

ENFIELD DISPATCH

Nº 92 THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

MAY 2026



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Control of Enfield Civic Centre up for grabs as election looms

BY JAMES CRACKNELL & JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The future of Enfield is in the balance as 333 candidates fight for 63 seats across 25 wards – with the outcome of this year's local election more difficult to predict than any vote in the borough's history.

Voters head to the polls on Thursday, 7th May, although the results will not be known until later the next day, as there will be a daytime count held on the Friday instead of on the night of the election itself.

The *Dispatch* website will carry live coverage throughout the day.

Enfield Council has been controlled by a majority Labour administration for the past 16 years, but the ruling party has been losing support locally since 2018. A resurgent Conservative group now hope to win outright

control, while several other parties could also gain significant representation at Enfield Civic Centre – and possibly even hold the balance of power if no single party can attain a majority.

While the Tories, Liberal Democrats, Greens, Reform UK and Enfield Community Independents represent different parts of the political spectrum, the issue in Enfield unifying them all is the fate of the borough's Green Belt.

Put simply, Labour want to build thousands of homes on it – the rest want to protect it.

The future of the Green Belt was already a key issue at the time of the last election in 2022, which took place less than a year after the Labour administration had published its first draft Local Plan. At that time, the council had proposed around 6,000 homes on Crews Hill and an area of farmland near World's End it called 'Chase Park'.

The 2022 election saw Labour lose eight seats to the Conservatives but, undeterred, the administration doubled down 18 months later by publishing a second draft of the Local Plan which proposed more than 9,000 Green Belt homes.

Just as the council was finalising this plan, amid a series of public examination hearings last year, the Labour government announced its 'new towns' programme – with Crews Hill and Chase Park now slated for 21,000 homes.

On a visit last month to Enfield – but not Crews Hill – Housing Secretary Steve Reed spoke to the *Dispatch* about his vision for the new town. In the interview (available in full on page four) Reed was asked how the election of a Conservative-led council wanting to "save the Green Belt" might affect his government's plans.

"We need a Labour council here to help realise its potential – the

Tories don't want to build homes," claimed Reed.

Labour council leader Ergin Erbil echoed this sentiment in his own interview ahead of the election (available on page ten). "We need to build genuinely affordable homes," he said. "The inaccessible fields, the golf courses, the garden centres and the car parks that are currently labelled Green Belt, I would argue that they're not genuine Green Belt."

But the opposition parties point out that Meridian Water – the council's flagship housing project being built on brownfield land in Edmonton – has produced just 301 homes out of a 10,000 target since work began five years ago.

In his own election interview (available to read on page eleven) Enfield Conservatives leader Alessandro Georgiou explained his

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Published on 24/04/2026

Big rise in parking fines issued across Enfield

Council leader Ergin Erbil has welcomed news that 71% more PCNs for illegal parking were issued in 2025/26 compared to the previous year

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enforcement of parking laws in Enfield has improved significantly over the past year, new figures show.

The number of penalty charge notices (PCNs) for parking violations in the borough has risen by 71% – from 71,005 fines in 2024/25 up to 121,429 fines for 2025/26.

This is according to data released following a Freedom of Information Act request by the *Dispatch*. Figures available through London Councils also confirm that the parking PCN total for Enfield in 2025/26 is higher than any year since London-wide data collection began in 2018/19.

At the beginning of last year, *Dispatch* readers were asked to send in their own evidence of illegal parking in their local areas, with 40 of the worst examples then published in the March 2025 issue, out of 150 submitted to the paper in total.

The widespread flouting of parking rules – particularly through parking on pavements, which creates a safety hazard for pedestrians – was condemned at the time by council leader Ergin Erbil.

Cllr Erbil subsequently promised a crackdown on the problem,

and instructed council parking contractor NSL to employ additional enforcement officers. NSL's Enfield enforcement team was eventually expanded to 50 staff, up from 36 at the start of 2025.

The larger enforcement team has had the desired effect, with a big rise in the number of PCNs being issued. The number of impounded vehicles has also gone up, from 1,002 in 2024/25 to 1,081 in 2025/26.

Cllr Erbil welcomed the news. He said: "If you push a pram, use a wheelchair, are elderly or have mobility issues, you shouldn't be forced to walk or be pushed into the road because of inconsiderate parking on pavements by inconsiderate drivers.

"I would like to pay tribute to our hard-working enforcement teams, who are working hard every day. We want safer and cleaner streets, and making sure our rules are enforced properly is a massive part of that."

Both Enfield Labour and Enfield Conservatives are making further pledges to clamp down on illegal parking in their election manifestos, ahead of polling day on Thursday, 7th May.

Labour are committing to introduce "a dedicated parking enforcement team for each town centre" in Enfield, while the Tories want to implement "24-hour parking enforcement across the borough to keep our roads clear and safe".



PCNs issued for parking violations rose by 71% across Enfield last year

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

opposition to building on Green Belt and said: "It's about protecting the environment, it's about protecting jobs – and it's about protecting Enfield's heritage."

Cllr Georgiou hopes to soon be leading the council – and has even persuaded a former Labour cabinet member to stand alongside him for the Tories.

Dino Leminodes, the council's cabinet member for finance between 2014 and 2018, decided last year to join the Conservatives and is now standing for the party in Bowes ward.

Explaining his switch of political allegiance, Leminodes told the *Dispatch* he thought Enfield Labour had become "self serving" and said: "This is a local election and I want to see the end of the Labour administration."

The ex-Labour councillor added: "I think he [Cllr Georgiou] has a better handle on running the council."

Also interviewed for this paper (starting from page twelve) are the local representatives from Reform UK, Enfield Community Independents, the Green Party and Liberal Democrats. All have vowed to protect the Green Belt if elected.

Asked what would represent success for his group of left-wing activists, Enfield Community Independents founder Khalid Sadur told the *Dispatch*: "We want to remove the leader of the council from Edmonton Green [...] we want to have that Portillo moment."

Polling stations are open from 7am until 10pm on Thursday, 7th May. Depending on the size of their ward, registered voters will be electing either two or three councillors to represent them – using a corresponding number of votes. Everyone must bring a form of photographic identification to be able to vote.

Men charged with murder

Three men from Enfield have been charged with murder following a fatal stabbing at Primrose Hill last month.

On Tuesday, 7th April, 21-year-old Finbar Sullivan was fatally stabbed at the London tourist hotspot at around 6.40pm.

Oliuwadamilola Ogunyankinnu, aged 27 and of Southbury Road in Enfield; Alexis Bidace, aged 25 and of Fore Street in Angel Edmonton; and Ernest Boateng, aged 25 and of Keswick Drive in Bullsmoor; were all arrested and charged with Finbar's murder.

The three have all appeared in court but have yet to enter any pleas.

A provisional trial date has been set for April next year.

Khalid Abdulqadir, aged 18 and of Fellows Road in Camden, has also been charged with grievous bodily harm, violent disorder and possession of a knife.

The investigation is ongoing, with police continuing to ask anyone with relevant information to contact police on 101, quoting reference 6448/07Apr.

An anonymous report can be made via Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Body found in woods

The discovery of human remains in an Enfield woodland on Monday, 6th April is not being treated by police as suspicious.

The Metropolitan Police Service indicated the man was likely to have died four years ago and taken his own life.

The body was discovered in Brooke Wood, just off The Ridgeway near Botany Bay village, at around 12pm. It was accompanied with belongings containing ID, which enabled the police to identify the man, although his name has not been released.

A Met spokesperson said: "Officers were called to Brooke Wood, Enfield, following the discovery of suspected human remains.

"Officers attended. Enquiries continue to establish the circumstances but the matter is not believed to be suspicious at this stage.

"Anybody with information is urged to call 101, quoting reference 2788/06APR."



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 AT ENFIELD

Housing secretary insists Crews Hill businesses ‘will be supported’

Steve Reed visited Enfield in April but missed the chance to see the ‘new town’ site

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Housing Secretary Steve Reed insists he is “keen” to visit Crews Hill where a 21,000-home ‘new town’ is being planned – despite missing the chance to go there while dropping into Enfield for a photo opp last month.

Reed arrived in Enfield Wash on Thursday, 9th April to help publicise his government’s recent announcement that the area would benefit from a £20million cash injection as part of its ‘Pride in Place’ fund, with parts of Edmonton also named as one of the chosen areas to receive funding of £2m every year for a decade.

While visiting Enfield Wash, Reed met with Enfield Council leader Ergin Erbil, Enfield North MP Feryal Clark and many other local Labour politicians campaigning for the local election, who gathered for a photo opportunity in Hertford Road.

The *Dispatch* was invited to the event to speak to Reed about the Pride in Place funding but instead chose to use the ten minutes available to quiz the government’s housing chief on the new town at Crews Hill and ‘Chase Park’, which were named in March as among seven shortlisted sites where the construction of thousands of homes will be accelerated – with “spades in the ground” by 2029.

At Crews Hill and Chase Park – better known locally as Vicarage Farm – the new town proposal more than doubles the council’s own Local Plan target of building 9,200 homes on the Green Belt sites in the north-west of the borough.

One of many controversial aspects to the development is the fate of Crews Hill’s ‘golden mile’ of garden centres and other horticultural businesses – which include scores of family-run firms employing hundreds of local people – that will be forced to leave the area to make way for new homes.

So why did Reed not take the chance to visit Crews Hill and see the garden centres for himself?

“I’m not going there today, I’m going to a few other places, but I am keen to get there,” Reed told the *Dispatch* over a coffee at Best Cafe in Hertford Road.

“It is one of several areas that have been selected for a new town, the first wave of new towns since the post-war new towns, and it is an opportunity to rethink how we live together and what the communities of the future need to look like – it is very



Steve Reed (centre) visited Enfield Wash to promote the £20m Pride in Place funding his government has awarded the area exciting for Enfield that one of them is going to be here.”

But does Reed plan to visit Crews Hill and the other six new town sites at some point soon?

“I’d like to, if I can, I have probably got a bit of time.”

The *Dispatch* then asked Reed about the impact on local businesses.

“I am sure there are all sorts of changes that will need to happen. There will be some businesses that need to relocate but this new town will create many, many more opportunities for new businesses, new jobs for people, new start-ups – none of that is possible without a new town.”

“I know you are going to get some people will look at the negative aspects of it, but they are so outweighed by the positive aspects of it. Of course, businesses that are already there need to be supported.”

Local business owners have yet to see much evidence of this, however. Rod Thompson, owner of Thompsons of Crews Hill, said last month he had still not received any kind of communication from the council on the issue – and even said he was unaware of the government’s ongoing public consultation on its new towns programme.

Last year, barrister Matthew Reed KC (no relation) revealed the council would be issuing compulsory purchase orders to any local landowner at Crews Hill who refused to either sell up to housing developers or to move their business out of the area to enable new homes to be built.

Asked about this point at Best Cafe, Steve Reed said: “I am sure the council will be listening. It’s up to the council, not the secretary of state, to do that work. They can sit down with the businesses, they can talk to the businesses about how they can be relocated and operate somewhere else, but the opportunities here are what we should focus on.”

But can Reed provide assurance there won’t be a net loss of jobs across the new town area?

“There will be an increase of jobs because

that is what we are putting the new town in place for. Someone has got to build these new towns. There will be businesses in the new towns.”

The *Dispatch* asked Reed about local infrastructure, and whether promised improvements such as a new bus service for Crews Hill would be in place by the time the first new houses are built, starting in 2029.

“Well, it won’t be for me to decide that, that would be for TfL who will be engaging with the council and the MP. But absolutely we need to improve public transport.”

As the *Dispatch* was permitted one final question, Reed was informed that if the Crews Hill new town is constructed at the

same rate as the council’s flagship housing scheme, Meridian Water – where just 301 homes have been built in five years – the new town’s 21,000 homes would not be completed for another 350 years.

Does Reed therefore have confidence the council can successfully lead such a scheme?

“I have been so impressed by the quality of the council leader and his ambition for this area and the team he has around them and his cabinet,” Reed said.

“But we will work with this council to make sure there is appropriate governance to make sure there is the building rate required.”

Even if Enfield Conservatives – who have vowed to halt the new town – take control after the election on Thursday, 7th May?

“Well I hope that won’t happen, the Tories held Enfield back for 14 years, they cut its funding drastically and failed to fund the needs of the growing population.”

“This Labour government has given Enfield one of the biggest increases in funding in the country, we have put our money behind Enfield and we need a Labour council here to help realise its potential – the Tories don’t want to build homes.”

To take part in the government consultation on new towns before the deadline on Tuesday, 19th May:
Visit consult.communities.gov.uk/new-towns/new-towns-draft-programme-consultation

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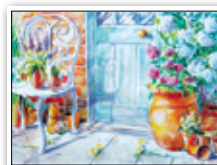
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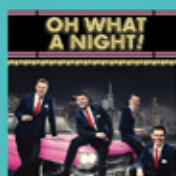


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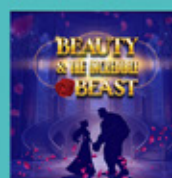
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LocalMotion Enfield Special Focus for M

Helping black men to open up

Jim Wasswa and Ruben Cabral speak to Courtney Brown, CEO of Father2Father and community leader, about the lack of support for black men and mental health

In a time where men are told that they can be vulnerable, it is vital to ask: is this truly the reality for men, especially for black men?

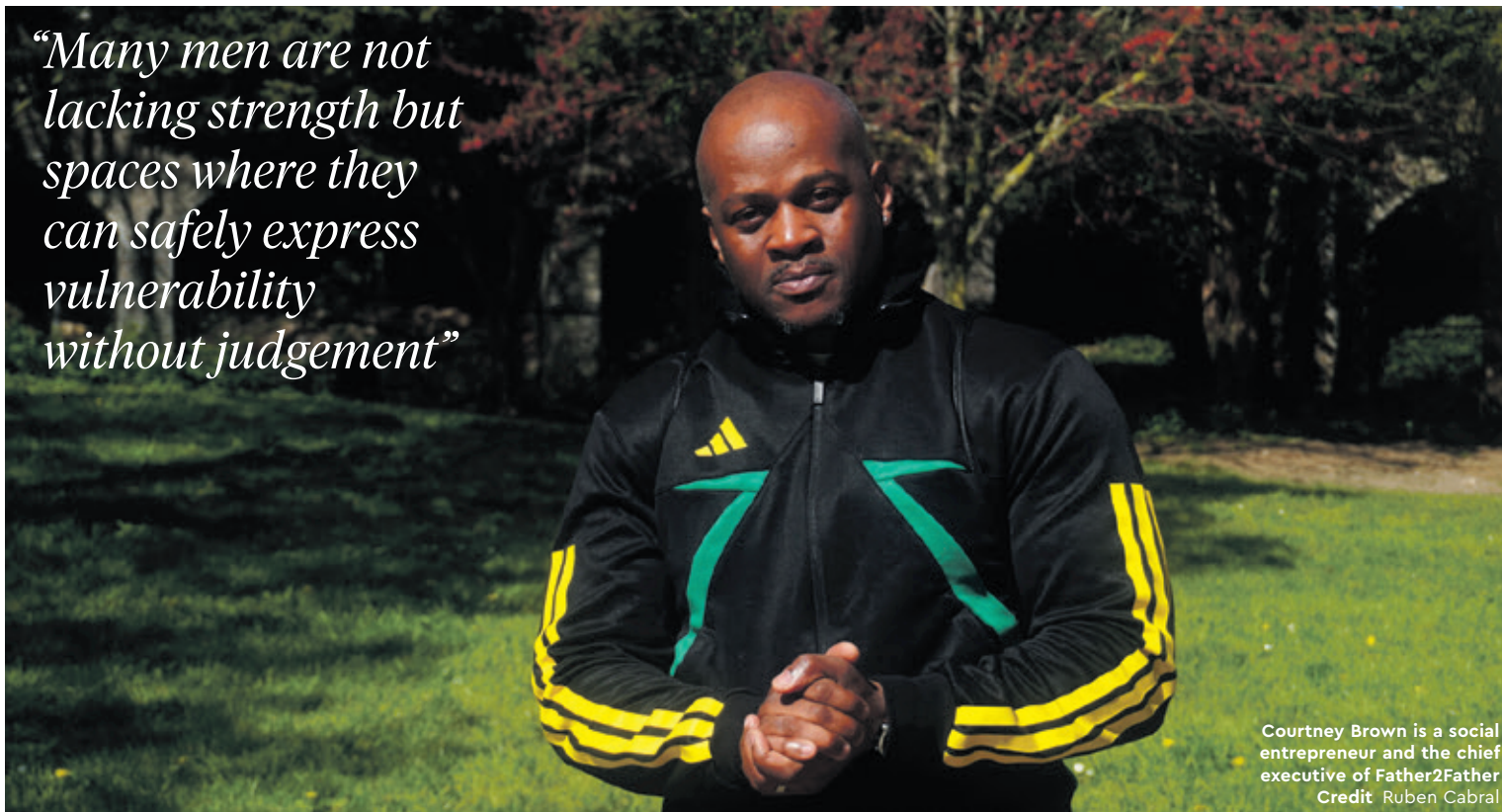
While conversations around mental health have become more open in recent years, there remains a significant gap in how support is accessed and experienced.

The stark truth is that black men are often overlooked in the early stages of mental health support, yet are disproportionately represented at the point of crisis. By the time support is offered, it is often too late, reactive rather than preventative, and rarely equipped to address the lived realities of their experiences.

This is where people within the community step in to bridge that gap. One of those individuals is Courtney Brown, chief executive of Father2Father. He is a social entrepreneur with skill sets in trauma-informed practice, expert by experience practice, restorative practice, mental health first aid and community advocacy.

Courtney's work is grounded in lived experience and a deep understanding of the

“Many men are not lacking strength but spaces where they can safely express vulnerability without judgement”



Courtney Brown is a social entrepreneur and the chief executive of Father2Father
Credit: Ruben Cabral

Sometimes...
it's good to talk.



needs within his community. When we had the opportunity to interview him, he spoke with pride about Edmonton, a place that holds deep meaning for him.

For Courtney, Edmonton represents community, identity and home. It is where his roots are grounded and where his purpose continues to grow. He also reflected on how the Enfield he grew up in had no social media and how its presence today has shaped identity and influence among younger generations.

Reflecting on his journey, he shared a time when he struggled with identity. He spoke openly about wearing different masks to navigate life, presenting himself through material success, such as living a champagne lifestyle with money, designer clothing and attention from women.

These were not simply lifestyle choices, but shields used to hide the pain of a young boy who wanted to be loved, understood and seen. His honesty reveals a deeper truth: many men are not lacking strength but spaces where they can safely express vulnerability without judgement.

This highlights the urgent need for intentional spaces where black men can connect,



ental Health Awareness Month In May

heal, reflect and speak openly; spaces where vulnerability is not seen as weakness, but as a pathway to growth.

In response to this need, an initiative is being introduced to the community: Men CHAT Too. Developed by Father2Father, it is an accredited counselling and healing programme designed to create exactly that kind of space.

So why Enfield, and why now? As a pilot initiative, there is no better place to begin than within the communities that shaped the very experiences it seeks to address. The programme will run over eleven sessions, covering key areas such as a basic introduction to counselling, mental wellbeing, fatherhood, healthy relationships, child development and personal development. These topics are carefully chosen to address areas where many men silently struggle.

At its core, the programme creates a culturally competent space, one that respects the unique social, cultural and emotional realities of black men. It offers an opportunity to process unresolved experiences from both adolescence and adulthood, supporting participants in becoming not only better individuals but stronger fathers, trauma informed practitioners and community advocates.

An additional strength of the programme lies in its accreditation in introductory counselling. This is not only about personal healing but also about building capacity within the community – by equipping men with foundational counselling skills and positive male role models. This creates a ripple effect where those who heal are able to can support others. This approach represents a shift from dependency to empowerment.

Courtney does not present himself as perfect. He speaks openly about experiencing an emotionally absent father and acknowledges that he has made some of the same mistakes. However, what sets him apart from his mistakes is his willingness to take accountability. He recognises the need for change and the need to heal himself if he wants to heal his household.

This pivotal moment shows that healing is a choice and growth is possible!

Ultimately, spaces like this are vital. Too often, black men move between work, home, and education systems where they are defined by what they do rather than who they are. Their humanity is overlooked, their emotions dismissed, and their struggles misunderstood. Men CHAT Too challenges that reality, creating a space where black men are recognised fully as individuals, fathers, sons and human beings.

For more information:
Visit father2father.co.uk

Rethinking mental health services

Elizabet Ekpenyong, a lived experience advisor for LocalMotion Enfield, on how person-centred treatment could help improve NHS treatment

The mental health treatment system is invaluable and the services provided are for the common good of communities across the country.

However, there are gaps in the system, and one of these is in the approach to provision of mental health services.

At the moment, the approach is based on defined pathways which service users have to follow, otherwise they risk being discharged back to their GP, and effectively being denied any form of therapeutic care.

These defined pathways work, for some, not for all. For example, group therapy may be good but some people have difficul-

ties speaking in a group. In the same way, cognitive behavioural therapy does not work for everyone, and some find alternative therapies, such as art, to be better suited to their needs.

The result is reluctant, or no, engagement with therapy by service users.

There is a need to adopt a different approach to mental health service delivery. Person-centred care focuses on the needs of the individual. It ensures that people's preferences, needs and values guide clinical decisions and provides care that is respectful of and responsive to them.

It argues, according to NHS England, that "health and wellbeing outcomes need to

be co-produced by individuals and members of the workforce working in partnership, with evidence suggesting that this provides better patient outcomes and costs less to health and care systems".

This begs the question, if there is evidence of person-centred care providing better patient outcomes, why is it not at the heart of mental health care?

If a person-centred approach were applied to mental health treatment, then service users' preferences would be taken on board in designing their treatment and care package.

There is a need to be intentional in addressing mental health treatment. At the forefront

Elisabet Ekpenyong Credit Kai Images



of service delivery should be the good of the service user, looking at the service user's values, preferences and needs.

There is no denying that this approach might make the initial on-boarding process longer, but the result will be engaged service users and better outcomes.

Living with hidden disabilities

Monique Fenton on how her physical and mental health conditions affect her daily life

Living with a hidden disability doesn't just affect our bodies – it can affect our mental health in ways that are often invisible to others.

On the outside, I may look fine. But beneath that, I am managing conditions including Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, fibromyalgia, postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome and widespread arthritis, which cause chronic pain, fatigue, and limitations that shape every part of my day.

There are times when I cannot leave the house, not because I don't want to, but because my body won't allow it. Over time, that leads to isolation – and isolation has a profound impact on mental wellbeing.

Alongside this, I live with depression, anxiety, complex post-traumatic stress disorder



and panic attacks. These don't exist separately from my physical health – they interact with it.

When my mental health is low, I can find it almost impos-

sible to do the very things that help support my physical wellbeing, such as going out for walks, exercise, preparing healthy meals, or even basic self-care. It becomes a vicious cycle

that is hard to break.

What makes this harder is that my disabilities cannot be seen. Even when I explain them, the lack of visible evidence can lead to disbelief or people simply forgetting. So, like many others, I mask; pushing through so I don't inconvenience others.

But carrying it all quietly takes its toll.

For Mental Health Awareness Month, I ask this: please don't assume that someone is 'fine' just because they look it. Believe people when they share their experiences. A little more understanding, patience and compassion can make a meaningful difference to those of us living with hidden disabilities.

Groups like Empowering Disability in Enfield (EDIE) are helping to create spaces where people with lived experience can feel seen, heard and less alone.

Get in touch with EDIE:
Email edie@localmotionenfield.org.uk

Locked gate mystifies local residents

The gate blocks Palmers Green residents from crossing the Pymmes Brook to reach local shops or the railway station

BY JADE LENNON

A mysterious locked gate is preventing residents in Palmers Green from accessing a local shortcut over a stream.

The gate blocks a small footbridge over Pymmes Brook, between Westminster Drive and Broomfield Avenue. It provides a shortcut to reach a row of shops on the North Circular or, in the other direction, to reach Palmers Green Station.

A sign on the gate states the bridge is “for use by members of Westminster Drive Residents’ Association only” but residents who previously had a key to the gate say the locks were changed last summer – and they don’t know why.

The part of Westminster Drive leading to the footbridge isn’t adopted by Enfield Council, and is privately owned by Fairview New Homes Ltd, which previously redeveloped the site. The company states that that “the residents’



The locked gate between Westminster Drive and Broomfield Avenue Credit Steven Adderley

association is responsible for the management and maintenance of the bridge as well as maintaining the small strip of land we own”.

The *Dispatch* attempted to reach Westminster Drive Residents’ Association by phone but received no response. There is no website or email address listed for the group.

Local resident Steven Adderley, who is not a member of the association, argues the arrangement doesn’t make sense and is unfair.

He said: “The problem seems to be that Enfield Council didn’t adopt the road when the new houses were built at the end of Westminster Drive, so this part of the road is effectively private property.

“This means that the residents’ association was able to install a gate without consulting other residents in the road, and can control who has access to keys.

“It’s a significant inconvenience for us, and there doesn’t seem to be a reason why other residents in the road should not be able to have keys as well.”

Planning permission for the gate was granted in June 2005, but the council’s planning portal offers no further information as to why the gate was requested.

Steven said he “has no idea” how some other residents obtained keys for the gate. He also expressed how inconvenient it is that only some residents have a key and others not.

The footpath has been included on Ordnance Survey maps since 1947, showing it was in use

decades prior to the installation of the gate, as paths must be used for a minimum of 20 years to be added to the map.

Steven therefore believes the locked gate represents “illegal blockage” which should be removed. He has called on the council to act to add the footbridge and path to its “definitive map” and added: “This also raises questions about private developers of new estates retaining ownership of the roads within them.

“Enfield Council may have wanted to avoid assuming the costs of maintenance of the new roads, but this has effectively privatised what should be public space. Had the extension of Westminster Drive been the public highway, the conditions for gaining permission to install a gate would have been stricter, and required more consultation.”

A council spokesperson said: “The council does not own or operate the gate. It is a privately owned, therefore the council will not be able to comment.”



Flooding at Whitewebbs Park in January 2021

Council wins funding to help combat flooding

More than £1m has been handed to the civic centre by the Environment Agency to support a variety of different schemes

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

More than £1million in funding has been secured by Enfield Council to deliver a series of flood alleviation projects across the borough.

The funding, confirmed by the Environment Agency for the upcoming 2026/27 financial year, will support a range of projects in both urban and rural areas.

The projects include natural flood management for Salmons Brook at Enfield Chase, a flood alleviation scheme in Bullsmoor where the Turkey Brook flows through, a new wetlands at Enfield Playing Fields, as well as sustainable drainage systems for Grange Park Primary, Highlands, De Bohun and Eversley schools.

The investment forms part of the council’s long-term strategy to reduce flood risk across the borough.

The funding has been made possible through partnership working between the council, Environment Agency and the Department for Education.

Sabri Ozaydin, the council’s cabinet member for environment and placemaking, said: “This significant investment is a major step forward in our work to protect Enfield residents from the increasing risks of flooding caused by climate change. We are proud to be working with partners to deliver innovative projects that not only reduce flood risk but also enhance our natural environment and create greener, healthier spaces for our communities.

“From wetlands and natural flood management schemes to sustainable drainage in schools, this programme reflects our long-term commitment to building a more resilient Enfield.”

Work on the projects is expected to progress throughout the year.

Enfield’s recycling rate continues to fall

Latest figures show the borough is still moving backwards on recycling

BY RICHARD CUBITT

Enfield’s household recycling rate is continuing to fall, the latest figures show.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs recently released its annual report into local authority waste collections, which shows that Enfield’s rate of household recycling in 2024/25 had fallen to 32.9%, down from 33% in 2023/24 and 34.2% in 2022/23.

This is despite Enfield Council’s own climate action plan promising that “Enfield will have a circular economy with increased recycling, composting, and waste used as a resource resulting in

overall waste reduction of 30% from our baseline by 2040”.

This plan has seemingly achieved little to improve recycling in recent years, as rates have stagnated – although they do remain slightly above the London average of 32.6%.

At one point Enfield had been the best performing borough within the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) area, but has now been overtaken by Waltham Forest.

NLWA, which co-ordinates waste disposal across Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Islington and Waltham Forest, has set a household recycling target of 50%.

But all these boroughs remain

a long way from achieving the target. NLWA’s own average recycling rate has fallen from 29.8% in 2023/24 to 28.5% in 2024/25, a much faster drop than across London as a whole.

In Enfield, the highest household recycling rate the borough has achieved was 39.1% in 2013/14.

Approached for a response, the council pointed out that the borough ranked 14th out of 32 London boroughs for recycling and that one of the main reasons for decreasing rates was because of an increase in contamination of recycling, where residents place the wrong items in bins.

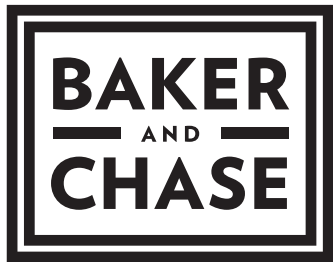
Efforts to boost recycling include a number of trials to increase food waste recycling, which improved food waste collection by 30% and halved contamination, according to the council. There is also now set to be a relaunch of recycling in flats, improving collection and



Depending on the result of the local election on 7th May the borough could soon see the return of weekly bin collections

introducing food waste services to all flats.

Under Labour six years ago, household bin collections in Enfield moved to fortnightly, but the Conservatives have promised to reintroduce weekly collections of both recycling and general waste should they win power after the election on 7th May. In response to the pledge, Labour have vowed to bring back weekly recycling rounds, but stopped short of also promising weekly general waste collections.



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Labour's message 'resonates with local people'

Council leader Ergin Erbil speaks to Joe Ives, Local Democracy Reporter, on his hopes of Enfield Labour winning a fifth successive local election

Council leader Ergin Erbil hopes to lead Enfield Labour to a fifth local election win in a row – but will need to buck both national and local trends to do so.

Labour have been in power at Enfield Civic Centre since 2010 but currently have a slender majority, with 35 seats out of the 63 available in total.

At the previous election in 2022, the local party lost eight seats to the Tories despite Labour rising in the polls nationally at the time. Three councillors have since left the Labour group following a range of scandals, including ex-mayor Mohammad Islam – found to have breached the council's code of conduct by bringing his office "into disrepute".

Responding to a question from political researchers YouGov last month, only 17% of people nationally said they'd vote Labour if there was a general election tomorrow. Ahead of the 2022 local elections that number was 38%.

Like Enfield Labour did in 2022, Cllr Erbil is hoping to buck the national trend again this year – this time in the opposite direction.

The Edmonton Green councillor has been leading the council since September 2024, following the departure of Nesil Caliskan, who was elected as a Labour MP for Barking earlier that year.

Cllr Erbil explains he's been engaged in local politics since he was a teenager and is keen to stay positive ahead of the election. "I am very confident but I am not complacent," he says, adding: "I know I'm going to win."

Enfield Labour, he claims, has a message that "resonates more with local people" than the one being put forward by the Conservative opposition.

But Cllr Erbil may struggle to win many votes from the borough's golfers and gardeners. He backs government proposals to build a 21,000-home 'new town' in the rural north-west of the borough which would be built across several hundred hectares of Green Belt land, including a golf course in Crews Hill and the area's famous 'golden mile' of garden centres.

Campaigners have said the proposals are vague, threaten nature and will displace businesses, especially the horticultural industry Crews Hill is known for.

"We have 7,000 people waiting for a council house," says Cllr Erbil, in defence of the plans. "We've got 3,000 people waiting for temporary accommodation.

Ergin Erbil has led the council since September 2024, succeeding Nesil Caliskan Credit Idris Emen



"We have seven golf courses in the borough – we just want to build on one of them."

The new town scheme, he argues, will create "thousands of jobs" and, with Labour, will give Enfield residents "first dibs" on new homes. The loss of Green Belt land, Cllr Erbil argues, will be offset by plans for new public green spaces.

"Listen, I'm 30 years old. I've got two baby girls. I've been to university. I followed the rules of life. I've got a good job and I can't afford to buy in my own neighbourhood.

"This shouldn't be the case, which is why we need to build genuinely affordable homes."

Cllr Erbil also believes that the council's other major housing project, Meridian Water, is "an effective scheme".

This is despite the council recently deciding to relinquish its role as master developer for the project, with only 301 of 10,000 planned homes having been built since construction began five years ago.

At the same time, the local authority has taken on nearly £500million of debt to finance land purchases and enabling work at Meridian Water.

The Labour leader blames "Tory failure" for rising costs in the building sector in recent years, which have affected the project. "We've built 300 – and we're going to build more," says Cllr Erbil.

Housing is a key issue for Enfield Labour.

In their manifesto they promise to create "dedicated enforcement of renters' rights" as well as to "cap HMOs and crack down on rogue landlords".

Labour's proposed hard line on houses in multiple occupation – where several people from separate households share cooking and washing facilities within the same property – may be tricky. The 2025/26 financial year saw the highest number of new HMO licence approvals in Enfield over the past five years.

Meanwhile, enforcement action on unapproved or unlicensed HMOs came under scrutiny recently, with mounting evidence that a former Brimsdown pub is now being used as an unauthorised HMO – despite the council launching an investigation last year.

"The record number of HMO applications should tell you that there is a massive demand for housing," says Cllr Erbil. "People need homes. People need a roof over their heads."

Asked how he plans to enforce his promised HMO cap, Cllr Erbil says his Labour administration would push the government "to bring in a policy to cap HMOs". Failing this, he claims Enfield Labour will "bake it into the Local Plan" – however, this major planning document is already in its final stages of approval, and does not currently include a cap.

Another recent HMO issue centres around one of Labour's own councillors, Mahym Bedekova. Cllr Bedekova remains the chair of the planning committee despite operating a HMO without planning

permission for more than two years. She eventually gained retrospective planning approval in March.

"Perception is very important, especially in politics," says Cllr Erbil. The LDRS asked the Labour leader why, given this belief, Cllr Bedekova remains in her post.

He responded by claiming Cllr Bedekova's name had been cleared in all investigations and that "under lodger laws she didn't actually do anything wrong". He also accused the *Dispatch* of running "a very sensationalist, clickbait article" in reporting the issue.

Cllr Erbil himself is no stranger to creating a storm online. In February he published a misleading video on social media falsely claiming that Crews Hill Golf Club is not within the Green Belt, only has 20 members and is of negligible importance to wildlife.

This prompted a huge backlash, including from the golf club, which pointed out 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.

Cllr Erbil eventually deleted the controversial post.

The council leader is still committed to his original position, however. Instead of following the legal definition of Green Belt land he, instead, appears set on defining it as what he thinks "ordinary working people" instinctively think of when considering the term. For Cllr Erbil, this is "lush woodland" and easily-accessible "genuine green space".

Cllr Erbil added: "The inaccessible fields, the golf courses, the garden centres, and the car parks that are currently labelled Green Belt, I would argue that they're not genuine Green Belt because they don't really benefit the way we would imagine them benefiting woodlands, forests and wildlife."

The council leader may not be concerned about building on the Green Belt, but he does have clear concerns about Green votes.

"Anyone considering Green, if they vote Green, they're going to get blue. Anyone considering voting Lib Dem or independent, they're going to get blue, they're going to get Tory," warns Cllr Erbil.

"This is a two-horse race between us and the Conservatives," he adds.

Voting Labour, Cllr Erbil argues, is the only way of ensuring Enfield will have a council that will invest in services and programmes that benefit working people and their families.

Tories vow to halt ‘new town’ if they win power

Conservative group leader Alessandro Georgiou speaks to Joe Ives, Local Democracy Reporter, about his plans for the council should the party win power

Opposition leader Alessandro Georgiou is eyeing up the top job at Enfield Civic Centre as the Conservatives look to return to power in the borough for the first time in 16 years.

Cllr Georgiou has been a councillor in Enfield since 2014 and, after the 2022 local election, took over as leader of the local Tory group.

As both the leader of Enfield Conservatives and a member of the London Assembly, to which he was elected in 2024, Cllr Georgiou is already a full-time politician.

But he will have even more work on his hands should his party win a majority on Thursday, 7th May. Even if time and energy is not an issue, Cllr Georgiou will have to navigate the local authority’s finances.

Enfield Council is now almost £1.5 billion in debt. However, the Conservative manifesto still promises, among other things, to hire 25 additional antisocial behaviour officers in a bid to “crush illegal business activity” and create safer streets, bring back weekly bin collections, deliver an additional 200 school places for children with special educational needs and disabilities (Send), and “eradicate pot-holes” across the borough.

All of which will cost a lot of money.

In addition, there could be even more spending needed to fight potential legal battles, as Cllr Georgiou’s Tory administration may face challenges to some of its policies.

These include ending a so-called “war on the driver” by abolishing two low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) installed by the current Labour administration. Tower Hamlets Council has tried since 2022 to do the same, but failed after losing a battle in court with campaigners wanting to keep them.

Cllr Georgiou maintains that his party’s manifesto promises are “fully costed” but has not published the figures.

In March, Transport for London (TfL) warned if the Conservatives follow through with their promise to remove the Hertford Road cycle lanes in the east of the borough, the council would have to repay the money TfL gave the local authority to install them – reported to be at least £8million.

But this sum has not entered into the Conservative group’s budgetary equation,

Alessandro Georgiou wants to become the first Conservative leader of Enfield Council since Michael Rye, who happens to now be his deputy
Credit GLA



Cllr Georgiou says. The cycle lane’s removal, he claims, would cost much less – and if TfL ask for their money back “I would say ‘see you in court’”.

Enfield Conservatives are campaigning on a platform of “governance, accountability, transparency and fiscal responsibility”, which includes a proposed inquiry into the fiscal decision-making of the Labour administration since 2010.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service asked Cllr Georgiou why, given his commitment to transparency, he was unwilling to give further details on how the Conservatives would pay for their election promises.

“I’m not in administration right now, I’m in campaign mode,” he says, adding that he didn’t want the “dodgy” Labour competition to steal his party’s ideas before the election.

The Conservatives certainly won’t be stealing Labour’s plans to support the government’s ‘new town’ proposals at Crews Hill.

Cllr Georgiou says his party would do “everything possible” to stop the 21,000-home development project if they win power in May. The proposals would mean the forced closure of many businesses in Crews Hill and the widescale development of Green Belt land in the north-west of the borough.

“Crews Hill,” he says, “is an integral part

of Enfield”.

The Conservative leader blames what he sees as “nasty developers” and a “useless Labour government” – as well as London mayor Sir Sadiq Khan and the Labour-run council – for trying to sell a false narrative of the area being run down. “It’s a vibrant hub,” insists Cllr Georgiou.

The Cockfosters councillor is personally invested in keeping garden centres open, too. “My wife takes the piss out of me,” he jokes, “but I love my garden”.

As for the Green Belt, Cllr Georgiou accuses Labour of being “nasty hypocrites” for advocating for the plans while also declaring a ‘climate emergency’. For him, “it’s about protecting the environment, it’s about protecting jobs – and it’s about protecting Enfield’s heritage”.

Enfield Conservatives, Cllr Georgiou says, would immediately withdraw the council’s ‘expression of interest’ in the new town scheme should they be elected in May – a move which could be difficult to implement if the government or mayor of London take over planning control, via the creation of a development corporation.

When challenged on this the Tory leader responded, saying: “If the government and Sadiq Khan want to play silly buggers we will see them in court all along the way.”

A protracted legal battle could be expensive here, too. Cllr Georgiou claims he is prepared to pay for this. If elected, he says Enfield Conservatives “will have a mandate to protect those sites”.

Regardless of what happens on polling day,

Cllr Georgiou believes “there’s no way shovels go in the ground by next parliament”.

A recent national poll by YouGov found that, right now, 24% of voters nationally would support Reform UK at a general election, compared to 19% for the Conservatives. Nevertheless, Cllr Georgiou says he is not concerned about Nigel Farage’s party.

“I’ll be entirely honest with you: I thought in this campaign we would find quite a bit of Reform [voters] given the national polling. We’ve found next to none. They won’t be winning a single seat in this election – I’m fairly confident on that.”

Reform, he says, is a “one-man band” for Farage as well as “a receptacle for failed Tories”.

Yet his party’s manifesto promise on civic flags would likely appeal to some Reform voters. The Tories are pledging to “respect national and local identity” by ensuring only the “Union, St George and Enfield Beast flags” are flown from council buildings.

Questioned on this, Cllr Georgiou admits to an exception for the Armed Forces Day flag, to commemorate the annual event. “We’re not going to be that prescriptive in that sense,” he says.

Would he be willing to make a similar exception to celebrate the LGBTQ+ community?

Cllr Georgiou says, in principle, he wouldn’t be against a Pride flag going up temporarily. The Conservative leader adds he is “proud” to have openly gay councillors and candidates.

His view on transgender recognition is not quite as resounding.

“I believe you are what you are born as,” Cllr Georgiou says. “Having said that, if ever the day came where I had a Conservative councillor that wanted to transition, let’s say, from being a man to a woman, and wanted me to call them by their new name, I’d gladly do it – because that’s a matter of respect.”

“It’s not a matter of my personal judgement on whether they’ve made the right decision.”

While sparring with the opposition about the council’s budget earlier this year, Cllr Georgiou made a reference to *50 Ways to Leave Your Lover* by Paul Simon. Wrapping up, the LDRS asked Cllr Georgiou about his music taste.

George Michael is the artist the Tory leader listens to in the car with his wife. “What we dance to,” he adds, is Whitney Houston’s *I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me)*, because it is the first song they danced to when they started dating.

Independent group aiming to oust Ergin Erbil

Enfield Community Independents are pushing hard to win in Edmonton

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield Community Independents (ECI) – a group of left-wing activists closely aligned to Jeremy Corbyn’s Your Party – are very clear on their key objective for the local election.

“We want to remove the leader of the council [Ergin Erbil] from Edmonton Green ward,” explains Khalid Sadur, an accountant who founded ECI two years ago.

“This is our number one target, we are absolutely pushing it and are committed to this – we are spending a huge amount of resources and a lot of time in Edmonton Green.”

Referencing the famous toppling of a Conservative cabinet minister in Enfield Southgate nearly 30 years ago, Sadur adds: “We want

to have that Portillo moment. We want that image of the leader not being able to stand because he has lost his seat.

“The dissatisfaction with Labour is widespread. What better way to show that than removing the council leader?”

But Sadur then clarifies: “I don’t want this to be a personal campaign, we are not indulging in personal attacks [...] we are targeting the leader as he is a figurehead of Enfield Labour.”

And what is it about Enfield Labour that Sadur dislikes? “There is one word here – incompetence. Incompetence in running the administration.”

Sadur moved to Enfield in 1978 and has lived in the borough ever since, mainly in Upper Edmonton, the ward where he’s standing. But how did he end up launching ECI?

“We want to remove the leader of the council from Edmonton Green”

“I reached a stage, certainly before the general election last year, where it was a question of the tipping point being reached.

“It really hit home at that election. The two main parties – Labour and the Tories – were effectively the same, and a lot of people felt disenfranchised. I wasn’t going to vote in 2024 because there was nothing to vote for. But we made a decision to do something different, and that’s how we



Enfield Community Independents on the campaign trail [ECI] were born.

“We wanted to provide a real alternative for people who want to be grounded in the community and provide a voice for those people.”

As well as ousting Cllr Erbil, and potentially electing enough councillors to hold the balance of power, Sadur wants more people involved with local politics. “I want community engagement, I want this campaign to bring people in so they feel they have a say,” he explains.

“Enfield Council touches a lot of our lives, not just the rubbish but the schools, Send [special needs] provision, social care, housing, so we want this campaign to be something everyone gets involved in – so

people understand the importance of it. “Community engagement is massive for us, and if it results in a higher turnout then we have done our job.”

In terms of policies, ECI’s platform is similar to that of the Green Party, but perhaps with a slightly tougher line on low-traffic neighbourhoods, promising a “comprehensive review” of their effectiveness and being “led by the evidence”.

Sadur also describes disabled people losing council tax support in 2023 as “horrendous” and says: “We have to look after our vulnerable people. It can’t be the case that we can’t afford to look after them. So we will look to bring the council tax support back for disabled people.

“Labour is blaming the Tories for those cuts – but ultimately they chose where the cuts were made.”

ECI aren’t standing in every ward, but have formed a pact with the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition. Between them, they will cover 17 out of 25 wards.

In terms of the relationship with Your Party, Sadur says: “Your Party is officially endorsing local community independent groups like ECI. We are campaigning with Your Party, we will be sharing communications with Your Party – so people will have no misconceptions on where we stand.”

Reform want to play ‘important role’ in Enfield

Local branch chair Stephen Bird says Reform have got their own “Doge team”

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Reform UK are flying high in the polls – and hoping to now win their first councillors in Enfield.

Nigel Farage’s right-wing party won control of a swathe of councils last year and Stephen Bird, chair of Reform’s Enfield branch, thinks they can play an important role here as well.

Asked what would represent success for Reform on 7th May, Bird, a former Enfield Grammar School pupil, told the *Dispatch*: “Getting enough councillors so we have part or full control.”

Would Reform consider forming a coalition with the Conservatives if no party won an overall majority? “The official line is no deal with the Tories [...] but if we can get into a position to implement our policies we would be prepared to compromise.”

Previously both a Labour and Conservative voter, Bird became more active in politics in the run-up to the last general election. “I was just unhappy about the way

the country was going,” he explains. “The Conservatives don’t really represent anything any more and I looked at Labour and I thought they weren’t my sort of party.”

Bird then says something surprising: “I am quite centrist in my views – a lot of people are.”

Reform have built their recent success around a hardline stance on “uncontrolled” immigration, linking the issue – as they see it – to a general economic and social malaise in the UK.

While Bird admits this was what drew



Local Reform UK candidates pictured in Crews Hill

him to the party, Reform’s local election leaflets do not mention immigration. Why is that? “We are a local borough and we don’t have control of that so there is no point,” he replies, simply.

As for the policies Reform’s local campaign does mention, there are pledges to “protect our green spaces” and “safeguard Enfield from crime”. Others include making roads “fit for purpose” by fixing potholes and prioritising parking, supporting the reintroduction of weekly bin collections and a vow to “regenerate our high streets” with a greater range of shops and more support for businesses.

However, a Conservative leaflet has claimed Reform “cannot be trusted” on the Green Belt, pointing to a recent London Assembly vote. “The Tories have taken that one vote and claimed something – but it is lies. They are misleading the electorate by saying because one person in Reform said one thing it can be expanded to Enfield and mean another thing.”

In terms of council spending, Bird is taking inspiration from Elon Musk’s ‘Department of Government Efficiency’, known commonly as ‘Doge’. At Enfield Civic

Centre, Bird says Reform would use a “Doge dashboard” to find savings.

“We have got our own Doge team. We are going through the data, we have got lovely dashboards. One example is, they have got different departments that have

“We are going through the data, we have got lovely dashboards”

contracts with different companies to do the same thing – it’s duplication.

“We will identify the waste. There’s spending on taxi services, translation services, professional services, they are all very

high. By comparing spending to other boroughs, you can see where a council is spending three or four times more on something.”

Bird insists “council tax rises are not inevitable” but that “unfortunately there is also a huge amount of debt that has to be paid off”, explaining why Reform has not pledged to freeze tax, even if it is still an aim.

Asked where Reform might perform most strongly in Enfield, Bird says polling data shows they are “either first or a very close second” across the borough. Curiously, given it is a Tory area at present, Bird himself is standing in Whitewebbs ward.

Greens claim they represent ‘real change’

Katie Knight discusses how the party could spring a “surprise” in Enfield

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

The Greens have been a mainstay of British politics for decades – but never have they enjoyed a bigger wave of popularity than under the leadership of Zack Polanski.

Could the Greens now be on course to cause an upset in Enfield, as they recently did in a Manchester by-election?

Katie Knight, who is standing for the party in Southgate where the Greens are campaigning hardest, believes they can do well. “If we can win in Southgate and also get a spread of other surprise hopefuls, it would be enough for a strong voice on the council,” she says.

“Just having a Green voice in the conversation really changes things. I think some people have discounted the outer London boroughs – Hackney and Islington [in inner London] have done amazing – but maybe some people have been

sleeping on Enfield a bit.

“The mood in the air is that people want change. We are really offering that. I think the difference is, even speaking to friends and family [previously] they would say a Green vote is a waste, but it doesn’t hold any more, it is not a wasted vote.

“We have a fantastic group of MPs and there is a surge of councillors across the country – there is a London Green wave.”

While Polanski has described himself as an “eco populist”, Knight says that, regardless of who leads the party nationally, “the important thing with the Greens is that policy is directed by the members, so it is not coming down from the executive”.

On environmental issues, it’s no surprise to hear Greens defend cycle lanes and low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), as well as opposing building on the Green Belt.

But Knight says that local voices continue to be important when it comes to LTNs. “I like what the Greens in Hackney are doing,

which is they recognise that some of the LTNs have been quite controversial.

“They have said it is still the best overall approach but have recognised it is controversial and taken it all into consultation with wider measures to make sure no-one is adversely affected, because it should benefit everyone.”

Knight, who works as a doctor in the NHS, recognises there are similarities between Green policies and those put forward by Enfield Community Independents (ECI), a local left-wing alternative. But the Greens ultimately decided against any kind of electoral pact with ECI because they “want to stand in every ward” and give everyone a chance to vote Green.



Enfield Green Party’s candidates in Southgate, from left; Charith Gunawardena, Katie Knight and Meraaj Sadath

On Enfield Labour’s record, Knight says the key impression voters have is that they “don’t feel listened to”, particularly on the Green Belt.

How would the Greens tackle the housing crisis?

“On a wider scale in London we know a lot of property is bought by foreign investors rather than local people,” says Knight. “A lot of chickens are now coming home to roost after selling off all the council housing – ‘Right to Buy’ has been a disaster. Some boroughs are now proposing buy-backs on what they should have owned all along.”

If no party wins overall control on 7th May, would the Greens consider entering a coalition?

“For the Greens, collaboration is in our blood, it is what we like to do, so we would work with anybody who puts forward and develops policies that are good for local people. And we do listen to people. It is not about making pacts or alliances but working collaboratively.”

Would that include the Tories?

“If the Tories want to rip out cycle lanes [we wouldn’t agree] but that doesn’t mean we couldn’t find common ground with them elsewhere, like protecting Whitewebbs and the Green Belt.”

Lib Dems hoping to make local breakthrough

Tim Martin criticises Labour “complacency” and vows not to take people for granted

BY JAMES CRACKNELL



Local Lib Dem activists campaigning in Enfield Town

Enfield Liberal Democrats are promising “not to take your vote for granted” and continue listening to the concerns of local residents regardless of the outcome of next month’s election.

While the Lib Dems do not currently have a presence at Enfield Civic Centre, they have enjoyed success nationally in

recent years, seeing a record number of MPs elected to Westminster in 2024.

Speaking to the *Dispatch* ahead of May’s poll, local party chair Tim Martin accuses Enfield Labour of becoming “complacent” and not listening to the views of residents.

“The number one thing talking to people about Labour is a sense of complacency,” he says. “Even if they agree with Labour on many of the principle points, they don’t feel that Labour is responding to them and their vote is taken for granted.”

The Lib Dems currently control three London borough councils, all in the south-west of the capital, while they also have pockets of strong support in other places – including Crouch End and Muswell Hill in Haringey. So could the party make a breakthrough in Enfield?

“I’m not going to put any numbers on it, but we want to get some councillors to demonstrate the difference of having a Lib Dem councillor,” says Martin, who will be standing in Whitewebbs ward. “We are engaged locally, we do talk to people and

understand their needs and respond to them – and we are not complacent.”

Interestingly, Martin’s route into politics came via Rory Stewart, the former Conservative minister now better known as a podcaster. Stewart fought a short-lived bid to become London mayor, as an independent, after quitting the Tories during the notorious Brexit wars of 2019. Martin campaigned for Stewart during his brief mayoral campaign.

“I have always been quite political and had opinions on how things should be done but it took me a while to find a party I was at home with,” admits Martin. “Since getting involved with the Lib Dems locally I have found people really working hard who care about this stuff, door-knocking every weekend – they are a good bunch of people to work with.”

The Enfield Lib Dem manifesto emphasises democratic engagement, talking of “fostering a democratic culture in our communities” through open meetings where residents can “put forward topics of concern”.

At Lib Dem-run Sutton Council, a committee system of governance aims to

resolve differences amicably rather than forcing decisions through at the cabinet level. This is a system Martin wants to see in Enfield.

“I think it is an example of something that doesn’t need to cost much but will change people’s whole experience of the council,” he says. “The committee structure shows how it could be different, by giving more voice to all the parties that

make up the council.

“It is more balanced for different opinions, rather than giving all the power to one party.”

In terms of policies, Enfield Lib Dems want to ensure the Crews Hill new town, if it does go ahead, is “not driven by profit but by people” and that local concerns around traffic, services and infrastructure are “balanced” with the need for more homes – but building on the Green Belt should be a “last resort”.

Martin, who used to work for Metaswitch in Enfield but now works in the City, adds: “There are big challenges and there are trade-offs and we believe in being honest about that. I personally don’t feel Labour has been clear about that and have not communicated to people.”

“People don’t feel that Labour is responding to them”

Credit Pavol Stugel via Unsplash



Education trust wins bid to run new special needs school

The Meadows School is planned to be built on a council-owned car park in Enfield Town

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

An education trust has been named as the winning bidder to run a new special needs school set to open in the centre of Enfield Town.

Following approval from the Department for Education (DfE), The Meadows School will be run by Search Education Trust, which will provide specialised education and tailored support to 96 children with complex needs aged from four to eleven years.

Search Education Trust, established in 2013, runs two existing special schools in Haringey. Heartlands High School in Wood Green and The Grove School in Tottenham are rated 'good' and

'outstanding' by education watchdog Ofsted, respectively.

The Meadows School will operate as a 'free' school, a type of state-funded school that is independent of local authority control.

It will be built at Portcullis Lodge Car Park, just off Silver Street in Enfield Town. The site was first identified four years ago by Enfield Council as it was deemed to be no longer needed.

DfE announced two years ago that it would fund construction of the school at a cost of £12.9million.

At around the same time, it was reported the council's special educational needs and disabilities (Send) service was receiving 700 requests for education, health and care plans (EHCPs) every year, the highest number in London, after demand

had doubled in just five years.

EHCPs are legal documents outlining how a child's special needs should be handled by teachers.

According to Search Education Trust, The Meadows School will "offer a range of subjects and learning experiences to cater to the diverse needs and interests of its children, so every lesson remains fun and exciting".

Staff will also be "highly trained to work collaboratively and deliver personalised support" and focused on "supporting children's social and emotional wellbeing, helping them to form positive relationships and become more independent".

Elen Roberts, the trust's interim chief executive, said: "We are very privileged to be given the opportunity to open this school.

"Our team has the expertise, experience, and passion to ensure that this new provision will be excellent for the young people of Enfield. We would like to extend our thanks to the Department for Education and Enfield Council for their unwavering support thus far. We look forward to building strong partnerships across the borough to support our ongoing success."

Abdul Abdullahi, the council's cabinet member for children's services, said: "As a council, we recognise the increasing need for Send provision. Therefore, this announcement is a huge win for our children with complex needs in Enfield.

"Our vision is for all our children and young people to have high aspirations and to achieve positive outcomes regardless of their background and abilities."

Cllr Abdullahi added that Search Education Trust would "deliver exceptional educational provision and create an inclusive, stimulating and supportive environment that will help each child to reach their full potential".

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark has also welcomed the news and said: "The Meadows has the potential to make a real difference by creating much-needed specialist places here in Enfield, and I know this will give hope to many parents who have been waiting far too long for greater certainty."

Work will begin in the coming months to develop designs and a construction programme for the new school. It had previously been stated that the school would open in 2027, but that now seems highly improbable given that no designs for it have yet been drawn up.

Biggest-ever NHS care board now serving Enfield

A second merger in just four years has led to the creation of single body planning primary care for 13 boroughs and 4.5 million people

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

England's largest NHS integrated care board serving 4.5million people across 13 London boroughs has officially been launched – in an effort to streamline services and reduce costs.

The new NHS West and North London Integrated Care Board (WNL ICB) was formally launched during its inaugural meeting on Wednesday, 1st April, following decisions made last year by the former North Central London and North West London ICBs to merge.

The enlarged ICB is now responsible for planning around £12billion of spending every year on NHS primary care services across Barnet, Brent, Camden, Ealing, Enfield, Hammersmith and Fulham, Haringey, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Islington, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster boroughs.

The new WNL ICB claimed the merger will allow for an increased focus on "strategic" investment and commissioning decisions "to shape long-term redesign of services and help local people live healthier, longer lives".

It further said the creation of the new ICB "follows months of detailed and complex work by colleagues across both organisations" including "large scale" consultations as well as voluntary redundancy schemes.

Speaking at the meeting, the new care board's interim CEO Katie Fisher said it had been an "impossibly difficult year" for many ICB staff, both locally and nationally. She added: "We're right at the sharp end of that now."

Regarding the redundancies

happening as a result of the merger, Fisher said: "We have many, many colleagues who we are starting to say goodbye to through voluntary redundancy processes.

"We have a lot more staff who will be leaving at the end of April and then the remainder of those staff are absolutely going through processes of applying for jobs and understanding what their personal futures are."

Fisher also said it was key the redundancies would be done with "kindness" and "compassion" and that "whatever individual outcomes are for people that they can hold their heads up high with dignity, proud of the enormous contribution they've made to their communities and to the NHS over many, many decades and years of service."

Until four years ago, each London borough had its own clinical commissioning group led by GPs, but these were replaced by



Enfield once had its own clinical commissioning group but is now part of a 13-borough NHS care board

ICBs covering large groups of boroughs in 2022, before the latest merger of local NHS bodies affecting north and west London was agreed last year.

In a further statement Mike Bell, chair of the new WNL ICB, said that while the merger "marks a significant milestone" it is "not a point of completion".

"The new ICB is standing up in a context of national reform and significant cost reduction," said Bell.

"We did not choose the scale or pace of change required, but we have taken responsibility for responding in a way that protects our ability to lead, partner and deliver."

Bell added: "It's a real challenge, but one we must rise to, and I believe we can."

Published 24th April 2026

Goods Vehicle Operator's Licence

Flower Freight Ltd of Pinetops, Theobalds Park Road, Crews Hill, Enfield EN2 9BH is applying change an existing licence as follows:

To keep an extra 5 goods vehicles and 2 trailers at the operating centre at Pinetops, Theobalds Park Road, Crews Hill, Enfield EN2 9BH

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centres who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected, should make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at Quarry House, Quarry Hill, Leeds, LS2 7UE stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice.

Representors must at the same time send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the address given at the top of this notice.

A Guide to Making Representations is available at www.gov.uk/object-hgv-operator-licence.

LICENSING ACT 2003

Notice of Application for a New Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that OSMAN MURAT has applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Enfield for a Premises Licence to permit:

- Sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises:
Mon to Thu: 10:00–00:00 | Fri to Sat: 10:00–02:00 | Sun: 10:00–00:00
- Recorded music (indoors):
Mon to Sun: 10:00–23:00
- Live music (indoors):
Fri to Sat: 18:00–02:00
- Late night refreshments (indoors):
Mon to Thu: 23:00–00:00 | Fri to Sat: 23:00–02:00 | Sun: 23:00–00:00
- For the premises DOSTLAR OCAKBASI situated at 307–309 HERTFORD ROAD, LONDON N9 7ET

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: 19 May 2026.

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: 24th day of April 2026

LICENSING ACT 2003

Notice of Application for a New Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that MYUZHDET MUHAMER GYULYUSTAN has applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Enfield for a Premises Licence to permit:

- Supply of alcohol by retail consumption on and off the premises, Regulated entertainment; Live music and Recorded music including Bank holidays and Public holidays for the premises Claud W Dennis Coffee situated at 3 Chase Side, London N14 5BP

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: 13/05/2026

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: 15th day of April 2026
Billimway: 07772 594087

LICENSING ACT 2003

Notice of Application for a New Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that TEO TH LTD has applied to the Licensing Authority of London Borough of Enfield for a Premises Licence to permit:

- Sale of alcohol and hot food on premises: Monday to Saturday, 11:00–00:00 and Sunday, 12:00–23:30.
- Late night refreshments on premises: Monday to Sunday, 23:00–00:00.
- Music in the form of Karaoke: Monday to Saturday, 18:00–00:00 and Sunday, 16:30–22:30.
- For the premises: Castello D'Argonto situated at 112 High Street, Enfield EN2 4ES

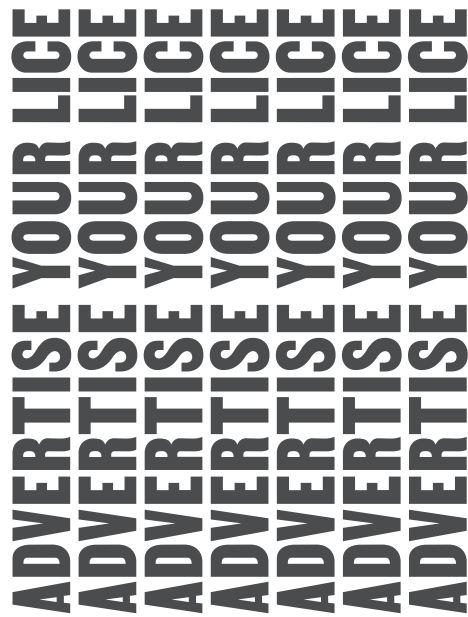
The public register where applications are available to be viewed by members of the public can be accessed online by visiting <https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/business-and-licensing/> and following the link to the Licensing Register. Email licensing@enfield.gov.uk to request a copy of the application 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: 20/06/2026

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: 22nd day of April 2026



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Supporting grassroots filmmaking in Enfield and beyond

David Williamson from Talkies Community Cinema on how a new awards programme offers a platform for filmmakers to showcase their work

A still from indie flick *Scallywags*, directed by Nenda Neururer



A new chapter in grassroots filmmaking is set to begin with the launch of the Talkies Short Film Awards – building on 14 years of dedicated support for emerging film talent by Talkies Community Cinema.

Since our founding in 2012, Talkies Community Cinema has established itself as a volunteer-led, not-for-profit cinema with a clear mission: to champion independent film and create meaningful opportunities for early-career filmmakers.

Through our acclaimed short film commissions, mentorship programmes and community screenings, Talkies has supported dozens of new voices, commissioning nearly 40 short films to date and reinvesting income directly back into talent development.

Our new Talkies Short Film Awards represent a natural evolution of this work. Designed to celebrate outstanding short films made in recent years, the awards create a platform for filmmakers to showcase

“In an increasingly competitive funding landscape, early-career filmmakers often face barriers to entry”

their work to live audiences, gain recognition from industry-informed judges, and connect with a growing creative community.

Over the past 14 years, Talkies has gone far beyond simple exhibition. Its approach combines direct funding through cash commissions to support production, mentorship from industry professionals to guide filmmakers through script development and production, and practical local support including access to locations, audiences and production assistance.

It also provides public screening opportunities, giving filmmakers a vital platform to share their work. This model reflects a wider understanding across the UK film

sector that short films are a crucial training ground where filmmakers develop skills, experiment creatively and build the foundations for future careers.

While our commissions have focused on enabling films to be made, Talkies Short Film Awards extend that journey by recognising excellence, rewarding achievement and helping films reach wider audiences.

Selected films will be screened as part of a dedicated awards event, with prizes awarded both by a judging panel of Talkies volunteers and through an audience vote, reinforcing our community-led ethos and commitment to accessible cinema.

In an increasingly competitive funding landscape, early-career filmmakers often face barriers to entry. Initiatives like these provide an essential stepping stone, offering not just financial support but also the confidence, networks and visibility needed to progress.

By combining commissioning, mentoring and now formal recognition through the Talkies Short Film Awards, we can continue to play a vital role in nurturing new voices and stories – many rooted in the rich and diverse communities of North London.

Talkies Short Film Awards reaffirm our founding belief that great filmmaking talent can emerge from anywhere, and that local, community-led initiatives can have a lasting impact on the national creative landscape.

As the awards launch, we are inviting filmmakers, audiences and supporters alike to be part of the next phase, celebrating bold storytelling, fresh perspectives and the filmmakers of tomorrow.

The launch of Talkies Short Film Awards is taking place on Saturday, 23rd May at Waterhouse Hall Theatre in Winchmore Hill. To book tickets for £6.50:

Visit talkies.org.uk

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Southgate's cottage gastro pub makes a welcome return

Chalk Stream trout



Neil Littman visits a newly refurbished and reopened The Woodman

Few places have received as much local fanfare as newly-reopened The Woodman Pub in Southgate.

I visited The Woodman several years ago when it was serving real ales and 'pub grub'. Its popularity was evident, but like many long-established places in that sector, the pandemic hit hard, and it closed and reopened a couple of times.

The pub then sat empty for a couple of years and began to look very neglected. I was concerned it might have been intended for redevelopment or worse, demolition. Fortunately, it reopened in February this year, reflecting the major effort that has gone into making this potentially one of the best new places to eat and drink in Enfield.

In a good location on Bourne Hill near Grovelands Park, The Woodman is a historic pub first established in 1868, created from two 18th Century cottages, and was reputed to have one of England's smallest bars. Originally a quiet rural spot, it was licensed by a retired police officer, Henry Wale.

The extremely small, intimate front bar has now been moved to the back of the pub, but the building still retains its low-

beamed rooms and an intimate, cosy atmosphere reminiscent of its cottage origins. Since 2024, The Woodman has been owned by Heartwood Inns, part of a group which includes the Brasserie Blanc chain. The company's investment offers a contrast between original features and modern dining, with an elegant and stylish eating area.

My first visit to the reopened pub was on a Monday evening in February with two friends. First impressions were very good, and it was surprisingly busy during what is a normally quiet time of the year. A lot of thought has gone into the menu – this place takes food seriously and has some surprises. There is an intention to make customers return and build a good reputation.

Our starters included mushroom tartine with poached egg and truffle oil, an outstanding twice-baked cheese soufflé with a cheddar sauce (a classic dish that showed off the skills in the kitchen) plus crab bites. For mains, we ordered roasted pheasant with pumpkin and girolles, rainbow trout and a chicken leek pie with mash potato. There was even a side of creamed spinach, which we probably didn't need!

The mustard sauce with the chicken pie was a bit overpowering and the dauphinoise potatoes advertised with the pheasant turned out to be layered confit potatoes – but were a pleasant surprise. That aside, it was great tasting food and well-presented and priced.

After seeing the wine list, we decided to try several by the glass. We ordered five in total, includ-

ing Turning Heads NZ white, Le Pionnier Sauvignon Blanc, Merlot Le Tuffeau, Chenin Blanc Boatman's Drift and Muscadet La Péch. The wine prices are very reasonable with many available from £7.50 for 175ml, with the Pionnier being a bargain at £5 for 125ml. Bottles start at £30. Cocktails and a good selection of beers are also available.

We finished with a shared dessert of pistachio soufflé (a surfeit of soufflés!) plus coffee. The total including 10% service came to £167. The waiting staff were very good and helpful when we asked about the menu and wines.

The Woodman is no doubt a good place for birthdays and celebrations, but booking is advisable. Starters cost £7–£10, mains £15–£20, and steaks start from £35. There is also a bar menu and vegetarian options are available, as well as special offers at lunchtime and a loyalty scheme.

For more information about The Woodman including opening times:

Call 020 4613 0800

Visit woodmansouthgate.com

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

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MARKET

Forty Hall Spring Fayre

Saturday and Sunday 23rd–24th May, 11am to 4pm
Forty Hall, Forty Hill Enfield EN2 9HA

Join us at Forty Hall and enjoy a day of shopping, music, and food in a beautiful historic setting. There will be craft stalls showcasing high-quality handmade products from local makers and food stalls offering a variety of delicious options. You can also explore the period rooms and historic courtyard, where you'll find a range of creative stalls offering unique, handmade gifts.

Entry £4 for adults, under 15s free

Visit fortyhallestate.co.uk/whats-on/spring-fayre-2026

COMEDY

Funny @ DAC

Saturday 30th May, 8pm
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

Funny @ DAC is our flagship comedy night, produced by Resistance Comedy – a proudly Enfield-grown comedy brand, showcasing top UK circuit talent alongside rising stars. The May show is headlined by Angelos Epithemiou (*Shooting Stars*, *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*) with a strong supporting line-up including Olivia Lee, Matt Rouse, Samantha Day, Darran Griffiths, Michael Hackett and hosted by Lateef Lovejoy.

Tickets £18–£20

Visit dugdaleartscentre.co.uk

FOLK

Wildstock 2026

Sunday 31st May, 1pm–5pm
Woodcroft Wildspace, Downes Court, Winchmore Hill N21 3PT

Wildstock '26 is all about a fun afternoon relaxing in the community and events meadow at Woodcroft Wildspace, listening to local folk musicians while also enjoying your picnic and a drink from the Little Green Dragon. This is a ticket-only event with all proceeds in aid of local charities; Little Sparks Enfield, Cooking Champions and Woodcroft Wildspace.

Tickets £12, free for children under twelve

Visit tickettailor.com/events/woodcroftwildspace/2148935

BOWLS

Cockfosters Bowls Club Open Weekend

Saturday and Sunday, 16th–17th May, 10am–12pm
Cockfosters Bowls Club, Chalk Lane, Cockfosters EN4 9JG

Come along to give lawn bowling a try and have fun! Just turn up wearing shoes with flat soles. We will provide bowls and tuition. Parking is available on site.

Free to attend

Call 07733 611620

Visit cockfostersbowls.com

CRAFTS

Meet 'N' Make Lunch Club

Last Friday monthly, 1–3pm
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

This is a social meet-up for the over-50s. Enjoy conversation, crafts, creativity and a two-course cultural meal. No experience needed, everyone welcome – all art and craft materials provided. Friendly support on hand.

Booking required, tickets are £10

Email admin@blackheritagehub.org

Visit blackheritagehub.org

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

SINGING

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Cockfosters players celebrate their FA Vase semi-final win Credit @els_photo_graphy



Cockfosters heading to Wembley

Semi-final victory over Punjab FC puts Chalk Lane side in dreamland

BY TOMMY ROSE

Cockfosters FC will play at Wembley Stadium for the first time in their history after completing a memorable FA Vase semi-final victory over Punjab United.

Gavin Kelsey's side secured their place in the final with a composed and disciplined performance across two legs, overcoming difficult conditions and a strong opponent to win 3–1 on aggregate. The reward is a trip to Wembley on Sunday, 17th May – a landmark moment for the club and everyone connected to it.

The two-legged tie began at Chalk Lane on Saturday, 28th March, where blustery conditions made free-flowing football difficult for both sides.

Punjab United took a first-half lead, but Cockfosters responded with determination and patience. Their persistence was rewarded late on when Jandir Da Cruz rose to head home an equaliser, ensuring the first leg ended 1–1 and leaving the tie finely balanced heading

into the return.

The second leg on Saturday, 4th April followed a similar pattern, with swirling winds again playing a major role. Cockfosters, however, showed their growing maturity and control in key moments. George Lutaaya gave them the advantage with a superb, volleyed goal, settling any early nerves and shifting the pressure onto the hosts.

As Punjab pushed forward in search of a way back into the tie, Cockfosters remained organised and resolute. The decisive moment arrived in the 86th minute when Da Cruz struck again, sealing a 2–0 victory on the day and confirming a 3–1 aggregate success.

At the final whistle, players, staff and supporters celebrated an achievement that will go down as the greatest in the club's history.

Reaching Wembley represents an extraordinary milestone for Cockfosters – a club built on the dedication of its players, management, volunteers and supporters. Manager Gavin Kelsey and his coaching team

have guided the squad through a remarkable campaign, while contributions from across the group have underpinned a run defined by resilience, discipline and belief.

Off the pitch, the achievement is shared just as strongly. Chairman Vas Chiotis and the volunteers who sustain the club week in, week out have played an essential role in making days like this possible. For many involved, the journey to this point has been years in the making.

Attention now turns to Wembley on Sunday, 17th May, where Cockfosters will have the opportunity to complete a truly historic season when they face AFC Stoneham in the final. The club is calling on the local community to get behind the team and be part of what promises to be an unforgettable occasion.

From late winners and penalty shootouts to composed performances in high-pressure ties, this FA Vase run has already delivered moments that will be remembered for years to come.

Now, one final step remains – on the biggest stage of all.

Emotional goodbye from Gavin as Towners relegated

Enfield Town FC boss announced he would be standing down following club's relegation from National League South

BY ANDREW WARSHAW

It isn't every day that an outgoing football manager who has just been relegated has his name sung to the rafters.

But that was precisely the reaction of the fans towards the hugely popular Gavin Macpherson at Enfield Town's final home game of the season as their two-year stay in the second tier of non-league football came to a sad end.

After three years at the helm, Gavin has stepped down, along with the rest of his management team, and the search for a replacement was well under way as the *Dispatch* went to press – with a number of potential applicants having thrown their hats into the ring.

Rebuild, reset and go again will be the mantra but whoever takes over will have the unenviable task of trying to emulate gaining promotion to National League South, unexpectedly achieved under Gavin at the end of his first season.

Keeping Town in the division for a second campaign was arguably an even greater accomplishment but it was third time unlucky as the club were unable to pull off another escape act – and now return to step three of the non-league pyramid.

"The club are extremely privileged to have had Gavin as our manager," chairman Paul Reed told the *Dispatch* when discussing the legacy left behind. "He demonstrated many qualities that we feel will become pre-requisites for future appointments. Perhaps the biggest of these is his deep understanding and connection to the DNA of our club.

"Being supporter-owned brings unique challenges and opportunities and Gav was very quickly able to grasp this. It's clear from the bond that he formed with our supporters that they all feel he was 'one of us'.

"Gavin also was able to build really strong relationships with our academy resulting in a number of our young scholars making their first-team debuts during his tenure. As we grow this is going to be a vital



Gavin Macpherson led Enfield Town to promotion two years ago but his reign ultimately ended in relegation

collaboration for our playing side and he has left a really strong pathway for this to continue.

"The promotion to step two highlighted a number of areas where we need to improve and get stronger [...] and his spell at the club has allowed us to identify these and work on getting better and more prepared for when the club are able to bounce back to this level."

Few who attended that final home game, an extraordinary and emotion-filled 5–2 rout of Slough Town, can fail to have had a lump in the throat, such was the outpouring of gratitude surrounding the end of an era.

Gavin said afterwards: "Managers always talk about their supporters being the best and while I don't want to get over-soppy, they've been unbelievable, way beyond what I imagined given the struggles this season."

He explained that, with a heavy heart, he had turned down efforts to keep him on at the club.

"Unfortunately we haven't achieved our ultimate aim but I'm going to miss everyone terribly. I just believe things need a fresh pair of eyes."

Whoever those eyes ultimately belong to is now the focus moving forward. For his part, Gavin was still pondering his future as the *Dispatch* went to press. But wherever he ends up, he has permanently carved his name into the annals of the country's first fan-owned club.

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