



Concern over access to blood tests Page 5

People of Newham: Doing life at the Old Bailey! Page 6



Fighting knife crime with a basketball Page 10

Labour targets clean sweep, but says 'we'll work with others'

JEAN GRAY

Labour will go all out to win every seat in the May council elections, in spite of opponent jibes about the prospect of another four years of a 'one party state' in Newham.

In an exclusive interview with *Newham Voices*, elected Labour group leader Councillor John Gray said he made no apology for the party's success, but he pledged to work with

others if Labour sweeps the board again this year, as it did in 2018.

He cites last year's referendum on the Mayoral role and the Newham Against Austerity campaign as examples of past collaboration with other groups.

"This is what you get with the first past the post election system that we have in Britain," he said. "Personally and as an individual, I am a supporter of proportional representa-

tion, but this is not the view of the Labour Party or the Conservatives, so it is incumbent upon all councils with large one party majorities to be as transparent as possible, and this is what we have tried to do."

Cllr Gray argues "respectfully" that it is for the other parties to look to themselves and "up their game" rather than criticising Labour for winning all the seats.

He believes it is less of an issue with voters on the doorstep. "People are much more interested in issues local to them, such as fly tipping and housing. But that's not to say that people don't take us to task.

"All parties have their problems... But we are working with the NEC and London Labour to move forward."

"I had a difficult discussion recently with someone about parking restrictions. We did not agree, but when I asked him if he would still vote Labour, he said 'of course, I may not agree on everything you do, but I still support you'."

Cllr Gray said he found the response 'humbling'. "There is a sizeable minority of people who are critical of the council, but the majority realise that we are doing our best in difficult circumstances. We have to make difficult choices."

Such choices include a decision to increase council tax in the next council budget, (See Page 3) but Cllr Gray argues that Newham has taken

decisions that protect the most vulnerable, adding that council tax in the Borough is still the lowest for this part of London.

Newham Labour approaches the election as a party under a cloud. Labour's national executive committee (NEC) last year suspended both East Ham and West Ham Constituency parties following allegations of misconduct by some members. The chairs of both organisations have recently resigned and quit the party.

Cllr Gray said he regrets their decision to resign. "All parties have their problems," he said. "But we are working with the NEC and London Labour to move forward. Some of these issues go back before 2019. There is huge support in Newham for Labour leader Keir Starmer, so you could say that we are on a journey."

As a result of the suspension, Labour's Newham May election candidates will be selected by the NEC, rather than the local party as is usually the case. The process is taking time, but this is good news, says Cllr Gray, because the party has been 'overwhelmed' with people wanting to become candidates.

He believes the biggest potential threat to Newham would be a national government pursuing an austerity agenda. "It would be awful if the government reduced funding and made people pay the price for what was rightly the response to Covid. This is still the fifth richest country in the world, there is money in this country." ●

Over the coming weeks, Newham Voices will be asking all the main parties for their approach to the May elections.



©Julia Omari

International Women's Day

See Pages 8-9



By local people, for local people

Our aim is to provide a voice for all of Newham's people. We are committed to helping you share your news, views and experiences with each other. We aim to be transparent, accountable and responsive to your needs.

We are a non-profit Community Interest Company (number 12790786). Our journalism is based on core values of accuracy, fairness, independence, humanity, accountability and transparency with a strong commitment to citizen journalism. More information is available on our website:

www.newhamvoices.co.uk

Newham Voices CIC Directors

Jean Gray, Catarina Joele, Shagufta Nasreen, Rebekah Samuel, Winston Vaughan and Aidan White

Publisher

Aidan White 07946 291511

Editors

Catarina Joele and Jean Gray

Designer

Mary Schrider

Editorial Team

Mickey Ambrose, Andrew Baker, Sylvie Belbouab, Fawn Bess-Leith, Nicole Blythe, Cecilia Cran, Phoenix Debola, Noah Enahoro, Neandra Etienne, Coco Garcia Acevedo, Charlotte Hall, Michelle Harris, Thomas Holdroyd, Wendy Jackson, Karolina Króliczek, Peter Landman, Shofa Miah, Phil Mellows, Zhenreenah Muhxinga, Thana Narashiman, Julia Omari, Farzana Rahman, Rebekah Samuel, Daphne Stedman, Mir Tasin, Lorraine Tapper and Winston Vaughan

Thank you to all of our supporters!

Complaints

If you have a complaint regarding the content of our newspaper or website contact the editor at editor@newhamvoices.co.uk Or by phone: 07946291511.

We will normally respond to your complaint with a final decision within 21 calendar days. If we uphold your complaint, we will tell you about our actions to remedy the situation. If you are not satisfied you can submit a formal complaint to IMPRESS, who will independently examine your complaint. *Newham Voices* agrees to be bound by the outcome of IMPRESS investigations.

For more information, go to www.newhamvoices.co.uk/feedback For general inquiries email us at: info@newhamvoices.co.uk



Veera Ibrahim and Reverend Amy Stott have both agreed to join our *Newham Voices* campaign panel to increase voter turnout in Canning Town South at the local elections in May. Find out more about our **Speak Up, Vote on 5 May** campaign and how you can get involved at www.newhamvoices.co.uk



Lorraine Tapper talks to two women leaders in Canning Town

Champion! 'Canning Town is my community,' says Veera

Veera Ibrahim loves her community in Canning Town and has found herself an ideal job – working as Morrisons Community Champion in the local store.

Her passion for community work prompted her to change jobs. She said: "this is my community." Veera has lived in Canning town since 2009 and only has a short walk to get to work.

The pandemic has meant that the focus of her role over the last few years has been supporting people who have experienced hardship because of falling incomes. In the lobby of the store, there are packs of essential items which can be bought by customers and then donated to local food banks.

Veera ensures that the cost of the packs is affordable for every budget: £1 – £5. She has found that despite people's personal circumstances they still want to help.

There is a growth in the number of food banks locally. They contact Veera who can arrange for the donations to be collected, preferably, or delivered.

The store has a community space which even prior to the pandemic was used by children as a study area. This has been particularly helpful where children are sharing a bedroom with siblings and are not able to study uninterrupted.

There are plans to open it up to the community again now that Covid-19 is less of a threat. For instance, offering afternoon tea for older people in the community, and a breakfast club for school children.

This would be staffed by Veera and members of the staff team who number 300. She says staff are always asking how they can help with the various initiatives spearheaded by Veera. Those who are able donate one hour a week to support the different projects.

To use the space, contact Vera on: champions.canningtown@morrisonsplc.co.uk

Morrisons' latest charity Partner is Together for Short Lives based in

Richard House in Beckton. The charity supports families caring for a seriously ill child and children's hospices.

Pots and buckets are placed at the checkouts for people who wish to donate. In addition, Veera organises fundraising activities. For example, hamper sales, or donations are made to the charity when you purchase specific food items between 15 February to 6 March. The charity can also send their own volunteers to the store

to do a bucket collection. The Morrisons Foundation has a "commitment to fundraising for good causes through our Community Champions, and our efforts to reduce waste while helping those in need with unsold food donations." The Foundation has a strong commitment to giving back to the community as is evidenced by the £18 million raised for the Young Lives VS Cancer charity. ●



Amy's faith in partnership

Reverend Amy Stott is not your typical minister. She is young and has had a baptism of fire as vicar of St Luke's Canning Town.

She was officially appointed in April 2021, but she had already been serving the community unofficially since February 2020 – five weeks before lockdown!

She's not what some might consider traditional. She prefers to be called by her first name for instance.

Amy grew up in a religious family, her father is a minister. She defines her role as providing pastoral care.

She is originally from Dundee in Scotland and moved to Canning Town in 2011 where she was initially an intern and then a youth worker at St Luke's in Ruscoe Road. Amy loves Canning Town and the community. Eight years ago, as her purpose in life became clearer, she started the process to become a minister and she was ordained four years ago.

This presented her with some unusual challenges, as it is the first church she is responsible for, and the parishioners were in lockdown.

It required some out of the box thinking. She has used technology and social media to ensure the church continues to bring people together.

To keep the young attendees of the Sunday school engaged the church would deliver packs that the whole family could enjoy together.

Canning Town is a community of communities as Amy sees it and she wants people from those various communities to find a home in the Church.

The theme of partnership runs through her vision.

The church was busy at the start of Covid working with other organisations organising foodbanks and delivering free school meals.

As concerns about Covid are reduced,

Amy is focused on building connections. This serves two purposes:

- to raise awareness of the location of the church. They share a space with St Luke's school. Although the church has been using the space for 20 years is still associated with the old building in Rogers Road.
- to provide outreach to the local community that meets their needs. For example, for the last few weeks the church has organised a social event called Together Thursdays where local people meet in the lounge of Ruscoe Road, Sheltered Accommodation for tea and cake between 12 – 2.

Amy is currently exploring other ways of reaching out. ●

Contact details

Revd Amy Stott
t: 020 7476 9729 / m: 07891374713
Email: rev.amystott@gmail.com

Lorraine Tapper is a home based business owner



Reverend Amy Stott

Covid cash shortfall as council puts up council tax and rents

Aidan White and Peter Landman report on Newham's spending for the year.

Residents in Newham face rises in council rent and council tax in the coming year.

The council will increase council tax by almost three percent and rents by just over four percent if the budget for 2022/23 agreed by the Cabinet members is endorsed by the full council which meets in March.

The council rent increase of 4.1 percent is possible under govern-

ment policy that allows councils to increase rent by one percent over the rate of inflation. People living in property Band B and D face a 2.99 percent council tax increase. Low-income households can get help from the 90 percent Council Tax Relief Scheme which remains in place. Around a third of the money raised from this will top up the money set aside for adult social care. According to the Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz more than two-thirds of council spending goes towards Adult Social Care and Children Services. She says an additional £3.7 million for adult services will support the elderly and there is £3.8 million more for children services.

The Mayor and Councillor Terry Paul, the cabinet lead on finance, said that tax and rent rises are necessary to balance the budget which has been hit by a £9m Covid-19 funding shortfall.

Valletta Grove.

- A further £1.8m set aside towards the purchase of Lady Helen Seymour House, which the council will use as an assessment centre for rough sleepers.
- £3.8m investment in children's social care and £1m for supporting families with no recourse to public funds.

Councillor Paul said: "I'd say to residents out there, look at the budget in the context of how we're focused on the priorities of people who need our services the most."

Major health and care initiatives

Three major health and care projects were agreed at the Newham council cabinet meeting on 8 February.

The Integrated Healthy Lives Service: This includes the council's Strategy of 50 Steps to a Healthier Borough and a programme of actions for individuals. There will be four categories – stopping smoking, weight

management, community health and wellbeing projects, and programmes to address inequality and help residents not able to afford extra health and well being expenditure.

Holiday activities and food programme: The Council has received a near £2 million government grant for the next three years to help families not able to pay for adequate food and childcare during school holidays.

The Council programme is targeting children from reception age to age 11 who receive benefits-related free school meals, young carers, children in risk of exclusion, and children from low income households in areas of deprivation.

Services for children with special educational needs: The council's support in this area will increase and the cabinet agreed to set up a new three year process with emphasis on development of Short Breaks for Carers. The emphasis will be to offer more than respite. ●



The Council has received a near £2 million grant government grant for the next three years to help families not able to pay for adequate food and childcare during school holidays.

ment policy that allows councils to increase rent by one percent over the rate of inflation.

People living in property Band B and D face a 2.99 percent council tax increase. Low-income households can get help from the 90 percent Council Tax Relief Scheme which remains in place.

Around a third of the money raised

The council also plans £7m in pre-planned savings and £3.7m more cuts in the next financial year.

Capital investment plans for the coming year include using funds already set aside for homes and development and will see:

- £5.5m spent on a new Shipman Youth Zone building and £3.3m for relocating Plaistow Library to

Stay connected with Newham Voices

Sign up to our monthly newsletter and receive regular news and information

It's easy to sign up
 Just use the link: bit.ly/NVnewsletter
 Or simply scan the QR Code

Follow us on social media for timely updates:

@newhamvoices

‘Why I was prepared to put my own money into a community newspaper for Newham’

- Newham Voices Publisher Aidan White

A recent survey of readers of Newham Voices found that most people really like their local community paper – but some still don’t realise how it’s paid for. In this special interview our Publisher Aidan White explains.

Who is behind Newham Voices?

The paper exists thanks to the hard work and devotion of more than 50 unpaid volunteers from across Newham. They write the stories, take pictures and ensure the paper gets distributed around the Borough.



We need around £20,000 a year, or £1700 per monthly issue to cover our current production costs.

- Aidan White

But who pays for the printing and other costs?

The major part of the money that we need – we spent around £20,000 in our first year – goes on printing and design costs and this comes from donations from a handful of supporters.

I’m the founder and I decided to use some of my retirement money to get the paper off the ground. I’ve donated about £18,000 and that initial funding has been topped up by



Aidan lives in Stratford and has been a journalist for 50 years, working at the Stratford Express and The Guardian. He was General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists for 24 years. Today he’s President of the Ethical Journalism Network and Publisher of Newham Voices.

members of my family who have chipped in another £5,000.

We also have local supporters who pay a few pounds every month – but we need many, many more to keep afloat. That’s not easy in a Borough like Newham where many people struggle to make ends meet.



It’s great to read such a local paper. It’s great to see a celebration of so many of the great things that happen in my community. Keeps me in touch.

- Survey response

Why did you start the paper?

I’ve been a journalist for 50 years and I used to work on the old Stratford Express before moving to The Guardian and then abroad for 30 years.

When I came back to Newham almost ten years ago I realised people were missing out on useful community news because of the collapse of local papers – even the Newham Recorder is a shadow of its former self!

I realised that relying on the council’s Newham Mag would only give a single point of view, so with some wonderful volunteers we got together and launched Newham Voices.

READER SURVEY: WHAT YOU SAID



79%

say Newham Voices keeps them up to date with what is going on in the area

82%

say Newham Voices makes them feel more engaged with the local community

25%

have taken action after reading an article, such as signing a petition, joining a club or attending an event

91%

say Newham Voices keeps them informed about local issues

We didn’t want to just be the same as other papers – but we did want to look and be as professional as any other paper in Britain. That’s what our readers like.

What makes Newham Voices different?

It’s not like traditional media, full of gloom and doom. Nor is it representing only one point of view. We try to focus on the creative, diverse and positive sides to local life. And we believe in telling all sides of a story.

We’re not afraid to point out when things are going wrong and that means some people might think we’re biased. But we’re independent and not politically attached. We do hate haters though!

I’ve been told we’re too pro-Labour, others tell me we’re anti-council but we are neither.

We just try to be honest and fair. We admit our mistakes. We give a voice to people who don’t always get heard. That’s what a good local paper should do.

We might be old school in the sense we stand up for ethics in journalism and transparency in public life, but we’re modern and youthful in our approach – particularly thanks to our Youth Voices team! We have a great following on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram.

What can I do to help?

I have invested in Newham Voices because I wanted to get it off the ground, but obviously that is not sustainable for the future. We need all the

help we can get. Anyone in the community can join our supporters group. If you can afford to donate regularly please do – every little helps!

We don’t get cash grants from the council or from other public institutions or private companies. We rely on some advertising and mostly on cash support from individuals within the community. So please do what you can to help!

Please scan the code below to make a donation or contact info@newhamvoices.co.uk. If you want to know more contact aidan.white@newhamvoices.co.uk or call me 07946 291 511.

Scan here to support us!

Newham Voices needs your support. To make a donation please scan this code with the PayPal app.



Aidan White addressing news strikers in 1980. He has been campaigning to save local newspapers since the 1970s.

Concern over access to blood tests

AIDAN WHITE

A new online booking system for blood tests in Newham is raising concerns that some people – particularly elderly and vulnerable groups – may be at risk of missing out on urgent health support.

More than 1,000 people need blood tests in Newham every day and since the start of the year a new online booking system has been introduced replacing the old walk-in service.

But many people find the online system difficult to use – particularly people aged over 60 and 70. People used to getting same-day tests by queuing up at a local clinic now have to wait days or even weeks for an appointment.

“I was shocked to find that the booking system online offered me a blood test almost three weeks away,” said one user at the Vicarage Lane Clinic in Stratford.

As *Newham Voices* went to press, all the online appointments available in Newham mean having a blood test and getting the result will take at least two weeks.

Doctors can still fast-track urgent appointments, but there are fears that people may miss out on important tests if they are discouraged from using the new system. The blood testing – or phlebotomy – service is vital to help doctors monitor the health of their patients.

But although the new system may be confusing for some people, including older patients, no-one will be turned away if they show up without an appointment, says Michael McGhee, Director of Community Health Newham.

“There are teething problems, but these problems are getting less,” he told *Newham Voices*. He said a number of slots for people without appointments were always available and at each clinic in Newham there is a receptionist to help people adjust to the new system.

Managed by the East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT), the Newham phlebotomy service is based at four sites – the Appleby Health Centre in Canning Town, the Shrewsbury Road Health Centre in East Ham, The Centre in Manor Park, and Vicarage Lane in Stratford.

The drive to switch to paperless organisation of blood tests became more urgent during the Covid crisis which saw the blood test service struggling to cope as social-distancing measures forced patients to queue in the streets around the clinics.

In the past doctors would prepare a blood test form for patients to take to their local clinic, but now a new ‘Swiftqueue’ digital online booking system should in theory mean people spend less time in the waiting areas, and will lead to efficiency savings.



Online trouble? Many find the new system confusing and difficult to use

But not everyone is convinced. Staff at some of the clinics have themselves been under pressure from anxious and frustrated patients. “It’s been going for some time, but it doesn’t seem to be making things easier for us and we’ve even had to deal with abuse from some angry people,” said one staff member.

However, there will be no going back. “The paper based system is gone for good,” said Michael McGhee, “but we are aiming to ensure the new system will be as user-friendly as possible.”

Let us know if you have had any problems with this service. Contact editor@newhamvoices.co.uk

300 sign up for befriending service

FAWN BESS-LEITH

Just over a year ago Newham welcomed its first ever befriending service and residents are reaping the fruits in terms of mind, body and soul.

The Befriending Coordinator Kita Berman spoke to me about this vital professional service in the borough – Connect Newham. Ms Berman is not only responsible for the efficient running of the service for those involved in the work, but ultimately helps to ensure that the experience for befrienders and clients is positive and safe.

She lifted the lid on how “loneliness and isolation has always been prevalent and normal in our society and everyday life and how Connect Newham is meeting this critical need that has been present for a long time but was obviously heightened by the pandemic.”

To date, more than 300 persons have benefitted with the support

of over 140 fully trained volunteer befrienders who may reside locally or across the United Kingdom. Ms Berman says: “Clients see the service as a unique opportunity as it’s



the first time in many years they have the space to speak about what’s going on for them without judge-

ment and with protected time other than ten minutes with their GP.”

The service is delivered via telephone and the befriender supports the client to decide how the time is spent to support their social and emotional wellbeing with friendly chats and connections with local community services such as Newham Talking Therapies or other mental health specific support.

Newham residents over 18 years, who are lonely, isolated or have other vulnerabilities can access this service, in addition to carers working in Newham even if they reside outside of the Borough.

Ms Berman went on to explain: “The majority of referrals are from professional networks but clients or their families can also refer.” Following the referrals, clients will have a telephone assessment within five working days, to ascertain the best support needed and to obtain background information so they can be matched with befrienders who

will deliver a package of holistic care tailored to each client.

Clients can receive a 30 minutes call once weekly or fortnightly from the same befriender for a duration of 3-20 weeks, consequently, having time to build rapport and a good relationship, understand the client’s need and offering a consistent approach thus encouraging feelings of trust and safety. In the event of a move or relocation, clients have the choice to be referred to other befriending services.

Ms Berman said: “The project is evaluated at various points to build a bigger picture so additional funding can be created for sustainability and for other projects, such as the outreach project that was launched over two months ago to specifically work with harder to reach clients by empowering BAME organisations to run their own befriending project.”

Newham connect is not a “help line or crisis line.” To access the service call **020 3954 3224** ●

People of Newham

Kathy Lancaster

Our recent readers survey shows us that you are interested in knowing more about each other. You told us you would like to see interviews with people from across the Borough, from all walks of life. This month, we launch our new series 'People of Newham,' starting with Kathy Lancaster who spent her career working in the criminal justice system.

LORRAINE TAPPER

Kathy Lancaster has been associated with some of Britain's most notorious villains for years.

But her work was always on the side of the angels while working at the Central Criminal Court – the Old Bailey.

She has had a long and illustrious career since leaving school at 16, and was originally from Tower Hamlets before moving to Newham in the '70s.

She started working at the Old Bailey when she was in her mid 20s and worked in different departments, the most interesting of which was the records office which provided detailed information on individual court cases and sentencing.

Records at the Old Bailey went as far back as the 1800s and were kept in the basement which was part of the old Newgate Prison. Kathy described it as spooky!

Records at the Old Bailey went as far back as the 1800s and were kept in the basement which was part of the old Newgate Prison. Kathy described it as spooky!

These records are now kept in Kew. Television producers would contact her department if they were doing a programme on one of the cases and needed information. This included the Oscar Wilde trial and the Jack The Ripper murders.

Kathy was fascinated by the indictments against Oscar Wilde and the notorious Dr Crippen, which she found very interesting.

Wilde was arrested and tried for gross indecency with men, a shocking victim of anti-homosexuality laws and jailed for two years. Crippen was convicted of a sensational crime of passion and the brutal murder of his wife, and hanged.

Kathy was once asked to do a survey on hangings, recording who was hanged and the reason why they were hanged. Some of the cases were gruesome. Murderers had dismembered bodies and the body parts would be found later in different locations. Then there were the sad cases of children as young as 14 who were hanged because they stole a pig!

Kathy recalled returning to the office after lunch when a car bomb

Doing life at the Old Bailey

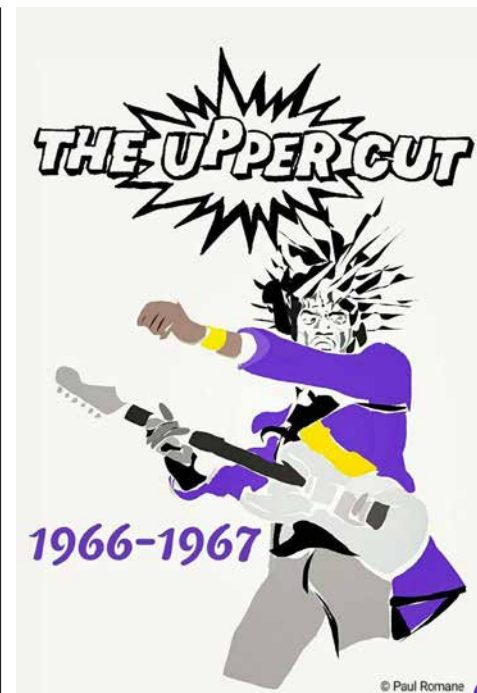


Left: Oscar Wilde, image public domain; Right: Dr Crippen Old Bailey, image public domain; Top: Lady Justice statue on top of the Old Bailey ©chrisdorney/Shutterstock.com

went off after a two-minute warning, in 1973. She said it was scary. The office decanted to a café in Smithfield Market before staff were sent home, returning to work the next day. Although the building was damaged, the buildings opposite

suffered more.

Kathy admits to being a voyeur. She would sometimes go and sit in the gallery and watch the court proceedings of high-profile cases such as the Kray Twins and the Yorkshire Ripper. ●



Upper Cut Club Mural Featuring Jimi Hendrix in the works

NEANDRA ETIENNE

Jimi Hendrix and other artists who performed at the Upper Cut Club, Woodgrange Road in Forest Gate will feature in a mural at the location where the club was located.

Last year I successfully campaigned for Jimi Hendrix to receive a Heritage Blue plaque at the location where he wrote the lyrics to *Purple Haze*, before his performance at the Upper Cut Club on Boxing Day 1966. The song was later released in the UK on March 17 1967.

The plaque was unveiled during an online event for Newham Heritage Month in May 2021. Speakers included local historians Lloyd Jeans, John Walker from E7 Now & Then, local musician and artist Paul Romane and Jimi Hendrix's brother Leon Hendrix.

The mural will feature above Jimi Hendrix's plaque.

An exhibition is also planned to coincide with the mural unveiling. It will feature art work from Leon Hendrix and memorabilia from the Upper Cut Club.

The local community will have an opportunity to be involved in this project. There will be workshops to help design the mural; they can have their art work displayed at the exhibition and vote on the final mural design.

More updates and details about the project including dates for the workshops will be available in the next issue of *Newham Voices* and on the website and social media platforms.

www.e7-nowandthen.org/

The fight goes on: defiant protesters renew demand to save city farm

NOAH ENAHORO

The battle to reopen Newham City Farm which was closed by the council last year goes on.

The campaign to save the farm organised a protest on 8 February when supporters gathered again outside East Ham town hall where council leaders were meeting.

The protesters reminded members of the Newham Council Cabinet meeting inside that their anger expressed in previous protests during the latter half of 2021 remains and demonstrations will continue.

“We are protesting because the council closed our community farm that was an invaluable educational community hub that had been open for 45 years”, said Jenny Mwangura, Chair of the Save Newham City Farm campaign.

“It provided so much for the community and met many community needs, such as education, those with special educational needs, and those with health needs,” she added.

The protest took place five months after Newham Council unanimously agreed to close the farm in September, despite a petition calling for the farm to be re-opened gaining nearly 50,000 signatures.

Councillor James Asser, Cabinet lead for the environment, highways and sustainable transport, apologised for the decision, but stressed that the farm was no longer fit for purpose and that consultation regarding the farm’s future will be open to the public and local communities.

The farm’s future has been included under the Beckton Parks Masterplan, a project set up by the Council to engage with local communities on the future of the green spaces in the wards of Beckton and Custom House.

According to the council website, the results of the consultation will be released later in the year.

Councillor Quintin Peppiatt, who has resigned from the Labour Party in February, was a long-time sup-



ANNOUNCEMENT ON PUBLIC NOTICES

NEWHAM VOICES

IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY
AND WE ARE AVAILABLE
FOR PUBLISHING

PUBLIC NOTICES TO DISCUSS PUBLISHING NOTICES SUCH AS

CORPORATE AND PERSONAL INSOLVENCY NOTICES
BLOCK TRANSFERS, DECEASED ESTATES,
COMMERCIAL LICENSES
OR
ANY OTHER FORMS OF PUBLIC NOTICES

CALL
07711057096

EMAIL
MAIA@SOCIALSPIDER.COM

Note: Our next issue goes to print on 31st March 2022



Photo via Facebook

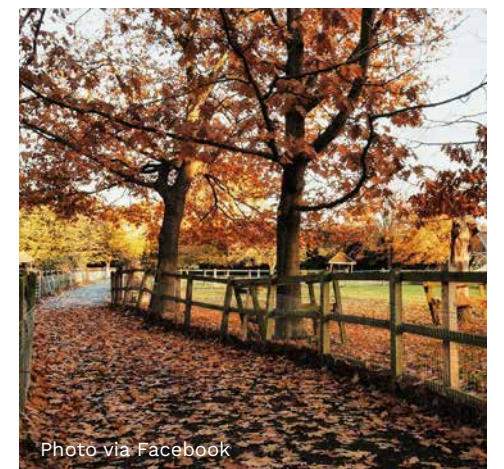


Photo via Facebook

The protest took place five months after Newham council unanimously agreed to close the farm in September despite a petition calling for the farm to be re-opened gaining nearly 50,000 signatures.

porter of the farm and challenged the council’s decision to close the farm.

“Getting people into ecology is very important nowadays, and the farm was a crucial way of educating people. The farm benefitted all members of the community.”

Newham Council has reaffirmed that the Beckton Parks Masterplan is open to all Newham residents and those who wish to have a say regarding the future of green spaces in the area, and have stated that they are committed to keeping the farm site a ‘publicly accessible open space’. ●

To get involved or to find out more about the Save Newham City Farm campaign, please visit: www.savenewhamcityfarm.com

Coming soon: A home to celebrate women in East End history

EAST END WOMEN'S MUSEUM

It's been suggested that women's stories account for a paltry 0.5 per cent of recorded history.¹ There are more UK statues of goats than of Black women; more statues of pigs than of Muslim women; and more of men named John than of any non-mythical, non-royal women.²

Even in contemporary records only 18 percent of Wikipedia biographies are about women.³ As well as neglecting a wealth of fascinating lives historically, what might this mean for women and girls today?

East End Women's Museum wants to balance the history books and challenge contemporary inequality. Since 2015, we've been working to put some of the missing women back in the picture, through archive research, interviews, exhibitions and events. We've also been facilitating people to tell their own stories and those of their families and local communities – ensuring they make their mark so that future historians can know of their lives.

We tell stories of 'ordinary' women as well as more well-known figures. For example, take Adelaide Knight, leader of the first London branch of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), based in Canning Town. After a childhood injury, she used crutches or a stick to walk, and experienced repeated ill health. Nevertheless she was a fearless suffragette, who went to prison rather than



Women's Hall Stall at Roman Road. ©EEWM

There are so many women's lives and voices we won't hear without being proactive about capturing, safeguarding, and sharing them.

give up campaigning. Adelaide Knight was also a pioneer in that she had an interracial marriage with mixed-race sailor Donald Adolphus Brown. Very unusually for the late 19th century, he took her surname, and the couple shared domestic chores.

Or Josie Woods, a Black woman from very humble beginnings in Canning Town. Aged 14 in 1926, she was picked out by American music hall star Belle Davis as having star quality and found great success as a dancer. She was passionate about

equality and led a strike for Black extras over late payment, while working on a film in 1951.

There are so many women's lives and voices we won't hear without being proactive about capturing, safeguarding, and sharing them. That's what drives the East End Women's Museum to do what we do. In our time we've researched women in the Silvertown factories, celebrated some of the women who owned and ran businesses in Newham from 1850–1960 and spoken about women of colour and community activism in Newham in the 1980s. And we will be taking part in Newham Heritage Month this year, researching women in sport in Newham.

Since 2015 we've operated as a pop-up and virtual museum, but now we're working towards opening our first brick and mortar museum in Barking in the next year – the only dedicated women's museum building in England. And we won't stop until that 0.5 per cent turns into 50 percent (at the very least!).

Please sign up for our e-newsletter and follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to be the first to hear about our building developments, new exhibitions and events. ●

¹ http://blog.english-heritage.org.uk/women-written-history-interview-bettany-hughes/?_ga=2.109810572.801992371.1601626490-122631883.1597826406

² <https://twitter.com/EEWomensMuseum/status/1271475141990547460>

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Women

Reaching out for diversity and equality

In our regular series on local memorials, **Julia Omari** discovers a statue honouring the modern black woman.

Tuesday 8 March 2022 marks the 110th celebration of International Women's Day, created to raise awareness of the position of women and with the intention of elevating females in every field of life.

An area still very much in need of improvement is statues. There are currently less than 160 statues of females in the United Kingdom, remove those of roy-

alty and the number drops, remove mythical female statues, and the number drops again.

In August 2020, a new statue by Thomas J. Price titled Reaching Out was unveiled in Newham to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the free public outdoor art trail called The Line.

Reaching Out is a nine-foot, silicon bronze statue of an anonymous, fictional, Black British female dressed in casual wear, looking at her mobile phone. She is one of just four black female statues in London, the others being Mary Seacole, The Bronze Woman, and Manche Masemola.

Statues have been a hot topic in the media lately, with calls for greater levels of diversity and demands for more named females to be honoured in this fashion. Campaigners have highlighted statues with colonial links and some statues have been removed to end the tradition of honouring those with these past links.

Reaching Out sits in Three Mills Park so is in the perfect location for families to visit, play, relax, and take in the beautiful and rare art piece. Let's hope that female statues will become more common in the years ahead. ●



©Julia Omari

A lockdown study of women unrecognised, but not forgotten

On International Women's Day Gillian Lawrence reveals some local life-stories to remember

Through my own desk-top primary research I've been able to dig deep into the lives of women in what was Essex and closer to home, Forest Gate.

Using their birth names I've been able to trace them and discovered the humanity and special qualities that marked them out in the neighbourhood.

Ada Margaret Dinn, for example, married a vicar. I found on EBay a St Marks Church cook book which years ago was used to help raise funds to repair the church roof.

I am pretty sure Dinn, in her role as vicar's wife, would have gathered the women for such projects. She died before her son was killed at The Battle of the Somme in 1916. She was not defined by her husband's role, but would have been influential in motivating the church congregation and has her own identity. Her husband remarried a year after her early death.

Durning Hall in wide Earlham Grove, once glorious and now decorated by overflowing bins, was bequeathed to the poor by the pow-



Top: Gillian Lawrence artwork, courtesy Gillian Lawrence; Bottom left: Hannah Kohn, image public domain; Bottom right: Theodora Durning-Lawrence, image via www.e7-nowandthen.org

erful and wealthy family dynasty Smith, Durning and Lawrence.

But the heiress, Theodora, lived without the trappings of a millionaire life-style. Instead, she made sure that the hall worked for the

community after opening it in 1959.

Hannah Kohn was her birth name, but she was Dr Strieson in her professional life as a doctor. What a woman. What a GP. She advocated for safer home-births and was the first woman NHS doctor in Forest Gate.

Someone connected with Royalty was Mary Orchard who is buried in Manor Park Cemetery. She was nanny to some of the children of Princess Alice, the mother of Prince Phillip who died last year.

Another notable was Jane Rebecca Yorke, a woman I discovered while working on a women's project based in Yorkshire which explores how women were ostracised and criminalised as 'witches'. She was a pensioner and widow who lived in Romford Road and made history by being the last woman to be prosecuted under Britain's ancient witchcraft laws.

She was arrested in 1944 at the age of 72 and the last woman to be prosecuted under the 18th century Witchcraft Act over seances she held in her front room. What marks her out is that she was a poor widow supplementing her pension by relieving other widows of their money and grief. She was notorious in Forest Gate and criminalised by an ancient

hardly used law which historically hurt more women than men.

I salute all these women and stand them next to all the suffragettes, every lioness and every wife-mother who claimed their own places on earth.

More herstories are at Facebook: **Join The Throng. Women's Heritage Project 2021** or Instagram: **@rag-worksart** for textile depictions of my researched women. ●

Poetry in Mind

Zhenreenah Muhxinga's poem to celebrate Mother's Day on March 27th will resonate with many



WORLD'S BLESSED MOTHER

Dear Mother
I hope you are keeping fine
On this lovely day full of sunshine
You are a special Mother everyday
With showers of blessing for you I pray
Sending love, kisses and hugs too
You are the very best that is so true
Earth Goddess, Great Woman you are nurturing
spiritual universe
Compassion, Love and Peace you truly deserve
You pay interest in my hopes and dreams
Makes me full with happiness and self esteem
What would I do without you
Guiding me when I am feeling blue
Supporting me I will strife
You deserve the very best in your life
You are worthy of so much praise
Health and wealth for all your days
Long life eternally
This poem is just for you and you only
Because there is no other
Than my beautiful mother
The greatest quality is that you are loved.

Time to take the trauma of women's hysteroscopy seriously

LYN BROWN MP

On 31 January, in Parliament, I asked the Government to ensure that women who have hysteroscopies are treated with dignity and respect.

A hysteroscopy involves the insertion of a camera into the womb, to look for abnormalities. Samples can be taken from the lining of the womb. Having a hysteroscopy can be very important for ruling out or diagnosing cancers early, but for many women, the procedure causes terrible pain. It is usually done with little or no anaesthetic, and many women are told nothing that could prepare them.

Hysteroscopies can save lives, but far too often patients are experiencing agony and humiliation. It is completely unacceptable and it must change. This was my ninth speech in Parliament on this issue. Change is long overdue.

Over eight years ago, my constituent Debbie told me about her experience.

Debbie was not offered an anaesthetic before her hysteroscopy. She was in so much torturous pain during the procedure, that she tried to stop the consultant from continuing. Horrifyingly, a nurse held her down.

Since I first told Debbie's story in Parliament, many other women have contacted me with their appalling stories. Women are being misled about the risks of pain, laughed at for asking for pain relief, told they're making a fuss over nothing, and left feeling utterly violated.

Since my speech, more women have written to me. A nurse told me how after being refused a general anaesthetic, she found her hysteroscopy so painful that she tried to stop it. Shamefully, her colleagues responded by forcibly pinning her down and continuing.

This can't go on. The Government

and the NHS must address the way women's pain and rights are all too often ignored by doctors.

I've asked the Government to ensure three things.

First, that tackling painful hysteroscopies will be a core issue in the expected Women's Health Strategy, and that patient groups are involved in discussing and monitoring the strategy.

Second, that all hysteroscopy patients are offered a full range of anaesthetics and informed of the risks of serious pain.

Third, that investment is made for more anaesthetists and theatre capacity for hysteroscopy patients.

The Minister made some key commitments in response to my speech. I will hold her to these and will continue to campaign until all women who need to undergo painful and invasive procedures are treated with the respect we all deserve. ●



Fighting knife-crime with a basketball

KAROLINA KROLICZEC

Sports are a lifeline for many people – they keep us fit and healthy – but pioneering basketball star Natasha Hart knows that for some young people they are a pathway to a life free from violence and fear.

Natasha is Russian by birth and now lives in Stratford. Her journey to Newham began near Sochi, home of the 2014 Winter Olympics, where she established herself as an international player. “My passion was basketball and I was lucky enough to represent Russia,” she said. She brought that passion to Newham in 1989 as a single mother with two young boys.

In 2005, she took her then teenage sons to Balaam Park to give them their first basketball lesson. They loved it so much that they told all their friends.

Other youngsters hanging around the park asked if they could join in. Within a month, Natasha had more than 30 kids turning up each week.

A year later, she set up a charity and opened a bank account with £20. She had no experience, but felt she had to do something.

“It was a struggle for a lot of young people in Newham,” she said. “They didn’t have the opportunity they may have had elsewhere. It was all about giving every young person the same opportunity that I had to play sport.”

The name for her charity – NASSA – came from the young people. They sat in the park and asked what they should call themselves. They were from Newham, basketball was a sport, they were learning together as an academy and all the youngsters said loudly: “We are all stars,” so Newham All Star Sports Academy (NASSA) was born.

In 2008, Anthony Okerefor was playing basketball at a NASSA session. Anthony’s phone was in his bag, so he didn’t hear it until the session had finished. One of his best friends had been trying to call to say he had been stabbed in a park. Anthony rushed over there, but his friend tragically died in his arms.

The boy started to educate young people about how dangerous it is to carry a knife. With NASSA and the Metropolitan Police, he launched the Carry A Basketball Not A Blade (CABNAB) campaign to talk about knife crime across local schools.

Natasha wanted to make NASSA more than just a basketball club. By offering young people the support to gain qualifications as a basketball coach, the kids realised that they could become future sports leaders.

But rebuilding the youngsters’ trust had been one of the main challenges – these young people found it hard to trust people without the same life experience. That’s why she recruited basketball coaches from local communities – they understood the

temptations that lure young people into drugs, alcohol, crime, anti-social behaviours and gangs.

When the first Covid wave hit Newham in 2020, young people had to stay indoors, with many experiencing difficult home lives. They found



Natasha Hart, Newham All Star Sports Academy’s (NASSA) Founder

it hard to talk to parents, often sharing the bedroom with another member of the family. “In the first wave alone, six NASSA kids lost a parent to Covid. Five were in their 40s, one in his 50s. All were from the BAME community. These personal tragedies didn’t just affect the young people who lost a parent, they affected their NASSA friends, wondering if

one of their parents would be the next one,” said Natasha. The charity set up Zoom calls that revealed the destructive impact of COVID-19 on youngsters’ mental health.

One of the hardest times came after the first lockdown was lifted in June

In the first wave alone, six NASSA kids lost a parent to Covid. Five were in their 40s, one in his 50s. All were from the BAME community.

2020. NASSA couldn’t start up sessions again and when they finally did, they had to play basketball outdoors, limited to a maximum of six people. “The young people were suddenly allowed out of their homes but they were limited to one hour of basketball each week. All of the temptations that basketball kept them away from were right there in their faces again.”

The charity is home for young offenders excluded from schools or those at risk of being excluded – that basketball pitch clearly never turned anyone away. “If anyone reading this now feels that they want to volunteer for NASSA, please get in touch. Every young person deserves a chance and I am committed to helping every one of them if I can”. ●

Feeders UK help to feed local community at Cut Above The Rest pop-up foodbank

NEANDRA ETIENNE

Businessman, author and local barber Patrick Phipps has collaborated with Feeders UK to organise a pop up food bank in his barber studio Cut Above The Rest in East Ham.

The idea came about during a chat between Patrick and Randy Cee, the founder of Feeders UK.

Patrick loves helping out and feeding the local community. Due to Covid and a lack of staff his barber studio is closed on Sundays. This presented Patrick and Randy with the opportunity to organise a pop up food bank in Cut Above The Rest.

Feeders UK is a charitable organisation that provides pop up food banks.



Feeders UK Foodbank at Cut Above The Rest ©Sarah Eldridge

They feed the homeless with pop up stalls serving free hot meals throughout Essex and London. To date Feeders UK have given away over

We fed a lot of people and I saw many smiling faces.

£300,000 of free quality food to the people in need in only 12 weeks.

Patrick said: “I was a bit scared because Feeders UK provided so much food I didn’t think it was going to go, but the day was great. We planned to start at 12pm and finish at 3pm but we ran out of food by 1.30pm so the day went really well.

“We fed a lot of people and I saw many smiling faces. Most people couldn’t understand why we were giving away free food so we had to convince them to grab a bag.”

Patrick may organise another pop up in the future. In the meantime he is concentrating on building and opening his barber academy where he will be training 16 to 18 year olds so he can give them a working skill.

For more information on how you can help Feeders UK continue their much needed work in the community please visit their website.

www.thefeeder.org

Patrick Phipps on Spotify
open.spotify.com/show/2kjfbnLfx-ZbH6KRD7VfAqi

Shop local to save the planet

WENDY JACKSON

Ok, so the big wooden boxes (aka traffic calming measures) in the middle of the street are a pain to some independent retailers, however now that many of them are to remain in place, this means that the voting public see them as a good thing. But what does this mean for the local convenience high street retailer? Is it time to view the traffic calming measures as a positive step? I think so...

Ok, so people cannot park to buy their plantain, a few eggs or a sack of potatoes, but perhaps there's scope to get creative and make local shopping a delightful experience where locals want to walk to the shops for exercise and even more importantly – to do their bit for the environment.

If more people shopped locally, there would be fewer cars idling in traffic, so this is a win for the world. Ok, I know that the major retailers are rocking up with all their strong brand presence, and green creden-

tials but even this could be a positive for independents as well.

The major chain retailers do not stock a wide enough variety of ethnic foods, they don't know local people either, so it's my opinion that if the independents took steps to own the local high streets, keep them neat, clean and vibrant, this could entice us to walk to the shops instead of driving. What's not to like?

So to me... shopping local has three core benefits, keeping us fit, keeping

Shopping local has three core benefits, keeping us fit, keeping the high street alive and helping us to do a bit for the planet by leaving our cars at home.

the high street alive and helping us to do a bit for the planet by leaving our cars at home. It's a win win for everyone – especially the environment. So come on all you independents, give us a good reason to keep shopping locally. Let's show the retail giants that you care about the environment too. ●



Good reads in Newham

The Newham Bookshop in Bark-ing Road tells us these are the top sellers this month:

- **High Street**
By J.M. Richards and Eric Ravilious
- **Open Water**
By Caleb Azumah Nelson
- **Love Marriage**
By Monica Ali
- **The Tale of the Whale**
By Karen Swann
- **The Dark Lady**
By Akala
- **Vi Spy: Never Say Whatever Again**
By Maz Evans

Compiled by David Ceen, Newham Bookshop



newhambooks.co.uk
@NewhamBookshop



Increased thoughts about life not worth living?



Call the Newham Mental Health Crisis Line

Trained staff can help you Telephone 0800 073 0066

All dressed up for World Book Day

JULIA OMARI

Going to school on the first Thursday of March always feels a little different as both students and teachers get into the spirit of World Book Day by dressing up as characters from their favourite books.

World Book Day started in 1995 and is currently celebrated in over one hundred countries to promote books and encourage children's love of reading. It was first celebrated in the UK in 1997 and has grown bigger every year with free resources, activities, competitions and a voucher given to each student to exchange for a free book.

You can find this year's resources and book list at www.worldbook-day.com and sign up for their newsletters to stay informed. ●



Alfie Carpenter dressed up as a character from his Robin Hood story. ©Gloria Hypolite



Pubs are finding innovative ways to provide you with good cheer, without costing the earth, says Phil Mellows

Pubs are places you usually go to escape the troubles of the world. But that shouldn't stop them playing their part in saving the planet. I've just finished judging the finalists in the Best Sustainable Pub Company category of the 2022 Publican Awards (winners announced at the end of March), and what's striking is what a complex business running a pub is, and how



many ways there are of cutting carbon emissions and waste.

Much fuss was made when plastic straws were removed from cocktails and soft drinks a couple of years ago, but that's the very least a bar can do. Its responsibilities stretch from making sure its supplies are sustainably sourced to efficient glass-washing and devising a menu that helps reduce leftovers on the plate.

Heineken, the global brewer, recently produced a Pub of the Future report that details some of the gains that might, or must, be made over the next decade, and my own judging visits in the last few weeks have uncov-

ered all kinds of inspiring initiatives.

Pubs are aware that their customers are increasingly switched on to buying and behaving in ways that protect the environment, and they want to show people they can be a part of the solution.

Most of what they're doing goes on out of sight. Beneath your barstool the beer cellar is using energy to chill the beer, the kitchen might be

Pubs are aware that their customers are increasingly switched on to buying and behaving in ways that protect the environment, and they want to show people they can be a part of the solution.

trying to wean itself off the cling-film and the thing you're sitting on might have been recycled from an earlier life.

Up on the roof there may be space for solar panels, or even beehives producing the honey for that dessert.

Plant-based dishes have been quietly growing on the menu alongside local produce to cut down on the food miles. Coffee grounds are recycled as garden compost and superfluous garnishes have gone from drinks and meals. Only the hungry bin will complain.

Have you noticed anything your local is doing to help save the planet? Let us know at *Newham Voices*. ●



After the storms Cecilia Cran is enjoying the opportunity to plant her "love-in-a-mist"



Photo courtesy Cecilia Cran

What to grow:

As a keen UK gardener, I try hard not to let the weather influence what I do *too much*. Often easier said than done. If I did, I think I'd likely spend around 50 per cent of my time wrapped up warm indoors, promising to finish off the pruning/mulching/watering another day - one with blue sky and sunshine.

Recently, in between the gale force winds of storms Dudley, Eunice and Gladys (they sound like people I'd like to sit down for a cuppa with, not batten down the hatches against!), even the hardiest gardeners have thought twice before stepping out into the great outdoors.

But now the storms have passed and after a bit of time away from the garden, I'm so excited to get back to it. This month I'm planting Nigella, or as they are commonly known 'love-in-a-mist'. They are incredibly easy to grow and have such pretty colourful flowers and fabulous feathery foliage.

How to grow:

Nigella plants are hardy annuals so can be grown outdoors from March and April, before coming in to flower in early June through to August.

First off, choose the spot where you would like them to grow, they can be



Photo courtesy Cecilia Cran

grown in large pots, or directly in the ground. For the purpose of this piece, I will be sowing directly into the ground, but the same rules apply.

Nigella plants like well-drained soil and full sunshine, so choose a spot that gets lots of natural light and warmth from the sun.

Then, to give the seeds a good start, I put down a thin layer of peat free, multi-purpose compost. Seeds can be sown around 1cm deep and 15cm apart - as the plants grow, they spread, so need lots of space. When you sow too close together, plants will often have to compete for nutrients, water and light and you can end up with smaller plants and less vibrant flowers. Water them in well and wait for them to grow.

There are so many varieties to choose from, I tend to go for Nigella 'Delft Blue', which produces a mix of blue and white flowers.



Photo via Facebook

Green escape:

This month, I'm enjoying the wonders of Plashet Park.

A year in to writing this column, discovering new green spaces is still just as exciting as when I started and Plashet Park was no exception, it made for a brilliant discovery on a blustery day!

The park is just big enough for you to feel like you're not in the centre of East Ham, but small enough to navigate and not get lost in. It's a well maintained space, with a paved walkway and some beautiful trees, shrubs and flowers. It also has a range of excellent amenities including basketball courts, a children's play area, a café, cricket nets, bowls, toilets and tennis courts (the tennis courts needs a little TLC), but everything else was well kept. There was a great buzz to it, lots of family enjoying the playground, runners and walkers out for some exercise and people making the most of the other sports facilities. Can't wait to go back in the summer sun, to sit and soak up the space with a picnic! ●

Managing diabetes? Mental health is top priority

ZHENREENAH MUHXINGA

Mental health affects so many aspects of daily life. How you think and feel, handle stress, how you relate to others, and make choices. Having a mental

health problem can make it harder to check on your physical health.

Thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes can affect how healthy your body is. Untreated physical health issues can make your health worse, and problems with these can lead to

unhealthy diagnosis. For example diabetes can make mental health worse.

Some mental health medication side effects result in overeating and weight gain that can lead to diabetes.

Steve's Story

Steve became unwell from the age of 17. He is now 33 and hardly ever checked his blood sugar. His medication opened up his appetite to crave carbohydrates such as: sweets, chips, cakes and fizzy drinks.

This led to Steve collapsing at home and being taken to the intensive care unit for two weeks. Steve was in a state of shock, and realised that due to his unhealthy diet, he had developed type 2 diabetes.

At present Steve has to inject himself, check his blood sugar, as well as making sure to take his medication. This is having an impact on his daily life.

Diabetes distress sometimes leaves him feeling discouraged, worried, frustrated, or tired of dealing with daily diabetes care, like diabetes is

controlling him instead of the other way around.

Those overwhelming feelings, known as diabetes distress, cause him to slip into unhealthy habits, stop checking his blood sugar, even skip his doctor's appointments, or skip his medication.

But if he keeps up with his healthy regime, if one gets better, the other tends to get better, too.

Healthy Diet Plan:

- Fill half of your plate with non starchy vegetables, such as spinach, carrots and tomatoes.
- Fill a quarter of your plate with a protein, such as tuna, lean pork or chicken.
- Fill the last quarter with a whole-grain item, such as brown rice, or a starchy vegetable, such as green peas.
- Include "good" fats such as nuts or avocados in small amounts.
- Add a serving of fruit or dairy and a drink of water or unsweetened tea or coffee.

Symptoms of depression can be mild to severe, and include:

- Feeling sad or empty
- Losing interest in favorite activities
- Overeating or not wanting to eat at all
- Not being able to sleep or sleeping too much
- Having trouble concentrating or making decisions
- Feeling very tired
- Feeling hopeless, irritable, anxious, or guilty
- Having aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems

Tips for mental health and wellbeing

- Get enough sleep and rest
- Take time out for things you enjoy
- Be active and eat well
- Nurture relationships and connect with others
- Learn to manage stress

If you have diabetes, make sure you're seeing a specialist nurse. These professionals are likely to have a deeper understanding of diabetes challenges than your GP.

For your mental health, ask your doctor to refer you to a mental health professional specialised in patients with physical chronic health conditions. ●



New meeting to focus opposition to West Ham Park development plan

JULES WILLIAMS, FRIENDS OF WEST HAM PARK

The Friends of West Ham Park are calling on Newham residents to join the fight against plans to build on a disused part of the park nursery.

A new public meeting will be held virtually on 29 March at 7.30pm to strengthen local opposition to development on park land, which serves some of the most deprived people in London and the UK.

West Ham Park is a 77-acre Grade 2 green oasis in East London and is hugely valued by the community it serves, but now the wealthy Corporation of London wants to build multiple large residential tower blocks on the disused nursery site.

The Friends note that this is in stark contrast to the Corporation's recent attempts to purchase additional land for public parkland in far more affluent parts of London.

They say the nursery site has always been part of the park and historically there was full public access to the majority of the area. They argue

that this area could be used instead to enlarge the public area of the park.

The park has been a lifeline for so many people, both before and especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, and has always been extremely popular and very well used.

The Friends of West Ham Park, who help the local communities gain the

most from this fabulous open space in such a densely crowded area, are appalled at the proposal. The upcoming meeting will provide updated information on the proposed development and discuss next steps in the opposition campaign. Residents interested in attending should email protectwesthampark@btinternet.com.



Photo courtesy Friends of West Ham Park

SPORTS SHORTS

Compiled by Neandra Etienne

Pupils from **St Bons** won a Boccia competition against two other Newham schools. Boccia is a Paralympic ball sport similar to bowls. They will now progress to the London Youth Games final representing Newham.



St Bons Boccia Team

The Indoor Simmonds Cup is an invitational Athletics event hosted at Lee Valley Athletics Centre. Each school enters a team from Year 7 to 10. St Bons successfully defended their title winning the overall competition.

Good luck to former **St Bons** pupil Nigel Aris who has been signed by Waterford FC for the 2022 season. The attacking midfielder/striker previously played for Shrewsbury Town and Watford.

West Ham United Women's football team beat Sheffield United Women 4-1 in their fourth round game, to book their place in the fifth round of the Vitality Women's FA Cup. The goal scorers were Mel Filis (1) Claudia Walker (2) and Dagny Brynjarsdottir (1).

📷 @westhamwomen



London Lions Women's Basketball Team

Well done to the **London Lions Women's Basketball** team for winning the Women's British Basketball League Cup for the first time.

The team beat Newcastle Eagles 87-47. Azania Stewart collected the Most Valuable Player award.

www.thelondonlions.com

Clapton Community FC's three CCFC 5s teams came together to organise a fun five-a-side tournament to raise money for the Old Spotted Dog changing room appeal. The eight teams competed across 2 groups to reach the final. The winning team Queenspace FC defeated MSA and Frenford 3-2. A total of £350 was raised.



CCFC ©Garry Strutt

The **University of East London Women's Volleyball** team has been crowned the champions of the British Universities and Colleges Sports Premier South division. The team were unbeaten in the league and they only dropped two sets all season!

📷 [eastlondonvolleyball](https://www.instagram.com/eastlondonvolleyball)

Aims 4 Diversity use Archery to break down barriers regardless of age, background, beliefs or ability.

They are organising free sessions in Plaistow Park for all Plaistow residents aged 12+. No experience necessary. Equipment will be provided.

More information can be found at Plaistow Library

📷 [aim4diversity](https://www.instagram.com/aim4diversity)

Upton Park Ladies FC is looking for committed experienced players who would like to join them.

uptonparkladies@gmail.com

East London Vixens are having an afternoon tea party to celebrate ten years of women's rugby at East London Rugby Club on 5 March 1pm.

For tickets email eastlondonvixens@yahoo.com

Irons Supporting Food Banks, a group of West Ham United fans and friends, have organised a fundraising Charity Statue Walk from the Bobby Moore statue at Wembley, to the 1965 Cup Winners Cup statue at the London Stadium, and then on to the World Cup Winners statue at the end of Green Street.

Money raised will go towards this year's Easter Egg Appeal for Newham Children

Saturday 19 March. 10am start from Wembley

[justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ironssupportingfoodbanks2021](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/ironssupportingfoodbanks2021)



Irons Supporting Food Banks

Central Park Allstars FC is looking for new players to join their girls' teams who play at Hackney Marshes Saturday League in the 21/22 season.

They welcome all abilities from ages 5-13

www.cpafc.co.uk

Central Park FC is a men's 11-a-side team that was formed in 2018. They are members of the North East London and Essex Church Football League (NELECFL), which is an established league, affiliated with the Amateur Football Association.

On 5 March, Central Park FC play in the semi-final first leg of the League Cup for the first time in their history, after winning the quarter final 6-1 on aggregate (winning 4-0 in the first leg and 2-1 in the second leg).

📷 [Central_ParkFC](https://www.instagram.com/Central_ParkFC)



Central Park FC

Congratulations to **University of East London scholar Emily Martin** who became a Double National Diving Champion.

Emily won Gold in the Women's 10m synchronised and Women's 10 individual at the British National Cup.

University of East London scholar Phoebe Spicer won silver and bronze at the British Universities & Colleges Sport Canoe Slalom Championships.

Phoebe competed in the C1 and K1 events.

📷 [eastldn_sport/](https://www.instagram.com/eastldn_sport/)

Bonny Downs Community Association has received a £72,000 grant from City Bridge Trust to secure the future of their Active and Connected 65+ project for at least another two years.

They offer older people in Newham free Exercise, social activities and creative sessions – including weekly 'Arts and Darts' sessions, one-to-one telephone support and regular outings including Dances.

City Bridge Trust Chairman Giles Shilson said, "Getting out, getting active and meeting people has life-changing benefits for older people and is something many will have missed greatly during the Covid pandemic."

We're delighted our funding



FFP Muay Thai Team

The **Fight for Peace Academy** in North Woolwich, East London, offers Boxing and Martial Arts classes, along with personal development sessions, mentoring, and leadership and employment support for young people aged 7-25 years old.

To become a member, you can sign up here: app.upshot.org.uk/signup/ff4a61cb/

Or head into their Academy and speak to a team member.

Good luck to the students who have been selected to represent **Newham Sixth Form** at the AoC Sport Indoor Athletics competition on 2 March

📷 [newvicsports/](https://www.instagram.com/newvicsports/)

The **Love Open Water** team at London Royal Docks will be hosting night swim sessions every Wednesday (4-8pm) throughout March.

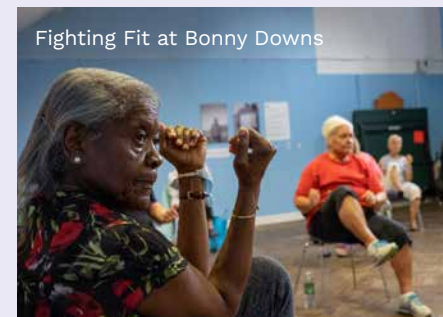
Sessions are available to book on ACTiO: actio.nowca.org/root/home

You must complete a cold water induction before you can swim at their venues.

For more information visit: www.loveopenwater.co.uk

Ruscoe Road Sheltered Housing in Canning Town offers chair exercise classes on Tuesdays, weight loss on Thursdays 9.45-11.45am and Tuesdays 1-3pm for people aged 65+

These activities are open to all. You don't have to be resident of Ruscoe Road Sheltered Housing to attend.



Fighting Fit at Bonny Downs

means this service, which has helped many hundreds of east Londoners over the last 20 years, can continue to help improve the health and quality of life of older people."

Indoor Bowls for 65+ will run on Wednesdays, from 10.45am - 12.45pm at The Well.

bonnydowns.org

Hammers fight on, but Zouma makes headlines - for the wrong reasons



The Zouma brothers have damaged West Ham says Mickey Ambrose, but he offers them the chance to rehabilitate.

We are now coming to the part of the season where West Ham United really need to put a run of games together to secure the Fourth Champions League spot. They began well when Jarrod Bowen's fifth goal in five Premier League games put them in front after only 10 mins against a Leicester City side who have only won once in five outings.

Bowen is making his own claim for an England place ahead of the FIFA World Cup in November and after this performance, I might give Assistant Manager Steve Holland a call myself although I am pretty sure both he and Gareth Southgate are fully aware of Bowen's contribution to this never say never West Ham team.

Leicester, though, came back with a penalty on the stroke of half-time through Yuri Tielemans to level the game.

The Foxes came out for the second half following Brendan Rogers' rousing team talk, I hear, resulting in them taking the lead with Ricardo Pereira on target. But the Hammers grabbed an equaliser in stoppage time thanks to Craig Dawson.

As a youngster, playing for Senrab, Link, and Tiger FC - my boyhood teams in Stepney and Poplar in the '70s - we were told to play to the final whistle and that is exactly what this West Ham side are doing. In their FA Cup 4th Round tie against non-league Kidderminster Harriers they were given a run for their money right down to the wire but they edged it thanks to late, late goals from Declan Rice and Bowen. The Hammers followed up that win with another against struggling Watford and equalised in the 91st minute thanks to another Craig Dawson late strike.

But despite all the excitement on the pitch I have to mention the disgraceful incident with Kurt Zouma and his brother Yoan and their ill-treatment of Kurt's pet cat.

What possessed him to act in this way against an animal and family pet? Even more worrying is why his brother Yoan filmed it and then posted something like this online knowing it would cause outrage and offence.

There is no excuse. It beggars belief to think that people act in this way (just like Boris Johnson and his partygate antics). When people like this get caught out they say 'SORRY' - but being sorry does not wash with many of us I am afraid.

West Ham United has and will always be known as the family community football club that built its foundations on empathy and that is what David Moyes is showing to Kurt Zouma by picking him to play, even though he has made a massive mistake. But everyone deserves a second chance.

West Ham must be furious that one of their star players could drag their name into the 'gutter' because it affects everyone at the club including their sponsors and brand name around the world.

Unfortunately, there has always been a problem with profession-

al footballers that make the wrong choices. I work in education and along with colleagues we are always saying to young people don't make the wrong choices because if you do there will be consequences that you will not be able to control.

I hope Kurt and his brother Yoan are given a second chance to receive support with any issues which would be part of their rehabilitation process. I am hearing Kurt is very remorseful and disappointed that he has let down the club, his family and himself.

So I will write to West Ham United myself to introduce a friend of mine, Carly Ahlen, Founder and CEO at Gabo Wildlife, an amazing lady. Carly and her team are dedicated to the rescue, care, and rehabilitation of injured, orphaned, and distressed wildlife across the UK.

Gabo Wildlife is entirely self-funded and receives no government funding. Carly is passionate about changing people's attitudes and behaviours towards wildlife and has offered this olive branch to both Kurt and Yoan.

With Kurt's thousands of young and influential followers, the message he conveys is dangerous and



highly concerning. The offer will be to come on a week's rescue and rehabilitation of animals to teach him and his brother about compassion and kindness, the most important assets he can hold. Prison would not rehabilitate him or his brother; they need to learn to treat animals with respect and to realise that their actions have caused a lot of pain and have serious consequences. ●

<http://helpwildlife.co.uk>
[companion/gabo-wildlife/](https://www.facebook.com/gabo-wildlife/)

Mickey Ambrose is a former Chelsea and Charlton player who lives in Stratford.

Animal Trust anger at Zouma cat cruelty

NEANDRA ETIENNE

There was a huge outpouring of anger and disbelief when the video was posted on social media of West Ham United defender Kurt Zouma kicking and slapping his Bengal cat in an incident filmed by his brother Yoan, who plays for Dagenham & Redbridge.



Celia Hammond, courtesy of celiahammond.org

Despite the video going viral the defender was still picked to play against Watford, the day after *The Sun* released the video.

Celia Hammond Animal Trust helps stray, abandoned and unwanted animals. It was founded by 1960s model Celia Hammond. Their Canning Town branch opened in 1999. Celia spoke exclusively to *Newham Voices* about the incident, "I was completely sickened by it. A kick like that could rupture a cat's spleen or bladder.

"Most incidents happen without being seen because it normally occurs behind closed doors, this just happened to take place on social media in view of the world. The sad thing is that when you have role models who are celebrities they should behave in a responsible way."

The RSPCA has removed the two cats from the footballer's family home.

In a statement posted on their website West Ham United Support-

ers' Trust Club condemned Zouma's action: "We echo the comments of the RSPCA that it's never acceptable to kick, hit or slap an animal, for punishment or otherwise. Also, Zouma should remember that many West Ham supporters themselves will have pets, including cats."

Zouma told Sky News: "I want to apologise for my actions. There are no excuses for my behaviour, which I sincerely regret. I also want to say how deeply sorry I am to anyone who was upset by the video. I would like to assure everyone that our two cats are perfectly fine and healthy.

"They are loved and cherished by our entire family, and this behaviour was an isolated incident that will not happen again."

Kurt Zouma has been fined £250,000 - two weeks' wages which will be donated to animal welfare charities.

Further information on how to donate to and support Celia Hammond Animal Trust from <https://www.celiahammond.org/>

Canning Town Branch - Cat Rescue & Rehoming Centre, 151-153 Barking Road, E16 4HQ

Information on volunteering with West Ham United Supporters' Trust Club: www.whust.org/volunteer

When you advertise with *Newham Voices* you help bring an independent voice to Newham

Local journalism is valuable in providing a reliable source of local news and information. Every month our dedicated volunteers work hard, giving their time to write and collate the contents of our newspaper so we can bring *Newham Voices* to you free of charge.

Advertising revenue helps us to cover the costs of producing and delivering *Newham Voices* to the local community.

We are all *Newham Voices*, let's work together.

37,500
estimated readership
12,500
free copies reach readers
in Newham each month

To talk to us about advertising, contact

Benji Taylor at benji@socialspider.com or on 07565 332497

Discounts available for local small business



Want to advertise in Newham and beyond?
Get in touch to learn about opportunities with our social enterprise partners.