

ENFIELD DISPATCH

N° 95

THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

AUG 2026



LAST MONTH A brand new museum, Trent Park House of Secrets, opened in Enfield. It tells two contrasting stories of the Georgian mansion – its pre-war use for VIP socialising, and its wartime role as a German prisoner camp where the 'secret listeners' gathered crucial intelligence. Celebrating the opening last month were (from left) Trent Park Museum trustee Helen Lederer, co-chair and founding trustee Jason Charalambous, fellow co-chair David Cholmondeley, and museum director Giuseppe Albano – read more on page 16. Credit PA

Whitewebbs Park 'saved' after judge quashes Spurs decision

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Whitewebbs has been "saved for future generations" according to local campaigners celebrating the decision by a judge to quash Tottenham Hotspur's planning permission for the park.

The verdict in the judicial review case was published late last month, with the judge ruling that Enfield Council's decision to issue permission for a women's and girls' training academy on Whitewebbs Park had been made unlawfully.

After hearing two days of evidence in June, Sir Tim Kerr explained in his written verdict that the council had deliberately "concealed" the expert opinion of a professional ecologist who had cast doubt on claims being made by Spurs over the biodiversity impact of the proposed training centre.

In doing this, wrote Kerr, "the committee were given the false impression that he did not disagree" and, therefore,

were "materially misled".

The unlawful decision to award planning permission to Tottenham Hotspur was made under the previous Labour administration, which lost control of the civic centre to the Conservatives in May. Upon taking office, new council leader Alessandro Georgiou dropped the local authority's legal defence of the judicial review, leaving Spurs to fight alone in court.

The case was brought by the Guardians of Whitewebbs campaign group, which collectively raised £35,000 to help fund it. Their cause was also backed by celebrities including Dame Judi Dench and Chris Packham.

Reacting to news the plans by Spurs to fence off a 16-hectare area of the park had been thrown out by the High Court judge, Guardians of Whitewebbs chair Benny Hawksbee thanked the legal team led by the Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) as well as other community groups such as Save Whitewebbs and Friends of Whitewebbs Park.

"Together, we have saved Whitewebbs Park for wildlife and future generations," Benny said.

"We triumphed against the odds, against a greedy football club worth billions, but this should never have happened.

"There were clearly failures in assessing the value and biodiversity of Whitewebbs Park, and an emphasis on serving a football club over the local community, their wishes and their right to enjoy Whitewebbs Park in perpetuity."

While it's possible Tottenham Hotspur could lodge an appeal, the *Dispatch* understands the Tory-led council now intends to work closely with the Premier League club to find an alternative site in the borough for the women's and girls' training academy.

Cllr Georgiou said: "This new administration pledged to protect Whitewebbs Park from unacceptable development and ensure it remains accessible for local residents and

communities to enjoy. That is why we withdrew from defending this judicial review, as such a defence would not have been in the best interests of residents across the borough.

"We are delighted that the High Court has allowed this judicial review and quashed the planning permission granted for the proposed training academy at Whitewebbs Park.

"We said we would protect Whitewebbs Park from this unacceptable proposal and we will now move forward with plans that reflect the needs of the local community and also preserve and protect this important area of Enfield."

Benny added: "We hope wherever the new council and Spurs have planned for the facility going forward is not public or green space in Enfield and the local community is fully consulted. Nature is not for sale and needs to be protected more than ever."

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Guardians of Whitewebbs campaigners outside the Royal Courts of Justice in June Credit Ed Allnutt

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Also responding to the verdict, Tottenham Hotspur said: “The court’s decision concerns the legal process followed by Enfield Council in granting planning permission, rather than the planning merits of the proposed development itself.

“We continue to believe the proposals would deliver significant benefits for Enfield by safeguarding Whitewebbs as a green space, improving access to nature, restoring important heritage assets, creating new facilities for local residents, community groups and sports clubs, whilst delivering a lasting legacy for women’s and girls’ sport.

“The development would create a world-leading women’s and girls’

training centre, helping to establish Enfield as a leading destination for the women’s and girls’ game. Alongside elite facilities, it would create new opportunities for girls across the borough to play and develop through expanded coaching, education and community programmes, while providing a visible pathway from grassroots football to the very highest levels of the game.

“We remain committed to Enfield and to continuing the work we have undertaken in the borough for many years through investment in sport, education and community programmes. We will now consider the judgement carefully and determine our next steps.”

This summer’s judicial review was the second to be fought over the future of Whitewebbs Park in as many years. Back in 2024, Friends of Whitewebbs Park chair Sean Wilkinson led a case against the council’s decision to issue a 25-year lease for half of the park to Tottenham Hotspur. However, following a

three-day hearing, the judge threw out all four grounds for the case.

Although not involved in the latest legal battle, Sean has welcomed the judge’s verdict. He told the *Dispatch*: “I am pleased. It is another step on the way to protecting the park for local people, and it gives time for the council to fulfil its promise to protect the park with things like conservation area status.

“They [Guardians of Whitewebbs] did very well to win a judicial review on planning, as officers are allowed a wide degree of latitude on decisions and the judge doesn’t expect them to be perfect.

“But it must have been quite an egregious error.”

In his verdict, the judge agreed with the claim that council officers were “salami slicing” the views of an ecologist in the planning report drawn up for councillors to read, so that they were “relying in the officers’ report on the convenient parts and concealing from

the committee the inconvenient parts” of the ecologist’s expert opinion.

Four other grounds for the judicial review – including a claim the council was “biased” towards Spurs – were rejected by the judge. However, only one ground needed to be upheld for planning permission to be quashed and, with the Conservatives now in charge, Spurs would be highly unlikely to win approval for the training academy if the club resubmitted its plans.

Harriet Child, a solicitor at PILC, said: “I hope the huge amounts of money and time wasted on this attempt to take over a public park will be a warning to councils and companies that residents care deeply about public open spaces and will fight hard to keep them.

“Enfield Council [under Labour] was so intent on pressing ahead with a deeply unpopular plan to lease a large area of this historic park that they misled their own planning committee.

“Now, the previous administration has been voted out and the decision has been quashed by the court. The new administration has an opportunity to work with residents and preserve Whitewebbs Park for the next 100 years and beyond.”

Asked to comment on the verdict, an Enfield Labour spokesperson said: “It is deeply disappointing that the High Court has quashed planning permission for what would have been the first dedicated professional women’s and girls’ training centre of its kind for Tottenham Hotspur.

“We are also concerned that the court found councillors were not provided with all the relevant information, including important ecological information, before making their decision.”

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark added: “Throughout this process I have consistently raised concerns about the quality of engagement with residents [...] Any future proposals for Whitewebbs must put local residents at the heart of the process.”

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Teen killers convicted

Two gang members have been convicted of murdering an Enfield teenager in a ride-by shooting last summer, with three others found guilty of assisting them.

Keanu Harker, 18, was shot in his head and chest at around 8.45pm on Thursday, 26th June 2025 in Great Cambridge Road, between Bush Hill Park and Southbury. He later died from his injuries.

Keanu’s killers were riding an e-bike when the murder took place. It followed a dispute on social media. Officers arrested one suspect two minutes before his train was due to leave for France, before building the case against the killers with the help of digital forensics teams.

It has resulted in two 18-year-old men being convicted following an Old Bailey trial. Tayvon Etefia, of Great Cambridge Road, and Emmanuel Popoola, of Carnarvon Avenue in Enfield Town, were both found guilty of murder and possession of a firearm.

Keanu was murdered because his killers took offence to something that was said in a social media group chat. Following the convictions, a detective described the murder of Keanu as a “cowardly” act which “shocked the community”.

Eliezer Mbaki, aged 25 and of Oulton Road in Tottenham, and Anais King, aged 19 and of Bulls-moor Ride in Bullsmoor, plus a 17-year-old boy who cannot be named for legal reasons, were convicted of assisting an offender.

Read more at enfielddispatch.co.uk

New homes at North Mid

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

More than 300 new homes are set to be built next to North Middlesex University Hospital after councillors approved the plans last month.

The scheme, supported by the Greater London Authority, was voted through unanimously by Enfield Council’s planning committee at a meeting on Tuesday, 14th July.

It will see “vacant and redundant” hospital buildings on the site demolished and replaced with 306 homes which will all be designated for ‘affordable’ housing.

The plans include a 16-storey tower block alongside a new nursery, café and replacement NHS offices.

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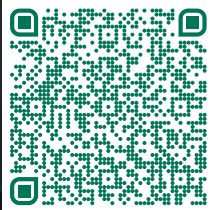
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Latest adult gaming centre ‘regrettably’ approved by councillors

Despite concerns over its impact on vulnerable people, councillors approved an application they wished they could have refused

BY JOE IVES,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Councillors have approved another new 24-hour gambling venue despite raising concerns it will exploit vulnerable people and turn the local area “into Las Vegas”.

Enfield Council’s licensing sub-committee “regrettably” approved the controversial application for a new adult gaming centre in Bowes following a hearing last month.

The ‘Palace Amusements’ venue is planned to open between 101 and 109 Green Lanes, replacing both a former florist and an estate agent on the corner with Melbourne Avenue.

At the meeting, Danielle Barron from Melbourne Avenue Residents’ Group urged councillors to reject the application, warning the adult gaming centre would be an “inherently predatory” venture.

Last year, East Kent Leasing Limited, the company behind the application, also controver-



Southgate and Wood Green MP Bambos Charalambous joined a protest at the site of the proposed new gambling venue Credit Richard McKeever

sially won permission – via a planning appeal – to open a similar venue further north along Green Lanes, in Palmers Green town centre.

The firm’s legal advisor Andrew Woods said that “children are not particularly attracted to these premises” and that the venue would provide “an extremely safe environment”.

Woods is part of the legal firm Woods Whur, which describes itself as “your legal partner for gambling legislation advice and support”.

But Barron dismissed arguments that the new site would not pose a risk to vulnerable people, describing them as “outrageous” and “delusional”.

Jeremy Godden, a director of East Kent Leasing Limited, responded to concerns about the

venue’s impact on the local area.

“We don’t want anyone to gamble to extremes,” Godden argued, adding that his business actively tries to identify and deter people who may be problem gamblers.

“We know our regulars,” he added, telling councillors that encouraging people to gamble who can’t afford it “does not make long-term sense for our business”.

Godden is responsible for more than 20 gambling and bingo operations around the country and described his adult gaming centres as “the modern day social club”.

“People are coming in for their leisure time – no different from a bowling alley,” he added.

Committee member Stephanos Ioannou said:

“Personally my feeling is I don’t like gambling establishments. They thrive off poverty.”

However, Cllr Ioannou acknowledged the application was “solid” and argued there was little that the council could do at present if applications meet licensing criteria.

The Metropolitan Police did not oppose the application – and did not send a representative to the meeting.

Committee member George Savva expressed his frustration with the Met and said: “If the police want to turn Green Lanes into Las Vegas, let them do it!”

In the end, it took over two hours for the committee to approve an application that it ultimately wished it could have refused.

Chair Penny Heathwood said members had “grappled with some difficulty” in reaching their verdict and that the committee “regrettably” had to make the decision, contrary to its preferred option, as it has to comply with the law as it currently stands”.

Addressing those attending, she said: “I’m sorry to those for whom the decision didn’t go your way. To the applicant: I wish you success, but I do encourage you to proceed with caution and care.”

The application was granted with multiple conditions, including recorded staff training to help ensure the safety of vulnerable people, including women and girls.

“Clear and visible signage” must also be displayed to warn patrons that “harassment or inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated,” said Cllr Heathwood.

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COCKFOSTERS AND ENFIELD BRANCH

My life as a young carer in Enfield

Ismael Rahman on his unique experience as a teenage carer for his elder brother and how Enfield Carers Centre has supported him

Most teenagers my age have to deal with exams, school and chores. But for a small minority, their duties involve the task of caring for a vulnerable individual.

Caring for my brother, Yusuf, can be very challenging at times; he is unable to walk, meaning he has to be lifted into his wheelchair, and his autism can mean he is exceptionally stubborn!

Additionally, Yusuf cannot eat or drink independently, meaning I often have to assist him during feeding times.

Yusuf also attempts to hurt himself, meaning he requires constant supervision. As a result, I often have to study in his room while making sure he doesn't bite or bruise himself.

From a young age, I remember accompanying him frequently to the hospital. Some of my earliest memories involve sitting in waiting rooms or the hospital nursery for hours.

I try to keep up my wellbeing by watching



Ismael Rahman with Yusuf

football or playing video games. But at times, I do feel my mental health is negatively impacted.

For a long time, I felt incredibly lonely as none of my friends could relate to my considerably rare situation.

Being a young carer affects my life in many ways, but Enfield Carers Centre has helped me to manage my caring role. Before regularly attending their events, I was unaware of the community of young carers in Enfield.

The Enfield Young People In Caring (EYPIC) service has provided free counselling sessions from professionals for both my younger brother and me. Additionally, they also organise free events to help provide a break from caring and meet other young carers.

Some of these events have focused on managing finance, how to attend an interview and building a CV; all skills which are essential for young people.

The session on managing hardship (which was presented by a senior Red Cross worker) was the most helpful to me; to this day, I still utilise the methods she taught us.

EYPIC's staff work incredibly hard to ensure the stress of caring is minimised; they often arrange visits with my school to provide counselling sessions.

Furthermore, they have also informed teachers and staff about my young carer status through emails.

This service is essential to the borough.

In June the *Dispatch* reported that EYPIC was under threat of closure as its National Lottery funding agreement expires at the end of this year.

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Young People Are Our Future – Let's Listen

Telling the stories we don't tell

Enfield playwright Ellis Witter reflects on his new play and why creating space for young men to speak honestly has never been more important

What happens to the stories you don't tell? The ones you wish you had the freedom, the safe spaces and the confidence to say?

Self-doubt, anxiety, overthinking and fear of backlash can all stop us from speaking. But what happens when you decide to go against the grain anyway? What happens when you speak about the things that keep you awake at night – the thoughts, feelings and emotions you've carried for years? What happens when you choose to breathe a little easier and stop carrying that weight alone?

Some stories are hard to tell; hard to hear. Yet they desperately need to be heard.

Our theatre production, *Stories Boys Don't Like To Tell*, written by myself and Dumisani KCA Moyo, brings those stories into the open in a way that is honest, humorous, relatable and authentic.

It doesn't just tell difficult stories; it honours what it took to tell them in the first place.

At first glance, everything feels familiar. The setting, the nostalgia and the friendships

between the boys are instantly recognisable. The jokes are hilarious, honest and, at times, brutal. The atmosphere feels warm and inviting.

Then everything changes. The truth begins to surface, and the unspoken rules of the 'bro code' come into play; protect the space and protect each other's vulnerability, no matter how uncomfortable things become.

As the play unfolds, it explores pornography, addiction, relationships, mental health, shame and the pressure many young men feel to appear confident, knowledgeable and emotionally invulnerable.

It isn't a lecture; it's the honest conversation many boys have never been given permission – or the space – to have.

This story matters because it comes from lived experience. I'm not writing about young black men from the outside looking in. I'm writing from within my own community, using voices, humour and experiences that are rooted in real life. Every story in the play is true; only the names have been changed.

That authenticity creates trust. Young people are far more likely to recognise themselves in stories that sound like them, look like them and understand the world they navigate every day. More importantly, it creates a safe space where people can begin to see one another more honestly.

Across many communities, including black communities, boys often grow up with powerful expectations about what it means to 'be a man'. Strength is admired, vulnerability is hidden. Talking openly about mental health, pornography, shame or emotional struggles can invite judgement instead of understanding. Our aim is to turn that on its head.

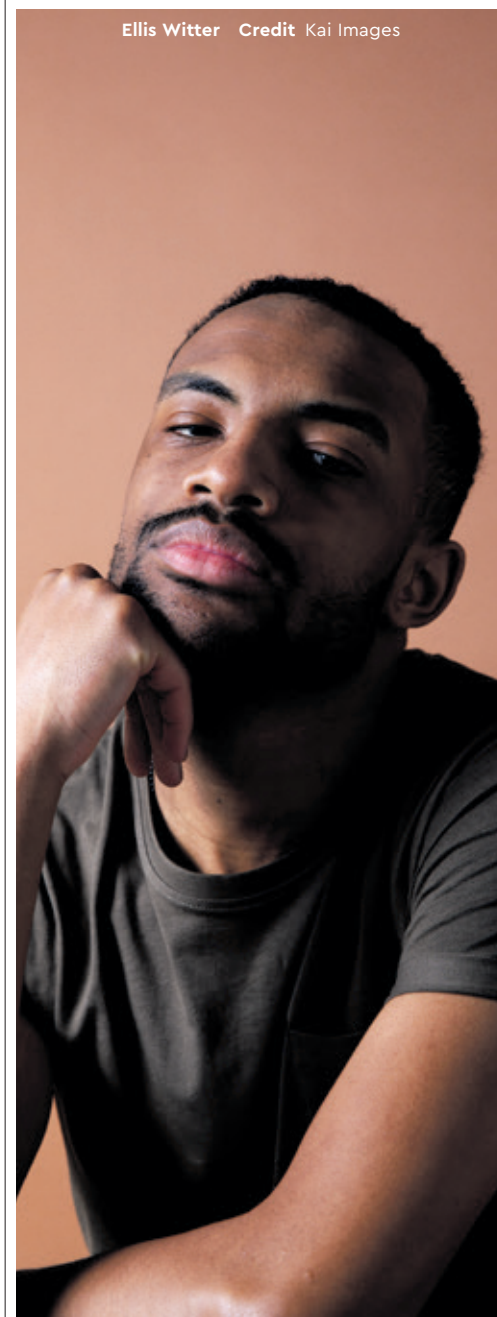
This isn't a uniquely black experience, but for many young black men those expectations are often intensified by stereotypes and the pressure to always appear strong and resilient. Choosing to tell these stories publicly is therefore an act of courage as much as creativity.

Stories like this don't just challenge individual silence – they challenge silence that can be passed from one generation to the next. For me, silence always collects a debt. The question isn't whether you'll pay it. It's whether you'll pay with your voice – or your freedom.

Many of the challenges facing young men don't begin with crisis. They begin with silence. Theatre can reach places that reports,

“Young people are far more likely to recognise themselves in stories that sound like them, look like them and understand the world they navigate every day”

Ellis Witter Credit Kai Images



statistics and policies never can. It creates empathy before debate, understanding before solutions and brings people together to talk about what has too often remained unspoken.

My hope is that this play helps parents, schools, youth workers and communities better understand the realities young men face today – and gives someone in the audience permission to tell a story they've never felt able to share before.

Because sometimes the most powerful change begins with one person finding the courage to speak.

Stories Boys Don't Like To Tell is showing at Dugdale Arts Centre in Enfield Town from Thursday 8th to Saturday, 17th October.

Local Voice, Local Stories



A coffee morning hosted by Empowering Disability in Enfield heard from local people who have suffered from digital exclusion in accessing healthcare Credit Kai Images

Disabled people are being shut out of NHS services

Empowering Disability in Enfield calls on the NHS to tackle digital exclusion across its services

The NHS increasingly tells us that the future of healthcare is digital.

Book appointments online, order prescriptions through an app, complete forms on a website, receive reminders by text message.

For many people, these changes have made life easier. For many disabled people, they have done the opposite.

Across Enfield, disabled residents are finding themselves locked out of essential healthcare because services once accessed through human interaction are now increasingly accessed through technology.

Many people with visual impairments cannot easily navigate websites

or apps. Some people with hearing impairments struggle with automated systems. Many people with learning disabilities need support to understand online processes. Others live with neurological conditions, cognitive impairments or mental health conditions that make digital systems difficult or impossible to use.

Disabled people are also more likely to experience digital poverty. Many cannot afford reliable broadband, suitable devices or enough mobile data. Disability and poverty often combine to create multiple barriers to healthcare.

Several local residents have told Empowering Disability in Enfield (EDIE) they now rely on relatives just

to book a GP appointment because the online system is inaccessible. What was once a private task now depends on someone else's time and support.

This is not simply inconvenient. It affects independence, dignity and privacy.

The NHS already knows

What makes this particularly concerning is that NHS England already recognises digital exclusion as a significant health inequality.

It has published an Inclusive Digital Healthcare Framework stating that digital services should complement – not replace – non-digital access. It has also developed a Digital Exclusion Risk Atlas identifying

communities most at risk, including many disabled people.

In other words, the NHS already knows. It knows who is at risk. It knows where exclusion exists. It knows the consequences.

This changes the conversation. The issue is no longer whether enough evidence exists. The evidence already exists. The question is why services continue to be designed in ways that produce the very exclusion the NHS has already identified.

A question of rights

The Equality Act 2010 places a proactive duty on service providers to make reasonable adjustments where disabled people are placed at a

substantial disadvantage. The NHS is also subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty, requiring public bodies to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity.

These duties require organisations to anticipate barriers rather than waiting for people to complain. Where organisations know disabled people cannot access healthcare because of digital barriers, yet fail to provide effective alternatives, they risk breaching these legal duties.

Once exclusion has been identified, mapped and measured, it becomes increasingly difficult to argue that unequal outcomes were unforeseen. Knowledge creates responsibility.

“The question is why services continue to be designed in ways that produce the very exclusion the NHS has already identified”

Designing with disabled people

This is not an argument against technology. Digital services can improve access when they are designed inclusively. But technology should expand access, not replace it.

Sometimes the most important accessibility tool is another human being. A receptionist who understands someone's communication needs; a member of staff who can help complete a process; a face-to-face conversation instead of another online form.

Disabled people should not simply be consulted after decisions have been made. They should help design services from the beginning. Every GP practice has a patient participation group where local people can influence how services are delivered.

Digital exclusion should be a standing item on every agenda. The NHS has already identified digital exclusion as a health inequality. It has already gathered the evidence.

The question is no longer whether the system knows what needs to be done. The question is whether it is prepared to do it.

EDIE is a lived experience working group supported by LocalMotion Enfield. We are working with disabled residents to understand the barriers people face and to help create public services that are designed with disabled people, not simply for them.

Council promises crackdown on HMOs

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield Council will launch a “HMO taskforce” to help tackle those which are “causing the most harm to our communities”, the new Conservative-led administration has announced.

In addition, the draft Enfield Local Plan will be “strengthened” to provide a “clearer and more robust framework to manage both the over-concentration and impact of new HMOs”.

The response from the council comes amid rising concern over the rapid proliferation of houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) across Enfield.

At the start of this year the Local Democracy Reporting Service revealed that the number of new licences being issued for HMOs in the borough under the council’s selective licensing scheme had accelerated, with a quarter of all current licences having been issued between April 2025 and January 2026.

The rate of approvals has continued to rise since then, however, with analysis from campaign group Better Homes Enfield recently revealing that more than one new HMO in the borough was being granted planning permission each day, on average.

HMOs allow properties to be subdivided into multiple individual units, usually with shared kitchens and bathrooms.

The council has acknowledged that while they “play an important role in meeting housing need” HMOs are also often associated with antisocial behaviour and waste management issues. This is particularly true in areas where multiple HMOs have been created on the same street, according to the council.

Efforts to control the spread of HMOs and clamp down on those which operate illegally or do not follow their licence conditions now have cross-party support in Enfield.

In a debate on the subject at last month’s full council meeting, Jubilee councillor Ian Barnes described HMOs as “a virus rapidly spreading across our borough” which were “ruining lives”.

The Labour councillor said: “A large proportion of my casework, as I imagine many other people [councillors], stems from HMOs.

“I’ve been sent Ring doorbell footage of it. Antisocial behaviour; drugs being smoked in back gardens; video games being played until dawn, you can hear that echoing through the walls; fast-food mopeds lined up outside HMOs.

“Ten strangers living in a small family-sized home in Enfield is not normal. It’s unfair on the neighbours, unfair on local infrastructure, and quite often unfair on the people living there, too.”

Welcoming the move to tackle

“Ten strangers living in a small family-sized home in Enfield is not normal. It’s unfair on the neighbours, unfair on local infrastructure, and quite often unfair on the people living there, too”



It comes amid rising concern over the rapid proliferation of houses in multiple occupation across Enfield

HMOs with new council policies, Cllr Barnes added: “You’ve offered hope, and this now needs to be followed by action.”

A motion put forward by another Labour councillor, Susan Erbil, argued that “the current threshold allowing up to 20% of homes on a residential road to become HMOs is too high and no longer reflects the concerns being raised by residents across the borough”.

The motion included a number of measures, such as a “comprehensive review” of current policies and a reduction of the HMO threshold from 20% to 10% per street, as well as a request to lobby the government to bring in tougher laws to regulate

“numbers, densities and impacts at a local level”.

Enfield Conservatives, who since May have had minority control of the council, supported the motion, having already campaigned on a manifesto pledge to “challenge the proliferation” of new HMOs to “preserve the character and stability of our local streets” as well as take a “zero-tolerance approach to enforcement”.

Deputy leader Michael Rye told councillors: “HMOs that are appropriately run provide useful homes for people who can’t afford their own independent larger accommodation. “However, sadly, too many HMOs – even [owned] by members of the opposition – don’t have planning permission and occasionally do not have licenses and enforcement.”

In his dig at the opposition Labour group, Cllr Rye was referring to the news – revealed by the *Dispatch* late last year – that the then-Labour planning chair, Mahym Bedekova, did not have planning permission for her own HMO. She later won retrospective approval.

Cllr Bedekova was re-elected in May and, after being put forward again by Enfield Labour following the election, continues to serve on the planning committee (although it is now chaired by the Conservatives).

Cllr Rye continued: “As the cabinet member for planning and

regeneration, as the motion states we need to wait for the Local Plan to be adopted, and then I will be speedily bringing to council a policy based around this motion, and as strict as we can, on HMOs.

“The other thing that I will be reviewing is the licence charge, which I’m told is set independently by the council. We have an opportunity there to bring some pressure to bear on these particular units.

“I’m sure those that are well run will comply, pay and do a good job, but possibly those that are less well run, that perhaps don’t obey the rules, will choose not to pay and that might be another mechanism that brings a measure of control.



Labour councillor
Ian Barnes



Deputy council
leader Michael Rye

“I’m sure that all members will support this motion because nobody wants family units next door to them with six or seven single people, with people staying over with noise and disturbance, constant comings and goings, large numbers of people gathering in gardens.

“We’re aware of all the issues.”

In his recent letter outlining the changes he would like to see made to the draft Local Plan before it is formally adopted, planning inspector Steven Lee criticised the council for not initially including a specific HMO policy with the plan.

It was only after the Labour administration was criticised for this omission that a policy was finally proposed, during the public examination process last year. But Lee wrote that even this policy did not go far enough and that “further modifications are necessary to ensure soundness”.

Writing in a recent blogpost on the situation, Matt Burn from campaign group Better Homes Enfield said: “The inspector has now accepted that a HMO policy is needed. He has said the submitted plan does not contain a specific HMO policy and that modifications are needed to plug this gap. This is a very welcome finding.

“Importantly, he has asked for the policy to properly address the quality of accommodation, deal more clearly with clustering and excessive concentrations, address impacts such as overlooking as well as noise and disturbance, and be clearer about parking standards. That is the kind of practical, enforceable policy Enfield needs.

“But residents should not have had to fight for this. A borough with Enfield’s housing pressures, private rented sector challenges and volume of HMO applications should never have submitted a new Local Plan without proper HMO safeguards from the outset.

“The fact that it did so raises serious concerns about how the previous administration managed this part of the Local Plan process.”

Previous analysis from Better Homes Enfield estimated that as few as one in ten HMOs in Enfield had planning permission. Council rules state that to be fully authorised, HMOs must have both a licence and planning permission.

Among those HMOs operating without permission had been the former Station Tavern pub in Green Street, Brimsdown, which the *Dispatch* revealed last year was being converted into housing despite twice previously being rejected for approval by the council.

However, the council has now approved a third proposal for the HMO, despite the application being “retrospective” – [read more on Page 18](#).

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Council seeks private operator for district heat network

Energetik has cost tens of millions in taxpayer cash so far but still needs many millions more of investment

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Enfield Council has agreed to sell off its district heating network to a private operator – while still retaining a “golden share”.

The decision to flog the costly Energetik project was made at a council cabinet meeting at the end of June, the first since the new minority Conservative administration took charge of the civic centre in May.

Using underground pipes, Energetik transfers heat from a variety of sources, including the Edmonton incinerator, to warm people’s homes. Some recently-built estates in Enfield are now plugged into the network, although it remains under construction.

A report last October confirmed the total cost of delivering Energetik was set to eventually reach £114million, via a combination of council loans and external grants. It also warned that, excluding one-off connection fees, the business would not make a surplus until 2038.

However, Tim Leaver, who was deputy leader of the Labour administration in charge at the time, claimed the company was currently “profitable” and had a “strong long-term outlook” under the council’s control.

The new Conservative administration does not see things the same way.

Edward Smith, the council’s cabinet member for council assets and culture, said the company had “moved beyond its initial delivery stage” and that now was the right time for the council to assess sale options.

This, he argued, was especially prudent

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given the next stages of expanding the network “would involve significant investment and specialist capability beyond what the council can sustainably provide as a sole shareholder”.

Following discussion of a strategic review of the company, cabinet members agreed “in principle” to sell the company while retaining a stake through a “golden share” arrangement. This would see the local authority retain a decisive say on certain aspects of the company after any potential sale.

Stipulations for the public-private deal could include preventing the future operator from creating subsidiaries or selling infrastructure.

Speaking at the meeting, council leader Alessandro Georgiou said the arrangement would mean the council has a “good financial interest in the scheme moving forward, which should, in theory, provide a good financial return for the taxpayers of Enfield” if the private partner is successful.

Much of the finer detail of Energetik’s finances and potential sale options have not been made public, however. This was instead discussed in a part of the debate held behind closed doors.

The council hopes to finalise its choice

of private sector partner by March next year, but Cllr Smith admitted this was a “tight timetable” and “more of an aspiration” than an absolute deadline.

“It is a target – and we are going to try and reach it,” he added.

The cabinet report prepared by officers ahead of the meeting explained that a more detailed strategy for the decision would be set out in the future “once market testing, commercial analysis and legal due diligence have been completed”.

This will include final advice from Hermetica Black, a company that specialises “in the funding, development and asset management of sustainable and decentralised energy projects”.

The local authority will also make use of legal advice from Womble Bond Dickinson, a self-described “straight-talking” law firm with “entrepreneurial lawyers and technical specialists”.

In summarising his hopes for the sell-off, Cllr Georgiou said: “I think there is an understanding that this administration will be a wonderful partner to whoever does proceed with buying Energetik and we will work collaboratively with them and they will have a stable administration to work with in their financial interests, and ours.”

Energetik is already connected to hundreds of Enfield homes but remains under construction



No Pride flag flown at civic centre this summer

Enfield Conservatives pledged in their election campaign to only fly three civic flags, but made an exception for Armed Forces Day

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The leader of Enfield Council has defended the decision not to fly a Pride flag outside Enfield Civic Centre this summer – arguing the move was made for “clarity and consistency”.

In their election manifesto published ahead of May’s local election, Enfield Conservatives promised to only fly “the Union Flag, the Flag of St George, and the Enfield Beast flag” outside council buildings, which they said was aimed at “restoring a sense of traditional civic pride”.

However, the new minority Conservative administration did decide to fly the Armed Forces Day Flag at the end of June.

In a social media video posted on the local authority’s Facebook and X pages, council leader Alessandro Georgiou explained the three flags being flown were “permanent” while the Armed Forces Day Flag was being flown to mark a special occasion to “celebrate our brave men and women in the armed forces”.

Pride Month is marked every June in many countries across the world, including the UK, as a means of celebrating the LGBTQ+ community and underlining the importance of championing their rights.

It also commemorates the Stonewall riots in 1969, a series

of protests often regarded as a turning point for the gay rights movement in the United States and beyond.

Under the previous Labour administration, the Pride flag was typically flown in the month of June. A spokesperson for Enfield Labour criticised the decision not to fly the flag at Enfield Civic Centre this year.

They described Cllr Georgiou’s decision as “a slap in the face to the LGBT community across Enfield” and argued Labour “was and is proud to stand with Enfield’s LGBTQ+ community”.

Cllr Georgiou said: “This decision reflects a clear and consistent policy that the flags flown permanently outside the civic centre represent our borough, our nation and our country, and those who serve it and defend our freedoms.

“These flags represent every resident of Enfield, regardless of their background, beliefs, ethnicity, faith, sexual orientation or identity.

“The council will continue to celebrate and support the diversity that makes Enfield such a vibrant place to live, work and raise a family. That commitment is demonstrated through our policies, services, partnerships and engagement with local communities.”

Why council was wrong to ditch Pride flag – turn to page 12

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Why Enfield Council was wrong to ditch Pride flag

Humanists UK's LGBT co-ordinator Nick Baldwin reacts to the new Enfield Conservative administration's decision not to fly a Pride flag at the civic centre



Nick Baldwin at London Pride in 2023
Credit: Humanists UK

For years, every June, the Pride flag flew outside Enfield Civic Centre. This June, it didn't.

The borough's new Conservative administration has adopted a policy of flying only the Union Flag, the St George's Cross, and the Enfield Beast flag. It did make an exception for Armed Forces Day at the end of June – but not for Pride.

I grew up in Enfield and attended school across the road from the civic centre, so this decision hit me surprisingly hard. But I'm well aware that Enfield is only the latest council to do something like this.

In June, Reform UK-run Havering cancelled its annual Pride flag-raising ceremony, days before it was due to take place. In Derbyshire, Reform councillors banned Pride flags following a complaint from a Christian bookshop owner. In St Helens, the council's new Reform leadership ordered officers to cease all engagement with the town's Pride celebrations.

Now the bans have spread beyond Reform-run councils to a Conservative one, in Enfield, a decision they said was made for "clarity", "consistency" and to prioritise flags that "represent everyone".

I won't spend long on that final justification because it doesn't merit it. A council that flies a special flag for the armed forces, as Enfield rightly did, has already accepted that recognising one community takes nothing from any other.

The neutrality argument is a paper-thin pretence, and everyone on both sides of the debate

knows it. What is actually happening is that visible support for LGBT+ people is being deliberately withdrawn, dressed up in the language of flagpoles and planning consent.

Why does a flag matter so much? Because of the world it flies in.

Even excluding London's Metropolitan Police (whose figures could not be counted this year), Home Office statistics recorded 18,702 hate crimes against people because of their sexual orientation in England and Wales in the year to March 2025, and 3,809 against trans people.

Despite modest falls in the last two years, those figures remain roughly 20% higher (for lesbian, gay, and bi people) and 50% higher (for trans people) than five years ago, with the sharpest surge coming in 2021/22 – a rise the Home Office said may have been fuelled by online debate about transgender issues.

Galop, the LGBT+ anti-abuse charity, saw a 60% increase in hate crime victims and survivors coming to it for support between 2023 and 2024. This is what years of escalating homophobic and transphobic commentary online looks like when it arrives in the real world: a shove on the night bus, a slur outside the school gates, a brick through a window.

And it is not only statistics. Last October, a Christian nationalist group calling itself the 'King's Army' marched in military formation through Soho, the heart of London's LGBT+ community, chanting at passers-by in a deliberate display of intimidation.

Humanists UK has been raising the alarm

about rising Christian nationalism funded by US anti-human rights groups for some time. Religious groups with deep pockets, buoyed by cultural and political ascendancy in the United States, have deliberately exported a Maga-style politics, grounded in an extreme form of Christian theology, which is explicit about wanting to roll back LGBT+ rights, women's reproductive freedoms, and other hard-won changes secured by progressive campaigners and humanists in the 20th and 21st centuries.

Recently, the movement has also found willing amplifiers in British public life, including a handful of MPs and home-grown billionaires. Seen against that backdrop, Pride bans stop looking like quirks of local politics and start looking like part of a wider effort to push LGBT+ people back to the margins.

For decades, the UK built a broad consensus, across the major parties, most religious groups, and the overwhelming majority of non-religious people, that LGBT+ people are equal citizens whose inclusion is a basic British civic value, not a contested opinion.

What some cultural conservatives are now attempting is to unpick that consensus: to recast Pride not as a civic norm but as a 'political' or 'ideological' position, something

a council may reasonably decline to be associated with.

First, the flag becomes 'divisive'. Then it becomes comparable to the vilest things imaginable. We have seen where this road goes in other countries, recently including Poland, where dozens of local authorities declared themselves 'LGBT-free zones' until the EU intervened.

We also remember, some of us personally, how things used to be in this country. Symbols matter. That is precisely why they are being targeted. A Pride flag on a town hall never housed anyone or fixed a pothole, but it told every LGBT+ resident that their council saw them as part of the community it serves.

This is not about any one party. LGBT+ people, like humanists, belong to every party and none, and councillors from across the political spectrum – including many conservatives – have defended these flags.

It is about a choice now facing every council in Britain: whether inclusion remains a shared civic value, or becomes another front in somebody else's culture war.

Humanists UK is a national charity bringing non-religious people together to develop their own views and an understanding of the world around them. Its petition to stop councillors banning Pride can be signed online:

Visit humanists.uk/action/reform-banning-pride

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Government must hear local views on 'new town'



Feryal Clark MP meeting housing minister Matthew Pennycook

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark explains why she now wants the new town to be scaled down

Recently, there have been several significant developments regarding the proposed 'new town' at Crews Hill and Chase Park, in my Enfield North constituency.

Having listened to residents across Enfield North and considered planning inspector Steven Lee's response to the Enfield Local Plan, I have reflected carefully on what these developments mean for our community.

I believe the way forward must be guided by two equally important principles: addressing the genuine housing pressures facing local families, while ensuring that any development of this scale only proceeds with the infrastructure, environmental protections and community involvement that residents rightly expect.

I have always supported the need for new homes. Every week I hear from constituents struggling with overcrowding, high rents, homelessness and the lack of affordable housing close to family and support networks. Those challenges are real and cannot be ignored.

Thousands of children in the borough, including those whose parents work full-time to provide for them, are homeless or living in

substandard and unsafe accommodation that is too small for them to grow and thrive in.

Anyone who thinks this situation can be allowed to continue or can be solved by only building on disused factory sites or vacant car parks is, at best, misunderstanding the reality of the issue or, at worst, misleading people as to the stark reality and scale of the challenge facing current and future generations in Enfield.

Development on a scale is needed to ensure the thousands of families who are homeless in the borough have a safe and secure home for themselves and their children.

We should all acknowledge there are merits to bringing forward major regeneration proposals rather than relying on a piecemeal, site-by-site approach that amounts to little more than a sticking-plaster approach to the issue.

At the same time, residents have raised legitimate concerns about the impact on the Green Belt, roads, public transport, schools, healthcare services and the character of our area.

The new town area includes 'Chase Park', better known locally as Vicarage Farm.

My position has remained consistent: if change on this scale is

to happen, it must be accompanied by the right infrastructure, robust environmental safeguards, high-quality design and meaningful community involvement, which to date has been lacking.

Decisions that could shape Enfield for generations require broad public participation and local voices must be heard.

Having finally seen a proposed site boundary and listened to residents, community groups and local stakeholders, I have concluded that the current proposal is simply too large.

In June I met with housing minister Matthew Pennycook and I have made my views known directly to him.

The current new town proposal envisages around 21,000 homes. That level of development is excessive. By removing Chase Park and other areas of high-quality Green Belt, the number of homes could be reduced while still making a significant contribution to housing need and reducing the impact on valued green spaces.

I have also been disappointed by the way the government's consultation was conducted. Taking place partly during a holiday period and failing to be as wide-ranging and comprehensive as a proposal of this scale deserves inevitably limited public engagement.

Although I formally requested an extension to allow more residents to participate, that request was declined.

Looking ahead, residents deserve far greater detail on infrastructure, transport, healthcare, schools, environmental impacts, governance arrangements and any potential development corporation.

Significant questions remain unanswered, and local people must be given a genuine opportunity to scrutinise and influence proposals through a more detailed consultation before any final decisions are taken.

I have also argued that any future development corporation must include strong representation from local communities, businesses and voluntary organisations, rather than being dominated solely by government bodies. The ministry has assured me that such representation can form part of future governance arrangements.

Send us your letters

Got an opinion on something in Enfield? We accept letters of up to 150 words from people and organisations in the borough. Email EnfieldDispatch@socialspider.com before the next deadline on **Monday 17th August**.

Mandelson's mates

Dear Enfield Dispatch

What a relief to hear that Enfield North MP Feryal Clark did not have a "personal relationship" with Lord Mandelson [MP's messages with Mandelson revealed, Page ten, Issue 94].

And how gratifying to read that she is "deeply disturbed and disgusted" – if not, er, "surprised" – by the details of Mandelson's personal relationship with the late Jeffrey Epstein.

The Mandelson story is the Labour Party story. Mandelson was the key man in Tony Blair's rise to power. Unfortunately, his taste for riches obliged Blair to sack him – twice. Then Mandelson got a job with Blair's successor, Gordon Brown (in-between cabinet meetings, he kept in touch with his mate Epstein).

More recently, as our ambassador in Washington, Mandelson helped the American AI giant, Palantir, to gain control of our NHS (a matter of obvious interest to any parliamentary under-secretary for AI and digital government).

Come on, Clark – tell us the rest of the story.

Howard Medwell
Upper Edmonton

Rain gardens

Dear Enfield Dispatch

For the last two years, I have been writing to Enfield Council regarding the appalling state of the rain gardens at the top of Green Lanes, before the North Circular intersection, and in adjoining roads.

When leaving side roads on to Green Lanes, it is difficult to see oncoming traffic due to overgrown grasses. I have repeatedly asked for a monthly maintenance schedule to be put in place and the beds to be replanted with ground cover. They are always full of litter and cigarette ends. At present, the beds are only attended to two or three times a year.

Another Bowes East Residents' Association committee member and I had a walkabout with Bambos Charalambous MP and he has written to the council on the matter.

I hope the council can now devote more to the upkeep of these rain gardens.

Sarah Harris
Bowes East Residents' Association

Caterpillar chaos

Dear Enfield Dispatch

The caterpillar of the oak processionary moth is spreading across the UK and the public need to be aware. It is not a friendly caterpillar – it is covered with hairs that are toxic to humans and animals. They move down oak trees in a head-to-toe procession, hence the name.

You do not need to touch the caterpillar itself to suffer irritation but if any of the hairs get on to your skin, they have little barbs so that they don't come off and they will cause an itchy rash. If the hairs get onto your dog, they can develop severe tongue and throat swelling that could lead to suffocation.

The oak processionary moth was first identified in London in 2006. It has been spreading ever since and is now in Enfield. You may see trees with warning tape and signs, such as one in Trent Park.

If you do see an oak tree that has been cordoned off, do not go under the tree, do not touch the tree, do not sit on the ground under the tree and keep children and dogs away!

Boyd Goldie
Enfield

Showing Pride

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Iam writing to protest the decision by the new Tory administration at Enfield Council not to fly the rainbow flag during Pride month.

LGBTQ+ communities bring much needed joy as well as spending power to the borough. I recently attended the Pride festival in Bowes Park, which was inclusive, colourful and enjoyed by all. We know that homophobic attacks and slurs are on the rise and showing our support for a marginalised community is essential in creating a diverse and happy borough.

Flags matter. Of course, the country's flag and the borough's standard should fly over the civic centre. But showing support for different communities, be they religious, ethnic or of sexual orientation is also important. Flying different flags through the year to support our diverse communities is a way of reminding us to be tolerant, kind and to celebrate all people of Enfield.

Sarah Richardson
Bowes Park



Changes to Enfield bus services approved – but no new Superloop route planned

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A shake-up to Enfield’s bus services is going ahead – but will not include the addition of a previously-proposed express route.

Transport for London (TfL) last month confirmed it was not currently taking forward plans for a second Superloop bus route between Barnet and Stratford, via Enfield Town, despite such a service being proposed two years ago during Sir Sadiq Khan’s mayoral election campaign.

Superloop bus services were first introduced by TfL in 2023, with a route along the North Circular linking North Finchley and Walthamstow via Arnos Grove, Palmers Green and Edmonton – called SL1 – launching in December that year.

The routes aimed primarily to link outer London suburbs with faster services, and during the 2024 City Hall election campaign Khan pledged to double the number of Superloop services from ten to 20.

Among a list of ten proposed routes published in April 2024 was a new service through the centre of Enfield borough. However, after being questioned about the proposal last month, a TfL spokesperson explained the transport authority currently had firm plans to deliver on just three new Superloop routes in 2027, and that none of these will serve North London.

At the time of his announcement during the 2024 mayoral election

campaign, Khan said that he’d “asked Transport for London to start looking at how they could best serve key locations – whether popular town centres, other transport hubs or public services like hospitals”.

But the TfL spokesperson said the Barnet-Enfield-Stratford proposal appeared on “an initial speculative list of potential routes – it was never a confirmed route”.

Meanwhile, a series of other proposed changes to bus routes serving eastern Enfield have been given the final go-ahead.

Two public consultations ran in January and February this year, in which TfL proposed increasing the number of bus services serving the Meridian Water development in Edmonton, while also axing the 349 serving Ponders End but extending some other bus routes in the area to compensate.

After considering the responses to the two consultations, TfL last month agreed to implement all of the changes affecting Enfield.

At Meridian Water, the changes involve re-routing two buses and replacing them with three other services, by extending their routes.

The W8 currently running from Chase Farm Hospital to Lee Valley Leisure Park will run to Tottenham Hale via Meridian Water. It will stop serving Pickett’s Lock but, to compensate, the 192 will terminate there instead. The 476 from King’s Cross to Northumberland Park is being extended to Meridian Water, with the current

341 instead terminating at Northumberland Park.

The 444, a bus which connects Turnpike Lane and Chingford via the North Circular, will include a diversion through Meridian Water in future. And a new night bus, the N341, will ensure there remains a night service in the area.

In Ponders End, the 349 to Stamford Hill, via Edmonton, will be axed. Instead, the 259 will extend from Edmonton Green to Ponders End, while the 279 which currently follows the 349 route up until Seven Sisters is now going to terminate at Stamford Hill instead of Manor House, to ensure that bus link still remains.

Geoff Hobbs, TfL’s director of public transport service planning, said there was “broad support for improving bus access to Meridian Water” and that the changes “will help ensure the area is well connected as it grows”.

He added: “Our aim is to provide a reliable, attractive and sustainable bus network that meets the needs of both existing communities and future residents.

“As with all changes, we will continue to monitor the bus network so that it meets the needs of our customers.”

TfL says it will gradually introduce the service alterations “in alignment with occupation of new homes at Meridian Water” and in a “staggered manner” and that all changes will be “clearly communicated in advance of introduction” via TfL’s website, customer communications and on-street information.

Review into reintroduction of weekly bin rounds

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield Council will conduct an “immediate review” of the borough’s waste collections, it’s been announced.

The review will be conducted “with a view to bringing back weekly bin collections” as per the local Conservative Party’s pledge during this year’s election campaign.

In their election manifesto, Enfield Conservatives promised to “reintroduce weekly black and blue bin collections”, referring to both general waste and recycling.

These bins have been collected on a fortnightly basis since early 2020, when the previous Labour administration made big cut-backs to its waste services, with general waste and dry recycling since being collected on alternative weeks across the borough.

However, with the minority Tory administration possibly relying on support from the Greens to vote through any changes, as well as the potentially high cost of any move needing to be assessed, the council is going ahead with a review before a final decision is made.

It remains unclear how much the return to weekly collections will end up costing taxpayers.

The review will, according to the council, “explore the best options for moving from fortnightly to weekly collections of recycling and general household to improve recycling rates, reduce waste and improve the service residents receive”.

Council leader Alessandro Georgiou said: “Residents expect cleaner streets, less fly-tipping and services they can rely on.

“They also want to see increased recycling and for processes to be simpler. That’s why we’re exploring the best options for introducing weekly bin collections to address these priorities.”

Enfield’s recycling rate currently stands at 32.9%, far below the borough’s target of 50%. At the time that weekly collections were previously in place locally, in 2019/20, the borough’s recycling rate was very similar, at 33%.

Going back further to 2013/14, however, the council achieved its best-ever recycling rate of 39.1%.

The council says its waste services review will look at “new measures to encourage recycling” and to help address the decline that has happened over the past twelve years.

The work will also assess the impact on vehicles, costs and the environment “to ensure a robust and deliverable plan is brought forward”.

“Creating a cleaner Enfield is a key priority for this council,” explained Cllr Georgiou. “That means cleaner streets, less litter and fly-tipping, more recycling, and a better environment for everyone.”

Options under consideration include simplifying collection schedules.

The council leader added: “Moving to weekly collections will require investment, but residents are clear they want cleaner neighbourhoods. By increasing recycling, reducing contamination and making the service easier to use, we can deliver real benefits for both residents and the environment.”

“Creating a cleaner Enfield is a key priority for this council”



Conservative council leader Alessandro Georgiou Credit Enfield Council

Published: 31st July 2026

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New museum hailed as 'extraordinary achievement'

Trent Park House of Secrets tells two contrasting stories of pre-war socialising and wartime intelligence gathering



On the ground floor, there's a recreation of Sir Philip Sassoon's drawing room Credit James O Davies

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A new Enfield museum celebrating the role played by the 'secret listeners' who gathered crucial intelligence during the Second World War is now open.

Twelve years after it was first proposed, Trent Park House of Secrets is open for people to explore the incredible – and contrasting – history of the Georgian mansion both before and during the war.

Shortly before opening day on Tuesday, 21st July, museum director Giuseppe Albano MBE said it was a "momentous occasion" and an "extraordinary achievement".

"We are right in the middle of living, breathing, history. It [the museum] shows the extraordinary layers of history of Trent Park and the thrilling drama this place has."

In the 1920s and 30s Trent Park House was the residence of Sir Philip Sassoon, one of the wealthiest men in England, who remodelled it to his taste. Sassoon was a friend of the future Edward VIII and future prime minister Winston Churchill. Other VIP guests included Noel Coward, Charlie Chaplin and Fred Astaire.

Sassoon died in 1939 and the house was requisitioned by the government. During the Second World War beginning that year, Trent Park House played a key role in Britain's intelligence operations – comparable in importance to Bletchley Park. Senior German officers were held captive in luxurious surroundings, unaware their conversations were being recorded. Vital information was obtained by bugging devices hidden in walls, lights, benches, plant pots, windows, and even a billiard table.

Beneath the state rooms, teams of 'secret listeners' – including German-speaking Jewish refugees – worked in concealed basement rooms, recording conversations between the captured officers and producing intelligence that gave the Allies a crucial advantage in the war.

Trent Park House of Secrets now brings together these two strands of history. The state rooms on the ground floor have been restored to their 1930s appearance, with artwork and furnishings belonging to Sassoon returning for the first time since 1939. In the basement the listening stations, offices and working rooms of the secret listeners are recreated with interactive displays, while new classrooms have already begun to be used by local schoolchildren.

Instrumental to the museum's creation has been Jason Charalambous who, as a Cockfosters councillor between 2014 and 2018, launched the campaign to save the house, restore it, and open it to the public. He became the founding trustee and chair of Trent

Park Museum Trust in 2016.

Speaking to the *Dispatch*, Jason said: "If it wasn't for the local campaign and people who turned up to the meetings and got this through planning, it could have been lost."

"We are delighted that so many people took it to heart."

Funding came from two primary sources; Berkeley Homes, developer of the adjacent housing scheme on the former Middlesex University campus, and National Lottery Heritage Fund. A large number of other funders also contributed.

The museum was due to open several years ago, but Jason said the Covid-19 pandemic, rising construction costs, and a "far more complicated" restoration process meant it took much longer.

"It wasn't easy for them [Berkeley Homes] to restore," Jason explained. "We had Covid-19, there was asbestos to deal with and all of these reasons why it has taken a long time."

"After Covid all museums were struggling and the priority [for funders] was to help existing venues stay afloat. But it [the delay] hasn't necessarily been a bad thing, it has enabled us to raise the money we needed and importantly to get it right, because it is so important in the local history and developing a sense of pride in Enfield."

Jason hopes the museum's opening will "captivate" visitors from near and far, "galvanising a community of historians to help us discover more".

"It is something Enfield should be proud of. As a councillor in 2014 I started this thing and I was determined to see it through."

The museum is open Tuesday to Sunday, 10am–5pm, with tickets costing £14 for adults and £12 for children and students. Under-fives enter for free.

For more information and to book tickets: Visit trentparkhouse.org.uk/products/tickets



Downstairs, hidden basement rooms show how 'secret listeners' eavesdropped on the conversations taking place above them Credit James O Davies

Enfield Camera Club member Pat Gowdie's picture titled 'St Mary's Shell', taken this spring at Cleveleys Beach, Lancashire



Life through a lens

Chris Silwood from Enfield Camera Club on how the group is embracing new technology while staying true to its roots

Founded in 1950, Enfield Camera Club has long been a fixture of the local creative community.

Every Thursday evening, members gather at Trinity Church in Enfield Town for two hours of photography, conversation and competition – a tradition that has endured for more than seven decades.

As the club notes, it has "always been light-hearted and friendly with plenty of time for discussion" – a spirit that continues to define our weekly meetings.

But in an era where nearly everyone carries a camera in their pocket, the club is adapting to a rapidly changing photographic landscape. The rise of smartphone photography and social media has transformed how people take, share and think about images.

Recognising this shift, we have expanded our programme to include sessions on mobile photography and we actively reach out to this newer community of image-makers. As it can be argued that everyone is now an amateur photographer courtesy of their smartphones, this is a trend the club is keen to embrace.

Historically, the club has attracted photographers of all levels, from beginners to seasoned professionals. Our programme blends guest presentations with digital and print competitions, and members regularly take part in local contests as well as the annual East Anglian Federation's inter-club championships.

Outings remain a highlight, with recent trips ranging from Woburn Safari Park to Kew Gardens and summer walks through the Lea Valley.

Yet we are also confronting a challenge facing camera clubs nationwide – declining mem-

bership. To counter this, Enfield Camera Club recently opened its doors to younger photographers, welcoming secondary school-age members – with appropriate safeguarding measures, including the use of chaperones.

The move has already paid off, with one junior member using their participation to fulfil their Duke of Edinburgh Award requirements. Such an extended cohort will hopefully bring a new dimension to the club, particularly in a world shaped by the likes of Instagram and mobile creativity.

The club's more established members are also exploring new technologies, including drone photography (undertaken while sticking to Home Office guidelines of course!) and the growing popularity of lightweight, mirror-less systems such as Micro Four Thirds.

This willingness to evolve is central to the club's mission; staying relevant, welcoming and creatively stimulating for photographers of all ages and abilities. Our digital presence reflects that ambition, with active accounts across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr, Flickr, Snapchat and Pinterest, alongside our website at enfieldcameraclub.co.uk.

In a time when photography is more accessible than ever, Enfield Camera Club is positioning itself not as a relic of the darkroom era but as a vibrant, modern community. Whether you shoot on a DSLR, a drone or simply your phone, the club offers a space to learn, share and grow – and to enjoy the social side of photography that apps alone can't replicate.

Happy snapping!

For more information about Enfield Camera Club: Instagram [/enfieldcameraclub2022](https://www.instagram.com/enfieldcameraclub2022) Visit enfieldcameraclub.co.uk

Great value Turkish cuisine in Palmers Green



Stuffed chicken tandir

Neil Littman visits new venue Tandır in Green Lanes for an Anatolian feast

I don't think it is any exaggeration to say the current economic climate for opening new restaurants is very challenging and risky.

There is still high consumer demand but also intense pressure from rising labour, energy, and food costs. New openings are running 15–20% below pre-pandemic levels, so I am very grateful to those who take the plunge and establish themselves against those odds.

Recently I ate at Tandır, following a recommendation from a friend. This is a new Turkish restaurant in Palmers Green which opened in November and is differentiating itself by offering regional cuisine from across Anatolia.

They have a short but interesting menu divided into two sections of main dishes. Tandır is also a 'bring your own' venue with no corkage charge at present, a bonus for drinkers.

The interior is distinctive with bare brick walls, wood-topped tables with comfortable seating and caramel and cream floor tiles reflecting the age of the building – over a hundred years old. An open kitchen at the back also allows you to see cooking and baking taking place.

The venue gets its name from the tandir, a wood-fired oven they

use to cook dishes called güveç (pronounced goo-vetch), which is a traditional Turkish stew or casserole cooked slowly in a clay or earthenware pot. These are served as a complete meal with chicken, lamb, beef, sea bass, or a vegetarian option with aubergine.

Other main course dishes include pide (Turkish pizzas served on flat bread) topped with lamb, beef, three cheeses or seasonal vegetables. I can best sum this up in just two words – comfort food.

In addition, there are several starters, a couple of soups (including a very good one made with lentils) and desserts, although each time I have eaten there I've settled for a glass of Turkish tea.

I was impressed with their bread,



Aegean three cheese pide

which they make themselves, and which accompanies both the starters and main courses. It's served golden-brown, with a slightly crispy crust and a pillowy, airy, and chewy interior. The bread is almost worth the trip alone!

On my first visit, I ordered muhammara, a walnut and roasted red pepper dip which was spicy and smoky with a kick of Aleppo pepper (a staple of Syrian cuisine as well). This arrived with their homemade bread, followed by a tandir dish called Topkapi, consisting of chicken stuffed with rice accompanied with roasted potatoes, onions, peppers, tomatoes with a red pepper paste – a great combination of flavours and ingredients, all for £15.

I followed this up with a return visit a few days later and ordered cacik, Tandır's take on tzatziki, made with thick creamy yoghurt, cucumber and oil garnished with sumac, dried mint and pomegranate seeds, plus more of that pillowy bread.



Muhammara

My main course was an Aegean three-cheese pide topped with a fried egg and a glass of ayran, a homemade yoghurt drink – an overload of dairy products! One disappointment was a side order of hummus which was a bit on the dry side and could have done with more tahini or oil.

On one visit I heard a couple of diners sitting on the next table discussing how they were unsure about some of the dishes on the menu, but the service at Tandır is welcoming and helpful.

While opening at a challenging time, fortunately they have been busy from the day they opened, and I consider they are one of the best-value restaurants in the area, with starters from £6 and mains from £13, including vegetarian and vegan options.

Tandır is open from 12pm until 10pm every day at 323 Green Lanes, Palmers Green N13 4TY. For more information: Visit tandir.co.uk

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

Submit your listing

We can include low-cost community events taking place in Enfield. For next month's listings, email the details of your event to enfielddispatch@socialspider.com by **Monday 17th August**.

THEATRE

The Sword in the Stone

Friday 7th August, 3pm
Myddelton House Gardens,
Bulls Cross EN2 9HG

Ancient British legends take to the road this summer as Cambridge Touring Theatre brings its lively and hilarious outdoor production of The Sword in the Stone to Myddelton House Gardens. Based on the age-old stories of King Arthur and his wise teacher, Merlin, this family version includes songs, dances and interactive fun, all presented by a cast bursting with energy and enthusiasm.

Tickets £18.45 adults, £13.79 children, under-threes free

Visit ticketsource.com/booking/select/opqvnblkxrr

LIVE MUSIC

Ska Reggae and Jerk at The Black Barn

Saturday 8th August, 6pm–11pm
Forty Hall Farm, Forty Hill EN2 9HA

Get ready for an unforgettable summer evening of irresistible rhythms, authentic Caribbean flavours and feel-good vibes as Ska, Reggae and Jerk comes to The Black Barn.

We've brought together two outstanding live bands for a celebration of the music that defined generations – from the infectious ska sounds of the 1960s to the laid-back reggae anthems that still fill dancefloors today. Add authentic jerk food, a fully stocked bar and the unique atmosphere of The Black Barn, and you've got the perfect summer night out!

Tickets £15 adults, £8 teens (all under-18s must be supervised)

Visit livestockuk.com

BANDSTAND

Lazy Sunday Afternoons at Hilly Fields

Sunday 9th August, from 3pm
Hilly Fields Park, Clay Hill EN2 9AJ

Our music on the bandstand summer programme continues with Roundabout Zoo providing the entertainment this month. Bring your own food and drink and enjoy lazing around on a Sunday afternoon!

Free entry, but raising money for North London Hospice

Visit hillyfields.info

Read more about upcoming events in Enfield on the Dispatch website:

Visit enfielddispatch.co.uk

CHILDREN

The Fairy Academy

Wednesday 12th and Thursday 13th August, 11am and 1.30pm
Chickenshed Theatre, 290 Chase Side, Southgate N14 4PE

The fairies' powers are fading and they need your help. Songs, spells and interactive trials bring the adventure to life. Join us for a magical experience – with fairy training before the show and a 'meet and greet' afterward!

Tickets £14, ideal for children aged two to eight years

Visit chickenshed.org.uk

SINGING

Gospel workshops

Every third Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm–9.30pm

Learn gospel singing techniques and a fun, inspiration gospel song! Includes refreshments.

£15 per session

Visit vocallysound.co.uk

WRITING

Enfield Creative Writing Group

Every second Thursday of the month, 10am
Community Room, Enfield Town Library, 66 Church Street, Enfield Town EN2 6AX

Enfield Creative Writing Group was setup by Enfield Over 50s Forum and continues to thrive. Please feel free to join us on the second Thursday of each month.

Free to join

Email enfieldtownlibraryhub@enfield.gov.uk

WORKSHOP

Papertunity Recycled Art Workshops

Every Wednesday in August, 12pm
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

These expressive workshops invite young artists (aged from five upwards) to experiment with creative techniques and recycled materials to produce a vibrant piece. Whether you're cutting, shaping, sticking or sculpting, you'll be guided step-by-step as you bring your artistic ideas to life using recycled paper and other eco-friendly resources.

Take home your very own masterpiece at the end of every session and leave inspired to continue creating sustainably at home.

Call 0800 640 3928

Email culture@enfield.gov.uk

AROUND THE BOROUGH

PONDERS END

Residents demand better rail services



Ponders End Station only has two trains each way through most of the day

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A recently-nationalised rail operator is being urged to boost service frequency at Ponders End Station – but Greater Anglia says there are “currently no planned changes”. This is despite Ponders End being the most poorly served of the borough’s four West Anglia Main Line stations – with Enfield Lock, Brimsdown and Meridian Water all served by more trains. Enfield Lock and Meridian Water stations both benefit from regular weekday services to Stratford, while Brimsdown recently benefited from

a timetable change that now sees evening services to Cambridge stopping at the station. But Ponders End only has two trains per hour through almost the whole day, with just a single additional service during the morning peak. Local resident Mike Cooper grew so frustrated with the lack of improvements he recently conducted a survey to establish what demand there was for more trains at Ponders End. Mike found that, among 252 Ponders End residents he surveyed, 96% believe the current frequency of two trains per hour is insufficient and 99% support increasing services to at least three trains per hour.

The survey also highlighted problems, with 95% of people experiencing overcrowding and 92% regularly having to stand for their journeys. “I have lived here for five years and the trains have always been a sticking point for me,” Mike told the Dispatch. “When you live in London you expect to be able to get anywhere conveniently, but these trains are often late, and they sometimes get cancelled or delayed. “The service is a bit crap really.” The area around Ponders End Station has seen extensive redevelopment in recent years, with hundreds more homes planned. Mike continued: “Sometimes, when a train is cancelled and you are left waiting half-an-hour for the next one, these fast trains zoom past you, and you wonder, why can’t there be one extra stop?”

A Greater Anglia spokesperson said: “We understand passengers want services which are reliable, convenient and meet demand, and we regularly review our timetable to identify where improvements are possible and practical. “There are currently no planned changes to services at Ponders End. Timetable changes are considered carefully across the wider network, taking into account customer demand, operational performance and the capacity available on the railway.”

FREEZYWATER

Award for long-serving scout leaders

Two longstanding volunteers with an Enfield scouts group have been honoured with a prestigious national award. Carol and Ron Beckwith, who have both dedicated more than 40 years to the 14th Enfield Scouts in Freezywater, were selected to receive a joint British Citizen Award (BCA). Often referred to as “the people’s honours” the award recognises exceptional individuals who have made an outstanding contribution to their communities through dedication, compassion and selfless service. Carol has spent more than 43 years leading and supporting the beavers troop, the youngest age group for scouts, while Ron has devoted over 40 years to leading the scout group. Together, they’ve attended countless



Carol and Ron Beckwith

evening sessions, weekend camps, expeditions and community events to “help thousands of young people develop confidence, resilience, leadership skills and a lifelong sense of belonging”.

It’s estimated over 2,000 young people have passed through beavers and scouts during Carol and Ron’s years of service. Reacting to their award win, Carol said: “Myself and Ron are absolutely thrilled and incredibly honoured to have been chosen for this award.” Carol and Ron’s influence has helped shape generations of local children, many of whom have gone on to become active and valued members of the community. Beyond the scouting movement, for more than 50 years, Carol and Ron have also volunteered at Freezywater St George’s Primary School, supporting pupils and staff. Even at the age of 80, they continue to volunteer within the school and remain active members of their local church community.

BRIMSDOWN

Pub HMO wins approval

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A previously unauthorised house in multiple occupation (HMO) has won planning approval for the first time. An application to convert the former Station Tavern pub next to Brimsdown Station was granted “part retrospective” approval by the council to operate as a HMO – after two previous applications failed. The first bid to convert the former pub into a HMO was refused in May last year. Then, last July, the council refused a second.

Despite this, in March this year there were multiple signs of people living there without permission, five months after the council said it was investigating the premises for unapproved works. The third – and now approved – application for a six-bedroom HMO was submitted in April. A council report confirmed it was already “fully constructed and occupied” but added: “The bin storage, cycle storage, and landscaping works have not yet been implemented.” The council also acknowledged the property is in an area with high surface water flood risk but added conditions to mitigate this.

ENFIELD TOWN

New social rent homes

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A newly-completed development previously slammed for not including enough affordable homes is set to be converted into 100% social housing. In a surprise move, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) agreed a deal with private developer HPJ 11 Developments to buy all 78 homes recently completed at 100 Church Street. The site was occupied by now-defunct technology firm Metaswitch until 2021, when a plan for the site’s redevelopment was strongly criticised for not coming anywhere close to meeting the council’s 40% affordable housing target.



The homes on the former Metaswitch site. Instead, a plan which proposed affordable units of just 9% was rejected by councillors – before the planning committee was later persuaded to grant approval for a small increase up to 11.5%. Now, with the new homes finally completed, MTVH has swooped in using cash from the Greater London Authority to purchase the entire development and offer it as social housing.

CARTERHATCH

Summer roadworks

Major roadworks are taking place on part of the A10 Great Cambridge Road this summer. Motorists using the dual carriageway through northern Enfield are warned to expect delays until “late September”. The works are taking place around the area of Cambridge Gardens, just to the south of Carterhatch Lane, where the pedestrian crossing is being replaced

and other road surfacing works are needed. In a letter to local residents, Julie Lewington, head of programme delivery at Transport for London, explained: “These works have been planned during the summer holiday period to help minimise disruption where possible.” Both day works and night works are taking place and temporary traffic signals will be in operation throughout the programme to safely manage traffic on the A10.

Major expansion of padel tennis provision across Enfield

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A major expansion of padel tennis provision across Enfield borough is being planned as the racquet sport continues to surge in popularity.

For several years, Hazelwood Tennis Club in Winchmore Hill hosted the borough's only padel tennis facility, but it could soon be just one of several locations across the borough if plans for six new venues are delivered.

Last month planning approval was granted for new padel facilities at Southbury Leisure Centre and Powerleague Enfield, while venues in The Ridgeway, Trent Park and Winchmore Hill also won permission over the past 18 months. In addition, a sixth padel tennis facility is proposed at David Lloyd Club in Enfield Town.

Invented in the 1960s, padel combines elements of tennis and squash and is played on a small, enclosed court with glass and mesh walls, requiring purpose-built facilities.

The application to install new padel courts on land to the rear of Southbury Leisure Centre was unanimously passed by Enfield Council's



planning committee in July, bringing the sport to a council venue for the first time.

The construction of the padel facility, containing three courts, overhead canopy and floodlights, will begin in the coming months.

Once open it will operate on a pay-and-play basis, opening from 7am–9pm, Monday to Friday, and from 9am–5pm at weekends.

Edward Smith, the council's cabinet member for council assets, said: "I am delighted our residents will

soon have the opportunity of playing padel in a brand new facility.

"The new courts will be in an established leisure and recreation setting and will help address a recognised shortfall in padel provision in the borough.

"Padel is the fastest-growing sport in the UK, so the courts will support both physical and mental health, by tackling inactivity, obesity and social isolation."

The other padel tennis venue to win approval this summer is at Powerleague Enfield in Great Cambridge Road, Edmonton, where four canopied padel courts are due to open by December as part of a £850,000 investment.

John Gillespie, chief executive of Powerleague, said: "Padel has continued to be incredibly popular across the UK, thanks to its sociable nature and the community it has attracted."

The other local padel facilities to win permission are Enfield Lawn Tennis Club, based in The Ridgeway (approved January 2025); Winchmore Hill Tennis Club, based at The Paulin Ground (approved November 2025); and Southgate Hockey Club in Trent Park (approved February 2026).

New Towners boss calls for 'patience' on eve of new season

BY ANDREW WARSHAW

Be patient – that's the message to Enfield Town fans from manager Billy Holland as the club embarks on a new season back at step three of the non-league pyramid.

Billy admits his team have been "thrown in the deep end" after they were handed a tough opening start to the Isthmian Premier Division campaign, which begins on Saturday, 8th August with an away trip to Lewes at the delightfully-named Dripping Pan.

That is followed by a pair of home fixtures against heavily-resourced St Albans and Ramsgate, and then a visit to promotion contenders Brentwood.

"Those first few games are very, very difficult," said Billy, who took over from Gavin Macpherson after the club's relegation from National League South at the end of last season and continues to develop his squad.

"We certainly haven't had it easy as far as August is concerned. They are all big boys, along with Chatham. Brentwood almost got promoted and with the players they've signed, and their budget, they'll be right up there.

"Lewes may have had a bad season by their own high standards last season but I can't see them replicating that. St. Albans have spent big and Ramsgate sacked their last manager because he didn't spend enough! It's sink or swim but let's take the first five games or so and see where we are."

The former Waltham Abbey boss has had to deal with the usual comings and goings during pre-season as he tries to build the best squad possible; players he thought he had but who changed their minds for various reasons, others who he decided did not quite fit the club's ethos.

Yet, Billy has an air of calm authority about him that augurs well. "I'm used to this sort of thing," he told the *Dispatch*. "As a non-league manager, you always have to have a plan B, even plan C. What I will say is that I have gone for characters, making sure our changing room is a happy place. I've learned over the years that while players may be very good at football, some are in it for themselves.

"Everyone I sign will have ability but must also have the fight to get us to where we need to go."

And where is that?

"I'm gradually getting my head around the fact that we are a big club at this level and our ambition is the play-offs. If we can get ourselves into a decent enough position by, say Christmas, that's a realistic goal because, by then, you've played everyone and know where your targets lie.

"But patience is going to be key."

Parents of young kickboxer launch fundraising appeal

Bella Chand from Enfield is set to compete at the ICO World Kickboxing Championships in France but her family must first find £2,500 to cover the cost

BY SIENNA MAHONEY

A twelve-year-old kickboxing sensation from Enfield will be competing for Team England on the world stage – but needs £2,500 to get there.

Bella Chand has won 19 gold medals in her kickboxing career to date and has recently been selected to be a part of Team England this October at the ICO World Kickboxing Championships in France.

However, Sanjeev and Pam Chand, Bella's parents, are currently raising money through a GoFundMe appeal to support Bella's trip.

Bella started kickboxing when she was eight-years-old and has won 31 medals this year alone.

Explaining her introduction to the sport, Pam said: "We wanted her to learn some self defence.

"To me, she's an inspiration."

But Pam and Sanjeev need to reach their £2,500 target to cover expenses including the flights to France, accommodation, competition entry fees, Team England kit, travel and event expenses, and training and preparation costs.

"The costs of competing internationally are largely paid for by the families themselves," said Pam.

"I just want her to get rewarded for what she does."



Bella Chand with one of her many trophies

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