

A fresh start: landslide vote for Carpenters plan

AIDAN WHITE

After almost 20 years of neglect and uncertainty residents at Stratford's Carpenters Estate have voted by a landslide for change and a multi-million pound redevelopment of the area.

A resounding 73 percent of residents gave the green light for a masterplan that includes building 2000 new homes for local people, half of them at "affordable" rents.

The work is due to start in the spring with the refurbishment of James Ri-

ley Point – one of three largely-empty tower blocks on the estate.

"We are delighted by the vote," said Victor Chamberlain, spokesperson for Populo Living which is managing the development for Newham Council. "It's taken so long to get to this point. But by working closely with the local community in a genuine piece of co-operation we have certainty about the future at last."

More than 66 per cent of eligible voters – including people on the estate and some who have left with a right to return – took part in the

ballot which is one of London's largest regeneration programmes.

Over the next 15 years the plan is to deliver the restoration of the estate into a vibrant neighbourhood in the heart of Stratford, and work will start in the spring with plans for 136 homes and a new community centre and sports centre in James Riley Point.

"Work will start as soon as we get final planning approval," said Chamberlain, adding that there was still much work to do, ensuring that plans get the go-ahead from the London Legacy Development Corporation,



tate, have decisively voted 'yes'.

"I am excited for its future and for local residents who will benefit from over £1 billion of Council investment." ●



A groundbreaking development: "Every local authority could benefit from the approach taken here."

and working closely with individual residents as the plan is put in place.

Pauline Clarke, Landlady of the Carpenters Arms, the estate pub, said she was sad that "we are going to see the break-up of a whole community" as a result of the vote with dramatic changes in the coming years. Customer Kevin Leach, who lives at 70 Gibbings Road on the estate was taken aback. "I don't know anyone who voted yes!" he said.

Deborah Heenan, the Chief Executive of Populo, said that the ballot and the council support which has including giving guarantees on the risk associated with the regeneration, was groundbreaking.

"Every local authority could benefit from the approach taken here," she said. Now the task will be to move on quickly with planning permission and reaching agreement with individual residents. "We want to accelerate the process and deliver on what residents have voted for," she said.

Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz said: "After years of false promises and the failures of the past, I am over the moon that residents on the Carpenters Es-

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Students sing for cash-strapped children's hospice

See Page 4



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How we brought you the news and so much more in 2021

REBEKAH SAMUEL

January, Covid has taken its toll in Newham with 33,000 jobs furloughed. Vaccine hesitancy and lack of trust built over decades is high in African, Caribbean and Asian communities making them 2-3 times more likely to die from Covid. Chair of North East London Integrated Care System and the NHS Race and Health Observatory, Gabriel North, appeals to **Newham residents, "come together and save our people."**

In **Bridging our Digital Divide**, risks posed by lack of access to technology and devices is highlighted and we look at how forward thinking Maryland Primary School developed strategies to manage this.

A **Crunch meeting over fuming residents' parking protest** follows the introduction of the new parking permit system on 6 January. While the Council insists it will improve Newham's poor air quality, the highest rate in England, over 30 Councillors support residents who consider it a regressive and unfair tax.

Participatory Democracy: why it matters sheds light on the value of being part of the community assembly consultation process.

March-April the Council declares 2021 'Newham Year of the Young Person'. **Youth Voices** is launched, with an array of editorial content from our newly-formed youth panel.

An open window on art in lockdown showcases work from local artists and we launch **Garden Talk**, a new regular gardening column.

May, we go monthly; in **Future of NHS at risk after sale of Newham GP practices to US** we question the lack of public consultation in a move



Lockdown art. © Sylvie Belbouab

affecting thousands of patients across four boroughs; Youth Voices reports on the crisis of violent crime in Newham calling for more investment to address the issue after a **Second Knife killing follows murder of schoolboy Fares**.

June, we shed light on Council plans for new homes starting with 1,000 by the following year; the **Clock is ticking for 30,000 on the EU settlement scheme** and we remind them to act or risk losing their right



EU settlement scheme. ©Sylvie Belbouab

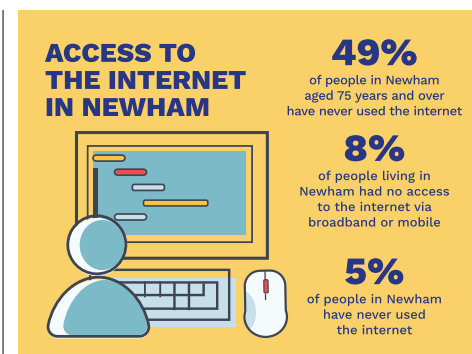
to stay; **Go Green! Residents vote to make parks and open spaces top priority** in the first meeting of the Citizens Assembly, which involves residents meeting locally to decide priorities on how to spend cash from the special £100,000 neighbourhood fund; we witness the spirit of human kindness when **Community solidarity raises £40k for the Covid crisis in India**.

July, **Carpenters Road Estate** is back in the news. Despite the grand vision of 2,500 homes over 15 years, uncertainty remains with only 25 flats out of 430 (between 3 blocks) remaining occupied.

Alison Steadman opens the Kew Gardens of the East Exhibition in West Ham Park as a celebration of the life and work of botanist Dr John Fothergill.

Mental health is in focus. In **Living a world of difference**, Shofa Miah, founder of Ashok's Vision speaks about her neuro diversity diagnosis, and in **Let's face it, illness is not a taboo**, local resident Daphne Stedman, talks about the various conditions she lives with.

September, we report on life under the Taliban through the experiences of former Afghani residents now living in Newham; In **The lasting pain of Coronavirus**, Thana Narashiman speaks out about living with long covid and calls for more action to recognise and treat the condition; **Summer on the Calais frontline** highlights the



Forest Gate couple working with refugees, fixing clothing and repairing bikes; and in **Golden sporting moments at Home and Away!** Mickey Ambrose celebrates British Olympians in Tokyo, and nearer home as West Ham defeat Newcastle 4-2.

October is a special issue for **Black History Month**. Stories include black history, racial misconceptions, sports, entertainment, women in business, art and culture; **Parks get boost in community project votes** as more money is awarded as part of Newham Council's local democracy programme; resident engagement is expected to see Council tenants benefit from an overhaul of housing services. However, the **Closure of City Farm and Stratford Circus**, and the pending **increase in emissions-based parking fees** see many people furious with the Council.

In **November** we pay **tribute to Plaistow born MP David Amess**, killed while holding a surgery in Southend; the **Alliance for race**



Shofa Miah

equality is launched aimed at combatting discrimination and disadvantage; **Clean streets** will be a priority under a **new bid to sweep fly-tippers off the streets**; waste recycling will be stepped up.

We wrap up the year with more green action. In our campaign for 2022, **Newham Voices for Green Action** we will share news about how locals are making our air safer, streets cleaner and businesses greener.

Thank you for your support in 2021. A happy 2022 to all our readers.



January gloom after Omicron hits Newham

AIDAN WHITE

Newham heads into 2022 in the eye of the Covid-19 Omicron storm. The Borough has been a hotspot for the rapid spread of the highly-contagious Omicron variant.

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New rules imposed on 15 December 2021 have meant compulsory mask-wearing on public transport and people having to show an NHS COVID-19 Pass – showing fully vaccination status or a negative lateral flow test – for visits to nightclubs and crowded indoor and outdoor venues.

Pubs and restaurants in the Newham, like others across East London and the have seen bookings suffer over the holiday period.

Mr Sumon at the Thai Pie Restaurant in The Grove, Stratford, reported that bookings had collapsed in the days after the government introduced new rules. “People are scared,” he said. “Around 70 per cent of all our bookings have been

cancelled. The situation is terrible.”

At the Steak Out nearby Mahmoud reported the same problem, with bookings suddenly cancelled. “And the situation has been made worse,” he said “because one of my team has gone down with the virus.”

According to Stratford Shopping Centre manager Tony Peters the latest wave of infections “is definitely having an impact.”

He said: “This is supposed to be peak trading time, but we’ve stayed pretty flat and it does seem particularly quiet this year.”

Lloyd Johnson, the chair of

Newham Chamber of Commerce, told *Newham Voices*, said that the “huge knock” suffered by the hospitality trade prior to the Christmas holiday will continue.

“Problems for businesses will accelerate and January will be particularly badly affected,” he warned. “Retail trade has started to slow as more people are working from home.”

But it’s not all bad news with the London Stratford City Holiday Inn reporting that the hotel has not suffered any significant downturn in business.

The sudden onset of the new variant also saw the cancellation of events to help some of the most vul-

nerable in the Borough.

The marketing company Mash Media had planned an event called ‘One Day at Christmas’ for 400 Newham residents who are elderly or likely to be spending Christmas alone. But the event, planned for December 14 and which included lunch, entertainment, bingo, and free transport, was cancelled at the last minute.

In spite of all the problems there is some optimism within the business

community. “Companies have learned a lot in the last year,” said Lloyd Johnson “I’m still positive for 2022, but we still have to be realistic.”

He says local businesses have welcomed support from the government and Newham Council during the pandemic so far. “The levels of support from the council have been good,” he said. “They have really listened to our concerns and this should continue.” ●

Keep healthy in the New Year

The holiday period is one of the busiest times of the year for local health services, so it is important to remember there are a number of ways to get advice and support from the NHS in Newham.

This includes visiting your local pharmacy for help treating coughs, colds and other minor ailments, and visiting NHS 111 online or contacting your GP surgery when you have wider health concerns.

Over the holiday period in Newham have a number of healthcare options:

- **Pharmacy:** Many common illnesses can be most easily treated by visiting your local pharmacy.
- **GP appointments:** People in Newham can book appointments by calling your own GP practice as usual during working hours or by calling NHS 111 when it is closed.
- **NHS 111 service:** If you have an urgent but not life-threatening medical need visit NHS 111 online which is available 24 hours a day. If you cannot use the internet, call 111.

Covid-19 vaccinations are also available. For more information, visit the North East London Health and Care Partnership website.

Transparency row: City Farm campaigners kept waiting

CATARINA JOELE

Save Newham City Farm, a group that has been campaigning against the Council's decision to close the local farm without public consultation, accuses the cabinet of lack of transparency.

The decision to shut the green community resource based at King George V Park, in Beckton, was announced in September and the petition attracted over 45,000 sig-

natures and the support of many local councillors, and East Ham MP Stephen Timms.

One of the campaigners said: "Our petition has not been taken seriously. The council had opportunities to secure financial support or to ask the community to get involved but instead cut the budget to create an emergency scenario."

Another member of the team said: "We are frustrated with the delays and in some cases failures to com-

municate with us."

According to the campaigners, the Council has not yet made clear whether the closure is due to budget cuts or animal welfare. They believe that they would be able to find local businesses willing to sponsor the city farm initiative and, if the animals' wellbeing is the main concern, the farm should close temporarily, while the issues are being resolved.

Maureen Parker and her son, Tom, who has Down's syndrome, have been volunteering in the city farm for nine years until Covid-19 came. She said: "My son is down and he misses the farm dreadfully, asking all the time when can we go back."

Another user, Kim Thompson, said: "With two young adult sons with special needs in our family, Newham City Farm was an asset. It was local, within walking distance with our boys in their wheelchairs. No need to wait around endlessly for transport as parents and helpers could wheel them there. They absolutely enjoyed every minute of being there and mingling with the animals in a well provided for space."

The Council has not yet published a response to the questions submitted by Save Newham City Farm campaigners ahead of the Council meeting that took place on 22 November, and has not responded to *Newham Voices* requests for an update.

www.savenehamcityfarm.com



Photo via Twitter

VIEW FROM MY WARD

Plaistow South

Councillor Jane Barbara Lofthouse

Plaistow South is

a bright, vibrant, sociable and green ward. It boasts Plaistow Park, New City Green, a large section of the Greenway – from Barking Road to Boundary Lane – and one of our Community Assembly projects, a community garden, still in its infancy, in Walton Road.

These green spaces are constantly being enhanced. The Greenway not only has the enriched Greenway Orchard, which offers a peaceful place for some patients of the adjacent Newham University Hospital, but also hosts the Plaistow Youth Market where creative young entrepreneurs sell their handmade, homemade, homegrown and interesting produce.

Plaistow Park has had an injection of new life. Not long before the years of Covid-19, the railings outside the Park, by Barber's Alley, were given a bright coat of paint by students from Lister School (our next door neighbours from Plaistow North) as were some of the brick walls.

This summer, as part of the Newham Unlocked festivities, organised by Rosetta Arts, another wall in the park was painted, giving us the Shape Newham Community Mural, but this time it was painted with photocatalytic paint, which helps to purify the air.

Plaistow South is a hub of learning with wonderful schools – three primary, two secondary, the Tunmarsh Centre, the Pupil Referral Unit, and NewVic College. A little less salubrious, though essential and famed throughout the Borough, is Jenkins Lane Re-use and Recycling Centre.

We also have two cycle super-highways, are home to a hospital and Newham Leisure Centre but... we have no station.

Plaistow is one of the few Passmore Edwards libraries still serving its original purpose and always buzzing with activity. A very sociable place, Plaistow, where, as you see, we get on well with our neighbours.



Students perform song written for cash-strapped children's hospice

Children from Calverton Primary School Choir joined Richard House Children's Hospice in officially switching on the Christmas tree lights at ExCeL London.

Before the big switch on, there were carols from the nearby school, who performed a song written especially for Beckton's Richard House which is facing a £500,000 shortfall due to covid-19 hitting its fundraising activities.

Founded in 2000, Richard House was the first children's hospice in London and provides care to children and their families with life-limiting illnesses. It is one of five long-standing Newham-based charities that ExCeL supports

Chris Baker, Chief Executive of Richard House, said: "We are delighted to be one of ExCeL London's long-standing partners, their support at Christmas and all year round means so much to us, particularly in these challenging times. It was great to come together with members of our community and celebrate Richard House and the partnership in such a festive setting. Thank you ExCeL!" further enquiries or information about ExCeL London, please contact:

To support the Richard House Urgent Winter Appeal visit:

www.richardhouse.org.uk/Appeal/urgent-winter-appeal



Children from Calverton Primary School Choir at the ExCeL London Christmas lights switch on. ©Andrew Baker

New delay over MSG Sphere as local elections loom

AIDAN WHITE

A decision on the controversial plan to build the MSG Sphere, a massive entertainment venue in Stratford, has been delayed with a planning decision now expected in the first half of 2022.

A spokesman for the London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) told *Newham Voices* that it was hoped that a decision would be taken “before the May council elections.”

After three public consultations and the broken promise of a decision before the end of 2021, the latest delay adds to concerns already expressed by residents and opposition groups over the Sphere which will consist of a music venue holding up to 21,500 people and a nightclub, restaurants, and bars.

Besides adding to the flow of people through one of Britain’s busiest transport hubs, the building will be an unmistakable feature on the skyline with an outer ‘skin’ of light



displays for advertising and promotional videos.

An initial decision date for the scheme was set for September last year but this was pushed back until

the end of the year. Now the LLDC says no decision will be taken until “the New Year” but no planning committee date had been fixed as we went to press.

Besides adding to the flow of people through one of Britain’s busiest transport hubs, the building will be an unmistakable feature on the skyline with an outer ‘skin’ of light displays.

The plans have ignited opposition from Newham Council, residents’ groups and local MP Lyn Brown. This will be one of the last major planning decisions taken by the LLDC which was set up to control development in the area at the time of the Olympic Games in 2012.

The Corporation is due to hand back control of the Olympic Park area to the London Borough of Newham during 2022. ●

HAVE YOUR SAY – LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@newhamvoices.co.uk

Newham City Farm was our lifeline

With two young adult sons with special needs in our family, Newham City Farm was an asset. It was local, within walking distance with our boys in their wheelchairs. No need to wait around endlessly for transport as parents and helpers could wheel them there. They absolutely enjoyed every minute of being there and mingling with the animals in a well provided for space.

It was a place to meet others and their peers, for all to socialise and to be at one with nature. We don’t have anything else like it in this area within walking distance.

Beckton District Park North is nearby but the pathways need attending to dramatically for wheelchair users and those pushing them.

The paths around our Newham City Farm were in a far better state for accessibility than the surrounding areas in Custom House and Beckton.

As residents in E16 we heard nothing of the NCF closure. It wasn’t until we kept going past it and wondering

why it hadn’t opened and why the animals seem to be disappearing.

I got onto the Next Door neighbourhood site and asked if anyone knew of anything about the farm closure. Someone mentioned it had closed during the Covid lockdown of 2020 and didn’t think it was going to re-open.

So we got together with other residents to see what we could do to campaign for its re-opening.

I also wrote to my local MP, Lyn Brown around August who did reply.

There is no alternative to having a lovely local, accessible farm in our Borough. I feel the need to ask Councillors and officials if they are anti-animal as we certainly have nothing else like our farm in Newham.

Another unique and wonderful thing about the farm was that they offered work experience to special needs people.

This farm needs to be reinstated and made good again. Residents should be able to put forward what they want to see there. Wouldn’t it be good to keep bees and go and buy a pot of local honey? When stressed

out, to wander with the animals to make you feel calm.

Kim Thompson & Family, E16

Unity platform – is it a runner for the May elections?

I’m picking up from Newham residents the feeling that it’s time to call a halt to the scenario that the Labour Party in Newham are able to deliver the change we need.

But the electorate have it in their power to change this. The best way to do this is for the opposition parties to form a united platform putting up unity candidates as an alternative to the Labour Party across the Borough.

The nightmare would be if the Labour Party were re-elected in May 2022 without any external opposition whatsoever.

The concept of a unity platform is worth discussing and I would hope through *Newham Voices* we could have at least a mature discussion about the possibility.

Perhaps we could organise a pub-

lic meeting to test the feasibility of a project in which all the opposition parties work together.

This would cause a revolution in democratic representation, but surely things can only get better with if we utilise all the different talent from across the political spectrum to challenge the drooping red rose of the Labour Party, which runs the risk of becoming a dried political flower.

There are surely many more blooms the Borough can offer.

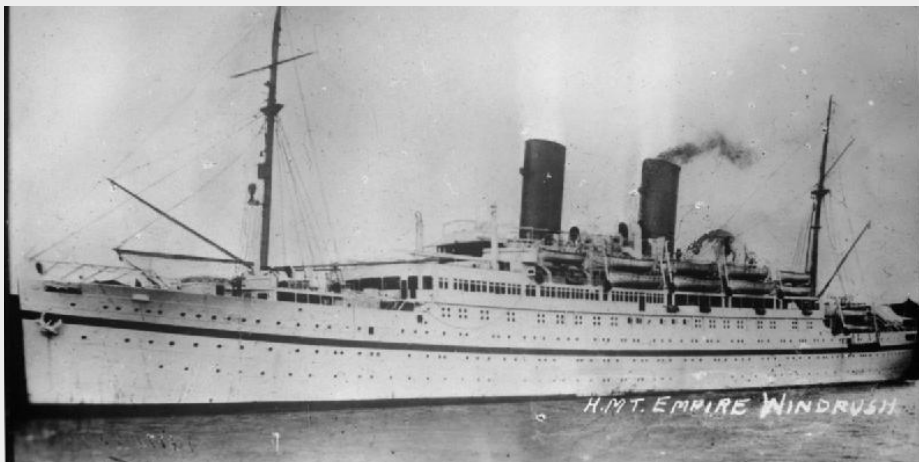
In an ecologically aware time we need not only social justice but to be mindful of individual liberty as well.

It is time, I believe, for Newham to sweep away the cobwebs. We need a real wind of change. Let’s join together with one voice, under one banner of opposition.

I hope this opens up the discussion for 2022 and it leads to open meetings and rational discussion on the benefits of a unity slate across the Borough

*Julian Meek, Interfaith minister
Stratford Unitarians
West Ham Lane
E15 4 PH*

Stories of the Windrush



Between 1948 and 1970 nearly half a million people moved from the Caribbean to Britain, which in 1948 was suffering severe labour shortages after the War. The immigrants were later referred to as the windrush generation. This verse imagines what it would have been like for some of the first travellers.

The marketplace:

I looked at Mama in the marketplace,
Green, yellow – bananas of all shapes and sizes,
Handed from person to person,
As money drops from one purse to another.

“Mama!” I said,
Have you ‘eard about the windrush?
The boat, they say it’s bigger than the titanic,
Could take the whole island with it,
And carry the next 3 generations
Across the sea to
The land of opportunity.

They say over there the sun don’t beat,
And more buses on the street,
And more people go to university –
And you can shake hands wit the queen.

My friends say they’re going,

I wanna go to.
We could do more things across the sea,
Like sip tea and shake hand with the queen.

At home:

My daughter said she wanna go to Great Britain,
I’ve been thinking of it myself.
But I’m nervous still as I open my mouth,
To tell my husband of these plans.

“What!”
He says, mouth open wide.
Eyes bloodshot, and crazed with mad anger.
“They don’t want us over there”
He cries
“They look at us like we’re nothin”
He says

“Over here we mean something,
we have something”
His Papa did fight in the first world

war,
Was friends with the british –
When i said this he smiled and nodded ok,
“No harm in trying, anyway...”

The windrush

My son came running in one mornin’,
Coursing with life,
With passion and the urge for something new.
Told me to grab my things and go.

I couldn’t bring the old armchair,
50 years old,
sunken in but still good as new.
Spent two decades tending to that garden outside,
Where things learnt to grow and blossomed into beauty,
Where I spent my days under the sun,
with the people I loved –
The only one left was my son –
And tears fell from my eyes as I closed the groaning door.

10 thousand feet tall it could have been,
Was high as a mountain that boat.
The pier full of people,
Jostling with anxiety, with hope and with fear,
Worried faces mixed with joyous ones,
People cried and people laughed.

My family was behind me,
The little girl, her mama and her dad.
I clutch the photo of my beloved,
Draw a deep breath –
And take my first steps.

To a new life,
In a new land,
Full of new opportunities.

– Tiffany Igharoro



Ageing and wellbeing strategy expected this month

PETER LANDMAN

About 1200 people in Newham have responded to a Council survey targeting residents over fifty on ways of supporting older people. A follow up meeting included calls for:

- A special DIY support and gardener service.
- A booklet listing good people for those jobs.
- More reskilling programmes for older people

More than half of the people surveyed said they were not happy with social contacts. Concerns were expressed about lack of access to computers and there was support for joint activities and events involving both older and younger people, as well as calls for more predementia planning and dementia support.

It was also suggested that there should be an introductory and explanatory booklet on end of life documentation.

A draft Ageing and Wellbeing Strategy is scheduled for late January.

Newham Resists on the march

LORRAINE TAPPER

There are a lot of people fighting for their rights and the rights of others in Newham but these causes are often isolated campaigns and weaker as a result.

Lois Austin who has had a life of activism since 1984, when she joined the Young Socialists Party as a young teenager during the miners strike, has recognised this problem and is trying to create a united front for these groups under the umbrella of Newham Resists.

This is “ a group of activists that

feel there is a need to coordinate these struggles to build a united movement in our borough against cuts, poverty and create an alternative to rally everyone.”

On 27 November, representatives from different groups, including members of the public, came together in Durning Hall Forest Gate to present their campaigns and cause.

Among the causes were campaigns to Stop the Silvertown Tunnel, Stop MSG sphere, Save Durning Hall, Save West Ham Park, Save Stratford Circus, Save Queens Market and Save Newham city farm.

Many concerns were expressed: that Newham has been a Labour controlled Borough since 1964; that the council is complacent and is not representative of local communities.

Newham Resists says Lois intends to fight against this and has set up a committee to organise effectively in the new year and in the run up to the next elections.

Lois has for years been campaigning for change in Newham and nationally. She was on the National Committee of the Labour Party Young Socialists, has been a member of Militant, founded a campaign against

racism and fascism in Greenwich and Bexley, joined the fight against the poll tax and was on the steering committee of the Stop The War Coalition.

As a member of the East London Socialist Party (ELSP), she has been campaigning for years with trades unionists and anti-cuts campaigners across the Borough.

With local elections due in May and many campaigns on the march she expects the Newham Resists work to gather momentum in 2022.

For more information on these campaigns email newhamresists@gmail.com or call 07946 447 576.

The bittersweet truth of an arranged marriage

Don't Laugh and Don't Cry

YOUTH VOICES
OF NEWHAM

ESEM

The magazines piled on the tables of every waiting room were the best. When the receptionist wasn't looking you would tear out the posters and stuff them in your school bag. Once home it would get neatly ironed out and straight inside the wardrobe with the rest of the pile of heart throbs. Dare you hang them up any place visible to any naked eye – they must remain a secret. Like the forbidden fruit from the story of Adam and Eve (well, Adam and Bibi Hawa for her) She only had to go to near the forbidden pile of images to feel the intensity of heightened excitement, the butterflies in the tummy and the racing heart.

Is this what people felt when they fell in love, she ruminated, and she pondered. The collection of images were special. Almost sacred to her.

The word Love

Growing up, love was everywhere she looked, as well as in places she didn't look.

Powerful love, intense love, a fierce type of love.

The type of love that says 'If anyone looks at my sister, they die'

The type of love that said 'My sister remains pure'

'She is a diamond she needs to be protected' and 'our sister is our honour'

Yes, love was in abundance. But, the love was a little unkind. It was little scary.

You knew you were loved and you also knew you existed.

All the friends you keep, places you go and things you read needed approval. Everything required the mighty approval. Even the clothes you wear had to be ticked against the checklist.

You had to deliberately make yourself look unattractive when going out, just in case you get stopped at the front door. Yes, you did exist. You were never invisible.

You learnt as you went along, adapting to the new rules that come into place, sometimes without any logic behind them...

One day, it is okay to look out the window but the next day it isn't. You're told 'The neighbours may talk, it will taint our honour. We love you, remember, you Are – Our honour.'

The burden of lugging around 'the



honour' got pretty heavy at the end of every day.

Puberty - Where did the time go, look you've grown up. We must fulfil OUR duty and find you a suitable life partner. A man who will look after you for the rest of your life, just like we have done all these years. You will continue upholding our honour and when you go there, you will carry HIS family's honour.

It was time for the respectful handover process. The transition.

The photos started pouring in, potential grooms in all different shapes and sizes – Good lord, some were pretty soul destroying.

The visits followed shortly afterwards, then came the inspection of the bride. Rejection was tough, even though it came from some ugly f*****.

Too short some said, too skinny, her nose isn't sharp enough, She's not educated enough ...

One final match was made, and everyone was so excited. Almost felt like they were all getting married. There was jubilation and excitement, as though the festivals of Eid, Diwali, Christmas and Halloween were being celebrated all at the same time.

There was authorisation to see each other in the presence of chaperons in the home. Her first impression – He was handsome, well-spoken and a true gentleman. Nothing to fault (sadly)

But there was an absence of emotion. Neither did the butterflies flutter, nor was there a racing pulse. The mind, body and spirit did not feel a scintilla of passion of any scale. Everything stood still, cold and decided.

The dates for the wedding were

set and her economic stability for the future planned out by everyone; everyone. Land from back home, gold jewellery, furniture, down to every kitchen utensil?!

In 3 months' time you belong to your husband. On the wedding day you will enter his house, his world, and you accept his ways and habits of life, leaving behind the ways and habits you had acquired.

The wedding day - Before leaving the family home for the final time, she had one last goodbye to make. In her full Bollywood queen outfit, she reluctantly walked to her wardrobe. She took out all the posters she'd collated over the years...an enormous and priceless collection!

She touched the pile and Geromino, the sudden rush of butterflies took over her body in its entirety, the racing pulses, and the pounding heart, so hard her chest hurt. One by one she looked at the images... mountains, waterfalls, tropical beaches, caves, horses, elephants, marine life, coral islands and right at the bottom, a huge collage of Brad Pitt! Interview with the vampire, Legends of the fall, Fight club.

Butterflies and heartbeat - That moment she knew, what she was feeling was love and attraction.

Throughout her life she was surrounded by handsome Asian males, but she never had those feelings for them, no secret crushes no fantasies. She knew it wasn't for her.

She looked down at all the images, these were her dreams, her motivation her future visions... Laughter, Adventure and Love – A companion she chooses and finds attractive.

At that moment – She wondered what would happen if she said she

wanted to marry outside the culture? The thought made her stomach churn with fear.

Deep breath - Time to grow up she thought –Tonight, I will be in a man's bed, whom I don't even know. Time to grow up stupid girl!

She took another deep breath. She gently folded ALL the images into small pieces and then placed them gently in the bin – with No emotion.

Yes, even her beloved blue eyed blond-haired super crush.

Leaving the house – She was told: Don't Laugh and Don't cry.

15 years on – She reflects back.

The connection happened, the 1st, 2nd and all the other nights happened, the kids came, celebrations happened, the grief from in laws happened, financial hardship happened, mental illness happened, couple conflict happened, ruptures continue to happen and so do the repairs – The union of marriage is still intact. Because – because he is still the handsome, well-spoken and a true gentleman. Nothing to fault (sadly)

Everything happened.

Sadly, the madness of real love didn't happen.

The butterflies never came. The heart was beating at the same pace, all these years.

She asked her younger self 'My dear, what is the meaning of marriage?'

The younger self replied "Self-sacrifice and upholding family honour"

Deep breathe.

She asked her older self "You fool, what is the meaning of marriage?"

Marriage is symbolic and should not make a difference to how you feel. Marriage is about the strength of the relationship. You must feel the connection and feel attraction and most importantly, feel the Love.

Yet again, she pondered the idea of love; how much the absence of it ached on some days, but how she bore the burden of honour on most days.

She was carrying this organised HONOUR relentlessly, and now finds herself into the latter years of her adulthood.

Now is the time, she said out loud to herself – now WAS the time for her.

Love was, and love will forever remain an emotion so deep, a

sentiment beyond belief and a feeling unseen which she will grab onto with dear life the next time she felt an iota of those missed butterflies ---- -- anywhere along the peripheries.

When Love is within reach now – The burden of honour will not get in the way – this time. ●



Zenab Ali (right) with patient Norma Wilson.

Living life to the fullest with the help of a hospice

From the moment she walked through the doors of St Joseph's Hospice, **Zenab Ali** knew it was a special place. Having made the remarkable journey from domestic assistant to day hospice manager, she is keen to ensure that people across Newham know the Hackney-based service is there for them – and it has more to offer than just end of life care.

St Joseph's hospice has a very close and special place in my heart, from my very first step into the hospice I felt warm and welcomed. It is such an amazing place to work. The care given to patients and families is so specialised with a holistic approach.

Many people hear the word hospice and think this is a place where people come to die. Yes, people do

come to the hospice for end of life care, however we also have many other outpatient services such as physiotherapy, complementary therapy, counselling and social worker input.

Day Hospice at St Joseph's gives people with a life-limiting condition the opportunity to spend an enjoyable, lively day with others in a similar situation, in a friendly

and caring environment.

Days are tailored to meet individual needs, focusing on how each person is coping with their illness and helping to ease some of the physical and emotional difficulties they may be experiencing.

Coming to Day Hospice helps people make new friendships, maintain their independence and live life to the fullest. It is for anyone aged over 18 with a life-limiting condition, living in the City of London and the boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Newham.

Day Hospice runs three days a week from 10am to 3pm. People usually attend one day a week for 12 weeks, on the same day so they can get to know the people. Some people attend for just one 12 week

block, some are re-referred. There are approximately 8-12 people on an average day. Referrals are taken from healthcare providers but people can also refer themselves by calling the First Contact Team.

Services at Day Hospice include:

- symptom advice
- advance care planning
- emotional and social support
- arts and crafts (e.g. painting, sewing and printing)
- gym group
- social work or benefits advice
- complementary therapies (e.g. aromatherapy and acupuncture)
- counselling
- physiotherapy
- chiropody

- spiritual support from our chaplains
- an opportunity to talk to staff about any issue

Being diagnosed with a life-limiting illness affects all parts of your life, taking a mental, emotional and physical toll. For many of our patients, their illness means they are socially isolated which greatly impacts their mental and emotional wellbeing.

While Day Hospice allows our patients to attend outpatient appointments with our therapies and advice

Days are tailored to meet individual needs, focusing on how each person is coping with their illness and helping to ease some of the physical and emotional difficulties they may be experiencing.

services (for complementary therapies, benefits advice, counselling) or medical appointments (physiotherapy, pain-management and symptom control) – the main benefit for most of the people who attend is the emotional support it offers.

Patients love the atmosphere – Day Hospice is full of happiness, joy and laughter – they are with others who understand them, they can forget about their illness and simply socialise and be themselves, not have to be judged or have to explain themselves. There is plenty of peer support making a huge difference to their mental health and wellbeing.

Coming to Day Hospice can also be a great gateway to other services the hospice can offer.

In 2020–2021, Day Hospice was open for seven out of the 12 months due to COVID. While closed, the staff were redeployed to support inpatients but continued to support day hospice patients via zoom and telephone calls.

With each lockdown, patients encountered a higher level of social isolation and we recognised the impact not attending Day Hospice had on patients' psychological and

physical health – mobility declined, they saw fluctuation in weight, loss of confidence, despair and depression.

Day Hospice was one of the first to open its doors in summer of 2020 and again in April 2021 once restrictions allowed.

The service is currently running at a reduced level.

- 11am to 2pm
- Takes up to 10 people (usually up to 20)
- 1 volunteer (usually 5 per day)

Patients have been delighted to be able to come back and we have been

full to capacity since re-opening our doors, showing the need for the service.

The key objective is to be able to stay open for the whole year.

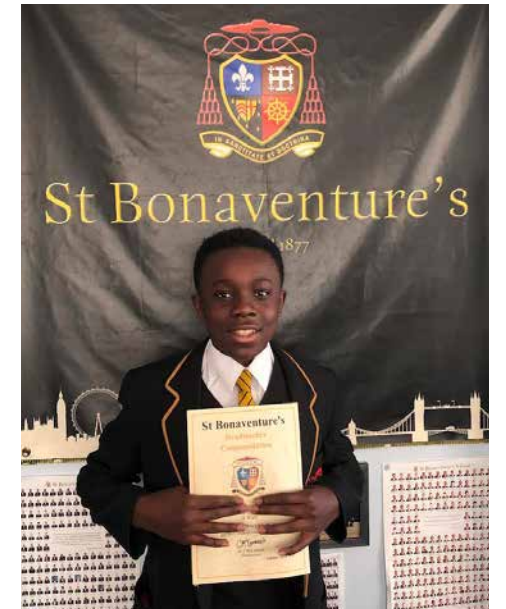
We would like to extend our reach and encourage referrals from GP surgeries and other local health professionals, ideally to offer our services to people earlier in their diagnosis.

At the end of life, patients are referred to the hospice who need palliative care and have a prognosis of less than 12 months. Patients can be referred for an inpatient bed whether that is for symptom management, carer support or end of life care. We have specialist community palliative care nurses who offer symptom control advice and end of life care within the three boroughs in the patient's home. ●

If you would like to find out more about St Joseph's Hospice services go to www.stjh.org.uk or call First Contact on 0300 30 30 400.



Local student awarded for helping mum in need



NOAH ENAHORO

A student from St. Bonaventure's School has been awarded and recognised for his bravery in helping a local mother in distress.

The Year 9 student has been called the 'epitome of The Good Samaritan' for assisting a mother in safely reuniting with her autistic son, who had bolted from her.

"He realised that I was in urgent need of help, and he acted. Without him, my son would have been in danger," she said.

Coming home from school, the young man saw the mother calling for help and looking visibly distressed. He asked the mother if she needed help and when he had discovered what happened, ran after the boy.

Upon reaching him, the quick-thinking teenager (pictured above, but not named in accordance with school policy) remained calm and reassured the boy that everything was alright, and holding his hand returned him to his mother.

"I am lost for words. There were adults along the way who were laughing, finding it amusing but this boy helped."

The grateful mother, who was worried that her son would have run into traffic, expressed her heartfelt thanks by subsequently writing to the Headteacher, Mr Christopher McCormack, asking for the student to be awarded for his bravery and quick intervention.

St. Bonaventure's took to Twitter to commend the young man stating: "Heroes do not always wear capes. They are ordinary, kind, selfless people like this teen and we could not be prouder of him." ●

Born in East London to parents from India and Pakistan, Zenab Ali started work in McDonald's and Morrisons, but a chance meeting changed all that...

Every evening at the bus stop I met a lady and we started chatting. I found out that she worked at the hospice which sounded like an amazing place. She got me an application form and I applied.

In 1998 I got the job as a domestic assistant in Hackney where I'd lived for 18 years, but I had never heard of the hospice, what it offered, what sort of organisation it was and that it was so close to home.

Two years later I became a healthcare assistant as I loved the environment. In 2005 I applied to city university and went off to do my nurse training.

My first child was 18 months old, my husband and parents convinced me that they would support me which gave me the boost I needed. I qualified as a registered nurse in April 2008.

Throughout my training I continued working as a bank health care assistant at the hospice and got the opportunity to do my work placement as a stu-

dent nurse on one of the wards which made me even more determined to work for the hospice once I qualified.



As a newly qualified nurse I went back to work on the ward that I worked as a domestic assistant and then a health care assistant. I worked as a staff nurse on the ward for a few years and then moved up a band into a triage nurse post.

I worked in that role for under a year, had another child and returned to the job after my maternity leave. I then applied for

a palliative community nurse role, visiting patients in Newham for symptom management and end of life care.

I did this for two years and then moved to a part time position as palliative care nurse in the day hospice in 2013. I have been in the day hospice as a staff nurse to a charge nurse and now I am the manager.

Primary School Honours Newham's Black Heroes

NEANDRA ETIENNE

Maryland Primary School art exhibition, which was funded by Black History Newham, has honoured the ambitions and achievements of inspirational Black Newham figures with an exhibition of students' artwork featuring local heroes such as Ade Adepitan, Dawn Butler MP, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Idris Elba, Lennox Lewis, and Asquith Xavier.

Sabrina Charlery, Art and Design Lead at Maryland Primary School said: "The art exhibition demonstrates the pupils' understanding of these key figures, their achievements and impact on our society."

Dawn Butler MP visited the school in early December and was given a spe-

cial school assembly, a tour of their Education for Change Equality Library and the art exhibition, accompanied by Head Teacher Lorna Jackson.

All the children were involved from ages four to 11 (Reception to Year 6). The whole school dedicated lesson time to investigating key figures. The children then produced a piece of artwork based on the style of Black artists such as Sonia Boyce who is from Newham, Chris Ofili and Yinka Shonibare CBE. Some pieces of art were individual and some were produced collectively.

Sabrina Charlery said: "This was our way of teaching history, social studies through the medium of art and paying homage to our Black Newham Heroes."

The school educates their students about Black History throughout the year. Lorna Jackson explained: "It is important to note that Maryland's ethos is not to celebrate Black History Month once a year, but for the school to educate, embed and integrate the achievements and impact of a diverse set of inspirational people all year round, so children have role models and 'real' models from all backgrounds to represent and inspire them."

Sabrina Charlery has also written Art 4Change, an art project for all primary schools and early years settings in Newham. The project provides opportunities for all children from Nursery age to Year 6, aged 11 to begin to have conversations to help them challenge racism.



Head Teacher Lorna Jackson and Dawn Butler MP. ©Neandra Etienne

Ms Jackson said: "There has never been a more important time for us all to challenge racism through conversation and curriculum."

When asked what message he would like to give to all Newham children, Adrian aged six and in Year 2 said: "We must be kind and caring, we are all equal. It doesn't matter who you are, we must be fair." ●

Community causes on the shopping bill

ZHENREENAH MUHXINGA

Carers Community Mental Health Group were one of three Forest Gate organisations who received support from the local Coop during 2021.

Each year the Coop welcomes applications for their Local Community Fund, which allows not-for-profit community groups to apply for funding if their projects link into one or more of its three missions: fair access to food; fair access to mental wellbeing and fair access to education and employment for young people.

Member Pioneers, the Coop's community connectors, then work closely with these groups over the year.

Money is raised by Coop members

every time they shop or purchase a Coop product and members are encouraged to choose a cause that they want their money to support. Anyone can register for a membership card, which provides weekly offers for members' shopping at the Coop and also adds 2p to their membership account for every £1 spent. ●



Our wishes for Newham in 2022

A community-owned pub in the heart of the borough with a great range of well-kept local beers and a welcoming space for people to come together as well as enjoy food, drink and live entertainment. **Phil Mellows, pubs correspondent**

A fresh start after the pandemic – more investment in jobs, young people and more opportunities for the people of Newham to have their say about the future of the Borough and particularly more action to provide people with affordable and decent homes to live in. **Aidan White, Publisher, Newham Voices**

I will continue to do my bit for the environment by taking my own bag along, when shopping. I have found the Council's Zoom consultations so good that I will continue to join every time I can in 2022. **Peter Landman, Newham Voices**

Let's erase the pain of lost days in the golden light of the new year. A brighter Newham, illuminated in the light of hope. **Farzana Rahman, Newham Voices**

Pupils enthralled by show with a serious message

Theatre company The Comedy School presented a moving, funny, and informative show at primary schools Ranelagh, Kaizen, Hartley, Cleves, Kier Hardy, St. Luke's and Ravenscroft from 13 to 17 December reaching more than 400 pupils.

The play – called "It's No Joke!" – uses humour to deliver a serious message about the consequences of knife-carrying and violent crime.

After the performance at Kaizen Primary School, Headteacher Barb Sims said: "I think this is a really good opportunity to talk about this subject."

"At the end, a boy who has older brothers involved in gangs came up to me and said: 'Miss, it was brilliant! Can we get this theatre company to come back again? I learnt a lot from listening to the story!'"



Photo by Ollie Wilson

Home truths: Why the living wage matters to Newham families

Students at School 21 in Stratford have joined Newham Voices to acquire an understanding of journalism and the community. In their second article Ibrahim Alom, Abu Miah and Sazzad Hossain interview students who are involved in the campaign for a national living wage.

School 21 is one of a number of local schools backing a campaign to support the national minimum living wage. The students have campaigned and interviewed members of the public to identify how many people in the local area are paid the living wage.

They uncovered a grim reality –

the vast majority of people they came across are not getting paid enough to survive and, even if they are, they have no excess money to spend.

Talking to students at School 21, it is clear that many of them are involved in the project because the issue resonates in their personal lives.

One student said: “A lot of our families struggle to make ends meet so it is vital that we ensure that they and other families get the basics in order to survive.”

In Newham this is true for many families. According to the Office for National Statistics 33.8 percent of jobs in the Borough pay less than the real living wage. This adds up to

around 23,000 workers in total.

Some students acknowledge that if this campaign is successful, they will benefit themselves. One said: “Our parents not earning the living wage affects us. We are therefore unable to buy necessities for school and we are not able to take part in enriching activities outside, such as martial arts.

“If our campaign results in change our parents may benefit and as a result so will we.”

The students’ claims are supported by the fact that about half of all children across the Borough live in poverty and are deprived of access to resources to help them with their studies and future prospects.

Overall, the students are extremely passionate about the campaign but many are far from optimistic that any serious change will be made.

One highlighted that “We are just viewed as kids and our opinions on serious matters are often overlooked”. Another added that being undermined by adults could lead to “the campaign becoming a failure”.

However, there is optimism that Newham will be a better place if young people engage in issues such as this.

“Even if this campaign does not lead to direct success, it may bring more awareness to the cause which will eventually lead to change,” said another student. ●

NewVic students selected for Future Leaders Programme



YOUTH VOICES OF NEWHAM

NOAH ENAHORO

Seven talented NewVic students have been awarded a place on the prestigious Future Leaders Programme, an award-winning leadership initiative for Year 12 students in Newham and neighbouring boroughs.

Supported by the Mayor of London and Queen Mary University of London, the programme, running through to March 2022, sees students take part in curricular activities to develop their skills, confidence and aspirations.

The selected individuals join in weekly evening workshops where they have sessions from university admission tutors, take part in guest talks

from changemakers who are working to make society more inclusive, are given work experience opportunities and are paired with a current undergraduate student as a mentor.

They will also go on a visit to the Houses of Parliament and the University of Oxford, where they will attend taster lectures and meet current students.

Magdalena Johnson, Vice Principal at NewVic, said: “This is such brilliant news! This programme will give our students access to opportunities they may not otherwise have, ultimately increasing their long term prosperity and life chances.

“Year on year, many NewVic students progress into higher education at Russell Group universities and we are delighted to be working with the Future Leaders Programme to help more and more young people to follow their aspirations and achieve their full potential.” ●

Maryland nursery event raises £1100 for charity

Zikora Day Nursery in Maryland celebrated the holiday season with a charitable week of fun, games and the sale of a huge selection of cakes and pastries that raised more than £1100 for Save the Children.

The children baked cupcakes and adults provided a range of delicious cakes including lemon and chia seed cake, chocolate brownies, traditional Romanian cake as

well as homemade meat samosas, vegetable spring roll and pancakes. Also on sale were Christmas ornaments and tea and coffee to grab and go for parents in the morning.

The Director, Dorothy Ede said: “A massive thank you to everyone taking part in the fundraising event. We have around 30 children attending the nursery currently and we are happily surprised to see the total amount.”

Photos courtesy Zikora Day Nursery



SOMETHING'S BREWING

Dry January? It's never been more palatable says Phil Mellows

While some of us might consider those long, dark, cold January evenings quite the worst time to give up drinking, there are a lot of people who choose the start of a new year to clamber onto the wagon, or just ease up a bit.

The good news for them is that in the last few years non-alcoholic alternatives have improved in choice and quality – especially when it comes to beer.

Those of you who remember the previous rush of low and no-alcohol beers onto the market in the 1980s might be forgiven for feeling sceptical about the drinkability of these brews, but I've tasted quite a few, and while they're not all great, there are certainly those that will surprise you.

Advances in techniques now enable brewers to make beers at very low strengths without losing too much of their essential 'beeriness', while the craft beer revolution has opened the door to new styles and flavours.

One brewer taking full advantage, among only a handful of firms in the UK exclusively brewing low and no-alcohol, is based just beyond the borough boundary in Leyton. Set up by Becky Kean and her brother-in-law Andrew Keresey, Nirvana brews a range of styles from a helles lager and an IPA to a traditional pale ale and a stout, plus specials – the latest a London Porter.

They're made at strengths between 0.0% abv and 0.5% abv. A little alcohol can give them a more satisfying body without any chance of getting you tipsy. You might find more booze in that carton of orange juice in your fridge.

Other names to look out for are Big Drop, which has an even wider range that includes a delicious brown ale and sours, and Lucky Saint, which

is dedicated to perfecting its 0.5% unfiltered lager.

Both companies are encouraging pubs to serve their beers on tap, as is brewing giant Heineken, which recently launched its 0.0% lager on draught. That's a potentially exciting development for low-alcohol drinkers as it puts them on a level with other pub-goers.



Advances in techniques now enable brewers to make beers at very low strengths without losing too much of their essential 'beeriness...

Online buying has also made it easier to try new beers in bottle and can – all breweries now have web shops – while London's first alcohol-free off-licence has been opened in Great Portland Street by 'mindful drinking' organisation Club Soda.

There's never been a better time to go low. ●



Top image: Nirvana founders Becky Kean and Andrew Keresey; Above: Nirvana porter.

GARDEN TALK

Cecilia Cran comes in from the cold with a focus on indoor plants, and she discovers an outdoor space with a touch of Suffragette history...

What to grow:

As the weather gets colder and wetter and the hours of daylight dwindle, I'm turning my attention to the greenery inside my home.

This month, I'm shining a light on the humble houseplant – the different types easily available, what works best indoors and how to manage and maintain them.

Kicking things off I'm looking at the peace lily. An easy to care for houseplant that is said to be one of the most effective at naturally filtering toxins in the air and humidity in the home. These plants like to be in a warm space, exposed to lots of natural light – not in direct sunlight though. The soil should be kept moist, but not soggy, so recommend watering once a week, maybe more when the weather gets warmer. A peace lily has a number of dense, delicate thin-stemmed green leaves and can grow anywhere from 1-4 feet tall – depending on the cultivar



Photos courtesy Celia Cran

you select. They will typically bloom twice a year, in spring and early autumn where they'll produce distinctive, pretty white flowers.

Mother in Laws Tongue or Snake Plant is another perfectly low maintenance plant, that is famed for purifying the air – this one is recognised by NASA no less! Seen as one of the most effective natural filters of harmful household toxins.

The plant likes to be exposed to light, but not to be in direct sunlight, it does not require a lot of watering. Water once a month or when the soil is dry to touch. These plants grow tall, firm green leaves, typically reaching heights up to around 4 feet high. They come in a range of cultivars, so do research which one would work best in your space.

With the above plants, they are

readily available at all the garden homeware shops and some of the major supermarkets and are reasonably inexpensive.

Along with getting the watering right, remember to prune and remove dying and dead leaves to keep the plant healthy.

Green escape: Hermit Road Recreation Ground

A lovely green idyll, with a slice of suffragette history.

I've said before and I'll say it again for the people at the back: I'm continually surprised by the array of green spaces Newham has to offer!

Not only does this park have a great little play area, it also has two very well maintained tennis courts, an outdoor gym with a range of equipment and a couple of table tennis tables.

Beyond the facilities, there is also a sizeable lush, grassy space to sit and relax (weather dependent!), a small wooded area, some raised beds and last but not least, a wonderful garden to explore – The Daisy Parsons Memorial Garden. It can be accessed through a pretty, ornate iron gate and is home to a wonderful variety of colourful roses. The garden is in memory of Daisy, West Ham's first female mayor, elected in 1936. Daisy was an impressive woman who alongside becoming the area's first female mayor, was also at the forefront of the east end suffragette movement, campaigning tirelessly throughout her life for the rights of women. The garden is a lovely reminder of a local heroine and a beautiful tranquil spot to soak up nature. ●



A health and safety disaster or wartime sabotage?

In our regular series on Newham monuments, Julia Omari recalls the tragic Silvertown Explosion

On the 19 January 1917 at 6:52pm, an explosion rocked Silvertown killing 73 people, injuring more than 400, destroying 900 homes, damaging around 70,000 properties and killing one horse.

The blast was reported to have been heard around 100 miles away. An investigation into the incident highlighted a number of dangerous safety issues at the munitions factory but the full report was not available to the public until the 1950s. This silence led to a number of local conspiracy theories on what caused the blast including German sabotage.

Britain had been fighting in World War I for two years and was facing a high explosives shortage. In 1915, the War Office ordered the manufacturing of TNT in an empty space of the

Brunner-Mond Chemical business, a factory situated in a populated area.

A fire started in the factory on Friday evening, after most of the workforce had left, this fact no doubt limited the final death toll. Employees, firefighters and police officers were quickly on the scene after the explosion which killed 69 people immediately. It took until Sunday afternoon to put the fire out. The Minister of Munitions visited the area on Saturday, followed by the Prime Minister on Sunday.

In memory of those killed, Brunner-Mond erected a four sided stone pillar outside the factory site on North Woolwich Road in the 1920s.

The memorial also remembers those lives lost in service during the two world wars. The memorial was later moved closer to the river Thames where surviving family members met on 17 January 2017 to mark the 100th anniversary of this devastating incident.

To find out more about the explosion and local history visit Eastside Community Heritage at www.hidden-histories.org and for more on the history of Brunner Mond visit their Twitter page [@bmhistory](https://twitter.com/bmhistory).



Silvertown Explosion Memorial. ©Julia Omari



Good reads in Newham

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

- **They They Played with Bobby Moore – The West Ham Years**
By Tim Crane
- **Eighty at Eighty: An A to Z of Masters from Ali to Zidane**
By Geoff Hurst
- **From Bow to Biennale (New revised edition)**
By David Buckman
- **Sticky McStickstick**
By Michael Rosen
- **When Shadows Fall**
By Sita Brahmachari
- **Black and British: A short, essential history**
By David Olusoga

Compiled by David Ceen

Nature's own pharmacy

FAWN BESS-LEITH

Welcome to 2022! For some people, the new year means setting health goals, such as losing weight, following a healthier diet, and starting an exercise routine. But these resolutions tend to be restrictive, expensive and unsustainable so we need achievable goals. But a healthy lifestyle doesn't have to be costly. Try the suggestions below. They are beneficial and cost effective.

NUTRITION: Whole foods, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, seeds and nuts contain an abundance of nutrients our body needs. Following a whole-food-based diet may significantly reduce heart disease risk factors, body weight, and blood sugar levels, as well as decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes. Here are a few tips to help you eat healthy while saving money:

Start a herb garden, buy seasonal produce, plan and prep your meals, buy generic brands and look out for deals. Eat the rainbow – fruit and vegetables of different colours every day!

EXERCISE: In the old days too much hard work rapidly wore people out. Nowadays our bodies can decay because of inactivity. In January gym membership increases by 12 per cent as many people purchase expensive

memberships for fitness programs. But though most people start strong, the majority don't make their new routine into a lasting habit.

Regular physical activity, either in the form of gardening, cycling or walking makes you breathe more deeply. This is nature's best way for combatting stress, tension, insomnia and depression. It also makes you sweat and that eliminates waste products so the body functions better.

Find a fresh air activity you love and set an attainable goal – for example a walk three or four specific days per week instead of daily. This way your new routine will last and lessen the chance of early burn out.

WATER: Clean and adequate water does wonders for our body. Six to eight glasses a day is required. You can start by drinking 2-3 cups of slightly lukewarm water about an hour before breakfast.

SUNLIGHT: Many of the best things in life are free. Sunshine is one of them. Spend as much time as possible outdoors when the sun shines. It provides Vitamin D which is vital for the body's absorption of calcium. to

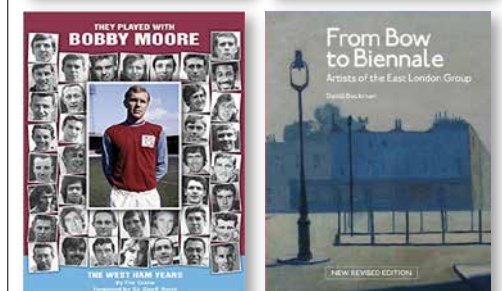
prevent brittle bones. Take Vitamin D supplements in the winter.

AIR: Many of us breathe polluted air and spend too much time indoors where the air is stale with too little oxygen. This causes us to become pale, depressed and our minds are foggy. Try to go out regularly in green open spaces and rural areas with fresh air and keep your homes well ventilated. It's not just about accessing fresh air but learning to breathe correctly. During exercise we naturally increase

the rate, not the depth of our breathing. Practicing abdominal breathing technique will allow air to stream deep into your lungs and stale air to be fully expelled. Abdominal breathing soothes our nervous system, promotes digestion and ensures sound sleep.

REST: The competitive world is stressful so rest is more necessary than ever. Sleep with windows slightly open, weather permitting. Get to bed early, try to get eight hours sleep.

Learn to relax. Take short breaks often, ten minutes every hour is better than twenty minutes every two hours. Practice deep breathing techniques. ●



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SPORTS SHORTS

Compiled by Neandra Etienne

Boxing Champion **Lawrence Okolie** received an Honorary Doctorate of Sport from the University of East London (UEL) in recognition of his achievements inside and outside the boxing ring.

Lawrence told students at a graduation ceremony at ExCel London on 25 November:

"I believe that anyone who puts their mind to something and truly believes is going to go on and achieve amazing things."

Lawrence enrolled at UEL on the high performance sports scholarship programme in 2014.



Active Newham's free **Ping! Table Tennis** sessions are taking place at various Newham parks in January. The sessions are open to everyone from January 2nd - 4th

- 2nd Brampton Park 12-13.30, Central Park 14.30-16.00
- 3rd Royal Victoria Garden 12-13.30, New Beckton Park 14.30-16.00
- 4th Stratford Park 12-13.30, Chandos Road 14.30-16.00

To book a space, please visit: www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/activenewham-30651492968

West Silvertown Foundation will be organising free youth Football sessions for 9-16 year olds every Tuesday and Thursday 4.30-5.30 on Britannia Village Green.

There is no need to pre-book. Sessions are set to start from 10 January, but keep an eye on their website for any updates.

www.wsfroyaldocks.org

London Lions Basketball team have two FIBA Europe Cup games; 12 January away to Bakken Bears and 26 January at home to Bahçeşehir Koleji

London Lions Women face the unbeaten, top of the table, Sevenoak Suns at home on 9 January

www.thelondonlions.com

NewVic Sports Basketball, Cricket and Netball Academy teams won Association of Colleges (AoC) regional



NewVic Knights Basketball Team

competitions. They are heading to AoC national games in Nottingham in April 2022!

The Netball team at NewVic travelled to Uxbridge College on 1 December to take part in the London AoC Regional Netball Tournament - where the winning team then goes on to represent London at the AoC Nationals. The Netball team won all of their games and for the first time qualified for Nationals.

The next NewVic Knights Basketball home game is on Wednesday 26 January 2022 v New City College. NewVic students and teachers can attend the game. External visitors are not allowed.

@newvicknights

Kyle Rowe represented team **Fight for Peace** at the prestigious Muay Thai Grand Prix held at Scala in King's Cross on 12 December. His call up to the Grand Prix event came off the back of a string of impressive results including a stunning first round stoppage back in September.

"It was a great experience and I loved every minute of it," said Kyle.

www.fightforpeace.net



Kyle Rowe Fight for Peace

Fight for Peace runs free Brazilian Jiu Jitsu classes at its Academy in North Woolwich every Wednesday and Friday at 6.30pm. Classes start Wednesday 5 January. They are open to any young person aged 14-25 years old and everyone, from beginners to more experienced athletes;

Check their social media and website for updates

@fightforpeace

Athletic Newham FC has been drawn at home to play Littlehampton Town FC in the next round of the

FA Vase cup on Saturday 15 January 2022. Athletic Newham FC play in the Essex Senior League

Supporters are welcome to attend both home and away games.

youtube.com/channel/UCv0gz7ld-fVCMi6SiboAg-yA

@athleticnewhamfc/

West Ham United Women will play Sheffield United Women in the Fourth Round of the Vitality Women's FA Cup on the weekend of 30 January 2022.

The Hammers made it to the final of the competition in their first professional season in 2018.

www.whufc.com/news/women



West Ham United FC Women's Team

Great Britain Men's National Basketball and **Cheshire Phoenix** player **Teddy Okerefor** visited his former school St Bons. Teddy chatted with his old coaches and pupils, signed autographs and donated his signed GB #5 shirt to their PE department. Teddy achieved a record breaking 50 consecutive caps for Great Britain's Men's Basketball team that saw him breaking a 45 year old record during the team's historic victory over Greece.

@stbons

Despite battling an ever-increasing injury list **Forest Crusaders WFC** are sitting 2nd in the Greater London Women's Football League. They trail the current (temporary) leaders by 6 points with two games in hand and have already defeated the current occupants of the top spot by 3 goals to 1. The team is also going strong in two cup competitions and are confi-



Love Open Water

dent that they can finish the season with some silverware.

Forest Crusaders WFC welcomes supporters so why not come along and support your local women's team. Their home games are played at the Memorial Sports ground in West Ham. You can help the team create some noise as they continue to make progress in Women's football in Newham.

Forest Crusaders WFC, in association with Playmaker10 coaching, is now offering coaching sessions for young players. They are launching their first sessions at Newham Leisure Centre on Saturday 8 January. Email playmaker10coaching@gmail.com for more details.

Love Open Water is having a New Year Day Cold Water Swimming event at their venue at London Royal Docks. www.loveopenwater.co.uk

The Old Spotted Dog Trust and **Clapton CFC** have launched a campaign to raise funds for their new changing rooms. Before the team can return to their Football ground at the Old Spotted Dog they are required to build changing facilities.

Further details can be found on their website if you would like to donate: www.claptoncfc.co.uk/2021/12/01/old-spotted-dog-trust-and-clapton-cfc-launch-new-dressing-room-fundraiser/

All games and events featured in this Round Up are subject to change. Please check the websites for any updates.



Teddy Okerefor and St Bons pupils

Last chance to tell us what you think!

Share your views and you could win £50 in Morrisons vouchers



CLOSING DATE: 5 JANUARY 2022

As a not-for-profit independent newspaper, we really count on the support of our readers.

We have developed a short survey to help us understand who our audience is and why people are reading *Newham Voices*.

Your response will help us to shape the paper so that it is more relevant and serves you, our audience, better.

The survey should take approximately 5 – 10 minutes to complete. You may skip a question but please be as complete as possible. Your responses are voluntary and will be confidential. Responses will not be individually identifiable unless you choose to share your details for the prize draw.

Return the printed copy to: *Newham Voices* reader survey, 11 Vicarage Road E15 4HD or you can take the survey online at: www.newhamvoices.co.uk

What is your relationship with Newham?

Please select all that apply.

- I am a resident I work in the Borough
 I am a student here
 I am a former resident/formerly worked in the borough
 I am generally interested
 Other: _____

Where do you get your news? Select all that apply. Please state the publisher/broadcaster in the comment box.

- National news (print) National news (online)
 Local news (print) Local news (online)
 Social media Radio Television
 Other: _____

How do you access online news?

Select all that apply.

- Desktop browser
 News apps (mobile/tablet)
 Mobile browser
 Tablet browser
 Facebook
 Twitter
 Other social media
 Other: _____

Are you a regular reader or supporter of *Newham Voices*? *

- I am a regular reader
 I would like to become a supporter

If you read the print copy of *Newham Voices*, where do you pick it up?

Do you visit *Newham Voices* online?

- Yes No

Do you follow us on social media?

Please select all that apply.

- Instagram Facebook Twitter

Reading *Newham Voices*: Please select all that apply.

- Makes me feel more engaged with the local community.
 Informs me about local issues and campaigns
 Keeps me up to date with local services and organisations
 Keeps me entertained.
 Provides useful information for my job.
 Other: _____

What most appeals to you about *Newham Voices*?

Please select all that apply.

- News and features Community
 Photography Listings
 Arts and culture Sports Youth Voices
 Regular columns such as pubs and gardens
 Other: _____

Is there anything you would like to have or see more of?

After reading *Newham Voices*, have you done any of the following?

- Recommended *Newham Voices* to others
 Shared an article online
 Joined a local group
 Attended a local event, including a training course
 Emailed the editor to raise a local issue
 Taken action (eg. signed a petition, signed up for a course, requested further information)
 Followed us on social media
 Other: _____

How would you like to improve coverage of *Newham* and your neighbourhood?

About you: Individual data will not be shared with any other organisations, however, aggregate demographic data may be used to provide relevant information to potential funders and advertisers. For example, potential advertisers like to know whether the people who read *Newham Voices* are people who might want their products or services. As with all the questions in this survey, you are not obliged to answer.

Please select your age category

- 0-18 19-30 31-40 41-50 51-60
 61-70 71-80 81-90 91-100 100+

Please state the gender you most identify with.

- Female Male
 Transgender female Transgender male
 Non-binary Prefer not to say
 Other: _____

Please select your ethnicity:

- White British White Irish
 White Gypsy or Irish Traveller
 Any other white background
 White and black Caribbean
 White and black African
 White and Asian
 Any other mixed/Multiple ethnic background
 Indian Pakistani Bangladeshi
 Chinese Any other Asian background
 African Caribbean
 Any other Black/African/Caribbean background
 Arab Iranian Turkish

If you are employed, what is your occupation?

What are your current accommodation arrangements:

- Social housing (Council)
 Private rented (Landlord)
 Owner occupied (You are buying your home)
 No fixed accommodation
 Owner occupied former council owned property
 Your answer: _____

Please tick and provide your email address if you would like to receive our regular newsletter straight to your inbox.

Email: _____

Would you be happy for us to use quotations from your responses in order to show reader satisfaction? If so please state how you would like to be identified.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

I would like to take part in the prize draw for £50 Morrisons vouchers

My contact details are: _____

Terms and conditions are available on our website: www.newhamvoices.co.uk

Joy and mayhem as Moyes deals with mixed fortunes



Mickey Ambrose was among the revellers on a day that West Ham fans will always remember.

There were incredible, exhilarating scenes inside and outside the Queen Elizabeth Olympic stadium and Stratford Centre after West Ham defeated Chelsea and knocked them off the top of the premier league.

Things were calmer after sobering losses to Arsenal and Southampton, but it was a day and night to remember after the Chelsea game with fans celebrating in bars, pubs, and fast-food restaurant chains, in great high spirits – one fan even stopped me to ask where he could get some pie ‘n mash. Alas none to be found in Stratford.

David Moyes, the West Ham boss

who spent 11 years as manager of Everton is an unassuming type who performed miracles on Merseyside, but got a rough ride as manager of Manchester United. Now at West Ham the team are flying because he has instilled belief into his players. Moyes is ‘pure class’, The fans are in Winter Wonderland at the moment; would you Adam and Eve it?

There were the usual flashes of class though from Chelsea, but none of their trademark control. Slumped in his seat on the bench, Thomas Tuchel could not believe what he was watching. Chelsea’s defence had been pushed to the limit by West Ham and, by the end of a barmy encoun-



Mickey Ambrose (abover) is former Charlton and Chelsea player

ter, he must have been wondering if his team have what it takes to outlast Manchester City and Liverpool.

Twice Chelsea led; and twice they were pegged back because of sloppy defending. West Ham were immense. Declan Rice was imperious, Jarrod Bowen’s endeavour was rewarded with a fine goal and it summed up a wildly entertaining game when Arthur Masuaku sent a fluke winner past Édouard Mendy, who had handed West Ham their first equal-

iser by conceding a foolish penalty.

Chelsea, who have won two of their last five league games, could have few complaints. Although Mason Mount scored a stunner on the stroke of half-time, too many of Tuchel’s players were below par. There were jittery displays in central defence from Andreas Christensen, Thiago Silva and Antonio Rüdiger, who could not contain Michail Antonio, and the other worry for Tuchel is that Chelsea did not create much, even after introducing Romelu Lukaku for the injured Kai Havertz at half-time.

West Ham are a resilient side who fought for everything. They were built in the image of their manager Moyes, who continues to make a mockery of claims that he was past his best. West Ham have progressed at an astonishing rate having seen off Liverpool and Tottenham at home this season their push for Champions League qualification has even more momentum after beating the European champions. ●

Time for reboot at the home of football

FA EQUALITY NOW of which I am Co-Chair supports the fan-led review calling for an independent regulator for the Football Association.

We are taking on the FA, the oldest sporting governing body in the world, because it is archaic and in desperate need of reform. (See more on my YouTube videos).

The People’s FA invited me to present our review and recommendations to number 10 Downing Street alongside John Stiles son of 1966 World Cup Winner Nobby and surgeon Dr. Sally Tucker, campaigner for action over dementia in football. See our website www.faequalitynow for more information.

The government has backed the work which states “football requires a strong, independent regulator to secure the future of our national game”.

We say anyone should be able to become a member of the Football Association by signing up, giving the general public a vote to decide who should be on the 24-person board. We want an end to the closed-door ‘old boy’s network’ which has dominated football in England for so many years.

The new regulator is a central recommendation of the fan-led review which the government commissioned in April in the wake of the European Super League storm. The key

recommendations of the review are:

- An independent regulator to oversee financial regulation in football
- a new ‘fit and proper persons’ test to replace the existing system which would also include an ‘integrity’ test on potential owners and ‘real time’ financial checks
- Fans to be consulted on all key off-field decisions through a ‘shadow board’
- Equality, diversity and inclusion plans to be mandatory for all clubs
- Key items of club heritage to be protected by a ‘golden share’ for fans
- A new corporate governance code to be set up
- Women’s football to be treated equally and given its own review
- Stakeholders to work to increase protection of welfare of players leaving the game

Finally, it is proposed that there should be more support from the Premier League to the pyramid through a solidarity transfer levy.

I would like to wish all our readers a Happy and Peaceful New Year.



At 10 Downing Street: myself, John Stiles and Dr. Sally Tucker present our report and blueprint for change to the government.