



## We're a year old!

This edition marks our first birthday. And we're marking it by celebrating the solidarity that makes Newham such a special place.

The people of Newham are always ready to help – working on projects to improve our neighbourhoods, supporting refugees in search of a better life.

But as always there are challenges.

On **Page Three** we report on how park lovers are ready to fight to save a neglected corner of beautiful West Ham Park from the developers and on a new campaign to save Newham City Farm from closure.

And we have more inspiring stories – two icons of Black culture in Newham provide a curtain-raiser to October's special report on Black History Month on **Page 13**. We also have urban gardeners on **Page 14** and a Covid survivor talks of his struggle with long Covid on **Page 11**.

PLUS all your favourite columns and inspiring community news stories. It's been a great year and we can do more with your support. Find out how on **Page Two**.

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



# Solidarity



## Newham responds to international refugee crisis

- The Mayor offers Newham as a safe haven for Afghan refugees
- A local shop-worker tells of family tragedy and Taliban brutality

**See Page 5**

©Apik / Shutterstock.com



Photo courtesy Care4Calais

**Helping Hands: Summer on the Calais frontline**  
See Page 7



Photo courtesy XLP/Facebook

**The votes are in! Full list of community project winners**  
See Page 8



**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](http://www.newhamvoices.co.uk)

**Newham 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, Phil Mellows, Zhenreenah Muhxinga, Thana Narashiman, Julia Omari, Farzhana Rahman, Rebekah Samuel, Daphne Stedman, Mir Tasin, Lorraine Trapper 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](mailto:editor@newhamvoices.co.uk) Or by phone: **07946291511** or by post to 11 Vicarage Road, London E15 4HD.

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](http://www.newhamvoices.co.uk/feedback) For general inquiries email us at: [info@newhamvoices.co.uk](mailto:info@newhamvoices.co.uk)



# Your £5 can give Newham an independent voice

Welcome to the anniversary edition of *Newham Voices*, the free news service for London's most diverse and vibrant community. We are a group of volunteers who over the past year have defied lockdown and the pandemic to launch a newspaper and online news portal. We are independent and not-for-profit. We have no political affiliation, but we are dedicated to the people of Newham.

We are a grassroots organisation, providing a platform for everyone, but we need your help. Today I am asking for your support. We need to raise £3000 a month to pay for printing and production costs. Every contribution, no matter how small, can make a difference. We have no corporate backers and we are grateful to the businesses who take out advertising, but we believe the support of residents is crucial to our survival. So every penny you can give, no matter how small, is important. Become a supporter today – just £5 a month from individuals, or £15 a month from organisations. Above all, get involved.

Contact us at [info@newhamvoices.co.uk](mailto:info@newhamvoices.co.uk). – Aidan White, Publisher

## Thanks to the local businesses supporting *Newham Voices*

**Afrisounds**  
Music Studio and Distribution  
Broadway  
Stratford, E15 1NG  
☎ 07799 322 268  
www.afrisounds.co.uk  
@Afrisounds

**The Calicandy Shop**  
538b Barking Road  
Plaistow, E13 8QE  
@bit.ly/calicandycontact  
www.thecalicandyshop.com  
@thecalicandyshop

**Central Park Café**  
Central Park, Bartle Ave  
East Ham, E6 3AJ  
☎ 07969 920853  
www.centralparkcafe.co.uk  
@breadclub1

**clubJJ**  
Mens's Clothing  
372-374 Barking Rd  
Plaistow, E13 8HL  
☎ 020 7474 1210  
www.clubjj.co.uk

**Cornerstone Cafe**  
408 Barking Road  
Plaistow, E13 8HJ  
☎ 020 7473 5800  
@Cornerstone Cafe- Plaistow

**THE FOX & HOUNDS**  
178 Forest Lane  
Forest Gate, E7 9BB  
www.bit.ly/fox-n-hounds  
@craftunionpubs  
@foxandhoundsforestgate

**GIOVANNA'S**  
DELI & WINE  
58 Woodgrange Road  
Forest Gate, E7 0QH  
☎ 020 8616 9800  
www.giovanнас.co.uk  
@giosgaff

**The Greengate Cafe**  
538a Barking Road  
Plaistow, E13 8QE  
☎ 020 8470 9911  
www.thegreengatecafe.business.site  
@tggcafe

**JJ's Kids Clothing**  
Girls and Boys Wear  
382 Barking Rd  
Plaistow, E13 8HL  
☎ 020 7476 6400  
www.jjkidswear.co.uk

**JOLLOF HUT**  
65a North Mall  
Stratford Shopping Centre  
London, E15 1XH  
☎ 07440 430509  
gm.jollofhut.7  
Show a snapshot of this biz card in-store and get **10% discount**

**Kaldi Coffee**  
345 High St. North  
Manor Park, E12 6PQ  
☎ 020 3200 1002  
www.kaldicoffee.org  
Show a snapshot of this biz card in-store and get **15% discount**

**olive and lemon**  
mediterranean cafe / bistro  
30 Broadway  
Stratford, E15 4QS  
☎ 020 8503 1596  
www.oliveandlemon.com  
@oliveandlemon.official

**shine fostering**  
109 George Lane  
South Woodford, E18 1AN  
☎ 020 8530 7679  
www.shinefostering.co.uk  
@shine\_fostering

**the refreshment room.**  
27 Broadway  
Stratford, E15 4BQ  
☎ 020 3105 7082  
www.refreshmentroom-stratford.com

Join others in supporting us by listing or advertising your business with *Newham Voices* and by subscribing to receive a digital copy of the newspaper direct to your inbox for just a single fee of £6 for the year. For further information contact Rebekah Samuel on 07306 515 223 or at [advertising@newhamvoices.co.uk](mailto:advertising@newhamvoices.co.uk)

# Park users draw up action plan to fight ‘insult to the community’

JEAN GRAY

The City of London is facing a major battle over its plans to build blocks of flats on a corner of West Ham Park where the plant nursery used to be.

Friends of West Ham Park have pledged to fight the proposal. Chair Roger Jones said they are drawing up plans for “a vocal campaign, bringing together all the affected stakeholders, to fight against this insult to the local community”.

Campaigners claim the park – the biggest in Newham – provided a life-line during the lockdown, attracting more local people than ever, in what is already “a densely populated area” that can ill afford to lose green space.

In June, the City of London Corporation’s West Ham Park Committee approved plans to begin marketing the site over the summer and to invite developers to submit bids for further consideration.

In a press release the Corporation claimed that alongside the planned housing development, 50 per cent of the site would be reserved for a combination of operational buildings, new parkland and recreational facilities, such as a community café and changing rooms.

The housing element of the scheme is expected to provide “vital funding” for future management and maintenance of the park. They argue it is the most viable way of generating income for the charity while “meeting the need for additional homes in accordance with the objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework”.

However, two elements of the June press release in particular have been described as ‘misleading’ by local resident and park user Richard Stubbs, who has fact-checked the claim by the Corporation that ‘the vacant plant nursery site is ‘adjoining’ the park and that the glass-houses, unused since 2016, are on a ‘brownfield’ site.

According to Richard Stubbs, the site is not “adjoining” the park, but is within the West Ham Park boundaries, which are shown in a plan of the park held by Historic England and clearly include the proposed area designated for redevelopment.

He also argues that because the site is within the park it cannot be seen as a “brownfield” site. The National Planning Policy Framework excludes “land in built-up areas such as residential gardens, parks, recreation grounds and allotments” from being



The flower garden above is the park showpiece, one of the features that has been a magnet to thousands in Newham. © Friends of West Ham Park

defined as brownfield sites.

The framework also says local authorities should maintain brownfield registers of land suitable for housing. Newham Council maintains such a register and the proposed development site is not listed.

He cites the fact that when the park was originally transferred to the Corporation by the Gurney family in 1874, it was to be held “on trust forever as open public grounds and gardens for the resort and recreation of adults and as playgrounds

for children and youth.” The City of London agreed to maintain and preserve the Park for this purpose at its own cost.

The Corporation manages the park through a charity that it controls, though Newham Council does have two representatives on its Committee (Cllr. James Asser and Cllr. Tahmina Rahman).

“It’s hard to understand how building private housing in the park is anything other than a breach of the charity’s objectives. I wonder

what the Council has to say about it?” asks Richard Stubbs.

A spokesperson for the City of London Corporation told *Newham Voices* that the land is considered brownfield because it ‘is previously developed land’ and repeated that the 3-acre former nursery site is not within the green space of West Ham Park. She added: “The Nursery was closed because business was not viable on a site of that scale, unable to compete with cost-effective plants from the larger scale European growers.” ●

## Hundreds join campaign to save Newham City Farm

NOAH ENAHORO

An online petition calling for Newham City Farm to remain open to the public has received more than 600 signatures in just 24 hours after concerns were raised over its future.

The petition was started by local resident Alison McLucas who urged the Mayor and Newham Council to keep the farm.

“We consider the farm to be a special place, a valuable asset and educational resource for the local community, families, schools and

people with special educational needs and disabilities,” said McLucas.

“We are concerned at reports of funding cuts to the current farm, proposals to close it and to regenerate the current site into more general green leisure space with which the area is already well-served.

“We consider that with careful funding, it should be possible to keep a community farm at the heart of any green spaces regeneration plan.”

Opened in 1977, Newham City Farm is one of London’s oldest city farms and Alison McLucas called upon the Mayor and Newham Council, which

is to decide on the future of the farm in the coming months, to make sure any decisions made reflect the views of local residents. ●



Photo courtesy Newham City Farm

# Finance jobs are top priority for Timms as UK trade envoy

East Ham MP Stephen Timms, who has been appointed a government trade envoy to Switzerland, aims to use his new role to protect and create more jobs for East Londoners in financial services.

Timms, along with former cricketer Ian Botham and other MPs, joins a government team to boost British business.

"I'm glad to take on this role," he told *Newham Voices*. "Financial services are such an important part of our economy and I'm very keen to work to raise employment in this sector."

His focus on Switzerland, a leading player in world financial affairs, gives him an opportunity to draw upon his experience as a finance minister in the governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, when he had several senior appointments including Chief

Secretary to the Treasury.

Although the post is a government appointment there was no objection to it from Labour leaders and it will not mean any significant cutback in his work as a local MP.

"I think the job will involve only

Timms, along with former cricketer Ian Botham and other MPs, joins a government team to boost British business.

a couple of visits to Switzerland a year and it's not going to be a big part of my ongoing work. I'm not the first Labour MP to take on a role like this, and I'm looking forward to



Stephen Timms

it," he said.

"We all want UK trade to increase and we have a lot of people working in financial services which is a major part of our trade with Switzerland." ●



## VIEW FROM MY WARD

**East Ham South**  
Councillor Susan Masters

East Ham South is the ward I've represented for the past seven years. It's the tail end of East Ham, the last stop before Newham crosses the A13 and becomes Beckton. Travel east and you'll find Wall End; to the west, Boleyn, and north, East Ham Central.



It's a family ward, home to three great primary schools (Vicarage Lane, Brampton and Roman Rd) as well as soon-to-be-outstanding nursery Oliver Thomas. Our one secondary, Brampton Manor Academy, is the school famous for winning more Oxbridge places than Eton.

East Ham South is also a surprisingly green ward. I deal with a lot of casework around Central Park which lies a mere stone's throw over the border, but our residents also have Brampton Park to kick back in.

Gooseley Lane Fields might be more tucked away, but those who do make the trip will be rewarded with tennis courts, a petanque patch and even a BMX bike track.

East Ham Southerners are a really proactive bunch. Over the years they've delivered the quarterly Greatfield market selling homemade foods and crafted gifts as well as the East Edge Sisters Women's Institute.

Local artist studio Red Door offers a monthly pop-up café with occasional music evenings and exhibitions and the gorgeous St Mary's Church hosts a nature reserve and green gym.

More than this, though, we are an inclusive community. When the pandemic struck, our ward mutual aid group united the Somali Association with the Muslim-run local community centre and the Bonny Downs Community Association – a charity that has grown out of a local church, dedicated to community resilience offering a food bank, advice for those facing homelessness or debt issues and activities for young people, children and families.

# In trouble? An advocate may be able to help

PETER LANDMAN

It can be difficult to get your voice heard in bureaucratic powerful organisations, whether it is a government department, the Borough Council, or the NHS.

This is where an advocate could help. An advocate is someone specially trained to make representations on your behalf and to help you to express what you want to achieve. Age UK East London provide a free, independent and confidential service for residents over 50.

Phillip Adams, a senior advocate with the group, explained how he can offer to help:

- To clarify what is happening in your involvement with the organisation
- To provide further information about your situation
- To explain options
- To help you reach decisions
- To challenge decisions made about you, if you disagree with them.

He provides one example of tenants who were long term residents getting nowhere in dealings with the landlord over dilapidations, rising damp and black mould.

In this case, the advocate visited the premises, spoke to the tenants and took photographs. As a result of the contact, and the photographic evi-



dence, the responsible Housing Officer at the Council carried out an inspection and instigated a programme of planned repair and maintenance.

In their work Age UK adhere to the principles of the Advocacy Charter.

The first sentence of the charter reads: "To take action to support

people to say what they want, secure their rights, and obtain the services they need."

At least two other organisations in Newham provide advocacy: Newham Health Watch and Voiceability, specialising in mental health.

### CONTACT DETAILS

**Age UK**  
info@ageukeastlondon.org.uk  
0208 981 7124

**Healthwatch**  
advocacy@healthwatchnewham.co.uk  
020 3828 8245

**Voiceability**  
helpline@voiceability.org  
0300 363 1660

## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

In last month's article *It's Time to Celebrate with Pride* (August 2021) we gave the impression that Forest Gayte Pride were working in collaboration with Newham Council. They are not. We apologise to FGP who have informed us: "We do not work with the council. We are an independent grassroots organisation that is not affiliated with Newham Council or any other government or state organisation, or corporate sponsor."

In the article *Lift Off for Young Athletes* we said Dalton Grant was Team GB captain. He is, of course, a former captain of the team.

Apologies, too, for some typos – to our own Zhenreenah Muhxinga for misspelling her name on the *Poetry in Mind* column and on Page 8 we spelled MP Vicky Ford's name as "Vicki". Sorry about that.



# Afghan nightmare returns for local worker who fled Taliban terror

AIDAN WHITE

The drama and tragedy overwhelming opponents of the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan has brought back horrifying memories for one Newham worker.

Akram (not his real name), who works in a food delivery outlet in the borough, fled the country 20 years ago as the Taliban were rounding up young men from high schools to fight in the tribal war then engulfing the country.

He was a fresh-faced teenager who escaped attention because he looked young, but some of his friends, many with the first traces of facial hair, were not so lucky. "Most of them were taken away and sent to fight in the frontline," he told *Newham Voices*.

"I know from experience the dangerous situation that people are now facing," he said. "I was able to escape then, but now the crisis is just as bad."

Members of his family who have been political opponents of the Taliban in Afghanistan for many years are particularly in the firing line.

In the past they supported the Northern Alliance, a united front formed more than 25 years ago to fight a defensive war against the Taliban government that was toppled after the

American-led invasion in 2001.

Two months ago Akram's uncle was shot dead by five gunmen. He was serving in the Afghan army, but had been targeted by the Taliban. He leaves a widow and six children who have now gone into hiding in Kabul.

"I know from experience the dangerous situation that people are now facing. I was able to escape then, but now the crisis is just as bad."

He has two other uncles and their families who are also at risk.

"Everything is very confused on the spot," he says. "No-one knows what to do, but there are thousands of people facing persecution."

He says that western governments, including Britain, should not recognise the new regime or give it any legitimacy.

Nor is he impressed by statements from Taliban leaders saying they are not interested in revenge and that they will respect the rights of women and free speech.

"The reality is that among the Taliban forces will be people who have lost family members in the conflict and they are already looking for revenge and hunting down their opponents. That is why people are so

desperate to get out," he said.

When he arrived in London 20 years ago Akram went to college and since then has worked in the family business. He married and now has three children of his own.

Every day he commutes to Newham

for work with his cousin, who came to Britain five years ago and is still trying to get his mother and sisters to join him from Afghanistan.

"I welcome the statement from the Mayor of Newham," said Akram. "It's important that people give as much help as they can." But he recognises that even in Britain divisions exist and threats remain.

"There are people who support the Taliban even here and my family have already received warnings and threats," he said. "It's important that we don't do anything that will make matters worse or put people still in Afghanistan at further risk." ●

*The identity of our source has been withheld to protect his safety and that of his family, both in Britain and Afghanistan.*

## We're ready to welcome refugees says Mayor

The Mayor of Newham has offered Borough support to help resettle Afghan refugees as the government announced an emergency resettlement scheme for up to 20,000 refugees following the takeover of the country by Taliban forces.



In a statement on August 18, as the government recalled parliament to discuss the crisis, Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz said Newham was ready to extend support to help refugees fleeing persecution.

She said: "I am calling upon the UK government to do all they can to help as many people as they can. In Newham we stand ready to work with the government to support the resettlement of humanitarian refugees with the right financial support from central government."

She also acknowledged the need to give priority to vulnerable groups particularly women, children and religious minorities who are most at risk from the Taliban takeover.

"Like all of us," she said, "I am horrified to see the events unfolding in Afghanistan and my heart goes out to the people of Afghanistan, especially the women who will suffer the loss of many of the freedoms that we all take for granted. I know that if I lived in Afghanistan I would be one of the first people the Taliban would target for persecution because of who I am."

### How you can help displaced people in Afghanistan

People who want to support can contact:

- [www.rescue-uk.org/article/how-can-i-help-afghanistan](http://www.rescue-uk.org/article/how-can-i-help-afghanistan)
- [www.donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/afghanistan-crisis-appeal](http://www.donate.redcross.org.uk/appeal/afghanistan-crisis-appeal)
- [www.afghanaid.org.uk](http://www.afghanaid.org.uk)
- [www.unicef.org.uk/donate/donate-and-help-protect-children-in-afghanistan](http://www.unicef.org.uk/donate/donate-and-help-protect-children-in-afghanistan)

In addition, the Church of England Chelmsford diocese covering Newham, said its Refugee Engagement Team is ready to support parishes helping Afghan refugees.

- [www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/afghan-refugees-welcome](http://www.chelmsford.anglican.org/news/article/afghan-refugees-welcome)



## SOMETHING'S BREWING

*Phil Mellows is looking forward to Cask Ale Week later in the month, but he can't wait that long for a good pint!*

Generously spread over 11 days, Cask Ale Week gets under way on September 23. Events and activities are brewing and will be announced soon. But you don't have to wait to start drinking it.

Cask conditioned beer, or 'real ale' as it's otherwise known, has had a hard time during the pandemic. Thousands of pints had to be poured down the drain when lockdown closed the pubs, and brewers remain nervous about producing too much of a product that doesn't keep for long. So try and order something on the handpumps when you can.

Quality remains an issue, though. Cask beer is 'live', meaning it undergoes a second fermentation in the pub cellar. That makes it a rare kind of product that's finished by the person selling it. Skill, patience and passion are required, and not every publican can serve a great pint.

Only five Newham pubs are listed in the 2021 Good Beer Guide, chosen by local members of the Campaign for Real Ale. First among those has to be the Black Lion in Plaistow, not only a genuine freehouse and the Borough's most historically interesting pub – it's an 18th Century coaching inn – but one that prides itself on its cask beer.

There are usually three or four on the pumps, including 'house' ale Captain Bob from Essex brewer Mighty Oak. On my last visit I was surprised to see Boltmaker from Yorkshire's Timothy Taylor. Timmy's is more famous for its Landlord but Boltmaker won Camra's Champion Beer of Britain a few years back and

you don't often see it down here.

How to spot a good pint? One way to tell is the lacing on the glass. It shows the beer has successfully re-fermented or 'conditioned' – and it's a sign of a clean glass, too.



The Black Lion also displays the blue Cask Marque plaque, meaning its beer has been approved by independent experts, mostly retired brewers, so that's something else to look out for.

The others in the Good Beer Guide are Greene King's Golden Fleece in Forest Gate, Tap East brewpub in Westfield, and a pair of Wetherspoon's, the Miller's Well in East Ham and the Golden Grove in Stratford.

And with the likes of the Boleyn, the Denmark Arms and the Forest Tavern reopening I reckon there could be a couple of additional pubs in the 2022 Guide. Live beer is looking up!

Photos courtesy Phil Mellows

## GARDEN TALK

*It's time to play the long game. Cecilia Cran already has her eye on a colourful Spring*

### What to grow: Muscari Latifolium

As we come to the end of summer, now is the time to start planning your plants for the seasons ahead. Begin thinking about the different spaces you would like to bring to life – the foliage, textures and plant colour combinations you want to try. Getting seeds and bulbs planted in autumn is key to ensuring you create your perfect spring space.

This month, I'm planting my Muscari Latifolium – more commonly known as grape hyacinths (they look like perfectly formed little bunches of grapes!). These little cobalt blue flowers are fabulous and provide such a wonderful colour to any garden. I have to note that you are playing the long game by planting these, as they are considered an early spring flowering plant, so you can expect colour from around mid-March through to early May.



### How to grow

Muscari bulbs work well in pots or can be planted directly into the ground. For the purposes of this, I'll refer to planting directly in the ground (but the same rules apply).

These bulbs like to be planted in sunny spots and prefer a sheltered space with well-drained, but not too dry, soil. A word of caution – think carefully where you would like to plant these bulbs, as they will come back each year and spread quickly.

Each bulb will give around one to three flowers that grow to around 15cm tall and create a fabulous effect when grouped together, so I tend to plant around five bulbs at the same time.

Once you have chosen the best location, dig a hole around 7-10cm

deep and then space the bulbs around 7cm apart. Place the bulbs in, with the pointed tip facing upwards and cover with peat-free compost. Once the bulbs are planted, press down on the top of soil to ensure they make contact with the soil and then water.

### Green escape: Cody Dock

To anyone who has not yet witnessed the joy of Cody Dock, I implore you to go and see the space. It is part of the Gasworks Dock Partnership, which is a registered charity and social enterprise formed to act as a vehicle for the community-led regeneration of Cody Dock.

As the area's surrounds have rapidly received a facelift over recent years, this little corner of the Lower Lea River has remained relatively untouched, except for a number of passionate and ambitious pioneers who have big dreams for the area and have been committed to nurturing a wonderful and inclusive creative community.

It has so much to offer, whether you're keen on gardening, the arts, wildlife, learning or volunteering, there is always something exciting happening. The area has so much to explore – from a wonderful little café and a gallery space (which runs creative sessions and also hosts exhibitions), an array of sculptures, their very own outdoor classroom space and their newly refurbished river boat the River Princess, which can be hired for community or commercial use.

The Gasworks Dock Partnership was awarded funding by the Green Recovery Challenge Fund to deliver a programme of citizen-led ecology surveys, clean-ups, restoration and habitat creation. Most recently, in July, they secured grant funding from Newham Council to build Cody Dock's Community Forest Garden.

Visit [codydock.org.uk](http://codydock.org.uk) to find out more.



Photos courtesy Celia Cran

# Summer on the Calais frontline

## Newham fixers put a smile on the faces of refugees

Forest Gate couple Simon Shaw and Lesley Hare have spent the summer supporting refugees in France as part of a project run by the charity Care4Calais. But their experiences mending clothes and servicing bikes have led Simon and Lesley to dub themselves Repair4Calais!

Lesley said: "They are just boys mostly and need some looking after. I noticed how many had torn clothes, jeans that had holes in, pockets falling out and coats with rips in them. It's not that easy to get good clothes in Calais and often the refugees want to keep the stuff they have but need it mended."

So she made up some sewing kits for her latest trip. "At first I bought all sorts of fancy stuff to put in the kits but over the years have found that all I really need is a needle and spools of black thread. Mending tears is about my limit."

The boys often call Lesley 'mum, mama, mummy' and ask if she can mend their clothes. "They sit down beside me and patiently wait. They are always so polite and respectful, it's a pleasure to help them. Most have left families thousands of miles away. It's a little bit of time just for them and they walk away with a coat that will last a few more weeks."

"One fellow came to me with both sleeves of his anorak about to fall off. It looked like a big job for a needle and thread, so I was getting up to go to the van to get him a new coat, but he stopped me. 'I don't want a

new coat, I want this one, it works, and I don't want to lose it.'

"So many coats aren't that water-proof, or the zip is broken, or they don't fit that well, so when he'd found a coat he really liked he wanted to keep it. I set about sewing the sleeves back on. It took a while but he walked away with the biggest grin. It just warms my heart to sew for them."

Simon, the other half of Repair4Calais, mends bikes. "I'm no expert but can just about change a tyre. Bikes are so valuable here, they mean you can get to distributions, find food, make appointments and get to the shops. The bikes we mend are falling to pieces, held together with a wing and a prayer! There is maybe only one nut holding a wheel on, or the frame is so rusty it's a miracle it holds the rider. We provide a few tools and some spare parts we have managed to source."

Mostly refugees fix the bikes themselves and are incredibly resourceful. Simon watched a group of young men dismantle a bike and rebuild it using whatever they could find and scavenge from other bikes.

"I had the idea to start the repair shop as I'm a cyclist myself and always take my bike with me. There's some beautiful countryside to cycle through outside Calais. I'd be devastated if my bike broke but I know I would be able to replace it, but I thought the refugees can't so how can we help them keep the bikes running?"

Lesley and Simon have been going



Photos courtesy Care4Calais and Simon Shaw

to Calais for five years.

Simon said: "We're not beach people, so this is ideal. I really enjoy helping in Calais, it gives you a buzz to be useful. I love talking to the refugees, really getting to know them and seeing what amazing people they are. You meet some great volunteers

too. It is a way of doing something, not just talking about fighting racism but actually doing something concrete and anti-racist." ●

To volunteer with Care4calais email [clare@care4calais.org](mailto:clare@care4calais.org)  
 Facebook: [care4calais](https://www.facebook.com/care4calais)

# Stratford memorial for one of England's finest and most troubled poets

JULIA OMARI

Sitting outside Stratford library is a memorial stone for a man classed as one of England's greatest poets: Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Hopkins was born in Stratford on the 28th July 1844 and lived at 87 The Grove for the first ten years of his life. The family were prosperous, well educated, deeply religious and attended their local house of worship, St John's Church.

Hopkins' father moved the family to Hampstead in 1852 and Gerard was sent to Highgate School as a boarding student. It was here that he started to write poetry. Gerard continued to write poems until 1867, when he



Photo courtesy Julia Omari

decided to dedicate himself to training in order to become a Roman Catholic priest - an act that would see his Anglican family distance themselves from him permanently.

Gerard made a vow never to write poems again, unless by order of his superiors. In fact, he burnt all his poetry in a self-made bonfire!

It took eight years, a shipwreck and the loss of 157 lives (including those of five Franciscan nuns) before his superior asked him to write a poem to commemorate the tragic SS Deutschland - the ship had run aground in the Thames estuary during a storm on 6th December 1875.

Hopkins' poem *The Wreck of the Deutschland* touched many hearts

while confusing many minds because it did not follow the standard poetic form of English poetry for that time. During Hopkins' years of writing, he had developed a style of his own which he called Spring Rhythm.

Gerard Manley Hopkins died on the 8th June 1889 in Ireland after some years spent in isolation. He was a poet ahead of his time. His lifelong friend and then poet laureate Robert Bridges published the poems of Hopkins some years after his death.

On the 28th July 1994, 150 years after his birth, a memorial stone with four lines from *The Wreck of the Deutschland* was placed near the location of his Stratford home. ●

# The votes are in!

## All the winners in Newham's £800,000 community projects ballot

Here we list all the winners and highlight some of the neighbourhood projects that topped the polls in last month's voting on proposals submitted to Newham's eight community assemblies.

The winners will get a share of £100,000 allocated to each assembly by Newham Council.

Next month we will carry more information on winning projects in East Ham, Beckton, Royal Docks, Custom House and Canning Town.

For the full information on each project go to the community assembly website at [newhamco-create.co.uk/en/folders/assemblies](http://newhamco-create.co.uk/en/folders/assemblies)

In **Forest Gate** top of the poll was the charity Ashok's Vision which will create a weekly pop up workshop for creating handmade planters. The project will support young people to learn about the importance of a cleaner and greener borough where everyone has access to nature, clean air and pleasant spaces to rest, relax and enjoy.

Among the other projects, of the 12 selected was one submitted by the Magpie Project a charity which supports women with children under five who are living in temporary or insecure accommodation. The funding will help them transform the derelict Hamfrith Centre between Forest Lane and Romford Road into a new community space to bring the Magpie project back into the area and provide a beautiful and welcoming space for mums and small children.

In **Plaistow**, most votes went to the Wild Green E13 project to create an urban garden.

Wild Green E13, a voluntary community organisation founded two years ago to set up a community park in the Upperton Road West Park, will use the funding to provide fencing, hard-standing pathways, timber benches and a container for storage.

Second place went to a project to improve the Greenway Orchard by providing three benches situated both in the orchard and on the greenway itself; creating a possible picnic area; play equipment to attract more family engagement including touch,



Wild Green E13

feel and hear equipment for children with special educational needs and their families.

In **Stratford and West Ham** most votes went to XLP Hub in the Stratford Centre for a project to run more health and fitness sessions and team building exercises as part of their work to create positive futures for disadvantaged young people in Newham. The Hub will provide more activities for young people.

The centre already has special girls-only gym sessions and girls groups to provide support and guidance to young women; an equipped recording studio; and provides employability training for those who are not in education or training to help them have the skills and confidence to find jobs.

Also among the winners was the Carpenters and Docklands Community Centre, which won support to buy a second hand van to support its food and clothes banks.

The food bank supports more than 350 people a week directly and thousands indirectly, providing food to people currently placed in temporary accommodation and the most vulnerable and families on the Carpenters Estate. They also support thousands across the Borough by providing food to numerous other food-poverty organisations.

In **Green Street** neighbourhood the project to improve Priory Park, being one of the only green spaces in the area, won most votes. The project will fix the current water fountain, adding picnic benches for families to sit and enjoy the park, installing table tennis tops, installing fruit trees and planters to create a community growing project for local residents to grow fruit and veg.

This project will bring local people together to grow food in a dedicated community gardens space. The pandemic has shown the benefit of gardening for physical health and mental well-being.

Among other proposals to win votes was a community safety for women project. Given the high number of anti-social behaviour incidents and crime issues, the question of public safety, particularly for women and children has been a major concern.

The project will deliver workshops and sessions on self-defence, safety awareness, sessions with local

police, community safety events, online safety awareness, children's safety, community safety packs in different languages and women support groups.

In **Manor Park** most votes went to the project to buy branded pop-up market stalls to establish a small farmers market to be created on Manor Park Road/Station Road at weekends.

A bi-weekly/monthly pop up market would encourage local residents to shop locally, meet the traders and support their local businesses, a more sustainable way of shopping for Manor Park, and will build on the success of similar initiatives in other neighbourhoods such as Forest Gate.

### Beckton and Royal Docks winners

1. Inclusive Community Hub
2. Permanent Play Street in Beckton
3. Beckton Nature Play and Learning Sessions for Families
4. Social space at North Beckton Park pavilion
5. Provide wheelchair access to ponds and replace derelict viewing platform
6. Beckton Community Projects - Initiation of the Youth Club
7. Improvements to park map signage
8. Improvements to the green space on the Drew Rd estate, Silvertown
9. Multi Use Games Area at Beckton Globe
10. Improvements to Britannia Village Green
11. Community Gardening for Wellbeing

### Custom House and Canning Town winners

1. Cody Dock Community Forest Garden
2. Ling Road Tree Pit Flowerbeds
3. Victoria Dock Road Re-greening Project
4. Youth Community Centre
5. Improving and maintaining green spaces- community gardening project.
6. CHB - BAME and Disabled Bookshop proposal
7. What's The Point? (an anti-knife crime project lead by FiS and NYFC)



XLP Hub



8. The Youth Café
9. Play Wheels – Mobile Play Project

#### East Ham winners

1. Urgent refurbishment and new play equipment for Barking Road Recreation Ground
2. Changing Places Toilet in Central Park Café
3. Making East Ham Safer, Cleaner, and More Accessible
4. Adding art to fly tipping hotspots
5. East Ham Nature Reserve enhancement for local residents
6. Additional funding for Changing Places Toilet in Central Park
7. Grow Together, Be Together – Improving a Community Garden in East Ham
8. Additional funding for refurbishments in Barking Road Recreation Ground
9. Tiny libraries for E6
10. Tackling anti-social behaviour in Central Park

#### Forest Gate winners

1. Youth Led – Forest Gate Planting Project
2. Creating an environmentally friendly open space
3. Creating a new home for The Magpie Project and other community groups
4. Going Green – Green the high street: Woodgrange Road and Upton Lane
5. Woodgrange market – a community space
6. A new nesting raft and nesting box for ducks in Forest Lane Park
7. Permanent Rainbow Crossing on Woodgrange Road – LGBT+ Visibility
8. Greening concrete-dominated estate in central Forest Gate
9. Bio-diverse corridors
10. Make the most of what we've got
11. Odessa Park Improvements
12. Signposts and Trails to Playgrounds

#### Green Street winners

1. Priory Park Improvement
2. Tree Planting & Planters
3. Green Street Pocket Parks
4. Food Growth Katherine Road
5. Hamara Ghar Community Garden Project
6. St Stephens/Dorset Road Alley Way Project
7. Women Community Safety Project
8. Renovation and enhancement of Dorset Road Community Garden
9. Stondon Walk Community Project

10. Greening Green Street Project

#### Manor Park winners

1. The Living Wall (£20,000)
2. Manor Park Community Garden (£20,000)
3. Arts Café, performance and Exhibition Space in Plashet Park (£20,000)
4. Street Planters in East Ham North, Little Ilford and Manor Park Ward (£20,000)
5. Mini Lending Library and Trees in Plashet Park (£5,000)
6. Manor Park Community Pop-Up Market (£5,000)
7. Trees for the Avenues and Romford Road (£5,000)
8. Plant street trees along Romford Road (£5,000)

#### Plaistow Winners

1. Wild Green E13, an urban garden for all (£20,000)
2. Greenway Orchard Improvements (£19,160)
3. Plaistow Park Play Space Planting (£4,992)
4. Replace New City Green broken and missing play equipment (£4,850)
5. Parklets for Plaistow (£3,850)
6. Free Little Library Boxes and Benches in Plaistow Park (£5,000)
7. Plaistow Litter Picks (£5,000)
8. More Bins and Benches for New City Park (£5,000)

9. Walton Road Community Garden (£20,000)
10. Parks and People (£4,250)
11. "There is no planet B" Art & Craft Project (£4,820)
12. Sewing Project for Residents (£5,000)

#### Stratford and West Ham winners

1. Stratford XLP Youth Hub
2. Community Van Carpenters Estate
3. Cook, Eat and Grow: sustainability and well-being for young people and families
4. Growing Roots and Floating habitats
5. Anti-fly tipping project
6. Greener Together – Space for Play and Exercise
7. Health and Wellbeing through Digital Inclusion for Vulnerable domestic Abuse survivors.
8. Make do and Mend
9. The Potential Project 21
10. Art in the Park



# Growing interest in West Ham Park's vegetable garden

**EUGENE CZAUDERNA**

Entering West Ham Park from the main entrance on Upton Lane, you pass a house on your right. Immediately after this is a path off to the right where you may notice a barred gate, set in a hedge. Beyond this is the West Ham Park Vegetable Garden, which is run by volunteers, with assistance, advice and guidance from the park staff.

The garden has been in operation since 2012 and, as its name suggests it is primarily concerned with growing fruit and vegetables, though the keen volunteers also grow flowers. This year they have a bed of edible flowers as a way of combining the two!

The group have some ten or so regular volunteers who usually come on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. There are always jobs to do; planting, harvesting, improving the soil, looking after the compost bins and

when that's done, there's always some more weeding!

Gardeners have grown strawberries, gooseberries, raspberries, blueberries, beans of all kinds, peas, herbs, lettuce, tomatoes, carrots and potatoes along with other crops, all with great success. However, they are very open to suggestions for other, maybe more exotic, plants to try to grow.

Anyone interested in helping out with the garden, please contact Stella on [parks.gardens@cityof-london.gov.uk](mailto:parks.gardens@cityof-london.gov.uk), or drop in to one of their sessions from 10am on Tuesdays or 2pm on Wednesdays. Or why not drop in anyway and see how they are getting on!

**Eugene Czauderna** is a volunteer in West Ham Park vegetable garden



# WHAT'S ON IN SEPTEMBER

Compiled by Neandra Etienne

## East Ham Library

Below are some of the activities for residents aged 35+:

- Monday: Embroidery 11am – 1pm
- Tuesday: Pilates 9am–10am
- Friday: Chair based exercise 10–11am
- Friday: Knit and knatter 11am–12pm
- Friday: Evening yoga 6–7pm

For these events, due to limited capacity – residents should either come in or call the library 02033730827 to book their slot.

🐦 @NewhamLibraries

## East Ham Community Neighbourhood

- Tuesday: Coffee morning at Pilgrims way 11am–12:30pm
- Thursday: Coffee morning at Central Park Café 10 am–12pm

## The Line London

If you want to explore the wildlife, art and heritage along The Line in Newham why not join their free One Step at a Time wellbeing walks – which are running until the end of September 2021.

Walks are at 12pm on Thursday afternoons and start from The Print House in Stratford. You must register to attend.

To find out more and sign up, please email [wellbeing@the-line.org](mailto:wellbeing@the-line.org)  
🐦 @thelinelondon

## Undercurrents

17 AUGUST - 5 SEPTEMBER

Abstract Artist Leah Dyke will be showing some of her paintings at the Abstract works of colour and texture exhibition.

The opening times are between 8.30am till 4pm during weekdays and 10am till 4pm over the weekend. Number 8, Forest Gate Emporium, 8 Sebert Rd, London E7 0NQ

🐦 @number8fgemporium

🐦 @lsdyke.art

## Denmark Arms

QUIZ NIGHT 2 SEPTEMBER

Start time 7pm till 9pm

It's time to get your thinking caps on for the return of the first quiz night post lockdown. £50 first prize.

## Soul Night (DJ)

3 SEPTEMBER

6/7pm until 10pm

A DJ will be playing a mix of old skool classics and new age soul music. A selection of cocktails will be served that night too. (Mojitos, Woo Woos, Tequila/Rum/Vodka Sunset) Denmark Arms 381 Barking Road, E6 1LA  
[www.denmarkarms.com](http://www.denmarkarms.com)

## Future Cargo

3-4 SEPTEMBER – 8PM

Future Cargo is a sci-fi dance show performed in a 40 foot haulage truck. Future Cargo is showing as part of Greenwich+Docklands Inter-

national Festival, London's largest and longest-running festival of outdoor theatre.

Free, Pontoon Dock

[www.royaldocks.london/whats-on](http://www.royaldocks.london/whats-on)

## TikTok Dance Class

4 SEPTEMBER – 3PM FROM £10

If you want to take your dance moves to another level, book your place at Roof East's brand new TikTok dance class, hosted by Pineapple Dance Studios.

Roof East is located on top of the Stratford Centre car park. Floors 7 & 8, Stratford Multi-Storey Car Park, Great Eastern Way, London E15 1XE  
[www.roofeast.com/events](http://www.roofeast.com/events)

## Gallery Opening

4 SEPTEMBER

Stratford Unitarians are having their official opening of a gallery space. It's going to encourage the creativity of professional artists and promote community participation.

West Ham Lane, London E15 4PH

[www.ukunitarians.org.uk/stratford](http://www.ukunitarians.org.uk/stratford)

## Materials and Process

9 SEPT - 3 OCT

Private Viewing: Thurs 9 Sept 6pm–9pm

Artists Talk: Sat 18 Sept 12–3pm

Artist KV Duong invites you to his group exhibition. KV is exhibiting with Diana Burch, Chris Horner and Geraldine Van Heemstra.

Canning Gallery, 11 Brunel St. E16 1EB  
[canninggallery.art](http://canninggallery.art)

## Newham Unlocked Festival

10 SEPTEMBER - 17 OCTOBER

Newham Unlocked Festival is an arts, culture and creativity festival featuring an exciting and diverse programme of events. Showcasing talented local performers, it will be happening throughout Newham with loads for residents to get involved with in the run up to the festival. The theme of this year's festival is Unity.  
[www.newhamunlockedfestival.org](http://www.newhamunlockedfestival.org)

## Strangers on a Patio

11, 18 & 25 SEPTEMBER

Comedian, mental health advocate, cocktail enthusiast and gardener Krish, aka the Depressed Baker has opened up a comedy club in his garden in Maryland.

All proceeds from these events will be going to The Wickers Charity who organise community programmes in London for young people aged 8 – 18.  
[bit.ly/StrangersOnAPatioWebsite](http://bit.ly/StrangersOnAPatioWebsite)  
🐦 @the\_depressed\_baker

## Forest Gate Jumble Trail

12 SEPTEMBER – 11AM – 4PM

Wilkinson Estate Agents are sponsoring the Forest Gate Jumble Trail.

If you would like to be a seller at the Jumble Trail it costs £5. You can book a stall by popping into Number

8 Emporium Forest Gate with your details and money.

[linktr.ee/FGJumbleTrail](http://linktr.ee/FGJumbleTrail)

🐦 @number8fgemporium

🐦 @fgjumbletrail

## 50 Mile Sponsored Cycle Ride

12 SEPTEMBER

The Renewal Programme's chair of the board has organised a sponsored cycle to raise money for their 50th appeal. The cycle will cover 50 miles and take place in 50 of Newham's landmarks and views.

[www.renewalprogramme.org.uk](http://www.renewalprogramme.org.uk)

## Forest Gate South Jumble Trail

19 SEPTEMBER

St Matthews Church is organising a jumble trail for residents wanting to sell anything from books, clothes, bric a brac, artwork and home craft projects. Anyone in the area can set up a stall in front of their house; all you have to do is register free online.  
[stmatthewse15.co.uk/whatson.html](http://stmatthewse15.co.uk/whatson.html)

## Quincy's Comedy Lounge Presents...

27 SEPTEMBER

Doors open 6pm with showtime at 8pm Canning Town's very own Quincy aka Cockney Prince is performing his Stand Up Monday comedy event at the Refreshment Room. 27 Broadway, Stratford, E15 4BQ  
[refreshmentroom-stratford.com](http://refreshmentroom-stratford.com)  
🐦 @quincy\_comedian

# Actor Jo Martin in the frame as Doctor Who lead changes

ZHENREENAH MUHXINGA

Newham actor Jo Martin, star of Dr Who and Holby City, is one of the top contenders to become the 14th 'doctor' when Jodie Foster leaves the programme this year.

Jo, who has already played an incarnation of the doctor in series 12, was born in Newham to parents who arrived in the area from Jamaica in the 1950s. She went to Portway primary school then Plashet all girls secondary school.

She told me she loves the diversity of Newham, different cultures and the community spirit. 'I enjoy getting on with everyone and eating the different types of food available in the area.'

Jo once moved out of the Borough, but missed it so much she returned, saying: "It's easy reach for everything, such as the local post office, train stations, and our lovely heritage of the Olympics."



Jo Martin

She told me: "I got into acting from the tender age of ten at Monega school, doing school play. A 14, my first play was "Job Rocking" supported by Benjamin Zephaniah, it got all the way to Edinburgh."

Seventies actresses, like Mona Hammond, Ellen Thomas and Carmen

Monroe, became her inspiration.

Two years in Holby City playing neurosurgeon Max McGerry made her a household name; she also appeared briefly in EastEnders.

Eventually Dr Who producers saw Jo in a film, she auditioned for the part and was cast as 'The Fugitive of Judoon'.

She said: "Dr Who put me on the map internationally, the first black person playing the lead part. I am very proud, my family is proud and I hope I make the Newham community proud. Acting in Dr. Who is a big achievement for me."

For relaxation, she loves to be in her kitchen cooking good healthy food as well as cycling around Newham for her wellbeing.

Jo was voted third in a Radio Times reader poll to find the most popular contender to follow Jodie Foster, behind Michael Sheen and Richard Ayoade. ●

# The lasting pain of Coronavirus

**Thana Narashiman** is one of 225 people in Newham known to be suffering from long Covid. He argues for action to recognise and treat the condition.

The Covid-19 virus pandemic has left a lasting mark on many of the survivors of the illness – those now recognised as sufferers from long Covid.

As someone who caught Covid in April 2020 and now suffering from long Covid – diagnosed in October 2020 – the impact has been debilitating on my day to day activities. It may now be time for this condition to be classed as a long-term disability.

The NHS has rightly focused on the main Covid pandemic with billions of pounds allocated. But sadly the funding for long Covid has lagged with sufferers not referred for rapid response diagnostics coupled with treatments. It seems we have been forgotten while clinical pathways are being drafted. In contrast, the USA has classified long Covid as a long term disability and enacted laws (Americans with Disabilities ADA) to protect sufferers from discrimination.

One of the main symptoms is the severe lethargy, plus short term memory loss (brain fog) and breathing issues that have prevented me from wearing a mask. However, I have counted over 24 symptoms and 200 have been reported in all. I had to curtail many of my usual activities and am mostly housebound at the moment. Even travelling to the local supermarket is challenging.

Dr Kate Corlett, Medical Director Community Health Services, East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT) states: “long Covid is a significant cause of disability even in people who were not hospitalised with their initial infection and have no detectable abnormality on examination and investigation, for example chest X-ray.”

Now, finally, in July 2021, I have been referred by my GP to specialist cardiologists and neurologists with long waiting lists for full diagnostics related to heart palpitations and internal potential nerve muscle pain manifesting in “body tremors and vibrations” but other symptoms

remains unresolved pending clarity on budget and clinical pathways.

There is also a stigma around long Covid as I have encountered medical staff thinking I might transmit the Covid virus – which is untrue. I have had both doses of the vaccine after the diagnosis of long Covid and the vaccine was not the causal factor for



Thana Narashiman

long Covid or its associated symptoms. I wanted to share this to dispel any myths.

Nationally around 2 million people are impacted by long Covid, but in Newham around 225 were diagnosed as of July 2021. Many I suspect have not been diagnosed with this “invisible” disease due to lack of public health dissemination. I did approach Public Health Newham but no response was provided.

Councillor Zulfiqar Ali, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care said: “long Covid is of significant concern given the huge numbers of people that have been impacted by Covid 19 locally. While our understanding of long Covid is in its early days, we are working closely with our NHS partners to understand both the scale of the impact and ensure there is adequate and proper support for people suffering”.

My MP Stephen Timms has been a strong advocate for me and for others, raising questions with the stakeholders and states: “The NHS is still

trying to get to grips with long Covid. I understand that there are now 89 specialist clinics in England, and, in June, the government announced a £100 million expansion of long Covid care. With so many people affected, it is vital that we have the funding locally for the services we need, and that GPs are trained as soon as possible to support those patients who are affected.”

With around £25 million budget for community services allocated to ELFT, it is very regretful that the Newham NHS commissioners have lagged allocating budget to treat long Covid. Currently, only online triages hubs exist in Newham and I have not been seen by any long Covid medical specialists despite having reached out for urgent intervention. There should be specialist Covid units with expertise to treat – and not simply diagnose – this condition.

I urge the local NHS commissioning Board and the Health Minister to rapidly collaborate for an integrated approach to treating this syndrome holistically and engage better with identified sufferers so that they can compile data coupled with multi-disciplinary expertise.

The primary focus on Covid itself has masked the health inequalities for long Covid sufferers and we need to level-up better outcomes – and it needs to start now. ●

According to ELFT a specialist hub on dealing with long Covid for Tower Hamlets and Newham is being established. The following online resources will provide more information and support for people worried about the impact of long Covid:

- Supporting your recovery after covid: [www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk](http://www.yourcovidrecovery.nhs.uk)
- Royal College of Occupational Therapists Resources: [www.rcot.co.uk/conserving-energy](http://www.rcot.co.uk/conserving-energy) and [www.rcot.co.uk/node/3540](http://www.rcot.co.uk/node/3540)
- COVID 19 Patient Rehabilitation Booklet [flipbooks.leadsth.nhs.uk/LN004864.pdf](http://flipbooks.leadsth.nhs.uk/LN004864.pdf)
- Resources and webinars: [www.longcovid.org/resources/patients](http://www.longcovid.org/resources/patients)
- Yoga for post covid patients: [www.theyogaforlifeproject.co.uk](http://www.theyogaforlifeproject.co.uk)



Dave and Carol Richards

## St John's Dave and Carol on the move after 31 years

Dave and Carol Richards, veteran champions of community rights in Newham, are moving on after 31 years at St John's Church in Stratford.

They will hold final services at St John's on Sunday 5th September at 11am and 6pm and are inviting everyone to join them. They will retire to Dorset, where they expect to continue ministry at their local church.

Dave and Carol arrived at St John's – “The Big One in the Middle” – at Stratford in 1990. At the time the church was struggling, with a small congregation and a backlog of repairs to the building.

Today it is home to a large congregation, one of the most diverse in London, with about 55 nationalities represented, and the building has become a major base for community meetings. It has hosted large events, in partnership with others, such as the 2018 World Cup Large screen, the 2012 Olympic Community festival, and the annual Love Stratford event.

The couple have been dedicated community activists. Carol has been a board member of every Regeneration group in Stratford Town Centre, starting with Stratford City Challenge in 1992, and continuing to the Stratford Original BID.

Dave has been a school governor, part of the Westfield Chaplaincy Team, has hosted the Local Police Ward Panel, and was a founder member of the Greater Carpenters Neighbourhood Forum, challenging Sir Robin Wales' plans to demolish the Carpenters Estate.

They said: “We have loved every minute of our time at Stratford. We have seen it grow and develop into an amazing place. We will miss the vibrant church and the diverse community. We have been so lucky to work with such wonderful people.”

It will take about nine months to appoint a new Vicar at St John's, and, meanwhile, Rev. Robert Otule, Associate Vicar, will be in charge. ●



Photo courtesy John Walker

## Exposing the horrors of childhood poverty in Victorian Forest Gate

THOMAS HOLDROYD

**O**ut of Sight, Out of Mind, Abuse, Neglect and Fire in a London Children's Workhouse is a new book from Forest Gate resident and author John Walker.

The local historian is also owner of the highly successful history blog E7 Now and Then: [www.e7-nowandthen.org](http://www.e7-nowandthen.org).

His book is an account of the lives of Victorian east London pauper children, from the age of two, trapped in an institution where abuse, neglect, ill-discipline and corruption were

“The more I looked, the greater the story emerged... It took about a year to research, and the writing gave me something to do during lockdown!”

rife. The story is told in the context of how English authorities treated ‘looked-after’ children over a thousand-year period.

I asked John what prompted him to tell this story: “Having written about the building in my blog, I’ve been left wanting to find out more. I started to dig around in archives and was amazed at what I discovered about the Forest Lane establishment.

“There was a book in it, which I felt I had to write! The establishment housed over 50,000 East End workhouse youngsters, from the age of two, in the second half of the nineteenth century. After its closure as a workhouse school, it became Forest Gate maternity hospital, until

the 1980s, where it saw the birth of 50,000 Newham babies. The stories of all of those children and the subsequent lives of many are told, and they are gripping.”

A great deal of research was required for the book. John said: “Very little has been published about the institution, but there are thousands of documents about them in the London Metropolitan and National Archives, and thousands of articles about them in nineteenth century newspapers. The more I looked, the greater the story emerged, of, as the title of the book indicates, abuse,

scandal and the devastating fire on New Year’s Day 1890, killing 26 children. It took about a year to research, and the writing gave me something to do during lockdown!”

So what is next? “Let’s see how this goes. I’m at the early stages of investigating another gripping local history topic concerning one more little-known institution, about which there are reams of documents in the Essex Records Office. I need to dig a bit deeper to work out if it becomes a book, or a smaller pamphlet – but there is definitely a story to be told!”

Published 26 August 2021, priced £12.99 the book will be launched at Newham Bookshop on the same date.

## Grandchildren inspire memoir of ‘a Forest Gate girl’

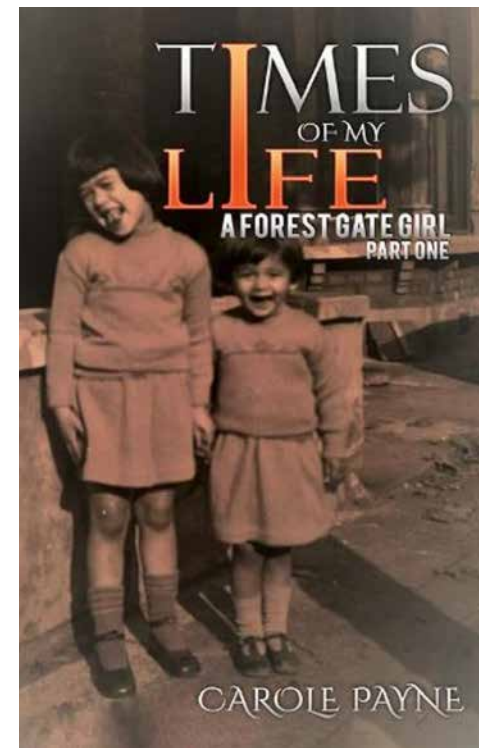
JULIA OMARI

**L**ocal author Carole Payne was born in Forest Gate in 1950, the second of six children, after her family fled India, the country that had been their home for generations, but where it had become too dangerous to remain.

Carole spent her childhood being shaped by the excitement of London in the 1960s and ‘70s, first as a student at St Angela’s Convent, then City University, before setting off to fulfill her many goals, one of which was writing.

She achieved success on all fronts: a career, marriage and children, but it was becoming a grandmother that inspired her to write her first book, called *Times Of My Life*. Carole wanted to pass on to her grandchild the many stories, memories and traditions she had continued from her mother and grandmother.

In *Times Of My Life*, Carole shares the premarital years of her life growing up in Forest Gate in a time before



technology played such a big role in childhood. It is available to buy from Newham Bookshop. ●

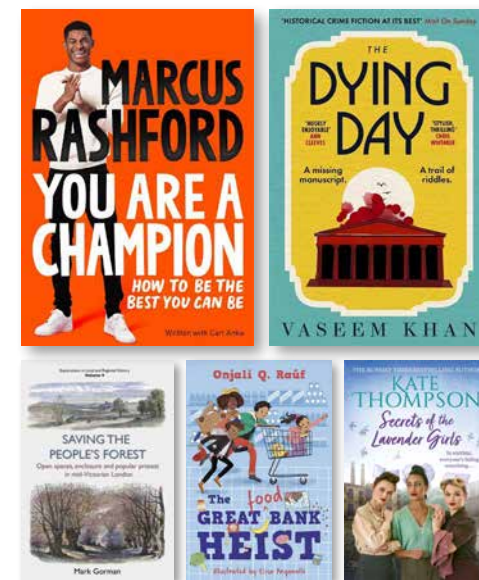
## Good reads in Newham

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

- *Secrets of the Lavender Girls* by Kate Thompson
- *The Dying Day* by Vaseem Khan
- *Saving the People’s Forest* by Mark Gorman
- *The Great (Food) Bank Heist* by Onjali Q. Raúf
- *You are a Champion* by Marcus Rashford

Compiled by David Ceen

[newhambooks.co.uk](http://newhambooks.co.uk)  
 @NewhamBookshop



## Are you ready to challenge racism?

Newham Council is looking for people to join the Newham Race Equality Alliance to help tackle racial inequalities. The Council is seeking an independent chair and eight people as members of the Alliance to champion race equality across the Borough.

To find out more, go to: [www.newham.gov.uk/council/get-involved-shaping-new-newham-race-equality-alliance](http://www.newham.gov.uk/council/get-involved-shaping-new-newham-race-equality-alliance)

People from African and Caribbean backgrounds have been a fundamental part of East London and British history for centuries, and every year **Black History Month** – in October – provides an opportunity to celebrate their value and contribution to our community.

The next issue of *Newham Voices* will highlight the impact on Newham of black heritage and the importance of black culture to our community with stories to celebrate Black History Month 2021.

We will carry stories on the contribution made by the Black community in the fields of social welfare, culture, sport and, of course, in the world of business.

In her report below **Michelle Harris** highlights the contribution made by a black entrepreneur who over 30 years overcame personal challenges to make his barber shop a cornerstone of the community and, bottom, **Neandra Etienne** talks to a local author about her inspiration and the changing climate for black writers.



## Black culture: a cut above the rest

**H**airdresser Patrick Phipps has come a long way since he opened the doors of the barber studio Cut Above the Rest at 339 Barking Road 30 years ago.

Patrick – better known to many as ‘Uncle Pat’ – said: “I was just 21 when I got the keys to the shop, and I’ll never forget how much resilience it took to make this happen. At one point I thought it almost wouldn’t.”

He was expelled from school at the age of 14, diagnosed with dyslexia and told by his teachers that he ‘wouldn’t amount to much.’

He didn’t agree. “This didn’t sit right with me,” he said, “so I picked up a hairdressing course at City and East London College in Stratford. I was the only one to pass and since then I dreamed of having my own business.”

“The community is what spurred me on. I’ll never forget being up on a ladder trying to paint my shop sign. I was nowhere near ready to open, but already there were three people downstairs calling up to me for a haircut. I knew then everything I had gone through was worth it. I put my brush down, and with just a few milk crates I sat people down and started cutting hair in between renovating the place.”

Over the years he has cut the hair of children who became fathers and then grandfathers “Now I cut their sons, sons’ hair! That’s four generations!” he says. And he has been an inspiration to others.

“I’ve seen many barbers come and go,” he said. “Some I’ve trained and proud to see they have gone on to start their own shops now. The best part is witnessing the growth of cli-

“The best part is witnessing the growth of clients like the music artists Kano and Ghetts who went on to really make something of themselves.”

ents like the music artists Kano and Ghetts who went on to really make something of themselves. It’s experiences like this that make it very hard for me to be just a barber.”

Now his barber shop is a centrepiece of the community. He has published four books, been a qualified teacher at Newham college and in 2018 won the Community Hero award from Newham based non-profit organisa-



Patrick with Stephen Timms. ©Neandra Etienne

tion Troan. He also has more plans – to launch a barbering academy where he will teach 16–19-year-olds. “I just want to make a difference and this way I can.”

– Michelle Harris

## Love and criminal justice

**T**hirty years working in the criminal justice system inspired Pamela R Haynes to write a book that puts the probation service at the centre of the story.

*Loving The Brothers* focuses on Patti, a Senior Probation Officer; Charmaine, a stressed out mum of twins; and Rose, a pastor’s wife with five daughters.

Previous experience of dealing with domestic violence at HM Crown Prosecution Service and later at the Probation Service in Stratford, gave her the idea to tackle this issue.

She said: “I chose to include the cycle of domestic abuse to demonstrate the different forms of abuse, for example, financial, emotional and physical abuse.”

Pamela didn’t feel any pressure to

write a story that focuses on Black issues, because domestic abuse occurs regardless of race, educa-



Pamela R Haynes

tion, job or religion. However she wanted to highlight why abusive relationships affect black women differently.

“For Black women there is a real fear about involving the authorities when things go wrong in their relationships, because of the discrimination they may experience and the systematic racism within large organisations like the police, social services and the family courts.”

It took Pamela two years to write *Loving The Brothers* alongside working full time.

Her experience of publishing was not always positive.

“The feedback I received from agents was not always helpful. Some suggested I change the title of my book, the cover or make one of my

protagonists white. Unfortunately, that was non-negotiable.”

But Pamela noticed a change after the death of George Floyd.

“A significant number of traditional publishing houses have appeared to open their doors,” she said. “I have certainly seen more mentoring opportunities and writing competitions focused on redressing the balance.”

Pamela completed her second book during lockdown, a sequel called *Loving The Sisters* and is currently writing her third novel *Loving The Children*.

– Neandra Etienne

📍 [anchor.fm/pamela-r-haynes](https://anchor.fm/pamela-r-haynes)

📘 @prhaynes

📖 @lovingthebrothersauthor

🐦 @PamPamHaynes

# From derelict site to the green heart of the community

NEANDRA ETIENNE

When local residents Lloyd Jeans, Myanah Saunders, Paul and Karin Holloway, Yasmine Curpen and Hugh Barnard discovered a rundown site close to the town centre, they recognised the area had potential to become a community garden.

Eight years later, after a fight for the lease and a two-year consultation with local people, Myanah believes their dream space is making a major contribution to life in the area.

Lloyd explained how it all started: “The idea of a community garden was born in April 2013, engendered by local opposition from ‘Save Forest Gate’ to a proposal to build a 26-storey tower block on the site.

“We spent two years consulting with the local community to plan our dream space while we fought for the lease. We finally succeeded in May 2015, and that’s when the hard

work began.

“When we first found the site we never imagined the garden would become so special. As well as being a peaceful haven for wildlife and a place for relaxing and meeting friends, it has become somewhere where people can make new friends and develop new interests.

“The success of the garden is entirely down to the efforts of the many volunteers, who are there summer and



Photo courtesy Myanah Saunders

winter, whatever the weather.”

Forest Gate Community Garden is a charitable organisation that aims to create and maintain green spaces for wildlife, wellbeing, plants and people.

They are involved with local community groups including the Maggie Project (for homeless families with young children), the Forest Gate Festival, Forest Gayte Pride, Bloomin’ Forest Gate, UCL Stratford Campus, Woodgrange Market, Forest Arts and Newham Climate Collective. They also take referrals from GP social prescribers and mental health services.

Their sub group, Green Shoots, is committed to improving the local environment by working alongside local residents to maintain street planters and plant up bare spaces.

Local musician and artist Paul Romane is an occasional van driver and regular visitor to the garden.

“It’s a great community resource and I admire the work that the volunteers put in. It’s been a pleasure to

watch the garden grow both as a garden and as a place where people can meet and learn about gardening. The garden has given space for artists and musicians to teach and play.”

The land is owned by the London Borough of Newham. They have plans to redevelop the area into housing. Forest Gate Community Garden hopes to have the lease renewed in May 2025, however, if this is not successful they may have to look for another site. ●

## Volunteering

136 Earlham Grove, London E7 9AS  
Fridays and Saturdays 10am to 3pm  
Summer 10am to 12pm on Sundays.  
*Two volunteers are always on site to ensure public safety, welcome visitors, open and lock up. The Garden is also available for hire at a small fee.*

[info@fgcommunitygarden.org](mailto:info@fgcommunitygarden.org)  
[fgcommunitygarden.org](http://fgcommunitygarden.org)  
[@FGCommGarden](https://twitter.com/FGCommGarden)

**As we wind down after the summer, do take time out to visit and support our local coffee shops, cafés and restaurants. Remember to always stay safe.**



Scan to access the interactive map online.

Here are a few venues that would welcome your support. While you’re there, don’t forget to mention *Newham Voices*.

## East Ham

- 1 **Central Park Café**  
Bartle Avenue, East Ham, London E6 3AJ

## Forest Gate

- 2 **Giovanna’s Deli & Wine**  
58 Woodgrange Rd, Forest Gate, London E7 0QH
- 3 **The Fox & Hounds**  
178 Forest Lane, Forest Gate, London E7 9BB

## Manor Park

- 4 **Kaldi Coffee**  
345 High St North, Manor Park, London E12 6PQ

## Plaistow

- 5 **Cornerstone Café**  
408 Barking Road, Plaistow, London E13 8HJ
- 6 **The Cali Candy Shop**  
538a Barking Road, Plaistow E13 8QE
- 7 **The Greengate Café**  
538b Barking Road, Plaistow E13 8QE

## Stratford

- 8 **Olive and Lemon Mediterranean Café**  
30 Broadway, Stratford E15 4QS
- 9 **Jollof Hut**  
65a North Mall, Shopping Centre, Stratford, E15 1XF
- 10 **The Refreshment Room**  
25 Broadway, Stratford, E15 4BQ

## SPORTS SHORTS

Compiled by Neandra Etienne

**Central Park All Stars (CPA FC)** was started in 2020 by two parents from East Ham who wanted to give young people from the ages of 5 to 16 the opportunity to play affordable football within a structured, safe and enjoyable environment.

All of their games are carried out under the supervision of FA qualified coaches who are DBS checked.

The club recently started a CPA Girls FC. Training days and times are Saturday 9.00 – 11.00 and Wednesday 17.30 – 18.30.

There are 5 CPA FC teams playing in the Echo League season 2021-2022.

[www.cpa.fc.co.uk](http://www.cpa.fc.co.uk)

[@echoleague](https://twitter.com/echoleague)

Take the first step to becoming a **BMX Olympic medal champion** by signing up for some free coaching sessions.

This is open to Newham young people aged 9-19. All abilities are welcome. Equipment is provided or if you have your own bike bring that along. All sessions are weather dependent.

11, 25 September, 11am – 1pm at Gooseley Playing Fields BMX Track, St Albans Ave, East Ham, E6 6HU

[bonnydowns.org/youth](http://bonnydowns.org/youth)

**London Lions** men have announced their Basketball League fixtures for the 2021/22 season.

They travel to Surrey for an opening night match against the Scorchers on Friday 24 September followed by their first home game of the season two days later against the Plymouth Raiders on Sunday 26 September.

Copper Box Arena in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford

[www.thelondonlions.com](http://www.thelondonlions.com)

**Clapton CFC** put a call out to their members to design and vote on their new home shirt in celebration of the return of football to the Old Spotted Dog Ground.

Their new home outfield shirt is designed by Maurizio and their new home goalkeeper shirt is designed by Ed. Rage Sport will produce the kits, which will hopefully be ready in time for the teams to wear when they play back at the Old Spotted Dog Ground.



Clapton CFC kits

Clapton CFC Women's first team have announced their fixture list for the new 2021/2022 season starting in September.

[www.claptoncfc.co.uk](http://www.claptoncfc.co.uk)

**JK Silvertown FC** is an amateur sports team currently playing in the Essex Sunday Combination Senior Division. They started the club in memory of their friend James Kiely who died in 2011.

Chairman and former Manager, Ben Short, told BBC Sport: "We're an 11-a-side team and we've all known each other for 20 odd years. Silvertown's the area we all come from and JK is the initials of our friend that passed away."

Details of their games can be found at:

[@JKSILVERTOWNFC](https://twitter.com/JKSILVERTOWNFC)

[@jksilvertownfc](https://twitter.com/jksilvertownfc)



**A1 Judo Club** founded in 2009 is a thriving family run community club. They cater for all levels and ages; ranging from 3 year olds to adults.

If you would like to take up the Olympic sport of judo, register your interest by going on their website. Visitors and new starters are always welcome; the first session is FREE.

Wednesdays at East Ham Leisure Centre

- 6.30-7.30pm (4-9 year olds)
- 7.30-8.30pm (10+ including seniors)
- Saturdays at Central Park East Ham
- 1.30-2pm (Tots 3-4 year olds)
- 2-2.45pm (5-12 year olds)

[www.aijudo.com](http://www.aijudo.com)

**Upton Park Ladies** play in the Greater London Women's Football League. They are looking for new players, experienced defenders and midfielders ideally ages 18+ to join their first team.

They train at Royal Docks Academy on Wednesday evenings.

Spectators are welcome to come and support the team for free during their home games at West Ham Foundation, Beckton E6 5NX

Ridgeway Rovers Ladies First 12 September, Leyton Orient FC Women 26 September

[info@uptonparkladies.com](mailto:info@uptonparkladies.com)

[www.uptonparkladiesfc.co.uk](http://www.uptonparkladiesfc.co.uk)

**Forest Crusaders Women** play in the Greater London Women's Football League (GLWFL). They will be play-

ing two home games in September.

Spectators are welcome to come and support the team for free at the Memorial Sports Ground in West Ham. You can buy their merchandise including scarfs, hats and pin badges during their home games.

Alexandra Park FC 5 September, Leyton Orient Woman 19 September

[@CrusadersWFC](https://twitter.com/CrusadersWFC)

[@CrusadersWFC](https://facebook.com/CrusadersWFC)

[@forestcrusaderswfc](https://instagram.com/forestcrusaderswfc)

Congratulations to **East London Rugby Football Club's Vixens** ladies' team player Kat Salthouse for winning the diversity and inclusion category at the national final of the prestigious Mitsubishi Motors Volunteer of the Year Awards 2021.

Kat, women's rugby development officer on East London RFC's management committee, was nominated by the club based at Memorial Park, West Ham, and supported by Essex County Rugby Football Union.

[www.eastlondonrfc.com](http://www.eastlondonrfc.com)

Two pupils from **St Bons Franklin and Torron** were awarded Most Valuable Player (MVP) at the Ball Out National 3x3 Basketball Competition.

Former St Bons student Erinaldo Krasniqi who left school in 2019 to play for Huddersfield Town Football Club in 2019 has gone on loan to Falkirk FC.

East London Sport interviewed British Canoeing and University of East London scholar Chris Bowers about what motivates him and his plans to compete in Paris 2024.

[@eastldn\\_sport](https://twitter.com/eastldn_sport)

**Active Newham** work closely with 3 Cricket Clubs in Newham: Newham Cricket Club, West Ham and Stratford Cricket Club (ages 5 to 16) and Bow Green. They offer a range of opportunities to play cricket and improve your skills.

Indoor cricket facilities are also available at East Ham Leisure Centre and Newham Leisure Centre.

[www.activenewham.org.uk/cricketnewhamcc.com](http://www.activenewham.org.uk/cricketnewhamcc.com)

[westham.play-cricket.com](http://westham.play-cricket.com)

[bowgreen.play-cricket.com](http://bowgreen.play-cricket.com)

The **London Youth Games** is a London-wide sporting event in which all London boroughs compete.

This year, the programme has been regionalised and Newham will be competing against boroughs from the East region of London.

In September, Newham competes in Basketball 5th September, Football 11th September, Cricket 12th September and Volleyball 12th. No spectators are allowed this year apart from family of the participants.

[www.londonyouthgames.org](http://www.londonyouthgames.org)

Congratulations to the **Manor Park Ladies** 313 Dragon Boat Team for winning the Al-Noor Boat Race for the third time.

The Al-Noor Annual Boat Race, established by the Al-Noor Foundation in 2018, at Fairlop Waters in Redbridge aims to unite the community whereby individuals, families and organisations have the opportunity to raise money for charitable causes which are close to their hearts. The Ladies raised money for the charity Save One Life.

[@313fitnessofficial](https://twitter.com/@313fitnessofficial)

[@saveonelifeuk](https://twitter.com/@saveonelifeuk)

## London Landmarks Half Marathon

On Sunday 1 August over £3,500 was raised for Caritas Anchor House by a team of seven runners in the London Landmarks Half Marathon.

The Newham runners who fundraised for Caritas Anchor House were Andy Lewis, James Mackay, Jose Daniel, Andrea Thompson and Alexis Wilson.

Caritas Anchor House's mission is to build hope, enable lasting change and end homelessness for people in East London. They provide accommodation and support to single homeless adults in Newham where 1 in 23 people have nowhere to live; this is the highest rate of homelessness in the country.

[www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk](http://www.caritasanchorhouse.org.uk)



L-R: Jose Daniel, James Mackay, and Andy Lewis; Alexis Wilson (photos via Facebook)

# Training Newham's unsung carers

ZHENREENAH MUHXINGA

Unpaid carers have been pushed to their limits every day caring for loved ones throughout the pandemic. They have often been overlooked and overwhelmed, working under pressure and saving the government billions of pounds every day. We should also remember the contribution of young carers and the role they play.

The Carers Health Empowerment Programme (CHEP), funded by the Big Lottery Fund, has provided support – aiming to empower carers in Newham to become more resilient, through professional training and workshops, and then providing practical and holistic support by mentoring other carers, in a friendly and social environment.

In year one of the programme carers from a variety

of groups and organisations in Newham attended workshops to help determine the content for the programme in year two from June 2020 to May 2021. Those who took part expressed how challenging it was to study during lockdown, while taking care of their loved ones at the same time.

All carers who completed the course thanked Shirley Barber who designed and delivered the advocacy module. She also delivered training relating to the rights of carers and those they care for. Carers also thanked Catherine Isles who facilitates Health and Wellbeing for the carers and the Renewal Programme for their support and patience during covid challenging times.

In the picture nine proud carers receive their awards for completing the course. ●

Zhenreenah Muhxinga is Chair, Carers Community Mental Health Group



## Internships for young people with special needs

JEAN GRAY

Young people with disabilities and autism are being offered internships with Barts Health NHS Trust as part of the Newham Supported Internship Programme run jointly with Newham College, Newham Council, Generate Job Coaches and Our Newham Works.

It is open to people aged between 16 and 30 with special educational needs and disabilities who can potentially move into employment. But anyone interested in taking up the opportunity will need to move fast. The next intake starts this month and runs until July 2022.

Through training and direct work experience, young people will develop employability skills, self-confidence, job specific skills and maths, English and computer skills while working alongside employees in a real employment environment.

The Barts scheme involves spending time in a wide variety of settings at Newham hospital, carrying out activities such as catering, booking appointments, engaging with children, deliveries and restocking cupboards, with an end goal of finding a job.

Barts is one of several local organisations offering internships, including Asda, Send Coffee, Newham Council, John Lewis and Waitrose.

For an application form and more information contact:

• Joseph Kunyeda (LBN Our Newham Work)  
[joseph.kunyeda@newham.gov.uk](mailto:joseph.kunyeda@newham.gov.uk)  
Tel. 0203 373 4948

• Angie Hincks (Newham College)  
[angie.hincks@newham.ac.uk](mailto:angie.hincks@newham.ac.uk)

Further information is available at: [supportedprojects@newham.ac.uk](mailto:supportedprojects@newham.ac.uk)

# Golden sporting moments at Home and Away!



ON THE  
BALL

Mickey Ambrose praises the heroes of Tokyo and celebrates a winning West Ham start.

What a golden month it's been – there have been golden moments for Britain's Olympians in Tokyo and for West Ham as they kick off the new Premier League season with two stunning wins!

How does the old saying go – you wait for one bus and then they all come together – well that can be said for sport, too following England's superb football display in the Euro's, Great Britain came fourth in the medals table at the delayed Tokyo securing a total of 65 medals – 22 of them

gold. So well done to our athletes this time – we are proud of you all.

There were so many inspirational performances and heroes to talk about – Laura and Jason Kenny, of course with Jason winning seven cycling golds and nine in total, and swimmer Tom Daley who we recall popping into our local Tesco Express on Stratford High Street after the 2012 Olympics. Then there's Adam Peaty, Max Whitlock, Jonathan Brownlee, his brother Alistair, Galal Yafao in boxing, Laura Muir (who finally got

a medal) and Keely Hodgkinson, winning silver in the 1500 and 800 metres respectively,

I have to mention 13-year-old Sky Brown who won bronze in skateboarding, Britain's youngest Olympic medallist ever (personally I struggle to go on the Tea-Cup ride at Thorpe Park let alone trying to balance myself on a Skateboard) but what a courageous young athlete and what skill she showed.

But my pick of the bunch is the gold medal for Lauren Price, Wales's first female boxer, a former Welsh footballer, and kickboxer who was raised by her grandparents as a new-born after her parents gave her up. In her hometown of Ystrad Mynach in Caerphilly the council have painted a telephone box GOLD how cool is that.

Onto football and let's cheer for West Ham United who beat Newcastle 4 – 2 (away) reversing the



fortunes from their opening game last season – also against Newcastle – which they lost! Who picks the names out of the fixture hat?

They followed that up by thumping Leicester 4 – 1 with Michail Antonio scoring to become the Hammers top goal scorer in the Premier League, overtaking Paolo Di Canio. Wow! Well done Michail.

I hope to interview Michail for next month's *Newham Voices* – so tell all your family and friends to pick up a copy. I get mine in Sainsbury's in the old Stratford Shopping Mall as you exit where the Security Staff are (hint, hint..). ●

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