



Newham Voices

Community News and Views

FREE

Issue 31 | July 2023

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Image via @WestHam



Have your say in key elections

Newham Voices is giving local voters an exclusive opportunity to question political candidates before two crucial Newham Council by-elections to be held on July 13.

A meeting of all the candidates standing for election in the Boleyn and Wall End wards will be held at East Ham library on Saturday July 10 at 10.30am.

The vacancies arise following the resignations of Labour's Luke Charters and Cecilia Welsh. Cecilia has resigned for family reasons and Luke has decided to quit to focus on his campaign for election to parliament in York in advance of the general election expected within the coming year.

By-elections are inevitably a mix of local concerns such as pollution, fly-tipping and transport as well as wider national issues including increasing poverty, the homes crisis, and the health service.

With a national election due next

year, these Newham votes will test the credibility of all political players. Candidates from Labour, Green, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Reform parties and one independent will face a grilling from residents on how they will deal with the challenges facing local people.

We are looking for a lively and robust debate, and we will make sure that there is none of the ugly hate-speech which arose in some campaigning for elections to the council last year.

Political parties need to give leadership in this campaign by showing respect for democratic values and avoiding any hateful targeting of their opponents – even where they disagree strongly.

These elections will also be historic – the first elections in Newham where voters will have to show photographic ID when they get to the polling station. If people don't have one, they can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate. The deadline to

NEWHAM VOTES: YOUR CHANCE TO QUIZ CANDIDATES IN BOLEYN AND WALL END

Newham Voices is holding a hustings for candidates in the two local by-elections

Saturday 8 July | 10:30
East Ham Library cafe

Refreshments will be provided

apply for Voter Authority Certificate is 5pm, Wednesday 5 July 2023.

How to apply and more information on acceptable forms of voter ID is available on the council website:

www.newham.gov.uk/council/elections-coming

Newham Voices is providing a golden opportunity for local democracy. Come and have your say

Candidates' statements – see pages 4-5



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.

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Newham Voices is a not-for-profit newspaper published by Social Spider Community News: Visit socialspidercommunitynews.co.uk

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Council Notebook: Report highlights pregnancy deaths among black women

Peter Landman reports from the June Newham Council Cabinet

A council report into maternity services in the Borough has revealed a disturbing statistic that there is a higher rates of stillbirths and death rates in pregnancy among Asian and black women.

Council leaders at the Cabinet meeting received the Health and Social Adult Care Scrutiny Report into Maternity Services which reveals that the fewest number of stillbirths and deaths in pregnancy is among white women, higher among Asian women, and still higher among black women.

The report blames the health impact of the cost of living crisis and recommends closer partnerships between the Council and Maternity Services and also with food banks and the Newham Food Alliance to ensure pregnant women receive good health advice, sufficient fresh food, vitamins and folic acid.

Corporate Plan Review: Council leaders also reviewed the progress of the

Newham Corporate plan Building a Fairer Newham. The largest amount detailed in the performance report is £50,000 funding to rewild the Greenway, the pedestrian and cycle way that snakes through urban Newham.

On a bigger scale, there could also be a massive lease agreement for a new Health Centre in Freemasons Road. The Council will start negotiating with Health and Care Space Ltd, the company set up jointly with Newham Council and East London Foundation Trust to provide integrated health/social centres.

Government Household Support Fund. Newham has received around £7 million for the coming year. Nearly £4 million is allocated for free holiday meals to children and young people eligible for free school meals and to children from families with no recourse to public funds. About £1 million is for residents who have made applications to Our Newham Money.

Housing Revenue Account Management. Council tenants and leaseholders are to be consulted over a new management strategy that aims to bring Newham into line with the forthcoming Social Housing Regulation Bill; to coordinate the separate repairs and maintenance teams; and to make the council's housing stock more energy efficient.

Gas and electricity use accounts for a quarter of Newham's carbon emissions, so the strategy includes phasing out of gas central heating systems.

Special Educational Needs And Disabilities Strategy. Also going out for consultation are the priorities to identify special needs in a child as early as possible, to increase access to specialised support and to prepare the young people concerned for adulthood.

Anti Social Behaviour Scrutiny Commission Report. Council officers gave written responses, particularly in relation to women's safety with detail of the newly introduced Women's Safety App and the Night Safety Charter.

Homes forum and fun days

DEAN ARMOND

A new programme of consultation with local residents over the Borough homes crisis has been launched by Newham Council.

The Local Area Forum programme allows residents to meet the councillors and officers to discuss priorities for housing and plans for the area.

Cabinet member for housing, Cllr Shaban Mohammed said: "Housing Local Area forums are a great opportunity for residents to have their say."

Residents receive information about the current Housing hubs (in Stratford and Canning Town) and plans for more hubs to discuss housing issues in person. There is also discussion about priorities for the future.

The final forum for Plaistow West, Canning Town, Custom House, Beckton, Royal Victoria, Royal Albert areas is on 5 July at Canning Town Library, London E16 1EH, 6.30-8.30pm.

The forums are followed by a series of estate Community Fun Days. The dates are: 26 July 12-5pm Jack Cornwell Open Space (Jack Cornwell Street, E12); 2 August 12-5 pm Westland House/Queensland House (Rymill Street E16); 9 August 12-5pm May Green (Watson Street, E13); and 16 August 12-5pm College Point (Wolffe Gardens E15 2JJ)

For more information visit: newham.gov.uk/housing-homes-homelessness/local-area-forums

Triumph of late bloomer Lorraine Tapper

SHEILA NURSIMHULU

In a world that often idolises youth and early success, it is refreshing and inspiring to come across the story of Lorraine Tapper's remarkable success as an artist late in life after a long career as a social worker.

Hackney-born Lorraine, now a Newham resident, defied societal expectations and embarked on a creative journey in her sixties.

The fascinating thing is that she had never had any interest in the world of arts until her chance encounter with her art teacher, Eleanor Pearce whom she credits with her success.

As a woman of colour of Caribbean descent, she always believed that the arts were for other people and not for people of colour.

At the age of 67, with a profound passion and love for visual arts, Lorraine is now flourishing in the realm of great artists. Quoting George Eliot, she quips, "It is never too late to be what you might have been" and says her artistic expression is influenced by the vibrant colours of the Caribbean

and her life experiences.

According to the artist, one of the advantages of starting later in life is the wealth of experience that she has been able to draw from her personal journey, her resilience, identity, and the human condition. Her artwork became a reflection of her life, capturing the essence of emotions, memories, and the



wisdom she had gained over the years, but most importantly, the vibrant colours of the Caribbean and Africa, the land of her forefathers.

Her exhibitions received critical acclaim, and her artwork began to find a place in galleries and private collections. Despite the initial scepticism surrounding

her late start, Tapper's talent and unique perspective resonated with art enthusiasts, establishing her as a successful artist.

Starting creative work later in life is not without its challenges, but Lorraine has overcome self-doubt and has shown she could catch up with artists who had devoted their lives to their craft.

Lorraine Tapper exhibition at the Gate, Forest Gate, E7 in July.

“Inhuman” Royal Docks plan for asylum seekers sparks protest

Plans by the government to put up asylum seekers in boats and vessels moored across the country, including in the Royal Docks, have been slammed by Newham’s Mayor.

Rokhsana Fiaz accused prime minister Rishi Sunak and his government of “a cynical and repugnant response to the desperate plight facing people fleeing war, famine and torture”.

In a statement on June 8 she said: “As a Borough that welcomes refugees compassionately, we will resist these plans using all and any pow-



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ers at our disposal.”

She said the Council was supporting the Royal Docks Management Authority which has rejected Home Office proposals to moor a vessel to house migrants and asylum seekers in the historic docks.

“The government’s flagrant disregard of international frameworks guiding the treatment of those vulnerable people fleeing persecution is inhumane,” said Fiaz.

“Those who have sought sanctuary in the UK should be able to live safely, with dignity and supported compassion-

ately while awaiting decisions on their asylum claims.”

She said putting hundreds of vulnerable people on moored vessels would damage their health and wellbeing, especially children and young people. At the same time, the plans would have “a calamitous impact” on public services.

“Newham has a proud history of welcoming people fleeing conflict and persecution in their home countries,” she said. “We intend to become a borough of sanctuary because we believe in the rights of refugees. They are welcome in Newham.”

NewVic cuts: strikers plan more action

MIRIAM SCHARF

Strikers at Newham’s NewVic say they are fighting to save “Our local community college.”

National Education Union members have held a nationally unprecedented 30 days of strike action during April, May and June in protests over cuts and now are holding a vote to continue stoppages in September.

Last year members took 12 days strike action and successfully stopped plans to convert the college to an academy, but they say the management is not honouring that agreement, and is forging ahead with plans for a merger, which as one striker said, “would not benefit Newham students”.

One student appealed to *Newham Voices*: “Please look into the strike action being taken at NewVic, it’s been horrendous. We’re sitting our exams after not being taught after two months! It’s extremely unfair. Please consider the voices of students.”

On June 15 a group of students barricaded themselves in the office of the principal, Mandeep Gill.

In recent years staff and students have become increasingly unhappy with many issues: the chaos caused at enrolment, and exam mis-management over which the college is being investigated. A vote of no confidence was followed by a ballot for strike action, supported

by more than 90 percent of union members.

Strike days in the Spring Term calling for talks at ACAS were not successful and the union group voted for more action.

The management response was to start making cuts and redundancies. Implementing a restructure that made many highly experienced and valued members of staff redundant.

The huge cuts in the curriculum included that of the nationally award-winning Performing Arts team. It is Performing Arts students who have been regulars on the picket line: dancing, leading the chants and speaking about the importance of the subject and NewVic in their lives.

The cuts have continued with Engineering and Construction threatened with closure. This course is a highly successful, continually outstanding and oversubscribed course and there seems no reason for this cut, but it is noted that one of the five highly experienced staff is also a leading union rep.

NewVic is the only inclusive sixth form college in Newham. Union members have fought long and hard for it to remain serving our community.

A member of the strike committee said, ‘The college just isn’t safe in the hands of this management’.

Newham Voices has contacted NewVic management for a response.

My pride in a medal for giving back

Angela Caroo was awarded an MBE in the King’s birthday honours for her work with local children from deprived backgrounds. She tells her story.

Receiving this award for the work I continue to carry out in Newham for children and families from socio-economically deprived backgrounds, is a real honour.

What started as a Christmas gifting initiative at Barclays where I work, and a wish to give back to children within the community, turned out to be a real light bulb moment for me and my volunteer colleagues.

I was told by more than one head teacher that receiving gifts was nice but they would prefer basic necessities for children who they knew were struggling.

Items such as hats, gloves, scarves and underwear and socks were requested.

After three years of gifting over 600 families within Newham with food hampers, personal care items for parents, and personalised Christmas gift bags for children, I saw first-hand the impact it was having on these families and wanted to do more.

To date we have provided over 4000 gifts to schools and families living below the threshold for government support. In 2021 I realised there was a huge need in this area, which was not being met. I decided alongside five other volunteers to register a non-profit charity, Start Young UK, to support the children and their families long term.

Today, Start Young UK is supporting 20 children on a scheme which provides them with a new school uniform every year, attendance one evening per week at a com-

munity club, and a buddy scheme where mentors write letters to their sponsored child over their academic career path.

Once the young person is of school leaving age, the charity and buddy supports the young person with work experience or apprenticeship. Once employment has been secured the young person will buddy a child from the scheme to ensure legacy. The charity currently is in talks with two other schools to join the scheme.

I have a huge passion for investing in our younger generation, and believe if we all do a little, collectively these children can then benefit a lot.

My honour is a British Empire medal. I know there was a lot wrong with the empire in the past but I believe we have the opportunity to make sure that we make changes in the future.

If you believe you could be a ‘buddy’ (sponsor) please contact us at www.startyounguk.com or follow us on Instagram @startyounguk

Angela Caroo is one of four people from Newham who were recognised in the honours list. The other three are: Beverley Halligan OBE, principal social worker with Newham Council; Ellen Kemp MBE, a member of the Boleyn Trust and a trustee of the Chelmsford Diocese Education Trust; and Caroline Rae MBE, Newham’s Libraries and Community Assets Manager.



We asked the candidates for the 13 July by-elections in Boleyn and Wall End to spell out their answers to the challenges facing residents.

What we

Conservatives

Lawrencia Durojaiye, Boleyn Ward

I have been a care worker for over 20 years. It is a job I love – working with the elderly, the disabled and youngsters. They have hopes, ambitions and dreams too, just like the rest of us.

However, they are fragile to their environment, and that is why it is vital they are both safe and made to feel safe.

This starts with having a clean environment for mobility and to improve their mental health.

Unfortunately, in Boleyn, fly tipping is common. Crime is epidemic – according to local police data, in the month of April 2023 alone there have been 69 criminal incidents of which 25 were violence and sexual offences in Boleyn. Women don't feel safe walking home alone. Parents are deeply concerned about their children. The elderly and disabled are afraid of being robbed.

It is extremely sad to say, however, residents do not feel there is any point calling the police anymore.

I am standing to make our streets safer and cleaner.

I pledge to collaborate closely with our local Safer Neighbourhood Police team. I will maintain a consistent police presence and establish temporary CCTV facilities to enhance safety on our streets and catch fly tippers.

www.met.police.uk/area/your-area/met/newham/boleyn/contact-us/top-reported-crimes-in-this-area.

The Conservative candidate in Wall End is **Durai Kannan**.

Green Party

Joe Hudson-Small, Boleyn

I'm Joe Hudson-Small, a progressive Green activist and IT consultant who has lived in Newham all my adult life and I've got experience working with our existing councillors. I'm a renter and I understand the cost of living crisis and the soaring costs of rent, bills, and food.

The Green Party are the only party with elected councillors

holding Labour to account, who had been unopposed for twelve years until we broke through last year. Greens voted against cuts and council tax rises, and unlike Labour councillors, we aren't told how to vote by our party so we are free to stand up for you.

Boleyn has been neglected – flytipping has been piling up and we know electing another Labour councillor won't change anything – Boleyn has had 11 different Labour councillors in 10 years.

We have inexcusable levels of air pollution and poverty. Labour blames funding cuts but found £160,000 for coronation parties, spending the second most of any council in the country.

Greens listen and work all year round to make our communities safer and greener.

If you want to see change then vote Green this July 13 and choose Joe Hudson-Small as Newham's third Green councillor.

Tassadduq Cheema, Wall End
My Name is Cheema, and I believe that social justice is entwined with climate justice. We need to challenge the status quo and hold this council to account and I would be proud to represent Wall End joining our current two Green councillors.

The Green Party ensure communities are sustainable which also comes with lower bills – something we all need in a cost-of-living crisis. There are real issues with insufficient affordable housing, damaged pavements, potholes in the roads, cycle lanes damaged and of course, litter flowing down the streets with flytipping on every street corner. Nothing has changed under Labour's rule of this Borough.

I want to champion your concerns to make a real difference you can see daily – I want to be invested in the community, strengthening it and helping support everyone.

Greens are the only other party that can beat Labour in Newham. We proved this last year breaking the one-party-state of 100 percent Labour control, winning two council seats and holding Labour to account. I want to be vis-

ible in the community and if elected I will be there for you in order to support you with your issues on a daily basis.

INDEPENDENT

Mehmood Mirza, Boleyn Ward

I have been living in Newham for 25 years and am currently working as a pro bono legal adviser. I believe in equal rights and opportunities for every one regardless of their gender, background or beliefs.

With food inflation at 20%+ and all our bills going sky high, we need a council that protects its people. In the latest budget Newham Labour put up your council tax and made cuts to services totaling millions. Newham council is doing the dirty work of the government. As your local councillor I will challenge the Council to stand up to the government and launch a London wide campaign to demand more money from central government.

Labour are no longer serving the interests of working people, they are acting as agent of Tory Government and fat cats, I will speak out for you. Unlike the other political parties, I am independent which means that I don't have to listen to a political party's instructions or agenda because you as the resident are my party. I only have you to listen to you.

It's time you say No to Newham Labour and elect me as your Boleyn ward councillor to fight for your rights. Let's make history in Boleyn.

Labour

Sofia Patel, Boleyn Ward

I was born in Newham, grew up in Forest Gate, and now live within the heart of the Boleyn ward. I am therefore passionate about my local area and the community I am proud to be a part of. Due to the death of my father when I was five years old, I was brought up in a single-parent household and worked various low-paid jobs in retail, hospitality and care to help provide for my family. These experiences provided me with a strong work ethic that helped me study for a

part-time degree as a mature student and eventually work for the leader of the Labour Party, Sir Keir Starmer MP.

Living in the area and talking to residents, I have a good idea of local priorities. I will bring fresh determination to the campaign against the fly-tipping that blights our area and I will work to ensure our environment is protected and pollution cut.

I will ensure that Boleyn gets the investment and infrastructure it deserves, from new lighting along Green Street to making sure the agreed investment in Queens Market and Priory Park goes ahead. I will work with local police to tackle anti-social behaviour and ensure our streets are safe and homes secure. I will ensure our area benefits from the Council's Cost of Living Crisis response and its action against rogue landlords.

From Green Street to Barking Road, from Priory Park to Henniker Gardens, I will be a determined and tireless advocate for our community and for the area I am proud to call 'home'.

Stephanie Garfield, Wall End

I'm standing to represent the Wall End community on Newham Council because I want to give a voice to residents struggling under the Tory cost of living crisis, and to secure a better deal for working families and local businesses.

I care deeply about this community and the people who make it special because I hail from a working-class household in the West Midlands, in a neighbourhood just like Wall End. Having been a Newham resident for seven years, I've dedicated myself to advocating for social and economic justice, inspired by my roots as a grandchild of the Windrush generation.

My career began as a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter, assisting patients in accessing healthcare. I've supported students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at Newham Sixth Form College, and worked in the NHS during the peak of the pandemic—a testament to my lifelong commitment to public service.

Living in Newham, I understand the day-to-day struggles families in Wall End face, especially given the economic hardship our Tory government has imposed, with skyrocketing rent and mortgage costs, stagnant wages, and an overwhelmed health service. In this by-election, I see a chance to fight for Wall End as well as support local charities and the small business community as your representative.

I am determined to make a lasting difference for the people of Wall End, and together, we can create a brighter future for our community.

Liberal Democrats

Liberal Democrats in Newham believe the Labour council are not doing a good enough job for local people. For decades, they have taken your vote for granted.

Claire Pattie is standing in Wall End. She is a genuine local candidate who lives and works in East Ham and has family living in Wall End ward.

David Terrar is standing in Boleyn. He was born in Limehouse, brought up in a council flat in Barking, is a lifelong Hammers supporter and moved back to Newham in 2020.

Both candidates love the diversity of Newham and the spirit of its people.

They are also passionate about the values the Liberal Democrats stand for – liberty, equality, and community.

Claire is a self-employed lawyer who works with technology businesses supporting their legal needs. She has previously worked as a carer for adults with severe epilepsy, as a swing dancer and teacher and as a lawyer for the BBC.

David has worked in the technology sector for 45 years and is the CEO of a not-for-profit trade body called the Cloud Industry Forum.

Claire has never stood for an election before, but has been an active part of her community, including co-setting up a Resident's Association that aims to nurture support-

stand for

ive community spirit, protect neighbourhood spaces and campaign for the improvement of local services.

David was a councillor for Sandridge Parish in St. Albans for ten years, and chair of the Council for five of those years.

Like the Liberal Democrat party, they both have a track record of getting things done. Both value community-led problem solving, the importance of effective local government and are committed to listening to, and championing, local voices.

As your Councillors, they will serve with empathy, dedication to the area, and will work hard to ensure the provision of essential services to support local community groups and businesses. They both believe community concerns about crime, litter

and facilities need to be better addressed and the steady decline in local green spaces over the last 50 years is a trend that needs to be reversed.



David Sandground, Wall End

Having lived in Wall End for 34 years, I believe that Newham needs opposition to the Labour-dominated Council.

I practised for numerous years as a chartered accountant and as such understand the need for balanced budgets and will put pressure on the Council to deliver.

I wish a review of parking

regulations in order to help encourage customers to our High Street and would reinstate free residents' parking for the first car. I will oppose any proposal for Low Traffic Neighbourhoods. Parking regulations were brought in mainly to stop commuters parking near stations. I would encourage a review of "all-day" restrictions to see if they are necessary.

Education: I would encourage more music, drama and the Arts in general, including appreciation of the Arts, within schools. This widens children's minds and results in a more complete future life. I would also wish to encourage learning facilities, without exams, for those who have retired. This would stimulate their brain and provide places of refuge from inclem-

ent weather during the Cost of Living Crisis.

Finally, I would oppose indoctrination of schoolchildren in such matters as gender identity and critical race theory. There are only two genders and sexes.

Daniel Oxley, Boleyn Ward

I have been resident in Newham since 2008.

My professional experiences include school teaching and being an independent tour operator. Currently I serve as the Chairman of Governors at a highly successful school.

My subject when teaching, was mainly Music and I deplore the marginalisation of this subject as well the many other subjects enduring the name fate. To focus so completely on just a hand-full of subject is, in my view, damaging to the core subjects themselves. There should be an honoured place for the Arts and children should exercise their imaginations.

I would welcome a change to the current restrictions on parking. It is difficult to eliminate entirely the motivation

of raising money. Some districts of London allow the residents to decide on their own the restrictions. This approach is sadly very different to the more Authoritarian stance of Newham Council.

Amongst many interests I am a committed member of the International Liberty Association. This is non-political, human rights organisation which concerns itself mostly with Iranian matters.

I reject the current trend to all things Woke and the teaching of opinions as facts.

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Srebrenica Memorial Day

Tuesday 11 July 2023, 10am – 12pm

(Doors open from 9.30am)

Old Town Hall Stratford, E15 4BQ



newham.gov.uk



SUMMER
READING
CHALLENGE



READY, SET READ!



Illustrations by Loretta Schauer and © The Reading Agency 2023

The Summer Reading Challenge is here again in your local library, for children of all ages during the summer holidays. This year's theme is focused on reading, sport and play. Children will be able to join a superstar team and their marvellous mascots as they navigate a fictional summer obstacle course and be rewarded with free incentives including stickers.

One lucky winner who finishes the challenge will be entered into a prize draw for a signed, West Ham football. The winning school with the highest percentage of finishers will win a West Ham Foundation sports takeover day.

All children attending a Newham primary school have already joined, so all you need to do is **#KeepUpTheChallenge** by visiting your local library.

Go Team Newham!

WE ARE NEWHAM.

HAVE YOUR SAY – LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@newhamvoices.co.uk

Plea to TFL – we can see Canary Wharf but we can't get there

People living in East Ham, Plaistow, and Canning Town currently have no direct bus link to Canary Wharf.

At this moment we have to take a bus to Canning Town station and get the Jubilee line – at extra cost – to Canary Wharf.

I would like to suggest a new bus route for the number 5. It could run to Canary Wharf via East India Dock Road, to Limehouse opposite Burdett Road junction, then onto Canary Wharf. In turn, TFL could cut the route from Romford Market. Instead, the 5 route could run from Becontree Heath to Canary Wharf. The lost part of that route could be replaced by extending route EL2 from Dagenham Dock to Romford.

It's not clear to me why all the buses heading for the City stop at Canning Town.

Canary Wharf is an important place for people living here, especially the many who work there. Cleaners for example often have to travel at odd hours and a direct route would make all the difference.

We can see Canary Wharf, but we can't get there!

– Martin Foster, Plaistow

A great day out, but festival brings East Ham to a standstill

AIDAN WHITE

The Bangladeshi cultural festival Boishakhi Mela, held for the first time in Newham last month, was a triumph with thousands more people than expected turning out in radiant sunshine in East Ham's Central Park.

But some local residents, many of them hugely supportive of local events in Central Park, were dismayed not to receive advance warning and were shocked over the management of the event which saw traffic jams, huge crowds and, after the celebration, a massive litter problem.

One resident wrote to *Newham Voices*: "No residents in houses bordering the park were informed about this event, which was on a huge scale. The unexpected noise was the least of the issues.

"The size of the crowd caused horrendous traffic issues all day, blocking up local roads and

making it incredibly difficult for residents to get to and from their houses, let alone park."

The next day, the Park was a scene of devastation caused by littering, but despite these issues he said the event seemed to go very well.



"I am not criticising the decision to hold the event in any way. But I cannot understand why an event of this size did not follow procedures and policies in effect for similar large events where local residents are informed in advance, security and parking restrictions are clearly in place," he said.

One problem for the organisers was that the festival,

which is usually held in Tower Hamlets, was far more successful than anticipated. Newham Council told *Newham Voices* that organisers expected about 10,000 people but at its peak around 14,000 were present.

The spokesperson said there would be an investigation taking account of the complaints and lessons would be learnt.

The spokesperson said: "The Boishakhi Mela was a vibrant and largely successful event, with good quality infrastructure and setup. However, some aspects of the organisers' management fell a little short of what was expected particularly around traffic management and waste and litter provision."

The Council admitted that despite advertising, local residents were not given advanced warning although this had been recommended by the Council.

"Any future events will need to show more stringent plans for dealing with the traffic and litter."

Advertisements

Woodgrange Organic Veg Stall E7



**Saturdays from 9.30 – 1.00
at Woodgrange Market**

(corner of Sebert and Woodgrange Road E7 0NQ)

Delicious vegetables fresh from **Sarah Green's Organic Farm** in Tillingham on the Essex coast.

Our friendly stall is run by a collective of local volunteers and all profits go to charities. Last year we donated more than £1,000 to the local food bank and to the Refugee and Migrant Project in Newham.

Follow us on instagram [@the_organicvegstall_e7](https://www.instagram.com/the_organicvegstall_e7) and hope to see you on Saturdays.

NOTICE OF VACANCY



Independent Persons – London Borough of Newham Standards Advisory Committee

Under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, the Council must appoint at least one Independent Person to assist the Council in promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct amongst its Members.

London Borough of Newham is looking to recruit one Independent Person plus a deputy to provide an important service to the Council and contribute to maintaining the high ethical governance standards of the authority.

The Independent Persons will be consulted on the decision on whether to investigate a complaint about conduct and before the Council makes a decision on a complaint which has been investigated. The Independent Persons may be consulted on other standards matters, including by the Member who is subject to an allegation.

The Independent Persons will liaise, as necessary, with the Council's Monitoring Officer (in accordance with the Council arrangements for dealing with complaints of a breach of the Members' Code of Conduct) to consider complaints about Members and offer their impartial views on the matter, including any investigations undertaken. The Independent Persons will also be expected to attend meetings of the Council's Standards Advisory Committee to participate in the consideration and discussion of wider ethical governance issues affecting the Council.

The position is voluntary, however; expenses for travel and subsistence will be paid.

To apply for the role please go to www.newham.gov.uk/jobs then use the apply for a job with us link to go to the jobs page and search Standards Advisory Committee.

**Closing date for applications is the
21 July 2023.**

OUT AND ABOUT WITH NEANDRA

People, plaques and precious memories

Windrush celebration

Newham is recognising the 75th anniversary of Windrush with a series of free community events, including art exhibitions, talks, workshops, entertainment and Professor Dr Shirley J. Thompson OBE, opera Women of the Windrush.

Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz attended the launch event at Stratford Old Town Hall on



Cllr Vaughan, Mayor Fiaz, Des Blake ©Neandra Etienne

Windrush Day, 22 June, which included a talk and Windrush Journeys: A black and white photographic exhibition of the Windrush community and their journey to the UK.

The launch also featured a preview of Home: Remembering the Windrush Generation exhibition, curated by author Tony Fairweather. The exhibition gives an insight into the nostalgic recreation of a Caribbean family's front room. It takes place at Stratford Town Hall from 1-12 August. Windrush events continue throughout the summer. See www.newhamwindrushday.org

BiBi Crew honoured with Newham Heritage plaque

One of the main Windrush anniversary events was the unveiling of a Newham Heritage Blue Plaque for The BiBi Crew at Theatre Royal Stratford East as part of the Windrush anniversary celebrations.

Original members Joanne Campbell, Judith Jacob, Janet Kay MBE, Suzette Llewellyn, Josephine Melville, Beverley Michaels and Suzanne Packer, devised and directed their own productions at the theatre from 1991-1995.

Sadly Josephine Melville, from Forest Gate, a dancer, actress, writer, director and producer with the Bibi Crew passed away unexpectedly in October 2022.

During her acceptance speech Suzanne Packer said, "I am so

honoured really and very emotional. I feel privileged and full of gratitude."

Mayor of Newham, Rokhsana Fiaz was joined by Cllrs Terry Paul, Sabia Kamali, and Joshua Garfield along with the families of the BiBi Crew, Theatre Royal Stratford East team and some local residents.

Philip Headley, Artistic Director of theatre from 1979 to 2004, gave an impromptu speech during the unveiling ceremony. He recalled giving the BiBi Crew the opportunity to devise and produce their own productions at the theatre.

For my own part, as the Creative Director for this event, I'm proud that the BiBi Crew have received their own Newham



Beverley Michaels, Judith Jacob and Suzanne Packer ©Neandra Etienne

Heritage blue plaque. Just to see how much it means to the BiBi Crew and their families makes me feel very happy.

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Our Chief reporter on events that reflect culture, history and heritage in Newham



Lee McQueen film and legacy

As the Creative Director for the McQueen Newham Heritage Month projects I was also given an opportunity in June to acknowledge the legacy of British fashion designer Lee with a film screening event and plaque unveiling ceremony for Newham Heritage Month.

The Mayor joined the screening of *McQueen* – a personal look at the life, career and artistry of McQueen CBE at Stratford Town Hall. He grew up

in Newham and attended Carpenters Primary School, Rokeby School and Newham College. McQueen was also mentored by Yvonne Humble, founder of Rosetta Arts. Ian Bonhôte, the film’s director and producer, gave an insightful and intriguing account of how the film was made. He said, “Lee McQueen’s legacy can still be felt to this day and it was one of the greatest honour of my career to make a documentary about his life.”

The Fashion and Art Creatives Exhibition paying homage to McQueen’s rise from Carpenters Estate to worldwide recognition, is showing from Friday 30 June – Friday 7 July, on the estate at The Dovetail, 22 Doran Walk. For more info email carpenters@populoliving.co.uk or connect at www.instagram.com/mcqueenfilm



©Neandra Etienne

Memorial for Sophie

April saw the unveiling of a planter in Forest Gate Community Garden in memory of Sophie Rigg. As Co-ordinator for six years she transformed the space, as well as sharing her ideas and enthusiasm with everyone she met. Made by volunteers mainly from recycled materials, the planter contains herbs for people to help themselves. Her spirit



lives on in her memorial. The summer season continues in the Garden with ever

popular plant sales on July 1 and 27 with a welcome e summer event on 15 July. For full details, follow on Facebook. The Garden is also available for private hire and interested volunteers can drop in on Fridays from 10am to 5pm, Saturdays 10am to 12pm or Sundays 10am to 12pm. Contact us at info@fgcommunitygarden.org

... and finally, Colours of Forest Gate

Colours of Forest Gate is a series of mural installations coming to Forest Gate that will highlight the history and identity of the area. The project will create opportunities for residents and the wider communities to co-design and actively take part.

I am collaborating with Bud Studio on the mural that will feature the musicians who performed at the Upper Cut Club. The mural will be placed above the Jimi Hendrix, Purple Haze Newham Heritage plaque

arranged for Newham Heritage Month 2021.

The other mural project locations include Wanstead Park Station Bridge and Woodgrange Road.

The mural designs will be discussed at in-person workshops, drop-in sessions and online discussions with local people. There will be a public consultation on final designs.

Bud Studio’s art making workshop 2 will focus on what *Forest Gate means to me* with a discussion about the area’s

cultural history and how to champion the area through artwork. Participants will be supported by professional artists to design and develop their own artwork. The outcome of this workshop will form the base themes and aesthetics for the artist brief.

Thursday 13 July, 6pm-7.30pm, The Gate Library, Woodgrange Rd, E7 0QH.

For more information visit newhamco-create.co.uk/en/projects/colours-of-forest-gate

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Note: Our next issue goes to print on 27 July 2023

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**YOUR VOICES.
YOUR CHOICES.
YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD.**

Adult education centre brings hundreds of courses to Stratford

A major adult education centre that prides itself on being “a friendly place to learn” will open its doors in Stratford for the first time on 11 September.

The Mary Ward centre, founded in the late 19th century, is moving from its historic building in Queen’s Square, Bloomsbury to a newly refurbished home on Stratford High Street, close to the DLR station.

Among the reasons that Stratford was chosen for the new college are good transport links and the lack of such rich adult learning opportunities in East London compared with the rest of the capital.

The 23/24 programme was launched



Photo via Twitter

last week. It offers hundreds of courses from fitness and dancing to IT, creative writing and specialist arts courses, languages, English, maths, music, counselling, and professional qualifi-

cations. Courses are taught in the day-time, evenings and at weekends.

Mary Ward also offers outreach art courses and runs community projects. The college will also be home to a legal centre, and is expected to create a number of new jobs.

Writing about the new building, Warden Suzanne Jackson praised the architects AWW who she said have come up with a design which reflects “our quirky, friendly non corporate approach and provides practical functional spaces”.

For more information or to enrol, visit www.marywardcentre.ac.uk or ring 0207 269 6000.



Good reads in Newham

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

- **The Invention of Essex**
By Tim Burrows
- **Demon Copperhead** (Winner of the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction)
By Barbara Kingsolver
- **The People’s Cemetery**
By Andrew Cole
- **Island** (Illustrated by David Litchfield)
By David Almond
- **Mya-Rose Craig: Flight** (Illustrated by Lynn Scurfield)
- **Julia Donaldson’s Book of Names** (Illustrated by Nila Aye)

Fifty park trees at risk

LYNDSAY JONES, FRIENDS OF WEST HAM PARK

Have you wondered why trees are being cut down in West Ham Park? No healthy tree is ever felled, but at least 50 trees are no longer healthy.

The culprit is last year’s hot dry summer, great for humans but not for trees. When it did rain, the water ran away over the hard-baked ground, so it did not soak down to the tree roots.

Lack of water stresses the trees, which are then more susceptible to disease, like the Sooty Bark Disease which has affected the sycamore trees. This fungus is also dangerous for people, causing breathing difficulties.

In order to try to save the trees, and benefit the grass and other plants, the park has bought a “spiking machine”. This will be towed behind the tractor and drive spikes 20cm into the ground at regular intervals, making holes for air and water to get into the soil.

We hope that this will also help those birds who feed on worms and other insects to find their food. We have noticed a reduction in the number of these birds recently.

In the longer term trees will be replanted, using different species and in different locations. It is not possible to put a new tree directly where the felled ones were growing, especially close to the paths where soil compaction is worst. Roots take five years to rot away, and anyway, the position has already killed one tree!

Hopefully these measures will work and West Ham Park will stay leafy and beautiful.



SOMETHING’S BREWING



Phil Mellows finds a safe haven born out of a famous victory for public action

In 1871, when the Ashley family first opened the doors of the Golden Fleece, a campaign to stop the threatened enclosure of Wanstead Flats came to a head.

According to local historian Peter Williams a crowd of some 30,000 people joined a demonstration to ensure the Flats remained a public space. And, as you can see today, they won.

No doubt the new pub on Capel Road, then no more than a dusty track, was able to provide post-protest refreshment, and 150-odd years later it’s still catering for visitors to Wanstead Flats as well as the communities of Manor Park and Forest Gate.

Custodian of the Fleece today is Suffolk-based Greene King Brewery, now one of the biggest pub operators in the country, and, for the past two years, its general manager Georgina Street.

Originally from the Netherlands, Georgina is one of those who fell in love with pub life working behind a bar while she prepared for a ‘proper’ career – in her case in the RAF. I reckon she was right to change her mind.

Her prize is the Golden Fleece overlooking the Flats with an enormous garden and children’s play area out back (pictured). The pub doesn’t just attract families, though. Sport on the screens is another draw, and for the diner an extensive menu offers some interesting spins on pub classics.

“Whether you want a bite to eat with the family, look over the fields and have a romantic evening with your partner or come in with your friends and watch the sports, we can accommodate,” says Georgina.

There’s also a busy programme of events such as karaoke every third Saturday of the month, live music including jam sessions every other Friday, and a Bank Holiday all-day on August 27 with kids’ entertainment, a barbecue and tribute acts.



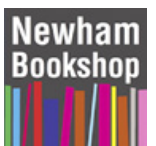
Whether you want a bite to eat with the family, look over the fields and have a romantic evening with your partner or come in with your friends and watch the sports, we can accommodate.

You’ll often find a wake on here, too, as it’s close to the City of London Cemetery and Crematorium, and I must thank the Fleece team for looking after family and friends when we lunched there last month during the annual get-together to remember my mum and dad.

On occasions like that you don’t want anything to go wrong, and we felt safe in the Fleece’s hands.



Compiled by David Ceen,
Newham Bookshop
newhambooks.co.uk
@NewhamBookshop





JOIN IN THE FESTIVITIES AT COMMUNITY FUN DAYS

WEDNESDAY 26 JULY, 2 AUGUST, 9 AUGUST, 16 AUGUST

There's fun for all of the family this summer as Newham Council's popular Housing Community Fun Days make their return to an estate near you.

Residents and leaseholders can enjoy food, giant games, arts and crafts, face painting, henna and much more during the exciting free events, which take place from 12-5pm on four consecutive Wednesdays starting on 26 July.

Visitors will also be able to meet staff from across Newham's Housing service, including housing officers and members of the repairs and maintenance team.

THE DATES FOR YOUR DIARY FOR THIS YEAR'S HOUSING COMMUNITY FUN DAYS ARE:

- Wednesday 26 July 12-5pm: Jack Cornwell Open Space (Jack Cornwell Street, E12 5NN)
- Wednesday 2 August 12-5pm: Westland House/Queensland House (Rymill Street E16 2LF)
- Wednesday 9 August 12-5pm: May Green (Watson Street, E13 9AE)
- Wednesday 16 August 12-5pm: College Point (Wolffe Gardens E15 2JJ)

For more information, visit newham.gov.uk/housingfundays or email getinvolved.housing@newham.gov.uk



WE ARE NEWHAM.

SPORTS SHORTS

Compiled by **Neandra Etienne**

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will host **London Youth Games**' biggest weekend at the beginning of July! The schedule features the finals of eleven sports; athletics, tennis, BMX, swimming, road cycling, basketball, volleyball, netball, hockey, aquathlon and table tennis.

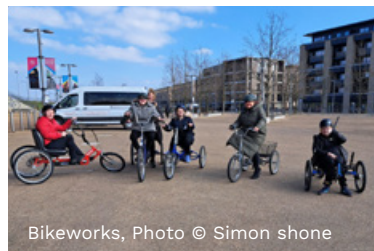
There will be a Festival outside the Copper Box Arena at Eastcross Square, open to all and packed with free entertainment. All activities will be free of charge to participants and spectators.

Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 July, from 9am-6pm, Copper Box Arena

queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk

Bikeworks will be running an All Ability Try Session at the Great Get Together, a free community festival at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park. Visitors can trial their adapted cycles and side-by-side cycle 1 July, between 12pm and 4.30pm

www.bikeworks.org.uk



Bikeworks, Photo © Simon shone

Central Park FC have announced their pre-season fixtures ahead of the new season on 1, 9, 16 & 23 July

[@centralparkfc](https://www.instagram.com/centralparkfc)

Two International students from the Royal Docks School of Business and Law at the University of East London, **Vibhanshu Gupta** (MSc Sports Management) and **Neel Patel** (MSc Computer Science) volunteered recently with Essex County Cricket Club (ECCC) ahead of a series of World Cup Super League matches between Ireland and Bangla-



Essex Cricket UEL

desh. Both spent matches and training days supporting the ICC TV Sport Production Team who were showing the games worldwide from Essex County Ground in Chelmsford.

The SportsDock was transformed into a sporting festival ground for the East London Sport 2023 Sport in Your Futures Festival, in collaboration with the British Olympic Foundation. Over 400 enthusiastic primary school children from five East London schools attended. The festival provided an opportunity for everyone to participate in a variety of sports.

Students also had the chance to delve into sporting heritage through an exhibition featuring items from the Association archive collection, proudly housed at UEL.

uel.ac.uk/sport-your-futures

London Lions had a successful winning season. WBBL Championship - League Title, WBBL Championship Playoff Title, WBBL Trophy Title, WBBL Cup Title. Holly Winterburn was named the 2022/23 Lions fan MVP!

www.thelondonlions.com

[@londonlionsw](https://www.instagram.com/londonlionsw)



London Lions

Plaistow South Big Local and Modern Arnis Martial Arts and Self-Defence have teamed up to offer a series of free weekday classes to women aged 18+ and free weekend classes to girls aged 11+ and women. Female police officers from Plaistow Police Station have been invited to attend a session on 1 July, to answer questions and concerns on the legalities of self-defence.

psbl.org.uk

[@plaistowsouthbiglocal](https://www.instagram.com/plaistowsouthbiglocal)

Clapton CFC were awarded Community Club of the Year at the National Game Awards.

Sophia Axelsson and Louis Burrows collected the decanter from Francis Duku of Our Game on behalf of the club. Clapton CFC were nominated anonymously for the award.

www.claptoncfc.co.uk



Futsal national champions

Newham College are the Association of Colleges National Futsal champions after a resounding 23 - 6 win against a talented Exeter college team! Following the 2021-22 season win, the Futsal men's team topped the league comfortably while scoring an exceptional 93 goals in 7 games.

Congratulations to their champions; Daniel, Jayden, Nelson, Leonildo, Aleko, Hermen, Xavier, Ian, Jose, MD, Kieron, Erik, Dylan and Ovi!

www.newham.ac.uk

Newham College has qualified through the regional stage of the Association of Colleges Cricket tournament.

They faced a tough challenge from neighbours NewVic Sixth Form College; Newham performed brilliantly with the ball to set up a 4-wicket victory.

Excellent bowling from Wali and a man-of-the-match display from all-rounder Ahmad ripped through the NewVic defences, leaving the visitors 72 all-out. Darshan got Newham off to a great start, and they ran out comfortable winners with seven overs remaining.

Head Coach Zaheer Daleel commented: "It's a good victory to build momentum" Captain Rakib said: "It's good to win against NewVic again; we beat them indoors and now outdoors, so I hope we can achieve great things this season."

www.newham.ac.uk



Newham College cricket team

Newham College cricket team has also won the London Further Education indoor Cricket League.

This makes them back-to-back competition winners. The team is looking to carry this momentum into the outdoor season! Big congratulations to Ahmed, Niaz, Rakib, Darshan, Zamer, Hassan and the coaches involved.

www.newham.ac.uk

Newham Sports Club have been running mixed ability, open to all and half-court basketball sessions every Monday evening. They have now set up a Thursday night session to cope with the demand 7.30pm every Thursday night. They are looking for coaches, volunteers and support around developing capacity. Get in touch if you can help.

www.meetup.com/Futsal-London
info@newhamfutsalclub.co.uk

[@newhamfutsal](https://www.instagram.com/newhamfutsal)

Congratulations to **ANM FC** who are league cup winners after their 4-1 win against City Gates.

They have 2 pre-season games confirmed for July 15 and 29.

[@anm_fc2020](https://www.instagram.com/anm_fc2020)



ANM FC

Fan-owned FC United of Manchester will visit the Old Spotted Dog Ground for a double-header with **Clapton CFC**'s men's and women's first teams. The teams will be competing to win the Football Supporters' Association trophies - the Brian Lomax Supporters Direct Trophy and the Supporters Direct Women's Shield. Saturday, July 15, Old Spotted Dog Ground.

www.claptoncfc.co.uk

All games and events are subject to change. Please email your news and game fixtures to neandra.etienne@newhamvoices.co.uk

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LICENSING ACT 2003

Notice of Application for a Premises Licence

The Eadn London have applied to NEWHAM COUNCIL for a premises licences for:

The Eadn London, 24 Stephenson Street, London, E16 4SA so that the following licensable activities may be provided on the following days and hours:

Licensable Activities: "Late-night refreshments (indoor and outdoor), sale by retail of alcohol (on the premises and off the premises), performance of dance (indoor and outdoor), exhibition of a film (indoor), indoor sporting event, performance of live music (indoor and outdoor), performance of recorded music (indoor and outdoor), entertainment similar to live music (DJ), facilities for dancing (indoor and outdoor), facilities for making music."

Days and Hours of Other All Activities:

- Monday to Thursday: From 23:00 to 04:00.
- Friday and Saturday: From 00:00 to 04:00
- Sunday: From 23:00 to 02:30

Supply Of Alcohol;

- Monday to Thursday: From 00:00 to 04:00.
- Friday and Saturday: From 01:30 to 04:00
- Sunday: From 00:00 to 02:30

Late Night Refreshment;

- Monday to Thursday: From 23:00 to 04:00.
- Friday and Saturday: From 23:00 to 04:00
- Sunday: From 23:00 to 02:30

Provision of Films, Provision of Indoor

Sporting Events, Supply of Alcohol days;

- Monday to Thursday: From 00:00 to 04:00.
- Friday and Saturday: From 01:00 to 04:00
- Sunday: From 00:00 to 02:30

Newham Council's Licensing Register is kept at the office of the Licensing Team, Grassroots, Memorial Avenue, London E15 3DB (open from 9.30am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday), 020 3373 1925, where details of the application may be inspected. Any representations against the application must be made in writing and received by the Licensing Team at the above address, by no later than the **14th Jul 2023**.

Individuals, businesses and other bodies may make representations in relation to the application.

Representations must be relevant and can only be on the licensing objectives of the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance, and the protection of children from harm.

Copies of all representations will be sent to the applicant. Persons making representations will have to appear at the Councils' Licensing Sub-Committee.

Note: It is an offence, liable on conviction to a fine up to £5,000 for a person to knowingly or recklessly make a false statement in connection with the application.

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Despite a stuttering season the glory days have come back for the Hammers

A team and a night for the ages



A winning night: for David Moyes, for Hammers fans and for our star turn Jarrod Bowen, says Mickey Ambrose

Wednesday 7 June 2023 is a date all Hammers fans will never forget, when the club defeated Fiorentina 2-1 in a tense Europa Conference League victory in the beautiful city of Prague.

Declan Rice now joins a special club of just two West Ham captains who have lifted silverware – Bobby Moore and Billy Bonds. It had been a 43-year wait, since their 1980 FA Cup Final victory.

Nor will the wild and heart-felt cele-

brations on the Slavia Prague Pitch ever be forgotten, as the tears flowed from an ecstatic David Moyes and Mark Noble.

The most touching part of the evening came with the very final humongous club photo, not just with players, but including the entire back-room staff – trainers, admin staff and even the club's tea-lady. They were all there, all equal, all hugging each other enjoying the greatest moment of their lives.

The Hammers fans quickly developed an endearing chant begging Declan Rice to stay at the club for just one more year. It's not to be, but Declan's future return visits to the London Stadium will be something to savour.

Finally, I would like to remember David Gold, who sadly passed away in January, followed by the untimely death of his daughter Jacqueline. Many of the Hammer's fans would have felt their presence on the night and have to thank him and his board for holding their nerve and standing behind David Moyes. They didn't follow the likes of Leeds and Leicester and sack their manager. They know David Moyes is building something special at the Olympic Stadium.

Unlike Leicester and Leeds West Ham not only survived the drop but went on to achieve their greatest tri-



Mickey Ambrose

umph of modern times, whilst David Moyes joins another prestigious club – Scottish Managers to lift European Silverware. The list now reads: Sir Matt Busby, Jock Stein, William Waddell, Bill Shankly, George Graham, Sir Alex Ferguson AND David Moyes.

Bowen, a hero of our time, makes West Ham bubble again

Players like Jarrod Bowen are not supposed to exist in the modern age of football, where complex IT driven scouting systems Hoover up the future football superstars by the hundreds for Premier League academies, before they even have a wisp of hair on their young impressionable chins.

After unsuccessful trials with both Aston Villa and Cardiff City a young Jarrod began his career at non-league Hereford United, making just 8 appearances with a single goal, before moving to Hull City for six years, where he played just 124 games scoring 52 goals.

However, like Arsenal and West Ham Legend Sir Ian Wright, Jarrod has proven that non-league players can succeed on the largest of stages and they do not get much bigger than a major European final.

The hardest goal for any striker to score is when you have time to think – after all, the instinctive header, touch or volley are second nature.



Bowen celebrates. Photo via www.whufc.com

However, in the final minute of the match, with 30 yards to run, a world class defender snapping at your heels, and the keeper narrowing the angle, all the while knowing you can win West Ham's first major trophy in 43 years – that is real pressure, under which only the finest of players do not crack.

I cannot remember the last time any player had such a burden of expectation, hope and history bearing down on them in open play. It will be fascinating to see how far Jarrod, now 26 and approaching his peak, can now go in his career.

As for the game itself, West Ham's only efforts of note in the first half came from Antonio, who drew a routine save in the first minute, and Rice, who flashed an effort wide when a long throw by Vladimir Coufal spilled to the edge of the penalty box.

Fiorentina created little either, until the fourth minute of added time at the end of the first half when they had a goal ruled out for offside.

Christian Kouame climbed above Coufal to head against a post and Luka Jovic was first to the rebound, heading it over the line as he was accidentally kicked in the face by Soucek. The flag went up, backed by VAR and the teams trailed down the tunnel for half-time.

Jovic did not return for the second half, replaced by Arthur Cabral. The game did not change until Benrahma's penalty jolted the match into life. It was given for a remarkably lame handball against Biraghi.



Happy fans: Nick Titley with sons James and David

The referee checked the touchline monitor, made the infamous square in the air and pointed to the spot. Benrahma held his nerve, to send Terracciano the wrong way.

Fiorentina hit back quickly, whilst producing their best football of the final. Gonzalez headed a high ball down into the penalty area and Giacomo Bonaventura hit an unstoppable shot into the corner, 1-1.

The theatrics increased. From the Italians, rolling around as if they had been shot, and some West Ham fans started throwing plastic cups onto the pitch. Fiorentina striker Nico Gonzalez, having won a corner, caught one and pretended to take a drink.

The mood turned when a vape hit Cristiano Biraghi on the back of his head. He needed treatment and a bright purple bandage was wrapped around his head.

Suddenly the final was uncorked. And then it came, the moment for Jarrod Bowen to write his name into West Ham folklore. He did not disappoint.

He gathered the perfect pass from Lucas Paqueta, then somehow managed a super-human burst amongst a field of tiring legs. Bowen powered into midfield, leaving two defenders in his wake, as the goalie came out, he powered a controlled drive, that just clipped the legs of the Fiorentina keeper. David Moyes could not believe his eyes and bounced onto the pitch like Zebedee from the Magic Roundabout.

This time, West Ham protected their lead for eight long, long minutes. At last came the final shrill of the referee's whistle and West Ham United's long wait for a new glory day was over and they became the 2023 Europa Conference League champions. Then came the celebrations which were as memorable as the match itself.

After 48 years in Professional Football, something tells me the story does not end in Prague. West Ham are back and the prospects of more success in the 2023/24 season will see the London Olympic Stadium bursting at the seams.



Flag seller Bill Philip at the Stratford celebration: Still happy despite missing the flight to Prague after a passport mix up.

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- We hold authority to account, expose scandals, highlight inequality, promote good causes, and provide a platform for local people
- Every penny of income from Newham Voices helps us deliver more journalism in Newham
- Currently, we are just about able to cover the paper's costs (design, printing and distribution).
- Our editorial team is entirely voluntary and in future, we would like to create paid jobs for aspiring local journalists.
- We currently have 20 supporters who contribute regularly, but we need more!

Can you help us? Our membership scheme has many different options depending on your ability to contribute. Rewards include having a copy of the paper posted to you every month. Local businesses and charities can also sign up and access discounts on advertising.

Find out more at: newhamvoices.co.uk/membership