground, said: “We regularly review capacity on London Overground to ensure our customers can enjoy regular, reliable and comfortable journeys when using our services.

“We have carefully considered the impact on existing London Overground services following Greater Anglia's decision to no longer operate some peak services

between Hertford East and London Liverpool Street, and are confident there is sufficient existing capacity on our routes to meet this additional demand on our services.”

Enfield Transport User Group (ETUG) confirmed it was also not consulted about Greater Anglia's decision and stated: “We agree with Cllr Caliskan that the axing of Abellio [Greater Anglia] services via Edmonton Green should have been co-ordinated with an increased provision by TfL on the Southbury branch to Cheshunt. It presently has just two trains per hour, which is 50% of the mayor's minimum turn-up-and-go standard.

“It is essential that we see four trains per hour to both of the London Overground branches in Enfield, resulting in eight trains per hour from Edmonton Green to Liverpool Street.”

DfT has not commented on the letter sent by Cllr Caliskan but in response to a written parliamentary question about the timetable changes, asked by Edmonton MP Kate Osamor, transport minister Huw Merriman said: “Operators continue to respond to changing passenger demand levels and travel patterns and it is important they have the flexibility to do so. We will only be in a position to reintroduce meaningful consultations once demand has stabilised.”

Ex-cop jailed

A former Met Police officer who worked in Enfield has been jailed after admitting to a string of child sexual offences.

PC Hussain Chehab, aged 22, was sentenced at Wood Green Crown Court to five years in prison, after earlier pleading guilty to 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. He was also made subject of a ten-year sexual harm prevention order and a ten-year restraining order.

The sexual activity with a child offence took place between March and September 2019, before Chehab began working in the Met. Chehab worked as a safer schools officer for three months in 2021, working at an Enfield secondary school, but the offence is said to be unrelated to this role.

Before his sentencing, Chehab was dismissed from the Metropolitan Police following a disciplinary hearing at which it was decided he had breached the standards of professional behaviour in relation to ‘discreditable conduct’.

Pub fate

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The fate of the last remaining pub in Ponders End will be decided by unelected planning chiefs rather than councillors, it has been confirmed.

Civic centre bosses will determine whether The Goat in Ponders End High Street can be turned into a restaurant – despite demands for the application to be brought to a planning committee so elected members can have their say. If the council approves the application, it will leave the area without a single local boozer, following a wave of pub closures in recent years.

Campaigners have been battling to save The Goat, claiming the change of use would go against local and national policies that protect pubs. But a council spokesperson said that “following consideration of a call-in request and on the advice of legal and senior planning officers, the application will be determined under delegated authority”, adding: “This is in line with the way comparable planning applications have been treated and in line with legislation.”

Homeless family forced to live in hotels for four months

Edmonton MP Kate Osamor slams council over treatment of pregnant disabled mother, her husband and their toddler

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A homeless family-of-three – including a pregnant mother left disabled from a car accident – were forced by Enfield Council to live in hotel rooms for four months before finally being rehoused.

Reza Ramazani, his wife Elnaz and their two-year-old daughter Artemis were holed up at Enfield Travelodge for two months having previously being sent to live at two other hotels in Hertfordshire, after first declaring themselves homeless last November.

The family were confined to living in one room throughout this time and were not able to cook a single meal for themselves, instead eating fast food every night. The total length of their stay in hotels was nearly three times the legal limit.

But within two days of the *Dispatch* initially publishing the Ramazani family's story online, the council finally offered them a temporary accommodation flat to stay in.

Reza had earlier said that he felt the council had "ignored" their plight and that a caseworker even told them they were "lucky" to have a hotel room instead of

sleeping on the street. He said: "Life has become very difficult for us, we are stuck."

Reza, Elnaz and Artemis were previously living in Edmonton but became homeless after being evicted by family members they had been staying with. Reza is a British citizen while Elnaz is Iranian and arrived in the UK with Artemis on a family visa last year – Iran is currently undergoing a period of civil unrest, with the government violently suppressing a series of women's rights protests.

Reza had been working as a lorry driver but is now a full-time carer for Elnaz, who was left with multiple permanent injuries after a car crash in 2021. It means she is unable to walk unassisted – needing help with basic daily tasks.

Elnaz is due to give birth in June. Reza said: "I need to help her shower and go to the toilet, I am like a carer for her at the moment."

"For a pregnant woman it is not good to be having fast food everyday. We can't cook here and we can't afford to go to a restaurant."

Reza is unable to leave Elnaz alone for long because of her disability and it meant the family were spending the vast majority of their day in their small hotel room. "Our life has become very hard," said Reza. "She [Elnaz] is crying and screaming in pain, she cries every day."

"My daughter has nowhere to play. There is no playground, there is nothing, and I have to stay close in case she [Elnaz] needs help."

Local authorities have a statutory duty

to provide temporary accommodation for families declaring homelessness. When no properties are available, councils will often resort to using hotels, but the legal limit for placing families in this type of 'bed and breakfast' (B&B) accommodation is six weeks. At the time when they finally left the Travelodge, they had been living in hotels for nearly 16 weeks.

Edmonton MP Kate Osamor had slammed the council for not doing more to assist the family. She said: "Nobody should be treated the way Reza and Elnaz have been treated by Enfield Council. But they are not alone. I'm contacted every week by vulnerable homeless families who've been left in hotel rooms by Enfield Council."

"Housing is a human right, families who approach the council looking to exercise that right deserve to be treated with respect and dignity."

Shortly before the council offered the family new accommodation in a ground-floor flat, a spokesperson said: "We are currently working with the Ramazani family to move them into suitable accommodation, but Enfield and London face an acute housing crisis."

"Housing demand exceeds supply, and the private rented sector has effectively collapsed since the pandemic and recent interest rate rise. Across London, there has been a 120% increase in temporary accommodation landlords requesting their properties be returned, and an 80% drop in supply in Enfield."

"We will continue to lobby the government to offer more help to resolve the issue of providing genuinely affordably social housing in Enfield."



Reza Ramazani, his wife Elnaz and their two-year-old daughter Artemis were stuck in a hotel on the A10 for months

'Vanity' furniture and refurb spending by council slammed

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield Council has defended spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on new furniture at the civic centre after an ex-employee hit out at a "vanity" refurbishment of the chief executive's office.

The former staffer lambasted the council for spending £632,000 on a new "business area" for boss Ian Davis and also revealed the pressure civic centre staff are being put under by recent cuts. But the council claims the refurb will help save money in the long-term by making better use of space.

It came after Enfield Conservatives revealed the council spent around £665,000 on "lavish" furniture both at the civic centre and at the council's housing hub in

the space of two years – including several £1,100 chairs, £2,200 sofas and a £15,000 boardroom table. The council also spent nearly £400 on a football table.

The ex-staffer said they had decided to speak out on behalf of their former team, who were struggling to cope with workloads previously managed by twice as many people, and that they felt the civic centre had "never been run as badly" in the time they had worked there.

They said: "The team I left was understaffed [...] They now they have a recruitment ban on any further appointments. This is causing some real mental health issues within the entire department, which is one of the reasons I left. You have approximately four staff being asked to do eight or nine staff members' work – and that is the same throughout other

departments, either due to staff leaving or excessive pressure."

Regarding the spending on the chief executive's office, the ex-staffer said: "All this pressure on the staff, and the chief executive is spending £632k on his own vanity project that wasn't needed."

Tory councillor James Hockney discovered that the £665,000 spent by the council on new furniture in two years included 16 designer sofas for £2,231.90 each, ten high-backed chairs for £1,100 each, 32 "lounge" chairs priced between £825 and £975 – plus a "football table" for £394.90.

Cllr Hockney said: "This money could and should have been invested into front-line services."

A council spokesperson said: "The council's build the change programme seeks to reduce the amount of office space used

by council employees and the number of buildings it occupies. The programme also looks at under-utilised spaces and explores how to use them more effectively and efficiently."

"In regard to the business area at D Block, four teams as well as admin support – a total of 42 people – have been moved into this previously under-utilised space which was formerly a poorly-used corridor. The majority of the cost, around £490,000, is related to the replacement of the mechanical and electrical building services and [...] fully accessible toilets."

They added: "The mental health and wellbeing of all council staff is of paramount importance to the organisation. Offering a more flexible working environment goes towards our support for employees' mental health."

Making Heart Throbs grow fonder

Jim Yates from Heart Throbs on the growing success of the Enfield cardiac support group

Many readers may be surprised to discover that almost one in two adults in the UK have high cholesterol levels and that heart problems, in general, strike all age groups and affect people from all walks of life and all communities.

Last year in the *Dispatch* we featured some of the activities of Heart Throbs, our cardiac exercise and support group based in Enfield and focused on the importance of staying fit and making lifestyle choices to minimise the risk of further heart problems.

Since then, we have continued to increase our numbers of regular exercisers at our nine weekly one-hour classes (six at Holtwhites Sports and Social Club, one at St. Stephen's Church Hall and two Zoom classes for those who prefer to exercise at home).

We currently have over 100 members, with most engaging in regular exercise and support classes.



Heart Throbs runs a number of exercise classes around the borough

There is no contract or signing-on fee to join our group. Our monthly fees range from £25 to £40, depending on how many classes you wish to attend.

All our classes are safely supervised by suitably qualified instructors who encourage our diverse group of members to enjoy a more active and happier lifestyle. One of our members, aged 90, is setting an excellent example to us all by regularly attending two exercise classes every week.

Founded in 1990, Heart Throbs is a local, non-profit organisation affiliated to British Heart Foundation, with community amateur sports club (CASC) status and with connections to Chase Farm, Barnet and North Middlesex hospitals. As a result, many of our members are able to share insights into similar medical experiences such as medications, stents, bypass operations, emergency open heart surgery and replacement heart valves.

We also have a WhatsApp group

for messaging where we share jokes, news, advice, quips and cartoons to help liven up the odd dull day. During the last year, we have added many more exercise weights, items to aid balance, first aid kits and a digital projector to enhance our evening presentations. These monthly social evenings include a wide range of medical, lifestyle and topics of general interest, such as physiotherapy, stress and anxiety reduction techniques. In the coming months, we will have a Q&A with a senior local cardiologist, a talk by a former BBC foreign correspondent, information on lasting power of attorney, plus a quiz night and a summer barbecue.

While we are primarily a support group for people with heart problems, we are also welcoming to partners, family members, friends and others in the wider local community.

Find out more about our Heart Throbs:
Call 07938 926 772
Visit heart-throbs.org.uk

Annie Smol became a trustee with Age UK Enfield after asking people living with dementia to help contribute their stories for a new theatre show



Jump on our board of trustees

Age UK Enfield trustee Annie Smol invites others to apply for a new vacancy on the charity's board

I volunteer as a trustee for Age UK Enfield and we are looking for more people who can join our board of trustees.

We are passionate about the older people of Enfield and run a wide range of services and activities for its many communities. We are also keen to reflect the diverse range of communities on our board as well as find someone with specific areas of expertise, such as human resources, IT, fundraising and business systems, so please do think about applying to share your skills and life experience if you think you might fit the bill.

So, why am I a trustee? I work in the arts and originally asked members of the Parker Day Centre for people living with dementia to help contribute their stories for a new theatre show. I was so impressed with the dedication and commitment of the staff to improving the lives of older people that I wanted to help.

I had also used Age UK Enfield myself as a carer for older parents and found this charity to be truly a life saver, with a personal and caring approach when you are trying to come to terms with a diagnosis of dementia and find your way through the maze of issues and benefits for older people.

If you want to give back to your community and support our older people in Enfield, please do follow the link below and apply. We look forward to hearing from you!

Find out more about becoming a trustee for Age UK Enfield:
Visit ageuk.org.uk/enfield/get-involved/volunteer/trustee

How to avoid getting scammed

Former detective Peter Barron, from Winchmore Hill, offers advice on how to avoid telephone fraud

We all place far too much trust in our mobile phones these days. When a known contact appears on your phone screen you (understandably) assume that it must be that person or organisation who is ringing you. Unfortunately, fraudsters have ready access to software to allow them to fake any phone number to convince a victim they can trust who they are talking to.

Let's run through an example. Your mobile phone rings and the number on the screen identifies the caller as your bank (if you have the number saved).

"Hello Mrs Evans, this is Roger Jenkins from the fraud department

at your bank. There is no need to panic, however we have discovered that your bank account number 12345678 has been hacked by fraudsters. They have not withdrawn any money yet, however, we need to act quickly to protect your cash."

If Mrs Evans queries the authenticity of the call, she is advised to look at the telephone number on the back of her bank card and compare it to that displayed on her phone. They are the same. If she is still not convinced, she will be advised to hang up and ring the number on the back of the card.

However, the fraudster actually stays on the line (and in some cases even plays a recorded dial tone down the line so the caller thinks she is making a fresh call). Mr Jenkins (the fraudster) then answers the new call as "Roger Jenkins, fraud department, how can I help you?"

Mrs Evans apologises for not trusting him but explains that she thought it better to be safe than sorry. Mr Jenkins compliments her on her vigilance, but

repeats that they need to move fast to save her money from being stolen. By this time, Mrs Evans is totally convinced she is genuinely speaking to someone from her bank and, if anything, feels slightly embarrassed for not trusting him immediately.

Mr Jenkins explains that as her bank account has been hacked, she needs to move everything from that account into a secure holding account in the same bank. Once the fraudster has been arrested, they will immediately transfer it back to her. He gives her the details of the "holding account" and, if she has access to online banking, he offers to remain on the line until the transfer is complete.

Once the transfer of all the cash has been made, he advises that if the money has not been returned to her account within seven days, she is to call him back. A week later, the money has not been returned, so she rings the number on the back of her card. This time she gets through to a genuine bank employee, but they have never heard of Roger Jenkins. Her

account is empty and the account to which it was transferred is empty too. The bank refuses to compensate Mrs Evans as she made the transfer herself – irrespective of the fact that was because someone had impersonated one of her own bank's staff using their official telephone number.

What can you do to avoid getting scammed? If you are called by someone who says they are from your bank, simply do not believe them. Take their name and tell them you will ring the bank back from a different phone – or better still, go into your local branch and make enquiries there.

Your bank will never ring you to discuss such matters. To avoid being called by fraudsters faking the bank's official number, save your bank's number, then block it! This will ensure fraudsters impersonating your bank cannot call you, but you can still call your own bank if you need to.

Report fraud or find more advice about avoiding fraud via Action Fraud:
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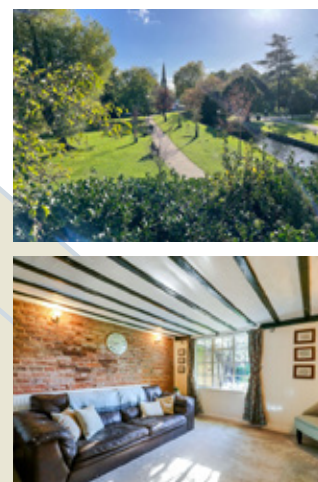
STUNNING 5/6 BEDROOM VICTORIAN FAMILY HOME – EPC F
Chase Green Avenue, Enfield, Middx EN2 £1,150,000 Freehold



CHAIN FREE

SOLE AGENTS

18TH CENTURY CHARACTER COTTAGE – EPC D
Gentleman's Row, Enfield, Middx EN2 £850,000 Freehold



NEW INSTRUCTIONS

SOLE AGENTS

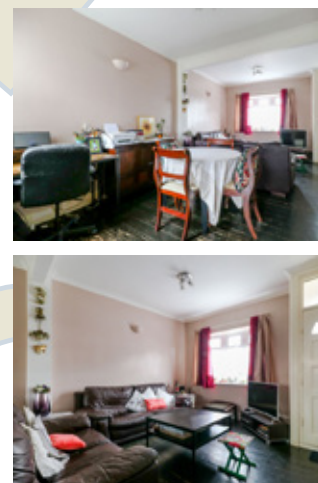
ATTRACTIVE TWO BEDROOM SEMI DETACHED BUNGALOW – EPC E
Monks Road, Enfield EN2 £475,000 Freehold



NEW INSTRUCTIONS

SOLE AGENTS

TWO DOUBLE BEDROOM OLDER STYLE HOUSE – EPC D
Scotland Green Road North, Enfield EN3 Offers in excess of £370,000 Freehold



CHAIN FREE

SOLE AGENTS

TWO BEDROOM RETIREMENT APARTMENT – EPC C
Ingleborough Cavell Drive, Enfield, Middx EN2 £275,000 Leasehold



NEW INSTRUCTIONS

SOLE AGENTS

ONE BEDROOM GROUND FLOOR APARTMENT WITH 151 YEAR LEASE
Gladbeck Way, Middx, Enfield EN2 £270,000 Leasehold



Enfield Council must do more to help homeless families

In our latest MP's column, Edmonton representative

Kate Osamor slams the council's treatment of families forced to live for weeks or months in hotel rooms

Over the last few months, I've seen a shocking increase in the number of homeless families being placed in hotels by Enfield Council.

This often leads to families living in one room without cooking facilities for months on end. One family of five who recently approached me have been moved from hotel to hotel for months. On multiple occasions they have been told by the council that a hotel room at one location had been booked for them only to turn up and find out that no room was available, leaving the family, which includes a four year-old child, out on the streets until 3am.

Another constituent who approached me recently was a wheelchair user who required an adapted bed. She was placed in a non-accessible hotel room, with no adaptations. One night she fell out of bed

and was unable to move to get help. She was left on the floor for hours.

These are no longer unusual cases. Every week I hear from families who have tragically found themselves homeless and have then been placed in a hotel room only to be ignored by the council for weeks or months on end.

Many families are booked into a hotel for a week and have no idea what will happen to them until the day their booking ends. In some instances, children have returned from school only to find they are locked out because their booking was ended without notice.

Vulnerable families, often with complex needs and disabilities, are being forced to go without access to basic facilities, like an oven or microwave or the means to wash clothing. Not only is it unlawful to place families in hotels for longer than six weeks, but it's also far more expensive than providing people with suitable homes.

The reason for the increased use of hotel accommodation by the council is clear. In Enfield there has been a 45% reduction in homes advertised for letting. At the same time, homelessness presentations have increased by 18% across London and there has been a 120% increase from landlords asking for their properties in use as temporary accommodation to be returned.

Supply has decreased just as demand has increased, on the back of 13 years during

Kate Osamor has been the Labour MP for Edmonton since 2015 Credit parliament.uk



"There is an epidemic of apathy from frontline council staff tasked with helping homeless families in Enfield"

which the Tory government has slashed local authority funding and destroyed what social housing stock we had left.

But that doesn't explain or excuse the way in which these families are being

treated. There is an epidemic of apathy from frontline council staff tasked with helping homeless families in Enfield.

The families I speak to find it almost impossible to speak to anybody at the council once they've been placed in a hotel room. When they are able to speak to somebody, more often than not they are met with a combination of rudeness, hostility and indifference. I know of multiple cases where residents have been told to be grateful they have a roof over their head and not to complain.

It will take a Labour government willing to rebuild our social housing stock, reform renting and reverse public service cuts to end the homelessness crisis. But Enfield Council doesn't need to wait for a Labour government to do better. Placing our most vulnerable homeless residents in hotels must be avoided at all costs and, when it can't be, the council must communicate with and not talk down to residents.

It's clear that there is a pervasive culture of indifference across many of the council's frontline services. It will take time and work for that to change but achieving that change should be a priority for the council.

Kate Osamor is the Labour MP for Edmonton. If you are a constituent you can get in touch:

Call 020 7219 6602

Email kate.osamor.mp@parliament.uk

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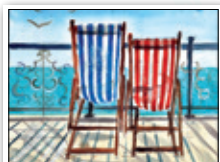
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Share your memories, stories, photos and memorabilia of the College to be included in the upcoming *Creating Futures* exhibition in October 2023 showcasing art, history, stories and workshops linked to the College and the community it has served since it opened in 1938.

To share, contact Tom Barden at marketing@waltham.ac.uk or 020 8501 8455

Standing up for Southgate

Elisa Morreale reflects on her first year as a councillor

Myself, Stephanos Ioannou and Chris Joannides were elected almost a year ago to represent Southgate ward. The first year of being a councillor has gone so quickly and, truthfully, it has been more challenging – but also more enjoyable – than I anticipated.

It is so hard to get things done and there are many obstacles for opposition councillors to make the positive changes that residents rightly expect and deserve. For example, I have repeatedly complained to the parking and traffic department regarding

the illegal and dangerous parking constantly occurring around Southgate, but I am always told to instruct residents to contact the parking shop for enforcement.

I want long-term, permanent solutions. Myself and my colleagues have made multiple suggestions, but these are always met with more barriers and complications as a result of poor management of the

“There are many obstacles for opposition councillors to make the positive changes that residents rightly expect and deserve”

department by the Labour administration. After a year of drawing the council’s attention to the issue and advocating for improvement, very little has

changed. However, I am hopeful that we will begin to work with the traffic and transportation team instead, to consider further measures for managing the issue.

We have also begun working on the obvious and significant issue of waste management and cleanliness. This is an issue which has become more prominent since the Labour administration introduced fortnightly bin collections three years ago. But I am looking forward to working with the street cleansing service to find sustainable solutions to these issues and ensure Southgate is always at its most beautiful and presentable.

There also remains the issue of the infamous low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs). Unfortunately, while the Conservatives in Enfield made gains at the local election last year, we did not win enough seats to take control of the council. For now, we will communicate the views of local residents and businesses to the council and scrutinise the decisions they make until we win control of the civic centre in 2026 and can finally remove the LTNs once and for all!

With all this said, I have loved every minute of being a councillor and I hope to continue representing residents for a very long time. Myself and my colleagues will adapt to the challenges to make Southgate the very best it can be!

Speaking of which, Southgate Civic District Voice, Enfield Council officers, Transport for London and others did a truly fantastic job of organising a 90th birthday celebration for Southgate Station.

Myself, Cllr Ioannou and Cllr Joannides enjoyed the celebration, particularly singing happy birthday, the informative station tour and seeing the old-fashioned 29 bus! It was really marvellous to celebrate and relish the community spirit. I hope to be involved in many more local events as both a resident and councillor.

Elisa Morreale is one of three Conservative councillors representing Southgate. Get in touch:
Call 020 8132 0547
Email cldr.elisa.morreale@enfield.gov.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 17th April**.

Defending teachers

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Last month members of the Enfield branch of the National Education Union (NEU) went on strike once again, with picket lines at schools across the borough and over 100 members marching through Enfield Town to join the national demonstration of an estimated 700,000+ striking teachers, junior doctors, university staff, civil servants, London underground staff, local radio journalists and Amazon workers. Enfield NEU members want to thank parents, residents and business owners who have shown their support locally for teachers. This includes parents bringing refreshments to striking teachers on picket lines!

Teachers would rather be in the classroom, getting on with what they do best. But they’ve said they can’t stand by and see colleagues experience hardship with yet another real-terms pay cut. And they can’t stand back and watch the exodus from teaching. Schools need more funds to meet the needs of our children, not less through unfunded pay awards.

Claire Docherty
Enfield NEU district secretary

Illegal parking

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Illegal parking is a big problem. Enfield Council will fine you for everything, but apparently not parking. Traffic officers are just walking around and closing their eyes, especially around pubs on Green Lanes, where cars park on double yellow/red lines and pavement, bus stops and bike lanes, in front of or directly on residents’ driveways – because they know they won’t be fined. When you call the council to report it, they just ignore you.

Martin Milev
Palmers Green

Contradictions

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Iwas disappointed at the casual acceptance by the chair of The Enfield Society regarding the proposed lease of Whitewebbs land to Tottenham Hotspur. It seems entirely incongruous to even open

discussions that would lead to a negative biodiversity outcome and a significant reduction in terms of public access to the land. Of equal concern is the contradiction with the encouragingly ambitious claims made in the council’s ‘blue and green’ strategy. This intention to release land to a commercial entity flies in the face of all the positive momentum that is building to protect and enhance our environment.

Anne Jennings
Palmers Green

Defending the NHS

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Last month Defend Enfield NHS members joined thousands of health workers who gathered at University College Hospital for a march to Downing Street as part of a nationwide NHS demonstration. Nurses were striking for a fair day’s pay. To say that significant pay rises are “unaffordable” is simply not true. What is true, is that the nation simply cannot afford to lose our treasured NHS.

There was massive support for an end to the crisis in the NHS to protect the health and safety of patients; restore the NHS to its former glory; stop unnecessary suffering and death; and ensure the NHS is there for future generations.

The outpouring of love for our NHS and the strength of feeling against the damage caused by government neglect was palpable. Speakers told of money being wasted on private providers, contracts abandoned as not being profitable, and patients being asked to pay up front in complete contrast to the founding principles of the NHS.

Frances Warboys
Defend Enfield NHS

Parking meters

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Enfield Council seems to believe that every driver should be forced to pay by telephone, whether they understand the system or not [Council axes all parking meters, Issue 54, Page 2]. I freely admit I don’t. They claim they consult, but as far as I can see it’s solely with each other.

Valerie Fisher
Bush Hill Park

Credit Hatim Bharmal



Capturing life on the Hertford Loop

Credit Nick Clark



John Cole introduces a new photo book celebrating the railway line through Enfield and beyond

The Friends of Gordon Hill Station and Edmonton Camera Club have produced a lavishly illustrated photo album featuring over 80 photographs of the Hertford Loop Line, the railway which connects Hertfordshire and Enfield with central London.

In May 2022, 13 photographers from Edmonton Camera Club were each assigned a station and asked to take images throughout a single week, representing the various activities in and around the Great Northern-managed railway line. They charted life from the quietest of times to the busiest of times, from the first train to the last. Their photographs include bridges, viaducts, cafes and many different trains, travellers and staff.

Duncan Primrose, station manager of the Hertford Loop Line, has supported the project and said: "It has been wonderful to support the Friends of Gordon Hill with this book, going from an idea to making the arrangements to seeing the book in print has

been an experience I'm proud to have been part of.

"The photos capture the Hertford Loop in all its glory."

The book was sponsored by Great Northern and The Enfield Society and will be launched as a paperback with a wrap-around cover photograph on 1st May. It is priced at £20 but if you pre-order via email you can get it for £15 (excluding postage). After the launch, it will be on sale from Luv Coffee at Gordon Hill Station.

We also have two copies of the book to give away! Just send one of your own photographs of somewhere along the Hertford Loop. Please ensure it's your work and that you are happy for it to be used by Friends of Gordon Hill Station to promote the book and use on social media (acknowledgement will be given).

To enter the competition and/or pre-order a copy of the Hertford Loop Line photo book:

Email friendsofgordonhillstation@gmail.com



Credit Nick Clark



Credit Malcolm Rapier



Credit Andrew Ridley



Credit Malcolm Rapier



Credit Dave Jackson

Chase Farm Hospital and (below) Labour MP Feryal Clark



Enfield North MP hits out at Chase Farm Hospital boss over reduced opening hours

The urgent treatment centre at Chase Farm has now been operating with ‘temporary’ reduced hours for seven months

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark has hit out at the boss of Chase Farm Hospital over ongoing reduced hours at its urgent treatment centre.

Feryal says she is “extremely concerned” with the earlier closure times of the urgent treatment centre, which have been in place since last July but were only intended to be temporary while Chase Farm filled a number of staff vacancies.

The facility offers residents needing non-emergency care the ability to turn up without an appointment, which Feryal says is something much-needed given the current backlogs and difficulties with accessing primary care via GP practices.

The opening hours were previously 8am until 10pm, but since 11th July the urgent treatment centre has been closing at 8.30pm each evening, with patients only being booked in until 7.30pm.

In a letter sent last month to Chase Farm chief executive Dr Alan McGlennan and seen by

the *Dispatch*, Feryal writes: “I am extremely concerned that the urgent treatment centre at Chase Farm is still operating on reduced opening hours.

“I have repeatedly raised my concerns regarding the reduced hours. My constituents need to be able to access the care they need.



“I’ve been consistently reassured that this is a temporary measure [...] It’s now been seven months.”

Although some new staff appointments have been made, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Chase Farm, has said “challenges” remain and that the temporary opening hours need to continue to ensure it can “consistently deliver

the best possible care”.

Attendances at the urgent treatment centre are said to be at a “record high” with between 120 and 150 attending each day on average.

Feryal is demanding reassurance that the temporary opening hours will not become permanent and adds in her letter: “I am told by the ICB [integrated care board for North London] that access and appointments in general practice are not an issue. Yet I consistently receive complaints from constituents that they are not able to get a GP appointment and evidently end up in the urgent care treatment centre.”

A Royal Free London spokesperson said: “Due to the continued challenges around staff recruitment and the high volume of patients attending, Chase Farm Hospital’s urgent treatment centre is currently operating at reduced hours.

“If you need urgent medical assistance and your condition isn’t life-threatening, please call 111 or, for those aged five and over, visit 111.nhs.uk and they’ll advise you what to do. This service is available 24 hours a day.”

Calls for housing chief to resign over “appalling failures” at Shires Estate

BY SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Enfield Council’s cabinet member for housing faced down calls to resign over the authority’s handling of building safety risks at an Edmonton estate.

Conservative opposition councillors called on Labour’s George Savva (pictured below) to quit over what they claimed was “poor management” of risk at Shires Estate in Edmonton, where two blocks – Cheshire House and Shropshire House – were recently found to be vulnerable to collapse in the event of a gas explosion.

But Cllr Savva and his Labour colleagues defended the council’s actions in responding to safety issues at the estate and voted against a motion calling for his resignation.

Both 18-storey towers failed structural safety tests carried out in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy, but the date for switching off the gas supply was initially extended from June this year to January next year so the buildings could be connected to the council-owned Energetik heat network, which is supplied by excess heat from the Edmonton incinerator.

However, in November, the gas supply to Cheshire House had to be cut off urgently after a leak was discovered – leaving residents using electric heaters and outdoor showers in sub-zero temperatures. The council has now switched off the gas at Shropshire House as well after installing electric boilers.

Civic centre bosses are considering various options for the future of the towers – including moving residents out permanently and decommissioning the buildings – as the cost of repair works is estimated to be £53million. A decision is due to be announced shortly.

At an extraordinary council meeting, the Conservative group tabled a motion calling on Cllr Savva to resign and apologise for “not treating the gas replacement as an emergency and making the risks clear to residents”.

Shadow cabinet member for housing Lee Chamberlain accused the council of “appalling failures to

properly manage the safety of residents living in Walbrook, Cheshire and Shropshire tower blocks”.

He said the council had chosen to leave residents in “structurally weak towers, with rusting gas pipes – towers which were at danger of structural collapse in the event of an explosion”.

Cllr Chamberlain added that recent safety measures had been implemented only after the council came under pressure from residents, the press and councillors. He added: “The cabinet member for housing should resign. The council is supposed to know the condition of its housing stock and plan accordingly. It is failing in this simple task.”

Council leader Nesil Caliskan hit back, saying the safety and wellbeing of tenants and leaseholders “is always our top priority” and accusing the Conservatives of political point-scoring. She added the council was already carrying out some of the actions proposed in the Tory motion, including rehousing residents and evaluating the civic centre’s property portfolio, and also claimed the council had acted “immediately” to install a new heating system in the blocks.

The council leader accepted there were “lessons to be learned” but accused the Tories of repeatedly opposing the administration’s investment in housing and said the situation at Shires Estate was “the consequence of decades of [government] underinvestment”.

Conservative group leader Alessandro Georgiou said: “We know the council left the gas running in Cheshire House even though it knew this risked collapse of the building. We know this council left many residents without water and heating. We know that the gas safety sensors were woefully delayed. And we know they only bothered to do anything in the end because it was raised in the free press.”

Responding to the calls for him to resign, Cllr Savva claimed the motion was based on “gossip or rumours just for them [the Conservatives] to pretend they care”. He said “not a single life was lost” as officers offered heaters, local accommodation and temporary showers to residents in Cheshire House.



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LICENSING ACT 2003 Notice Of Application For A New Premises Licence/ Club Premises Certificate*

Notice is hereby given that Your London Florist Ltd has applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Enfield for a Premises Licence/Club Premises Certificate to permit:

- The sale of alcohol not for drinking on the premises
- For the premises Your London Florist situated at Cattlegate Road EN2 9DX

The public register where applications are available to be viewed by members of the public can be accessed online by visiting <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/business-and-licensing/> and following the link to the Licensing Register. Email licensing@enfield.gov.uk to request a copy of the application within 28 days from the date of this notice. Any person wishing to submit relevant representations concerning this application must give notice by emailing licensing@enfield.gov.uk, giving in detail the grounds of the representation no later than: **28/04/2023**.

Representations received by post will not be accepted. Representations must include your full name and address. Representations must relate to one or more of the four Licensing Objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm.

It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application for a premises licence. A person guilty of an offence is liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level five on the standard scale.

Dated: 28/03/2023

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CRM Agape House Easter Service
Sunday 9th April 2023 @ 10am
Raynham Primary School (Early Years Building), Raynham Terrace, Edmonton N18 2JQ
All are warmly invited to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Refreshments will be served at the end of the service.
Call 07951 881 991
Visit crmagapehouse.org.uk

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Celebrating Edmonton's Bulgarian community

Hannah Bawden from Edmonton Community Partnership on how the charity is reaching out to Bulgarians in the area

We hosted our first community event at our new Pymmes Park premises last month – celebrating Bulgarian 'Liberation Day'.

It was a triumphant and happy day attended by around 210 residents, breathing life into the newly repurposed visitors' centre in the Edmonton park. The event was three years in the making and was a celebration of culture, diversity and community in Edmonton with traditional Bulgarian costumes, music, dancing and food.

Younger guests were treated to a brilliant outdoor show by performers from Chickenshed, to great excitement. Enfield mayor Doris Jiagge attended, along with deputy council leader Ergin Erbil and Edmonton councillors Thomas Fawn and Gunes Akbulut.

Cllr Erbil said that "today and



An event was held in Pymmes Park celebrating Bulgaria's 'Liberation Day' everyday we celebrate our borough's vibrant Bulgarian and Eastern European communities".

Representatives from the Bulgarian Embassy also attended and welcomed everyone to the event

as well as spending time speaking to residents and learning how they can offer more support.

Edmonton is home to a very large and growing Bulgarian population. As well as a celebration, the

event was also set up to support residents. There were a range of charities and local organisations to advise on homelessness, immigration and access to council services.

Trevor Blackman, chief executive of Edmonton Community Partnership (ECP), said: "Our team has spent nearly two years asking residents what they need and building trust and we are so pleased that they all came to join us."

The event was an important part of a three-year project funded by the National Lottery to reach out and support our 'hard to reach' eastern European and Roma communities and the success of this is a testament to the work carried out daily by ECP's dedicated outreach team and our local partners including Enfield Council.

One satisfied guest, Mr Stoyanov, who attended with his four young children said: "It was a unique atmosphere!"

A survey is open for people to give their views on the project



Art in the skatepark

Enfield artist Shay Press is leading on a collaborative art project

The welcome board at Edmonton Skatepark reads: "This is your facility."

Some of you may be familiar with the skatepark – officially called the A10 Wheeled Sports Facility – that sits next to the dual carriageway dividing Enfield and Edmonton. But few people are aware of Enfield Council's art programme to revamp and improve the park for its users.

As a local street artist, I have been visiting the site for the past few weeks and months getting to know the skaters and users of the park. Often I see the same faces, and sometimes some new ones, but always of interest to me is the range of ages and abilities that visit the park on a regular basis.

Despite the somewhat awkward location of the site, there exists a genuine sense of community and openness among the park users. It is this community element that is at the forefront of the mural project.

Having documented the skaters and BMXers of the park, and developed an understanding of the skating culture and its users, I'm opening the project to the wider community for a chance to get involved. An online survey asks people what kind of art they would like to see at the skatepark and whether they would be interested in joining a 'live mural' event in April. So please complete the survey to express your thoughts and ideas for the project.

After all, as a member of the Enfield community, this is your facility too.

Take part in the online survey on the skatepark mural project:
Visit survio.com/survey/q/K7D1E4V1T9C4Z3IOA

Taking performance beyond the stage

Jojo Morrall, Chickenshed's head of education, on the opportunities offered by the Southgate arts charity

At Chickenshed we take studying performing arts to the next level. On our courses students train alongside industry professionals and create theatre that shares experiences and shakes things up.

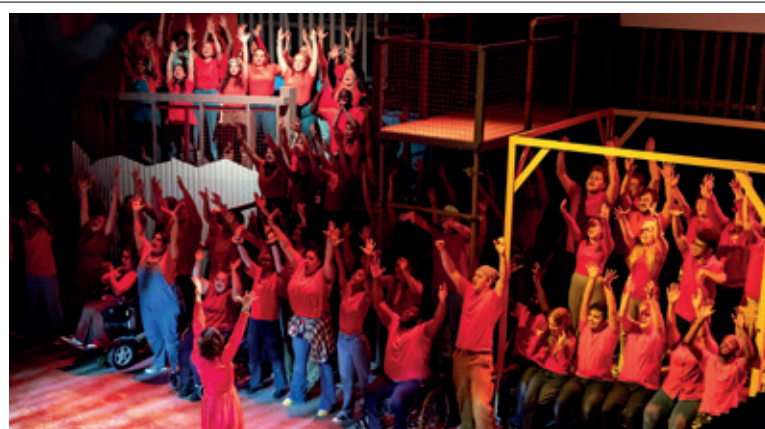
Across all of our three higher education courses, students have the opportunity to collaborate and create powerful productions to perform in our outstanding Rayne Theatre.

Studying performing arts at Chickenshed is open for everyone. We know that talent and passion cannot be measured purely by exam results or 'traditional' academic benchmarks. To produce outstanding results, we harness the potential of outstanding people, which is why our student groups are fully inclusive. As long as you meet the age requirements and can demonstrate previous experience, either within or outside formal education, Chickenshed could be the place for you.

Our level three and undergraduate courses in performing arts and inclusive performance are nationally recognised and accredited to both Edexcel and Middlesex University. Our BTEC level three extended diploma (rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted) has a 98% pass rate, while 70% of our foundation or BA graduates achieve at least a 2:1.

The BTEC extended diploma in performing arts is a two-year full-time course, nationally recognised as an equivalent to three A-levels. On this course our students explore music, dance, drama and musical theatre, gaining practical experience of inclusive theatre practice. This course is highly commended by external examiners for its quality, inclusivity and imaginative provision, and will equip you with a sound grounding in all of the disciplines that make up the performing arts.

Our foundation degree in inclusive performance is a two-year, full-time course, nationally



Chickenshed students get the chance to be involved in creating inclusive theatre performances

recognised as an accredited qualification, and provides a pathway to a full BA qualification.

We also offer a top-up year programme that builds on the achievements and learning outcomes from previous study at degree level, allowing students to achieve a full BA honours in inclusive performance and be a part of the development of diverse and innovative performance work. Dance, drama and musical theatre are all explored throughout the course, culmi-

nating in the opportunity to devise workshops and direct projects around issues that matter to you.

Chickenshed has a strong reputation for creating successful issue-based performance work that has had a real and lasting impact – our students become part of a team which continues to make a difference to people through theatre.

Applications to Chickenshed's performing arts courses are open now for September 2023. For more information:
Email antonijaj@chickenshed.org.uk
Visit chickenshed.org.uk/edu

Chicken gyros wrap at Tasty Gyros



Eating on a budget in Enfield

Neil Littman attempts to find the best 'affordable' places to eat a tasty meal out in Enfield

A friend was telling me that he often eats breakfast in his local branch of Wetherspoons but that they recently hiked their prices – a large breakfast with coffee has now gone up from £4.50 to £5.35. With not even Wetherspoons immune from inflation, I set out to see what other 'affordable' eating-out venues I could find around Enfield.

First stop, Café Brunello's in Winchmore Hill Broadway, for brunch on a Saturday morning. The menu is extensive, with eggs and muffins served several ways, plus veggie and vegan breakfasts. They also serve lunches. I had a tasty veggie breakfast with coffee for £10.50. The plate was almost the size of the table! The food is all good, and almost every seat was occupied, but the prices are

sadly about 20% higher than they were last year.

Next stop, midweek lunch at Kokoro in Church Street, Enfield Town. This is a Japanese/Korean fast food chain with over 50 branches in the UK. Not that long ago, Japanese or Korean food in the high street was a novelty but now, with Itsu and Wasabi leading the way, they are more commonplace. Kokoro's concept is simple; take a tray and order at the counter from a menu including sushi and hot dishes with rice, noodles, katsu curry etc. A large serving of sweet and chilli chicken with rice and diet coke set me back £11.50. The chicken had a good kick of chilli heat, but was too much for me to finish. Smaller servings are available if you prefer.

A few doors along from Kokoro is a newish venture decorated in a garish shade of yellow which claims to be "one of the most famous Greek fast food restaurants in London". Tasty Gyros mainly serves – as the name suggests – gyros, wrapped or open with or without salad and halloumi fries. But they also do Souvlaki and burgers and

it's a good lunchtime 'pit stop'. A chicken gyros wrap and drink cost £8.40. The fillings were good and I liked the tzatziki sauce, but it was messy to eat!

Finally, I went to Iroshushi in Palmers Green, which is another new addition to the borough. They serve sushi, bento lunch boxes, noodles, curry and teriyaki. It is possibly my favourite lunchtime food after pasta and a lifetime of greasy spoon meals, but it is a bit lacking in atmosphere. My bento box (14 pieces of sushi) and miso soup came to £10.50. What's interesting to note however is that it is cheaper to eat in than get a takeaway or delivery.

In the end, while I didn't manage to beat Wetherspoons prices, I certainly found some Enfield venues that beat them for taste!

Café Brunello's at 729 Green Lanes, Winchmore Hill, is open Monday to Friday, 7am–4pm, and Saturday 7am–3pm:
Visit cafebrunellos.co.uk

Kokoro at 9 Church Street in Enfield Town is open daily from 10.30am–10.30pm:
Visit kokorouk.com

Tasty Gyros at 54 Church Street in Enfield Town is open daily from 11am–11pm:
Visit tastygyros.co.uk

Iroshushi at 304 Green Lanes in Palmers Green is open daily from 11am–10pm:
Visit iroshushi.com



Salmon lunch box, Iroshushi



Veggie breakfast, Cafe Brunello's



Chilli chicken and rice, Kokoro

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 **Monday 17th April**.

BRUNCH

Free Sunday Brunch

Sunday 2nd April, 10am–12pm
CRM Agape House, Raynham Primary School (early years building), 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 cramagapehouse.org.uk

ART

Seasons Art Class Exhibition

Monday 3rd April, 2pm–5pm
Christ the King Church Hall, Bramley Road, Southgate N14 4HE

Seasons Art Class invites you to support and enjoy a display of our art! Exhibits are for sale at artists' discretion.

Free entry

Call 020 4542 7606

CROQUET

Introduction to Croquet

Tuesdays and Saturdays between 4th and 22nd April, 10am–12pm
Enfield Croquet Club, Bush Hill Park, Cecil Avenue EN1 1PS

Come and try one of the most addictive sports. We are running free introductory courses to croquet throughout April for those who may be interested in joining our friendly club. No experience necessary, but wear flat-soled shoes.

Free entry, booking essential

Call 07982 259 789

Email secretary@enfieldcroquet.org

Visit enfieldcroquet.org

DANCE

Dance classes with Studio YTA

Thursday 6th April, 10am–1pm
Studio YTA, 204 Chase Side, Enfield EN2 0QX

Join us at Studio YTA for our 'Let's Dance' workshop. Three dance classes consisting of commercial, jazz and lyrical styles. These are for intermediate or advanced dancers.

£10 per class or £25 for three classes

Call 07961 782 864

Email info@youngtalentacademy.co.uk

youngtalentacademy.co.uk

WOMEN

Spaces for Women

Thursday 6th April, 4.30pm–11pm
Fore Street Library 109–111 Fore Street, Edmonton N18 2XF

Celebrate women in Edmonton and discuss women's safety in public spaces. There will be artwork exhibited by artist Claudia Clare, spoken word poetry performances and readings from local women. There will also be a poetry workshop, film screenings, a panel discussion and live music.

Free entry

Visit bit.ly/3JOWauh

CHOIR

Aurora Choir presents 'Into the Light'

Saturday 15th April, 7.30pm
St Andrew's Church, Chase Side, Southgate N14 5PP

Join Aurora Choir for an Easter journey from contemplation to celebration. The programme includes excerpts from Handel's 'Messiah' and Stainer's 'Crucifixion' plus classics from Bach, Elgar, Byrd, Faure and others.

Tickets £12

Text 07421 220 754

JAZZ

Googlies Jazz Club

Thursdays from 7pm
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BRIDGE

Chicago Bridge

Tuesdays 2pm, Fridays 10am
Vita Pax Church, Bramley Road, Oakwood N14 4HE (Tuesdays) and St Mary Magdalene Church, Windmill Hill, Enfield EN2 7AJ (Fridays)

New players of any standard are assured of a friendly welcome!

Free entry

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AROUND THE BOROUGH

BRIMSDOWN

Day centre for disabled closed by council



Rose Taylor Day Centre in The Sunny Road, Brimsdown

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A DAY CARE CENTRE USED BY elderly people with visual and mobility impairments faces has been closed as part of budget cuts by Enfield Council.

Rose Taylor Day Centre in The Sunny Road, which hosts a range of social clubs offering activities such as fitness, gardening and arts and crafts, was closed at the end of March.

The council cited low attendance figures as the reason for the closure and said all residents who use the centre had been found an alternative day service within the borough.

Georgina Johnson, who is 80 and lives in Shirley Grove, branded the decision a “disgrace”. “We live on our own,” she said. “The only thing we have got for a bit of interaction is our club. They [the council] are just pushing us to one side. They are not there for us.”

Georgina said she had been visually impaired since 2004. “I had a husband then,” she added. “He passed away in 2020 and I’m finding things difficult. Without my club, I’ve got nothing.”

The day centre had been running for more than 40 years and hosted several long-running clubs, Georgina said, adding that some

residents may find other venues harder to reach.

“We are all 70 or over, and to take that away we have got nothing,” Georgina said. “Who do we talk to during the day?”

A council spokesperson said: “The decision to close Rose Taylor Day Centre was taken because the number of people attending the centre was low, even before the Covid-19 pandemic. Staff, people who use the service and their families were consulted throughout this process.

“We are pleased to confirm that all users of this centre have been found a day service within the borough and there was capacity for everyone to have a choice of location and service. This will enable the council to make better use of the resources available to help more people lead independent and fulfilled lives.”

BOWES PARK

Mystery over plastic plants in LTN boxes

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

MYSTERY SURROUNDS THE appearance of plastic shrubs in plant boxes installed as part of a low-traffic neighbourhood (LTN).

Enfield Council has denied planting plastic foliage at the junction between York Road and Brownlow Road and claims residents are likely responsible.

Large boxes dubbed ‘planters’ were used as physical barriers to prevent non-residential traffic from cutting through the LTN area when the scheme was launched in 2020.

Other planters in the LTN area contain real plants but have also been used to dispose of rubbish including drinks cans, bags of dog poo and takeaway boxes. A sign in the box containing the plastic plants states: “Replanting! Please – no poo bags or rubbish.”

The plastic shrubs sparked concerns when they appeared in February, with some on Twitter suggesting they went against the environmental goals of the LTN. But one poster



Plastic ‘shrubs’ in the Bowes Park LTN planters

claimed a resident had “thoughtfully provided some temporary colour pending council replanting”.

Kathie Burke, who lives in Highworth Road, said the plastic shrubs could have been installed by local residents “because they are getting fed up with bags of dog poo [in the planters]”.

She added: “I just think that we don’t need more plastic, however well-meaning.”

A council spokesperson said: “The plastic plants at the junction between York Road and Brownlow Road were not installed by the

council or its contractor.

“The council’s contractor is responsible for ensuring real plants are planted. The planters are incorporated into the council’s annual maintenance plan. Therefore, it is possible that the plastic plants were planted by residents.

“A particularly harsh winter has resulted in damage to a number of plants, which is why the plant beds may have been bare. Enfield Council officers are assessing the plant beds across the borough and will restore real foliage when the weather allows.”

BULLSMOOR

By-election date set

A BY-ELECTION IS TAKING PLACE this month following the resignation of a Labour councillor in March.

Esin Gunes announced she was standing down from the civic centre less than a year after being elected for the first time to represent the newly-formed Bullsmoor ward. Voters will now get to pick her replacement on Thursday, 20th April, with polls open between 7am and 10pm.

Explaining her reasons for

standing down, Esin said she was moving away from the borough with her young family and added: “It has been an honour to serve the residents of Bullsmoor ward and as part of Enfield’s Labour council.”

The deadline for postal vote applications is Monday, 3rd April and, for proxy vote applications, is Wednesday, 12th April. For the list of candidates and a preview of the by-election see the *Dispatch* website.

MERIDIAN WATER

Outgoing boss defends record

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

THE FORMER BOSS OF ENFIELD Council’s flagship housing scheme has defended his record and said the regeneration project is in “a very strong place”.

Peter George left his role leading the £6billion Meridian Water scheme, after more than eight years at the helm, to join Ealing Council as its strategic director for economy and sustainability.

Enfield Council aims to provide 10,000 homes and 6,000 jobs at the 85-hectare Meridian Water site in Edmonton, with the first new

flats now nearing completion. But the project has recently suffered a series of setbacks – including delays caused by high inflation and increased borrowing costs.

Peter said: “I’m really proud about what I have achieved during my time at Enfield.

“Meridian Water is very much underway: film studios, [manufacturing hub] Bloqs, a skills academy and train station all delivered, housing completions this year, and infrastructure works starting imminently.”

He added that Meridian Water “is in a very strong place to deliver the next stages”.

ENFIELD HIGHWAY

Block of flats approved

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

PLANS TO BUILD 38 FLATS ON the site of a former Enfield Highway pub have been approved despite failing to meet an affordable homes target.

Developer White Gold Properties won permission to build a six-storey block at 179 Hertford Road – a site that has stood empty since the demolition of The Black Horse public house in 2017.

The same developer won permission to build a smaller, five-storey development at the same site in 2019 but the larger scheme, approved during a meeting of

the council’s planning committee last month, will provide 13 extra flats, two commercial units on the ground floor and 14 parking spaces.

During the committee meeting, councillors repeatedly raised concerns over the plans to provide only eleven affordable homes. Making up 29% of the whole development, the affordable housing level is significantly below Enfield Council’s target of 40%.

Council planning officers said an assessment had shown providing more affordable homes was not financially viable. Following a debate, councillors voted unanimously to approve the scheme.

Freddie Buck with one of the trophies he won last year



Enfield Golf Club's junior sensation has the driver to succeed

Ten-year-old Freddie is taking on the adults thanks to hours of practice in his dad's garage

A ten-year-old golf prodigy is being touted as a potential future professional after a series of stunning successes.

Freddie Buck, who lives near Chase Farm Hospital and is a member of the junior section at Enfield Golf Club, has one of the lowest handicaps for his age group in the UK and has even begun entering men's competitions – and making cuts.

Proud dad Dan is now spending thousands taking Freddie to competitions all over the country, as well as abroad. "He had his first lesson when he was four and he hit the ball the very first time he swung," Dan explains. "From then on he was obsessed – he loved playing crazy golf at Trent Park."

Hitting balls around jungle animals and through water fountains was never likely to be enough for Freddie, however, so he joined Enfield Golf Club four years ago.

"As soon as he joined, his golf has just gone through the roof," says Dan. "He is now playing high-level competitions and if he can continue to play and get a positive

handicap by the time he turns 14, it is possible [he could turn pro]."

Also now a member of Hadley Wood Golf Club, Freddie enters competitions on an almost weekly basis. Recent successes include winning the US Kids British Masters and Irish Open and finishing as runner-up at the World Junior Championships in Portugal in February. Although Freddie has also qualified for the US Kids Golf World Championships in Pinehurst, North Carolina, Dan has never been able to take him there.

Freddie practices four hours every day on average, even hitting balls in the garage before going to school. But Dan says his son's success has also been helped by being part of Enfield Golf Club, where there is a thriving juniors section.

"We need to make sure he does it in the right way but he is improving quicker than we thought and now we have to think how best we can help him with the resources we have got.

"I come from a poor family and we could never have done this, so the fact we can do it with Freddie, we want to give him every opportunity."

Helping to guide him is Phil Tiddy, the juniors manager at Enfield Golf Club. Phil says: "In the 13 or 14 years I have been doing this, Freddie is by far the best junior we have had.

"Freddie even played in our men's club championships and made the cut!"

Dan also praises Freddie's coach Shaun Collins and says that he has opportunities at Enfield "that he wouldn't get at a lot of other golf clubs", adding: "I don't know any other golf club that gives up tee times for juniors at peak time on a Saturday."

Anthony Mocklow, the new general manager at Enfield Golf Club, says he is "excited by Freddie's discipline and drive" and that the ten-year-old is an example of why he considers it so important to develop a strong juniors section at the club.

Phil adds: "Over the years the strength of the juniors has built and now it is a place people come to as they know it is somewhere the kids can get on. The club recognises it has a social responsibility to bring young players through."

Tough run-in for Towners as season reaches tense climax

BY ANDREW WARSHAW

It's the business end of the season and the coming weeks could not be much tougher for Enfield Town FC in their promotion push – squeaky bum time, one might say!

Unlike the professional game, much of non-league football winds up at the end of April and the hurdles Town have to negotiate in order to reach the play-offs represent the hardest run-in of any of their rivals.

As if March hadn't been tricky enough, with five successive away league games – four of them on the Kent or Sussex coast – before the Towners hosted high-flying Hornchurch at the end of the month, April is full of challenging fixtures.

On Saturday 1st Town face play-off rivals Cray Wanderers at home, followed a week later by a trip to Horsham. Just two days after that on Monday 10th, local rivals Haringey Borough visit Donkey Lane for a bank holiday derby.

Then come the two fixtures which could ultimately decide where Town finish in the table; a visit on Saturday 15th to high-flying Bishop's Stortford, who also lost in last season's play-off semi-final and have been among the leading contenders all season; then the final outing of the regular season is a home fixture against Aveley, one of the surprises packages of this season, who have confounded predictions to challenge for back-to-back promotions.

Perhaps this season more than any other in recent years, the leading contenders in the Isthmian Premier Division have been incredibly evenly matched, swapping positions on a regular basis – aside from Hornchurch who have been in pole position for much of the campaign.

The promotion candidates are



Les with midfielder Sam Youngs

still separated by just a handful of points and although automatic promotion would represent Enfield Town's ultimate dream, the ambition has always been to emulate last season's play-off qualification – and then try to go further by winning the subsequent two games that would secure a first-ever move into National League South.

Whoever Enfield Town end up playing in the play-offs, it could well come down to goal difference, and the entire support base is holding its collective breath. Among their most passionate fans is Les Gold, a near-legendary figure and the Towners' oldest director at the age of 82. He still lives and breathes the club despite recently moving out of the borough after 27 years.

Among Les' many vital roles is to acquire as much sponsorship as he can, crucial financial packages without which non-league teams cannot survive. While he may have had a soft spot for Tottenham Hotspur since 1949 (he's famously on first-name terms with a string of ex-players from his time organising corporate dinners and charity events), Enfield Town, where he is held in high esteem, is very much his number one love.

Les' passion stems in part from his disillusionment with the way professional top-flight football has evolved. "It's far too commercialised these days," Les told the *Dispatch*. "I can remember paying £25 for a season ticket and watching the reserves on alternate Saturdays."

It also stems, he says, from the friendships he's made across the entire non-league fraternity, illustrated by the welcome he invariably gets in away boardrooms. "Where else can you stand outside the tunnel and all the players ask you how you are? That's what happens to me, whether we are at home or away. And that's what makes it all worthwhile."

His dream, Les says, is for Enfield Town to become a fully-fledged league team. That, of course, would mean three promotions rather than one, a somewhat over-ambitious aspiration for a club of this size. "People may take that view but I'd love it to happen one day," says Les, "even if I probably won't be around when it does."

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