

ENFIELD DISPATCH

Nº 59

THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

AUGUST 2023



An Enfield Grammar School pupil was crowned the winner of Jack Petchey's Speak Out Challenge 2023 after "capturing the hearts and minds of the audience". Ethan Bousoula's speech outlined the homophobia he experienced when revealing his sexuality and the valuable lessons he learned about himself along the way to becoming a better person. Jack Petchey's Speak Out Challenge is the world's largest public speaking competition for young people and is run in partnership with Speakers Trust – read the full story at enfielddispatch.co.uk

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Council debt among highest in UK

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Rising borrowing costs are putting Enfield Council under "extreme" financial pressure as new government figures show it has one of the highest total debts in the country.

Data released by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities puts Enfield in the top ten most-indebted English councils.

Three of those with greater debt – Woking, Thurrock and Croydon – effectively declared bankruptcy, via a Section 114 notice, after piling up huge debt mountains they couldn't sustain. Most others in the top ten are major cities, such as Birmingham and Leeds, which have greater capacity to borrow.

Bank of England interest rates rose to 5% in June and are forecast to hit 6.5% by year's end. This follows 13 years when interest rates were below 1%, during which period many local authorities built up significant long-term debt to finance capital spending – while annual grants from central

government were slashed.

Enfield Council's total debt is £1.12billion, with debt repayments now representing more than 10% of its net revenue budget. However, it insists its finances are "robust" with budgets managed "shrewdly".

Around £400m of council borrowing has financed the Meridian Water housing project. But the council's own budget report for 2023/24 warned this had "exposed" the authority "to a number of financial risks" with money borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board "to be paid back through land receipts". It means the project is "sensitive to wider market forces which impact sales values".

Enfield's housing crisis – in which hundreds of homeless families have been holed up in hotels – has created an additional £20m budget pressure this year that the council still needs to balance.

A local government policy manager at The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, Joanne Pitt, told the *Dispatch*: "Recently, we have seen a worrying

increase in councils issuing Section 114 notices in England, or talk of them being issued. They should be a last resort and while the reasons behind each one will be different, the reality for most is a failure to balance the budget, as witnessed in councils such as Croydon and Woking.

"A local authority can borrow money to finance capital projects, but it must be proportionate and in the public interest [...] The financial outlook for all councils is extremely difficult and requires clear vision, strong leadership and a workable financial plan, combined with effective management."

In response Enfield Council has pointed out that most councils suffering severe financial problems in recent years have had debts significantly higher per head of population, such as Woking's £19,000 per head and Thurrock's £8,600, compared with Enfield's £3,400. Croydon's short-term loans, which are more vulnerable to interest rate rises, represent 21% of its total debt compared with Enfield's 6.6%.

But James Hockney, the Con-

servative group's shadow cabinet member for finance, has warned that the council's high debt repayments will make big cuts necessary. He said: "We repeatedly warned Enfield Labour on the risks of piling up debt for years. They ignored these risks and now we are the tenth most-indebted council in England out of over 300 councils.

"What this means is huge cuts to frontline services to pay the debt interest. Already out of a £286m budget, £32m is spent on debt. This will continue to increase to £46m in three years' time.

"The government [last year] gave the council a core grant increase of 20% (£10m) – but the council's finances are in such a mess that this is outweighed by the debt payments bubble."

Matthew Fright from the Institute for Government has also called on Whitehall to help struggling councils. He said: "The government needs to get a firmer grip of the financial risks facing local authorities.

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Train crash driver jailed after admitting he fell asleep

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

The driver of a train that crashed at Enfield Town Station has been jailed after a court heard that he fell asleep and “endangered the lives of dozens if not hundreds of people”.

Inner London Crown Court heard last month that Erkan Mehmet, aged 41 of Middle Street in Nazeing, Essex, took the controls of a London Overground train on 12th October 2021 despite knowing he was “too tired” to work that day.

At 8.21am, as the train approached the buffers at Enfield Town, Mehmet fell asleep and “did not apply the brakes in time” according to a Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) report. It stated the train’s brakes were not applied for seven seconds, until Mehmet “made an emergency brake application just before the train hit the buffer stop” but too late to prevent a collision.

The train – with approximately 80 passengers on board – struck the buffers at a speed of 7.7mph, causing it to “ride up” and “come to a rest with its leading wheels about 800mm above the rails”. No-one was seriously injured or taken to hospital as a result of the crash, but one was treated at the scene for a leg injury and another suffered shock.

Mehmet had pleaded guilty to a charge of ‘endangering the safety of persons being conveyed upon a railway’ and was sentenced on 7th July to 16 weeks imprisonment. Although the RAIB report stated that Mehmet tested positive for a recreational drug – cocaine – after the incident, the prosecution in the case opted not to pursue an additional charge relating to this.

Mehmet had said that the



The aftermath of the crash at Enfield Town Station in October 2021

reason he was tired on the day of the crash was because he had been up late caring for his partner, who has a long-term health condition. However, he admitted he knew he

“You endangered the lives of dozens, if not hundreds of people”

should not have come to work and he had not reported his fatigue to his employer, who in turn had not identified that he was too tired.

In arguing that he should not receive a custodial sentence, Mehmet’s defence lawyer explained that he acted as a carer both to his partner and his mother, who also had a long-term health condition. Both family members gave evidence



Train driver Erkan Mehmet

in court to state that they relied on Mehmet for cooking, cleaning, help going to the toilet, and to get to medical appointments. However, he is not registered as their carer and had continued to work in the construction industry since resigning as a train driver.

Sentencing, Judge Kelleher said: “You were interviewed immediately and you said your

wife was unwell and you had been kept up late and you shouldn’t have come to work because you were so tired [...] you accept that you must have fallen asleep briefly at the exact moment the brake should have been applied.”

The judge added: “The micro-sleep fortunately happened when the train was travelling at low speed, but there was an obvious risk of a far more serious collision.

“The culpability is significant – you were trained not to come to work if you were unwell.”

While the offence carried a maximum jail term of two years, the judge took the mitigating factors of Mehmet’s family commitments into account and reduced his sentence accordingly. But he added: “You chose to drive a train when you knew you were tired. In doing so, you endangered the lives of dozens, if not hundreds of people.”

Extra £25m for Meridian Water

The government has agreed to hand over an additional £25million to help Enfield Council deliver crucial infrastructure works including new streets, bridges, cycle lanes, footpaths and parks at Meridian Water – but previously planned upgrades to rail capacity remain on hold.

The first new homes are currently being built on a site adjacent to Meridian Water Station but progress on the next phase of the 10,000-home regeneration zone is heavily dependent on new infrastructure being delivered with government cash.

While the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had agreed a £170m funding package three years ago, the projected costs have increased due to rising inflation. The council has been negotiating with the department for more money to cover the works and announced last month that it had secured a larger funding package of £195m.

However, the *Dispatch* has been told that this higher figure still does not cover the cost of long-planned railway upgrades that would enable Meridian Water Station to be served by four trains per hour. It was revealed earlier this year that they had been put on hold.

The £195m figure does cover “an extensive range of works” including the naturalisation of Pymmes Brook, two new parks, roads, bridges, footpaths and cycle links to be delivered over the next few years.

Council leader Nesil Caliskan said: “The infrastructure funding will pave the way to continue building much-needed homes for the Edmonton community.

“This funding is a further vote of confidence from the government in Meridian Water. It shows how important the scheme is in providing new homes, at a time when the DLUHC government department returned £1.9billion earmarked to tackle England’s housing crisis back to the Treasury, as they could not identify projects to spend it on. Meanwhile, we are moving forward positively.

“Meridian Water is increasingly becoming a hub of activity as the project is rapidly progressing in all areas. We are set to unveil our first council homes later this summer and the first phase of Meridian One is well on its way to deliver 300 homes.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

It should start by improving its monitoring and oversight of local authority financial health, as it promised in October 2020.”

A council spokesperson said: “Enfield Council’s budgets are in a solid position, and we manage our finances shrewdly with a clear and public ten-year investment strategy. A recent LGA peer review found our budget was in a robust position and we have always

managed to balance our budgets.

“The council has borrowed to invest in the regeneration of our borough, and hasn’t engaged in risky, out-of-borough commercial activities like other councils. Instead, we locked in lower interest rates to build homes where Enfield needs them the most.”

The spokesperson pointed out that central government funding for Enfield Council has been cut by 42% since 2010 – equivalent to £81m. They added: “This, alongside

the sky-rocketing inflation, record interest rates and economic turmoil amidst a cost-of-living crisis has created further budget challenges. Inflation alone increased revenue costs three-fold in twelve months, meaning we had to make savings.

“Had the government carried out the local government funding reforms in 2020/21 as planned, we would be £32m per year better off. Without adequate funding, we have no option but to revisit budgets across the council.”

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Nine Enfield ticket offices on closures list

Train operating companies want to move staff out of ticket offices and on to platforms

BY NOAH VICKERS & SIMON ALLIN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTERS,
& JAMES CRACKNELL

Train companies across England are proposing to close hundreds of ticket offices over the next three years – including nine in Enfield.

Govia Thameslink Railway – operator of the Great Northern franchise – is proposing the closure of ticket offices at 65 of its stations. This includes Gordon Hill, Enfield Chase, Grange Park, Winchmore Hill and Palmers Green ticket offices on the Hertford Loop line, plus ticket offices at Hadley Wood and New Southgate stations on the East Coast Main Line.

Greater Anglia is proposing to close the ticket offices at Enfield Lock and Brimsdown stations on its West Anglia Main Line route through eastern Enfield.

London Overground ticket offices will remain open.

Francesca Caine, chair of Hadley Wood Rail User Group, is heavily critical of the proposed closures. She said: “Despite being the critical amenity providing the only daily public transport service for our community, Hadley Wood Station is already barely staffed and these proposals can only worsen



The ticket office at Enfield Lock Station is one of nine proposed for closure in Enfield

the services provided by Great Northern.

“Not only will both vulnerable and non-tech-savvy and occasional rail users be especially disadvantaged, but there is also the danger of collateral damage to the availability of the station toilet, which Great Northern has decreed can only be open when the station is staffed.”

Across the country, only 12% of rail tickets were sold at ticket offices last year, according to the Rail Delivery Group (RDG), with the rest bought online or from vending machines. The RDG said the changes will involve moving staff “from ticket offices and into stations, offering more

face-to-face support for customers across the network as a whole”.

The organisation, which represents train companies across the UK, said the move would be made gradually. It added: “Where adopted, the proposals will see ticket office staff transitioning to multi-skilled ‘customer help’ roles – already in place in many parts of the network – where they would be better able to give advice about the best and cheapest fares, advise on journey planning and support customers with accessibility needs.

“The changes would mean a more visible and accessible staff presence across the network.”

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark has launched a petition against the closures which says: “Basic questions on how this will impact disabled and older passengers and the roll-out of technology in stations have been left unanswered.

“Railroading this plan through without consideration for passengers only risks exacerbating the managed decline of the rail network.

“I want the government to come clean on the damage these closures will do.”

Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous is also opposing the proposed closures. He said: “I’m deeply concerned about the impact this will have on the ability to buy tickets, accessibility, passenger safety and the job security of staff.”

A Department for Transport spokesperson said: “These industry-led consultations are about enhancing the role of station workers and getting staff out from behind ticket office screens and into more active, customer-facing roles that will allow them to better support all passengers. This is not about cutting jobs – no station which is currently staffed will be unstaffed as a result of these proposed reforms.

“We have been consistently honest about the need for our railways to modernise if they are going to survive. Reviewing the role of ticket offices – with the least busy selling only one ticket an hour – is a crucial part of this.”

A public consultation on the ticket office closures was due to end on 26th July but was later extended until Friday, 1st September.

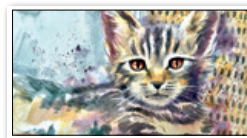
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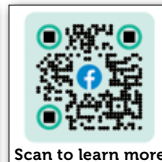
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²Evidence summarised in the report 'Impacts of air pollution across the life course - evidence highlight note' prepared by the Environmental Research Group, Imperial College London: [London.gov.uk/pollution-across-lifecourse](https://london.gov.uk/pollution-across-lifecourse)

Council confirms Spurs lease of Whitewebbs Park despite hundreds of objections

Premier League football club set to take over running of half the park

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Enfield Council has been accused of “riding roughshod” over the wishes of local people after vowing to press on with plans to lease part of Whitewebbs Park to Tottenham Hotspur Football Club.

The council received 788 objections to its plans to hand more than half of the Green Belt parkland to the Premier League club – whose existing training ground is adjacent to Whitewebbs – on a 25-year lease. It had given formal notice of the proposal last December, when it invited public comments, although it says some of the many hundreds received were “duplications”.

The plan to lease Whitewebbs to Spurs, which wants to create a women’s and girls’ training academy in the north-east of the park on part of what used to be a municipal golf course, has caused ongoing controversy since it was revealed two years ago. Local campaigners now say they will challenge the decision in court.

On 14th December last year, the civic centre published a notice of its intention to dispose of the land, allowing one month for objections. The hundreds of comments received raised concerns ranging from a lack of consultation to reduced public access to the land, loss of wildlife habitats, and claims the £2million value of the Whitewebbs lease represents a bad deal given that Tottenham Hotspur is one of the wealthiest football clubs in the country.



Tottenham Hotspur plan to open a women's and girls' football academy on part of Whitewebbs Park

Despite these objections, a report published by the council last month revealed it intends to go ahead with the lease, claiming it offers “significant benefits” such as a new nature reserve and the ‘rewilding’ of part of the golf course.

Conservative councillors in Enfield have long opposed the leasing of the park to Tottenham Hotspur. Reece Fox, who represents Whitewebbs ward, said: “Sadly, this represents the Labour council riding roughshod over the very clearly declared wishes of local people.

“The decision of the council to ignore local opinion and their own responsibilities is the height of arrogance.

“Spurs, apparently on the verge of coining in over £100m from the sale of their best player [there are rumours Harry Kane will be sold to Bayern Munich], are gaining access to the beauty of Whitewebbs for next to nothing.”

Cllr Fox said that when the proposed lease was debated at full council, “the anger from residents was palpable”. He added: “We will continue fighting this disgrace by all means necessary [...] Whitewebbs Park must be saved for public use.”

All three Conservative councillors representing Whitewebbs ward submitted a ‘call in’ request to the overview and scrutiny committee last month, which was due to be debated at the meeting on 27th July, after

the *Dispatch* went to press. They were set to argue that the decision to agree the lease with Tottenham Hotspur should be reconsidered because “the council holds the park in trust and as part of this trust is expected to maintain open access to the parkland”.

The authority is also facing questions over the financial basis for the closure of the municipal golf course that formerly occupied the site. The course was first closed amid the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, but the council chose to close it permanently in spring 2021 – a few months before Tottenham Hotspur was announced as a preferred bidder for the lease.

The council initially stated that the course lost nearly £1.2m in the six years to 2019/20 based on a “full-cost accounting approach”. But the authority’s latest Whitewebbs report now states that on the basis of “cashable savings as a result of closing the golf course” – which means excluding overheads and capital charges – it only made a £115,000 loss.

The report adds: “Although the calculated loss is significantly reduced, the golf club was nevertheless being run at a loss. The current proposal, if approved, would bring a financial benefit to the council of £2m [...] and an increase in business rates.”

Sean Wilkinson, chair of The Friends of Whitewebbs Park, said: “At first sight, it could appear that the reason for marketing Whitewebbs Park was based on incompetence and falsehoods.”

Further details of the football club’s plans for the site have also been revealed. They include proposals to work with the council and stakeholders “to establish one of the country’s first habitat banks to provide for the long-term stewardship of Whitewebbs Wood”. The proposed training academy – which still needs planning permission – would cover around 18% of the overall park.

Third man convicted of ‘ferocious’ Ponders End murder

Russell Jones was shot and stabbed to death in South Street in 2018 after being mistaken for a member of a gang

A man convicted of murdering a 23-year-old in Ponders End has been jailed for 25 years.

Victim Russell Jones was chatting to friends on a street corner when he was shot and stabbed at random by a group of men who wrongly suspected him to be a member of a rival gang.

Sherome Williams, aged 21 of Woodlands Road, Enfield, was convicted of Russell’s murder following a trial at the Old Bailey in June. He was sentenced at the same court last month to life imprisonment, with a minimum of 25 years in custody.

Two other men – Bilkan Bilkaneer of Dartford Avenue, Ponders End, and Duke Quianoo, of Holbrook Close, Forty Hill – were found guilty in 2019 of the murder of Russell, with both handed 29-year sentences.

The court heard that in the early hours of 17th March 2018, Russell and several friends were in

South Street, Ponders End, when they were approached by a group of men wearing dark clothing and masks covering their faces.

Out of nowhere, the group launched a ferocious attack on Russell and a second man, shooting Russell who fell into the road and was set upon by the group who stabbed him several times. One of his friends also suffered stab injuries.

Despite the best efforts of paramedics, Russell was sadly pronounced dead at the scene.

Detectives launched an immediate investigation to identify the suspects, a complex task involving an analysis of hours of

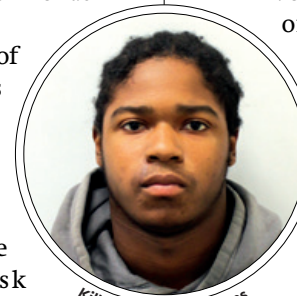
CCTV footage which was then carefully corroborated with mobile phone use by the suspects.

Detective Sergeant Joanne Donoghue said: “On a freezing cold night in March 2018, Williams and others armed themselves with a sawn-off shotgun and knives before setting out in search of opposing gang members. The group they chose were not in a gang, they were simply a group of young men chatting outside a shop.

“The wickedness and ferocity of the attack, which was captured on CCTV, has shocked even the most seasoned of homicide detectives.”



Victim Russell Jones



Killer Sherome Williams

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We need to clean up our act

Enfield Wash artist Lennie Varvarides urges local people and organisations to do more to tackle the scourge of street litter

I don't remember when street litter became 'normal' – but it is normal now. London was reported as having the highest incidences of fly-tipping across the whole country between 2020/21 because people do this – they dump their litter. Social sensibilities are obviously not enough to stop that rubbish from dropping out of their hands and into our neighbourhoods.

According to stats from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, there were 20 fly-tipping incidents per 1,000 people in England on average in 2020/21. But London had almost double that, with 43 per 1,000 people.

But does anyone know why more people are litter dumping so aggressively these days? Is it really because people have lost their capacity to care, or is it more serious than apathy?

Dropping litter is a sign of an eroding society. But what is causing it? Can the decline of our environment mirror that of our human consciousness? Or is it the decline of our consciousness that is causing more litter pollution? These are the questions I ask myself because I want to understand why people dump litter where they live.

Fly-tipping is linked to economic factors. Some people will do it to avoid paying commercial waste collection fees, or because private landlords want to pack as many people as possible into their accommodation without providing facilities for the extra refuse.

Other people dump because they want one less thing to worry about, or maybe they don't care about the effects on the environment because that seems too far removed from their daily lives. It could also



Litter in Edmonton

be a lack of green education or a lack of self-respect, or it could even be even more serious than that.

The National Library of Medicine states that: "Apathy is a common feature of depression and cognitive disorders and is associated with impairment in executive function."

The effects on the environment are obvious and long-lasting, but what about the effects on our mental health? It's like no-one is pointing out the connection that people drop litter because they are

apathetic and that they are apathetic because of their mental health and that the environment has an impact on your mental health. It's like we are stuck in a trap

of perpetually making things worse for ourselves and others.

Journalist and former Greenpeace board member Ros Coward said in 2018: "Research shows that litter affects people's feelings of wellbeing and safety. Littered streets feel abandoned, and consequently their inhabitants do too. Litter ruins people's enjoyment of the countryside and makes open spaces feel like waste grounds."

Maybe people drop litter because they feel abandoned or alone or unable to cope and cannot care about their actions or the implications of them, because they are not

landlords monopolise the market.

As always more recycling bins around congested areas and on high streets are needed together with more drop-off recycling centres.

Visible warnings and signage about litter fines are also needed. Fly-tipping is an illegal activity. If you see it in action, report it.

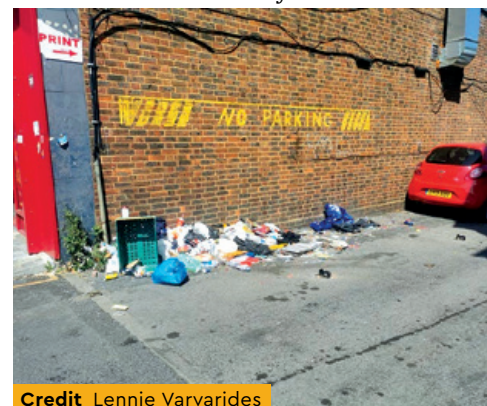
These suggestions won't necessarily reduce the impact on our streets overnight, but litter doesn't only end up on the high street. It ends up in our ocean, in our food, in our water supply, and even in our bodies, as well as impacting on our mental health. So even if you don't see it dumped on your high street, it will still find its way into your body.

We know all this but knowing still isn't enough. It is easier to change our behaviour and habits than it is to change the world around us. While one person cannot change much, they still have the power to at least not make things uglier.

Where we spend our money is the only immediate power we have. Think twice before buying fast fashion made of polyester – plastic is released into our water supply every time these materials are washed. Single-use items like bottled water or take-out coffee cups are also ending up in our oceans and slowly affecting fertility too.

Consumption is the ugliest part of capitalism and I just want to try and live beautifully. Please ask yourself what small change you can make, to make where you live more beautiful and to commit to your own mini-intervention.

"Dropping litter is a sign of an eroding society"



Credit Lennie Varvarides



able to care about themselves.

So what can we do to stop it? Most waste is made up of packaging, so it makes sense to pass the problem on to the big businesses that manufacture it. Big business needs to invest in bio-degradable packaging and be charged a pollution tax if they don't comply.

Urgent legislation is needed around waste solutions for homes in multiple occupation (HMOs) and landlords should pay extra to provide adequate waste management for their tenants. HMOs wouldn't be needed in the first place though, if councils invested in real social housing, instead of letting private

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We are delivering for Enfield residents

In our latest councillor's column, Ponders End ward councillor Nicki Adeleke argues the Labour administration is delivering for residents

I got involved in politics because I wanted to make a difference, but saw the Conservatives were sending the country into a period of managed decline. I also knew that people who look like me are under-represented in local government – it's important that our political landscape reflects the diversity of our borough.

I saw the positive difference a Labour council made in Enfield – protecting the most vulnerable in our borough and delivering great services for local residents. That's why I was honoured to be elected as a Labour councillor for Ponders End in May 2022.

Enfield's Labour councillors are committed to delivering a safer, cleaner, greener Enfield, and to supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis. Since the local election, my colleagues and I have been working hard to deliver on our promises, and the Enfield Labour administration has set out its priorities in the recent council plan, *Investing in Enfield*, which sets out our plan for the borough over the next four years.

We have created a 'tiny forest' at Alma Road Recreation Ground with the planting of 600 trees and have introduced more 'school streets' to make it safer for young people to travel to school. We are also retrofitting homes to improve their energy efficiency, helping residents with their energy bills.

I also chair the environment forum, which links councillors and local environmental groups to discuss a wide range of topics, including air quality, our beautiful heritage sites, and the maintenance of our parks and green spaces.

Since being elected, housing is the number one issue that residents contact me about, and thanks to the Conservative

government's mishandling of the economy, mortgage rates and rents have skyrocketed, making the housing crisis worse. We need to build more homes to accommodate our growing population and we have an ongoing, ambitious regeneration

waste collection service, which residents can use to collect furniture and non-electronic goods from their homes.

We are also working with the Lawn Tennis Association to refurbish the tennis courts in Ponders End Recreation Ground, ensuring

local residents have access to great spaces for our residents to play tennis in their communities.

Despite the considerable economic challenges caused by the Conservative government, the Labour-run administration continues to deliver for the residents of

Enfield. I will continue to speak up for the residents of Ponders End and work to deliver a safer, cleaner, greener Enfield.

Nicki Adeleke represents Ponders End alongside Mohammad Islam (both Labour). To get in touch:

Call 07583 115 861

Email cllr.nicki.adeleke@enfield.gov.uk

"I will continue to speak up for the residents of Ponders End and work to deliver a safer, cleaner, greener Enfield"

programme in Ponders End to provide good-quality housing for our residents.

Fly-tipping is a scourge in our communities but we are cracking down on this with a record number of prosecutions. We continue to fund our free bulky

Nicki Adeleke was first elected to represent Ponders End in May 2022
Credit Enfield Council



LETTERS

Send us your letters

Got an opinion on something in Enfield? We accept letters of up to 150 words from people and organisations in the borough. Email EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com before the next deadline on **Monday 21st August**.

Out of bounds

Dear Enfield Dispatch

I live in Grange Park ward, which is in the Enfield Southgate constituency but will now be moved to the new 'Edmonton and Winchmore Hill' seat. While it does at least keep most of N21 together, Highlands Village and some of World's End Lane will be moved to the new 'Southgate and Wood Green' constituency or the existing Enfield North seat.

None of these amendments were among those on which we were 'consulted', as the option for us at the time was being added to Enfield North, with the other half of Winchmore Hill joining Edmonton. The Conservatives submitted a more logical alternative to the Southgate and Wood Green proposal, but this was overlooked in favour of the new layout.

The whole restructuring was planned to even out the numbers of residents in each constituency, to make it 'fairer', but if Meridian Water ever happens the Boundary Commission will have to go back to the numbers to ensure Edmonton and Winchmore Hill won't have far more people than other constituencies.

Sue Woollard
Grange Park

Crossing the ticket line

Dear Enfield Dispatch

I believe the news that several ticket offices are being earmarked for closure on the Great Northern line that serves my local station at Winchmore Hill, as well as many more around the country, is an indication of a much wider issue. It is part of a dehumanising shift, reducing human interaction in the name of 'modernising customer service' in the same way wholesale branch closures have affected banking and automated checkouts have been introduced in supermarkets.

This in turn is discriminatory for the elderly, blind and other vulnerable groups and will also diminish our social bonds and the daily human contacts that enrich our lives. Studies have shown that even the brief encounters with other people can make us feel happier and better connected and help

alleviate loneliness and isolation.

The other intention behind this initiative is to push more people towards ordering tickets online, which may suit some but is not the answer for many specific groups of people.

If ticket office staff are moved out from behind the counter, what kind of questions are they expected to answer? I recently tried to buy an advance travel ticket from my local station when the ticket office was closed and the member of staff on duty could not deal properly with my enquiry and ended up selling me a ticket that cost £4 more than I would have paid either online or at the counter.

Neil Littman
Winchmore Hill

Gambling with our future

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Fore Street in Angel Edmonton is a very deprived neighbourhood faced by hardship. Betting shops or casinos encourage addictive behaviours which we do not deserve nor want as part of the high street business community.

The area suffers from an array of anti-social problems, particularly at night where there is a hostile environment of crime, prostitution, drug dealing, youth violence and knife crime. There are already seven casinos and betting shops, with four being near the most recent application for a new gambling venue. We also found out another betting shop has applied to convert into a casino.

The negative impact on the wider community is immeasurable. They are creating inactive shop fronts and discouraging other businesses from opening in the area, thereby creating a higher rate of vacant units.

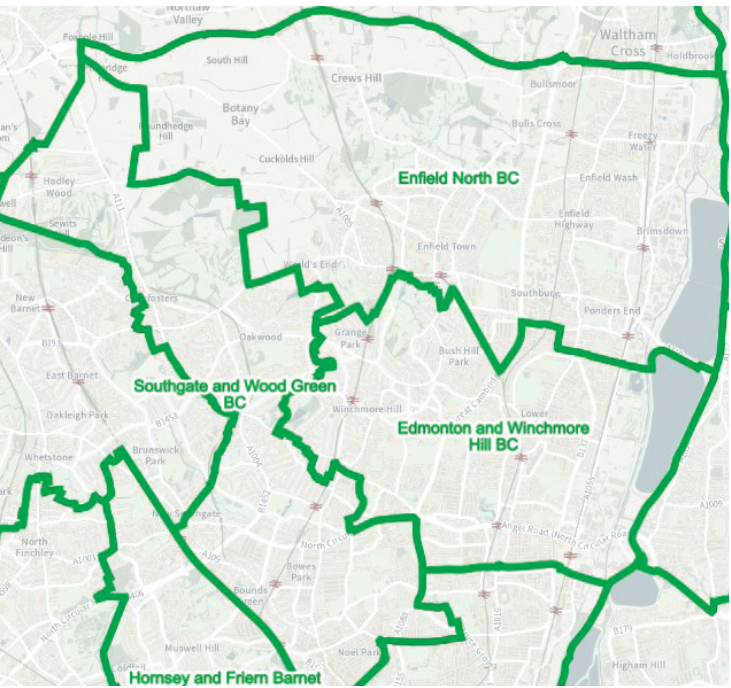
We are still waiting for a response to our request to an officer at Enfield Council, who informed us that she was not aware of a casino consultation which, according to the council portal, was with an unknown group called Edmonton Study Group as a consultee for permission to convert the Santander bank premises into a casino.

What monetary gain is more important than the damage being created by the council to our community?

Residents of Edmonton Angel Community Together (React)

Major changes to Enfield parliamentary constituencies confirmed

New seats called ‘Southgate and Wood Green’ and ‘Edmonton and Winchmore Hill’ will come into effect at next general election



A map of the new constituency borders in Enfield

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

The Boundary Commission for England (BCE) has decided to go ahead with its plans to create a new ‘Southgate and Wood Green’ parliamentary constituency despite admitting the change has been “heavily opposed”. In its final proposals now due to be enforced ahead of next year’s expected general election, a new ‘Edmonton and Winchmore Hill’ constituency is also formed, with Enfield North remaining largely unchanged from its present boundaries. While BCE has been working on its redrawing of constituency boundaries for several years – in an attempt to see MPs more fairly distributed across the UK and to account for population changes – the plan to create a Southgate and Wood Green seat was only revealed for the first time last December. A public consultation followed and BCE admits that it faced opposition to the idea of uniting voters in Enfield and Haringey along the Piccadilly Line because

it would “break community ties” in both boroughs. Enfield Southgate is a famously marginal seat and was held by the Conservative Party as recently as 2017, but merging it with Wood Green seems likely to make it a safe Labour seat in future. BCE’s final report published last month stated: “In the borough of Enfield, our revised proposals were heavily opposed for a number of reasons. In objecting to our reconfiguration of Enfield Southgate across three constituencies, one of which would extend into Haringey to create a Southgate and Wood Green constituency which crossed borough boundaries and the A406, respondents told us that there was little community of interest spanning such a long and thin area.” Over in Edmonton, the Winchmore Hill, Highfield and Grange Park wards in western Enfield are now being added to the constituency, which BCE announced would be renamed ‘Edmonton and Winchmore Hill’ as a result. It means that the borough’s most deprived and least deprived areas will be united

under a single MP – which could also make it a less safe seat for the Labour Party. Enfield North is the least affected by BCE’s boundary changes, but the final proposals do see the addition of Ponders End to the seat, while Grange Park is in turn removed to join Edmonton. Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous said: “The new boundary will see my constituency joined with Bounds Green, Noel Park, White Hart Lane and Woodside wards in Haringey, and I look forward to meeting residents from these areas and representing them in parliament if elected. “The proposals will also see the current Enfield Southgate seat lose Winchmore Hill, Grange Park, and Highfield wards to a new Edmonton and Winchmore Hill constituency. I will be sad to lose these wards, having built very strong relationships and friendships with schools, businesses and residents in these areas. “The Boundary Commission did reflect on evidence received during the consultation suggesting that Grange Park and Winchmore Hill wards should be kept together in the same constituency. This proposal has been adopted by including these wards in a new Edmonton and Winchmore Hill constituency.” Enfield North MP Feryal Clark said: “I am really pleased to see minimal changes in the Boundary Commission’s final recommendations. “Enfield North will continue as a constituency by name and by the area it represents. “The only major change we have in the final recommendations is the inclusion of Ponders End in Enfield North. This makes sense in terms of historical, industrial and community precedence.” Edmonton MP Kate Osamor did not respond to requests for comment.



Victim Seun 'Shay' McMillan

‘Justice for Shay’ as murderer jailed for 32 years

A man has been jailed for 32 years after being convicted of murdering a 23-year-old in Southgate six years ago. Jarrad Spence-Robinson, aged 26 of no fixed abode, was convicted of murdering Seun ‘Shay’ McMillan following a trial at the Old Bailey in February. Last month he was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum of 32 years. Seun and Spence-Robinson were known to each other and had fallen out in a row over money that Spence-Robinson believed was owed to him. On 2nd May 2017, Spence-Robinson was informed by a telephone call that Seun was in the Cowper Gardens area of Southgate and he travelled to the scene to find him. On arrival, he launched a swift attack, stabbing him in the chest before quickly fleeing in his car. Seun died in hospital later that evening. A post-mortem examination found the cause of his death to be a single stab wound to the heart. Detective Chief Inspector Brian Howie said: “Seun’s family and friends have faced a long and difficult wait for justice – we will never give up fighting for families like theirs who have lost their loved ones, no matter how much

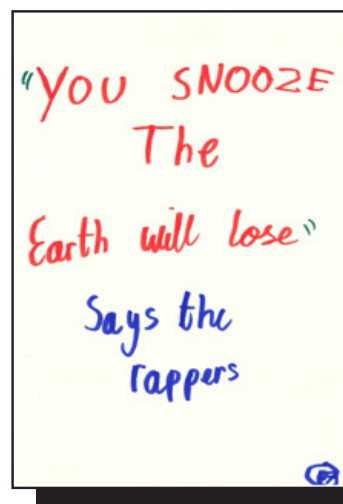
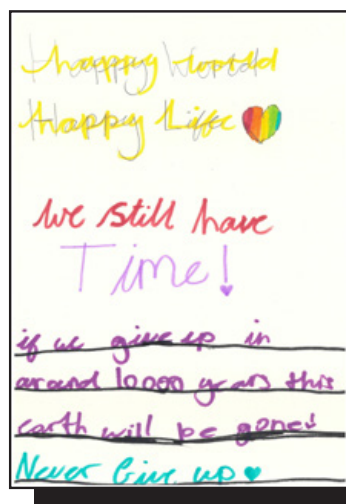
time has passed.” Seun’s mother said: “The impact on Seun’s death has been horrific on me emotionally and physically. I have not allowed myself to be consumed by grief, to be beaten with bitterness and sorrow. “Since Seun’s death I feel that I have not grieved. I have not allowed myself to do so, especially in front of my children as that would make them feel even more loss, than they are having to deal with. “The pain and loss of Shay’s death will never leave me and has left me heart broken. My heart currently works with one less valve. When I look at myself I see a different reflection, a person that I don’t recognise. When I see the pain on my children it hurts more. “Jarrad has never shown any remorse, or respect to me and the family for the murder of our eldest son. “For our family there will be no more family events, no joint birthdays that I arrange, Shay will not meet new additions to our family, I will never have any grandchildren and yet it’s hard to say life goes on. I thank my friends and family for supporting me over these years and thank the justice system for bringing justice for Shay.”



Killer Jarrad Spence-Robinson

Advertisement

Hinterlands Enfield community art project on the River Lea has begun with some amazing work created by Raynham Primary pupils!



The Raynham Reporter, a newspaper by pupils in the Sustainability Warriors After School Club at Raynham Primary, July 2023.



The Canal & River Trust is leading a community arts project along the River Lea over the next 12 months. Six artists are working with local community partners to explore the River Lea's past, present and future potential. The artists are researching wide ranging themes from industrial heritage and the river's role as a 'highway for trade' that gave the area a well deserved reputation for design and innovation; to social history, the creation of a community poem, and climate topics relating to freshwater habitats and eel migration to the incredible mythological healing power of river deities embedded in Caribbean folklore.

Did you know that canals were designed to be inaccessible because they transported goods from often hazardous industries, and to support safe passage from looting (think Peaky Blinders)? Running from the chalk hills of the Chilterns to the Thames in London's East End, the River Lea and the Lee Navigation have both played a key part in the growth of London, the history of our nation and the course of the modern world.

Today, canals and rivers provide an oasis of blue and green spaces for peace and tranquillity because spending time by water can support people's wellbeing. The climate emergency is a key priority for the project as the artists with local partners Raynham School pupils, Enfield Climate Action Forum and Bloqs explore how we can increase

the ecological, biodiversity and urban cooling potential of the River Lea for future generations.

Some very special young people from Raynham Primary School, the 'Raynham Reporters' have been working with artist Cathy Wade to think about these subjects in a new after school club set up as part of Hinterlands Enfield project called the 'Sustainability Warriors'. The children have been litter picking, and have worked together to share the importance of looking after the local environment and imagining what could be present 25 years in the future.

These talented pupils have been exploring the best ways to communicate about these global issues through newspaper publishing, and have made their own issues of the Raynham Reporter. In their newspapers the pupils have explored how they can share important messages about environmental sustainability, futures and change, and the ecologies present in the Lee Navigation with artist Cathy Wade and Assistant Headteacher Iveta Bejaoui. This work, and more of their activities, will be part of the Hinterlands Community Summer Event on 24th August that celebrates the voices of local children and what they have to say about the world that we live in.

For more information about the artists involved in the project, upcoming programmes and community partners please find us on facebook 'Hinterlands London' or www.canalrivertrust.org.uk search Hinterlands

The project has been funded by the Canal & River Trust, Arts Council England, Enfield Council and the People's Postcode Lottery

"The pupils have explored how they can share important messages about environmental sustainability, futures and change, and the ecologies present in the Lee Navigation"

Free Summer Holiday Fun For The Whole Family 24th August 10am-8pm

Hinterlands Community Summer Event along the River Lea from the cafe at Stonebridge Lock to Bloqs, Anthony Way.

Calling all family explorers, nature enthusiasts, and fun-seekers! Join us on a magical journey along the River Lea, from Stone Bridge Lock to Anthony Way, at the Hinterlands Community Summer Event. Held on Thursday, 24th August 2023, we're inviting you for a day of discovery, creativity, myths, magic and legends connected to water and nature.

Our family-friendly event will include artist and community-led performances, intervention and interactive workshops along the towpath. Enjoy a fascinating array of ecological, biodiversity, heritage, industrial heritage and cultural artist and community-led activities from spoken word, poster design competitions, floating camera obscura workshops, family foraging walks, wildflower seeding, to guided walks.

We're wrapping up the day with toe-tapping live music, and a mouth-watering BBQ and paying bar by Bloqs Cafe on Anthony Way.

Can't wait to see you there! #LifeIsBetterByWater

For more information about the project and for the full programme for the Hinterland Community Summer Event please find us on facebook 'Hinterlands London' or www.canalrivertrust.org.uk search Hinterlands.

As well as authoring a book, Esse has even launched a publishing house called 'British Isles Publishing'



Enfield boy stakes claim as 'world's youngest author'

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A four-year-old boy from Enfield Highway could become the world's youngest author after his father helped him turn his own bedtime story into a published picture book.

Transcribed from the imagination of Esse Loewenthal, *Baby Fox* – available to buy at online retailers, including Waterstones – is a short, charming story about the misadventures of a young fox which even manages to include a dramatic plot twist involving a jellyfish.

Esse had yet to reach his fourth birthday at the time *Baby Fox* was published in April. While the current record for youngest author is held by someone who was aged four years and ten months, Guinness World Records has told the family they can't claim it until 1,000 copies of the 30-page book have been sold.

So far, they have shifted around 400 copies, giving them until the end of the year to sell another 600.

Explaining his son's remarkable achievement, proud dad Sholi Loewenthal told the *Dispatch*: "When Esse was aged about one-and-a-half we started noticing that he learned the ABCs by heart and, by age two, we noticed he was reading words.

"All the way through from two to three he was reading and he was reading really well. We were doing bedtime

stories but he would want us to do two, three, four of them – we had to limit it."

With his imagination growing, story-obsessed Esse one day turned the tables on his parents by reading aloud his own imagined tales, based around a character he conjured called 'Baby Fox'. Impressed, Sholi began recording them on his phone.

"It has all been his initiative. He would ask us when we were going to print the book"

"Myself and my wife were telling our own bedtime stories that we would make up. When Esse was three-and-a-half, we got a book for his bedtime with empty pages, and he got us to draw characters from our stories. Then he decided he wanted to tell us a bedtime story himself. When we began recording them we noticed they were quite interesting."

Sholi said Esse has so far come up with "dozens" of stories, many of which use the same *Baby Fox* character. Although he would sometimes go on "meandering journeys", Sholi realised many were "distinct and powerful".

Asked how he made the leap to publishing the story, Sholi said: "It has all been his initiative. He would ask us when we were going to print the book. We were looking for publishers, and he was going through every word. He was familiar with different publishers like Penguin but then he decided he wanted to publish it himself and he said he wanted to call it 'British Isles Publishing'.

"He chose a logo and we helped cut out the letters."

Sholi used artificial intelligence to illustrate the book, after putting the text into OpenAI software. The result is eclectic, but it works well. More stories are now in the works.

"If Esse wants to carry on with it and other people start hearing about it and buying it, who knows, it could turn into a real business."



Esse collecting the first copies of his book 'Baby Fox' at the printers

Celebrating Edmonton's social revolution

Lynda Brennan introduces her play 'Bread and Roses', inspired by historic events

Come along to the Living Room Library in Fore Street next month and you will find yourself transported back to Edmonton in 1915 – which you could be forgiven for thinking was the epicentre of a social revolution.

Bread and Roses, performed by Enfield People's Theatre, tells the story of the 1915 Edmonton rent strike. One year into the First World War there was a national shortage of ammunition, so munitions factories sprung up across Britain. Wages were double the usual pay and workers flocked to work there.

But unscrupulous landlords saw their chance, increasing the rent and leading to hundreds of brutal evictions. Thousands of women across the country took the law into their own hands and organised massive rent strikes, which spread like wildfire from Glasgow, to Bristol, Birmingham – and, to Edmonton. The women strikers were victorious, and the first Rent Restriction Act was brought into force in 1916.

Bread and Roses tells this historic story but, alongside, also tells stories from our present housing emergency.

A community play can't blossom without a community. To create the show we ran drama workshops, hosted group discussions, and conducted interviews about the housing crisis. We'd like to say a big thanks to the staff at Fore Street Library for welcoming us to use their rehearsal space.

"To create the show we ran drama workshops, hosted group discussions, and conducted interviews about the housing crisis"

We are also thrilled to be working in partnership with the local community interest company, Everyone Loves Music, and are delighted that so many young people have written their own songs and will perform them as part of the play.

Led by Elizabeth Hart, the performances by the young people will be some of the highlights of the show. *Bread and Roses* is directed by Shirley Mason, written by myself, and has a great team of actors and singers – we can't wait for you to join us.

Audiences are invited to come along early to relax, glass in hand, and listen to Leszek Kusmier play us in with his piano before the play starts. We also invite you to sing along with a Marie Lloyd song and hum to *Willie McBride*.

Enfield People's Theatre is proud to have been granted funding for this play by the 'Untold Edmonton' programme, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund and managed by Enfield Council.

While tickets are free, numbers are limited, so it is essential you book either in person at Fore Street Library or via Eventbrite on the link below.

'Bread and Roses' is showing at Fore Street Library on Friday 22nd September at 7.30pm, on Saturday 23rd at 7.30pm, and on Sunday 24th at 3pm. To book visit [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk): Visit shorturl.at/vBIQR

A tale of two shopping parades

Neil Littman enjoys two contrasting experiences at Asian restaurants in Cockfosters

Black cod miso, Kiyoto



Viet Chefs is located at the quiet end of a shopping parade in Cockfosters Road where several establishments – the once popular Alfresco, as well as the area's only Indian restaurant – have come and gone in recent years.

This Vietnamese restaurant is trying to bring to the area a vibe that has worked successfully in areas such as Shoreditch and Hackney. While the anonymous interior lacked character, and I think they need to create a more engaging offer, the food itself is good.

For starters we ate summer rolls containing noodles, carrots and bean sprouts with prawns, wrapped in a translucent rice-wrapper, and served cold. We also ordered vegetarian spring rolls. Both came in impressive-sized portions and were served with dipping sauces. The spring rolls were freshly-made, bearing little resemblance to the freezer-pack portions that sometimes turn up courtesy of one of the many oriental supermarkets.

Our main courses were one-dish meals that arrived in generous portions; wok pho (stir-fry sliced beef with lemongrass, noodles and bean shoots, priced £9.80) and bún sà with seafood (including prawns, mussels and squid, priced £14.90). Again, they were good-size portions and also came with a generous amount of red chillies.

The Viet Chefs menu also has a lot of choice for vegetarians and vegans and, while I liked it overall, I think I prefer the noise and bustle of Vietnamese outlets in Shoreditch.

Kiyoto Sushi, by contrast, occupies a busy and attractive corner site of the shopping parade near Cockfosters Station. This Japanese restaurant opened two years ago and seems to have become a hit among the locals, attracting a younger crowd. Part of a fast-growing chain of restaurants (now four) and with a nod to the more upmarket Nobu chain on the menu, Kiyoto Sushi is thankfully more affordable.

For starters I wanted to order 'super spider', a crab tempura

wrapped in rice with avocado, but it was sold out so instead I chose tiger roll with prawn tempura, also wrapped in rice and served with perfectly ripened avocado.

For my main I ordered the signature dish of black cod miso, known as sablefish, which is normally expensive thanks to its delicious taste, quality, and limited supply – as the fish is found only in the deep waters of the northern Pacific. Coming with rice and a salad of avocado and asparagus shoots, at Kiyoto it is served for £19 – almost a third of the price of Nobu at £53 – and I have to say it is one of the best dishes I have ordered anywhere.

The interior of Kiyoto is bright, with slatted wood walls, stylish downlighters and a house music soundtrack that doesn't drown out conversation. If you cannot get a table (there are only about twelve in total) you can also sit at the bar – as I did when I arrived on a midweek evening – and watch the chefs cutting and arranging slices of fish and rolling their makiso (sushi mats). Fortunately, after a short wait, I was given a table.

While the service was slightly disorganised – my main course arrived before the starter – Kiyoto is one place not to miss.

Lastly, I must give an apology, as last month after I wrote about Sydney Rocks I noticed it had since been closed. The sign in the window said it was being refurbished, but a few weeks later it still hasn't reopened. Hopefully it will be back.



Prawn summer rolls, Viet Chefs

Viet Chefs can be found at 24 Station Parade, Cockfosters EN4 0DW, and is open 12pm–10pm every day except Monday. For more information and to book:
Call 020 8886 1988
Visit vietshefs.co.uk

Kiyoto Sushi can be found at 18 Cockfosters Parade, Cockfosters EN4 9EB, and is open 12pm–3pm, 5pm–10pm every day. For more information and to book:
Call 020 8440 1980
Visit kiyotosushi.co.uk

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 21st August**.

CINEMA

Talkies Cinema presents
'The Gravedigger's Wife'
Thursday 3rd August, 7.45pm
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

A gentle, humorous film by the Somali-born filmmaker Khadar Ahmed, laced with irony and wit, about the challenges faced by Guled, a gravedigger in Djibouti, and his family.

Tickets £6.50
Visit talkies.org.uk/events

CHILDREN

Meet the Super Mario Brothers
Thursday 3rd August, 11am–4pm
Edmonton Green Shopping Centre, 62 Smythe Close, Edmonton N9 0TZ

Mario and Luigi will be here giving Nintendo fans, families and gamers the chance to meet them in person. Dressed in their iconic red and green dungarees, the superstar siblings will race round Edmonton Green Shopping Centre.

Free entry
Visit edmontongreencentre.co.uk

Mini Safari at Edmonton Green
Thursday 10th August, 11am–4pm
Edmonton Green Shopping Centre, 62 Smythe Close, Edmonton N9 0TZ

Explore with the EdMINitons this summer at our free jungle mania event! The centre will be hosting a fun-packed day for the children, including a jungle-themed story telling session, a mini safari adventure, and making animal masks.

Free entry
Visit edmontongreencentre.co.uk

CRAFTS

Make Your Own Wooden Knitting Needles
Tuesday 8th August, 3pm–5pm
Stitch!, 2 Hazelwood Lane, Palmers Green N13 5EX

Come and make your own knitting needles out of wood with our specialist children's teacher Anna. Whether your child is already an avid knitter or would like to take this up as a new hobby or wants to make some needles as gift for someone this is fabulously unique class. This fun activity develops dexterity and concentration while encouraging mindfulness and creativity. This is a drop and go class, parents do not need to stay.

£15 per session
Visit stitch.org.uk

MARKET

Forty Hall Farmers' Market
Sunday 13th August, 10am–3pm
Forty Hall Farm, Forty Hill, Enfield EN2 9HA

Browse a range of food stalls, listen to live music, grab a coffee and meet the animals at Forty Hall Farm.

Free entry
Visit fortyhallfarm.org.uk

MUSIC

Baby Broadway Family Concert
Wednesday 16th August, 10am and 11.30am
Chickenshed Theatre, 290 Chase Side N14 4PE

Enjoy well-known musical numbers from your favourite shows and films, all performed by amazing West End singers. Expect bubbles, puppetry, dance moves and lots of audience interaction. Suitable for children aged up to six years.

Tickets £7, free for babies
Visit chickenshed.org.uk

FESTIVAL

Palmers Green Festival
Sunday 3rd September, 12pm–5pm
Broomfield Park, Palmers Green

Celebrating our community, Palmers Green Festival returns this September. Featuring food and drink stalls, family fun zone, live music, Biddal's Fun Fair, an art exhibition and more!

Free entry
Visit fobp.uk

NATURE

Sally's Adventure Club
Every Tuesday in August at 10am
Grovelands Park, Broad Walk entrance, Southgate N21 3QN

Adventures never end with Sally's Adventure Club. Every week a new story takes us through the woodland, leaving you and your little one fully immersed in forest glow. Forest crafts, songs, games, role play and discovery. Ticking all areas of child development; physical, social, cognitive, communication and confidence. Children as young as 14 months, through to five years, will thoroughly enjoy.

Tickets £10
Call 07989 757 494
Visit sallysadventureclub.com

Petition against new Palmers Green gambling venue signed by more than 1,000 people

Residents bemoan proposed arrival of Palace Amusements as the latest gambling outlet in Palmers Green

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

More than 1,000 people have signed a petition against a “totally unsuitable” gambling venue being planned for Palmers Green.

Palace Amusements wants to open an adult gaming centre in a former Lloyds Bank branch at 369-371 Green Lanes and has applied to Enfield Council for a premises licence to allow it to operate.

The stretch of road is already home to four betting shops and a Merkur Slots gaming centre that opened in 2021 despite considerable local opposition.

A petition against the latest gaming centre plan gained more than 1,000 signatures after being launched in early July. It warns

gambling venues could lead to crime and disorder and put children at risk of “becoming normalised to gambling”.

Giorgia Scaturro, who launched the petition and is part of local group Palmers Green Action Team, said: “We work very hard to bring businesses that could improve the local economy. This is a family friendly community – 20% of the demographic is children, and there is particularly no offer for them.

“We feel powerless. We want a cinema, a bookshop – and [instead] we get Palace Amusements. If this gaming centre goes ahead, we will have one patisserie between Ladbroke’s and Palace Amusements. How can this be allowed?”

Giorgia believes the proposal would contravene a council planning policy stating that there should be a minimum of five non-betting shop units between the next betting shop premises.

Her petition also claims betting shops and gambling venues attract criminality and pose risks to vulnerable people.

It adds that an adult gaming centre “is totally unsuitable in this area with a large number of growing families and elderly”, warning that children “will be exposed to yet more betting shops and gamblers while



Credit Nik via Unsplash

en route to school, to the nearby park, playgrounds and local shops, or at bus stops.

Giorgia said having so many gambling venues in such a small area deterred other businesses from setting up on the high street – and the council seemed “powerless” to stop the gaming centres from opening.

She said she wanted to know how the council could work with landlords to encourage retailers and other businesses to set up in the area and help to regenerate it.

Giorgia added: “Palmers Green is in the 40% most deprived neighbourhoods in the UK. Another betting shop is not going to help socially or economically. We just want this to stop.”

Palace Amusements and Enfield Council were approached for comment.

EDMONTON YOUTH HEROES EDMONTON GREEN

★ ★ Sponsored by edMinitons the big club for little shoppers ★ ★

Talented school girl wins prestigious national writing prize

A secondary school student from Edmonton has been selected as a winner of The Orwell Youth Prize 2023 – from a total of 570 entries throughout the UK.

The Orwell Youth Prize is an annual creative writing competition for children aged twelve and over, inspired by the works of George Orwell and his commitment to social justice. The 2023 theme was ‘Who’s in Control?’ and Heike Ghandi’s political short story was described by the judging chair as an “intriguing concept”.

Heike’s story, *The Catharsis of a Crane*, tackles issues of poverty and protest and was picked as one of four winners in the junior category. It impressed all four judges; Orwell Prize-winning author, Delia Jarrett-Macauley; Financial Times global education editor Andrew Jack; the BBC’s disinformation and social media correspondent, Marianna Spring;



Heike Ghandi collects her prize from Liz Wallace Credit Facundo Arrizabalaga and Forward Prize-winning poet, Will Harris.

Delia said *The Catharsis of a Crane* was “a beautiful story, inspired by an intriguing concept, cleverly linking origami and politics”.

Heike attends Enfield County School for Girls. *The Catharsis of a Crane* is available

to read for free on The Orwell Foundation website, along with the other winners and runners up.

All the shortlisted writers were invited to The Orwell Youth Prize celebration day at University College London on Saturday, 8th July, where they took part in a creative writing workshop with the award-winning writer and poet Anthony Anaxagorou and performed their work, before receiving their prizes, including a copy of George Orwell’s collected essays, and an Orwell Youth Prize goody bag.

The winners and runners up will also be invited



to join The Orwell Youth Fellows, a collective of young writers starting conversations and developing new writing that is responsive to our changing world – and supporting other young people to engage with the prize.

Far more than just a prize, each year’s theme is inspired by the writings of George Orwell, while encouraging young people to think critically and creatively about the world around them and issues which matter today. The programme is free to enter and participants can submit writing in any form.

Nominate your heroes

Dispatch readers are welcome to nominate their own ‘Edmonton Youth Hero’ – an inspirational young person (16 or under) from Edmonton who has made a valuable contribution to their local community. Simply email your nomination to EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com

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The Collaboration Enfield Needs

Pearsons

THE NIGHTINGALE
 Cancer Support Centre

During Pearsons' Beauty Week in June, you might have seen an abundance of red in store. That was The Nightingale Cancer Support Centre. While customers were benefitting from beauty bargains, The Nightingale was letting them know where they could benefit from cancer support services. This collaboration raised £2,079 for The Nightingale, and helped to promote our services to the wider community.

Pearsons and The Nightingale have the same key objective; to look after their community. So far in 2023, Pearsons has supported The

Nightingale with an end of school sale at their charity shop, donated prizes for their raffle, walked the Night Hike with a staff team and sign-posted staff and customers to their centre for support.

Nick Jacobs, CEO of The Nightingale, and Natasha, manager of Pearsons, are both excited about this partnership. Nick says: "Pearsons is a longstanding and vital part of the fabric of Enfield and we're honoured to be working with them. As an ever-expanding organisation we are always looking for new ways to reach more people and let them know of the cancer support that is out there for them.

"It is great to see a big institution like Pearsons bringing the health of their staff and customers to the forefront of what they do. Now that there is a greater demand for our services here at the centre, it's more crucial than ever that our community's mental and physical health is taken care of and given a little bit of tender love and care. Pearsons is helping us to make sure our community is taken good care of."

Natasha adds: "We feel honoured to be able to support such an incredible charity and cause. As an integral part of



The Pearsons' 'Sole Sisters' Team before they walked The Nightingale Night Hike 2024



The Pearsons Team running The Nightingale End Of School Pop Up Sale at their Baker Street Charity Shop

Enfield, Pearsons is so grateful that we can provide support and give back to the people who make up our community."

On Saturday 19th August at 2pm The Nightingale will be joining Pearsons at their 'An Audience With...' event, where the charity will talk more about what they do. The event is free to attend and all are encouraged to do so, especially if you or a loved one is struggling with a

cancer diagnosis.

Keep an eye out for what Pearsons and The Nightingale Cancer Support Centre are up to next.

If you have been affected by cancer, contact The Nightingale for free support today: nightingalesupport.org.uk/get-support

Reg Charity Num: 1094435

AROUND THE BOROUGH

PONDERS END

Anger over 200% allotment rent hike



Allotment holders at Falcon Fields in Ponders End

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

TENANTS ON AN ALLOTMENT site in Ponders End fear huge rent hikes planned by Enfield Council will force them off their plots.

Falcon Fields Allotments, in Church Road, is home to more than 200 small plots where tenants – many from low-income and ethnic minority backgrounds – grow fruit, vegetables, flowers and other produce.

As well as being a source of cheap, fresh food, the allotments give them a chance to relax, exercise and get together with other members of the community.

But in April this year Enfield Council put up signs around the

over 100 years,” she said. “There are elderly people here, and we are here because we need exercise for mental health, we have children, and we all get together.

“It is something to keep the community together.”

Monique from Edmonton said she started coming to the allotments in 2010 while suffering PTSD. “For me, when I got sick, my whole view of what is important changed,” she said. “These allotments played a big part in it.

“I still have mental health problems, but coming here has helped me to get better and find a safe place and be around people.”

A council spokesperson said: “The council is not collecting any fees from plot holders at Falcon Fields until April 2024, when the fees will align with all other allotment plots within the borough. Appropriate concessions will be available to those that meet set criteria.

“During the lead up to the change, the council held several meetings with stakeholders to inform them of the revised management. Notices were displayed throughout the site and a representative from the council has been present at the allotments for three days per week.”

site announcing it was taking over the management and upping annual rents plus water charges from £70 to £220 for Enfield residents and £299 for those living in other boroughs.

The council says the increases, which are set to take effect from next April, will bring fees into line with other Enfield allotments, and concessions will be available. But many tenants already being squeezed by the cost-of-living crisis say they will struggle to afford the new payments.

Fay Bernard started visiting the allotments in 2009 to help an elderly man she was cooking for, and she now holds two plots where she grows food for friends and family.

“This site has been going for

BRIMSDOWN

Affordable homes slashed at towers scheme

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

PLANS TO SLASH THE NUMBER OF affordable homes at a high-rise scheme have been approved.

The proportion of affordable homes on Stonegate Homes’ 148-home development at 241 Green Street, near Brimsdown Station, has been cut from 49% to just 25% – with the social-rent tenure dropped entirely.

Previous plans by the developer to build tower blocks up to 16 storeys high at the site, which were approved in December 2020, featured 73 affordable units with 46 set aside for London Affordable Rent, a social-rent level.

The plans by Stonegate Homes



The council’s planning committee considered the affordable housing provision to be one of the key benefits of the scheme, which had faced criticism over its size and appearance. But last month councillors approved revised proposals containing only 37 affordable homes, after a report said the original scheme was no

longer financially viable. All the affordable homes will now be at an “intermediate” tenure.

Matt Burn from Better Homes Enfield said: “We desperately need more social-rent homes in Enfield as thousands of families are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis and they can only afford social rent. By approving this application, the council has let those families down.”

Conservative planning lead Mike Rye said he and his fellow Tory committee members welcomed fire safety improvements but did not support the application because of the cut to affordable housing.

Stonegate Homes was approached for comment.

MERIDIAN WATER

Flat-pack music venue

A FORMER IKEA STORE IS SET TO reopen – as a 15,000-capacity live music venue.

Events company Broadwick Live secured a lease for the building and will be converting it into “an impressive hybrid home for culture in London”. As well as live music, the space is likely to be used for fashion shows, conferences and other events where a large capacity is needed.

Broadwick Live previously operated a music venue called Drumsheds within a disused warehouse

beside the River Lea, just a short distance from Ikea, as part of Enfield Council’s move to provide ‘meanwhile’ uses for old industrial buildings across its Meridian Water development zone.

The converted Ikea venue will also be called Drumsheds. Broadwick director Simeon Aldred said: “We are proud to announce Drumsheds, set to be London’s most impactful cultural space of its kind, set across 608,000 square feet in North London.”

ENFIELD TOWN

Pride display vandalised



The vandalised shop front

A CHARITY SHOP’S WINDOW display celebrating Pride was vandalised by homophobes twice in three days.

The British Heart Foundation shop in Church Street was displaying a Pride flag and the word ‘Pride’ in rainbow colours but shop volunteers arrived one Monday to find

someone had spray-painted over these parts of their front window.

After cleaning the spray paint off on 26th June and reporting the incident to police, more vandalism occurred two days later – this time with an offensive, homophobic message added alongside.

Richard Roe, regional director at British Heart Foundation (BHF), said: “We are shocked and saddened that our BHF shop in Enfield was targeted by vandalism. Incidents like this are not only upsetting for our dedicated colleagues, volunteers and customers, but they can also impact our ability to help fund lifesaving research into heart and circulatory diseases.”

The incident was reported to the Met Police. Anyone with information should quote crime number CAD1413/28Jun.

ARNOS GROVE

Step-free tube station

ARNOS GROVE HAS BEEN INCLUDED on a list of ten tube stations that will be prioritised for step-free access upgrades by Transport for London (TfL).

The Piccadilly Line stop was identified by TfL using an approach focused on “benefits to customers”, such as reducing journey times for those needing to use step-free access and reflecting issues that impact the delivery of step-free access, such as

the feasibility of new lifts, sufficient space for work to be carried out, and the depth of each tube station.

If Arnos Grove is made step-free, it would become the third London Underground station in Enfield to be made fully accessible, after Oakwood and Cockfosters further up the line. Subject to funding being identified and the outcome of feasibility studies, upgrade work could finish by 2026.

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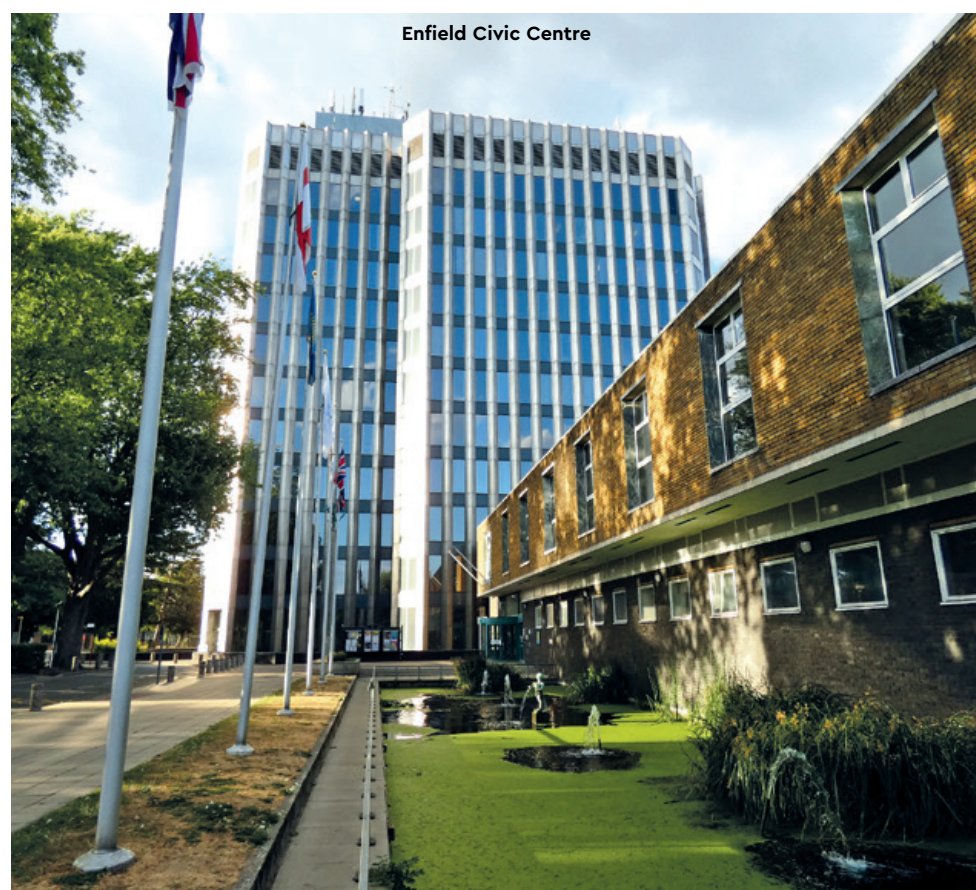
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#MoreThanACollege

Row over cut to council tax support scheme for poorest families



Enfield Civic Centre

Enfield Council wants to cut the maximum discount it provides on tax bills to 50%

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Thousands of low-income households in Enfield could face having to pay more council tax to reduce mounting financial pressure on the civic centre.

A shake-up of Enfield's council tax support scheme, which helps around one-in-three of the borough's households, could see the local authority cut the maximum discount it provides from 75.5% of bills down to 50%.

Last year, the council ruled out increasing the minimum payment made by residents supported via the scheme. Instead, it

introduced a banding system based on income that still saw some households lose up to £1,455 per year. But with budget pressures continuing to grow, it has now proposed upping minimum payments.

The council says higher interest rates and inflation have pushed up the cost of running the discount scheme from £30million in 2018 to more than £40m today, with the figure set to rise to £50m by 2026. It claims the changes will bring it into line with the London average, and it plans to invest £1m into a hardship fund to help residents who are most in need.

But a political row has already broken out over the proposed changes. James Hockney, the Conservative group's shadow cabinet member for finance, blamed the Labour administration's "financial mismanagement" for "heaping pain on those who can least afford it".

"The council is heaping pain on those who can least afford it"

He said: "Labour decided to become one of the most indebted London councils – despite our repeated warnings of the risks. Debt interest from the frontline services budget has surged to £32m this year and will continue to rise each year to £46m in three years' time. The Labour administration's actions mean ten of millions of pounds is tied up in a debt bubble rather than on frontline services.

"This is why they don't have the money for council tax support [...] with these cuts falling heaviest in the lower-income households in Edmonton and the east of the borough. Labour say they care about the hard-pressed taxpayer – but their actions say otherwise."

Tim Leaver, the council's cabinet member for finance and procurement, hit back at the comments, saying: "Enfield Conservatives still don't get it: after 13 years of austerity, a government that wrecked the economy and has failed to stop inflation – Conservative mismanagement is costing us all.

"The government used to fund council tax support schemes until the Conservatives slashed it, and then cut Enfield's budgets by £82m a year.

"Despite Conservative cuts, our Labour-run Enfield Council has consistently managed its budget robustly and responsibly. The cross-party Local Government Association recognised this in their recent review of Enfield Council, specifically commenting on the resilience of council finances.

"And whilst Enfield Conservatives continue to oppose any strategic borrowing to see improvements in our borough, Enfield Labour will continue to invest for the future, including to deliver much-needed affordable housing."

Further proposed changes to the support scheme include capping the maximum discount at band C property levels and changing the calculations on multiple non-dependent adults in one property.

Members of the council's cabinet will decide whether to launch a twelve-week public consultation on the proposals in September.

An oak sapling at Enfield Chase Woodland Restoration Project



Call to help identify new woodland sites

An "M25 for nature" could be created around the outskirts of London with help from local people able to identify sites where new woodland can be created.

London's countryside charity, CPRE London, is aiming to create a "tree ring for London", delivering a continuous circle of woodland around the capital and making an "animal super highway".

The project will help ensure that London's Green Belt plays a more powerful role in carbon capture and strengthening biodiversity, along with improving the wellbeing of Londoners. The continuous ring of trees will bridge Green Belt gaps in outer London and create corridors for wildlife.

In Enfield, 134,000 trees have been planted since 2020 by Thames21 and Enfield Council as part of Enfield Chase Restoration Project, with one million new trees being promised in total by the Labour administration at Enfield Civic Centre. However, the council is also proposing to build more than 6,000 homes on other parts of the borough's Green Belt – something opposed by CPRE London.

CPRE London hopes a ring of woodland will help the Green Belt do its job of "preventing urban sprawl". The charity's director, Anna Taylor, said: "There is an urgent need for more tree planting – but this needs to be well-planned with plentiful community input in order to maximise the potential benefits of new woodlands and guard against the loss of other priority habitats or prime agricultural land.

"We need to be creative in thinking about what London's community forest should look like. We need to ask ourselves: are there local green spaces near me where trees could be planted that would enhance rather than reduce their amenity value?"

For the ground mapping of potential woodland creation sites the charity needs reliable information on existing young woodland in the Green Belt, but also more widely across London. This will reveal where planting can join together with established woodland habitat. Potential planting sites could be put forward for government 'community forest' funding which would support the landowner to plant trees. CPRE London itself also has limited funding available.

To find out more about the project:
Email woodlandcreation@cprelondon.org.uk
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Townners prepare for 'toughest-ever division'

QE2 Stadium, home of Enfield Town FC



Andrew Warshaw previews the new 2023/24 season at Enfield Town FC

Pre-season is almost over, the players have been put through their paces by new manager Gavin Macpherson and his backroom team, and all eyes are now firmly on 12th August.

That's when Enfield Town FC's new season gets under way with a home game against Concord Rangers, who were relegated from the second tier of non-league football at the end of last season and are likely to provide strong opposition at the start of arguably the toughest-ever Isthmian League Premier Division campaign, on paper at least.

Town's second game takes place just four days later with a mouth-watering local derby at Potters Bar, followed by a trip to Folkestone the following weekend.

"Pre-season was all about putting down markers and being ready for that first game of the season and where you need to be," Gavin said in the build-up to the eagerly awaited 23/24 season and a new era for the borough's largest non-league club.

Renowned for his front-foot philosophy, the first two pre-season outings were both about concentrating on how the players worked out of possession, then in later matches switching to how they performed with the ball.

All the new signings have been prominent in pre-season with new goalkeeper Rhys Forster showing a commanding presence while Louis Birch's lung-busting industry and

Ollie Knight's crossing ability will surely be huge assets. Also raring to go is Reece Beckles-Richards, who is Enfield born and bred.

When Reece, who has played for three of Enfield's local rivals, got a chance to join from Cheshunt and move a few miles down the A10, he made up his mind pretty fast.

"There's not a more local club I can play for and it didn't take long for the gaffer to sell it to me," said Reece. "I've lived in the borough my whole life and now live literally five minutes from the ground. I could even walk there in 20 minutes. I guess it does seem odd that I never played for Enfield before given where I was born and brought up."

Expanding on what it was about Gavin that drew him to Town, Reece continued: "A lot of it was down to his honesty. I'm at an age now when I know instinctively if a manager is telling me the truth rather than trying to spin things."

"I had a few other Step 3 clubs interested in me but when it came about, it just made sense. I'm hoping to bring lots of goals as well as entertainment. I like to have fun. Obviously I want to win and the aim is to finish as high as possible. Promotion is obviously the ultimate goal but I understand that's

not always realistic."

As for the manager, Gavin has quickly made a strong impression on everyone at the club, not least the fans. And vice versa. "I knew what this club was about," Gavin said. "Of course there could be pitfalls along the way because you have to produce and this is a tough old league. But I got a feel for it straight away. They're a passionate group."

As well as a raft of new players, Town have also changed catering company to serve food and drink on match days. Based in Ponders End, Cooking Champions is a local registered charity who believe in the power of food as a force for good.

The company brings the community together for food education workshops, open kitchen sessions, community lunches and more – the perfect partner in terms of fitting with Enfield Town's fan-owned community-driven ethos.

In a statement the company said: "Supporters will be offered an array of high-quality food with all profits going straight to our charity. This will help to continue our essential food support that has been running every single week since April 2020. Thank you to Enfield Town FC for this opportunity and we can't wait to see what the season brings."

Enfield Town FC 2023/24 August fixtures

Sat 12 Aug	H	Concord Rangers	Isthmian Premier	3pm
Tue 15 Aug	A	Potters Bar Town	Isthmian Premier	7.45pm
Sat 19 Aug	A	Folkestone Invicta	Isthmian Premier	3pm
Sat 26 Aug	H	Cray Wanderers	Isthmian Premier	3pm
Mon 28 Aug	A	Haringey Borough	Isthmian Premier	3pm

Tennis club secures long-term future

Vicars Moor LTC expels doubts over the future of its site

A historic tennis club in Winchmore Hill says it has secured its future after years of uncertainty over the lease of its site.

Vicars Moor Lawn Tennis Club is based at Sherbrook Gardens, where it has six floodlit artificial grass tennis courts, and has existed in the area for nearly a century.

But the club, designated as an 'asset of community value' by Enfield Council, had faced an uncertain future without being able to secure a long-term lease,



Vicars Moor LTC is based in Sherbrook Gardens

prompting club members to campaign to save it.

After many years of uncertainty Vicars Moor announced last month it had signed a long-

term lease.

Club member Lionel Zetter said: "After a long campaign to save the club, with support from all members, local councillors,

our local MP and the LTA [Lawn Tennis Association] the club has now negotiated a deal to secure its long-term future.

"The club can now look forward to a programme of court and facilities refurbishment, and to continue to grow and serve the local community."

Members of Vicars Moor include beginners and juniors through to performance players. Activities range from social play through to team tennis, including men's and ladies' teams in the Middlesex Premier League. There is also an "enviable social scene" with regular events organised.

Anyone interested in joining the club or having a taster session: Visit vicarsmoortlc.co.uk

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LICENSING ACT 2003

Notice of Application for a New Premises Licence/ Club Premises Certificate

Notice is hereby given that **Eco Bravo Cafe** have applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Enfield for a Premises Licence/Club Premises Certificate* to permit:

- The supply of alcohol
- For the premises: **Eco Bravo Cafe** situated at **196 Lancaster Road EN2 0JH**

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: **31/07/2023**

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: 3rd day of July 2023



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