

ENFIELD DISPATCH

Nº 97

THE BOROUGH'S FREE COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER

OCT 2026



THE NEWLY-FORMED Enfield Wash Pride in Place Neighbourhood Board met for the first time last month, with £20m of government cash due to be spent over the next decade. One of the board's first spending decisions is to install Christmas lights along Hertford Road, stretching all the way from Ordnance Road to Green Street. Another 'Pride in Place' neighbourhood board, in Lower Edmonton, has also been formed – read the full story about both at enfielddispatch.co.uk

Three schools face closure threat as pupil numbers fall

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Three Enfield schools are being considered for closure amid falling pupil numbers – despite all being rated 'good' by education watchdog Ofsted.

A decision on whether to launch a public consultation over plans to close Bishop Stopford's School, a Church of England secondary in Carterhatch ward, the adjacent Suffolks Primary School, as well as Starks Field Primary School in Edmonton, is due to be made by senior Conservative councillors at a cabinet meeting on Wednesday, 14th October.

The number of pupils enrolled at Bishop Stopford's in Brick Lane has fallen by around 25% over the last decade, with only 554 pupils registered at the start of this year – less than half the school's maximum capacity.

The two primaries have seen numbers decline even faster – by around 45% (down to 182 pupils) at Suffolks and by 58% (down to 187 pupils) at Starks Field.

While no decision has yet been

made and views from parents and staff will be considered first, the news is already causing anxiety locally after the three affected schools were named by the council on its website.

Tammy Day, headteacher of Bishop Stopford's, told the *Dispatch* her school was a success story. She said: "Bishop Stopford's School has seen pupil outcomes improve with the 2026 results being the best in three years. More students are able to progress successfully to sixth form, higher education, apprenticeships and employment.

"The school's success has been recognised through three consecutive 'good' Ofsted inspections."

A motion proposed by Labour group leader Ergin Erbil last month argued that "falling pupil numbers should not automatically lead to school closures" and "must be considered alongside wider issues" including housing affordability.

The ex-council leader added: "Any consultation on the future of local schools must be transparent, meaningful, accessible and inclusive, including for residents whose first

language is not English."

Shrinking rolls at mainstream schools are being driven by demographic changes and an aging population but, at the same time, demand is rising for Enfield's special schools, with the council pushing to expand capacity for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (Send).

Cllr Erbil's motion requested that, where mainstream schools are closed, the council should "prioritise the use of the site for Send provision before any alternative is considered".

Trevor Blackman, chief executive of Edmonton Community Partnership (ECP), has also raised concerns. He said creating additional special school places should not "come at the cost of closing existing schools that are themselves serving communities with significant needs".

Regarding Starks Field, he added: "ECP works with the headteacher and her team, and we know the community they serve. The school supports a number of vulnerable families.

"Attendance may not always follow patterns we would like, but those

children do attend and they need their school. If Starks Field were eventually to close, I would want a proper assessment of the effect that could have on attendance, parental engagement, safeguarding, educational continuity and trust."

Chris Dey, the Tory-led council's cabinet member for children's services, said: "The council is currently considering a range of options to ensure we have the right balance of mainstream and specialist school places in Enfield, in the right locations, and to meet the needs of all children and families now and in the future."

He added: "We recognise reports about potential school changes can cause concerns for families and school communities. We want to reassure parents, pupils and staff that there are no imminent changes to school provision in the borough. Enfield schools continue to operate as normal."

Across London over the past five years, around 90 schools have closed or merged – although the vast majority until now have been in inner London.

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‘New town’ must have good public transport ‘from the beginning’

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

The government’s new towns programme will “fail to deliver thriving, sustainable communities” unless high-quality public transport is included from the outset, according to a new academic report.

The University of Hertfordshire report argues low-density, car-dependent housing development forces residents to drive – increasing congestion, carbon emissions and pressure on local infrastructure.

With the government currently considering a fresh generation of new towns, University of Hertfordshire researchers argued it must avoid repeating those mistakes.

One of seven shortlisted new town locations is Crews Hill and Chase Park, on Green Belt land in the rural north-west of Enfield borough.

Crews Hill has a railway station, but is only served by two trains per hour during off-peak periods, while it also currently has just a single half-hourly bus service which does not connect to the station.

The area of farmland around World’s End dubbed ‘Chase Park’ has no railway stations. Two bus services, the 121 and 307, run along Enfield Road, connecting to stations in the west and east.

Drawing on case studies from Freiburg in Germany, as well as major developments in Cambridge

Two buses run through the area dubbed ‘Chase Park’ but it does not have a railway station

and Harlow, the University of Hertfordshire report concluded that public transport, walking and cycling networks must be planned and funded before homes are built.

Co-authors Stephen Joseph OBE and Sue Walsh said the UK must allow more homes of a higher quality inside a compact footprint, creating a more connected and active community, more space for parks and community facilities, and a reduction in cars, parking requirements, road congestion, and carbon emissions.

Stephen said: “It has been shown in the UK that we can build at higher density with less car use, but high-quality public transport must be in place from the beginning and fully integrated with the master-planning of the developments.

“Germany solves this by using land

value uplift and public funding to cover temporary transport subsidies for mass transit developments, but these funding routes are not really available in the UK at present.”

Enfield North MP Feryal Clark recently spoke out against elements of the 21,000-home new town proposed for Enfield, arguing in the August issue of the *Dispatch* that Chase Park should be entirely removed from the plans, based partly on its poor public transport links. This summer local campaigners also handed more than 4,000 letters opposing the new town to 10 Downing Street.

Housing minister Matthew Pennycook last month told a House of Lords committee that a decision on whether to go ahead with each of the seven shortlisted new town locations would be announced before the end of the year.

Erbil cleared of misconduct

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Former council leader Ergin Erbil did not break the civic centre’s code of conduct by posting a misleading video during the election campaign, a committee has ruled.

The decision reached last month by Enfield Council’s conduct committee followed a review by monitoring officer Terry Osborne, following complaints.

On Sunday, 22nd February, while campaigning for re-election, Cllr Erbil published a video on Facebook and X in which he falsely claimed Crews Hill Golf Club was not within the Green Belt, only had 20 members, and was unimportant for wildlife.

This prompted a backlash from the golf club, which has over 400 members. Around two weeks later, Cllr Erbil removed the video, but refused

to apologise for his errors.

At the election, Cllr Erbil’s Labour group lost their majority on the council for the first time in 16 years, with Alessandro Georgiou now leading a minority Conservative administration. Cllr Erbil remains Labour group leader.

In her review, Osborne found Cllr Erbil hadn’t broken the code of conduct. This was challenged by Declan Linnane, who said Cllr Erbil made at least three statements that were “demonstrably

and materially wrong”.

Campaigner Matt Burn also told the committee: “A genuine mistake may be a reason not to punish somebody severely, but it’s not a reason to leave the mistake uncorrected.”

In a written statement, Cllr Erbil said: “Throughout this matter I have acted in good faith and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct. At no stage did I set out to mislead residents.”

The Labour leader claimed his video reflected his “genuinely held views about the housing crisis facing Enfield”.

Committee chair Chris Dey said: “We have considered very carefully whether Cllr Erbil breached any part of the member code of conduct and we are satisfied that he did not – and this decision was unanimous.”

Explaining the decision, Cllr Dey pointed to “reflection” and subsequent “adjustments” made to the misleading video made by Cllr Erbil.

Enfield Labour leader Ergin Erbil

Recycling confusion

Enfield Council will soon update its website to make its recycling page “easier to understand” after being accused of having among the most “confusing” guidance in London.

Research ranked every borough according to how clear and simple their household recycling rules and advice were – with Enfield ranking second for the most confusing guidance.

In its research Business Waste Ltd found Enfield Council had 87 different rules and exclusions listed for household recycling, including “a substantial amount of small print”.

For example, the company said, “aluminium foil must be formed into a fist-sized ball, glass jars should be rinsed with their lids replaced, and shredded paper needs to be placed inside a paper bag”.

Continued contamination, following letters to the household, can eventually result in collections being stopped and a £60 fixed penalty notice being issued.

A council spokesperson said: “We are working on a project to refresh the content and advice on our website to make it even easier for residents to understand what can and cannot be recycled.”

Free parking

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Plans to offer 30 minutes of free parking per vehicle per day are being taken forward by Enfield Council’s Conservative administration.

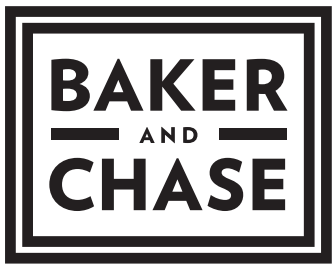
At a cabinet meeting last month, senior councillors gave resounding support to the new policy, which could be introduced before the height of the Christmas shopping period.

The council must now carry out a public consultation on the proposals before putting them into force.

Nevertheless, the feeling at Enfield Civic Centre is that the 30-minute free parking policy – applying to all council-owned car parks as well as “eligible on-street parking locations” – is likely to receive resounding support from the borough’s residents.

Maria Alexandrou, the Tory-run council’s cabinet member for environment, said the proposals were “a fantastic idea” which would “help the high streets” by boosting trade.

Council leader Alessandro Georgiou praised the plans as going “above and beyond”.



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Council leader ‘livid’ at Spurs over Whitewebbs appeal bid

It comes after a judge ruled in July that the planning permission issued to Spurs for a new women’s training centre at Whitewebbs Park should be quashed

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield Council leader Alessandro Georgiou has said he is “livid” at the decision by Tottenham Hotspur FC (THFC) to pursue an appeal against the recent judicial review verdict.

The football club wants to challenge the judge’s verdict which declared at the end of July that Enfield Council’s decision to issue permission for a women’s and girls’ training academy on Whitewebbs Park had been made unlawfully.

To do this, THFC has submitted a request to the Court of Appeal, which will need to grant approval before a second hearing goes ahead.

Back in June, High Court judge Sir Tim Kerr heard two days of evidence around the planning permission decision and later 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 appeal application is being made to the Court of Appeal because the High Court has already refused THFC permission to appeal



Cllr Georgiou took power in May on a promise to “save Whitewebbs”
Credit: Enfield Council

Kerr’s judgement. In rejecting this initial appeal, the judge stated that “the finding of material prejudice was a finding that real procedural unfairness had occurred”.

Asked for his reaction to the news, Cllr Georgiou told the *Dispatch*: “I am livid that a judgement

was made, the voters delivered their verdict [at May’s election] and Spurs are not backing down. But I have faith in the judicial process.”

This summer’s judicial review case was brought by the Guardians of Whitewebbs campaign group, which collectively raised £35,000 to help fund it.

In a statement, Guardian of Whitewebbs said they were “extremely disappointed” at the decision by THFC to pursue an appeal and “ignore the wishes of the local community and the new council administration”.

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

The group’s statement continued: “The Guardians of Whitewebbs will do all we can to defend our park, no matter how long it takes. The importance of public green space has never been greater, and it is abundantly clear that parks should not be enclosed and given over to private business.

“Unfortunately, due to Spurs’ intransigence, there are additional legal costs for all parties. We will be incurring additional fees that we will be unlikely to recover even if the application is refused.”

THFC’s plans for Whitewebbs Park – approved by councillors in February 2025 prior to their decision being quashed by the High Court this summer – had included a new women’s and girls’ training complex with eleven football pitches, situated within a 16-hectare fenced boundary, plus associated facilities within the existing former golf clubhouse. A new building had also been proposed to provide facilities for a grounds maintenance team and new ‘turf academy’.

“I am livid that a judgement was made, the voters delivered their verdict, and Spurs are not backing down”

In addition, THFC had planned to deliver a wider “restoration” of the park and its footpaths as well as to create “a new community hub facility” at the southern entrance.

Both THFC and Enfield Council declined to comment for this story.

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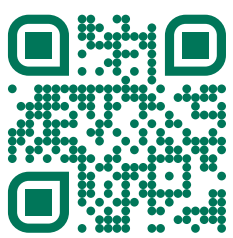
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Young People Are Our Future – Let's Listen

Exploring what makes boys angry

Youth mentor King Cas on how his new play *Stories Boys Don't Like to Tell* asks us to listen differently to the lives of young men

For years, the biggest problem surrounding young people was how to address youth violence.

Later, after more than a decade working with young people, I began to think we were asking the wrong question. Before asking 'what did you do?' perhaps we need to ask: 'What happened to you, are you okay?'

That's why I wrote *Stories Boys Don't Like to Tell* with Ellis Witter. We wanted to humanise the humorous boy, the angry boy, the sensitive boy, the rejected boy, the fatherless boy. He is one of us.

The play follows a group of young men laughing, arguing and joking together, while carrying things they've never properly said aloud. It explores fathers, sex, pornography, abuse, identity, race, faith, relationships and rejection – not because they make dramatic theatre, but because they came from real lives.

In 2018 and 2019, young men I was mentoring began sharing childhood experiences that were harrowing. I recognised parts of myself in their stories. One conversation changed me forever; an 18-year-old arrived furious, hitting himself, before finally telling me what had happened to him as a child. Then he lay in my arms and cried like a baby.

I realised these weren't isolated experiences. Boys do carry these stories. Many simply don't

have the language or the space to tell them.

One of the greatest misunderstandings about boys is that they don't talk. They do. The difference is who they become when they feel safe.

The banter in this play matters because that's how these conversations really happen. Humour becomes armour. Anger can feel safer than sadness. But when a man feels unconditionally safe, something remarkably honest emerges.

For me, masculinity is truth – not the watch, the clothes or pretending you need nothing. A young man's worth cannot be built on sexual performance or how tough he appears. I want boys asking a bigger question: 'Who are you, bro?'

The play also confronts something I've witnessed repeatedly – fathers matter deeply. Physical presence alone isn't enough. A father who affirms, listens and invests in his son can shape his life in extraordinary ways. My own father left when I was 14, but I never doubted he loved me. That mattered.

At the same time, I honour the women who've created spaces for boys when nobody else did. But boys also need healthy men willing to have uncomfortable conversations, admit they don't know everything, apologise, show affection and offer a model for courage.

The stories are told through a black lens because that's where they originated. Black boys

"One of the greatest misunderstandings about boys is that they don't talk"



From left to right; Christopher Yao, Rhys Lanahan and Maurice Forbes, cast of *Stories Boys Don't Like To Tell* Credit Kai Images



shouldn't have to perform someone else's idea of what being 'black enough' looks like. They deserve permission to be awkward, gentle, frightened, brilliant and fully themselves.

Faith belongs in this conversation too. Sometimes, compassionate listening means resisting the urge to provide neat answers and instead meeting the human being sitting in front of you.

What I hope happens when the lights come up isn't simply that people enjoyed the play. I hope fathers begin conversations they've never had with their sons. I hope older men lead younger men with honesty. I hope women recognise that the men in their lives carry insecurities too.

Most of all, I hope boys stop pretending they're okay when they're not.

If one person finally tells someone the story they've been carrying for ten years, our job is done.

Six years after writing this play, I know something I didn't know then; speaking isn't the end of the journey, it's the beginning.

Those stories have become testimonies. The boys who trusted me weren't frozen forever by the worst thing that happened to them – they became men. And my goodness, am I proud of them.

Stories Boys Don't Like To Tell plays at Dugdale Arts Centre from Friday 9th until Saturday, 17th October. To buy tickets: Visit dugdaleartscentre.co.uk

Local Voice, Local Stories

Williamz Omope
Credit Kai Images



Why one size never fits all

Williamz Omope, founder of WO Consultancy, on the importance of tailoring support for people's needs

Some of the most important lessons of my career did not come from a job – they came from sitting beside my mother as she tried to make sense of technology the rest of the world expected her to understand.

She did not need someone to do it for her. What she needed was a safe space to learn, to explore, get things wrong and to try again without feeling foolish. She needed patience, trust and someone who believed she could.

Being that person for her taught me something that has shaped every-

thing since; people do not fall behind because they lack ability, they are failed by systems that were never designed with them in mind.

This is why my WO Consultancy exists.

I am of this community. I did not arrive in Enfield to 'deliver a service' – I grew up understanding that one size has never fit all, and that the people most often overlooked are the ones who do not fit the neat boxes a programme is built around. That perspective is the thread running through everything I have done.

WO's mantra is simple – be disruptive in the spaces we occupy. Go against the grain, refuse to be performative, centre the community, and lead with lived experience rather than assumptions. That is not a slogan, it is how we work, and how we have survived.

Because the truth is, we have had to. The data on funding is stark; black-led organisations receive far less of it. We get a smaller slice of the pie and always have. So we decided early on not to depend on it.

Instead, we set out to be so good at what we do that we would be

commissioned on merit – trusted, recommended, and known for the quality of our work. It is one of my proudest moments when I meet people across London who have already heard of WO.

What we do is build spaces where people feel they belong. Our job clubs have no eligibility criteria and no gate-keeping – you are welcome whether you are unemployed, self-employed, a carer, a student, or simply stuck – and you can keep coming back until you are ready.

Today our clubs run across Enfield and Finsbury Park, with a new one

opening in West London this November. We run digital inclusion workshops all over the capital, from Brixton, to the Barbican, to Leytonstone; carrying our own mobile suite of laptops and tablets so that a lack of equipment is never the reason someone gets left out.

None of it happens alone. We work alongside a growing coalition of people who simply refuse to accept that opportunity should depend on your postcode.

This matters more now than ever. Digital exclusion is still very real, and the world of work is changing at an extraordinary speed. Artificial intelligence and automation are reshaping how people find jobs and how they do them. If we do not prepare our communities for what is coming, the people already furthest from opportunity will be left even further behind. I am not willing to let that happen.

"If we do not prepare our communities for what is coming, the people already furthest from opportunity will be left even further behind"

That is what Community Connect is about. It's our biggest event of the year, taking place on Thursday, 22nd October at the Living Room Library in Fore Street, Angel Edmonton.

This is not a job fair or a conference, it's a day to raise aspirations, to bring health, confidence, careers, wellbeing and real human connection under one roof, for free, with dignity, and with no barriers. It is where everything we believe becomes something you can see and feel.

This year it carries an even greater purpose. I am proud to be taking on the role of employment lead for Enfield Youth and Community Alliance, and we are using Community Connect 2026 as the launchpad for our shared work on employment in the years ahead – joining up brilliant local organisations, sharing what works, and building a collective offer worthy of the people it serves.

I have invested a long time in this community, and it began with something very simple; making sure one person felt capable and seen. I am not done yet – in truth, we're only just getting started.

For more information about WO Consultancy and the upcoming Community Connect event: Visit woconsultancy.co.uk



Boost for community patrol scheme

Love Your Doorstep’s community patrol is now backed by the council for the first time since it launched

A community crime patrol run by volunteers for the past seven years has launched a new partnership with Enfield Council.

Love Your Doorstep’s community patrol has helped improve safety in town centres by providing a visible presence in the middle of the afternoon, when schoolchildren are making their way home. It was launched in 2019 after a spate of robberies targeting young people.

Now, the not-for-profit social enterprise has entered into a partnership with the council’s own community safety team and CCTV operations.

It comes after Love Your Doorstep (LYDS) held a series of “positive meetings” with the council following the change of administration in May, when the Conservatives took over from Labour.

LYDS founder Emma Rigby, who was awarded a British Empire Medal in 2022 thanks in part to her work establishing the patrol, said: “This feels like a really significant step forward for community patrol.

“There has been a huge amount of work behind the scenes to get us to this point, and I am delighted that we will now be working so closely with Enfield Council’s community safety team and their wider network of partners.

“Our volunteers have given thousands of hours of their own time over the years because they care about our young people and our community. What we have always wanted is for that community effort to be properly joined up with the organisations working to keep Enfield safe.”

Representatives from LYDS recently visited the council’s CCTV control centre to see first-hand how the borough’s camera network is monitored and how the team responds when incidents occur.

The visit provided an opportunity to explore how the patrol and CCTV teams can work more closely together in future, particularly when volunteers witness or become aware of incidents while out in the community.

Emma continued: “Visiting the CCTV control centre really demonstrated what could be achieved by connecting all of these different pieces together.

“The regular Enfield Town patrol isn’t changing – our volunteers will still be out there after school as they always have been – but there will now be a much stronger network around them.

“Most importantly, we want to grow. There are so many people in Enfield who care deeply about their community, and we’d love more of them to come and join us.”

The LYDS community patrol was originally established in Enfield Town, where children from several nearby schools converge on weekday afternoons, but has since expanded into other town centres as well, with more than 200 patrol volunteers registered in total.

The new partnership will focus on recruiting even more volunteers, with the council supporting the patrol through its communications channels.

Council leader Alessandro Georgiou said: “Making Enfield safer takes all of us working together.

“When I became leader of Enfield Council I promised to work with residents for a better Enfield. I am so pleased the partnership between the community patrol, Enfield Council and our community safety partners is growing.

“The volunteers who give up their time to support their local community deserve enormous credit and a huge thank you. Their commitment is helping to make our neighbourhoods safer and stronger.

“By bringing together local residents, the council, CCTV services and community safety teams, we are taking a joined-up approach to tackling issues and preventing crime.

“We are proud to support the community patrol and look forward to helping grow its volunteer network so that, together, we can make Enfield a safer place for everyone.”

Man admits causing death by dangerous driving

Laura Sone-Demetrious was 27 when she was killed while walking her dogs along the A10

A man has admitted causing death by dangerous driving on the A10 in Edmonton.

Sedor Olmez, aged 20 and from Gardens Road in Tottenham, pleaded guilty to the charge during a hearing last month at the Central Criminal Court.

Victim Laura Sone-Demetrious was hit and killed by a BMW as she used a pedestrian crossing on the dual carriageway on Tuesday, 9th January 2024.

At the time of the crash Laura had been walking her two dogs, who were also killed.

Olmez was behind the wheel of the BMW when the crash took place. He was aged 17 at the time.

Another man is also charged with causing death by dangerous driving. Roderick Mirzakhani, aged 31 and from Sycamore Gardens in Tottenham, has not yet entered a plea.

Additionally, Olmez has admitted driving without insurance. His sentencing date for both charges has yet to be fixed, although he has already been disqualified from driving with immediate effect.

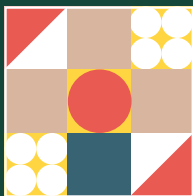
Laura’s death led to a road safety campaign by her sister, Gina, which eventually resulted in Transport for London (TfL) agreeing to install new average speed cameras along the A10 Great Cambridge Road last year.

Reacting to the news of Olmez’s conviction, Gina said: “A guilty plea does not, in our eyes, erase the pain that has been caused or demonstrate the remorse we have desperately wanted to see.



Laura Sone-Demetrious

“I am also deeply saddened knowing that my son will never get the chance to meet his beautiful auntie, Laura. Someone who was so bubbly, outgoing, loving and so full of life.”



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D-Day hero Don dies aged 105

Don Howkins helped liberate Europe in 1944 with the 90th Middlesex Regiment of the Royal Artillery

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Respects were paid last month to Enfield’s last D-Day veteran, who recently died aged 105.

Donald ‘Don’ Howkins – who carried a piece of shrapnel in his leg for the rest of his life after being wounded during the liberation of Europe in 1944 – passed peacefully at his Forty Hill care home, Elsyng House, on Wednesday, 26th August.

A funeral was held for Don two weeks later at Enfield Crematorium. The service was attended by nearly 200 people, including Enfield mayor Emma Supple. She described him as “a wonderful man who will be much missed” as well as an “Enfield treasure”.

Celebrations of Don’s life were also held at Elsyng House and at Enfield Town Club, where he was a long-time member.

Alina Simon, general manager of Elsyng House, said it was a “true honour and privilege” to know Don and added: “His courage, kindness, wonderful memories and stories

touched the hearts of residents, families and team members alike.

“We will miss his smile and his presence, and his legacy and service will always be remembered.”

Don was a motorbike dispatch rider with the 90th Middlesex Regiment of the Royal Artillery during the Normandy landings of June 1944. He landed on Gold Beach, aged just 23, and then went on to help liberate Nazi-occupied France and other parts of Europe.

After facing combat as a gunner in Tilly-sur-Seulles, Don moved through Belgium and the Netherlands with his unit, as the liberation of Europe continued. He was injured in December 1944 but miraculously he, and his four brothers, all survived the war.

Following his service in the war, Don and his wife, Dorothy, moved to Winchmore Hill where they brought up their three children.

Don returned to being a butcher, and became the managing director of a company that boasted shops all over London. Among its 14 locations, Buckingham & Partners had shops in Winchmore Hill, Palmers Green and Edmonton



Don Howkins with his war medals

“His legacy and service will always be remembered”

prior to its closure in 1992, when Don retired.

Don was awarded the Legion d’honneur, the highest French order of merit, on the 70th anniversary of D-Day in 2014.

While Don had been reluctant to talk about the war for most of his life, in later years he embraced his past and spoke to the *Dispatch* about his memories in 2023, describing D-Day as “very frightening”.

In recent years Don had also visited local schools and youth groups in Enfield to share his story. On the 80th anniversary of VE Day, last year, Don even became a TikTok star after a video of him visiting Enfield War Memorial and paying tribute to his “lost friends” went viral.

And for his 105th birthday earlier this year, Elsyng House hosted a big celebration for Don. He received almost 350 handmade cards thanks to the efforts of local schoolchildren.

Don had lived at Elsyng for the last three-and-a-half years of his life, where he enjoyed a daily tot of whiskey. When he first arrived, staff had no idea about Don’s past, and only realised he was a D-Day veteran when they saw his medals on Remembrance Sunday in 2023.

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Extent of Thames Water’s leaking Enfield pipe network revealed



A recent water leak in Oak Avenue, Enfield

Special Dispatch investigation finds 130 unfixed leaks in the borough, as demands grow for water industry to be nationalised

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

New analysis by the *Dispatch* has found 130 reported leaks across Enfield that remain unfixed by Thames Water – despite the utility company being alerted to some of them as long as 18 months ago. Amid ongoing anger locally over a series of major leaks this summer that took out supplies to thousands of families for several days – and even saw operations postponed at Chase Farm Hospital – the *Dispatch* trawled through public records to reveal the full breadth of the water issues affecting the borough. Thames Water provides a map on its website where customers can search for leaks in their area using their postcode, with details provided on how long each leak has been ongoing and whether the repair is underway or not. Last month, the *Dispatch* undertook an extensive search to collate records for all leaks in the borough that remained unfixed, as of the second week of September. This research revealed that out of 130 local leaks in total, there were 26 across Enfield that had been

reported in 2025 but had yet to be fixed, with ten of these still not fully investigated. Repairs were said to be either “underway” or “planned” for the remaining 16 leaks reported last year. Out of the 130 total, 91 leaks had either not been investigated by Thames Water at all or were still listed as “under investigation”, meaning the extent of the repair needed was unknown. Repairs were said to be “underway” on just 14 leaks. The longest-leaking pipe was located in Slades Close, World’s End, where an issue was first reported on 16th January 2025. Thames Water stated that it would “review this as soon as possible”. Other long-running leaks included one ongoing since 26th March 2025 outside a dry cleaners in Hertford Road, Enfield Wash, where Thames Water said it was “now planning the repair”. The same claim was made for a leak in Lincoln Road, Ponders End, that had been ongoing since 8th April 2025. In addition, as of September there were nine unfixed pipe blockages across Enfield, with work said to be “underway”

to unblock just one of them. Of these, one blockage was first reported more than six months ago, on 19th March, and remains under investigation. These findings followed two major leaks in the borough that both caused chaos for several days. In August, Chase Farm Hospital was forced to cancel routine operations as water supplies to 4,500 properties were impacted by a burst main in Bramley Road, which took Thames Water five days to fix. The company’s handling of that incident was criticised by Enfield North MP Feryal Clark, who described it as “appalling”. There followed another major leak in early September, in Enfield Road. This leak also lasted five days, as Thames Water struggled to even locate it. Supplies at Chase Farm were again impacted. Both major leaks in August and September came towards the end of a prolonged period of hot and dry weather. The Bramley Road leak was attributed by Thames Water to “dry ground” causing cracks to the water main. The company apologised for the disruption and said it wished to “sincerely

thank everyone affected for their patience”.

Nationalisation debate

Southgate and Wood Green MP Bambos Charalambous has called on Thames Water to be nationalised “either permanently or initially through a special administration”, writing to Environment Secretary Angela Eagle and describing the privately-owned utility company’s recent record as “particularly concerning”.

Both Charalambous and Clark addressed a parliamentary debate last month, prompted by 208,000 people signing a petition calling for a referendum on nationalising the water industry.

Clark told the Westminster Hall debate: “When a failure in our water infrastructure can disrupt NHS treatment, we are no longer talking simply about poor customer service. We are talking about critical national infrastructure.

“What made this incident [in August] particularly unacceptable was not simply that a pipe burst. Infrastructure can fail, we all know that. It was what happened afterwards.

“My constituents faced conflicting information about whether their water would return. They struggled to contact Thames Water. Bottled water stations were placed in places that were extremely difficult for elderly and disabled residents to reach without a car. When I raised the issue with Thames Water, their response was extraordinary. They said ‘it’s not uncommon for us to set up bottled water stations in

London areas without considering residents without a vehicle’.”

The Labour MP added: “That experience inevitably raises a much bigger question: who is our water industry ultimately being run for?”

Thames Water is owned by a consortium including a Chinese sovereign wealth fund and a Canadian pension fund. According to campaign group We Own It, the firm has paid a total of £10.4billion in shareholder dividends since privatisation in 1989, while debts now reach £14.7bn. It also points out 28% of bill revenue from customers is spent on servicing debt.

At last month’s debate, Charalambous said: “The current model for our water service is not working for customers and has not been working for quite some time. My constituents have watched their bills rise again and again while Thames Water falls further into debt and water bosses are rewarded with huge bonuses, despite failing to invest in critical infrastructure and allowing more sewage pollution.”

Prime Minister Andy Burnham previously expressed support for nationalising the water industry, calling it a “leaking monument” to failed policies, but now admits it would be “very difficult” to bring back into full public ownership, because of high debts.

Addressing MPs at the end of the Westminster Hall debate, water minister Emma Hardy said: “It’s horrific we have

ended up in this situation, but I am delighted to [soon] bring forward a water bill that meets the political moment and appetite for change, and very delighted that we are closer to that with the change in prime minister, opening up options that were previously not available.

“Suddenly, more things are on the table.”

However, Hardy would not commit to nationalisation. She continued: “We are working through things right now, across government, to bring forward a bill that meets that appetite for change.”

Thames Water loses around 570 million litres of water per day, but the company claims to have reduced leaks by 15% since 2019. The company has also twice been prosecuted by Enfield Council since 2024 over unauthorised roadworks, paying more than £70,000 over multiple rule breaches.

In August 2025 the *Dispatch* also reported on a leak in Windmill Hill that led to the road – used by six bus routes – being closed for nine consecutive days. Thames Water didn’t even begin its repair until a week after it was first reported.

Council leader and London Assembly member Alessandro Georgiou – an admirer of Margaret Thatcher, who led the 1980s sell-off of UK utilities – raised Thames Water’s performance at Mayor’s Question Time last month.

The Conservative addressed Sir Sadiq Khan and said: “I don’t want to go too hard and undermine my capitalist credentials on this [...] but do you agree local authorities need to use all the powers they have to absolutely penalise Thames Water when they take the mickey with roadworks, tearing them up, not doing the work, and we’re still getting burst mains afterwards?”

The London mayor responded: “He must have selective amnesia [...] it was Thatcher who took powers away from councils and privatised Thames Water.”

Asked to comment on the 130 unfixed leaks across Enfield, Thames Water did not respond.

“Who is our water industry ultimately being run for?”



Feryal Clark MP addresses the Westminster Hall debate last month

From battling cancer to fighting for Highfield

Conservative councillor
Peter Charalambous
reveals his journey
into politics and which
local issues are top
of his agenda

Four months ago, the residents of Highfield ward did something extraordinary. In the local election, our community decided it was time for a fresh approach, turning what had long been considered a safe Labour seat into a major Conservative win.

Standing alongside my colleague, Bambos Charalambous, we were deeply honoured to receive the backing of our neighbours. For me, stepping into Enfield Civic Centre as your elected councillor was not just a political milestone – it was a deeply personal triumph.

Many in Enfield know that my journey to this seat has not been straightforward. My most difficult trial came during my first run for council back in 2022. I was not just fighting a political campaign; I was fighting for my life against stage four cancer.

Facing down life's toughest hurdle teaches you a lot about resilience, empathy, and absolute determination. It is that exact fighting spirit that I have brought directly into my role representing you.

Having lived in Enfield for over 55 years, my roots here are deep. I am a family man, married with three daughters who grew up in this borough. Professionally, I have spent more than 36 years working in the travel industry, managing complex logistics, building strategies,

Peter Charalambous was elected in May to represent Highfield ward
Credit: Enfield Council



“Facing down life’s toughest hurdle teaches you a lot about resilience, empathy, and absolute determination”

and handling tight budgets.

For a quarter of a century, I have also thrown myself into grassroots community work – as chairman of our local Greek school, vice chairman of The Cypriot Football League

(UK) and currently as a trustee at the Friends of Firs Farm, who look after our community hub and wetlands, a place I recommend all Enfieldians to visit.

I didn't run for council to sit on the sidelines

or accept the status quo. I ran because I believe that local government should work for the people who pay for it.

Now, four months into the job, both Cllr Charalambous and I have hit the ground running. We are already delivering visible, practical changes to the issues that have been ignored for far too long. We have actively targeted speeding and anti-social behaviour to make our streets safe for families. We have launched a major crackdown on the environmental blight of fly-tipping and are taking a hard line against illegal houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) that threaten the integrity of our neighbourhoods.

Furthermore, we are finally tackling the destructive, overgrown tree roots that have been left to wreck public pavements and creep into residents' private driveways and gardens. These are the everyday frustrations that affect our quality of life, and we are fixing them one by one.

Looking forward, our mission remains clear. We want an Enfield that is clean, safe, and prosperous. That is why we are fully committed to bringing back weekly bin collections and introducing 30 minutes free parking – vital services our residents deserve to keep our streets immaculate.

Living here for over half a century has taught me that no challenge is too great when a community stands together. Highfield ward has trusted us to deliver strong, transparent, and dedicated representation, and we will continue working every single day to prove that your trust was well placed.

Peter Charalambous represents the Highfield ward alongside his Conservative colleague Bambos Charalambous (not the same person who represents Southgate and Wood Green in parliament). To get in touch with Cllr Charalambous:
Call 020 4534 1731
Email cllr.peter.charalambous@enfield.gov.uk

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Name-calling is not planning policy

Sarah Jons, leader of the Green group at Enfield Council



Green councillor and Enfield group leader Sarah Jons responds to a recent national newspaper column describing her party as “Nimbys”

Apparently, asking awkward questions about development now makes you a “Nimby”.

Nimby, naysayer, blocker. It has the rhythm of a nursery rhyme and roughly the same level of political argument.

Polly Toynbee’s recent column in *The Guardian* about the Crews Hill and Chase Park ‘new town’ gave Enfield Greens the Nimby treatment. But former prime minister Sir Keir Starmer actually got there first when, in June, he warned about “the naysayers and the blockers” and said the new town decision would be taken in the national interest.

So here is the new planning glossary...

Ask who can actually afford the homes? Nimby.

Ask whether schools, GPs, roads, trains, water and electricity can cope? Naysayer.

Ask whether people living there should have a meaningful say? Blocker.

At this rate, residents will need a bingo card!

But there is a more interesting question asked by us in the Green Party: what is development for, and who benefits?

We need homes, renewable energy, transport and digital infrastructure. But ‘development’ is not a magic word that makes consequences disappear.

Take data centres. They are coming;

vast industrial buildings with huge demands for electricity and water. The Green Party is challenging their blanket treatment as critical infrastructure.

If one lands near you, you might ask what it does to the grid,

water supply and local services. You might even ask what the community gets back. Congratulations – you’re a Nimby!

Then there is the other little fiction in Enfield; that five Green councillors have somehow become Conservatives in disguise. We could spend the next four years batting that one away. Yawn!

And in respect of Crews Hill and the new town; yes, Enfield needs homes, desperately. But “21,000 homes” is not a housing policy, it’s a number.

Enfield Labour’s record on Meridian Water is worth remembering. The 10,000-home ambition dates back a decade but, so far, just 301 homes have been completed, with another 274 expected by winter 2027.

This failure is not just the missing homes – Meridian Water is now part of Enfield Council’s debt problem. Labour may no longer run Enfield, but the party still owns that record. Now taxpayers are left carrying the bill.

So before Labour calls Greens “blockers” and “naysayers”, a little humility might be in order. Enfield Greens are not saying Green Belt land can never be built on – we are saying the bar should be exceptionally high. Once it is gone, there is no giant ‘undo’ button.

And while Westminster talks about the “national interest”, communities are entitled to wonder how much weight their views carry when the message from above is simply “get it built”.

Green councillors are here to ask who benefits, who pays, what we lose and whether residents are actually listened to. If that makes us Nimbys, naysayers and blockers, fine, but name-calling is not planning policy – it is what you do when you have run out of answers.

People voted Green in Enfield to challenge over-development,

poor planning and damage to nature. Someone has to help clear up the mess. That is what Greens are for.

We are already changing Enfield politics – and we’re only just getting started.

Editor’s note

‘Nimby’ is an acronym that stands for ‘not in my back yard’ and is a term frequently used to discredit people who raise objections to development in their local area.

“We are here to ask who benefits, who pays, what we lose and whether residents are actually listened to”

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 19th October**.

Nationalise now

Dear Enfield Dispatch

The dreadful handling of the recent Thames Water leak in Enfield was hardly surprising. This company is a basket case, taking London and the south-east of England for a ride.

They’re losing 570 million litres of water daily, that’s equivalent to over 3.5 million people’s daily water use – not far off half of London. It’s laughable that they’ve managed to improve this by 15% in seven years. They clearly prioritise shareholders over customers.

This is a critical issue that resonates across the political divide. Nationalising this mess and taking control of our water destiny is crucial as we face significant climate challenges in the coming years.

Does Andy Burnham have the courage to make this happen? It’s a political open goal.

Jerome O’Callaghan
Enfield Town

Get revamp right

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Enfield Town deserves a scheme that delivers value for taxpayers and works for everyone; pedestrians, cyclists, motorists, bus passengers, disabled people and local businesses. No single group’s interests should automatically take precedence without assessing the consequences for others.

In Palmers Green, I have observed severe congestion in Green Lanes at peak times and during roadworks, while the cycle lane often appears lightly used. Published evidence on usage, safety, journey times and business impacts should inform decisions about allocating limited road space.

Reviewing a scheme can be sensible [*Town centre revamp ‘paused’*, page 14]. However, the council should explain what it proposes to change, why, what any delay or redesign will cost, and how funding will be protected. Residents and businesses deserve clear, timely answers.

Transport for London funding is public money. Securing it matters; spending it well matters equally.

The priority must be getting the best scheme for Enfield while protecting public investment.

Angela Evangelou
Palmers Green

Parking costs

Dear Enfield Dispatch

It will be interesting to see how the council proposes to implement free daily 30-minute parking in council-owned car parks [*Free parking*, page two].

The Sunday three-hour free concession in the town centre took about a year or more to be effective once ‘PayByPhone’ and app payments were implemented and cash abandoned, after changes to the notice boards and modifications to the app so that people wouldn’t pay for parking inadvertently.

Little Park Gardens has two old, former cash parking meters capable of issuing manual tickets on a Sunday – one is permanently shut down, despite having a sticker on it saying it is usable – the other is frequently ‘out of service’, often leaving the only option as the smartphone app or a phone call to PayByPhone. So is phone access to be the only solution in future for free parking sessions?

If the daily concession is tied to the vehicle, across the whole council parking estate, does this mean the end of the ticket system – as there is no facility in those machines to enter a vehicle registration to enforce that – or will a new fleet of machines be required?

I also understand that parking in Palace Gardens, by ANPR, will be taken on by DWS/Deutsche Bank instead of the council. Will the 30 minutes grace be applied to that too?

John Usher
Enfield Town

Charity walk

Dear Enfield Dispatch

Bowel cancer is the UK’s fourth most common cancer, but it can be treatable, curable and even preventable. Knowing the symptoms – like blood in your poo, bleeding from your bottom or changes in your bowel habits – is really important.

Getting 150 minutes of exercise a week can reduce your risk of bowel cancer by around 20% – yet almost a third of people in the UK don’t know this. That’s why we’re asking people to walk 60 miles in October – less than two miles a day, at your own pace, whenever suits you.

Sign up at bowelcanceruk.org.uk, get walking, and fundraise for Bowel Cancer UK.

Genevieve Edwards
Chief executive, Bowel Cancer UK

AROUND THE BOROUGH

ENFIELD TOWN

Town centre revamp ‘paused’



New cycle lanes in London Road form part of the scheme Credit Enfield Council

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Enfield Council “should be honest” about changes being discussed to the long-awaited revamp of the town centre, the leader of the civic centre’s Green group has warned.

The Conservative-run council confirmed last month the ‘Enfield Town Liveable Neighbourhood’ scheme had been “paused” amid a “review” into certain aspects of the project.

Two phases have already been completed, in the west of the town centre, with the next phase set to focus on the eastern side and include new cycle lanes,

pedestrian crossings and a revamp of the area outside Enfield Town Station by relocating the taxi rank.

Green group leader Sarah Jons told the *Dispatch*: “This was meant to make Enfield Town easier to walk and cycle through, greener, safer and less dominated by traffic. If the new administration wants to pull pieces out, it should be honest about what residents will no longer get.”

The five-strong Green group helped the Conservatives take power in Enfield last May by abstaining on the vote for a new council leader, but did not enter any formal agreement with the party.

Funding for the Enfield Town

Liveable Neighbourhood scheme is provided by Transport for London (TfL), with the next phase set to cost £3.65m. In other parts of London where TfL-funded schemes have either not gone ahead or been scrapped after they were installed, the transport authority has used its powers to withhold funding for other local projects.

Regarding the Enfield Town project, a TfL spokesperson said: “The scheme was designed to be delivered in phases, with the first two phases now complete. We understand that the next phase of construction has been paused following a review of priorities by the council.

“We are awaiting further details before releasing further funding, to ensure that the proposals continue to deliver the intended benefits for local people.”

Multiple rounds of public consultations on the works in and around London Road, Genotin Road and Cecil Road have previously taken place and the former Labour administration approved the works in February.

A council spokesperson explained the project was “paused in May to allow time for the new administration to be confirmed and for the scheme to be reviewed”. This review, they said, “identified aspects of the design where further consideration is needed to ensure the next phase delivers the right balance of benefits for everyone who uses Enfield Town”.

“No final decisions have yet been made,” the spokesperson added.

BUSH HILL PARK

Mental health hub opened

A new integrated mental health hub has been opened.

Enfield mayor Emma Supple cut the ribbon to declare the Mental Health Community Hub, in Park Avenue, officially open for patients.

It now provides a range of specialist local services and a community café for out-of-hours crisis support, along with a service which supports people who are living with long-term mental health conditions.

The £3.3m hub also offers assistance in preventing social isolation and reducing the escalation of mental and physical health conditions. Previously, these services were split across two locations.

Andy Milne, the council’s cabinet member for adult social care, said: “The hub is integral to the borough and supports vulnerable residents in a welcoming and safe space.

“Our staff and people who use the services have been central to the centre’s development, and it was great to see a display of our service users’ artwork and creative writing on show at the official opening.



Enfield mayor Emma Supple (left) cut the ribbon on the hub in Park Avenue Credit Enfield Council

“The investment the council has made provides an improved environment and includes a modern clinic and consultation rooms with bright and open spaces. The project was delivered on time and under budget. Essential services continue to be delivered by expert local authority and NHS staff to provide support and care for those who need it the most.”

BRIMSDOWN

Cat poo firm fined

A company that stored food and drink in a warehouse contaminated by cat faeces has been fined more than £18,000.

FoodArt UK Limited, based in Lockfield Avenue, pleaded guilty to four food hygiene offences after environmental health officers from Enfield Council uncovered serious failings during inspections in January and February 2025.

Council officers discovered significant quantities of cat waste around the warehouse where food was stored. The contamination

included faeces, urine, and bacteria on the floor in aisles where drinks were stored, and on packaging that consumers may have handled and drunk from directly, including open crates of bottled water.

FoodArt UK Limited breached requirements to keep its food premises clean, maintain repair and condition, and to ensure domestic animals were kept away from foodstuffs. It pleaded guilty to the four charges at Highbury Corner Magistrates Court and was issued with fines and cost orders totalling £18,335.

EDMONTON

Tower demolition plan

BY JOE IVES, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Enfield Council has agreed to demolish an “unsafe” tower block – but accepts it “can’t frogmarch” out its remaining residents.

At a cabinet meeting last month, it was agreed to “commence demolition” of Walbrook House “as soon as vacant possession, funding and the necessary approvals are in place”.

The 23-storey building in Devonshire Road was one of three Edmonton tower blocks flagged with serious issues following safety inspections carried out in 2022. The other two are located on Shires Estate. Inspections discovered that the 1960s-built blocks were in need of substantial repairs, running to tens of millions of pounds.



Walbrook House in Devonshire Road

The last council tenants of Walbrook House were moved out in March 2025 and the civic centre claimed it had received “overwhelming support” from residents.

But the council has since confirmed it had failed to reach a resolution with three elderly leaseholders, who remain living in the building and claim the compulsory purchase price offered to them undervalues their homes.

FREEZYWATER

Action over allotment

A supermarket boss has been evicted from a council-run allotment site after unlawfully transforming the land for commercial use.

Öncü Food Centre and its director, Suleyman Tekagac, were ordered by Wandsworth County Court to vacate the plot at Elliotts Field Allotment, in Aspen Way, as well as restore the land and pay Enfield Council’s legal costs of £2,013.

It followed legal action by the council, after the allotment was used for business purposes without permission – including for storage and an access area. After the defendants initially failed to comply with the order, the court appointed bailiffs to secure possession.

Neither Tekagac nor Öncü Food Centre held a legal tenancy for the allotment plot. The business, in Hertford Road, sought to acquire the land for commercial use, but was refused permission.

LICENSING ACT 2003

Notice Of Application For A New Premises Licence/ Premises Certificate*

- The sale of alcohol for consumption off the premises between the hours of 08:00 and 23:00 daily
- For the premises Morrisons Daily Supermarket situated at 310-314 Hertford Road, Edmonton N9 7HB

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 **8th October 2026**.

Representations received by post will not be accepted.
Representations must include your full name and address.

Dated: 9th day of September 2026

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Next publication date: 30th October | **Booking deadline:** 28th October



Season of festive magic, big names and community spirit

Chickenshed’s autumn and winter season promises something for everyone, writes Susan Jamson

As autumn approaches, we at Chickenshed are preparing to welcome audiences to a packed programme of theatre, music, comedy and community events, bringing together people of all ages in a season that celebrates creativity, connection and inclusion.

At the heart of the programme is *12 Days*, Chickenshed’s major festive production, running from Wednesday, 18th November to Saturday, 9th January.

Inspired by *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, this original family adventure follows five children chosen by the Turtle Doves to discover the true meaning of love. Their quest to find five hidden golden rings leads them through a magical world of curious characters, original music and festive surprises.

Brought to life by a cast of more than 200 performers, the production explores themes of empathy, courage and belonging that have

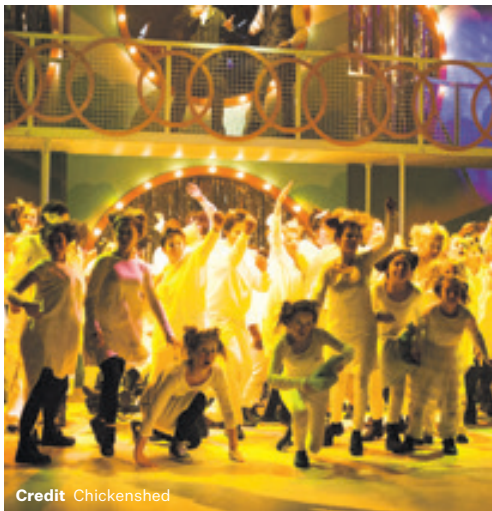
become hallmarks of Chickenshed’s unique approach to theatre-making.

For younger audiences, the return of *Christmas Tales* offers a lively and interactive festive adventure. Families with children aged up to seven can join the Tales team as they race to unlock Christmas after Clumsy the Elf loses the code to a mysterious safe. Packed with songs, challenges and audience participation, the production promises festive fun for the smallest theatre-goers.

The season also features a range of special events and live entertainment.

Entertainer and long-time Chickenshed ambassador Rory Bremner will also take to the stage in November, for a special evening of comedy, conversation and unforgettable impressions.

Music lovers are equally well catered for; Chickenshed co-founder Jo Collins returns with two instalments of her popular *Jo Collins & Friends* evenings, while rock fans can relive



Credit Chickenshed

the soundtrack of the 1980s and 1990s when *Shot in the Dark Reloaded* comes to the theatre in October.

The season also includes the inspiring community production *Change The Record*, bringing together different generations through music, theatre and shared memories.

Alongside our performance programme, Chickenshed continues to provide opportunities for people of all ages to get involved creatively. Young children can explore storytelling

and sensory play through *Planet Play*, *Tales from the Shed* and *Halloween Tales*, while aspiring performers can develop their skills through the theatre’s popular Sunday workshops for children and young people.

Adults are invited to discover their own creative talents through a range of inclusive activities, including acting workshops, musical theatre sessions and the ever-popular Community Choir, which welcomes singers of all abilities.

Community remains central to everything Chickenshed does. Every ticket sold helps support our mission to ensure theatre remains accessible to everyone, regardless of background, experience or ability.

Through workshops, performances and outreach programmes, thousands of people each year find a place where creativity, confidence and belonging can flourish.

As we look ahead to shorter days and longer nights, Chickenshed’s autumn and winter season offers plenty of reasons to venture out, whether its for a magical Christmas adventure, an evening with household names, or simply the chance to be part of one of North London’s most inclusive creative communities.

For information and bookings:
Call 020 8292 9222
Visit chickenshed.org.uk

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Thursday 5th November

Friday 20th November

Wednesday 2nd December

Friday 8th January

Please call **0208 363 1406** or scan the QR code to register your interest and for further information.



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We are also hosting two webinars:

21st October, 6 - 7pm

9th November, 10.30 - 11.30am

Q&A with Senior Leaders

Use the QR code to access the link and register your interest.



Webinar



Outcomes are consistently above the Borough & London average

Indian street food to savour



Neil Littman visits Karak Chaii, a South Indian street food chain with a new branch in Enfield Town

Karak Chaii must have heard about the wish list I wrote a while back, hoping that more places serving South Indian food would open in Enfield as, until recently, this was only available on a section of the menu at Chennai Spice (reviewed in July 2025).

They might be a new name in Enfield, but Karak Chaii have been around a while, steadily opening restaurants around the country (20 at the last count) following the opening of their first branch in Birmingham.

Karak Chaii’s menu includes a sweetened, spiced milky tea that originated in India – and from

which the restaurant chain takes its name – alongside Indian street food such as parathas, rice bowls and samosas, served all day.

The menu is divided into roti and paratha dishes and the extensive ‘street food’ section, a concept that seems to be very popular since being imported to the UK.

A few days after Karak Chaii’s grand opening I met up with James Cracknell, editor of the *Dispatch*, who is a big fan of Indian food – especially as a vegetarian. At Karak Chaii around 70% of the menu is meat free.

We were both very keen to see what was on offer, as we had been anticipating the opening for some time. In our excitement we got carried away and slightly over-ordered!

A complimentary sample of their signature chaii tea arrived, after which we chose a selection of dishes to share, including vegetarian thali (a chicken option is also available) with basmati rice, roti, achar and two curries for only £10; lassi saag, a Punjabi dish made with spinach and yoghurt, served with two parathas; plus bhel puri, made with spicy potato, mixed sev and puffed rice, chopped onions, and topped with coriander and pomegranate seeds. We also ordered a

bowl of chilli paneer (Indian cottage cheese) which was quite fiery, as well as more chaii tea and mango lassi to drink. All of this came to an extremely reasonable £30.

The menu is extensive and could take several visits to try everything, including their Indian desserts such as ras mali and gulub jamon, for those with a sweet tooth!

I later made another lunchtime visit and ordered chana paratha and samosa chaat. On this occasion, however, there was nowhere to sit and I had to take the food away – they really should have more seats given their central location in Enfield Town.

A few days later, I made another visit – early enough to get a seat – so I could sample Karak Chaii’s breakfast menu. They offer an English breakfast with chicken rashers and sausages and a veggie option, called ‘desi breakfast’, which includes masala omelette, paratha, and a side order of channa (spiced chickpeas) with a cup of chaii. All this is great value at £8.75.



I found out later that when the Indian railway companies tried to stop serving the desi breakfast and other vegetarian meals in 2013 there was a passenger revolt! They take their breakfast seriously.

Karak Chaii do takeaways and also offer a bespoke catering service for weddings, special events and corporate events.

Karak Chaii is incredibly good value and good quality. In my opinion, this is one of the best new openings in Enfield and stands up well against similar restaurants in Southall and Drummond Street, Camden (both good centres in London for South Indian food).

For more information about Karak Chaii Enfield, including opening times:
Call 020 3876 6790
Visit karakchaii.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 19th October**.

MUSIC

Antonio Forcione
Friday 9th October, from 8pm
Firs Farm Community Hub, Firs Lane, Winchmore Hill N21 2PJ

Hailed as one of the most charismatic guitarists today, Antonio Forcione's music transcends genres, blending jazz, Spanish, soul, African and Brazilian with ferocious virtuosity, passion, and humour.

Tickets from £22
Visit firsfarmcommunityhub.com

COURSE

Retiring with Attitude
Starting Tuesday 13th October, 10.30am–12.30pm
Palmer's Green Library, Broomfield Lane, Palmer's Green N13 4EY

Are you thinking about retirement or newly retired? Trying to work out what to do with your time, now you've finished work? Why not join our friendly six-week U3A course, meet others in the same boat and explore together how to make the most of your retirement.

Course fees £30, plus U3A membership £16
Email groups@pgsu3a.org.uk

VARIETY

An Evening with Rudolph Walker
Sunday 18th October, starting 5pm
Millfield Theatre, Silver Street N18 1PJ

A unique evening with the wonderful Rudolph Walker CBE, beloved star of British TV, who will be sharing the incredible 60-year career. Rudolph's trailblazing acting career, his humble beginnings in Trinidad, his CBE and the transformational work of the Rudolph Walker Foundation will all be explored in a lively interview, plus there'll be dance, music and drama.

Tickets £31.50
Visit millfieldtheatre.co.uk

TALK

Director of Trent Park House of Secrets
Saturday 24th October, 2.30pm
Walker Lower Hall, Christ Church Parish Centre, 7 The Green, Southgate N14 7EG

Southgate District Civic Voice is hosting a talk by Dr Giuseppe Albano MBE, director of Trent Park House of Secrets. Hear about Enfield's new museum as Giuseppe dives into the mysteries of this historic site, with its stories, secrets and memories.

Free for SDCV members, £5 non-members
Visit shorturl.at/6qx06

MYSTERY

The Mystery of Dugdale Arts Centre
Wednesday 26th October, 12pm
Dugdale Arts Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS

Calling all trainee detectives! Join us for an award-winning board-game style theatre show where your skills are needed to solve this thrilling murder mystery. We'll examine evidence, inspect video footage, and interrogate suspects – every clue bringing us closer to the truth.

Adults £13.50, children £11.50
Visit dugdaleartscentre.co.uk

FOOTBALL

Wildcats Girls' Football
Every Saturday, 11am–12pm
Enfield Rangers, Carterhatch Lane, Enfield EN1 4LJ

Wildcats Girls' Football will be running every Saturday throughout October. The sessions – supported by Middlesex FA – are for girls aged between five and eleven and this season we are also providing kits for the girls who join.

£40 yearly membership, £30 per month
Call 07790 000 549

SINGING

Gospel workshops
Every third Wednesday, 7.30pm–9.30pm
Enfield Baptist Church, Cecil Road, Enfield EN2 6TG

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, 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

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

Visit enfielddispatch.co.uk

Tommy's the talk of the Town

Tommy Avgoustidis picked up the latest 'player of the month' award after scoring two goals at Billericay in the FA Cup, writes Andrew Warshaw

Talk about bad luck of the draw. If Enfield Town are finally to reach the 'holy grail' of the FA Cup first round they are going to have to "do it the hard way" according to manager Billy Holland.

Having pulled off one of the upsets of the second qualifying round with a stunning 3-1 win at step two club Billericay, while missing no fewer than seven first-team players, Town now have to negotiate an even taller order after being drawn to play Oxford City on Saturday, 3rd October.

At the time of writing, City were lying second in National League North – ahead of former Football League clubs such as Macclesfield, Morecambe and Chester. No team in the third qualifying round is currently placed higher.

To make matters worse this was, incredibly, the seventh successive away game for Town in all cup competitions. That's some statistic and the conspiracy theorists among the Towners faithful are beginning to wonder, however fancifully, whether some kind of Machiavellian plot is at play.

There was certainly nothing lucky about Town's display at Billericay, which ranked as one of their best cup wins in recent years. In the league as

well, it's fair to say that progress has perhaps surpassed expectations.

Town's good form is due in no small part to a swathe of summer arrivals who have set pulses racing and quickly become fans' favourites. Chief among them are Amrit Bansal-McNulty and Tommy Avgoustidis, the latter having picked up the latest 'player of the month' award and whose two goals at Billericay set Town on their way into the third qualifying round.

Speaking exclusively to the *Dispatch* after that game, Tommy explained the importance of honing his craft in his native Greece and why he decided to further his career at Enfield after moving from Royston Town, having also spent several years with Leyton Orient without being given a full-time deal.

"When I saw Billy stepping in as manager, I told myself there was nowhere better to be, cos of the way he likes to play," said Tommy. "I came in for pre-season and it kind of spiralled from there."

Before moving to the UK, Tommy played youth football at PAOK Thessaloniki. Plying his trade at a young age in his homeland was invaluable to Tommy's development.

"PAOK has the best academy in the



Tommy Avgoustidis was previously on the books of Leyton Orient
Credit: Michael Michalia

country. It's mental, four sessions a week, two hours each session, two or three games a week. And that's the eight-to-ten age group. It taught me how to use both feet, practising over and over again. We travelled to

so many countries where you were expected to win. It made me the player I am today."

Tommy, who celebrates his 21st birthday when Town meet Dulwich Hamlet on Saturday, 10th October,

isn't surprised how well the season has started, despite many of the summer recruits having arrived from a division lower.

"I knew instantly how it might go," he said. "Some of the players who arrived from step four should never have been playing at that level. They are a lot better than that."

Regarding the passion of Town's fans, Tommy added: "I've never had to high-five so many supporters, even when we don't win. It takes the pressure off because you can't really lose. Billericay was a case in point."

While it's far too early to talk about promotion, there's undoubtedly a buzz around the place. "If we manage to keep most of the squad fit, there won't be many teams who can handle us," said Tommy.

The biggest concern is that richer clubs might come snooping for any number of emerging Town players, but Tommy insists he's staying put. "I'm enjoying my football, scoring and assisting, and in the main we're winning. What's the point of me jumping ship to somewhere I may not play as much?"

"Unless something unbelievably life-changing comes around, I'm not going anywhere."

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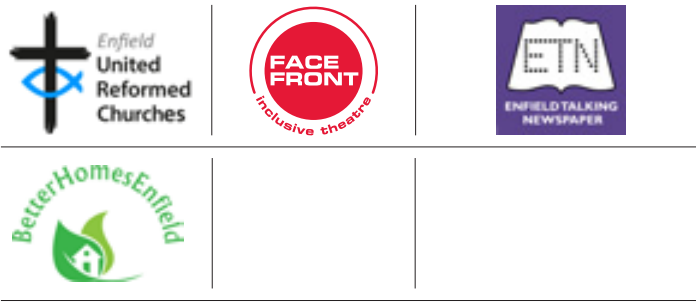
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