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WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free
Oct 2021, No. 79

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Hundreds told: 'Out of London or onto the streets'

Waltham Forest Council told many of its poorest households to move city or become homeless

by Victoria Munro

Waltham Forest Council has made hundreds of its poorest households choose between abruptly moving more than 100 miles away or becoming homeless.

The *Echo* can exclusively reveal at least 214 struggling households were given this difficult choice by the council since 1st June 2019, when it began working with "relocation experts" Reloc8 UK.

Like all councils, Waltham Forest must house its homeless until it finds a property they can afford – a difficult task given its 10,000-strong waitlist for council homes and high private rents.

Reloc8 UK offers to solve this problem, which forced the council to spend £25.4million on temporary accommodation last year, by providing homes in cheaper areas – and Waltham Forest is its biggest customer in London.

Residents who refuse the Reloc8 home, even if they have never seen it or been to the city, are deemed to have made themselves "voluntarily homeless" and must leave their temporary accommodation.

One such resident is Nadia Zamin, a 38-year-old single mother, who was offered a maisonette in Stoke-on-Trent on a Wednesday this July and told to decide if she would go by that Friday.

In an email from the council, seen by the *Echo*, she was told: "Please note that this offer of suitable private sector accommodation will discharge our duty to you whether you accept or refuse the property. You will only receive this offer of suitable accommodation.

"The offer of accommodation cannot be held open for you for more than 24 hours

and the council will assume that you have refused the accommodation offered if you fail to attend."

While the council maintains households are able to view the offered home before deciding, Nadia said she was explicitly refused the chance to do so.

She was instructed to meet a Reloc8 agent at the home that Saturday to sign the contract, offered a "travel warrant" to pay for tickets for her and her three children and asked to let the council know if she needed help removing her belongings from the temporary accommodation.

At the time, Nadia told the *Echo*: "I don't know where Stoke-on-Trent is. I have got my family and friends here and my children's schools; it's heart-breaking.

"Whoever decided this, it's a very shameful act. At the end of the day, they have decided to chuck me out of London."

A Freedom of Information request submitted to the council shows that, at the start of September, it had asked 214 households to move into Reloc8 homes, of which 94 agreed and the

remaining 120 refused.

Nadia's family were one of 162 specifically told to go to Stoke-on-Trent, while 32 households were asked to move to other locations more than 100 miles away from the borough and a further 20 to move more than 200 miles.

Further Freedom of Information requests submitted to all London councils show nine others had used Reloc8, 20 had not and Lambeth Council said it "[does] not hold the information" requested.

Among the other councils that used Reloc8, however, seven had moved fewer than twenty households.

"At the end of the day, they have decided to chuck me out of London"

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Nadia Zamin, a 38-year-old single mother told to move to Stoke-on-Trent
Credit Penny Dampier

NEWS



FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

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Waltham Forest Echo is the borough's free community newspaper. We publish monthly and distribute 17,500 free copies of each issue – and we will continue to do so during the ongoing public health crisis

Publisher

David Floyd

Editor

Victoria Munro

Designer

Jonathan Duncan

Head of Advertising

Klaudia Kiss

Local Democracy Reporter

Josh Mellor

Engagement Manager

Penny Dampier

Sales Representative

Xavier Duchon

Contributors

Josh Mellor, Michael Mann, Emma Curzon, Marcia Veiga, Jo Sealy, Penny Dampier, Mary Burnett, Michelle Edwards, Joanna Moncrieff, Daniela Da Silva, Frank Charles, Pre-Construct Archaeology, Chingford Historical Society, Nancy Taaffe, London Renters' Union and Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth, Leigh Day Solicitors, Extinction Rebellion

The member organisations of WFWellComm CIC are:

Community Transport Waltham Forest, Social Spider CIC, HEET.

WFWellComm CIC Board:

David Floyd, *Social Spider CIC*
Tom Ruxton, *HEET*
Helen Tredoux,
Community Transport WF

Contact

Call 020 8521 7956

Email WFEcho@socialspider.com

Post The Mill, 7–11 Coppermill Lane, Walthamstow E17 7HA

Advertising

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The remaining two – Hillingdon and Ealing – had moved 74 and 60 respectively.

The most dramatic move offered, according to the responses to these requests, was to a property in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, presented to a Barnet household.

Responding to the plight of another Waltham Forest mother, Monica, also told to move to Stoke-on-Trent this summer, campaign group Housing Action Southwark and Lambeth (HASL) said there was “no justification” for such an approach.

A HASL spokesperson said: “London Labour councils should be doing everything they can to support their homeless residents and find them suitable housing. They should never be forcing people out of London using the threat of homelessness and destitution.

“Labour councils need to act in solidarity with their residents to challenge the central government policies that are fuelling the housing crisis, like the cruel benefit cap, and campaign for the high quality, safe, secure council housing that we all need and deserve.”

In Nadia's case, she told the *Echo* the Government's benefit cap, which limits her to £442.31 a week as a single parent in London, was her biggest obstacle to supporting herself.

While the cap would not apply if she was in work, she said she is struggling to find a job that would still allow her to care for her three young children.

After several moves, Nadia is currently living in a Walthamstow home paid for by the council's social services department

while they assessed her case but once again faces eviction before the end of this month.

Responding to a request for comment, cabinet member for housing Louise Mitchell said the council's “approach is in line with that of other” London councils, which she suggested “will have their own arrangements with different agents”.

She said: “We regret that rising

property costs in the borough and in the private rented sector, which we are forced to use, combined with the Government benefit cap, means that housing people locally in decent accommodation where they can make stable settled homes isn't always possible, as much as we would like it to be.

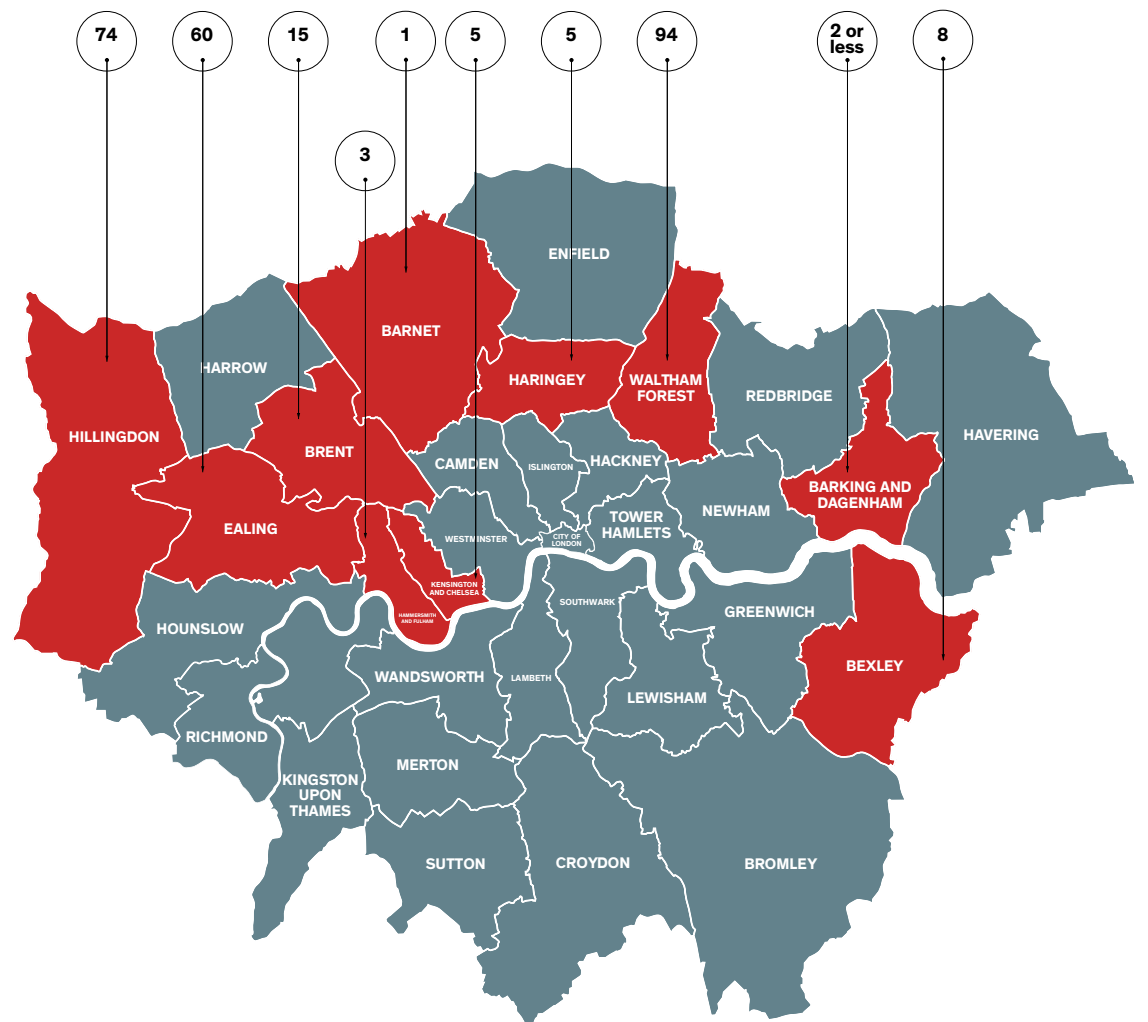
“We understand it is a very difficult time for households that find themselves at risk of losing their home, and we work hard to

find the most appropriate ways that we can support them.

“We must ensure that any offer of accommodation is affordable for them and that they have enough left over for everyday essentials such as food and children's supplies.”

Reloc8 UK was contacted repeatedly by phone and email in an attempt to speak to someone from the company but has not responded.

How many households councils moved out of London using Reloc8 UK



Editor's letter

by Victoria Munro

This edition of the *Echo* is my first as your new editor. While I've reported on east London since the start of last year, I'm ecstatic to finally devote my full attention to Waltham Forest. There's a lot going on here and someone not looking closely might miss it.

Our front page story is the perfect example of what I hope to bring you. While national papers

like the *Mirror* reported on single mum Nadia this summer, they quickly moved on when she became old news. It's papers like the *Echo* that stick around and ask questions, which is how we discovered how many of our poorest households were being put in the same position.

However, though it might not always seem like it to some at the council, who see my name in their inboxes near-daily, I'm here to do more than just criticise.

That's why we've devoted a

page to our interview with newly-elected council leader Grace Williams about her plans to make Waltham Forest even better. Elsewhere, we've celebrated a new venue in Leyton, the rail history of Chingford and a Walthamstow restaurant keeping a beloved grandmother's memory alive.

I owe this opportunity to everyone at Social Spider but particularly James Cracknell, who edited the *Echo* for five years. I first saw James reporting at a council meeting, a level of hands-on

dedication I had never seen from an editor before. He handed the role to Elizabeth Atkin, who was a delight to work with and continued to support me even after she left last month.

The responsibility now falls to me. I'd like to thank everyone who wrote, spoke or otherwise contributed to this issue and I sincerely hope I do you all proud.

If you'd like to get involved with the Echo, please do get in touch.
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NEWS

Charity hero honoured by Queen for Covid work

Leyton-born Frank Charles has spent almost 40 years supporting east London's most vulnerable

by Victoria Munro

A Leyton-born charity hero who delivered food to Whipps Cross staff, firefighters and the borough's poorest residents during Covid has received a royal honour.

Frank Charles, 58, who lives in Wanstead but says his "heart is always in Waltham Forest", has devoted himself to charity work "on and off" for the last 38 years.

He is perhaps best known for his Give a Gift Appeal, which has delivered "maybe 10,000 Christmas gifts, if not more" to sick children in Whipps Cross and other hospitals over the years.

While the appeal only became a formal charity in 2015, this will be Frank's 18th year delivering presents to Whipps, in memory of his son Ashley, who died in 1989.

Frank was presented with a British Empire Medal on 27th September for services to Waltham Forest, Redbridge and Newham during Covid and said he was "blown away" by the honour.

He told the *Echo*: "I came

from a poor family of seven kids in Leyton and that's what got me into charity. This was the stuff done for me and my brothers and sisters, I'm just paying it forward."

In addition to handing out food to rough sleepers and struggling families, Frank has continued to deliver to local fire crews and Whipps staff at least once a week.

He explained: "Given the sacrifices they made at a time when the country was at a standstill, that support should not just end because the lockdown has been lifted."

Whipps Cross chief executive Alan Gurney said Frank was a "dear friend" to the hospital and "very well known" for his Christmas deliveries.

He said: "This award is truly deserved and we also want to say a heartfelt thank you to Frank on behalf of our patients and staff for his time and continuous generosity over the years."

Frank is currently raising money for a van to support his work delivering food to the poor. Donate at crowdfunder.co.uk/a-van-for-frank-driving-it-forward



Frank received his medal at Westminster Abbey



Creative director Simon Hanning and Karen Bellamy, from LVE Foundation
Credit Daniela Da Silva

West end theatre comes east

A theatre unique to the borough, if not London, has opened in Leyton

A new cabaret theatre, promising West End-quality shows at a fraction of the price, has opened in Leyton.

The East London Cabaret Theatre staged its first show in the Leyton Great Hall on 2nd September.

The theatre was funded with the help of £169,500 from Arts Council England's Culture Recovery Fund, the biggest chunk of money awarded in the borough by a large margin.

Its proceeds will go to the LVE Foundation, a charity which rents out the hall and has spent five years visiting police custody suites with young people to warn them away from crime.

Creative director Simon Hanning said the goal was to create a theatre space unique to Waltham Forest, if not London, and take advantage of the borough's large appetite for culture.

He said: "Nobody has really done a cabaret space this big before. You do have cabaret spaces in central London, which are great, but they are

very small.

"There's not really other theatre spaces in Waltham Forest, other than the one being built in the EMD cinema, and there's enough people that live here that want this kind of thing."

"We will be featuring high-end performers that you would normally see in the West End for about £100 - but we won't be charging more than £25, and that's the top end."

The refurbishment of the former town hall building was a labour of love for the theatre's small team, who spent the first

residents and hospital patients to "bring them a bit of joy".

Upcoming productions will focus on The Beatles' performance at the Granada and the story of Laurie Cunningham, a Leyton Orient footballer who became one of the first black British players to achieve international fame.

The theatre also plans to host classic film nights, a short film festival and an interactive murder mystery night, set around a wedding, as part of its programme for next year.

In addition to the profits from its shows, the new theatre will also give the LVE Foundation the chance to offer young people training in theatre and film skills.

Karen Bellamy, a local councillor who works for the Foundation, said: "A lot of young people in theatre are quite middle class, this can give children who

don't have these advantages the opportunity to get involved."



The new venue in Leyton Great Hall Credit Daniela Da Silva

lockdown polishing its brass chandeliers by hand.

The theatre also kept busy while unable to open by putting on a live-streamed Christmas show for local care home

Find out more about the theatre and its upcoming shows at: elctheatre.com

NEWS

Walthamstow courier's spine fracture 'incorrectly attributed' to mental illness

An inquest found Robert, 35, probably would have survived if A&E staff had thought to check his spine

by Josh Mellor, Local Democracy Reporter & Victoria Munro

A popular Walthamstow bicycle courier, who struggled with paranoid schizophrenia, died after being neglected by an east London A&E.

Robert Walaszkowski's deteriorating condition after a serious head injury "was incorrectly attributed to his mental health" by staff, claimed a lawyer for his grieving family.

Robert, who his sister Dorota described as a "gentle giant" who "would talk with homeless people for hours", died at the age of 35 after being sent away from Queen's Hospital in Romford in October 2019.

The jury at his inquest, which concluded on 22nd September, heard from an expert neurosurgeon that he probably would have survived if staff had checked his spine and realised it was fractured.

Instead, despite being unable to support himself, he was propped up on the floor of a hired patient transport van and sent back to Goodmayes Hospital, where he had been receiving mental health treatment.

Robert arrived back at Goodmayes



Robert Walaszkowski (provided by family)

unresponsive and staff there immediately sent him back to Queen's, where he never regained consciousness.

Speaking after the inquest, Robert's sister Dorota said she "cannot make peace with what happened to him".

She said: "My brother was vulnerable because of his mental state and this was a reason for healthcare staff to be vigilant and careful with his treatment but, critically, they were not.

"Because he was judged to be mentally unwell the professionals failed to give

him the basic medical care and attention he needed.

"It's been almost two years since Robert's death but the pain and the anger that my parents and I feel has not faded. I have now sadly discovered how many people failed in their basic care of my adored older brother.

"Robert was a beloved son to my parents and my best friend and brother. He was loved by his many friends in Poland and London, particularly in the bike courier community, where they have established an annual bike race in his memory."

The family's lawyer, Nandi Jordan from Leigh Day, added that it was "heart-breaking and horrendous" to hear how Robert was "sedated and transported in a dangerous manner" when first sent away from Queen's.

The jury heard that, after being given the maximum daily dose of the sedative Lorazepam, according to the hospital's policy, Robert was then given the same amount twice more within 12 hours for "no medical reason".

He was then bundled into a van driven by Patient Transport UK and sent back to Goodmayes, with no support for his neck, causing further injury.

In a letter to the court, the company argued placing patients unable to support themselves on the floor of the van was the "safest" method of transport "to prevent a fall" and pointed out they had no way of knowing his spine was injured.

However, coroner Nadia Persaud argued this was "not in [her] view an adequate response" and said she would write to the company about "how many other mental health patients would be transported on the floor".

Following his return to Queen's, Robert was kept on life support until his sister was able to travel to his side from Poland and died on 15th November, 2019.

The chief executive for the NHS trust that runs the hospital, Matthew Trainer, has said it is "extremely sorry" Robert "did not receive the high level of care he should have been able to expect".

He said the trust has "learned from [its] internal investigation and made a number of improvements", including further training for staff on spine injuries and use of sedatives.

He added: "Another key area we have been working on is safer patient transfers and ensuring observations are carried out, and where necessary acted on, before discharge.

"We are also working with mental health trust NELFT to make sure that our Emergency Department staff are able to provide appropriate physical care to people who have severe mental illness."

Jurors, who heard seven days of evidence, recorded a narrative conclusion of Robert's death, noting it was "contributed to by neglect" at the A&E.

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FEATURES

Ancient Walthamstow history comes to light

An excavation outside a Walthamstow Catholic school unearthed a rare Roman coin and signs of prehistoric life

by Victoria Munro

An excavation at a Walthamstow school unearthed the first substantial evidence that Romans once lived in the area.

Shane Maher, from Pre-Construct Archaeology, said the playing fields behind Holy Family Catholic School in Shernhall Street quickly proved one of his favourite sites in his career.

After expecting to find nothing older than medieval, his team unearthed signs of “continuous settlement” on the land, dating back 3,000 years to the late Bronze or early Iron age.

In addition to the remains of a prehistoric roundhouse and Roman farm buildings, they discovered a Roman coin so rare it’s “almost a one-off” and painted pottery.

Shane, 52, told the *Echo*: “When you look at historic maps of Walthamstow Village, that field always seemed to be vacant until the industrial school so we were not

expecting to find anything there at all.

“But when we started seeing lines and box shapes in the ground, I thought ‘we have got something special here’.

“We know there was a settlement in Waltham Forest during the late Roman period but there’s been no evidence other than isolated finds around the place, like a coin here and there.

“This tells a story of continuous occupation in Walthamstow. The village is the oldest part of Walthamstow and now we’ve discovered it’s even older.

“Hopefully, this should inform future work around here. The area is historic anyway but what we got lucky with is that this was the last green space.”

The earliest structures the team found were a ring-shaped ditch that would have acted as the drain for a prehistoric roundhouse, and signs of where ancient inhabitants dug out the clay they used for their pots.

Shane recalled: “When the first member of staff brought some prehistoric pottery over, I had not seen any in years and just thought ‘wow, that’s lovely’. I like the look



An ultra-rare Jovian siliqua found at the site (Pre-Construct Archaeology)

and feel of it, it feels rough and very strong. “We had cooking pots and storage pots, all of them fragments. Some of them showed signs of re-firing, which is how we know they’d be used for cooking.”

The site then seems to have fallen out of use until the late Roman period, when there appears to have been farm buildings that may have been part of a villa complex.

He said: “The reason we know they were farm buildings is the lack of domestic fittings like rubbish pits. It could have belonged to a richer person or a small community.

“We got a lot of Roman building material and some of it was for buildings that would have had under-floor heating, which means there was something of a high status in the area.

“The buildings we found were [lower-status] clay and timber buildings, probably with thatched roofs, but that material did not tend to travel far.”

Shane said “one of the nicest finds” was a “very, very rare” silver Roman coin, which “came out almost perfect”.

He said the coin is a “siliqua” – the modern name used for all thin, silver coins produced in the 4th century – and shows the emperor Jovian, who only reigned for eight months.

His favourite find, however, was a painted pot from the Roman period.

“It looks like something I might have made,” he said, “The swirls and the pattern are not perfect and that’s what I like about it, it’s so human-looking.”



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INTERVIEW

New council leader to 'reset' borough

Grace Williams was chosen as Waltham Forest Council leader at the start of a year-long post-Covid reset

by Victoria Munro

While the resignation of Waltham Forest Council's previous leader came as a shock to many, it's appropriate the council changed hands at the start of a borough-wide "reset".

On 8th July, six days after Grace Williams was chosen as leader by the Labour group, the council's cabinet began its £10million Covid recovery programme.

The programme, due to last until next July, is a "short-term plan to recover public services so people can get back to the 'new normal'", she explained.

Having started the job in September, Cllr Williams is only guaranteed to keep it until the May local elections but it's clear she's confident about re-election.

She said: "I'm really excited to be leading the Labour group. If you look at London council

leaders, many have been cabinet members for children and there's a number of reasons for that.

"It's the second largest budget, which means you're used to making hard decisions. Plus, you see the cases where children really need help... [which] sit with you and inform your understanding of what the council is there to do."

Cllr Williams assumed leadership just days after a teenager was shot dead on a Leyton estate and, unsurprisingly, keeping children safe from violence is a key concern.

She said the council wants to see children as young as nine taught "how to make decisions and ask for help" in schools and is changing how it deals with expelled students, focusing more on "the trauma they might have experienced".

She said: "We need to make sure we are meeting their needs and are able to get them back into mainstream education. We want to look at this through a different lens.

"We're working to have inclusion units within schools and the borough's headteachers have been amazing. The idea is that those children can stay connected and integrated in school."

Her time as cabinet member was not unmarked by controversy, particularly one incident that tested her ambition as leader to "bring people on board and explain difficult choices".

Last summer, parent campaigners took the council to court in an unsuccessful attempt to overturn funding cuts for some children with special needs. Asked if this choice could have been better explained, she said:

"Labour is getting nearer and nearer to winning over Chingford"

children with special needs. Asked if this choice could have been better explained, she said:



New council leader Grace Williams (WF Council)

"I completely accept there are decisions people will [always] be unhappy with.

"Like every other local authority, we had gone into such a deficit that, if we didn't make that decision, we would be at risk of not being able to meet the needs of children in the system."

One of the most loudly protested areas of the council's work is its commitment to building new homes, with many residents angry at what they see as over-development of the borough.

Cllr Williams said: "Waltham Forest is an urban borough, which has seen a lot of change over the years and people have a perhaps outdated view of what homes should look like.

"It's important we have enough homes and that will mean smaller places and might mean tall buildings. As a Labour council, one of the things we must do is try to address the housing crisis."

However, she remains unfazed by the Tory challenge to her leadership come the next local elections in May and is even optimistic about increasing the party's majority.

"Labour is getting nearer and nearer to winning over [Tory stronghold] Chingford," she insisted, "Each election you can see that happening."

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NEWS

Council 'still expects' to reopen iconic venue despite developer's collapse

The council is already looking for "alternative providers" for the former Standard site in Blackhorse Lane



An artist's impression of how the finished venue was meant to look Credit Acme/The Collective

by Victoria Munro

Waltham Forest Council is still determined to reopen an iconic Walthamstow music venue despite its approved developer folding.

Developer The Collective was given planning permission last December for the site that was once The Standard in Blackhorse Lane, which shuttered in 2011 after 25 years.

The plan was to build 300 studio flats and open a new 350-capacity venue on the site, with work due to start this summer and finish by 2023.

However, on 15th September, the company went into administration, leaving some worried they might never see live music return to the area.

Cabinet member for economic growth and housing, Simon Miller, told the *Echo*: "I am very disappointed by the news about the collapse of The Collective."

"The council is now working urgently to fully understand the impact this will have on proposals for the Standard site."

"We can confirm that we would still

expect a purpose-built music venue to be provided as part of any new redevelopment proposal.

"We are already engaging with the development community to explore alternative providers for this key cultural and residential opportunity site."

"The housing targets set out in our draft Local Plan remain unaffected."

This is not the first plan to fall apart at the site after receiving planning permission from Waltham Forest Council.

In 2017, the building's previous owners Turkish Food Centre were

given permission to create a bar, supermarket and 50 flats, which never materialised.

In December, when The Collective's plans were approved, planning committee chairperson Jenny Gray said she had seen applications to reopen The Standard "for many years".

She said: "When we finally gave permission [to Turkish Food Centre] years ago, local people were really excited about it."

"You can't have an iconic music venue without anything to pay for it, it's obviously not sustainable on its own or someone would have reopened it."

"It's obviously not sustainable on its own or someone would have reopened it"

Secret plans to open university campus revealed

The University of Portsmouth plans to open a campus in the borough in 2023

by Victoria Munro & Josh Mellor,
Local Democracy Reporter

The University of Portsmouth (UoP) has been in secret talks with Waltham Forest Council about opening a campus in the borough in 2023.

The budding partnership was finally revealed after more than a year at the council's cabinet meeting on 9th September.

The council hopes the campus, for which a location has yet to be decided, will "raise the ambition" of the borough's young people and boost the local economy.

Newly-elected leader Grace Williams told the cabinet: "When [this project] started, there were challenges which existed for young people to be able to excel in the borough."

"Our young people tend to

stay at home more than in other areas, so it's desirable to bring education to them. It's really exciting to create all of the extra benefits that that kind of high quality campus will bring."

The report for cabinet noted the council could decide not to partner with UoP, which means footing some of the bill for the campus, but that "this would present a significant disincentive to locate in the borough".

In a press release, Professor Graham Galbraith, the university's vice-chancellor, said it was "thrilled" to be working with the council on the project.

He added: "We know that many of our students come to Portsmouth from London, and that many more London students would want to come to Portsmouth but can't because of their circumstances."



The University of Portsmouth (provided by Waltham Forest Council)

"A London campus will allow us to share our experiences, expertise and courses in ways that best support the aspirations of local students and the local community, while preserving and promoting what makes the University of Ports-

mouth distinctive."

So far, the two organisations have signed a "non-legally binding 'joint statement of intent'" to work together and hope to have a full business case finished by December.

This business case would lay

out what courses the campus would offer, expected staff and student numbers and proposed locations in the borough.

It is expected that "an integral theme" of the campus's courses and research will be "sustainability and climate change".

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Example full page advert

Nº.5
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NEWS
Streets ahead
The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward
2
EC1 Echo
moves forward

NEWS
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Of any city in the world, London has been the most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. The impact on the city has been profound, with many businesses closed and people staying at home. The city's streets are now quieter than ever before. The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward, with many roads closed to traffic and the introduction of cycle lanes. The city's streets are now quieter than ever before. The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward, with many roads closed to traffic and the introduction of cycle lanes. The city's streets are now quieter than ever before. The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward, with many roads closed to traffic and the introduction of cycle lanes.

NEWS IN BRIEF
The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward. The city's streets are now quieter than ever before. The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward, with many roads closed to traffic and the introduction of cycle lanes. The city's streets are now quieter than ever before. The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward, with many roads closed to traffic and the introduction of cycle lanes.

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The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward. The city's streets are now quieter than ever before. The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward, with many roads closed to traffic and the introduction of cycle lanes. The city's streets are now quieter than ever before. The coronavirus has brought anti-car measures forward, with many roads closed to traffic and the introduction of cycle lanes.

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Mains
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with Mashed Potatoes
Thobaldi's Apple & Rhubarb Steak with
Burrata & Beet (x2)
Burrata, Heritage Tomato and Summer Pesto
Five Range Roast Chicken with
Pear, Baby & Sweetcorn
Home Baked Brioche, Cheese, Tomato,
Gruyere with Chips
"Second Meat" Burger, Spicy Cauliflower,
Vegan Cheese with Chipotle Veggies

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FEATURES



Walthamstow's Cà Phê Culture

Vietnamese restaurant Hanoi Cà Phê began its life as a race against time

by Emma Curzon

When her grandmother was diagnosed with dementia, Hanoi Cà Phê founder Gina Lely knew she needed to act fast to preserve the family recipes, in order to one day pass them on to her two sons. It was a mission that saw her abandon a 9-5 office job to launch a market stall in 2015 and, just six years later, serve food inspired by her grandmother in Walthamstow, Leyton and Hackney Wick.

Growing up in Vietnam, food was an integral part of Gina's childhood. "In the Vietnamese tradition, food is so highly regarded," she told the *Echo*, "When you walk into someone's house, whether you know them or not, they would say, have you eaten? Not hi, how are you... it's like, have you eaten? When you've sat down and you've eaten, then we can start the conversation. It's so vital that you feed and you show people your love and kindness and friendship through food."

While the success of her market stall quickly led to pop-ups, supper clubs and corporate

events, a pivotal moment came when CRATE St James Street, still under construction, started looking for businesses to host. "They did an opinion poll and they asked what food people would want, and our name came up quite a lot of times." It was, she recalls, "incredibly flattering, and we're really grateful for the community's support."

Hanoi Cà Phê has more than earned that love, if their food is anything to go by. The menu includes various flavours of pho (rice noodle soup), banh mi (Vietnamese baguettes) and noodle salads. For something lighter, there are sweet potato chips, spring rolls and more – all washed down with some Vietnamese-style iced coffee. Gina estimates around half the menu was directly inspired by Grandma Quyen, who sadly died in June: "The way she would prepare the pho, slow-cooked over 24 hours, the ingredients she'd put in there, the marinade for the tofu – that's definitely taken from her recipes."

When the pandemic hit and the restaurant, like most small, local businesses, began to struggle, the support of Waltham Forest's residents became more vital

than ever. Gina credits her ability to stay afloat to having "a bit of a stubborn streak" and managed to get by on deliveries. However, the commission demanded by apps like Deliveroo and Uber Eats meant it was hard to profit and she instead focused on "keeping our name and our brand and our food alive" until the all-clear was given to reopen.

A few months later and business is booming enough to expand outside the borough, with a new venture Hanoi Chay recently opening at Hackney Bridge. Gina described it as "almost like the sister company to Hanoi Cà Phê", as well as "100% plant-based". It's another tribute to Grandma Quyen, who would set aside several days each month to follow a vegan diet as part of her Buddhist practice.

Non-carnivorous Walthamstow residents don't need to worry, though: every section of Hanoi Cà Phê's menu has at least one item suitable for vegetarians and vegans. So if you're curious about Vietnamese cuisine, then now is the perfect time to visit CRATE St. James Street and give this vibrant local business a try.

It takes a borough

Leyton teacher Michael Mann on how Waltham Forest inspired his debut book

When I moved to Waltham Forest six years ago, I was a primary school teacher first and an enthusiastic hobbyist when it came to writing. Little by little, as I wrote in my Leyton attic, it appears something of the drive and creativity of my new home started to rub off on me. *Ghostcloud*, my debut novel for ages eight and up, hits bookstores on 7th October and is a story I couldn't have written without the schoolchildren, green spaces and skyline of this borough.

It's a teacherly cliché to say our students teach us just as much as we teach them but, when you want to write books for children, it becomes even more true. I've taught at two fantastic local primary schools – Newport Primary School in Leyton and St Mary's CofE Primary School in Walthamstow – since moving here and my pupils were invaluable in showing me how to keep

kids engaged. More importantly though, it made me realise how few popular books for children, especially those with magic and adventure, feature heroes that reflect the diversity of our corner of London. Like myself and many of my students, my protagonist is mixed-race and can sometimes feel he doesn't quite belong. I wanted to make sure the children I owe so much to know they can be the hero too.

But it's not just the human world of Waltham Forest that began to seep into the story I wrote. Whenever I felt stuck, I would walk or cycle through Walthamstow Marshes and along the canal because it felt like escaping from the city. I ended up setting *Ghostcloud* in an east London slightly different from our own, where the river has flooded, forcing people to live on boats just like those I rode past. It's a more wet and wild version of



Michael Mann with his new book outside Phlox bookstore in Leyton

London, overgrown with the ivy and bindweed I saw on canal paths, as if our marshes had eclipsed the urban sprawl.

Perhaps the story's biggest debt, however, is owed to the Leyton skyline and the sunsets from the bridge over Leyton Tube station, some of the finest in the country. During the height of the pandemic, I was struck by how, no matter what we lost, nobody could ever

"The sunsets from the bridge over Leyton Tube station are some of the finest in the country"

take the sky away. Fantastic, vivid orange creations seem to cluster over the velodrome, contorting

into weird and wonderful shapes, before fading into a dusky blue night. The central conceit of *Ghostcloud* is that such shapes are in fact ghosts watching us back and, in the book, my hero Luke Smith-Sharma discovers this mysterious world above. The book's scenes in the sky were some of my favourites to write and nearly all were inspired by those Leyton views.

My hope is that the children who read *Ghostcloud* will look at the sky a little differently. There's a whole world up there waiting to be discovered, provided you're prepared to stop and look.

'Ghostcloud' can be purchased in local bookshops and online at Waterstones, Amazon and bookshop.org from 7th October. Signed copies with bookmarks can be found in Phlox on Francis Road Leyton and Waterstones in Walthamstow.

Find Michael on:
Twitter @mikebmann
Instagram @mikemannwrites
Visit michaelmann.co.uk

NEWS

Plans for new young offenders' centre unveiled

The council has committed to treating young offenders as "children first, offenders second"

Waltham Forest Council has unveiled plans to build a brand new home for its young offenders' service in Leytonstone.

The service is currently in Rowan House in Cecil Road but could move to the site of a disused adult learning centre, about ten minutes' walk away, as early as 2023.

The council wants to knock down the former centre and build a new two-storey building, which would also educate up to 20 children excluded from school, starting work in January 2022 if possible.

However, at an online consultation on 22nd September, neighbour Anna Williams warned this would place it on the same road as two existing homes for young homeless people.

She said: "The council have not checked what's already in

North Birkbeck Road. Everybody supports these children living here... but there are quite a number of crimes on a regular basis.

"It feels like you are creating a super-hub for young people to make criminal and unhelpful new connections on our doorstep."

She was particularly concerned by the period from 3-6pm, when people leaving the new centre could cross paths with young people waiting to be let back inside the homes for the night.

However, Anne-Marie Koroma, who works at the service's current home in Rowan House, said that, in her experience, children who use the service "do not really want to be hanging around" afterwards.

She said: "We don't tend to get children congregating because they don't want to be there, they want to be off.

"It's also important not to assume that anything that happens in the area is due to children attending the youth offending centre."

Residents were also told that the council plans to meet with the Single Homeless Project, which runs the homes discussed, to come up with a "management strategy".

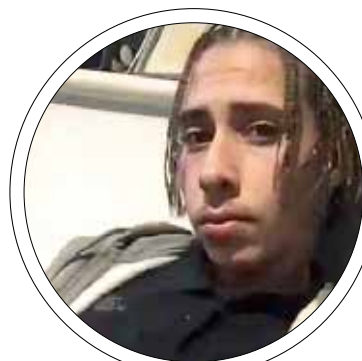
The centre will provide counselling and therapy, as part of its commitment, agreed by full council last December, to treat each young offender as a "child first [and an] offender second".

The centre for excluded students will also offer counselling and therapy, alongside lessons in Maths, English, construction, catering, music production and computer technology.

It will include a "small-scale sports hall" with space for indoor games, as well as drama and music performances.

Seven charged over teen's murder four years ago

Seven men, including three from the borough, are charged with murdering Kacem Mokrane



Kacem Mokrane, 18

Abdul-Karim, 23, from Islington; and 40-year-old Richard Billington, from Essex.

Kacem's death came half a year after 17-year-old Elijah Dornelly was murdered by two teenagers in Walthamstow High Street and four months before Joseph Williams-Torres, 20, was shot dead by members of the borough's Mali Boys gang in a case of mistaken identity.

Speaking in the House of Commons in January 2019, after the tragic death of 14-year-old Jaden Moodie, Walthamstow MP Stella Creasy named Kacem as one of "six children buried in our community" over the preceding 18 months.

She said: "Each of their families, like Jaden's family, is grieving for the life they have lost. They are now asking for our help so that no other family will go through this horror.

"They need a government who joins the dots and recognises that too many of our young people are struggling in education, are vulnerable to exploitation and are therefore vulnerable to such challenges.

"We must ensure that young people receive alternative provision and that we see those young people as worthy of fighting for.

"Please, I do not want another child in our community to be buried because of knife crime ever again. It is preventable, and if we work together, we can stop it."

All five men arrested on 16th September appeared at Thames Magistrates' Court that same day and are currently being held in custody.

They are due to appear at the Old Bailey on 3rd December but have yet to enter a plea.

An almost four-year investigation into the fatal stabbing of a teenage boy on Walthamstow's streets may finally be nearing its end.

Kacem Mokrane died in November 2017, at the age of 18, after he was stabbed on Mount Pleasant Road.

Kacem, who died from his injuries four days later, was the second of a string of six young men to lose their life to the borough's violence in a year and a half.

On 16th September, more than three years after the last update from police, seven men were finally charged with his death.

Ranging in age from 40 to just 19 years old, the group includes three men from Waltham Forest and others from east, south and north London, as well as one man from Essex.

Waltham Forest resident Kamil Kazmierski, 21, was arrested and taken to a police station, while 23-year-old Hamza Ul-Haq and 19-year-old Luca Griffiths, also from the borough, were charged via post.

Also arrested that day were Abdirisak Ali, 24, from Newham; Christopher Wilson, 20, from Greenwich; Shadab

"I do not want another child in our community to be buried because of knife crime ever again"

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INVESTIGATION

The long shadow of knife crime

An investigation into the second-hand effects of violence in the community



Weapons seized by police across London in summer 2017 as part of "Operation Sceptre" Credit Met Police

by Marcia Veiga

When Christopher* was ten years old, his uncle was stabbed picking his cousin up from school. A decade later, knife crime has remained a recurring theme in his life. "I was 17 years old when I first witnessed an attack unfold," he remembers, "and to date, I've seen five physical brawls, with three involving weapons."

As a young black man, Christopher fits the bill of those typically affected by knife crime, according to Commander Alex Murray, the Met's specialist lead for violent crime. He describes the most common victim as "male, BAME and under 25" and, in the last two years, Christopher has lost three close friends to violence, all of whom fit this description.

However, asked if, given his experiences, he feels unsafe in Waltham Forest, Christopher insists he does not.

"I live, study, work and socialise in the borough and have done for the majority of my life, so perhaps I've become desensitised," he told the *Echo*, before admitting: "Most teenage boys would testify that knife crime is a concern... but I'd say my biggest concern is the lack of employment opportunities."

A cursory look at social media during the recent spate of violence – which in the last two months has included two fatal stabbings and a teenager shot dead – would suggest not everyone feels the same. A survey conducted by the *Echo* this summer, to

which more than 340 residents responded, saw almost 80% list knife crime among their biggest worries and three quarters say they worry about the number of stabbings "often" or "fairly often".

However, of these respondents, the majority of whom identified as white and middle-aged, only around one in ten said they had been directly affected by knife crime, while only a similarly small proportion had witnessed an attack or its immediate aftermath. What appears to have affected many instead is the aftershocks of such violence, with around 40% saying they had been "emotionally impacted by hearing or reading" about a stabbing.

Courtney Barrett, Walthamstow resident and founder of Binning Knives Saves Lives, said he has seen this culture of second-hand fear have concerning and counterintuitive effects. "I get so many men between 50 to 60-years-old who tell me they're carrying [a knife] because they don't feel safe without it," he told the *Echo*, "If there's no police around them, they need to ensure they can defend themselves."

This sense that police - and other authorities meant to tackle crime - are missing in action was reiterated by the surveyed residents, three quarters of whom said they don't feel "enough is being done by people in power". It's an impression local officers and Waltham Forest Council are keen to challenge, but one that seems hard to shake. In March last year, Waltham Forest had seen the biggest drop in stabbings since August 2018 of any London borough,

according to a report for the council's cabinet, but the rate of fear about knife crime was the second highest in the city. Speaking to researchers from the council's Violence Reduction Partnership, one resident said: "I don't want the council to waste money telling me that crime isn't that bad, I can see what's happening with my own eyes. I believe what I see and feel, not the stats provided by the police."

In an effort to reassure the community, it is perhaps unsurprising police heavily favour a tactic with tangible results: stop and search. In the last two years, there were more than 21,000 searches in Waltham Forest, the third highest figure among outer London areas. Among those responding to the *Echo*'s survey, eight out of ten people felt stop and search was "necessary",

target they're aiming for. Over the last two years, 79.5% of more than 21,000 searches in Waltham Forest resulted in "no further action", suggesting almost 17,000 people had nothing illegal on them. While the average of fruitless searches across London is not much lower, at 76.5%, Waltham Forest's percentage is the highest in the capital.

It's figures like this that have inspired Steve Barnabis, founder of Project Zero, to help young men like Christopher challenge their treatment by police. Steve, who named his organisation after his goal to see zero young people die from violence, has lost two relatives to knife crime and does feel "an element of stop and search is needed", even if he is concerned by the way it is used.

He told the *Echo*: "When I was young,

"So many men between 50-60 tell me they're carrying a knife because they don't feel safe without it."

although almost the same number said neither they nor a relative had been searched.

Caught on the double-edged sword of being the most expected victim and perpetrator, it is young men of colour like Christopher who bear the brunt of this tactic. He told the *Echo* he is searched weekly: "I don't blame them because [officers are] told that black boys are the perpetrators, they just follow the target. However, I've never seen a white boy in a tracksuit get stopped."

The Met's own statistics confirm the borough's black population is almost twice as likely to be searched as their white counterparts, a process that often sees them handcuffed on the street in front of strangers. However, these same figures suggest officers more often than not fail to hit the

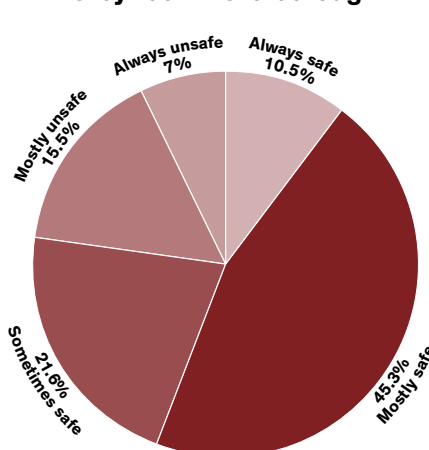
even before I knew the terminology 'stop and search', I experienced it daily – sometimes even twice or thrice a day. I would be going about my normal business and it would happen. For me to be stopped and searched that much wasn't right.

"The important thing is the opportunity to challenge it, especially if you're a young person. The motive for a stop and search should always be explained, I think that's what sometimes goes amiss."

To this end, Project Zero and fellow local youth organisation Spark2Life have secured funding for an advocacy service for young people, which they aim to launch early next year. While the Met has its own complaints process, all but the most serious incidents are investigated by the force themselves.

It is clear that knife crime has and will continue to have a significant impact on life in Waltham Forest, although not always in the ways we might expect. While incidents of knife crime have a massive impact on victims and their loved ones, so too do the perceptions and fears of the community and the measures taken to assuage them. The ongoing challenge for the authorities and campaigners is to find the balance needed to help people feel safe, while ensuring men like Christopher are treated fairly.

How safe surveyed residents said they feel in the borough



This investigation has been funded by Trust for London, in conjunction with The Centre for Investigative Journalism.

*Not his real name

PHOTOGRAPHY



Chris Bramble – Fine Art Ceramicist

Kingsley Thompson – Leather Craftsman



Dudley Dickson & Toussaint Clarke – Master Steel Pan Makers and Tuners

Moussa Dembele – Master craftsman of West African instruments



Local Photographer Celebrates Black Artisans



Marcia Bennett-Male – Architectural Stone Carver, Letter Cutter and Stonemason



Dolores Swift – Bespoke Leather Design



Ray Clarke – Upholsterer and Designer



Doreen Gittens – Master Weaver

The Black Artisans is an exhibition of black makers and craftspeople, created by Jo Sealy and travelling round the borough this Black History Month. While there are many black artisans in the UK, they are rarely seen and the exhibition is a chance to celebrate their work and, through a series of recorded talks, educate young people about routes into the industry. The talks, to be made available to schools and colleges, were created with the Heritage Crafts Association and TV presenter, furniture restorer and designer Jay Blades MBE.

The exhibition, funded by a Make It Happen grant from Waltham Forest Council, will appear at William Morris Gallery until 3rd October, at Chingford Library from 5–18th and at Leyton Library 19–31st. Find out more at www.theblackartisans.org

We want your photos and illustrations! Please send in your images of people and places in Waltham Forest to penny@socialspider.com. We are also accepting entries for our next theme: 'Home'. Deadline is 10th Nov.

COMMENT

Whipps Cross bed numbers are still under threat

Mary Burnett, from Action4Whipps, fears the council is celebrating too soon over the apparent promise not to cut beds in the new hospital

The good news, Waltham Forest Council tells us, is that the NHS have agreed not to cut bed numbers at the new Whipps Cross Hospital. But are they celebrating a bit too soon?

In a letter to concerned local MPs last month, the hospital’s redevelopment director wrote they would maintain bed numbers at the new Whipps, but only “should that prove necessary”. The NHS trust that runs the hospital, Barts Health, are making similar vague assurances, claiming bed numbers will stay the same “if that is required for healthcare at the time of opening”.

Barts emphasise their “flexibility in both planning and design” but the size of a new building isn’t flexible; it’ll be fixed if the planning application currently with the council goes ahead. Equally important is that the Government have capped the costs of the rebuild at £400 million. So where would extra beds go and how would they be paid for? What services or spaces for staff would have to be cut? A recent newsletter from Barts mentions the potential to convert office space into

additional wards but office space is essential, as are beds for patients. The rationale for cutting 51 beds has always been that improvements in services in the community will reduce admissions and the length of patient

stays. But anyone trying to get through to their GP or other much-needed social care services will seriously question this. Social care budgets have been cut to the bone, bursaries for nurses have been slashed and GP training has been underfunded for years. So how does Barts plan to “maintain a relentless focus on delivering improvements to services – in the hospital and across the local health and care system –

each year between now and when the new hospital opens”?

Even if there was a vast improvement, there’s compelling evidence we’d still need more hospital beds than we have now. The Greater London Authority estimates there will be almost 11,500 more people in the borough by 2026. Furthermore, Barts’ plan for the new hospital is for it to be a centre of expertise for the treatment of frail and older people, as was confirmed in their newsletter in March. Not only do older people take longer to treat in hospital but the number of over 65s across the hospital’s catchment area is projected to increase by 25% by 2029, according to the Office of National Statistics.



Mary and other local health campaigners protesting plans to reduce beds in the new hospital (WFSO/NHS)

“If we want a Whipps Cross that meets our community’s needs, we must keep campaigning”

Barts Health NHS Trust are up against considerable financial pressures when it comes to delivering this much-needed new hospital. If we want a Whipps Cross that meets our community’s needs, the plans must be closely scrutinised and we must keep campaigning.

Redbridge and Essex demand say on new Whipps Cross

Waltham Forest Council have set up a joint committee to let other councils raise their concerns about the redevelopment

by Victoria Munro

Neighbouring boroughs have successfully demanded a say on Whipps Cross Hospital’s redevelopment to raise their concerns about planned changes.

Redbridge councillors have previously said they are “simply not buying” some claims made by the hospital’s NHS trust, Barts Health, to justify its plans.

While figures from the hospital, taken between December 2019 and last November, show more than half of its inpatients were from Waltham Forest, a fifth were from Redbridge.

On 2nd September, Waltham Forest Council set up a joint committee with both Redbridge and Essex County Council to scrutinise plans for the new hospital together.

Neil Zammett, who chairs Redbridge Council’s health scrutiny committee, told the *Echo* its representatives “will be pursuing” a number of issues but “most of all” hope to see the hospital “up and running as soon as possible”.

These issues include bed numbers at the new hospital and whether it will continue to offer end-of-life care, plus questions around parking and public transport to the site.

Last month, Barts released a statement saying it would keep the same number of beds in the new hospital “if that is required for healthcare at the time of opening”.

Speaking on 2nd September, when Waltham Forest’s full council voted to approve the joint committee, councillor Richard Sweden said it will provide “an opportunity to test the assertions being

made” about the new hospital. He said: “This will give us a chance to look in proper detail at the proposal and support what should be a life-changing development for those in the borough and neighbouring boroughs.” The committee will have seven

members – four from Waltham Forest, two from Redbridge and one from Essex – all nominated by each council’s health scrutiny committee. Epping Forest District Council will also be able to have a member present but only to observe proceedings.



LETTERS

More praise for bus driver

Dear Waltham Forest Echo

As two of the millions of grandparents who infest Walthamstow helping to look after its coming generation, we would like to say thank you for the piece about Mohammed Shabir [Issue 78, p18].

We only met him once but have never forgotten how the W12’s doors slid open and he beamed at us over his white beard and said: ‘Welcome to my bus!’. We didn’t know who he was and it’s great to read about him. Thank you!

We always pick up your paper when we see it and never fail to find something which interests us.

Martin and Penny Wainwright
Part-time Walthamstow residents

Blocking Our Future

Dear Waltham Forest Echo

I recently read Waltham Forest Council’s draft Local Plan, which offers residents a plethora of riches, such as ‘vibrant communities’ and ‘dynamic business hubs’. The plan presents itself as a consultation document, so surely residents get to decide how things happen – or do we? It has become clear this consultation is akin to offering a prisoner their choice of poisons for the lethal injection. Whether we wish it or not, local and central government are imposing on our already crowded borough a population rise of between fifty and a hundred thousand, all in large blocks of flats.

These developments are commercial operations, designed to maximise profit by packing as many units as possible onto a small site, so developers refuse to proceed unless they can build big. This places our councillors in an invidious position: they have housebuilding targets to meet yet no funds of their own to construct smaller blocks on a human scale.

The results are increasingly visible on and high above our streets: brutal, ugly, light-blocking and view-blighting. This is battery cage existence for human beings and, unless residents refuse, more and more of our land will be given over to these monstrosities. Already

permission has been granted for massive blocks in Walthamstow town centre and already the council are preparing to destroy the historic, harmoniously-designed assembly hall and library in Chingford.

I encourage fellow residents to look to the future and decide how we want our children and our children’s children to live. Tower block living is very far from ideal, especially for families and older people, and I believe we should demand an end to all buildings above three or four stories immediately. Waltham Forest Council loves to heap tributes on William Morris, our area’s greatest son, but he would be at their throats over the hideous, fellowship-destroying blocks they are creating!

Alan Ross
Chingford resident

Advertisement

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Gravity Well Taproom Limited** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for a new premises licence to use the premises at **Arch 155, Midland Road, London E10 6JT** for:

- The sale by retail of alcohol and the playing of recorded music

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am–5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR or via email to: Licensing@Walthamforest.gov.uk.

Representations must be received no later than 19 October 2021. The Licensing Authority will have regard to any such representation in considering the application.

It is an offence, under section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003, to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in or in connection with an application for premises licence and the maximum fine on being convicted of such an offence is unlimited.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Notice of Application for a New Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Jeremy Salomon Le Delas** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at: **Bubble of London, AC MALL, Leyton Industrial Village, 44G Argall Avenue, Leyton E10 7QP**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- Supply of alcohol off the premises from 08:00 to 08:00 daily
- Opening hours: 20:00 to 20:00 daily

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am–5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR or via email: Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk.

Representations must be received no later than: **22/10/2021**

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with this application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on conviction should such a false statement be made.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Notice of application for the grant of a Premises Licence under section 17

Notice is hereby given that **Deja Brew London Limited** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at: **Deja Brew-8 Forest Road, Walthamstow E17 6JJ**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- Recorded music (indoors): 08:00–16:00 and 17:00–23:00 Sun–Thurs, 08:00–16:00 & 17:00–02:00, Fri–Sat
- Late night refreshment (indoors): 23:00–24:00, Sun–Thurs, 23:00–02:00, Fri–Sat
- Hours premises is open to the public: 05:00–24:00, Mon–Thurs, 05:00–02:00 Fri, 06:00–02:00 Sat, 06:00–24:00 Sun

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am–5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR or via email: Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Representations must be received no later than **18/10/2021**.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with this application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on conviction should such a false statement be made.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Notice of application for the grant of a Premises Licence under section 17

Notice is hereby given that **Signature Brew Ltd** has applied to Waltham Forest Council for a premises licence at: Unit 15 Uplands Business Park, Blackhorse Lane, Walthamstow London, E17 5QJ. In order that the following licensable activities can take place:

- Supply of Alcohol: Monday to Sunday, 9am–11pm
- Late Night Refreshment Sunday to Wednesday, 11pm–00am Thursday to Saturday, 11pm–1am
- Recorded Music Monday to Wednesday, 12pm–00am Thursday, 12pm–00am Friday, 12pm–01am Saturday, 09am–01am Sunday, 09am–00am

The licence register listing details of the application is held at the The Licensing Section, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR, Tel: 0208 496 3000, Email licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk, Internet www.walthamforest.gov.uk

Any representations against this application must be made in writing and received by the Licensing Service at the above address, by no later than: **24/10/2021**

Residents and businesses in the vicinity of the premises, or their representatives, may make representations on licensing objectives grounds only, i.e. the prevention of crime and disorder, the prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm. Copies of all representations will be sent to the applicant. It is an offence, liable on conviction to a fine up to £5000 for an applicant to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with the application.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Ionut Marian Florea** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **218 High Road, Leyton E10 5PS, Magazin 2 Culturi**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- Only to permit the sale of alcohol from Monday to Sunday, 08:30–21:00

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am–5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR or via email: Licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk

Representations must be received no later than **26/10/2021**.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with this application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on conviction should such a false statement be made.

Public Notice
Licences For Special Treatment

Notice is given that **Ms Xhanan Goleshi** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for a Special Treatment Licence for:

- Manicure, pedicure, nail extensions and waxing
- License for the premises: 321 Higham Hill Road, Walthamstow, London E17 5RG

Anyone wishing to oppose the application must give notice in writing to the Licensing Officer, Resident Services, Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, London E10 5NR **WITHIN 28 DAYS OF PUBLICATION** specifying the grounds of opposition.

Persons objecting to the grant of a licence must be prepared to attend in person before a Committee of the Council.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for a New Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Theventhiran Masethan** has applied to the Waltham Forest Council for the grant of a Premises Licence, in respect of the following premises:

- Wings Hut, 26 The Avenue, London E4 9LD
- Retail sale of alcohol off the premises Sunday to Thursday 11.00 to 02.00 Hours, Friday & Saturday 11.00 to 03.00 Hours, Late Night refreshment Sunday to Thursday 23.00 to 02.00 hrs, Friday to Saturday 11.00 to 03.00 hrs.

Any person wishing to make representations about the proposals outlined above can do so in writing to Licensing Service, Magistrates Building, 1 Farnan Avenue, London E17 4NX. where the Public Register is available and may be viewed during normal office hours or email: licensing@walthamforest.gov.uk, must be received no later than **19th October 2021**.

It is an offence to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with a licensing application, and the maximum fine for which a person is liable on summary conviction for that offence shall not exceed level 5 on the standard scale.

Advertisement

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for the Grant of a Premises Licence

Notice is hereby given that **Homies on Donkeys Ltd** has applied to the London Borough of Waltham Forest for the grant of a Premises Licence at **Homies on Donkeys, Unit 38, Wood Street Indoor Market, 98–100 Wood Street E17 3HX**. The nature of the application is as follows:

- Sale of alcohol (off sales) – Tuesday to Saturday only: 12:00–17:00

The Licensing register listing full details of the application is kept by the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, E10 5NR. The application may be viewed Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am–5pm (except Bank Holidays).

Any person wishing to make a representation in respect of the above activities may do so in writing to the Licensing Service, 3 The Square, Leyton, E10 5NR.

Representations must be received no later than: **28/10/21**

It is an offence under Section 158 of the Licensing Act 2003 to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with an application. A person is liable to an unlimited fine on conviction should such a false statement be made.

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AROUND THE BOROUGH

Walthamstow

Town hall flats approved



An artist's impression of the finished development Credit Hawkins\Brown

Five blocks of 433 flats and council office space will now be built around Waltham Forest Council's refurbished town hall.

In June, the council completed its £25 million revamp of the Grade-2 listed town hall, which created a new fountain already popular with visitors but went £3.4m over-budget.

The new blocks, given planning permission on 7th September, will range from five to nine storeys high and will include 87 affordable homes for those on the council's housing waiting list. Committee vice-chair Sally

Littlejohn praised the plans for not separating the affordable and more expensive homes, adding: "That's really unusual. It adds to the costs because they are not all together and the housing association has to dot around but I think that's very positive about this plan."

Despite largely positive comments, there were still some reservations, particularly as to whether the new buildings would "detract" from the look of the town hall.

Councillor Richard Sweden said: "My main preoccupation is... [whether] the buildings might detract from the prominence

of the excellent building in which we are standing. From the drawings, they certainly look as if they are the same height."

Committee chair Jenny Gray responded that she thought the blocks were "imaginative, well-designed" and would be "a lot more in-keeping" than the former court building currently next to the town hall.

She also praised the recently completed refurbishment, adding: "When I came to this meeting tonight and saw how many families were enjoying this beautiful space, I did feel a bit choked up."

Chingford

Care home no longer risks closure

by Josh Mellor,
Local Democracy Reporter

A Chingford care home for disabled adults no longer risks being shut down after dramatically improving.

Normanshire Care Services in Normanshire Drive was placed in special measures by the CQC after an inspection in August 2019.

Inspectors deemed the home 'inadequate' due to severe under-

staffing, staff hired without proper background checks and a resident with bruises and scratches.

Following an inspection in May, however, the home's rating improved from the lowest possible to the second highest 'good' rating.

The improvement comes after a change in leadership, including a new manager who joined a few months earlier in March.

Inspectors wrote that staff "are now familiar with residents' likes

and dislikes" and "people are treated with dignity and respect".

Their report adds: "In the past, the service was very short staffed, they now have staff providing cover for breaks."

In 2019, CQC inspectors were horrified to discover one employee was hired without a criminal record check or completed job application.

However, the care home's records show all staff now have the proper background checks.

Leytonstone

Olympic champion given honorary doctorate

Waltham Forest's newest Olympic gold medallist received a further honour last month in the form of an honorary doctorate degree.

Leytonstone-born Bethany Shriever became the first and only Brit to win Olympic gold in BMX racing this July at the Tokyo Olympics, aged just 22.

A month later, she went on to win another gold medal at the 2021 BMX World Championships in the Netherlands.

To celebrate her fantastic achievements, on 14th September, she was given an honorary doctorate of sport by the University of East London.

At a graduation ceremony, she told students: "What I achieved hopefully proves to the world that you should keep believing in your dreams. We all have good and bad days. Whatever you want to achieve after today, stick at it, work hard, and it can come."

Bethany is now focusing on the 2024 Olympics in Paris and



hopes to inspire more girls to get involved in BMX. When she eventually retires, she hopes to pursue a career in her part-time job, early years teaching.

She told UEL graduates, many of whom plan to teach: "I know many of you here today will know what I mean when I say that teaching and supporting children to learn and develop gives you an amazing buzz."

"I got to help them with their maths, reading and writing, and of course I started a cycling club at the school to inspire the next generation of BMX riders."

Walthamstow

Almost 2,000 homes could be built in Blackhorse Lane

High-rise towers of 18 storeys or more could be on the horizon in Blackhorse Lane as part of Waltham Forest Council's "masterplan" to regenerate the area.

The council is working with the Mayor of London to "intensify" industrial use and boost local employment but also wants to add up to 1,800 homes.

The emerging plan, presented to residents online on 15th September, had some attendees concerned future developers would focus more on profitable residential buildings than industrial space.

Attendee Jon Reades said: "It makes sense to intensify Blackhorse Lane, my main concern is the worry that there's money to be made in residential."

"How do we stop developers saying 'yeah, yeah, yeah, we promise to develop work-space' and then developing what isn't really usable? Or not building spaces that are cheap or very affordable."

Project manager Patrick Shannon insisted the regeneration would be "industry first", rather than "resident first".

He added: "We'll be saying to developers, 'if you want to develop then you need to increase that industrial space on your site'."

The online workshop also heard from architectural consultant, Steve Walker, who said the plan would see the area remain industrial in the north and "combine with other uses" to the south.

COLUMN

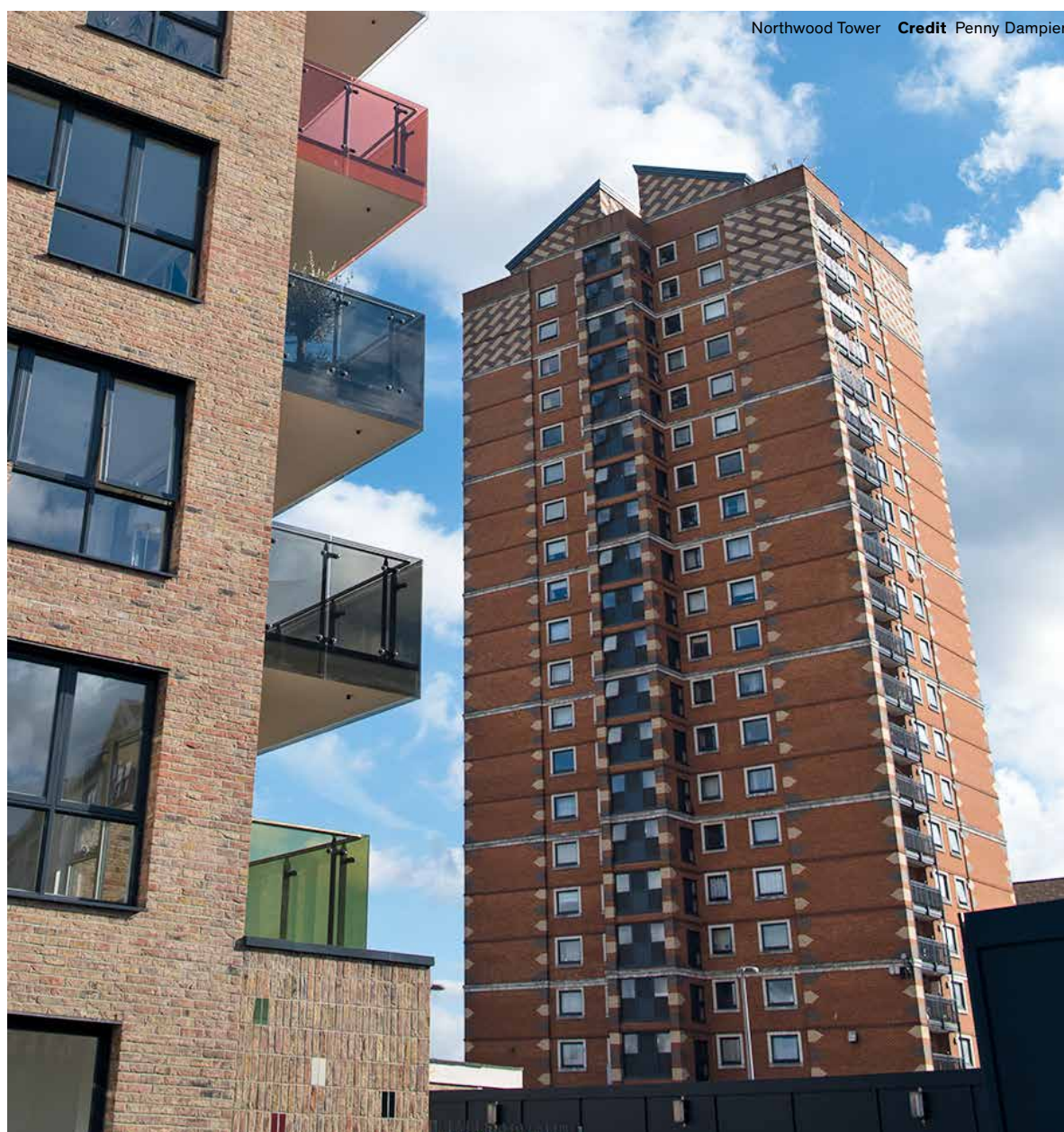
All along the watchtower

Columnist Michelle Edwards questions if fire wardens are an effective solution to lingering safety risks

Last month, advertiser-funded broadcaster Channel 4 aired *Grenfell: The Untold Story* and, as usually happens after I think about the tragedy, my mind immediately turned to a tower closer to home. The powerful documentary uses never-seen-before footage originally shot by filmmaker Constantine Gras while working on a promotional film about the tower, commissioned by its landlord, Kensington and Chelsea TMO. It was then 2015, two years before tragedy struck and the same year a £9.7 million refurbishment began covering the building in now-infamous cladding.

Regardless of his promotional brief, what Constantine ended up capturing is a historical record of residents' frustrations with the refurbishment and the unwillingness to listen among those in charge. Knowing what we now know, watching the corporate buck-passing from local councillors, former Conservative MP Victoria Borwick and representatives from the TMO is stirring stuff. "We were fighting for our lives," as one tenant put it, "but we didn't know that yet."

I first wrote in the *Echo* about the concerns of people living in Northwood Tower – a 21-storey block and the only part of Marlowe Road Estate not being redeveloped – just two months later. As recently as April 2017, a complaint about fire safety raised at a meeting of the estate's steering group had been dismissed by the council with what felt like complete disinterest but, at a meeting the day after Grenfell, residents' frustration boiled over. Seemingly out of nowhere, the council instructed its contractor Osborne to carry out an "external works programme" on Northwood Tower, which would include new windows and front doors. In recent years, Waltham Forest Matters blogger Nick Tiratsoo has reported extensively on the 217 new doors and the confusion and, it seems, misinformation over how fire-proof they actually are. Four years later, and despite



"When I speak to residents, what I'm left with is a picture of absolute chaos"

the work done, it's clear the building is still at risk, given it has its own "waking watch".

Waking watch wardens constantly patrol Northwood Tower, as well as 13 other council-owned buildings around the borough. First introduced last year, they are trained to detect fires, raise the alarm and manage evacuations in buildings that still pose a fire risk and will remain in place until the council has finished work to make each building safe. An FOI request I submitted to the council shows that, in

addition to these 14 buildings, there are also three managed by social housing providers – Goodwood Apartments in Chingford and Lingfield and West Central Apartments, both in Walthamstow – that still require a waking watch, plus, presumably, an unknown number of privately rented blocks. According to the Government's website, each warden costs anywhere from £12 to £30 an hour and the FOI response reveals the council has so far paid £1,316,644, excluding tax, for this service.

The waking watch is an interesting stop-gap for an urgent problem and, on 17th June this year, a near-miss incident at Northwood Tower may have put it to the test. A small fire broke out in a kitchen on the eighth floor, where Mother S, as I will call her to protect her anonymity, lives with her four children. While the family relaxed in front of the TV, a plastic takeaway box melted away on a back hob which was thought to have been switched off. Had the dog not run into the passageway and started barking, nobody would have

known and, by then, thick black smoke had engulfed the kitchen and was steadily making its way through the passageway. S scooped up her kids and ran outside.

When I speak to residents about the events of that day, what I'm left with is a picture of absolute chaos and questions about how effective the watch proved to be. S did recount seeing a warden raise the alarm as she left her flat but, when her fire alarm remained silent, she still felt the need to knock on her neighbours' doors herself. Another resident told me she was woken from her regular after-school nap that day by the repeated ringing of her mobile: a friend in another block had seen the smoke and screamed at her to get out. Weeks after the event, others claimed they were unaware a fire had even occurred.

This is not the first time I've heard suggestions from Northwood Tower residents that the waking watch is not an effective solution to the dangers still posed by the building. At a cost to the public of more than £58,000 a month, after tax, it's a bitter – and costly – pill to swallow.

The council's cabinet member for housing, Louise Mitchell, insists it has "received no complaints" about the events of 17th June and "have no reason to believe" the concerns I relayed to them second-hand.

Regarding the fire, she added: "Four wardens were on call at the time. London Fire Brigade (LFB) attended the incident within four minutes, while the building was still being evacuated, and assessed the situation as non-life threatening. They deemed the Tower safe to return to while it was in the process of being cleared.

"If residents wish to make a complaint it will be fully investigated by both the council and the wardens' employers. Furthermore, we work closely with residents and the LFB with regards to fire safety."

For what it's worth, the LFB didn't wish to comment and the incident is not featured on the list of fires recorded on their website. For now, the building remains intact.

NEWS

More than 100 Leyton trees under threat from high-rise flats

Environmental campaigners promise 'non-violent direct action' if attempts are made to cut them down



An activist poses with the London Maple she has promised to protect
Credit: Friends of Orient Way Pocket Park

by Josh Mellor,
Local Democracy Reporter

More than 100 trees set to be cut down for housing in Leyton have each been given their own bodyguard.

The trees are in Orient Way Pocket Park, an “informal green space” near Lea Bridge Station created by Waltham Forest Council, which now wants to build around 300 new homes in the area.

The new homes would be spread across three sites at the crossroads between Orient Way, Argall Way and Lea Bridge Road and would require removing all 122 trees in the pocket park.

The council says 95 of these trees are “low quality” and 12 “cannot realistically be retained” for longer than one year, while promising to plant more than 250 replacement trees on the development.

Protestors, meanwhile, are determined to stop the felling and, on 27th September, posted notices on each tree with the name of someone who has promised to protect it.

Organiser Emily Hughes said: “If it comes to the chop, citizens are ready

to do non violent direct action. [This is] something purposeful that can be replicated whenever a green space is under threat.”

Campaigners posted “Citizen’s Tree Preservation Orders”, imitating the legal documents that councils can use to protect trees from development.

Final plans for the Lea Bridge regeneration, which envisions towers of up to 22 storeys at the crossroads, were submitted this summer after five years of consultation.

The council’s cabinet member for housing, Simon Miller, said it “respects residents’ right to voice their opinions and concerns about local developments”.

However, he argued the new homes would enable “more of our people to live green, sustainable lives locally” and noted the development will include hundreds of new

trees, “specially selected to boost biodiversity”, as well as “green roofs and habitats for birds, bats and invertebrates”.

He said: “The Lea Bridge Station sites have been programmed for redevelopment for many years. We will not support proposals unless there is assurance that there is no net loss of trees.”

“If it comes to the chop, citizens are ready.”

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HISTORY

Chingford Station's frustrated ambitions

Qualified tour guide Joanna Moncrieff explains the surprising grandeur of the nearly 150-year-old station

On 3rd September, 1878, the *Essex Herald* reported on an application for a new alcohol licence from a surprising source: Chingford Station. The Great Eastern Railway, it explained, wanted to be able to offer glasses of champagne in its refreshment room and, despite an uproar from local pub owners, the licence was granted a month later.

To those that don't know its history, the move – and even the building itself – might seem needlessly grand. The new station had opened that very month and boasted four waiting rooms, the aforementioned, commodious refreshment area and three separate exits in order to cope with hordes of expected visitors. Upstairs were two sleeping rooms for attendants and even an eight-room apartment for the station



A wooden arch erected at the station to celebrate a visit from Queen Victoria
Credit Chingford Historical Society

master, a Mr Arthur B Staggs, who remained in the post until at least 1901, according to the census.

All this replaced a previous station consisting only of a single platform, once located at the junction of Bull Lane (now

King's Road) and Hale End Road (now Larkshall Road). This earlier Chingford Station operated for only five years from November 1873 and the site was eventually built over in 1976.

The station's grandeur and long

platforms make far more sense considering Chingford was not originally meant to be the end of the line. The Great Eastern Railway hoped to extend their line into the forest, all the way to High Beach, a plan scuppered the same year the station opened by the Epping Forest Act. This act transferred responsibility for maintaining the forest to the City of London Corporation, who still have it today, and meant any new development on forest lands was prohibited.

Chingford Station would still profit from its connection to the famous beauty spot, receiving a visit on 6th May 1882 from Queen Victoria, en route to a reception at High Beach where she would "dedicate [the] beautiful forest for the enjoyment" of her subjects. To celebrate her visit, a large wooden arch was erected outside the station.

Unfortunately, as soon as eight years later, it was in a bit of a state. A report in 1890 described it as "a hideous eyesore ... a collection of old sleepers, in varying stages of putrefaction"! Despite this withering description, it was not demolished until 1901.

Over a century later, however, the size and grandeur of Chingford Station is finally going to be put to worthwhile use. Love North Chingford have been offered the lease for the station's currently unused extra space for a new community hub, which could host anything from art exhibits and small concerts to micro-businesses and tuition for children.

You can find out more about their plans at: lovenorthchingford.co.uk/projects

To discover more about Chingford's history, join Joanna on a guided walk around Chingford on Sunday 7th November. More details here: tinyurl.com/MoncrieffWalks

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