

ENFIELD DISPATCH

Nº 62

THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

NOV 2023

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A MEMORIAL DEDICATED to all those in the borough lost to the Covid-19 pandemic has been officially inaugurated. Enfield Living Memorial began to take shape last year with the planting of 30 trees in Town Park, in the shape of a heart. Now the final piece of the memorial, a metal artwork depicting a phoenix rising, designed by local artist Joe Robinson, has also been unveiled. Fundraising efforts were led by the Sorooptimist Club of Enfield and raised around £10,000 in total. Credit: Enfield Living Memorial/Joe Robinson XL

Hundreds of children housed by council in B&Bs beyond legal limit

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

The number of Enfield families with children being housed in bed and breakfast (B&B) types of temporary accommodation beyond the government's six-week legal limit has hit 150.

In total, there are currently 247 Enfield children living in B&Bs, which includes any temporary accommodation where there are no cooking facilities or shared cooking or washing facilities – and in most cases means living in cheap hotels such as Enfield Travelodge.

While the number of families with children housed in B&Bs by Enfield Council beyond six weeks in April 2022 was just one, a year later this had

risen exponentially to 113. Despite efforts to reduce the number, which has included a major U-turn on housing policy this summer as the council now looks to rehouse people in cheaper areas beyond the south-east of England, the latest data shows that 150 Enfield families are now exceeding the legal limit on B&B stays.

According to the government's own legal guidance for local authorities, B&B accommodation "caters for very short-term stays only" because it "affords residents only limited privacy, and may lack or require sharing of important amenities, such as cooking and laundry facilities". It further warns: "Living in B&B accommodation can be particularly detrimental to the health and development of children [...] Housing

authorities should, therefore, use B&B accommodation to discharge a duty to secure accommodation for applicants with family commitments only as a last resort and then only for a maximum of six weeks".

In the longest known local case, a Palmers Green family made homeless from a house fire in August 2022 have remained living in hotels ever since, for well over a year. Disabled dad Piotr Rembikowski spoke to the *Dispatch* again last month and said he had "no hope" left – read the full story on Page 6.

The latest figures on the extent of the housing crisis in Enfield were revealed in a council report published last month. It also showed that in the first quarter of 2023/24, 1,231 homeless applications to the

council were made, up from 802 in the previous quarter.

The report says: "The proportion of households in B&B accommodation continues to increase as temporary accommodation providers exit the market.

"A new five-year strategy for the provision of accommodation to prevent homelessness and to meet our statutory homelessness duties was approved at the September 2023 cabinet meeting. It sets out a number of potential delivery options for constructing new temporary accommodation in Enfield, including building new homes using modular techniques, extending existing temporary accommodation blocks and repurposing general needs housing schemes."



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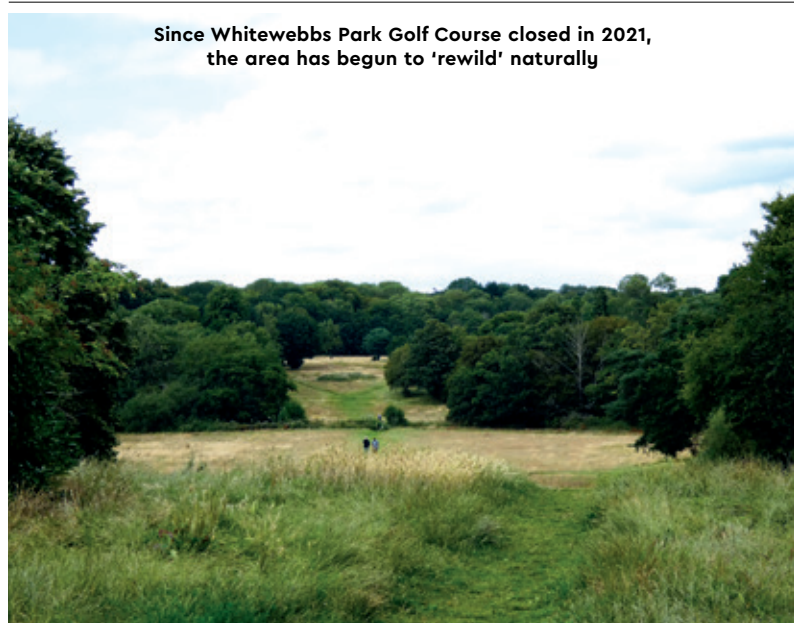


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Spurs reveal first details of plans for Whitewebbs – but locals slam ‘PR exercise’

A series of public exhibitions are taking place this month as Spurs prepare to submit planning application for its women's and girls' academy

Since Whitewebbs Park Golf Course closed in 2021, the area has begun to 'rewild' naturally



BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC) has confirmed that it plans to erect a fence up to two metres tall surrounding its proposed “world-leading” women's football academy at Whitewebbs – but also intends to plant 3,000 trees.

The first details of the Premier League club's proposed takeover of half of Whitewebbs Park were disclosed to the *Dispatch* ahead of a series of public exhibitions where local residents are being invited to view and discuss its plans for a women's and girls' academy.

Thousands of leaflets were delivered through people's doors in the area around the park last month, inviting them to attend three consultation events at the beginning of November. This is ahead of a full planning application, now being drawn up, which the club will likely submit next year.

However, the Friends of Whitewebbs Park residents' group, which has organised a series of protests and petitions opposing Enfield Council's 25-year lease to THFC, has already branded this month's pre-application consultation as “no more than a PR exercise”.

In a letter to the executive director at Spurs, the group wrote: “The park is already a regional asset offering accessible open space for the residents of Enfield. It is land rich in biodiversity with a variety of natural landscapes for people to

enjoy. The purpose of the park is for recreational use by residents and visitors, not by commercial concerns.”

The lease offered to THFC by the council comprises an area representing just over half of Whitewebbs Park, broadly covering the former golf course which closed in 2021, but the fenced-off academy itself will occupy 18% of the overall park. The fence surrounding it will be buttressed by hedging similar to that used around the existing training centre, which will be directly linked to the new academy.

Most of the remaining part of the lease area will be maintained as “historic parkland” by Spurs.

However, residents have questioned why a football club would wish to manage a park, with the friends group pointing out in its letter: “To the best of our knowl-

edge THL [Tottenham Hotspur Ltd] has no experience in providing and managing public open parkland.”

It adds: “You will be aware that local opposition to the decision to dispose of the park has been very strong but you have made no meaningful attempts to engage with the users of the park.”

THFC says it is now welcoming local people's views and that some ideas residents may have for the parkland could be taken forward with its forthcoming planning application. They are invited to attend exhibitions taking place at Toby Carvery, at Whitewebbs House in Whitewebbs Lane, on Wednesday 1st (3pm–7pm), Wednesday 8th (3pm–7pm) and Saturday 11th November (11am–3pm).

At these events, residents will be able to see the first visual impressions of the football academy, which will occupy the building previously used as the northern clubhouse for Whitewebbs Park Golf Course and also add an extension, essentially doubling its footprint.

While the enclosure of the area for the academy and the laying of football pitches will likely entail the removal of ten trees, representatives from THFC told the *Dispatch* the club intends to plant 3,000 elsewhere around Whitewebbs.

Within the woodland, a dilapidated building beside the lake, known as Conduit House, is set to be “transformed into a bird-watching platform”, while existing footpaths and bridleways will be repaired or upgraded. Spurs also want to erect

a new visitor centre in place of the existing cafe, clubhouse and toilet blocks at the southern entrance to the park. Proposals are still being finalised and could include additional features suggested by residents.

In its leaflet promoting the public exhibitions, the club explains: “We are still developing our designs for the site, and we now really want to hear from local residents – those who we hope will use the woods, new parkland, café, and training and educational facilities.

“Our proposals met the council's objectives of securing this unique site's future with a green use and also responded to local aspirations for enhanced access to nature and improved public facilities.

“The site presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a regionally significant asset for Enfield and we very much welcome the opportunity to meet this challenge. As a leading professional sports club and adjoining landowner, we offer a unique combination of a passion for sport, leisure, education and inclusivity; an understanding of the local area; a track record of delivering schemes to the highest standards and a demonstrable respect for conservation and the environment. We hope you can join us at one of our public events.”

The Whitewebbs Park lease, closure of the golf course and plans for the football academy have all proven highly controversial, with local opposition centred around the loss of access to part of the park. Multiple protests have been staged outside council meetings, while Sean Wilkinson, chair of the Friends of Whitewebbs Park group, is also pursuing legal action.

The legal action relates to the council's decision to issue a 25-year lease to THFC for £2million, which was confirmed this summer. Sean said: “I have lodged an application for permission to seek judicial review with the High Court. Enfield and Tottenham Hotspur have lodged their responses and the application is now pending before the court.”



Tottenham Hotspur's women's team are set to use Whitewebbs as their new training base Credit Katie Chan via Wikimedia Commons

For more information on the public consultation and exhibition events:
Call 0800 092 0422
Email thfcwhitewebbs@londoncommunications.co.uk
Visit tottenhamhotspur.com/whitewebbs

New cafés proposed at three borough parks

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

New cafés could be opened at three local parks after Enfield Council invited “expressions of interest” from potential caterers.

The offer to create new food and drink venues – at Enfield Playing Fields in Southbury and Edmonton’s Jubilee Park and Pymmes Park – comes as the council also seeks to find new operators for four existing park cafés that

were closed suddenly in September.

The cafés at Trent Park, Whitewebbs Park, Town Park and Oakwood Park all closed on the same day in September, when enforcement action was taken against the leaseholder following a “contract breach” which the *Dispatch* understands amounted to thousands in unpaid rent.

Now, the council is inviting catering companies to apply to reopen and run each of the four closed cafés, but is also promoting the

potential for three new venues as part of the Labour administration’s commitment to open more park cafés across the borough.

A spokesperson said: “Enfield Council is currently advertising for applications for four park cafés and is working as quickly as possible to review and accept applications from potential new operators.

“We are also advertising for three new cafés in Jubilee and Pymmes Park, and Enfield Playing Fields, following our commitment to invest in our parks and introduce more cafés. Expressions of interest will be out for tender soon.”

The new cafés would need to be opened after converting existing disused or dilapidated structures at the parks, such as toilets and changing rooms. In a commercial brochure promoting the catering opportunities and inviting bids, the council says the “bustling parks” offer “the future opportunity for café provisions”.

Because the cafés would require significant building work to take place, at this stage the council is only seeking to hear from interested parties rather than encouraging financial bids, and it is likely the council would need to provide investment itself.

At Enfield Playing Fields, which is very well used by local sports clubs with its many pitches for football, rugby and even baseball, the council says it wants the central pavilion



The café at Oakwood Park is among four in the borough currently closed



Enfield Council is inviting “expressions of interest” to open a café within the pavilion at Enfield Playing Fields

block to be converted to provide “much needed hospitality to those using the playing fields, such as families, clubs and all those enjoying the space”.

In addition, the commercial brochure seen by the *Dispatch* includes tenders for council-owned cafes that are in continuing operation – at Dugdale Arts Centre and Enfield Town Library, both run by EN Food, and at Forty Hall Estate. This does not necessarily mean the current operators would leave.

The council spokesperson said: “We are further introducing more opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs by advertising opportunities at Dugdale Arts Centre, Enfield Town Library and Forty Hall – helping our local economy further.”

Regarding the recovery of lost rent at the four closed cafés, they added: “The council is unable to comment on any legal proceedings with regard to the previous operator.”

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Enfield is blooming marvellous

Vicki Pite from Enfield In Bloom reflects on another great year for the borough's growers and gardeners

Enfield is deservedly known for its green spaces, its nurseries and garden centres at Crews Hill, and is admired for the 'friends' who dedicate hours to maintaining our beautiful parks.

Less celebrated are the Enfield gardeners and horticulturists who improve our environment with their vibrant garden displays and by providing the urban habitats important for pollinators, bugs, worms and pond life.

Enfield in Bloom, now in its 44th year, is a well-established community organisation that applauds the contribution of gardeners and horticulturists to our quality of life and the environment through its annual gardening competition, the Enfield in Bloom Awards. It's also one of a handful of 'Town in Bloom' groups in London, so it's an important part of Enfield and London's heritage.

It's a testament to the commitment of our volunteers and many loyal sponsors that, despite setbacks like Covid-19, cuts to local authority financial support and the challenges of extreme weather, competition entries continue to rise every year – and their quality is undiminished.



Victoria Goodson and Piper Khan's entry (best wildlife garden, gold winner)

There are many competition categories, sponsored by local businesses or community groups who are committed to supporting our efforts to improve the environment. The variety allows everyone to enter, and includes front gardens, residential streets, communal gardens, wildlife gardens and meadows, small gardens, window boxes and balconies, allotments, and innovative growing spaces. Truly something for everyone!

Judging is done by our team of judges, who are volunteers and travel the length and breadth of Enfield in June, personally visiting each entry: hard work, but inspirational.

Arguably the most uplifting category is 'school grounds with an environmental aspect'. This year there were five entries, all of which gained gold awards. Reading the judges' comments and seeing the photographs, it's not difficult to see why. Whether the schools are in heavily urbanised or rural areas, they enhance children's learning by giving them responsibility for creating their own gardens and wildlife habitats, for planting and seed collection.

The schools enrich their curriculum by providing the hands-on experience that inspires a love of nature, respect for the environment and an understanding of sustainability. The children and young people grow food for their own kitchens, organise plant sales and make compost; a lesson for us all.

Hats off, therefore, to the dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff at Tottenhall Infants' School, Grange Park Primary School, Brettenham Primary School, Prince of Wales Primary School, and Oaktree School.

Enfield in Bloom supports schools and friends of parks groups with small grants to help them sustain our precious environments. The Enfield in Bloom competition is free, and each entry is judged on its own merit, so there are over 100 awards given out. All amateur gardeners are welcome to participate and the winners are invited to our awards ceremony held every October.

At present we are looking for volunteers for the Enfield in Bloom committee, especially if you have some computer skills to help with all the administration involved.

To see all of the 2023 Enfield In Bloom winners: Visit enfieldinbloom.org.uk/competition-results



Tottenhall Infants School (best school grounds, gold winner)

Feeding the community

Visitors to the ‘community kitchen’ service run by Enfield charity Cooking Champions speak to James Cracknell about how it’s helping them survive the cost-of-living crisis



Outside the Cooking Champions Community Kitchen in Ponders End are (from left) team members Keely Forbes, Heather Bredee and Clare Donovan

The soaring price of food in the UK has forced many people to rethink what they buy and perhaps give up some luxuries – but for some already struggling the impact has been far more severe.

At the weekly ‘community kitchen’ run by Enfield charity Cooking Champions, dozens of regular visitors benefit from a free hot meal which they wouldn’t otherwise be able to pay for themselves. The service is literally a lifeline for these people, and some of the stories they have to tell about their lives are absolutely shocking – as I recently found out when I went along last month.

Single mum Ruby has been attending the community kitchen in Ponders End for around a month and told me she was “always counting the pennies” since “the price of everything has gone through the roof”.

When I asked for an example of what she was cutting back on, however, I was taken aback by Ruby’s answer. “I used to buy bread,” she said, “but I can’t afford it now – fruit is too expensive as well”.

Ruby explains that she has hasn’t turned her heating on at home for more than two years and that her daughter, aged eleven, would likely go hungry if it weren’t for

free school meals.

Because some people now cannot afford to turn on their oven, Cooking Champions launched its community kitchen last year as a way to help visitors turn cheap ingredients into healthy, hot meals, using the cooking equipment provided at St Matthew’s Church in South Street.

Another visitor is Emma. The mother-of-two says that despite her husband having stage four kidney failure, forcing him to quit his career in the NHS, he has repeatedly been denied access to personal independence payments from the Department for Work and Pensions.

“I wrote on Facebook about how we were struggling and [Cooking Champions founder] Clare messaged me about the community kitchen.



Paula Morris is one of the regular visitors and says the food is “exquisite”

“It is amazing here, the people have made me feel so welcome – they didn’t make me feel like a failure”

“It is amazing here, the people have made me feel so welcome – they didn’t make me feel like a failure.”

Emma also struggles with health issues and says her family can only afford to buy “essentials”. Like Ruby, they manage without heating in winter. “We just use blankets,” she tells me. “Sometimes we take the kids to my parents after school as it’s warmer there. I’m dreading winter.

“When you have two kids they don’t understand why it is cold – you feel like a failure, it’s horrible.”

Paula, another regular visitor, can’t speak highly enough of the community kitchen. “The service is exceptional, they are friendly and thoughtful, and the meals are exquisite,” she says.

“Sometimes it is hard to find nutritious food, I have had to cut back, so I am very thankful for this place.”

Retired coach driver David agrees. “Cooking Champions is absolutely

brilliant, I have made so many friends here,” he says, adding: “You go into the supermarket and it’s 50p more on this, 50p more on that, and then what you buy is getting smaller as well.”

Another visitor, who asked not to be named, tells me he’s stopped buying crisps. “It was my one vice, but I had to cut back on it. I don’t eat three meals a day any more, I just survive on two.”

While most foodbanks require referrals from designated services such as the local council or NHS, Cooking Champions is far easier for people to access and does not turn anyone away – even while demand has risen fourfold. It enables those who might not be eligible for other foodbanks to get what they need.

The community kitchen is an additional service launched following feedback from some users that they couldn’t afford to cook at home because of the cost of electricity and

gas. As became apparent from the stories I heard on my visit, it has quickly become essential for many people, but Cooking Champions was sadly forced to close it for eight weeks this summer when funding ran out.

Fortunately, thanks to a successful crowdfunding appeal, the community kitchen returned in September and is now fully funded through until the end of the year. “It was so hard, having to close for eight weeks and tell people they couldn’t come,” founder Clare Donovan told me.

“It has been an achievement to run it for a year but there are challenging times ahead. We see every day how people benefit; whether it is from the meals, the cooking lessons or the socialising, it is a real community hub, and the idea of it not being here is really worrying.”

The community kitchen at St Matthew’s Church runs from 12pm until 1.30pm every Thursday. To make a donation to the crowdfunding campaign: Visit gofundme.com/f/ztumpz-community-meals

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Piotr Rembikowski outside Enfield Civic Centre in October, when he demanded to speak to a housing officer about his family's situation

Homeless family stuck living in hotels for 14 months

The Rembikowskis declared homelessness with Enfield Council after their Palmers Green home burned down in August 2022

An Enfield family remain stuck living in a hotel well over a year after they were made homeless when their house was destroyed by fire.

The Rembikowski family declared themselves homeless with Enfield Council after their Palmers Green bungalow was destroyed by a blaze in August 2022. Their plight was first reported by the *Dispatch* in April, when they were living at Enfield Travelodge, but they have since been moved to three different hotels in the last six months.

Piotr Rembikowski, who is disabled, now lives with wife Magda and two sons Alan, aged 15, and Natan, aged 20, in two rooms at a hotel near the M1 motorway, which they were moved to last month after previously being placed by the council at Travelodge hotels in Whetstone and Borehamwood over the summer.

The council told the family they were “not a priority” for social housing, despite Piotr’s disability, and is advising them to search for a new home in the private rental sector. But Piotr told the *Dispatch* they can only afford one-bed properties, even outside London, and that many of these are unsuitable because

he uses a wheelchair.

Being forced to move to hotels outside the borough has also created problems with accessing local services, especially Alan who has struggled to restart his education. Magda works as a housekeeper in central London and now has a very long commute, while Piotr was forced to give up his career in carpentry after the accident which left him in a wheelchair, just a few months before the house fire.

“They are trying to push me into the private sector,” Piotr explained. “I received an email from them saying I don’t need emergency accommodation and I was found not to be in priority need for social housing.

“I am looking everywhere for properties but with my income they say I can only get a one-bed flat – how can I live there with my whole family? I am looking outside London because it is cheaper but it still is not cheap enough.

“I tell them [estate agents] I have a wheelchair and a German shepherd and then they don’t accept me.”

After growing increasingly frustrated with his treatment by the council, Piotr visited Enfield Civic Centre in October accompanied by journalists from BBC

London, *The Guardian* and GB News, as well as the *Dispatch*. The council subsequently offered him his first-ever face-to-face meeting with a housing officer later that week.

However, Piotr and his family remained living in a hotel at time of going to press, coming up to 15 months since they were made homeless.

A council spokesperson said: “Enfield Council is committed to enabling everyone to access a stable, secure and decent home and to minimize the use of temporary accommodation. In this case, we are exploring a number of avenues to find the Rembikowski family suitable accommodation, including the private rented sector.

“Unfortunately, the supply of adapted or adaptable homes is extremely limited and exceptionally difficult to acquire. We have agreed to maintain weekly contact with Mr Rembikowski and will continue working with our housing providers and partners to secure suitable accommodation at the earliest opportunity.”

The Rembikowskis are just one of hundreds of families placed in hotels this year by the council amid a spike in homelessness, with Enfield now having the highest no-fault eviction rate in London.

Action pledged on A10 car meets and speeding

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Car meets could be banned across Enfield following calls for action from residents whose lives have been blighted by noise and dangerous driving.

The council is planning to expand its current public space protection order (PSPO) against car meets to cover the whole borough rather than specific designated areas, with a consultation on the proposal set to start this month.

PSPOs work by banning nuisance behaviour in public spaces, with those caught breaking the rules liable to face fines or prosecution. In the short term, new bollards and concrete blocks have been installed at the car park of Colosseum Retail Park beside the A10 dual carriageway, to prevent it being used by drivers performing “dangerous stunts”.

It comes on top of measures previously implemented by Transport for London (TfL), which included installing average speed cameras along a section of the A10 between the M25 and Southbury Road.

But during a public meeting last month – one of two to discuss the topic in the space of a week – residents and councillors called for further measures to crack down on speeding drivers with modified exhausts, who have been causing noise pollution and endangering residents for years.

James Hockney, a Bush Hill Park ward councillor who has long campaigned on the issue, drew up an eight-point charter designed to stop the problems. It calls on the council to seek an injunction against illegal car cruising and meets, deploy antisocial behaviour officers and mobile CCTV to hotspots, amend the PSPO to cover the whole of the borough, and take enforcement action against car park owners who fail to install security measures.

The charter also urges TfL to introduce noise cameras along the A10, rollout average speed cameras from Southbury Road to Great Cambridge Junction, and bring back the “enhanced police resources” of City Hall’s ‘vision zero’ operation.

During the meeting, residents

gave accounts of how car meets and dangerous driving had affected their lives. Louise, who lives in Edmonton, said speeding cars and noise had been a problem for 17 years and were getting worse, causing her sleepless nights. She said the borough-wide injunction was a “great idea” to prevent illegal car meets and called on councillors to work together to deal with the problems and “listen to the people of Enfield”.

Mike, a driving instructor who specialises in disability tuition, said his car had been hit 35 times during the 17 years he had been teaching. He added: “We get tailgated constantly, we see the most stupid and reckless driving. What makes it worse is that as a disability instructor, I teach people that have to use adaptations, which, if they are not used to them, they will hit the wrong pedal and hand control, and things do go horribly wrong.”

Representatives from the Metropolitan Police and TfL attended the meeting and were questioned by the public. Inspector Richard Lee, from the Met Police, said only two of his 15 officers were trained to drive on blue lights, and Enfield

was at a disadvantage because it is halfway between two garages. He agreed with the need for a covert approach but said he didn’t have the resources to do it.

Rob Varney, from TfL, said speed and noise cameras were “some of the things we can look at” and added: “I will continue to work with our policing team, and hopefully we will find some solutions.”

A separate meeting was convened by Enfield North MP Feryal Clark

in conjunction with local resident Joy Cowley-Smith. The Labour MP said: “Since becoming Enfield North MP I have received hundreds of complaints from residents regarding the hugely disruptive car meet-ups and dangerous races taking place on and around the A10 [...] I personally agreed to chair another meeting in six to twelve months’ time if we have not seen progress, and we all agreed we need to see more stop and spot checks on all modified cars driving in the borough.”



Bush Hill Park's Conservative councillor James Hockney



Enfield North MP Feryal Clark
Credit: parliament.uk

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School pupil named among 'young poets of the year'

A pupil at an Edmonton school has been named one of the Foyle Young Poets of the Year 2023 after writing a poem exploring some of her personal struggles.

Bea Unwin, who is in year eleven at The Latymer School in Haselbury Road, had previously been shortlisted twice in the top 100 of the prestigious awards organised by The Poetry Society, but this year went all the way and was named among the 15 winners.

Bea says her winning poem, *Suggestions for First Love*, "is about my experience of how I live and I am viewed as a young queer person, struggling with my mental health, and this was my way of exploring that".

She told the *Dispatch*: "For as long as I can remember I have always loved writing. Most of my poems are quite personal. I aim to write as often as



Bea Unwin collecting her award

I can but I do take time to perfect them.

"It [writing poetry] comes quite naturally to me, but I have done a lot of workshops and have been refining my style to make sure they are the best they can be."

The Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award, founded in 1998, is an opportunity for any young poet aged from eleven to 17 to accelerate their writing career. With 15,800 entries this year from over 6,600 young people from across the UK and 119 countries worldwide, Foyle is the largest competition of its kind.

Judge Jane Yeh, commenting on this year's entries, said: "I was astonished – and

humbled – to read so many poems brimming over with inventiveness, ambition, and sheer quality."

Bea says her English teacher at Latymer, Ms Berry, has been "very supportive" of her entering poems for the awards. Asked whether poetry will be something she continues with after finishing school, Bea added: "It is definitely something I want to pursue further on in life."

Watch Bea Unwin performing her poem on YouTube: Visit youtube.com/watch?v=SJb3hdpO_t4

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



Council leadership ‘confident’ of balancing next budget

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The Labour administration at Enfield Council insists it is “confident” it can balance its budget despite fears of bankruptcy being raised by opposition Conservatives.

The council is now one of the most indebted local authorities in the country but the leadership at Enfield Civic Centre has moved to downplay speculation it might have to issue a Section 114 notice – effectively declaring bankruptcy – after several other councils with large debts either issued such notices or warned they were close to doing so.

A spokesperson for Enfield Council said there was “no evidence” to suggest it was close to issuing a Section 114, after the subject was raised by the leader of the Conservative group at a full council meeting.

Councils that have recently issued Section 114 notices – which bar them from making new spending commitments – include Birmingham, Croydon, Thurrock and Woking. Havering in East London also recently announced it was on the verge of doing so.

Faced with a projected £39million budget gap for the 2024/25 financial year, caused largely by

higher inflation, borrowing costs and soaring demand for temporary housing, Enfield Council recently proposed several new cuts in a bid to balance its books.

Among the proposals is a significant reduction to a scheme set up to help the most vulnerable residents with their council tax payments, which Labour had pledged to retain at its current level in its election manifesto last year.

During September’s full council meeting, Conservative opposition leader Alessandro Georgiou warned a Section 114 notice “will come at some point”, adding: “We can play the blame game or we can take the decisions today to mitigate that and to ensure that our residents in the future will not be carrying a significant council tax burden.”

Responding to the speculation, a council spokesperson said: “Like all local authorities, Enfield Council is having to make difficult decisions due to budget challenges caused by inflation and government cuts, but we are confident we will balance our budget.”

“There is no evidence to suggest we are close to a S114 situation that other councils have experienced – a recent LGA [Local Government Association] peer review found our budget was in a robust position and we have



Enfield Council is facing a long winter of spending cuts to balance its spring budget always been prudent.

“We will continue to invest in Enfield and our services to make a cleaner, greener and safer borough.”

Cllr Georgiou stood by his comments, however. Citing the council’s high debt, “extreme” levels of borrowing at Meridian Water and “failures” at council-owned company Energetik, he said a Section 114 notice was “inevitable”.

Cllr Georgiou’s Conservative colleague James Hockney, who is shadow cabinet member for finance, added: “The path that the Enfield Labour council chose puts them at significant risk of bankruptcy. Enfield Conservatives repeatedly warned Enfield Labour on the risks of high borrowing – for years. They ignored these risks and now we are the tenth most-indebted council in England.”

“Like all local authorities, Enfield Council is making difficult decisions”

Enfield smokers ‘least willing to give up’

Enfield’s smokers are the least willing in England to give up the habit, according to a new analysis.

NHS data for 152 areas in England between April 2022 and March 2023 was analysed by Go Smoke Free. It considered which areas were most interested in quitting smoking, as determined by the number of people who had set a quit date per 100,000 smokers in each local authority area.

The research found that Wirral has the highest number of smokers looking to quit, with 8,299 out of every 100,000 smokers in the Merseyside borough reporting to



NHS data suggests only 109 smokers per 100,000 in Enfield have set a quit date Credit: Lilarts via Unsplash

have set a quit date. Stockton-on-Tees ranks second, with 7,564, and Hackney ranks third with 7,551.

However, Enfield was found to

be the area with the least desire to stop smoking, with only 109 smokers per 100,000 reportedly setting a quit date.

Go Smoke Free also considered which areas were most successful at quitting smoking, as ascertained by the number of people who reported that they had quit during a four-week follow-up – with Enfield again faring very badly.

Warrington was found to be the most successful at quitting smoking in England, with an 84.24% success rate as 1,026 out of 1,218 smokers who set a quit date through NHS stop smoking services reporting they had

kept off fags at the four-week follow-up. But Enfield has the second-lowest success rate, at 19.23%. Only ten out of 52 people reported that they had quit at the four-week follow-up.

Go Smoke Free’s analysis used statistics on NHS stop smoking services in England, between April 2022 and March 2023, from NHS Digital. Local authority areas were ranked based on the number of people setting a quit date per 100,000 smokers. A number of local authorities were omitted from the final rankings where data was unavailable or not comparable.

Asbestos still present at 32 Enfield schools

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Buildings on 32 school sites owned by Enfield Council still contain asbestos, new data released under the Freedom of Information Act show.

The potentially deadly material is not considered harmful when in large pieces and undamaged, but can lead to an incurable type of cancer if it is disturbed and the fibres are inhaled.

Concerns over the safety of school buildings have mounted since the government revealed more than 170 schools around the country contain reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (Raac) – a lightweight form of concrete used from the 1950s to the mid-1990s that is at risk of collapse after its 30-year lifespan.

Three Enfield schools – St Ignatius’ College in Bulls Cross, Winchmore School in Winchmore Hill, and Ark John Keats Academy in Enfield Wash – are currently known to contain Raac.

Figures published by the Department for Education in 2019 revealed asbestos was present in four out of five schools in England. This led to fears that construction work to make buildings containing Raac safe could be slowed down by the presence of asbestos.

All three types of asbestos are known as class one carcinogens, although blue and brown asbestos – which have been banned since 1985 – are most dangerous. White asbestos was banned in 1999.

Before it was banned the substance was used in a wide range of construction materials.

A report produced by the Joint Union Asbestos Committee estimates that between 5,000 and 10,000 former staff and pupils died from mesothelioma between 1980 and 2017 because they were exposed to amosite (brown) asbestos in schools. The committee called on the government to fund the phased removal of all asbestos in educational establishments by 2028.

A council spokesperson said: “The safety of students and school staff is paramount. Enfield Council has a robust and rigorous system of management in place for schools where asbestos has been identified.

“These site-specific management plans, training, advice and site visits have all been created in line with health and safety regulations and guidance. Where structures containing asbestos are in good condition and are unlikely to be disturbed, they will be left in place with a regular inspection regime, in line with industry guidance.”

Don't be left in the Cold, Get help with Citizens Advice Enfield

**citizens
advice**

Enfield

Citizens Advice Enfield, along with The British Gas Energy Trust, are working to ensure residents are not left in the cold over the winter months. They are offering advice, energy saving tips, and – for those on pre-payment meters – fuel vouchers to help residents get through the winter. The cost-of-living crisis is putting many families under a lot of strain.

Citizens Advice predicts that by the end of this year it will have seen 26% more people in need of help with energy debt compared to 2022. The charity says the numbers seeking help for energy debt has more than doubled in four years. The British Gas Energy Trust, which supports organisations such as Citizens Advice Enfield – by providing voucher schemes, funding for debt advice and Financial Capability workshops – has supported more than 29,000 individuals and advice-giving organisations with £6.2million worth of grant funding.

Help available from Citizens Advice Enfield

- **Fuel Vouchers for households on prepayment metres**
- **Tips on Saving Energy and budgeting tool available at citizensadvice.org.uk**

Income maximisation

Residents may not be aware of different benefits and grants that are available to them. Advisors can research to see what may be available to those already on benefits or individuals struggling financially. Dealing with money issues can sometimes be off-putting, but it's surprising what solutions may be available. If you are struggling, they can check whether you qualify for Breathing Space, which holds action to recover debts for up to 2 months

Financial Capability Workshops

Citizens Advice Enfield is working with community groups across the borough providing workshops, to help raise financial awareness, providing residents with knowledge, resources, and tools to help with budgeting and debt, income maximisation, staying safe online, and managing money through challenging times. They also provide one-to-one training sessions.



Crisis Prevention

A project funded by the GLA; Citizens Advice Enfield work with partners in the borough to open up access to advice. Sessions are held in Libraries, St Monica's Church and Community Centre, and All People All Places.



Advice Line: 0808 278 37837



Sign up to the Enfield Dispatch newsletter

Scan the QR code



We need to know what the council's plans are for Meridian Water

Matt Burn from campaign group Better Homes Enfield calls for the council to finally publish its new masterplan for Meridian Water



The first new homes at Meridian Water were launched in September, but it's still unknown when or how future phases of the scheme will be delivered to meet the 10,000 target

Enfield Council's regeneration of Meridian Water, if properly delivered, could help solve the housing challenges faced by many of Enfield's residents.

For example, it could deliver the affordable homes needed by both younger and older residents, as well as help address the borough's acute shortage of affordable family homes for key workers.

But is it being properly delivered? This is an important question because this scheme

is so big, that failing to properly deliver it would not only be a huge missed opportunity in terms of housing, it would also have very significant financial implications for the council, which could ultimately impact every household in the borough.

Various documents indicate that around 13,000 homes could now be planned for the scheme, and an enormous amount of public money is being spent by the council on the basis that the scheme will deliver 10,000 of these by 2038.

But there is a big problem. The original Meridian Water masterplan formally adopted by the council in 2013 – and all other formal planning documentation including the council's draft of their proposed new Local Plan – only allow for 5,000 homes. The council's last attempt to increase the number of planned homes at Meridian Water to 10,000 was refused by a planning inspector in 2018, due to a lack of cogent evidence that 10,000 homes could be built at the site.

Despite this, since 2018 the council has continued to borrow and spend very large amounts of money on the assumption that 10,000 homes will be built and has said that the evidence needed to justify this assumption would be set out in a new Meridian Water masterplan.

The council and a large number of consultants have been working on this new masterplan for five years, and well in excess of one million pounds has been spent creating it. Documents published in 2023 show that they now consider it to be complete and are using it to make decisions, but the masterplan has not been published for public consultation, which is a significant problem.

It's a problem because the council is obligated to consult a number of statutory consultees about the new Meridian Water masterplan before it can be officially adopted and used as a basis for key decision making. This is standard practice, as it enables the plan to be assessed by a range of outside bodies – such as the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, Thames Water and

the Environment Agency – to check it is viable and realistic, for example, in terms of transport infrastructure, flood risks, climate change and appropriate land use.

Furthermore, the council's 'statement of community involvement', a document the council must have by law, also requires it to publish the new masterplan for public consultation to ensure the views of local people are properly considered and incorporated into the new plan.

“Enfield Council is continuing to borrow and spend huge sums of public money on the basis of an assumption that may or may not be deliverable”

What does all this mean? The fact that the council hasn't published the new Meridian Water masterplan for consultation is a serious error. It means they haven't formally shown whether or not their plan would be acceptable to a range of statutory consultees – whose assessment could stop the plans in their tracks – as happened in 2018. It means that important decisions about Enfield's future have been made without the council having properly considered or respected the views of local communities and stakeholders. It also means that Enfield Council is continuing to borrow and spend huge sums of public money on the basis of an assumption that may or may not be deliverable, and as a result it risks placing the borough in considerable financial jeopardy, which could harm every household in the borough.

Finally, it means the potential of Meridian Water to help address Enfield's housing shortages may not be properly realised, at least for the foreseeable future.

We are calling on the council to publish the new Meridian Water masterplan without delay, and to commit to conducting a proper and transparent public consultation about the new plan before officially adopting it.

Better Homes Enfield is a local independent group campaigning for more affordable housing across Enfield. For more information: Visit betterhomes-enfield.org

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LICENSING ACT 2003 Notice Of Application For A New Premises Licence To Be Granted

Notice is hereby given that **Mr Xhevdet Selishta** have applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Enfield for a Premises Licence to permit:

- Retail Sale of Alcohol: 09:00 until 23:30, Sunday; 09:00 until 02:30, Thursday to Saturday
- Late Night Refreshment: 23:00 until 02:30, Thursday to Saturday
- Regulated Entertainment: 09:00 until 02:30, Thursday to Saturday; 09:00 until 00:00, Sunday
- For the premises MELODIA situated at: 4 Green Lanes, London N13 6JT

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: **14th day of November 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 unlimited.

Dated this: 17th day of October 2023

Town ward councillor Emma Supple (left) on patrol with Love Your Doorstep, including founder Emma Rigby (right)



All about Town

In our latest councillor's column, Conservative Emma Supple explains how the community in Enfield Town is pulling together to tackle anti-social behaviour

For me as a Conservative, I believe in free choice and using the money in your pocket to support local businesses.

As an Enfield resident of many years now, I have always tried to buy local. I shop in SJ Smith, the organic butchers, and try as much as possible to buy my fruit and veg from Paul and Audrey in Enfield Town Market.

Holtwhites Bakery is a treasure in Enfield and now has a second shop in Palmers Green. I make sure to shop in Pearsons as much as I can as well, especially now as it celebrates 120 years in Enfield Town!

However, there is a more challenging side to Enfield Town, and we all need to pull together to tackle it. The issue is crime and anti-social behaviour. We have several schools in the area whose pupils congregate in the town centre at the end of the school day, and I am very pleased to be taking part in the community patrols set up by Emma Rigby from Love Your Doorstep.

Recently, patrol volunteers like myself were welcomed at New Scotland Yard and given

police community awards to recognise our service to Enfield – contributing to a reduction in crime levels, making our high street safer. This was a real accolade to those people who saw that there was an issue and stepped in. The patrol is always in need of volunteers, and it is a pleasant and positive way to spend an hour or so.

I have made Enfield my home and have raised my three children here. I also run my business here. We recently moved to new premises in London Road, which has been fantastic for visibility – I have a great team of podiatrists and assistants who help me run Supplefeet.

“I am very pleased to be taking part in the community patrols”

I have also been ‘brown owl’ of the 2nd Enfield Brownies group for over 25 years, and in doing so I have had the privilege of watching young women grow and flourish and become owls themselves. We were the first pack to go on holiday after the

end of the Covid-19 restrictions, and we never gave up on the girls all the way through lockdown. Many packs had to close, but ours has thrived. Everywhere I go I see some of my old brownies and that gives me great joy.

My work as a local councillor has focused on health scrutiny and this has been a fascinating insight into areas other than footcare. I have been appointed as the trustee for the Belling Education Foundation, supporting the advancement of education, in particular electrical engineering and electronics. The charity provides grants to enable persons to take advantage of such educational facilities –

do apply via the website link at Enfield Council for 2024 funding.

Most recently, Enfield mayor Suna Hurman and I were invited to our twinned town, Gladbeck in Germany. It was great to join their apple festival and work is underway to welcome them back to Enfield in 2024.

Emma Supple is one of three councillors representing Town ward, alongside Michael Rye and Jim Steven (all Conservative). To get in touch: Email cllr.emma.supple@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 20th November**.

Barrowell not-so-Green

Dear Enfield Dispatch

At Barrowell Green, our only recycling centre in Enfield borough, the staff have been telling residents for some time to put hard plastics in the general waste containers as their plastics recycling container is full. Anything put in general waste gets burnt at the Edmonton incinerator and burning plastics releases extremely toxic pollutants on our neighbours in Edmonton and elsewhere, depending on how the wind blows.

I asked to see the plastics recycling container at Barrowell Green and was shown a small, unmarked bin. It was tied shut and appeared not to have been emptied for weeks.

When I asked Enfield Council about the size and frequency of emptying of this bin, they replied that the bin “was previously being used for a past project” – gobble-dygook for please stop asking questions! I was pleased that the council did then promise that a 40-yard container for plastics recycling would be installed “soon”. Let’s hope soon means soon!

Ann Jones
Palmers Green

Ticket offices

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Iam writing to highlight the proposed closure of rail ticket offices across England, that will have a devastating impact on blind and partially sighted people’s ability to travel independently; stopping people getting to work, health appointments, and seeing friends.

Ticket offices are not just about selling tickets. They provide a reliable first point of contact for many kinds of staff assistance such as arranging sighted guidance through the station and safely on to the train, to advising on any changes to journeys.

Modernisation of our railways doesn’t just mean apps and touchscreens; modernisation means inclusivity and not leaving anyone behind. These proposals must be scrapped.

Anne-Marie Hinton
& Costa Asprou
Palmers Green

Pharmacies

Dear Enfield Dispatch

When Covid-19 hit, many people switched to online services for collecting prescriptions. My local pharmacy lost 30% of its regular users at that time and, so far, few have come back. But perhaps they should.

What most people over 60 don’t realise is that they are entitled to free delivery from their pharmacy. My local pharmacy goes further and doesn’t charge anyone, whatever their age. They cover a surprisingly wide area and it’s usually the same driver who comes to your door. So why not ask?

It’s obvious we have a crisis with GP surgeries and there is no sign of a magical improvement arriving soon. Contacting your pharmacist can be a lot easier and quicker than getting a response from your local surgery, and you are guaranteed a face-to-face consultation just by walking in. But they also run independent businesses, and can only continue if we support them.

Malcolm Sleath
Ponders End

Voting reform

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Last year’s Labour Party conference overwhelmingly voted to adopt a proportional representation system – in which the share of seats in parliament match the share of votes – for general elections. This year, Labour’s national policy forum stated: “The flaws in the current voting system are contributing to the distrust and alienation we see in politics.”

When new assemblies were introduced in Scotland, Wales and London, the Labour government opted to use proportional representation for their elections. Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous himself says: “It works very well. People understand it, and it delivers good government in all those regions.”

Our Westminster parliament needs it too. The time is now.

David Brown
Co-ordinator, Make Votes
Matter North London

A Ziggy's World Jazz Club night featuring Steve Taylor, Josie Frater and Big Band Explosion



Why Ziggy's 'gets it right'

Steve Taylor invites jazz and world music lovers to another Ziggy's show this month and reveals a new Enfield collaboration for 2024

Top UK soul/jazz singer Mica Paris remarked that "Ziggy's gets it right" after appearing on a Ziggy's World Jazz Club stage at an Enfield festival event a few years ago.

Our mission was to create the high-end feel of legendary Soho jazz venue Ronnie Scott's Club – without the West End price tag. We're happy to say that this vision for an atmospheric intimate club space currently morphs into our monthly Ziggy's World Jazz Club live shows at The King's Head in The Green, Winchmore Hill.

Live music is the ultimate life-enhancing experience for us and we have always been keen to give Enfield audiences a genuine opportunity to experience national and international world-class jazz artists up close and personal.

Ziggy's, curated by myself Steve Taylor and partner Josie Frater since 2012, has presented more than

150 scintillating, high-quality live jazz concerts featuring a who's who of jazz and related music. These performers have included the aforementioned Mica Paris, plus Omar, Ian Shaw, the National Youth Jazz Orchestra and my own Steve Taylor Big Band, to name a few.

Ziggy's has presented live music across most of Enfield's arts spaces, including

Dugdale Theatre, Millfield Theatre, Chickenshed Theatre, and now 'Upstairs at the Kings Head'.

Ziggy's has even been broadcast on Jazz FM, BBC Radio 2 and 3 and has been a regular contributor to the London Jazz Festival.

Every Ziggy's show aims to be an event to remember. We're delighted to be bringing live jazz and world music to appreciative Enfield audiences while nurturing new, upcoming talent. For lovers of live jazz-funk and fusion and to coincide with the last night of this year's London Jazz Festival, Ziggy's World Jazz Club presents Steve Taylor Fusion Phew on Friday, 17th November.

In addition, I can announce we will be launching a new 'Forty Hall Jazz Club' after

being approached by Forty Hall Estate, suggesting a collaboration. We presented a sold-out pilot show featuring stalwart saxo-

phonists of the UK jazz scene, Hannah Horton and Toni Kofi, in September, and we're now thrilled to be announcing that Ziggy's will be partnering regularly with Forty Hall.

The first Forty Hall Jazz Club takes place in the long gallery of Forty Hall on Friday, 16th February 2024.

For more information and to book tickets for Ziggy's: Visit ziggysclub.com

Enfield drag queen stars on Italian reality show

'Queen of Enfield' Sissy Lea, who hails from Sicily, is performing on *Drag Race Italia*

An Enfield-based drag queen is taking part in an Italian reality show based on the popular RuPaul's *Drag Race* series.

Sissy Lea has been a well-known performer around Enfield for many years and the drag name is a play on words that pays homage to her origins of Sicily, while also being a nod to her adoptive home near the River Lea.

Sissy Lea is the creation of Massimo Malluzzo, known by many as the former owner of the popular Zippola coffee shop in Lancaster Road. The local drag star is now one of the contestants on *Drag Race Italia*.

Massimo said: "I first got into drag when I started watching the second season of the US version of *Drag Race*. Then in 2016 my husband took me to a drag show in Spain and that's when I decided I wanted to become a drag queen.

"The first thing my husband and I did when we got back from that trip in 2016 was build a stage in our coffee shop. We were able to host the first ever drag show in Enfield."

Sissy Lea started her career as a drag queen at the age of 40 and wants everyone to know that it is never too late to follow your dreams.

Since then, Sissy Lea has entertained the Enfield community on several occasions, including a sold-out show at Dugdale Theatre



Sissy Lea used to run an Enfield coffee shop but is now a TV star back in Italy

in 2019. In 2021, she released her first pop single, *Camouflage Veil*.

"I'm a live singer," says Sissy Lea, "and by singing I mean I ruin your favourite songs! But I guarantee you will have the best night out at one of my shows."

Sissy Lea is now competing for the crown on the new season of *Drag Race Italia* alongside twelve other queens. The season premiered on 13th October on Paramount+ and WOW Presents Plus and continues through November.

To find out more about upcoming shows and appearances, follow Sissy Lea:
Facebook [Sissy Lea](#)
Instagram [@sissylea.queen](#)

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The interior at The Meeting boasts an authentic Thai decor

Southbury's favourite Meeting place

Neil Littman enjoys a tasty Thai meal at The Meeting Bar and Restaurant

The population of Enfield is around 330,000 people, so considering there are almost 2,000 Thai restaurants in the UK – including a large number of these in London – it's surprising the borough only has three places exclusively serving this popular cuisine.

Of the three in Enfield, one is the (well-regarded) Val's Thai pop-up at The Hop Poles, and another is a takeaway in Ponders End. But a welcome surprise for me was The Meeting Bar and Restaurant in Southbury Road, near Cineworld Cinema, which I visited one evening. Formerly operating as The Southbury, a hotel and pub serving Thai food, the venue changed its name to The Meeting in 2013 to focus on its food offering. Today the interior boasts an authentic Thai décor with dark wood and features

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images from temples, set off by screens and animal statues.

It was very busy the evening I visited – if, on a Tuesday, you are asked if you've booked, then you know it's a popular place! I was seated at the only free table, next to a dividing wall from the main dining area, and realised it might be a better experience to turn up with a few friends next time.



Pla muk yang

I ordered a starter of pla muk yang, which is chargrilled squid with a spicy chilli dipping sauce, and a Singha beer. The starter was decorated with a carrot sculpted in the shape of a butterfly, which was a surreal touch. The dipping sauce was one of the hottest I have ever tasted, which was followed by an immediate order of tap water. I could still taste the heat during the main course. Perhaps it would be sensible to add another couple of chilli symbols on the menu to warn other diners!

The menu is extensive and covers traditional ground, with green and red curries and the thicker-style massaman curries

with potato and roasted peanut sauces. They serve a wide range of regional dishes, including fried rice with crabmeat, deep fried fish balls, laksa style soups, as well as a lot of seafood options and vegetarian and vegan dishes. However, the menu says that there are no gluten-free options.

I opted for a main dish of stir-fried duck with peppers and onion, in a rich tamarind sauce. Fortunately it had no chilli symbols next to it on the menu, and was accompanied by a side order of coconut rice.

From the lively atmosphere I think it would be a good place for groups to share dishes and my only regret was not being able to try more dishes, as I was dining on my own, but what I ate was very good and I will be sure to make a return visit soon.

Starters are priced from £7.95, main dishes from £10.95. Set meals start at £25 per person (for a minimum of two people). They also serve a Thai hot pot menu from £15.95 per person and £7.95 for children "under 120cm" (here's hoping a tape measure is provided!).

The Meeting Bar and Restaurant can be found at 253 Southbury Road, Enfield EN1 1RG and is open from Monday to Friday, 12-3pm and 6pm-11pm, on Saturdays 12pm-11pm, and on Sundays 12pm-10pm. To book:

Call 020 8363 6856
Visit themeetingenfield.com

LISTINGS

Submit your listing

We can include low-cost community events taking place in Enfield. For next month's listings, email the details of your event to enfielddispatch@socialspider.com by **Monday 20th November**.

CINEMA

Talkies Community Cinema presents 'Lunana: A Yak in the Classroom'
Thursday 2nd November, 7.45pm
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

A shiftless young city man, four years into a five-year teacher training course but with dreams to make it as a singer in Australia, is disciplined by being sent to do a season of teaching at the village school of Lunana, possibly the most remote school anywhere in the world, at an altitude of 3,400m above sea level in the Bhutan Himalaya. Exiled from his Westernised comforts, and initially daunted by the scale of the challenges he faces, he finds it a life-changing experience.

Tickets £6.50

Visit talkies.org.uk/events

CONCERT

Enfield Choral Society's autumn concert
Saturday 11th November, 7.30pm
St Mary Magdalene's Church, Windmill Hill, Enfield EN2 7AJ

The programme for Enfield Choral Society's autumn concert will include Leonard Bernstein's Chichester Psalms as well as pieces by Leoš Janáček and Benjamin Britten.

Tickets £15 (£14 in advance), £7 for students under 25

Call 07864 061 755

Email tickets@enfieldchoralsociety.org.uk

Visit enfieldchoralsociety.org.uk

EXHIBIT

'Beyond Colour' photography exhibition
Running from Monday 13th November for two weeks
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

Visitors are invited to join Palmers Green deaf photographer Cliff Docherty for his first solo exhibition of monochrome work. This exhibition encourages visitors to go for a walk and look at the world around them, even as colour fades as the autumn becomes winter, and see how shape and texture is all around us. *Beyond Colour* explores this idea of the photo walk as a way of exploring your creative eye and getting a little fitter at the same time, almost without realising.

Free entry

Email info@cliffdocherty.com

THEATRE

Chickenshed presents 'The Toymaker's Child'
Running from 22nd November until 13th January
Chickenshed, Chase Side, Southgate N14 4PE

The toymaker lives a simple and quiet life. He has just one child, his pride and joy; but (as all parents do) he worries. They often play alone and rarely bring friends home from school. Worried his child is lonely, the toymaker cooks up a cunning plan. Using a magical 3D printer, he creates an all-singing, all-dancing AI child, serial number PIN:0Cch10.

Tickets from £10

Visit chickenshed.org.uk

SEWING

Refashion and Reuse Social
Tuesdays, 7-9pm
Stitch, 2 Hazelwood Lane, Palmers Green N13 5EX

Join Liz for an evening of sewing where we encourage you to focus on altering and mending second-hand or worn clothes to create something that can become a favourite once again. Turn some old jeans into a fabulous bag, add some embroidery detail to a boring sweatshirt, restyle a frumpy skirt to make it your own. Bring along anything you want to work on and share your ideas and creativity with like-minded sewers in our friendly local workspace.

£8 entry

Call 07903 614726

Visit stitch.org.uk

CHOIR

Mumsing Choir
Mondays 10am-11.30am
St Stephen's Church Hall, Park Avenue, Enfield EN1 2BA

Mondays 7.30pm-9pm
Enfield Baptist Church, Cecil Road EN2 6TG

At MumSing you'll be singing some great songs. Anything from your favourite musicals, gospel, 80s ballads, 90s RnB and, obviously, Disney! I'm sorry, but if you don't like Disney, you just can't join!

Free taster session, then £17 per month

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AROUND THE BOROUGH

FORTY HALL

Baby beaver signals success for rewilding



The beaver kit is thought to have been born in July Credit Colin Pressland

A BABY BEAVER HAS BEEN BORN in Enfield for the first time since the species was reintroduced.

The kit has been filmed helping its parents build dams and swimming in pools created within an enclosed area of Forty Hall Farm. It's thought it was born early in July.

Enfield's beaver reintroduction project is a first for London and has enabled the species to be brought back to this part of the

country for the first time in 400 years, when they were hunted to extinction in the UK. As well as reintroducing beavers, the rewilding project is designed to boost flood alleviation and bring wider ecosystem benefits.

Enfield Council and Capel Manor College have led on the project, with help from Beaver Trust, and the first pair were released in March 2022. Sadly, the male later died, as

did a replacement male, with the female subsequently blamed for being overly aggressive. It was then decided to introduce an established pair last winter.

The persistence appears to have now paid off, with the first kit being born. It is thought to be the first baby beaver born in what is now Greater London for hundreds of years. They have been living in other more isolated parts of the UK for around a decade.

Rick Jewell, the council's cabinet member for environment, said: "This truly is wonderful news. The adult couple are quite young so we weren't sure they would breed successfully in such a short time. You can already see the positive impact the beavers are having through their natural landscaping of the area."

Capel Manor College will capture the new beaver to give it a thorough on-site health check with an experienced exotic animal vet. The college's animal collections manager, Meg Wilson, added: "We are thrilled for this new arrival."

GORDON HILL

Watchdog flags 'safety risks' at mental health trust

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A CARE WATCHDOG HAS DOWN-graded a service provided by a local mental health trust over safety concerns.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) told Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust to improve patient safety following inspections in May. In its report published last month, CQC downgraded the trust's wards for older people with mental health problems from 'good' to 'requires improvement'. Mental health crisis services and health-based places of safety were re-rated 'requires improvement'.

While the trust retained its overall rating of 'good', inspectors

flagged safety concerns with Silver Birches, a ward on the Chase Farm Hospital site in Enfield that treats older people with mental health problems. CQC found processes at the ward – previously identified as having a high number of incidents around people's physical health and risk of falls – were "not always sufficient to ensure the safety of patients". It said six incidents relating to safeguarding matters or falls that led to bone fractures hadn't been discussed with staff.

Inspectors also found the trust's mental health crisis home treatment services in Enfield had too many cases compared to their resources. This meant staff didn't always have enough time to meet people's needs.

Jane Ray, CQC's London deputy director, said: "When we inspected these services, we found leaders needed to make further improvements to people's safety in some areas of known risk. However, most people received care from kind, skilled staff who knew how to meet their needs."

North London Mental Health Partnership, responsible for running the NHS trust, said: "The safety, comfort and welfare of our service users are our highest priority and we have made many improvements since inspections took place.

"We will continue to focus on achieving the high standards the CQC noted in many parts of both services, consistently, across every area."

SOUTHBURY

Probe into moped rider's death

BY LOUIS ALTMAN

THE INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF Police Conduct (IOPC) has opened an investigation into the death of a moped rider following a collision with a police vehicle.

The 26-year-old man died after his moped and a police car were involved in a road traffic collision just after 3pm on Thursday, 12th

October, near the intersection of Baird Road and Southbury Road.

The police car was responding to an emergency call at the time of the collision, but was not pursuing another vehicle. The Metropolitan Police officer involved in the collision is now said to be under a criminal investigation for his role in the death of the moped rider, named as Christopher de Carvalho Guedes.

EDMONTON

Teen's killer still sought

POLICE CONTINUE TO HUNT FOR the killer of a 16-year-old boy stabbed to death on a residential street.

Taye Faik was attacked at around 11.27pm on Sunday, 1st October, in Kendal Gardens. Officers attended along with ambulance colleagues but, despite the best efforts of the emergency services, Taye, who lived locally, was pronounced dead at the scene. As the *Dispatch* went to press on 26th October, no-one had been arrested or charged in connection with his death.

DCI Joanna Yorke, leading the investigation, said: "We are keen to hear from anyone who may have any

footage including CCTV or dashcam of the incident or the local vicinity around the time of the attack."

Detective Chief Superintendent Caroline Haines, the senior officer responsible for policing in Enfield,



Taye Faik, 16, was stabbed to death on 1st October

added: "My thoughts and most sincere sympathies are with the family and friends of Taye. We will be there for them, and I can assure them that detectives will be working to bring to justice."

Anyone with information can submit it online at mipp.police.uk/operation/01MPS23V75-P01. Anyone who wishes to provide information anonymously can call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

ARNOS GROVE

Station scheme 'under review'

THE DEVELOPER OF A MAJOR housing scheme next to Arnos Grove Station has paused construction work while the development is reviewed in light of expected new fire safety regulations from the government.

Work on the 162-home scheme by Connected Living London (CLL) – a partnership between Transport for London (TfL) and property firm Grainger – is now on hold. The scheme has been highly controversial because of the loss of hundreds of car parking spaces at the station and was only granted

planning permission following a public inquiry last year, after initially being rejected by Enfield Council's planning committee in January 2021.

Now CLL says that it will be reviewing the scheme. A spokesperson said: "Like many developers across the country, CLL is currently reviewing its programme, including at Arnos Grove, while it awaits further clarity from government on proposed building regulation changes, including new fire safety regulations for buildings over 18 metres."

The Towners will soon be departing London for Europe

Towners ready to depart on European tour

Andrew Warshaw previews Enfield Town FC's international adventure

At the end of this month, Enfield Town FC embark on one of the most exciting ventures in their history.

Everyone at the club is readying themselves for the team's very first competitive European fixtures as part of the Fenix Trophy, a Uefa-approved tournament involving non-professional clubs selected for their unique ethos.

While near-neighbours Tottenham Hotspur have no European competition to look forward to this season, the Towners – the first supporter-owned club in the country – were invited to join the third edition of the Fenix Trophy, which recognises social and cultural distinctiveness.

They play their first game on 28th November when they host current champions BK Skjold of Denmark in Group A of the twelve-team, four-group tournament.

In the past, Enfield Town have formed a close connection with previous Fenix participants FC United of Manchester and Belgian side KSK Beveren, finding common ground over their fan-owned status.

"It's a great privilege to have been invited to participate in this year's Fenix Trophy," Town director Gabriel Meytanis, who has been spearheading the club's involvement,

told the *Dispatch*. "Given that the tournament is a celebration of culturally and historically significant clubs in the European non-league game, it's a real badge of honour for us to be involved.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to showcase what we offer as a football club, to foster relations and friendships with our fellow clubs across Europe, and to demonstrate how enjoyable and how important the game remains away from the professional level [...] we're hoping that all our games in the competition will certainly live up to that."

"It's a great privilege to have been invited"

The other team in Enfield Town's group is South Wales outfit Llantwit Major FC, with remaining fixtures to be decided in the coming weeks. The first stage consists of four groups of three, with every club playing home and away. No more than one game per day will take place, allowing the respective fan bases to take centre stage.

The name Fenix is an acronym representing the tournament's core values; friendly, European, non-professional, innovative and xenial, which comes from the Ancient Greek word *xenos*, indicating an attitude of hospitality towards strangers.

The ground-breaking tournament is run by Italian side Brera FC, who have participated in the two previous editions, but this year are just organisers. Brera's Leonardo Aleotti, who conceived the idea, is keen to stress the non-professional nature of the competition.

"It is all about replacing the value of money with the experience of something unique," Leonardo said. "Enfield are trailblazers for fan-owned governance."

Last year's final four was played at the iconic San Siro in Milan and, although there is no decision yet about this season's venue, it seems likely to be in Italy in late spring.

Enfield Town chairman Paul Reed commented: "The trophy celebrates unique and progressive clubs across the continent and we're extremely thrilled and delighted to be making our debut.

"It was a very easy decision to accept the invite. Having watched the competition develop over the last couple of years we can't wait to be involved and bring European football to our players and supporters.

"Our great friends at Beveren and FCUM have spoken very highly of the tournament and we look forward to forging fantastic new relationships with our fellow competitors."

Enfield Ignatians developing rugby talent at every level

Jonathan Landi on how the borough's top rugby club is helping to grow the game locally



Enfield Ignatians taking on London Scottish Lions Credit Rob Bruce

Enfield Ignatians continue to fly the flag for community rugby and, in addition to fielding two senior teams and being home to burgeoning youth and girls' rugby sections, we also pride ourselves on being as a source of talent further up the game.

Mark Donaldson, who played for the club in the 1970s, went on to be capped for the All Blacks, while the Sanders brothers, Phil and Denis, both had respective spells at Wasps and Saracens. Ben Mills, the former Ignatians first-team hooker, also successfully represented Cambridge University in their 15–10 win over deadly rivals Oxford University in the Varsity Match at Twickenham in March.

Enfield is home to a large Cypriot community and Ignatians provide players for the island's rugby team, which ply their trade in European Conference One South. Indeed, the Fayaz brothers, Hadee and Fadee, were ever-presents in a squad which won two of its four games, with highlights being wins against Slovenia (56–7) and previously unbeaten Hungary (35–17). Four Ignatians players also trained with the Cypriot 'Barbarians' squad at Altrincham, Cheshire,

in the summer, and are in the mix for places in the away clash against Malta in November.

The youth section at the club is in rude health. In addition to minis rugby, the club also caters for the under-13s, 14s, 15s and 16s age ranges. The under-15s were in fine fettle recently, scoring a 40–36 win over Twickenham in their opening league game.

Just as pleasing is the fact that girls' rugby has gained in popularity. A total of 40 players are currently registered with the club and our age bands, split over two years, range from the under-12s up to the under-18s, with players mainly recruited from local schools.

Explaining the club's commitment to girls' rugby, head coach Tom Mann said: "We advertise in secondary schools, support a primary tag tournament every year, hold girls' recruitment sessions at the rugby club, run sessions at St Anne's, AIM (Accessible Instructional Materials) and local primary schools."

Elaborating on the many positives, he added: "[It's great] the way our girls go about playing and training. They are a tight bunch who look after each other, get on really well, are respectful, hard-working and good fun."

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OUR CURRENT SUPPORTERS

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