

Warm 'havens' to ease cost of living crisis

JEAN GRAY

The national cost of living crisis is likely to be 'huge and catastrophic' for people in Newham, says Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz who has launched an action plan to help local residents cope with the emergency.

Details of a 'Warm Havens'/ Hot Meals programme were being finalised as *Newham Voices* went to press. "These are places where people can go if they are not able to keep their own homes

warm or if they need a hot meal," said Mayor Fiaz.

Exact locations and timings will be announced shortly, along with interactive maps to help people find venues.

Building on lessons learned from the Covid pandemic, there will also be a series of cost of living emergency sessions to train voluntary and community groups' staff on the full support package on offer so that they can help people access benefits they are entitled to.

Individual residents will be invited

to become Cost of Living Emergency Response Champions. They will get regular updates to help them support others in their communities through the crisis.

The action plan was announced by the Mayor at an emergency summit in September where 150 representatives from the voluntary, faith and community sectors were presented with new research showing that the Borough will be one of the worst hit areas of the country as a result of rises in the

prices of food and energy, alongside poor quality housing and housing tenure (see fact box below). These figures show that people in Newham are already disadvantaged compared with others.

There are plans for a 'town hall' style meeting for residents on the crisis, as well as a business event to make small businesses aware of what support they can get, and where big companies will be asked what support they can offer the people of Newham

The Mayor's Cost of Living Task Force will meet monthly to oversee and drive delivery of the plan.

Speaking after the government's recent 'mini budget', Ms Fiaz said it would "do nothing to help the majority of Newham residents facing the major and harsh realities of the dire economic and financial crisis facing the UK".

If you are interested in participating in the Warm Havens/Hot Meals programme either by hosting or being a financial sponsor, please email julia.nicholson@newham.gov.uk

For information about the advice sessions contact costoflivingresponse@newham.gov.uk

To be a Cost of Living Emergency Response Champion, email costoflivingresponse@newham.gov.uk, and include your mobile number if you would like information by WhatsApp as well as by email and on Zoom. ●

Fact File

- **Energy:** Newham has the second highest fuel poverty rate in London and the 21st highest fuel poverty rate nationally.
- **Housing conditions:** approximately one-in-seven households live in the least energy efficient accommodation (below Band E) and are most impacted by hikes in the energy price cap.
- **Housing tenure:** Newham has the highest proportion of people renting privately of any borough in London (35 per cent).
- **Private renters** are significantly more likely to be in fuel poverty. The number of private rented homes in Newham has increased by 27 per cent since 2012.
- **Rent levels:** the mean monthly rent for a 3-bed property is £1,824.
- **Average income per household:** Just £19,465 compared to the London average of £29,362.
- **Structural inequalities:** young people and people of colour are disproportionately affected by the cost of living crisis due to structural inequalities that have a greater impact on their lives.

Source: <https://www.newham.gov.uk/downloads/file/5052/colsummit-v6-rf>



Remembering Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II

See pages 7-9

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Sell-out launch for Newham Poetry Festival

BEATRICE WHITE

The first ever Newham Poetry Festival took place over the weekend of 24 and 25 September. Organised by the Newham Poetry group at its Poetry House in Stratford Park, the event played host to more than 20 performers, offering the audience a mixture of music, song, poetry, and spoken word.

The line-up featured notable names such as slam poet David Lee Morgan and prize-winning poet Jenny Mitchell, alongside regular attendees of the poetry group's sessions.

Tickets to the festival sold out in advance – evidence of the appetite among locals to come out and experience poetry performed live.

The debut edition set out to “amplify

marginalised voices”, by “offering the majority of the slots to young locals, LGBTQ+ individuals, migrants and people from the global majority.”

For Calu Lema, one of the event's organisers and facilitators, it was crucial for the festival to be an “inter-cultural and intergenerational” space, as this “reflects the ethos and values of Newham Poetry group – this is our audience.”

The organisers intend to make the festival an annual event, and hope its success will boost efforts in the future to secure support and funding, which up until now has often proved difficult. For Sonia Quintero, the group's founder, the goal is also to show people another side of Newham.

“This Borough is very creative, people are very talented,” she said. “We want to make space for these voices to be louder.”

She hopes next year's event will be even more successful and reflective of Newham's talent and diversity – bringing in more voices from young people, disabled communities, and the more than 200 languages that are spoken in the Borough. ●



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Note: Our next issue goes to print on 27 October 2022

Council notebook

Peter Landman reports on the highlights from the August Newham Council meeting:

- **Sir David King**, ex-Government Adviser on Climate Change, attended by video as a Newham Partner and came up with a simple solution for all of us to help save the planet – use public transport in place of cars.
- Mayor **Rokhsana Fiaz** spoke on initiatives to promote the London Living Wage, starting with a disturbing statistic: 40,000 Newham people in work do not receive the London Living Wage. She said 200 people had been helped by the Employment Rights Hub in Stratford and said the London Living Wage is promoted throughout the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone.
- Councillor **Sarah Ruiz**, Cabinet Member for Children's Services expressed satisfaction with the redeveloped Care Leavers Service stressing that the Council by law acts as parents of under majority age care leavers. She was particularly pleased that care leavers had designed their own space, the Cove, to meet together.
- Councillor **Nate Higgins** proposed a motion on the MSG development. He said councillors had been repeatedly outvoted at planning meetings of the London Legacy Development Corporation. He called for London Mayor Sadiq Khan to block the plan. The Council agreed. (See letter page 5)

Independent probe into care of abandoned Canning Town woman

Lillian John-Baptiste lay dead in her home for two years

AIDAN WHITE

The quality of care given to Lillian John-Baptiste, a mentally ill woman who died tragically after being left abandoned, isolated and alone is to be independently investigated.

Ms John-Baptiste lay dead in her Canning Town flat for more than two years until her badly decomposed body was discovered by police lying among “piles of rubbish.”

A formal inquest into her death in August heard evidence of a catalogue of errors in the case.

Coroner Graeme Irvine sharply criticised the police and highlighted the “shocking” failures of two agencies responsible for her care – Newham Social Services and the East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT).

Ms John-Baptiste was aged 73 when she died in late 2019. She had last been seen in Newham in September of that year and was eventually reported by concerned friends and family to be missing in July 2021.

Although it is impossible to establish a causal link between her death and the treatment she received from health and social services, an independent investigation or Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR), will be carried out to examine the quality of care she received.

The investigation takes place amidst concerns that the current approach to the care of vulnerable people may not prevent another incident like this from happening again.

At her inquest, the coroner voiced concern that unless services improved, other people could suffer the same fate. He said Newham Council and the ELFT had failed to take her “harrowing” death seriously enough.

The police, who visited the flat three times before discovering her body, came in for particular criticism. “The Metropolitan Police Service have not covered themselves in glory,” he said.

In July last year during the Covid-19 emergency Newham Council could not



Lillian John-Baptiste, photo via Met Police

reach Ms John-Baptiste and called the police who entered the flat but found nothing. A second visit took place in August, but was abandoned because officers “felt unsafe” in the chaotic flat.

Her body, mummified by decomposition, was finally found in a third police search at Westland House, Rymill Street in February this year.

The inquest was told she had likely died more than two years earlier and because of the decomposition of the body a post-mortem examination was unable to show the exact cause of death.

“This is probably the most advanced case of decomposition that has been submitted to me,” said pathologist Alan Bates. The coroner recorded an open verdict.

Ms John-Baptiste was born in St Lucia and moved to the UK as a teenager. The inquest was told she had worked as a nurse at Queen Mary’s Hospital in Stratford.

A 40-year battle with mental illness, beginning in the 1970s, saw her diagnosed with schizophrenia and admitted to hospital. Her three children were taken into care.

In a statement her estranged daughter Amanda Alexander said: “She took it very hard when we were taken away

from her. From recollection, there was never any effort to reconcile us with our mother. I do not believe she ever fully recovered from us being taken away.”

The police admitted their actions “fell far below the standards we and the public should expect” and the inquest was told that police training had been updated.

Bailey Mitchell, Newham Borough Director at ELFT, told *Newham Voices* they accepted more could have been done to follow up her failure to attend her last out-patient appointment.

“We tried to contact her on four occasions with no response,” he said. “What we didn’t do was to send someone to check on her.”

“We didn’t provide that level of assurance to ourselves before closing the case. That’s something we should have done and we accept this as a failing.”

The death and inquest have led to a joint review of the case by both Newham Council and ELFT which has been submitted to the coroner.

Among the recommendations ELFT has decided that, as a minimum, any future death will lead to a 48-hour report. Changes are also planned in the way patients are discharged or moved to outpatient treatment.

However, Mr Mitchell remains wary that this may not be enough to prevent similar incidents in future. Noting the actions of the police, he said: “It’s difficult to say whether our actions alone will prevent something like this from happening again.” He believes the SAR “will give more assurance”.

Jason Strelitz, Corporate Director of Adults and Health at Newham Council, expressed again the Council’s sadness over the death of Ms John-Baptiste and said the Council was fully co-operating with the SAR.

As a result of the case, he told *Newham Voices*, Newham Adult Social Care is reviewing and reinforcing its training, duties, policies and procedures when an individual disengages with care and support. ●

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Going for a swim? Not in Newham

All Council-supported swimming pools in Newham have been closed due to a world-wide shortage of chlorine supplies.

Active Newham, which manages the Council’s fitness centres, says all pools will remain closed until they receive the chemicals needed to run pools to a safe and hygienic standard.

For details of cancelled swimming lessons and how to freeze membership: www.activenewham.org.uk

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HAVE YOUR SAY – LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@newhamvoices.co.uk

MSG Sphere: Newham needs to think again

I have investigated the development of the MSG sphere in Stratford, including a walkabout in the area.

I've looked through the minutes of the London Legacy Development Corporation, and the MSG Sphere website and discovered a string of proposed benefits, including mitigation measures against congestion. There are plans for a special underground station entrance in Montfichet Road and four footbridges.

As well as the Sphere, there is a proposed erection of a smaller entertainment venue and lay out of a garden.

There will also be community uses, ten concerts for emerging local talent; further community involvement through a grants scheme for local groups; vocational training and jobs; and a scheme to introduce young people to the entertainment industry. There will be the employment of a quota of local people in construction and the London Living Wage will be paid.

Given these points I think there is a need for a more balanced approach to evaluation of development benefits by

the Council.

The Mayor and MP Lyn Brown are deeply concerned about congestion, size of the dome and advertisement lighting, but as I have indicated there is a wide range of benefits.

From what I have read about planning, there is always likely to be both a local neighbourhood dimension, and a wider dimension from outside the local area. An implementation group, similar to one set up for the Silvertown Tunnel development, could be agreed.

In my walk about by the site, I thought that the neighbouring blocks of flats were considerably set back. So maybe they are too far back from noise and the advertising lighting, and there are plans to limit the impact of the lighting.

I am enthusiastic about the objective to make Stratford a West End type entertainment and retail hub in the East End. This should be considered when an amended version of the MSG Sphere comes before the Council in the near future for final approval.
– Peter Landman, East Ham

Westfield blood test clinic closes

The new Newham blood testing clinic that opened a few weeks ago at Westfield Centre in Stratford closed down on 27 September. At the same time the Westfield Covid vaccination centre also closed and is relocating to the Mile End Hospital.

The East London NHS Foundation Trust says the existing four blood testing clinics in Newham have extended their capacity and the online booking system is quick and straightforward and means patients do not have to wait with others in a waiting room.

Although not an emergency service, there will be some slots reserved each day for urgent blood tests. For people who are unable to book using the online service they can call a helpdesk hotline: **020 8475 2199** and press option 2. Lines are open weekdays from 9 am to 3 pm.

The interim clinic in Westfield was opened following complaints, highlighted by *Newham Voices*, over the rapid introduction a year ago of an online appointments system, ending the previous walk-in service. ●



Don't get angry, get snapping

LORRAINE TAPPER

Do you ever wander around Newham and think how dirty and untidy some parts of the Borough are?

Instead of getting annoyed there is an app you can use to report any unsightly rubbish to the council with just a few clicks from your Smartphone.

Download the Love Clean Streets app for iPhone and Android. You can use the app to report the following:

- Graffiti
- Fly-tipping
- Fly-posting
- Potholes
- Abandoned cars
- Dog mess

Making a report is very easy. Take a picture from your phone, open the app and follow the instructions.

Each time you make a report you will get confirmation from Newham Council and when the rubbish has been cleared they will send you



another email confirming this has been done.

Their response time is usually within a couple of days.

The app is a fantastic way to keep your environment clean and tidy for yourself and the people of Newham

lovecleanstreets.com

Lorraine Tapper is a social entrepreneur who works from home

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WE ARE SORRY THAT BIN COLLECTION STRIKE ACTION IS TAKING PLACE.

STRIKES WILL CONTINUE UNTIL MONDAY 3 OCTOBER

Collections from houses are unlikely to take place during the strike period. We are prioritising waste collections/cleansing services on main roads/estates, particularly blocks of flats (due to fire risk).

Bagged household rubbish and recycling can be taken to the Temporary Waste Drop-off Sites

Open from 12 noon to 7pm

- Little Ilford Park Service Area, Reynolds Avenue, E12 6JU

Open from 10am to 8pm

- Shaftesbury Road Car Park, 85 Shaftesbury Road, E7 8PD

Open from 12 noon to 8pm daily

- Church Street Car Park in front of shops, 30-46 Church Street, E15 3HU
- Freemasons Road / Coolfin Road Car Park, E16 3BE

Jenkins Lane Re-use and Recycling Centre, Barking, IG11 0AD is open daily for waste & recycling between 7.30am–5.45pm.

TIPS TO REDUCE WASTE

Recycling banks

Our on-street recycling banks across the borough recycle glass, plastic bottles, cans and paper.

Need extra recycling bags?

Pick up extra orange bags for recycling at your local library.

• Food makes up 50% of a Newham bin:

- Plan your meals before you shop - with a day or two to eat leftovers.
- Freeze the food you haven't had time to eat – right up until the use by date.
- Find the best way to store foods – search 'A to Z food storage' for the handy Love Food Hate Waste tool.
- Try home composting your food waste.

• Buy loose fruit and vegetables and avoid items that are heavily packaged.

• Use refillable water bottles and coffee cups.

• Buy products you can refill.

• Have a go at repairing items.

See the latest service updates and waste advice at www.newham.gov.uk/wasteAdvice



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Remembering Her Majesty The Queen Elizabeth II

A constant through our lives

It's Black History Month and in this reflection on the life and legacy of the Queen, Mickey Ambrose celebrates Queen Elizabeth II's role in creating opportunities that saw him achieve success on the football field.

I am thinking about my dear mother Mona Ambrose who arrived on the Windrush in the '50s from Dominica. Mum adored the Queen. When Her Majesty gave her Christmas Day address at 3pm we had to stand up in our front room in Poplar to show respect. That is how we were brought up.

We lived in a council flat, all five of us. They were good times and I had a fantastic childhood. This was the London of the 1960s and 1970s, so like all Afro-Caribbean families we faced racism and prejudice. As a young black footballer, at times I had it worse than many, with monkey chants and bananas being thrown from the terraces.

But mum would have none of it and would tell us that we could be and achieve anything, while always looking up to Queen Elizabeth as a shining beacon of hope for the future. Mum always said that the Queen was the most beautiful woman in the world.

Fast forward 55 years and Mona's son has had a successful career in



professional football and has been an Ambassador for the Duke of Edinburgh Awards for many years and now also represents the wider family of royal charities. This is why I tell the pupils at the Reform School where I work in Central London, that they can be and do anything.

There is no excuse for crime, drug-dealing or joining gangs. Sure, it is hard growing-up as a young black person on an inner-city council estate, but it is much easier for this

generation to succeed and have a positive impact on the world than it was for my family.

When the passing of our beloved Monarch was announced on 8 September, the pain and grief was palpable. Cars honked their horns in London as a mark of respect, while people from all walks of life walked down the street with tears freely flowing, from mums doing the school run to burly lorry drivers covered in tattoos, off to seek a sandwich on their lunch break.

Queen Elizabeth had a deep and meaningful relationship with people. She was a constant through all of our lives, like a warm glow from a fireside.

She did more to eradicate racism and create an equal society than any other monarch or politician in British history.

When she came to the throne, it was 27 years since the decision was taken for a Commonwealth to be formed from the British Empire – a dominion of equal and independent states.

However, very little actually happened in regard to how the British public perceived their former colonies, until a young and determined princess became queen and swore an allegiance of servitude to the United Kingdom

and the Commonwealth.

Over the coming decades Queen Elizabeth, with her constant companion and confidante, the Duke of Edinburgh, visited every Commonwealth country of the time.

These visits and the respect that Her Majesty showed every culture, reinforced that sense of equality, that we, the second and third generations of immigrants from the Commonwealth, could be and achieve anything.

It has been a hard struggle, but the everyday racism and insults of the 1960s and '70s, can now attract a prison sentence as a race hate crime in the United Kingdom. The overt racism of this period is now a shadow of its previous incarnation and we focus on the passive racism, the legacy of the past, and glass ceilings that still exist for the Afro-Caribbean Community in the British Isles.

However, race is no-longer the predominant issue; we have reached a stage in the evolution of thinking in my country where the easiest way to break down racial barriers is through joint experiences and interests, which create friendships and loyalties across all ethnic lines. This is the true legacy of Queen Elizabeth II. ●

Royal Reminiscence coffee morning

NEANDRA ETIENNE

Councillor Harvinder Singh Virdee (Boleyn Ward) joined more than 70 local residents at a Reminiscence coffee morning held in honour of Queen Elizabeth II at the Katherine Road Community Centre.

In the run up to her funeral Newham libraries and community centres arranged for local residents to come together as a community, to remember the Queen and share their experiences during Reminiscence coffee mornings.

Jobrul, Community Neighbour Senior Officer for Green Street, explained that the staff were there to offer residents support, by referring them to the relevant services should they need further assistance.

Nusrat Yasin, Chairperson of the local women's community group Fair & Share, wanted to attend the coffee morning to pay respect to the Queen and also sign the condolence book. She was a volun-

teer at Community Links when she met the then Prince Charles during a visit when he met with staff and volunteers.

Nusrat told *Newham Voices*: "We were trained how to present yourself and how to talk with him. He stayed for about 15 minutes and I had a photo taken with him. I was so happy I couldn't express my feelings to my family. I still remember it clearly." ●



Katherine Road Community Centre
©Neandra Etienne

School turns to street art to mourn the Queen

GILLIAN MUIR

The death of the Queen which led to a wave of sadness among many in Newham, particularly children, prompted Julie Carver, a teacher at Gainsborough School West Ham to organise a special artistic legacy for the monarch.

The day after the Queen died she contacted street artists MurWalls and asked for their help. The result was this mural of the Queen donated to the school by UK based Canadian artist Chris Levine is best known for his "Lightness of Being" a feted portrait of Queen Elizabeth II (1926–2022) with her eyes closed.

The school's mural is a picture of the Queen with her eyes open and in Mr Levine's distinctive style. Children laid flowers at the mural and people were able to write messages of condolence in a book on a table draped in the Union Jack.

MurWalls Ltd, Street Art since 2019,
info@murwalls.com



Mural of Queen Elizabeth II at Gainsborough School in West Ham



Remembering Her Majesty

These pictures tell the story – Queen Elizabeth II was no stranger to Newham, and many local people were more than ready to get out the bunting for celebrations, from her coronation in 1953 to the diamond jubilee this year.

There are those who claim an even stronger connection, arguing that Her Majesty, although not an avid football fan, was actually a West Ham supporter, dating back to the 1960s and her admiration for the Hammers' most successful manager, the late Ron Greenwood, who she awarded a CBE. Some say it goes back further to the Second World War and the respect she felt for the resilience of the people of East London during the Blitz.

As sovereign of the host country, the Queen also had the honour, of course, of presenting the World Cup to West Ham legend Sir Bobby Moore in 1966 when he was captain of the England squad. Moore was awarded his knighthood by the Queen in 2002, the same year she visited the club at the old Boleyn ground in Upton Park with Prince Philip, part of her Golden Jubilee celebrations.

Quoted on the WHUFC website, former West Ham player Joe Cole remembers meeting her at Upton Park: "She was talking about how much she loves East London. She seemed very nice and kind and genuinely happy to be there. She asked me about West Ham and we chatted for probably about 90 seconds, but it wasn't denied or confirmed if she was a West Ham fan. They're great memories and I've got pictures to prove it!"



ty The Queen Elizabeth II



These pictures tell some of the story of the royal celebrations and the Queen's time in Newham: Silver Jubilee parties in 1977 in Vicarage Road E15, Meath Road E13, King Street E13, Coleridge Avenue E12 and Braemar Road E13, meeting the Mayor in 1977, opening of East Ham Nature Reserve in 1983 and her visit to Newham in 2002 for the celebrations of her Golden Jubilee, which brought out the Dohl Academy Musicians. Pictures courtesy of London Borough of Newham Heritage picture library (<https://www.newhamphotos.com>)



Young influencer Mosfica heads for the world of business

AIDAN WHITE

An East Ham student with her sights set on a business career has praised a ground-breaking programme for young people that helped her focus on the world of finance.

Mosfica Matin, aged 20, joined the Young Influencers Programme, organised by international banking group Société Générale, which aims to boost employment opportunities for under-represented groups in the finance industry.

Encouraged by her teachers at Newham College she joined a group of 75 students who took part in a six-month programme of interactive workshops followed by a period of work experience.

The participants also formed teams in a competition to test their communication skills. The winners, from Newham Collegiate Sixth Form Centre, presented an idea on how to combat knife crime 'No Newham Knives' while Mosfica's team focused on Covid support.



Mosfica says the programme helped her better understand how people from troubled areas can overcome social inequalities.

She loves the atmosphere of living in East Ham, for example, where she says community life is active and vibrant, but she has no illusions about social problems in the area.

"Sometimes it's dangerous," she told *Newham Voices*. "There's a lot of knife crime, drug abuse and many different types of crime."

But during her teenage years she found ways to keep away from trouble. "I kind of got used to it," she says, relying on family and a network of friends to keep her safe.

Although she sees herself as a shy person, her engagement in the young influencer programme gave her motivation and boosted her confidence, convincing her that whatever social background people come from, they can find a better place.

During the work experience part of the programme, for example, she says, "I met some amazing colleagues".

Now she has joined Queen Mary College to study accounting management and after graduation hopes to join a business graduate scheme. But she also has personal ambition.

"I want to have my own business," she says. "I haven't figured out what

exactly, but I would like to do work that involves the community and I already have family members who have their own businesses."

Her interest in community work was inspired by her experience supporting charity shops in East Ham and work with the elderly during the Covid pandemic.

"There are many elderly people in the area where I live," she says. During Covid times many of them were isolated and needed help from volunteers like Mosfica. "Sometimes I could hear in their voice how sad they were to be alone," she says.

The Young Influencers Programme organisers are now looking for 16-18-year-old recruits from Newham to participate in a new round of activities.

Mosfica is strongly encouraging young people to take part. "Never settle for what you have," she says. "Always aim for more, move out of your comfort zone and never be scared to experience new things." ●

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To find out more, visit: <https://so.ge/uk-csr>

THE FUTURE IS YOU  SOCIETE GENERALE

Beckton Attic lends helping hand to the local community

NEANDRA ETIENNE

Newham Council chair Winston Vaughan cut the ribbon to officially open the new Beckton Attic self-storage facility in September.

In the run up to the launch, the company asked local residents to vote for one of seven local charities or good causes, also nominated by local residents.

The Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders received 344 votes which resulted in a donation of £1720.

Other charities that Attic also supported as part of the same initiative included, Celia Hammond, Bonny Downs Community Association, Lola's Homeless and Amy's Space. In total Attic donated just over £2000 as part of this campaign.

Between now and the end of the year Attic are also running a local food poverty campaign. They will be donating £5 for every person that takes a unit at their storage facilities to local food banks.

They will be making these donations on a monthly basis. So far for this

campaign Attic have donated just over £700 to Newham food bank.

Another part of their community-led initiative included the art exhibition "Beauty of Beckton" created to celebrate the local area, which is displayed in the Attic reception area.

Children from local schools were asked to create a piece of artwork that shows what they like or enjoy about the area. Local artist Matt Ponting then created an artwork based on their drawings.

Matt Ponting said: "As a community artist living in Beckton, the chance to work with local school children is a dream job. I love this area, so it has been really fun finding out why they love it too."

The artwork will be given to Richard House Children's Hospice in Beckton at the end of October.

Attic will also be donating £1,250 to the hospice, which supports families from several London boroughs including Newham.

Attic will also be donating £500 worth of art and craft supplies to Ellen

Wilkinson Primary School's art department, for being the school with the highest number of artwork submissions.

Attic self-storage facility is located off the A13, in Claps Gate Retail Park in East London

www.atticstorage.co.uk
www.richardhouse.org.uk
or call 020 7511 0222



Richard House Receiving donation ©Attic

'It's fun, it's easy and you'll never need therapy'

ZHENREENAH MUHXINGA

Stratford East Singers is led by Creative Director and recording artist Byron Gold, who lives in Beckton and has worked in Newham for more than eight years. One of his favourite places is Plaistow, where he works at NewVic, and Kai Sen School as well as at Gainsborough School.

Byron was busy working on a project called Babel in the Stratford area when ten years ago he was asked by the Stratford Theatre team to start "Stratford East Choir".



Stratford East Singers. Photo via Twitter

The choir started in October 2012 and the genre of music stems from all walks of life. The vast majority of the songs are uplifting and vibrant: soul, pop, African beat, spiritual songs. There are a few songs that provoke a great audience reaction, for example Reggae music, especially from Bob Marley.

The choir is known for performing their joyous singing on the X-Factor (ITV), and came third in the Naked Choir on BBC2, which was hosted by Gareth Malone. They also perform at home in the Stratford Theatre once a year. Because of Covid this was put on hold, but is in the pipeline to start up again.

Long term member Mary Jones said: "Deciding to join SES has been one of the best decisions I've made. At our weekly Wednesday choir sessions we learn new songs. It is so easy and fun. It is a pleasure to be among so many talented people who have also become friends. Being a community choir we sing and perform at lots of different events across London, as well as hosting our annual show at Theatre Royal Stratford. Also being part of the choir you will never need therapy!"

All new members are required to attend a trial session. To find out more, please email stratfordeastsingers@gmail.com.

The choir is based at Stratford Theatre, Gerry Raffles Square, Stratford E15 1BN

My Newham

In the first of a new series, Julia Omari interviews author James Thomas who first honed his skills as a writer while working in Newham.

How long have you been connected to Newham?

I've worked in and out of Newham for over 20 years. My first job in Newham was with Reed in Partnership who had their office right by the bus station. We were working with the long term unemployed and I got to support many in the Stratford area and help them back into work. It was a really fulfilling role. It was also where I did a lot of my writing during lunch and before and after work. In fact, I wrote a television screenplay that was accepted by the BBC based on my job with Reed in Partnership in Stratford. I also worked at Stratford Job Centre, Plaistow Job Centre and then with the Building Crafts college in Stratford.

What's your favorite Newham moment?

It might be a friend's leaving do in Yates in Stratford High Street. This was around 2002. Stratford High Street was busy and Yates was the place to be. There was good music, good drinks, good people and good vibes. I think we went to a local restaurant first and then didn't leave Yates till it closed. Stratford has always had a positive, energetic vibe for me.

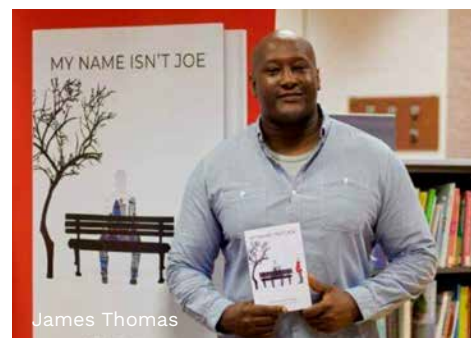
Most inspirational Newham person?

Kele Le Roc! When we were young she was like a local hero, still is. She gets so much respect from the whole East London community for her musical

talent and for being someone local who made it big but still stayed true to her roots.

Favourite place to eat in Newham?

Nandos in Stratford. There was a point in time where I practically lived there, but recently I have really been feeling the Steakhouse restaurant, across the road from Morrison - their burgers and steaks are great! Actually, there's also Allegra, in Stratford City. The food is exceptional. I took my wife for our anniversary, the food and decor was fantastic.



Favourite Newham outdoor space?

Definitely the Olympic Park - on a hot day there are few places in London with a better vibe and better scenery.

How would you spend a free day in Newham?

Walking around the Olympic Park taking pictures and being inspired by the people and scenes. Find a nice spot to

read and then take out my laptop to do some writing till it gets late. Then go to Stratford Picture House to watch a movie and sit in the lounge and write a powerful film review.

You recently held a book launch at Stratford library for your first book. Tell us about it.

It was amazing. This is my debut novel, *My Name Isn't Joe*, so it was my very first book launch. I was worried that no one would attend apart from my wife, niece and nephew. But over 100 people were there! I had friends perform spoken word pieces that were so moving - honestly, half of the audience were in tears at one of them. Then I was interviewed by a professional speaker who is also a friend that I have known since I was five years old. I talked about my clinical depression which I suffered following my mother's death and my ex-wife leaving a month later. My novel deals with mental health issues, loneliness, failed relationships and feeling disconnected while living among millions. We discussed how so many people suffer in silence because there is still a stigma surrounding mental health issues.

Finish the sentence, Newham is...

One of the most vibrant and exciting boroughs in this great city of London. For a great day and a great night out, there are few places better than Newham! ●

Black History Month

Newham Celebrates Black History Month

NEANDRA ETIENNE

Plaistow-born award-winning rapper and songwriter, Ghetts will launch Newham Black History Month with 'A Conversation with Ghetts', an event co-facilitated by local young people Shanea Oldham and Zak Khalil.

This year, Newham Council will host a programme of activities and events on the theme of 'Celebrating Black Identities'.

Highlights include: Black Pound Day Market (The Grove Market), co-produced with Pelisha Deeble, will feature Newham-based Black businesses

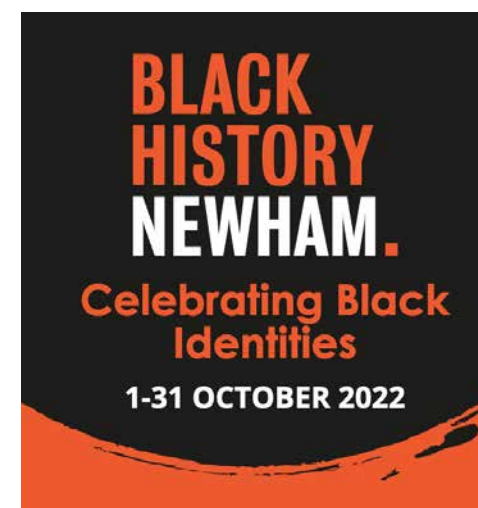
and entrepreneurs; Caribbean Cooking Workshops hosted by the local charity REIN (Rights and Equalities In Newham), Caramel Rock's fashion festival; Royal Docks free family fun day celebrating Black identities; film screenings from The New Black Film Collective; Celebrating the Windrush Generation: Fun Day; music from Troy Ellis, His Hail Jamaica Reggae Band, Queen of Lover's Rock Sandra Cross and local DJ Flex co-produced with Riddim Squad.

Local resident Patricia Regis has organised a performance night of dance, comedy and poetry for her event Shackles, The Whip and the Drum.

The event Patricia arranged for Newham Black History Month 2021, Smadification - The Spirituality of Jamaican Dancehall Culture - proved to be such a huge success that it will be performed at the Bloomsbury Theatre on Thursday 13 October 2022.

The event programmes for Newham Black History Month are part of Newham Unlocked, the Council's cultural festival of events and activities which highlight the rich and diverse mix of creativity that exists in the Borough.

Full details of the events can be found online at www.newhamblack-history.org



East London's global trail highlights racial justice

JULIA OMARI

Newham and Hackney are currently playing host to one of the 11 free outdoor sculpture trails that are each made up of ten unique globes placed in cities around England and Wales.

Every globe is designed by a different artist with each sharing the theme of exploring different aspects of our shared history, how that history impacts our lives today and how we can reimagine the future.

The 103 artist globes, organised by The World Reimagined, cover nine themes with each trail including one globe from each of the nine following themes:

Mother Africa, The Reality of Being Enslaved, Stolen Legacy: The Rebirth of

a Nation, Abolition and Emancipation, A Complex Triangle, Echoes In The Present, Still We Rise, Expanding Soul, and Reimagine The Future.

There are also a number of globes designed by students placed in public places across the UK. Globes will remain in place until 6pm 31 October after which they will go to auction to raise funds for organisations that will focus on projects working towards making racial justice a reality for all.

The Newham to Hackney trail starts at Hackney's Dalston Curve Garden and ends at Stratford Theatre. You can download a trail map from www.theworldreimagined.org website where you will also find free educational resources and information on local and UK wide events. ●



Poet Khadija read her poem in front of the Windrush Globe

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estimated readership

12,500
free copies reach readers in Newham each month



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Hero GP is often left out of his own story

In our regular series on memorials around Newham, Julia Omari discovers an unsung Canning Town hero who brought together two giants of the 20th century

Chuni Lai Katial was born in the Punjab Region of India on 1 January 1898. As a young man he studied for a medical degree at Lahore University, then worked in Iraq with the Indian Medical Service for five years.

Still wanting to learn more, Doctor Katial moved to Liverpool in 1927 to study public health and tropical medicine for two years. After gaining a diploma, he spent some years as a GP in Canning Town, running his own medical centre and treating local working class families.

On the 22 September 1931, at the request of filmmaker and actor Charlie Chaplin, Dr. Katial helped arrange a meeting between Mohandas (Mahatma) Gandhi and Charlie Chaplin at his home on Beckon Road, Canning Town.

It seemed the whole world had turned up to see the famous men as thousands waited eagerly for each one to arrive. Spectators even climbed the garden walls in order to look through the windows and while they did cause some damage to the brick work, all were said to be in good spirits. Although Gandhi - prior to Chaplin's request - had been unaware of who Charlie Chaplin was, the two men had no trouble talking about the impact of machinery on modern life and other topics of the day including the issue of British oppression in India.

In 2015 the location of the historic meeting was turned into the Gandhi Chaplin Peace Garden, just off Newham Way in Canning Town, in remembrance of both men. But the space shares more than just their names as it showcases four mosaic art pieces, an information wall, a buried time capsule (that will be opened in 2065) and flowers maintained by local school children.

The memory of the good Doctor Katial lives on in his own right and

as part of the story of the Gandhi Chaplin Memorial Garden. He continued to serve his community throughout World War II and eventually moved to North London where he became the first South Asian Mayor of the London Borough of Finsbury, now part of Islington.

The healthcare pioneer and humble politician left a number of legacies after his death in November 1978. He built the Finsbury Park Health Centre that provided multiple medical services under one roof, something that would not be seen as standard for years to come.

He organised the monumental meeting of two giants of their day, even though the doctor himself is often left out of the story. ●



With Charlie Chaplin at Dr. Katial's residence in Canning Town, 22 September 1931



Good reads in Newham

The Newham Bookshop in Barking Road tells us these are the top sellers this month:

- **Treacle Walker**
By Alan Garner
- **The Little Wartime Library**
By Kate Thompson
- **Colours of London**
By Peter Ackroyd
- **Goldilocks and the Three Crocodiles**
Michael Rosen
- **Black Poppies: The Story of Britain's Black Community in the First World War**
By Stephen Bourne
- **The Baddies**
By Julia Donaldson

The story behind my Caribbean cultural style

ADANYA OH

In June 2019 I met Jennifer, the owner of Sakafet London, a business that sells cultural clothing. Jennifer was wearing a Dominican outfit and I thought she looked beautiful. I had a photo taken with her and I never knew then that three years later I would be in her fashion show celebrating Windrush Day 2022.

I really enjoyed being on the stage, doing twirls and striking poses. There was a group of us all wearing different styles of Dominican clothing and we all looked stunning.



L-R: Jennifer and Adanya in 2019 and in 2022. Photo ©Julia Omari.

Last month I was lucky to be in a film with Jennifer and Cultural Fashion and Arts called The Story Behind My Caribbean Cultural Style sharing our clothes and our culture. We filmed in Newham and on set it felt like being a big family. I was interviewed and danced in front of the cameras.

I am going to the film's premiere at Cineworld 02 Greenwich for Black History Month and will walk on the red carpet. I am so excited, I can't wait to see the film.

Free workshop looks at Caribbean Madras fashion

NEANDRA ETIENNE

Sakafet London and I will be hosting a free Caribbean fashion history workshop on the Madras traditional outfit.

There will be discussions on the origins of Caribbean Madras fabric, from its beginnings in the region of Madras (now known as Chennai) in India, to its journey to the Caribbean and how its use was influenced by European and African culture and the relevance of the Madras fabric to the UK Caribbean diaspora.

Participants will learn how to make Madras head ties and try on traditional Madras outfits.

Caribbean refreshments and food will be provided. This event is funded by the Windrush Community Grant. Saturday 12 November, 12.30pm-4.30pm Canning Town Library, 18 Rathbone Market, E16 1EH

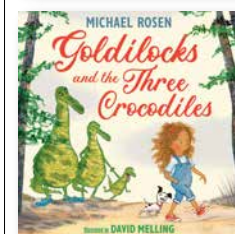
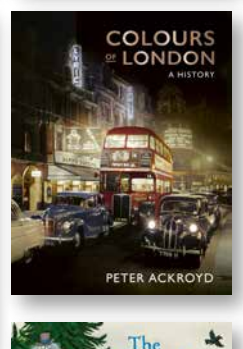
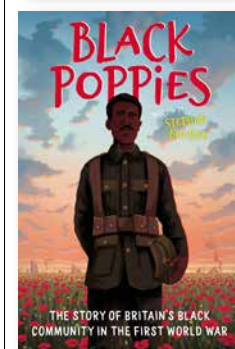
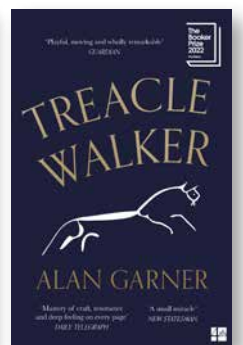
Book your free tickets via Eventbrite at: eventbrite.co.uk/e/caribbean-madras-culture-past-and-present-fashion-workshop-tickets-426745716927

More information and updates at:

Instagram: [@sakafetlondon](https://www.instagram.com/sakafetlondon)
Website: <https://newhamvoices.co.uk>

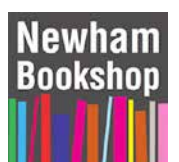


Sakafet London Madras Outfits ©Neandra Etienne



Compiled by David Ceen,
Newham Bookshop

newhambooks.co.uk
@NewhamBookshop





SOMETHING'S BREWING



It may not be your typical East End boozier, but it's a pub for all that. Phil Mellows visits an upmarket community local

Pubs come in many different shapes. The Windjammer opened on the eve of lockdown in March 2020 as part of the Royal Wharf development on Silvertown's riverside. More than a housing estate, this conglomeration of upmarket flats aims to be a ready-made community. And for that, the people behind it realised, you had to have a pub.

The spectacular new-build, split over two levels, and opening out onto a broad, south-facing terrace with views of the Thames, is a fine example of modern design – and despite its intentions to be a community hub, not exactly your traditional East End boozier.

Smart and shiny, bright and airy, it serves 'signature cocktails' and boasts an extensive range of alcohol-free drinks. The food menu includes dishes like miso-marinated sea bass, roasted heritage carrot, avocado and pomegranate salad and a plant-based burger that proudly announces its roots in rural Hackney. Families are encouraged, with arts and crafts activities for the kids while their parents enjoy a Sunday roast in peace.

In a word, it's posh. And some would say, not a proper pub. But it's a broad church. In fact, pubs are much broader than churches in their variety. So what do they have in common?

Firstly, there is beer, right at the



heart of it. The Windjammer is part of the Fuller's group, which doesn't brew itself any more having sold its brewery to the Japanese company Asahi. But the full range of Fuller's ales are still the first thing you see on the pumps when you walk in the door.

Second, it's the relaxed, informal atmosphere. There's table service if you want it, but you can go to the bar, too. And while the food may be a tad pretentious, the staff certainly aren't.

And third, there's the community thing. The Windjammer has enough about it to be what the trade calls a 'destination pub', somewhere you'd travel to just to be there. But it's mostly focused on serving its local community, even if it's a slightly better-off community.

The Windjammer may not be the traditional pub-goer's pint of bitter, but it makes you think about why, exactly, we value the places we call pubs. ●



With the hottest days behind us, Cecilia Cran is looking to the future with a step by step guide to propagating the colourful fuchsia

With the boiling hot weather behind us, I (along with my tiny thumbnail of outdoor space) have breathed a slight sigh of relief. I don't want to sound ungrateful, I am one of the first people to spend a large part of the year in hope, manifesting a magical summer with more than three consecutive days at a reasonable heat, where we can pace ourselves and enjoy the sun instead of running towards a local park in a mad panic, only to incur debilitating sunstroke, resemble a lobster and wait another 364 days for the pleasure to do it all again.

I have narrowly managed to keep a few of my plants alive over the last few months, one that has brought a flash of colour, that I want to be sure to replicate and grow more of next year is my fuchsia. Such a simple plant to have in a pot, a hanging basket or to grow directly into the ground. A great addition to help green any space, big or small.



What to grow

This month, I'm propagating my fuchsia plant, follow my step-by-step guide.

How to grow

1. Whenever taking a cutting, always select a plant with lush, healthy stems to cut from. This gives you the best chance of growing a healthy new plant.
2. Cut a stem the length of around 8cm-10cm from the mother plant.
3. Cut away all lower leaves from the chosen stem, except for those at the tip of the stem.
4. Prepare a pot of peat-free compost and consider mixing in some grit to encourage good drainage. This will ensure the stem and the developing roots do not face the risk of rotting.
5. Place the stem cutting in the prepared pot, insert it around 5cm deep. Pat down to ensure the stem is secured in the soil, then water in well.
6. Cover the pots with a propagator, or if you do not have an official one, cover with a clear plastic bag. This will help retain a level of humidity. Place the covered pot in a sunny space and water routinely to keep the soil moist, but not wet. This will help encourage root growth.
7. After around three weeks, the cutting should have started to develop roots and can be taken out of the propagator, to ensure it begins to acclimatise.

8. Alongside watering when the top soil is dry, consider using a little liquid plant feed, this will help encourage flowering shoots.

9. Keep the pot indoors until mid-April, once the hard frost has passed, then place the pot outside in the daytime to fully acclimatise the plant to the outdoor elements, bringing it in at night. After a couple of weeks doing this, the plant should have hardened-off and will survive outside.

10. Choose where you want to plant the cutting – now a plant in its own right – and watch it grow!

Green escape: Brampton Park, East Ham

This month I headed to the South East side of the Borough for some outdoor inspiration.

I still marvel at how green our Borough is. Don't get me wrong, there is always more greening to do and some of our designated green spots are a little rough around the edges. However, it's heartening to find new green havens in Newham for all ages to enjoy and this is definitely one to add to your list.

As you enter, you're greeted by a huge sycamore tree, overlooking an impressive (if perhaps a little random) brick pergola structure. Not something you see every day, but strangely beautiful and a warm welcome into the space.

This park has a well-equipped play area, complete with the usual slides, swings and climbing frames. With the addition of...drum roll please... a zip-line – the first one I have come across in a Newham park to date!

In one corner of the park, there looks to be the beginning of a local gardening group – with signs announcing it as the 'Rainbow Community Gardens', it is a small space that is home to colourfully painted wooden pallets, containing geraniums, tomatoes and other plants, a fabulous and green neighbourhood initiative.

There are also well kept basketball courts, and ping pong tables, as well as an imaginative 'Trim Trail' with accompanying equipment and workout advice. Sadly, the equipment seems to have been vandalised – a shame as it seems an excellent and free way to exercise. Hopefully something the park wardens will restore. ●



Photos courtesy Cecilia Cran

Early winter for parched trees

LYNDSAY JONES

Broad leaved, or deciduous, trees lose their leaves in Autumn because they cannot get enough water from cold soil to keep them alive. This year the very dry soil conditions have had the same effect on our trees, so in effect winter has come early.

It is possible that some of the older and younger trees will die, as they have not been able to make enough food to start growing again in the spring.

Trees (and all plants) live by using the energy of sunshine to turn carbon dioxide from the air into a sugar called glucose which feeds the tree. This process, photosynthesis,

also needs plenty of water to make it work. Leaves contain special cells which contain a green pigment (colour) called chlorophyll which makes carbon dioxide interact with water and create the sugar.

Autumn colours are seen when the green chlorophyll is lost as part of the autumn shutdown, and other pigments which are in the leaves can be seen. Some colours are made as the sugar in the leaf breaks down. Colours are at their most spectacular when this happens slowly and the air cools and we see frost.

This year many leaves have died and turned brown without showing any of these colours, because it has all happened too quickly and the weather has been very warm. ●

SPORTS SHORTS

Compiled by Neandra Etienne

Canning Town Library is offering free Boxing exercise classes for adults aged 35+. You can either book in advance or drop in on the day.

Every Thursday from 6-7pm, 020 3373 0854

[@NewhamLibraries](#)

The University of East London Netball Club was presented with the 'Club of the Year Award' at the University of East London (UEL) annual Sports Awards.

They were coached last season by Bisi Owolabi, who is also head coach of the Leyton Netball Club. The team returns on the 28 September for the start of the new British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) season

[@eastlondonnetball](#)



University of East London Netball Club

West Silvertown Foundation's Table Tennis tournament is taking place at the Royal Wharf Community Dock.

Refreshments provided. Spectators are welcome for free. Saturday 1 October 1-5pm.

www.wsfroyaldocks.org

There was success for **Thames Dragons Paddlers** at the European Nations Dragon Boat Championship. Team GB had a fantastic championship helped by paddlers Kevin, Paul, Linda and Simon from Newham's Thames Dragons. They came away with five bronze medals, four silver medals and two gold medals in the various race distances. Their team includes members from all ages, backgrounds, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion and they have people of all abilities in the boat - from complete beginners to long time veterans.

www.thamesdragons.club



Thames Dragons Paddlers



Central Park FC Manager

Central Park FC's manager Robert Samson took part in the 10k Run-Through event on Saturday 17 September at Olympic Park. He raised £600 for the Havering Mind charity.

[@centralparkfc](#)

London Youth Rowing, based in Royal Docks, will be attending the Rocking the Boat Conference, hosted by Henley Royal Regatta.

Friday, 7 October, Free online event, 9.30am-5pm

www.londonyouthrowing.com

The Bike from Boleyn Ride maintains the link between Boleyn (where West Ham United used to play) and the London Stadium.

This is a short (about 3 miles), leisurely, mostly off road ride. You do not need to be going to the match to take part.

It is organised by Newham Cyclists which is part of the London Cycling Campaign in partnership with Bike from Boleyn, and Pedal to the Pitch.

Sunday 9 October, 12pm-5pm

www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/bike-from-boleyn-tickets-419656803797

[@bikefromboleyn](#)

[@NewhamCyclists](#)



Geoff Shreeves, Photo by Paul Marc Mitchell

Sky Sports' pitch-side reporter **Geoff Shreeves** will be discussing his 30 year career during a live event hosted by The Wanstead Tap and Newham Bookshop

Geoff's book, *Cheers, Geoff! Tales from the Touchline*, is available to buy from the Newham Bookshop

Wed 12 October, 7.30pm, The Wanstead Tap, Forest Gate E7 0AQ

www.newhambooks.co.uk

Genesis Futsal Club has announced the men's team October games for the FA National Futsal Series.

Their home games will be played at the UEL Sportsdock. This will be their 10th year playing national Futsal games at UEL SportsDock.

16 October, 30 October

[@genesis_futsal](#)

[@GenesisFutsal](#)

Clapton CFC player-physio Jon Akaly has been chosen by the men's development team to take over from Justin Cummins, who has stepped down.

Tom Marsland will remain as their assistant manager.

www.claptoncfc.co.uk

The Ascension Eagles Cheerleaders (AEC) received a donation of £1720

during the grand opening of the new Beckton Attic Storage facility. AEC, a charity based in Newham, was started by AEC's Patron and founder, Shara Brice MBE in November 1996. They offer programmes including All-Star Cheer, school programmes, recreational gymnastic classes and Ascension Eagles Soar Clinics.

www.ascensioneagles.com



Ascension Eagles Donation Presentation
©Neandra Etienne

NewVic Knights Basketball team has unveiled new branding signage, thanks to team member Joe who was the Jack Petchey Foundation prize winner. He used his £250 prize for the new signage.

newvic.ac.uk/elite-sport-academies



Clapton CFC ©Nick Davidson



Ade Orogbemi, East London Phoenix

Former Great Britain Paralympian Ade Orogbemi is the new Head Coach of the **East London Phoenix** women's wheelchair Basketball team. Ade has over twenty years' experience in wheelchair basketball. He is a four-time European champion, has participated in seven World Championships and has won two Paralympic bronze medals. He said: "I want to help the players play to the best of their ability and raise the team's performances as a result."

[@eastldnphoenix](#)

[@EastLDNPhoenix](#)

[@EastLDNPhoenix](#)

Forest Crusaders WFC are recruiting players in all positions to join their 11-a-side football team. Training takes place on Wednesday evenings.

If you are interested in joining this grassroots team contact them via their social media or email forestcrusaderswomen@hotmail.com

[@CrusadersWFC](#)

[@CrusadersWFC](#)

[@forestcrusaderswfc](#)

Former St Bons student **Divin Mubama** was named in the England Men's U19 squad for a trio of 2022-23 UEFA European Under-19 Championship qualifying matches. Divin signed his first professional contract with West Ham United in October 2021

[@divinmubama](#)

Congratulations to **Isa**, and all the other young people who successfully climbed Mount Kilimanjaro (19,341 ft)

Isa's mum Shaida is a youth administrator for the local charity organisation Aston-Mansfield.

aston-mansfield.org.uk



Isa's expedition to Mount Kilimanjaro

*All events/activities are subject to change. Please check websites/social media for updates.

OPEN DAY



12

**Saturday
November 2022**
10am - 1pm



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CAMPUS TOURS
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**[newvic.ac.uk/
open-days](https://newvic.ac.uk/open-days)**