

# ENFIELD DISPATCH

Nº 91 THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

APR 2026

## FEATURES

Enfield businesses join charity's battle against cancer

P. 4

## NEWS

High foodbank demand amid fears over inflation spike

P. 10

## ELECTION 2026

See what six local parties are promising voters ahead of next month's local election

P. 12

## NEWS

New 20mph speed limits for three Enfield town centres introduced

P. 14

## SPORT

Cockfosters FC now just one win away from 'dream' Wembley cup final

P. 19



THE HARD WORK of three Enfield charities was celebrated last month at a special gala evening hosted by mayor of Enfield Margaret Greer, who brought together residents, community leaders and supporters to highlight the "extraordinary work" of her chosen charities. The event at Meridian Grand in Edmonton celebrated the "compassion, dedication and vision" of Enfield Black Heritage Hub (pictured) as well as Royal Free Charity's North Middlesex Red Cell Service Fund and the Enfield branch of Macmillan Cancer Support – read more at [enfielddispatch.co.uk](http://enfielddispatch.co.uk)

## Government selects Crews Hill as 21,000-home 'new town'

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield has been named among the government's seven confirmed locations for its 'new towns' programme – with a public consultation now open.

The Labour government wants to see up to 21,000 homes built across a large swathe of Metropolitan Green Belt in the rural north-west of the borough, at Crews Hill and 'Chase Park', an better known locally as Vicarage Farm.

The new town would be more than twice the size of the council's own proposals for the two largely greenfield areas in its draft Enfield Local Plan, which has still not yet been adopted. But the civic centre has nonetheless enthusiastically welcomed the government's intentions for the area ever since Crews Hill and Chase Park were first put forward by the New Towns Task-

force last September.

The taskforce had itself named twelve potential new towns, but the government confirmed last month it would only be taking seven forward.

Announcing the new town sites on Sunday, 22nd March, Secretary of State for Housing Steve Reed said: "People want real homes they can actually afford and infrastructure that really works – this government is making that a reality for communities across the country."

Reed's ministerial colleague at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Matthew Pennycook, told parliament in January he thought Crews Hill was "very promising" as a new town site and that the "growth potential" is "clear as day".

The government insists every new town will "aim to have a 40% affordable housing target, with at least half for social rent" and

further claims they will provide "neighbourhoods that people can easily get around without a car, shared green spaces and vibrant high streets".

Mayor of London Sir Sadiq Khan – who spent six years opposing Enfield Council's plans for building thousands of homes on the Green Belt before U-turning last year – welcomed the latest announcement as "a step forward" and said the new town would offer "significant opportunities to support the government's growth mission and to help address London's acute housing needs through the delivery of sustainable, high-quality neighbourhoods".

However, scores of existing businesses in Crews Hill, centred around horticulture, would be forced to leave if the new town goes ahead. Several have expressed their anger with both the council and government.

Talking on BBC 5 Live following the announcement, Carol Fisk from Action for Enfield's Future pointed out Crews Hill was currently "home to hundreds of businesses that provide hundreds of jobs" which the new town would "get rid of and start again".

"These are jobs that won't be affected by AI, they are in rural enterprises," continued Carol. "It attracts people from all over the region, the garden centres are a day out for people, but all that will disappear."

The Green Belt is also a major dividing line across Enfield politics, with the opposition Conservative group pledging to protect it while the Labour administration continues to double down on its housing plans. To read what all local parties are saying on the subject ahead of the election, turn to page 12.

Take part in the government's new towns consultation before Monday, 18th May: Visit [gov.uk/government/consultations/new-towns-draft-programme](http://gov.uk/government/consultations/new-towns-draft-programme)



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Published on 27/03/2026

# Complaint against Erbil's free Spurs tickets rejected

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield Council has dismissed a complaint over freebies handed to leader Ergin Erbil by Tottenham Hotspur shortly after the Premier League club won approval for its plans at Whitewebbs.

Last year Cllr Erbil accepted free tickets from Spurs in the months immediately following the decision by the council's planning committee – which he does not sit on – to approve the club's plans for a women's and girls' training centre at Whitewebbs Park.

The freebies were five tickets to a legend's match in March 2025 and an invitation to join the victory parade in May following Spurs' victory in the Europa League Final.

After the news of these gifts being declared by Cllr Erbil, Sam Gracie Tilbrook – from the Guardians of Whitewebbs campaign group which aims to stop Spurs building on the park – filed an official complaint with the council, alleging the freebies breached the members' code of conduct.

The complaint was investigated by a governance advisor at the council, who issued his final complaint report last week following sign-off by the council's monitoring officer and director of legal and governance, Terry Osborne.

The report, seen by the Dispatch, dismisses the complaint against Cllr Erbil. It states: "I find that Cllr Erbil declared the hospitality

to the monitoring officer before accepting it and that acceptance of the hospitality was not a breach of the code in either instance.

"The code of conduct does not prohibit the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and I find that advice was sought and followed and that the hospitality was properly recorded. I also find that it was not excessive in its likely value."

Regarding the decision to approve the planning application from Tottenham Hotspur in the weeks prior to Cllr Erbil being offered and then accepting his freebies by the club, the report states: "Cllr Erbil was not a member of the planning committee and was not present at the meeting. In any event, the meeting took place before the events took place and before the hospitality was offered and accepted.

"I note that the planning permission was not issued until 22 July 2025, but I find that Cllr Erbil was not involved in the issuing of

the permission and the permission was issued in accordance with the decision of the earlier committee meeting."

The Guardians of Whitewebbs group is currently preparing for a judicial review challenge against the council's decision to grant planning permission to Spurs. The case will be heard at the High Court on 24th–25th June.

Cllr Erbil is the third successive Labour leader of the council to have accepted some kind of free ticket or hospitality gift from Spurs, going back over a decade, with Doug Taylor and Nesil Caliskan also having done so during their periods in charge from 2010–2018 and 2018–2024 respectively.

Asked to comment at the time of his first football freebie being revealed by the Dispatch last year, Cllr Erbil denied that Spurs had "purchased influence" with the council by handing out free gifts and added: "I acted transparently and in good faith."



A Tottenham Hotspur match

# Huge boost for parts of eastern Enfield

Residents living in two parts of eastern Enfield are set to benefit from a major new cash injection from the Labour government.

Enfield Wash, plus the northern part of Enfield Highway, will receive £20m, while Lower Edmonton will also get the same amount. For each area the funding will be spread over a decade-long period, meaning there will be £2m available for these communities every year between now and 2036.

It had been announced last year that Enfield borough would benefit from £1.5m of 'Pride in Place'

government funding to spend on improving public spaces, but this figure has been eclipsed by the latest announcement, which forms part of the government's 'Plan for Neighbourhoods' – itself part of the wider Pride in Place Impact Fund.

Enfield Wash and Lower Edmonton are among 40 areas around the country "facing the greatest challenges around social connection, community resilience and deprivation" to be granted money.

This new funding will be delivered through a "community-led approach" with decisions on how the funding is allocated shaped

by local residents and community groups, instead of being allocated centrally.

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark and Enfield Council leader Ergin Erbil will now work to establish two neighbourhood boards, acting as "conveners, mediators and collaborators" to ensure the process remains open, transparent and on track.

Cllr Erbil said: "The best part of this funding is that it will be guided by our local community."

Spending could, for example, be used to revitalise high streets and tackle empty shops, or protect and restore valued local assets.

# Library sale

Enfield Council looks set to sell off the building previously housing Winchmore Hill Library.

Winchmore Hill was one of seven libraries closed last year by the council as it looked to cut costs from its library service.

In February, the council announced the sale of Enfield Business Centre – which previously housed Enfield Highway Library – to a religious education charity.

In March, it was revealed the council was also now going ahead with the sale of Winchmore Hill Library in Green Lanes to an as-yet unnamed bidder.

In a decision report, the council stated that the buyer had proposed to use the building for "use falling within [class] F", which should mean that the site will be reopened either as a learning or local community facility.

It's understood the council is also in talks over the sales of other library buildings left empty since last July.

Read the full story online at [enfielddispatch.co.uk](http://enfielddispatch.co.uk).

# Park flooding

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Enfield Council has been accused of neglect by a local group which claims Arnos Park has been left "waterlogged, unsafe and unusable".

The criticisms come from the Friends of Arnos Park group of volunteers, which argues the council has taken no action to fix flooding issues that came after Thames Water finished its work in the park last year.

They say "poorly designed and inappropriately located" inspection covers installed as part of the works are still causing "extensive" flooding in the park and rendering parts of it unusable.

A senior Labour councillor in Enfield has said the council is "working closely with Thames Water to resolve this".

However, the friends group says it's the council's responsibility to protect the park in Arnos Grove and to ensure any works that occur there are "fully remediated".

"This is not a weather issue – it's a design and oversight failure," said former councillor Daniel Anderson, who is co-ordinating a campaign.

Read the full story online at [enfielddispatch.co.uk](http://enfielddispatch.co.uk).



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## Enfield businesses join battle against cancer

Lucy Godfrey from The Nightingale Cancer Support Centre on how local traders can get involved with the charity's latest campaign

**T**his April we're calling on businesses across Enfield to join our 'Spare Change Makes Real Change' campaign to support local people affected by cancer.

All we're asking is for restaurants, cafes,



The Wonder Pub

shops, or any other customer-facing business in the area to display a collection tin on their premises. That's it!

It's a simple way for people to contribute their spare change to a cause that touches so many lives.

With one in two people diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime, it is likely that many customers (and staff) will have been personally affected by the disease.

The Nightingale Cancer Support Centre supports a growing number of people each year, offering free emotional and physical support services at a time when individuals and families need it most. Demand for our services continues to rise as we have seen a nearly 80% increase in people walking through our doors in the last year.

Despite this growing demand and rise in operational costs, we believe that money should not be a barrier to receiving cancer support and still provide all of our services free of charge. Therefore community support is more important than ever.

By taking part, businesses are ensuring that The Nightingale can continue providing free, vital support services to people living with cancer and their loved ones across the borough.

One of the businesses taking part is Fortuna Healthcare, based in Southbury. Explaining why Fortuna supports us, director Julian Bavetta said: "Fortuna Healthcare has been supporting The Nightingale for several years now, through their various



Hudson & Kemp hairdressers

events and fundraisers.

"We find it a worthy local cause to help, considering all they do for our local community. We're happy to have their collection tin at our premises because not only does it help them raise money to continue their work but also makes our customers aware of the support they could receive from them."

Every penny dropped in a Nightingale tin will go a long way in securing our future. As we are non-government funded we rely solely on the generosity of our community and, when our community comes together, pennies turn into pounds – and pounds turn into changed lives.

Each collection tin holds up to £30 and with 18 businesses already taking part, that's £540 already raised. Out of the thousands of businesses in Enfield we're hoping to



Fortuna Healthcare

encourage 50 of them to join our campaign and raise £1,500.

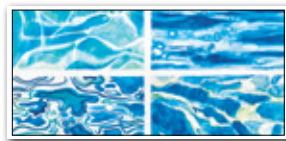
This month isn't only about raising vital funds for the charity but also about raising awareness of our services to people who may need our support, but aren't aware we're here. Businesses of all sizes are encouraged to get involved. Taking part requires minimal effort, a simple collection tin on a counter or poster in a window, but can make a meaningful difference, helping to fund services that directly benefit the local community.

Any businesses interested in joining our campaign or finding out more can contact our fundraising manager Ryan at [ryan@nightingalesupport.org.uk](mailto:ryan@nightingalesupport.org.uk).

For more information about The Nightingale Cancer Support Centre:  
Visit [nightingalesupport.org.uk](http://nightingalesupport.org.uk)

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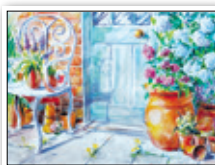
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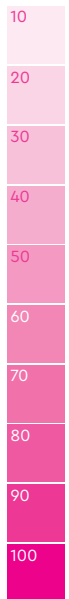
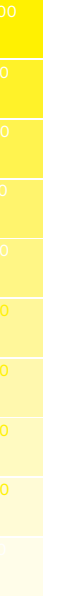
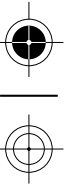
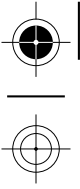
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**Young People Are Our Future – Let's Listen**

# Social media: what Enfield students think

*In the second part of a three-month series, local school students Megan Ledain, Jessica Ampong and Charlotte O'Donoghue speak to classmates about what the government can do to protect children from social media harms*

**I**n our first article, we shared our own perspectives as students growing up with social media and asked a big question: should social media be banned for under-16s in the UK?

It's an issue that is increasingly being discussed by politicians, parents and schools. Some believe stronger rules could protect young people from harm online, while others think that social media is now a big part of everyday life and banning it may not be realistic.

In this article, we speak to students in our school, teachers, parents and other adults to gather different perspectives about the proposed ban.

**What students think**

Many students we spoke to felt that setting the age limit at 16 is unrealistic, because so many young people already use social media. One student said: "I think it's good, but I think 16 is a bit too high, because all of us now already have social media and people younger than us do too. Times are changing. Most people have it and use it to talk to people, because not everyone can go outside every day and talk to their neighbours."

For many young people, being online feels like a normal part of everyday life.

Social media is how they stay connected with friends, organise plans or simply keep in touch.

Some students said that learning how to use online spaces is becoming an important skill. One explained: "Being online is part of people's lives. Even in school we use things like [Microsoft] Teams, where we need to learn how to be online. If we wait until we're 16, we won't know how to use it properly, which is pointless because we'll need it in the future."

Others mentioned practical reasons for using social media and messaging platforms. "It's easier because you can communicate with your parents if something happens," one student said.

**Education instead of a ban?**

While many students were not in favour of a complete ban, they recognise that social media can sometimes cause problems, suggesting that education and parental guidance might be more effective than removing access completely.

One student said: "I think the age limit should be lower, around 13 or 14. Instead of doing a complete ban, there should be more parental controls."

Another said: "Instead of removing it



Jessica Ampong, Charlotte O'Donoghue and Megan Ledain Credit Kai Images

completely, they should add more lessons in school where we learn how to stay safe online. Then we can still use it, but at least we'll know how to avoid serious situations."

Some questioned whether banning social media would make digital safety education less meaningful. One stated: "That's the whole point of workshops like 'Building Futures: Safer, Smarter Families', to learn

how to stay safe. If social media is just taken away from us, what's the point of learning about it?"

The feedback suggests many see social media as something that needs to be managed responsibly rather than removed entirely.

**Teachers' perspectives**

The teachers we spoke to had slightly different views, often shaped by what they see in the classroom.

One said she generally supports the idea of restricting social media use among younger teenagers because of the impact she believes it has had on attention spans and that it changes young people's whole neurology, and the way they teach has changed because of social media.

The general consensus is that constant digital engagement has made it harder to keep students focused in class. It's a concern shared by many adults and that it may be affecting how young people learn, focus and interact.

**Recognising the risks**

Even students who were against a full ban acknowledged that social media does come with risks. One student pointed out that restrictions could have some benefits. They said: "I think it could help keep people safe from things like cyberbullying."

This shows that many young people understand both sides of the argument; they value the opportunities social media offers for communication and connection, but are also aware of the potential threats.

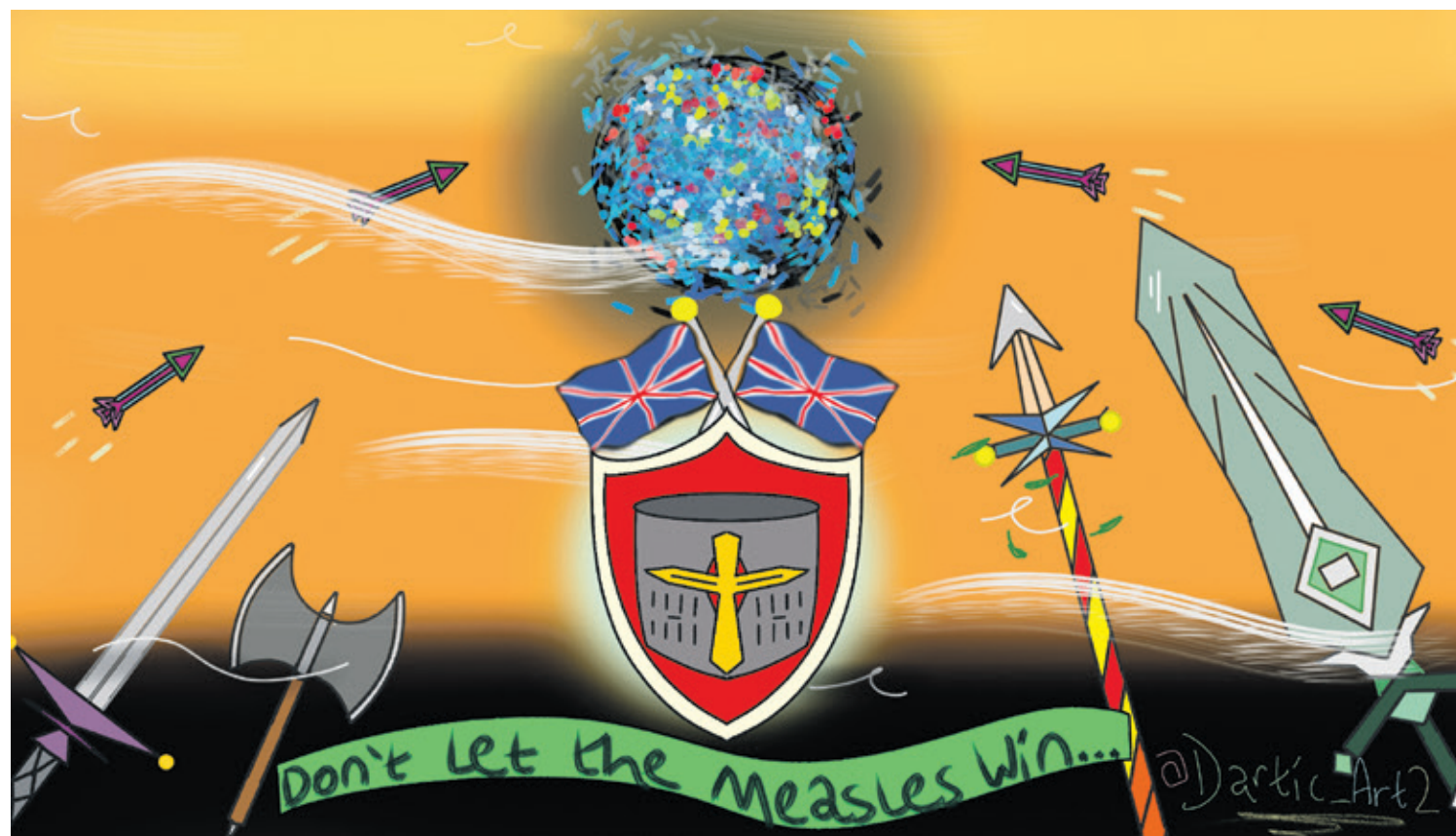
**A continuing conversation**

After speaking to students, teachers and adults, one thing is clear: the debate around social media and young people is far from simple. Students feel that a complete ban at 16 would be unrealistic and suggest more education, digital safety lessons and parental controls.

Teachers and adults are more focused on the potential negative impacts of social media on learning, behaviour and wellbeing.

Next month, we will reflect on everything we have heard and share our own recommendations for what schools, parents and the government could do to help young people navigate social media safely in the future.

**Editor's note:** In March, MPs voted against a proposal to ban under-16s from using social media. A consultation will now explore the issue further, with a range of restrictions still under consideration.





Credit Kai Images

## Connecting Enfield's deaf community

*Laurence Banks and Emma Iliffe on the formation of a new network for deaf people in the borough*

There are approximately 250 registered deaf people in Enfield and 27,000 who are partially deaf, from moderate to severe.

The Enfield Deaf Images Group (ENDIG) was founded around 20 years ago with support from Enfield Disability Action (EDA) and other charities. ENDIG worked closely with EDA's Deaf Project team, coordinated by Marianne Holford and Mary White.

Marianne supported deaf committee members in running a deaf-led organisation, giving deaf people a stronger voice with local authorities, organising meetings, sharing information, and arranging campaigns and social events for Enfield's deaf community.

A unique part of ENDIG's

identity was its logo. It was first created by Colin Bunting, a committee member known for his work as a deaf clown and magician. His aim was to help the public better understand deaf culture, communication, and access needs. The balloon artwork used in the final logo was later designed and digitally created by Emma Iliffe, a qualified graphic designer,

to reflect ENDIG's creativity and spirit. ENDIG has always been committed to making sign language accessible, expressive, and fun.

In April 2016, the deaf community faced severe service cuts that had a significant impact on deaf people's daily lives. When EDA closed, the future of the Deaf Project became uncertain. Unfortunately, due to a lack of

funding, it ended in 2018/2019.

The project had acted as a vital lifeline – offering advice, helping with paperwork and bills, and providing telephone assistance. Many deaf people relied on it to overcome communication barriers and navigate essential services.

ENDIG played an active role in campaigning for better support. This included organising protest marches and holding panel meetings with MPs to highlight the importance of accessible services. For many years, ENDIG and the Deaf Project were recognised as the 'deaf voice' in Enfield. When the Deaf Project closed, ENDIG was left without direction for nearly four years. The committee decided to wait before making any final decisions about ENDIG's funds and future.

In January, Empowering Disability in Enfield (EDIE) launched a coffee morning to begin discussing future support for disabled residents. Some deaf attendees felt it was time to reconnect and rebuild, forming a new deaf group called Enfield Deaf Community (EDC). The former ENDIG committee agreed to transfer ENDIG's remaining funds to EDC as a positive step forward, supporting new leadership and renewed community involvement.

EDC aims to share updates, signpost available services, and provide information relevant to deaf people – for example, details about British Sign Language interpreter availability and accessible online options. By working with EDIE, EDC hopes to strengthen awareness, continuity, and inclusion for deaf people across the Enfield area.

Barry Churchill with his Special Olympics medals



## A special achievement

*Enfield man's gold-medal winning success celebrated*

The recent 2026 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games left us inspired, with Team GB doing us proud in Milan and Cortina.

Less well known is the Special Olympics, a global movement providing year-round sports training and athletic competition for children and adults with learning disabilities. And, incredibly, we have our own Special Olympics gold medallist right here in Enfield!

Empowering Disability in Enfield (EDIE), LocalMotion Enfield's lived experience working group, discovered that one member, Barry Churchill, had competed at the Special Olympics National Games in the 1990s, winning three gold medals and one bronze in table tennis at a single event.

The Special Olympics was founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, and the movement promotes inclusion, dignity, and respect through the power of sport. Structured like other elite sporting events, athletes compete in local, national, and international games.

The Special Olympics is built on the belief that people with learning disabilities succeed when given the opportunity, encouragement, and support.

Barry's medals are a proof of this belief. His success had not widely known until recently. As EDIE is committed to shining a light on the achievements of disabled people in Enfield, we need your help. If you have any information about the games that Barry competed in, please get in touch. Or, if you have your own success story, EDIE wants to hear from you.

Barry's achievement reminds us that greatness can be in our community without us knowing!

Get in touch with EDIE:  
Email [edie@localmotionenfield.org.uk](mailto:edie@localmotionenfield.org.uk)

The old logo of Enfield Deaf Images Group (ENDIG)



The new logo for Enfield Deaf Community (EDC)



Crews Hill Golf Club, where the council wants to build hundreds of new homes



## Council leader deletes misleading social media post

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The leader of Enfield Council last month deleted a social media post containing multiple false claims because of the “volume of complaints” – but still didn’t apologise for it.

Ergin Erbil published a video in February, on both his Facebook and X accounts, in which he falsely claimed Crews Hill Golf Club was not within the Green Belt, only has 20 members, and was not important for wildlife.

This prompted a backlash from the golf club, which pointed out that it has over 400 members and is indeed part of the Green Belt.

The golf course is also designated as a ‘site of importance for nature conservation’ (Sinc) – a designation supported by the council in its most recent Sinc review.

The club further refuted Cllr Erbil’s claim it was “private”, pointing out it has hundreds of non-members playing the course every year.

Cllr Erbil’s video was posted in an attempt to defend controversial government proposals, backed by the Labour-led local authority, to build up to 21,000 homes on Green Belt land in Crews Hill and ‘Chase Park’ as part of its ‘new towns’ initiative.

Crews Hill Golf Course itself is currently earmarked for 200 new homes in the council’s draft Local Plan and would be included within the new town if it goes ahead.

In his video, Cllr Erbil also claimed “6,000 council homes” would be built at Crews Hill Golf Course. It not known where this

figure originated.

Cllr Erbil’s misleading social media post was deleted last month from both X and Facebook, more than two weeks after it was posted.

Asked by the Local Democracy Reporting Service for an explanation and whether he would issue an apology for spreading misinformation, Cllr Erbil said: “I removed it because the volume of complaints from a small number of golf course users risked becoming a distraction from the much bigger issue we should be focused on, which is the urgent need to build homes for local families.

“I do not want that debate to be side-tracked by noise when the real issue is the lack of affordable homes for people in this borough.”

David Spring, general manager of Crews Hill Golf Club, said that while “pleased the councillor has removed

his misleading and inaccurate posts” the council leader still needed to be held accountable for his actions.

Spring said: “Statements have been made which contain factual inaccuracies and which present a misleading account of the position.

“Such conduct raises legitimate concern when undertaken by an elected representative entrusted with serving the residents of Enfield.”

Spring argued that the council leader’s actions were not in keeping with codes of conduct and integrity required by councillors – and the Labour Party itself. He said his club had no political agenda and was simply concerned with inaccurate and potentially misleading claims made by those in public office, regardless of political party.

“In these circumstances, a prompt correction of the record and a clear apology remain the appropriate course of action,” he continued, adding: “Residents and businesses of Enfield deserve clarity, accuracy and accountability from those who speak on their behalf.”

Cllr Erbil added: “I stand by my view that the golf course is a man-made landscape and that it is right for us to consider it as part of the solution to the housing crisis facing our borough.”

In January Action for Enfield’s Future launched a campaign against the Crews Hill new town, listing eleven reasons why the area in north-west Enfield is “sub optimal” for housing development.

*“Residents and businesses of Enfield deserve clarity, accuracy and accountability from those who speak on their behalf”*

Enfield Council leader Ergin Erbil



## HMO licence approvals in Enfield hit new high

Enfield Council says it is working to make sure “people living in HMOs in Enfield have safe and secure homes”

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Approvals for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in Enfield have hit a new high, figures show.

Data recently obtained by the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) through a Freedom of Information (FOI) Act request reveals Enfield Council had approved 1,078 active HMO licences, with a combined capacity for 5,948 people, as of 21st January this year.

The FOI shows that at least 262 licenses had been issued in just the first nine months of the 2025/26 financial year – representing nearly a quarter of all current HMO licenses in the borough.

This is more than the total reached in any full twelve-month period over the past five years, going back to the first full year of the council’s ‘selective’ HMO licensing scheme.

The council granted a five-year renewal of its selective HMO licensing scheme in March last year, following a public consultation. It means the scheme, first introduced in September 2020, will run until 2030.

The scheme requires landlords for smaller HMOs in Enfield – those occupied by three or four people – to apply for licences. This is stricter than the national mandatory HMO licensing scheme, which applies for properties occupied by five or more people.

According to a 2024 report by the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) on local authority enforcement, Enfield was ranked sixth among all local authorities nationally between 2021 and 2023 on its use of civil penalties to tackle issues in HMOs.

In a press release published in March 2025, the local authority said its inspections found that 70% of HMOs in Enfield needed help to meet safety and housing standards, including issues like fire and electrical safety, as well as damp and overcrowding.

For this story, the LDRS app-

roached Enfield Council for an update on this figure and did not get an answer, but a spokesperson stated the civic centre was putting more resources into improving HMO inspections over the past year. They claimed this increase in staff and funding meant the local authority had “been able to inspect more properties and approve more licences”.

Regarding safety and housing standards, the council spokesperson said: “If our inspectors find problems, the landlord must fix them. Sometimes we add special conditions to the licence, with clear deadlines, so landlords know exactly what needs to be improved and by when.

“We provide clear guidance on our website to help landlords understand the rules and meet the right standards. We also have a dedicated fire safety adviser who visits HMOs to give expert advice to landlords and managing agents about fire safety.

“We also support landlords through regular forums and digital newsletters. All of this work is aimed at making sure people living in HMOs in Enfield have safe and secure homes.”

The spokesperson added that the council supports new government legislation aimed at providing better rights and protections for renters and that Enfield’s selective licensing scheme was “successful” and means “rented properties in Enfield must be of good standard”.

Brimsdown pub converted into HMO without permission – read more on page 18



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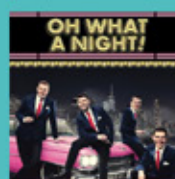
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Tickets: £30.50



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# High foodbank demand amid fears over inflation spike

BY LEAH RENZ

Enfield's biggest foodbank remains "extremely busy" even before a looming inflation spike from rising oil prices further impacts the cost of living.

New figures show charity Trussell Trust's North Enfield Foodbank delivered 15,241 food parcels last year, over a third of which (5,923) were distributed to children.

This represents a 142% increase compared to seven years ago, before the pandemic, although demand peaked at around 18,000 food parcels in 2023/24 when inflation was higher.

Now, the war in Iran and subsequent blocking of the Strait of Hormuz is increasing the price of oil, likely leading to another rise of UK inflation and household bills throughout the rest of this year, putting further pressure on foodbanks.

Sharmayne from North Enfield



One-in-three parcels handed out by the borough's biggest foodbank go to children  
Credit: Trussell Trust

Foodbank told the *Dispatch*: "North Enfield Foodbank remains extremely busy."

"We continue to support a large number of individuals and families each week, including many who are working but still struggling to afford essentials."

Donations have also been fluctuating, she explained. "We have noticed that some households, who previously donated regularly, are now facing financial pressures themselves."

Sharmayne added: "For many families, wages and benefits have

not kept pace [...] essential costs such as rent, utilities and food remain high."

North Enfield Foodbank is the only Trussell Trust foodbank operating in the borough, but a host of other charities working to end poverty in Enfield are also enduring high demand.

Cooking Champions, a charity which provides local food support and hosts a 'community kitchen' in Ponders End, has seen a steady increase in need over the last three years.

Founder Clare Donovan said that in January 2024, the charity distributed 622 bags. But in January 2026, that number increased to 1,022.

Alongside increased demand, Cooking Champions has seen a drop in physical donations of food.

Clare said: "The reason for this is that people are struggling [...] obviously I think people want to help but they're just not in a position to, because everything is

just so expensive and they have to cover their own bills before being able to help us."

While lower inflation over the last year has reduced demand slightly at North Enfield Foodbank from its peak in 2023, Clare said the demand at Cooking Champions had remained very high.

"I wish I could say yes [to seeing positive impacts of stabilised inflation], but sadly we haven't."

Both charities are urging local people interested in making a difference to volunteer or donate to help keep services running.

Clare warns that Cooking Champions faces possible closure or reduction in services without additional help. "We are at a real crunch point where we have to consider the long-term future of the foodbank," she said.

For more information about North Enfield Foodbank:  
Visit [northenfield.foodbank.org.uk](http://northenfield.foodbank.org.uk)

For more information about Cooking Champions:  
Visit [cookingchampions.org.uk](http://cookingchampions.org.uk)

## Scale of new Enfield Town plans revealed

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

New plans to redevelop an Enfield Town shopping centre would rise to 15 storeys tall, it's been revealed.

Five years ago, plans for tower blocks of up to 26 storeys at Palace Gardens drew widespread opposition, including from two local MPs. While the new proposal is much lower, it still exceeds the recommended maximum of 39 metres (around 13 storeys) included in Enfield Council's draft Local Plan.

This maximum was itself controversial, having been fiercely opposed by The Enfield Society during public hearings last summer. The group claimed any height over nine storeys would cause "substantial harm" to the Grade 2\*-listed St Andrew's Church nearby.

The *Dispatch* understands that even Palace Gardens owner DWS Group will admit in its planning application – due for submission this summer – that the scheme adversely impacts Enfield Town Conservation Area.

Residents were last month invited to share their views on the fresh proposals for Palace Gardens – with 300 homes planned as well as new shops.

While existing large shops such as Pearsons and Marks & Spencer would stay, a large part of Palace Gardens would be demolished and redeveloped with new retail areas and public spaces. Describing its plans, DWS stated: "New homes are a key part of the proposals for Palace Gardens and play an important role in delivering the wider improvements people told us they want to see in Enfield Town centre."

"New residents will help bring more activity into the area throughout the day and evening, supporting local shops, cafés and services while contributing to a safer, more welcoming public environment."

Regarding the new shops set to be provided, the German firm added: "The proposals aim to strengthen Palace Gardens as an everyday shopping destination while introducing new food and drink outlets that support activity into the evening."

Anonymous comments written at an exhibition event last month were mixed. One said: "Pleased they reduced the height of the building from the original – now more in keeping with the area."

But another said: "Think that the height is a problem and the scale of building is inappropriate."

# Committee approves Labour chair's 'retrospective' HMO

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The chair of Enfield Council's planning committee has finally obtained approval for her house in multiple occupation (HMO) – after operating it without permission since 2023.

Labour councillor Mahym Bedekova faced calls to resign last year after it was revealed in December she had been operating a HMO without planning permission for more than two years.

Following a vote by the planning committee last month, Cllr Bedekova was finally granted approval for the "retrospective" application she had put in for the HMO in November 2025.

Michael Rye, a Conservative committee member and former council leader, said before the vote the whole situation was

"fairly staggering".

Electoral register records suggest that at least five adults have lived at the property in question since 2023, including Cllr Bedekova.

She had obtained a HMO licence for the property in May 2023 but did not apply for planning permission for the property until more than two years later.

In Enfield, council rules state HMOs must have both planning permission and a licence to operate.

When news broke of Cllr Bedekova's unapproved HMO late last year, Cllr Rye was among those calling on the planning chair to resign, describing her position as "untenable".

Campaign group Better Homes Enfield concurred, saying it was "an issue of integrity and trust in the planning system" in which "councillors and residents are subject to the same standards".



The planning committee discussed Cllr Bedekova's HMO on Tuesday, 17th March  
Credit: Joe Ives/LDRS

Cllr Bedekova, who remains in her post, said she had "always acted in good faith" and takes her responsibility as planning chair "extremely seriously".

Her retrospective planning application was considered by the council's planning committee at last month's meeting. It was the final one of six decisions made on the night, an unusually high number.

Cllr Bedekova recused herself as chair when the matter of her retrospective application finally came up nearly two-and-a-half hours into the meeting. Fellow Labour committee member Kate Anolue took over proceedings.

During the discussion, Tory committee member Lee Chamberlain questioned the "transparency" of the report prepared by council officers. He noted that Cllr Bedekova's name did not appear on the report's front page under the section headed "Applicant Name & Address" and was first mentioned instead on the fourth page.

A council officer responded saying that the applicant's name did not necessarily have to appear on the front page.

After a brief discussion, Cllr Bedekova's application was approved with three votes against, one abstention, and all Labour members present voting in favour.

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## What the parties are promising this year



Enfield Labour launched their 2026 manifesto last month

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Six political parties look set to stand candidates in every single ward of Enfield borough for the local election this year – an unprecedented number which shows just how fragmented politics is becoming.

For voters, it means more choice – but also more difficult decisions to be made before heading to the polls on Thursday, 7th May.

Now that the parties have set out their policy platforms, outlining their pledges should they win control of Enfield Civic Centre next month, the *Dispatch* has summarised the key points for each below.

### Labour Party

Looking to win a record fifth term, Enfield Labour launched its 2026 manifesto last month, titled *Cleaner, Safer, Affordable*.

On the environment, Labour want to bring back weekly recycling collections. Six years ago, both household recycling and general waste bins moved to fortnightly, so this pledge represents a semi U-turn. The party also pledges to “introduce a dedicated ranger for every major park” and further vows to “make it easier for bigger households to get bigger bins” and “use apps to make it easier to report illegally dumped rubbish” as well as use “new tech such as drones, improved CCTV, and AI”.

On community safety, the party is promising “new CCTV and deterrents in crime hotspots”, plus “expanded safety patrols, including around schools”. The party further wants to “tackle the causes of crime by continuing to provide free courses and activities to young people, jobs fairs, public health services, tackle the cost-of-living crisis and strengthen community unity to address the root causes of crime”.

On affordability, Labour is pledging to “double the council’s hardship fund” for low-income households as well as offer “free energy-saving support” and “more warm spaces” in winter. The party also commits to introducing “childcare support for parents in insecure work”.

The manifesto includes a section on

the proposed new town at Crews Hill and ‘Chase Park’, which might see more than 20,000 homes built on Green Belt land over the coming decades – a policy backed by Labour locally, regionally and nationally. The party is now pledging to “introduce a ‘first dibs’ policy for first-time buyers already living in Enfield for affordable homes” and “push for the reopening of the A&E at Chase Farm Hospital” to improve healthcare access for new and existing residents, plus extra train services. The party will also “push for this infrastructure to be in place before new residents move in”.

On transport there’s a pledge to introduce “30 minutes free parking on high streets” (something the Tories had previously announced), while on housing Labour promises that “no more than 10% of properties in any neighbourhood can be converted to a HMO”.

### Conservative Party

Enfield Conservatives are making some very big – and expensive – pledges as the party seeks to return to power in the borough for the first time since 2010.

Their manifesto is titled *A Blueprint for Change* and includes “five pillars”. The first is “restoring fiscal integrity and accountability” through ending a “culture of political patronage” and by launching “a comprehensive independent inquiry into the past 16 years of financial decision-making” as well as a “rigorous debt-reduction strategy”.

The second pillar is “protecting our Green Belt”. A Tory-led council would “immediately withdraw” from the government’s



Enfield Conservatives held an event for their manifesto launch last month

new towns process and scrap plans to build on the Green Belt, “preserving the suburban character that makes Enfield unique”.

The third pillar is “cleaning up Enfield’s streets” and states the Conservatives would end “the war on the driver” by abolishing “failed” low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), “stop plans for a 20mph borough-wide scheme” and restore weekly bin collections – a bigger promise than Labour’s, as it means collecting all bins weekly.

The fourth pillar revolves around community safety and includes pledges to “re-establish local police hubs in council buildings”, recruit 20 additional officers, and “revitalise our trading standards team to crush illegal business activity”.

The fifth pillar of the Conservative manifesto is “investing in the next generation”, with a pledge to create 200 additional places for special needs children and “safeguard our vital youth centres”.

Elsewhere the Tories pledge to “ensure only the Union Flag, the Flag of St George, and the Enfield Beast flag are flown from council buildings”.

Other eye-catching pledges include bringing back school lollipop patrols, giving the Met Police a chance to use “space in existing council buildings to establish local hubs”, and a promise of a “moratorium on new cycle lanes” as well as removing existing cycle lanes in Hertford Road, originally installed using tens of millions of ‘Mini Holland’ cash awarded by then-London mayor Boris Johnson in 2014.

On Whitewebbs, the manifesto doesn’t mention the controversial Spurs deal with the council, but does promise to “enact a specific Conservation Area status covering the entirety of Whitewebbs Park to protect it from inappropriate development”.

### Liberal Democrats

The Lib Dems are the only other party to publish a manifesto for this election. It begins with two full pages on democratic issues, as “what sets the Liberal Democrats apart is that we stand up for proper local democracy, putting power back into the hands of residents”.

In Enfield, this would be achieved by “fostering a democratic culture in our communities” through regular open meet-

ings where residents can “put forward topics of concern”, as well as “reforming the consultation process”, introducing a committee system of governance “to better involve minority voices” and using “consensus” principles inspired by Iceland.

There is also a pledge to “protect the Green Belt”, bring back street litter bins removed under Labour, “work with TfL to review the bus network” and “continue to pressure Network Rail to bring step-free access to stations” on the Hertford Loop Line.

### Enfield Community Independents

Enfield Community Independents (ECI) are a group of left-wing activists with close ties to Your Party, the Jeremy Corbyn-backed political project launched last year.

ECI’s campaign literature includes pledges offering “new social housing and rent controls”, “zero-tolerance” on fly-tipping, the creation of an “Enfield apprenticeship scheme”, a review aiming to “restore council tax support”, as well as “opposing building on Green Belt land” and a “comprehensive review of all LTNs”.

There is also a commitment to follow Palestine Solidarity Campaign’s pension fund divestment demands.

### Reform UK

Right-wing populist party Reform UK makes no mention of any anti-immigration rhetoric on the leaflets it has printed for campaigning in Enfield this year. Instead, the party pledges to “protect our green spaces” including the Green Belt, “end wasteful council tax spending” and “safeguard Enfield from crime”.

Other pledges include making roads “fit for purpose”, supporting the reintroduction of weekly bin collections, and a vow to “regenerate our high streets”. The leaflet also highlights the council’s £1.3billion of debt and claims that “Reform are the only party who will reverse this trend”.

### Green Party

Enfield Green Party is promising “a cleaner, greener, safer” borough. The party wants “better streets and neighbourhoods” while “celebrating our diversity, protecting our community and green spaces”.

The left-wing movement says it is “fighting neglect faced by our elderly, disabled, and children” and is demanding “better local services, including hospital access, day centres, mobile and home care” as well as improved special needs provision in the borough.

The Greens also want “affordable, frequent public transport you can rely on” and “streets made for walking and cycling, safe for active travel”.

The deadline to register to vote in the local election is midnight on Monday, 20th April:  
Visit [gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://gov.uk/register-to-vote)

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# LETTERS

## Send us your letters

Got an opinion on something in Enfield? We accept letters of up to 150 words from people and organisations in the borough. Email [EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com](mailto:EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com) before the next deadline on **Monday 13th April**.

## Library loss

*Dear Enfield Dispatch*

While it is undoubtedly good news that the home of Enfield Highway Library is not to be sold for redevelopment following its closure, it is not clear to me that the purchasers are intending to open a facility open to all in the community, as the library was.

The last library in Southbury ward, John Jackson, was closed by Enfield Council in July 2025. That means a potential community hub, IT centre and designated 'warm space' next to Avenues Estate, and also close to Ayley Croft Estate, is in danger of being lost forever.

The building was modernised, enlarged and refurbished in 2010 with a grant from the National Lottery Fund. For this reason I would urge the council to consider very carefully what course of action to take over the John Jackson site.

The anger and distress at the closure decision was apparent at a meeting in September 2024 attended by local residents and library users. We also presented a petition prior to the closure decision being voted through, with hundreds of signatures. Sadly there was a consensus among us that the council intended to sell off the building to developers.

Michael Hardyman  
 Bush Hill Park

## Southbury development

*Dear Enfield Dispatch*

The plans for the proposed complex of tower blocks replacing Cineworld and three restaurants [in Southbury Road] are horrendous, with the tallest proposed to be 26 storeys.

Essential local facilities are already full up, from the local primary and secondary schools to the GP surgery, while the local dentist has fulfilled its quota of NHS patients. And yet, the area is expected to absorb thousands of new residents, made up of single people and families, to occupy 1,150 flats.

I remember the old cinema in town, near the Tesco site, and how, after it was demolished, we had to

trek to Lee Valley [Leisure Complex]. What a joy when the multi-screen Cineworld was opened! It caters for blockbusters, including an Imax screen, and also provides films in ethnic minority languages and West End plays, musicals and operas at a third of the price. It also houses a branch of the Jubilee Church.

It's a long bus ride to reach [the Odeon at] Lee Valley, the Wood Green Cineworld, or the two cinemas in Crouch End. It would be an end to the pleasure of a multi-screen cinema within walking distance, a facility which I dare say the new residents of the tower blocks would also regret losing.

The most attractive housing built now, even council housing, is in terraces or low-rise maisonettes. How about some low-rise building on the B&Q site, aimed at homeless Enfield singles and families with connections to our area, including families already relocated miles away – leaving Cineworld alone? But that would not make a profit for the developers, methinks.

Jess Yates  
 Bush Hill Park

## Special tree

*Dear Enfield Dispatch*

Enfield Council has said "reckless disregard for our borough will not be tolerated" and is seeking a public apology from [Toby Carvery owner] Mitchells & Butlers plc for the irreversible damage caused to the 500-year-old Whitewebbs Oak.

Can I suggest M&B additionally fund hosting *Of The Oak* somewhere in Enfield? This immersive video installation, commissioned by Kew Gardens and most recently on display at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, uses technology to highlight ancient trees as living monuments of connection, keystones in the web of life, typically supporting well over 2,000 species.

Whitewebbs' veteran 'mother tree' connected species within this sylvan setting through fungal networks; communicating, supporting and ecologically anchoring the woodland species into one arboricultural family.

Karl Brown  
 Palmers Green

# New 20mph speed limits for three town centres

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

**N**ew 20mph zones covering three large town centres in Edmonton, Palmers Green and Southgate have gone live.

The implementation of lower speed limits was approved in January following a series of consultations held last year.

According to Enfield Council the new 20mph zones will “help to create safer, calmer streets for everyone”. They form part of the civic centre’s “commitment to improving road safety, encouraging active travel and supporting healthier communities”.

Sabri Ozaydin, the council’s cabinet member for environment and placemaking, said: “I am pleased that we have been able to introduce 20mph speed limits after consultation with our residents.

“By lowering speed limits in town centres, we will now be able



Cabinet members Sabri Ozaydin (centre) and Rick Jewell (left) help install new 20mph signs in Palmers Green. Credit: Enfield Council

to create safer streets for residents, visitors and businesses and help to improve road safety and encourage active travel.

“The scheme will also decrease pollution and create a more inviting environment for pedestrians, and the benefits will include fewer and less severe collisions,

cleaner air and lower emissions and we will hopefully see increased walking and wheeling rates for a safer Enfield.”

New signage and road markings have been installed to support the changes. Funding for the implementation is being provided by Transport for London, with

£1.6million granted so far.

In Edmonton, the 20mph zone starts at the southern end of Fore Street in Angel Edmonton up to Edmonton Green Shopping Centre, as well as some side roads and a short section of Church Street and Hertford Road in Edmonton Green.

In Palmers Green, it extends along Green Lanes, starting from the borough border with Haringey in the south and continuing up to the junction with Hedge Lane in the north. Aldermans Hill, Palmerston Crescent and Elmdale Road are also included.

In Southgate, the 20mph zone begins at the Cannon Hill and Aldermans Hill junction, extending north along The Green and Southgate High Street. Chase Side, part of Chase Road, Crown Lane, Ashfield Parade and several side streets are also included.

For more information:  
Visit [letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/20mph](http://letstalk.enfield.gov.uk/20mph)

## New children’s care home

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**E**nfield Council is set to create a new care home for children with complex needs in a bid to address its “severely limited” service.

A report published ahead of the decision said the lack of council-owned facilities had meant that more than 90% of the children who need them have been placed outside the borough.

This lack of capacity has also led to the local authority accidentally sending two children to unregistered placements in the past five years, the report said.

“This poses significant safeguarding risks and impacts on the overall quality of care, highlighting the urgent need for more registered local provisions,” council officers wrote.

Aside from being expensive, these out-of-borough facilities lead to “disruptive care”, with a lack of continuity of care workers “affecting trust and support for young people”.

Council officers said there was an “urgent need” to address the issue, with the number of children and young people with complex needs requiring local placements in Enfield rising by 24% over the past five years – with costs increasing by 64%.

The borough currently lacks its own dedicated property for children and young people with complex needs, trauma and deprivation of liberty (DOL) orders. DOLs are interventions to protect people who could be a danger to themselves. This safeguard can only be used if the person is to be placed in a care home or hospital.

The council’s cabinet agreed to spend £1.5million on setting up its care home, with up to £1m of this set aside to buy a property on the open market. This will then be converted into the children’s care home.

Once complete, the property will have four bedrooms to accommodate four children, with one in a specialised “self-contained annex” for DOL placements. There will also be a therapeutic room and secure outdoor garden.

Half of the cost will be covered through a grant received from the Department for Education in February last year. The council will be borrowing to pay the remaining £725,000 bill.

The care home will need to be registered with Ofsted by the end of March 2029 in order to guarantee the government grant funding.

# Major estates rebuild to start this summer

*A revised phasing plan aiming to “speed up” delivery of the 2,000-home redevelopment of Joyce and Snells has been agreed*

**W**ork is expected to start this summer on building the first new homes as part of a major Edmonton estate rebuild.

Enfield Council’s cabinet recently agreed quicker construction of future phases of the redevelopment at Joyce Avenue and Snells Park estates in Angel Edmonton.

Construction of the first 270 affordable homes is now due to begin in early summer, with Hill Partnership formally appointed to build the initial phases.

Plans for the redevelopment of both estates was approved by councillors two years ago, after residents backed the scheme in a ballot. The project is earmarked to cost £800million, with the existing 795

homes at Joyce and Snells making way for a much denser scheme of more than 2,000 “modern, safe, and sustainable homes” in blocks up to 26 storeys tall.

Preparatory works have already begun and a new playground opened last year. The council’s revised phasing plan will now speed up the next stage of redevelopment, with the first housebuilding phase building 220 homes instead of 148 as previously planned.

Ayten Guzel, the council’s cabinet member for housing, said: “Achieving the promises the council made to residents at the time of the ballot is our priority. This is a major step forward for those residents and for Joyce and Snells Park.

“By agreeing the contract with



Designs for the new Joyce and Snells estates

Hill and revising the phasing of the scheme, we are not only delivering on those promises, but speeding up the programme to bring forward more council homes, more quickly.

“Working with Hill on these first phases, we will improve the estate into a modern neighbourhood with high-quality homes and

improved community spaces. Residents are already seeing progress on site, and this decision ensures the momentum continues.

“We are committed to making a lasting difference, not just by providing thousands of much-needed social rent homes, but by creating a place that people are proud to call home.”



# Murderously good fun at Chickenshed's night of mystery

BY MARY-ELLEN DYSON

I have always been intrigued by the prospect of a murder mystery night, but I had never had the opportunity to get involved until Chickenshed decided to host one last month – and I thoroughly enjoyed it!

Immersiveness is all the rage at the moment, and the Southgate theatre's *Murder Mystery Evening* was a truly immersive experience.

Great care and attention went into bringing the setting of a 1920s club to life, with scenery, costumes and music all contributing to the atmosphere. The audience also did their bit by dressing up from the era – a prize for best dressed would have been keenly fought.

The best part was the immersive improvisation. From the moment I walked in, long before the official start time, characters were having plot-critical conversations inches from people's tables – a test of my lip-reading skills when they spoke quietly!

After the murder occurred, a detective interrogated characters



The murder mystery event at Chickenshed last month Credit Leda Omran

on a small stage at the front whilst characters continued to interact between the tables. At times, characters would circulate to discuss suspicions with the audience; teasing out their stories, and pushing the murderer to reveal themselves, was great fun.

I really enjoy puzzles of all varieties, and Chickenshed's evening provided excellent puzzling throughout. It was tremendously engaging to watch the charac-

ters' goings-on in the background throughout, picking up clues and many more red herrings.

Guessing 'whodunnit' was far from easy. Guests who wanted to lean into the puzzling, as I did, had plenty to get their teeth into.

There is something for everyone in this murder mystery event. For those who wanted an involved experience, the show was thoroughly interactive, with endless deduction throughout. For those

who wanted a 1920s experience, the evening delivered in spades.

For the music lovers among us, there were three renditions of period songs, and the pianist provided plenty of 1920s-themed background music (and 'dun-dun-dun' riffs, as appropriate). And for those who wanted a light evening, the show was tongue-in-cheek and didn't take itself too seriously; there were plenty of laughs throughout.

Chickenshed has plans to host its *Murder Mystery Evening* again in future, although no dates have yet been confirmed. It would be great fun with friends – with six sat each table – but if you'd prefer to go on your own, Chickenshed's community feel means that there would be plenty of people at your table who would be ready to share the experience with you.

Chickenshed's *Murder Mystery Evening* offers a great night out for all. My top tip would be to arrive early – the experience begins long before the start time, so soak up as much of it as possible while you can!

## Museum's new education scheme

A new schools programme will teach local children about the history of the 'secret listeners' who used an Enfield mansion to gather intelligence during the Second World War.

Trent Park House of Secrets, a new museum opening at Trent Park this summer, has launched the lottery-funded education programme which is aimed at children in both Enfield and Barnet aged from eight to eleven years.

Supported by The National Lottery Heritage Fund and now open for bookings, the schools programme brings the "remarkable story" of Trent Park House alive through immersive drama and historical investigation.

During the Second World War, Trent Park House was requisitioned by the government and transformed into a prisoner-of-war camp for high-ranking German officers. Unknown to the captives, the house and grounds were fitted with cutting-edge listening equipment. The intelligence gathered by the secret listeners – including women and refugees – helped shape the course of the war.

The 'Sharing Stories' education programme has been co-created with partner schools and London-based Freshwater Theatre Company. Prior to each workshop, students will discover a mysterious worn leather bag filled with intriguing objects. Through investigation, the class pieces together the story of its owner: a German Jewish refugee who worked as a secret listener at Trent Park House during the war.

Sharondeep Jawanda, the new schools manager working for Trent Park House of Secrets, said: "I'm excited to reintroduce the schools programme which invites local children to uncover the extraordinary hidden histories of the secret listeners."

"The programme encourages pupils to listen carefully, ask bold questions and explore the power of communication and empathy. These hidden histories deserve recognition, and we're thrilled to work with Freshwater to make them accessible to young learners in an engaging and meaningful way."

"I'm looking forward to seeing how pupils connect with and explore these powerful histories."

Director Giuseppe Albano added: "Sharondeep brings fantastic experience working with schools, families and communities, and we're delighted to have her leading this programme."

"The story of Trent Park House centres on one of the most remarkable intelligence operations of the war, and it's important young people understand the role played by the secret listeners."

# Dugdale to screen award-winning indie flick by Enfield filmmakers

*The Spin* is a "celebration of warmth, gentle humour, friendship and self-discovery" set in Northern Ireland

BY ALEXANDROS IOANNIDES

Dugdale Arts Centre will this month be screening an award-winning film made by two Enfield producers.

*The Spin* is a comedy following two best friends and music lovers on a search for a highly-valuable vinyl record in Northern Ireland.

The film is light-hearted, with a soundtrack of folk and country music. It stars Dermot and Elvis, played by *Game of Thrones* actor Brenock O'Connor and Owen Colgan, known for his role in *Hardy Bucks*.

The plot follows the two close friends struggling to keep hold of their record shop, Boneyard Records, and, facing eviction, they embark on a lucrative quest for the sought-after vinyl.

On the way, the pair come across characters who help form a unique friendship with Dermot and Elvis.

*The Spin* is directed by Michael Head, who previously directed *Bermondsey* and *The Fall of the Roman Empire*, with producers Ismail Ismail and Jake Jakcovich being local to Enfield, having met at Winchmore School.

The *Dispatch* spoke to Ismail regarding his experience working on his first film production. Asked about the roots of the film being close to Northern Irish culture, he said: "It was great to keep to the authentic folk music and I



A still from *The Spin*

will be working on more Irish productions in the future."

On working with Brenock O'Connor and Owen Colgan, Ismail added: "Their chemistry is fantastic, and they are always pushing each other and making themselves, and us, laugh. It was such fun."

*The Spin* also stars *Love Island* contestant and Irish TV personality Maura Higgins in the role of Rose, in her first venture into acting, alongside Pussycat Dolls singer Kimberley Wyatt as Dallas.

Leah O'Rourke and Tara Lynne O'Neil, who both worked together on *Derry Girls*, also joined the cast.

The film premiered in Ireland and has already racked up several awards internationally, including 'best feature film' at festivals in Dublin, Belfast, Omaha, Toronto, Chicago and Bremen.

*The Spin* will be screening at Dugdale Arts Centre in Enfield Town on Friday 3rd and Saturday 4th April. For more information and to book tickets: Visit [dugdaleartscentre.co.uk/whats-on/the-spin](http://dugdaleartscentre.co.uk/whats-on/the-spin)



## It's a wrap

Neil Littman visits a unique Turkish venue in Enfield Highway recently rated among the top four restaurants in London

Until recently I had three ways to discover places to eat; my local knowledge of Enfield where I have lived for over eleven years, recommendations and tip-offs from friends and readers, and Googling search terms such as 'new restaurants in Enfield' (which was how I found the extraordinary Shere Khan restaurant).

This time, however, a fourth solution presented itself – a full-page review in *The Guardian!* The author of the piece showered praise on Neco Tantuni in Enfield Highway. Transforming what was a former greasy spoon café, the Turkish venue incredibly won fourth place in *Vittles'* list of London's top restaurants.

Located in Brick Lane just off Hertford Road, Neco Tantuni still looks like a café from the outside and gives little away about what's happening inside. The name is part of their story; 'Neco' means 'everlasting' and 'Tantuni' is a popular Turkish street food, originating from Mersin on the southern coast and consisting of finely-diced beef, chicken or lamb, stir-fried with sumac and other spices cooked slowly on a massive pan. It is served wrapped in lavash bread with fresh tomatoes, onions, parsley and sumac, with a squeeze of lemon or served with yogurt. Presentation is simple but delivers a great burst of flavour.

Arriving on a cold, wet winter evening and unable to get hold

of my regular dining companion who had the flu, I entered the packed dining area, which has about 20 seats. I thought it might mean getting a takeaway, but they found me a seat on the end of a table for six occupied by four other very enthusiastic diners. Curiosity got the better of me and I asked them if they had eaten there before, and they said they had also read the article in the weekend press.

Neco's short menu is printed on just one side of a laminated card with a dozen dishes including various tantuni (a type of meat wrap) plus their signature dessert, kunefe (made with spun pastry dough and syrup). There is not a kebab in sight!

The one vegan option – printed on a separate card stuck on the wall – is ciğ köfte, a popular Turkish/Armenian spicy dish made with fine bulgur, tomato/pepper paste, and spices, wrapped in lettuce with lemon and herbs. I was offered a sample taste of



Front counter

this dish, which had a rich, spicy and tangy flavour from ingredients like Urfa pepper, cumin and pomegranate molasses.

There was a hive of activity at the serving counter, where all the preparation and cooking with oil and spices takes place using an enormous special convex iron hotplate. I ordered a chicken tantuni, but a complimentary plate of pickled vegetables and chillies arrived first, which were sharp and crunchy and hot. So hot, in fact, I ordered a glass of their ayran yoghurt drink to cool myself down, and then a second!

The tantuni arrived 15 minutes later and tasted juicy, savoury, slightly spicy, and tangy all in one mouthful, as well as filling. I wasn't really prepared for this, as the dish itself looks like any other wrap, but the flavours are a great combination and demonstrate that appearance is not everything.

I rarely order desserts as they are often bought in, but at Neco I ordered their kunefe which is prepared in front of customers on a smaller version of the hot plate used for the savoury dishes. Kunefe is made with kataifi shredded pastry used in Middle Eastern desserts. There was some kind of soft cheese in the base, which was doused in syrup. This is served with ice cream or cream and was heaven on a plate. Complimentary Turkish tea was served at the end of the meal.



Kunefe

The tantuni deserves praise for offering something different and introducing another facet of Turkish cuisine to Enfield. I also wish to thank my fellow diners from Potters House Church, who were on my table and treated me to my meal!

Neco Tantuni is family-friendly and good value, costing around £15 per person, but is cash only. It is unlicensed but does offer takeaways. It opens every day, 2pm–12am.

Do you have any suggestions for restaurants in Enfield to review or feedback on the places Neil has already reviewed? He would love to hear from Dispatch readers:  
Email [eatingoutinenfield@gmail.com](mailto:eatingoutinenfield@gmail.com)

## Submit your listing

We can include low-cost community events taking place in Enfield. For next month's listings, email the details of your event to [enfielddispatch@socialspider.com](mailto:enfielddispatch@socialspider.com) by **Monday 13th April**.

## CROQUET

### Come and Play Croquet

Tuesday 7th, Saturday 11th and Tuesday 14th April, 10am–12pm  
Enfield Croquet Club, Cecil Avenue EN1 1PS

Croquet is a game of skill and tactics, suitable for all ages. It is fun, competitive, and very sociable. Everyone is welcome.

### Booking required

Visit [enfieldcroquet.org](http://enfieldcroquet.org)

## CHILDREN

### Easter Bunny Tales

From Tuesday 7th to Saturday 11th April, 10am and 11.30am  
Chickenshed Theatre, 290 Chase Side, Southgate N14 4PE

Join Chickenshed's Tales from the Shed team for some egg-stra special Easter fun! Our Easter-themed performances are filled with enchanting stories, lively songs and plenty of movement.

### Tickets £7, free for babies

Visit [chickenshed.org.uk](http://chickenshed.org.uk)

## HEALTH

### Expressive Arts for Health

Every Thursday from 16th April to 18th June, 10.30am–12.30pm  
Fore Street Library, 109–111 Fore Street, Edmonton N18 2XF

A free ten-week creative wellbeing programme for adults using drawing, watercolour and visual journaling. For people experiencing isolation, anxiety or low mood.

### Free to join, registration required

Visit [expressionsthrough.art](http://expressionsthrough.art)

## ACTION

### Celebrate Our Countryside

Saturday 18th April, all day  
Meet outside Thompsons of Crews Hill

Enfield Road Watch is joining the National Day of Action for Nature, Parks and Green Spaces to help celebrate Crews Hill, as part of the campaign against the proposed new town. We will be hosting a range of activities and tours of the area and its many attractions!

### Free to attend, booking may be needed for some activities

Email [enfieldroadwatch@gmail.com](mailto:enfieldroadwatch@gmail.com)

## CONCERT

### The Rowantree Choir's Spring Concert

Saturday 25th April, 7.30pm  
United Reformed Church, Fox Lane, Palmers Green N13 4AL

The Rowantree Choir will be performing Puccini's *Messa Di Gloria* and other opera highlights, including the *Grand March* from *Aida* and Bizet's *Pearl Fishers' Duet*.

### Advance tickets £17 adults, £8 children

Visit [ticketsource.co.uk/rowantree-choir](http://ticketsource.co.uk/rowantree-choir)

## BOWLS

### Broomfield Bowls Club Open Day

Sunday 26th April, 12pm–5pm.  
85a, Hedge Lane, Palmers Green N13 5SZ

Come and try lawn bowls for free. A game for all the family. Coaching and equipment provided. Just wear casual clothing and flat-soled shoes. Free refreshments, parking available.

### Open day is free to attend

Call 07979 932 189

## COFFEE

### Community Coffee Morning

Fridays, 9am–12pm  
St Peter's Church, corner of Bounces Road and St Peter's Road, Edmonton N9 8JP

A social group meeting for a chat and to also make new friends. Enjoy quizzes and other activities, with light refreshments available. Also a registered warm space.

### Free entry

Email [stpetersedmonton@gmail.com](mailto:stpetersedmonton@gmail.com)

## JAZZ

### Googlies Jazz Club

Thursdays, 7pm  
Botany Bay Cricket Club, East Lodge Lane EN2 8AS

Googlies Jazz Club features a house quartet plus a different guest artist each week – always one of Britain's leading soloists or vocalists. A two-course meal for £15 is also available – please book in advance.

### Tickets £10 members, £12 non-members

Visit [googliesjazz.co.uk](http://googliesjazz.co.uk)

# AROUND THE BOROUGH

## BRIMSDOWN

### Pub turned into unauthorised HMO



The Station Tavern has now been converted into a HMO  
Credit Joe Ives/LDRS

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A FORMER PUB BUILDING HAS been converted into an unauthorised house in multiple occupation (HMO) – despite Enfield Council launching an investigation five months ago.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS) last month visited the site of The Station Tavern in Green Street, near Brimsdown Station, and found clear signs that people were living there, including a mailbox next to the property with a sign which said: “Letters here for HMO rooms.”

This is despite the council twice refusing planning permission to convert the building into a HMO last year.

An initial application to convert the former pub into a HMO was refused last May. Then, in July, the council refused a second application, saying “the applicant failed to address flood risk requirements”.

After concerns were raised last October the building was being converted into a HMO without permission, the council confirmed it was investigating to “determine the appropriate next steps,” adding it was “unable to provide any further information as this property relates to a live investigation”.

Asked to comment now there’s clear evidence of occupation at the former pub, a council spokesperson said: “The council’s planning enforcement team is aware of the concerns raised regarding

the alleged use of the former Station Tavern public house building as a house in multiple occupation (HMO) without the necessary planning consent.

“Planning enforcement cases can take time to progress, and this site is subject to many investigations. The council must ensure any investigation is thorough and robust, and all evidence is fully considered before deciding on the most appropriate course of action.

“As this is a current and ongoing investigation, we are unable to comment further.”

The Station Tavern in Green Street has been closed to the public for nearly a decade, with plans to knock it down and build an “unsafe” tower block in its place finally rejected at the fourth time of asking in 2024.

In council documents the applicant of the rejected HMO plans is named on the council’s planning portal as ‘Mr Tepe’. This is the same surname as the man behind the proposed tower block on the site of the pub, dubbed ‘Tepe Tower’.

Mr Tepe and his planning agent Huseyin Cicek were approached for comment. Huseyin said a third planning application for the HMO would soon be submitted.

## ENFIELD TOWN

### Dead body found in New River

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

THE DEATH OF A MAN WHOSE body was discovered in the New River last month remains a mystery.

Emergency services were called to a stretch of the waterway just north of Carterhatch Lane at around 7am on Sunday, 15th March by someone who spotted the partially submerged body. The man, aged in his 50s, was recovered from the water but pronounced dead.

Metropolitan Police officers spoke to local residents throughout the day but didn’t appear able to

piece together what had caused the man’s death.

Although police have not named the man, the *Dispatch* established he lived on his own at nearby Mahon Close, overlooking the New River. Neighbour Beatrice Muzezu described him as “a good man” who “always said hello”.

Beatrice, who found out the news only after she returned from holiday, said it was “shocking” to hear.

A police spokesperson said: “The death is being treated as unexpected and enquiries are ongoing to establish the circumstances.”

## PONDERS END

### New day care centre

ENFIELD CARERS CENTRE HAS announced the opening of a new day care centre for adults.

Connections opened its doors for the first time this month in a refurbished space in Queensway, near Ponders End High Street.

It offers activities for older people or those who need care, as well as respite for carers, complementing the award-winning carer support services Enfield Carers Centre already provides.

Charity boss Pam Burke said: “We’re excited about opening our doors here in Ponders Ends and extending the support we provide to unpaid carers.

“We know we need more services for people receiving care, so that unpaid carers have flexible options for combining their caring



Visitors to the day care centre on its opening day  
Credit Enfield Carers Centre

responsibilities with work, or to simply take a break, and manage their own health and wellbeing.

“Connections has been purpose built with users in mind, offering care in a new space provided by qualified, trained staff. Clients can expect services delivered with dignity and respect, in a safe and secure location.”

## EDMONTON GREEN

### Major revamp of community building

A £3MILLION REFURBISHMENT of Community House has been completed.

Tenants and local people came together to celebrate the official reopening in late February.

The three-storey building in Fore Street is used by a number of local charities and voluntary groups but had previously been “under utilised”. The revamped site now also houses a café, disability resource centre, daycare services for people with learning disabilities, as well as the previous voluntary and community service tenants.

Enfield Council hopes its investment in the refurbishment project “will attract more people to the hub and the services offered”.

The redesign was shaped in collaboration with tenants and user groups, ensuring colours, wayfinding and new murals “reflect the identity and creativity of the community while making the building easier and more intuitive to use”.

Across the building, improvements include fresh décor, new flooring and upgraded heating and ventilation. There is a new enclosed computer room, improved physiotherapy rooms and accessible toilets.

The disability resource centre “supports disabled people to learn new skills, access wellbeing activities and build friendships”.

The revamp had originally been earmarked to cost £2.43m, but a council report confirmed that “the



Community House reopened last month  
Credit Enfield Council

state of the building” in Fore Street was found to be “worse than was expected”. An extra £493,000 was earmarked for works “to cover critical activities such as compliance with fire regulations”. It brought the refurbishment costs up to a total of £2.92m.

It’s now hoped that, with the improvements made and new cafe, more people will be encouraged to use the building and rent the spaces available.

## PALMERS GREEN

### Restaurant shut down by council

A RESTAURANT’S LICENCE TO operate has been permanently revoked by Enfield Council after the business was repeatedly warned about indoor smoking and antisocial behaviour.

Union Bar & Restaurant Ltd at 56 Aldermans Hill received several warnings and inspection visits from the council’s environmental health officers last year, with 15

complaints being made by local residents and councillors.

One of the major issues frequently seen during inspection visits was smoking in an enclosed area, which is illegal. The restaurant also breached licence conditions by serving alcohol without table meals, placed tables and chairs on the highway, and played loud music at night.

Cockfosters (in blue) defeated Droylsden 4-2 in the quarter final  
Credit @els\_photo\_graphy



## Cockfosters one win from 'dream' Wembley final

Club committee member Tommy Rose on how the Spartan South Midlands League Premier Division minnows reached the semi-finals of the FA Vase

**C**ockfosters FC are now just one win away from competing at Wembley Stadium for the FA Vase.

The Chalk Lane club's remarkable cup journey took another dramatic step forward with a superb late surge to defeat Droylsden FC 4-2 and book their place in the semi-final of the competition, which is contested between clubs at the fifth and sixth steps of the non-league pyramid.

The quarter-final fixture on Saturday, 28th February, presented one of the toughest assignments of the campaign. A lengthy trip north to Greater Manchester awaited Gavin Kelsey's side, who faced an established and experienced Droylsden team in front of another large and expectant crowd. But as they have throughout this cup run, Cockfosters rose to the occasion.

In a fiercely contested match, the sides were locked together deep into the second half before Cockfosters produced a decisive late spell to pull clear. A goal apiece from Conrad Holland and, on his debut, Ollie Sotoyino, proved decisive. It followed first-half goals from Cory Ugboamah and Kendall Gyamfi.

The two late goals secured a memorable 4-2 victory, sparking celebrations among the travelling supporters who had made the long journey to witness another historic moment in the club's season.

Next up are Kent-based Punjab United FC, who await in a two-legged semi-final. For the first time in the club's history, Cockfosters will compete in a last-four tie with a place in the Wembley final at stake.

The first leg will be played at Chalk Lane on Saturday, 28th March, with the return leg scheduled for the following weekend on Saturday, 4th April. Interest in the home fixture has been extraordinary, with tickets selling rapidly and a capacity crowd expected as the local community turns out in force to support the club.

After a cup run defined by late goals, penalty shoot-out drama and determined performances on the road, Cockfosters now find themselves just 180 minutes away from the biggest stage in English football.

For a club that has already made history this season, the dream of Wembley is now closer than ever.

## Fight for survival continues as Towners consider future

Andrew Warshaw on what relegation might mean for Enfield Town FC as season reaches a climax

**C**an Enfield Town pull off a second successive miraculous escape from relegation, against all the odds?

Lightning rarely strikes twice and, as the *Dispatch* went to press, Town's hopes of retaining their National League South status were hanging by a thread.

With the 2025/26 league campaign concluding on Saturday, 25th April, the borough's leading club are likely to need all the help they can get to prevent them spiralling back down into step three of the non-league pyramid.

While they have undoubtedly been given a lift by the unexpected return of fans' favourite Jake Cass – who now lives predominantly in Dubai but has come out of retirement until the end of the season – manager Gavin Macpherson has stressed numerous times how much stronger this division is compared to last year when the club ensured their survival on a dramatic final day of the campaign.

Throw into the mix the fact that more and more clubs in National League South are becoming full-time and that fan-owned teams are inevitably disadvantaged when it comes to financial resources, and you get some idea of how Town have been punching above their weight.

But is it all about to end, and where do the club go if the worst comes to the worst and they are relegated back into the Isthmian League?

Much has been made on various fans' forums in recent weeks about the need to change the constitution for the club to advance, scrapping or at least moderating the fan-owned ethos and allowing for significant majority ownership. But any future sugar daddy would want a return on their money – certainly not a guarantee.

Plus, critically, any prospective new owner would have to have a

proper vision for the future, a fact not lost on those who remember what happened to the old club which folded under highly contentious circumstances a generation ago.

"Obviously we would love to stay up, as the professionalism is so much better and it would eclipse anything we did last season," Town vice-chairman Paul Millington told the *Dispatch*. "It would also mean we could tap into crucial additional funding, which we wouldn't get at step three.

"But if we do get relegated, the silver lining is that we have the facilities to go straight back up again. We've tasted this level once and I'm sure that we could challenge to be able to do it again."

Even though there are bigger clubs than Town, even at step three, with far greater financial might? "Are they really that much stronger? What we have is a debt-free club," argued Paul. "We [spent] twelve years at step three and we know how competitive it is. But as we also know in football, it can be boom one day and bust the next. What some of these clubs have done to try and get promotion is unsustainable."

Ever the realist, having been at

the forefront of Enfield Town's very existence as a club, Paul doesn't buy the argument that its unique status will necessarily have to change for it to move forward.

"Would it be a struggle to remain at step two as a fan-owned club? Maybe, but there are ways we could grow, for instance by increasing revenue streams, including sponsorship. Other predominantly fan-owned clubs have done it.

"Let's face it, we've been finding our feet over the last couple of years. This has been a big step up for everyone. We've moved from a club largely reliant on volunteers to a much more professional basis."

While future outside investment would certainly be considered – indeed encouraged – in terms of involvement in the running of the club, there is one no-go area, and that relates to Enfield Town's 99-year lease of the ground.

"The red line is never giving anybody any interest in the ground itself," said Paul. "We've been there before and we all know what happened. It belongs to the club and its fans and the board would never ever entertain giving that away."

Towners fans are proud of their history as England's first fan-owned club



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Enfield Dispatch is published by Social Spider Community News, a not-for-profit social enterprise. Our mission is to hold authority to account and provide a platform for the community.

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