



Portacabin future looms for community centre told to quit

Foodbank facing Christmas eviction

Richard Stubbs returns to the Carpenters Estate where the mood is far from festive

Last month *Newham Voices* reported that the Carpenters Estate Foodbank, which has been running since 2007, was facing eviction by the Council-owned Populo Living in November.

On the deadline for eviction we called Tee Fabikun, who runs the service, to see if the bailiffs had arrived. Tee said that following the story being aired on ITV News a postponement had been granted.

I visited on 18 November and feared Tee had been wrong as the Centre was surrounded by hoardings. However, the back way in was open and

the building was packed with people.

Some 80 people had tickets for food parcels and were sitting around tables in the community hall chatting, while many volunteers packed food, managed security and talked to people about their requirements.

I interviewed Tee in what used to be the computer training suite she had established. I've known Tee since 2001, when she was Chair of the Tenant Management Organisation (TMO) that ran the estate. We worked with others to raise funds for what became the most advanced interactive TV service in the UK.

One of the programs was about the Council's imminent

plans to redevelop the estate, yet 20 years later plans are still being talked about and a once thriving community has been scattered as people were decanted and many properties have been left vacant for years.

Tee said that they had been given consent to stay until their Christmas party on 2 December but after that they had no alternative but to move. The foodbank and café have been offered what is referred to by Populo as a "purpose-designed foodbank" which turns out to be four connected portacabins.

There is no conceivable way that what I saw could be carried out in these.

I asked Tee whether there was any possibility of them returning to their current building



once it had been redeveloped. She said that when the Tenant Management Organisation ran the estate its workers and the community shared the large hall and kitchen. She saw no reason why Populo staff couldn't do the same thing, but this option has not been offered.

The volunteers do a lot more than run the foodbank. They provide support for people in nearby residential homes including educational classes. All these activities are at risk.

Eileen, another volunteer, who has been a tenant on the estate for 27 years, said it had been a lovely community where everyone knew everybody, but most had been made to go. She felt that although residents had been told about the plans for the estate they hadn't been able to influence them, to just vote yes or no.

Finally I talked to Warren, a tenant and volunteer, who moved to the estate 28 years ago. He got involved in the residents' group and became its Chair around 2012. At that time residents simply wanted refurbishment of the existing properties and the relevant Council officer agreed this was

practical, but the mayor at the time saw redevelopment as better and insisted on this.

I asked how he saw the consultation of residents on development plans. He said that though there had been the appearance of this it had no practical effect. Warren felt that part of the aim was to gain financial benefit from gentrification of the area, and he asked how tenants should feel when the first development that Populo does on the estate is to build brand new offices for its staff and kick out one of the best community projects on the estate. He feared that the organisation may not survive the move.

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Festive events in Newham

See pages 10-11

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Council Notebook

By Peter Landman

Council row over cut in 'affordable' homes pledge

Opposition Green councillors have strongly challenged Newham's Labour administration housing policy saying that greedy developers and landlords were coming before housing needs.

But in a sharp debate at the Council meeting on 10 November the majority Labour councillors hit back, insisting that recent measures from the Government were improving the local housing situation.

Councillor Nate Higgins (pictured), Green Party Leader, proposed a motion calling for Newham Council to:

- **Oppose** the reduction in the Community Infrastructure Levy;
- **Call** upon the Government and Mayor of London to reaffirm the target of 50 percent affordable homes in new developments;
- **Abolish** Right to Buy; and
- **Introduce** a Land Tax on all land holdings to provide funds for more housing developments.

The motion followed a government announcement in October of a so-called "emergency package" of policy changes aimed at boosting house building.

These include a new fast-track planning route, to last until March 2028,



and lower affordable housing targets of 20 percent rather than 35 percent, watering-down current requirements.

Also planned is Community Infrastructure Levy relief for projects providing at least 20 percent affordable homes. The changes come after figures earlier this year showed that starts on new housing across London have fallen to a 16-year low.

In the debate Green councillors asked what had been achieved by conceding to the demands of landlords and property developers.

But Councillor John Morris, Labour, insisted that much could be achieved by the Government's recent initiatives, with £35 million support for new home

construction, £2.5 million in low cost house building loans, and funding to prevent early homelessness.

Labour Councillor John Whitworth submitted an amendment to the Green Party motion covering these points and including further clauses to ensure that renters in Newham are made aware of their new rights under the new Renters Reform Act, and to enable more zero carbon public housing schemes. The amended motion was passed.

Much of the rest of the Council meeting was taken up with debate over how to promote growth, jobs and inclusive communities within the Borough.

This included discussion of the Connect to Work Programme which aims to help residents with disabilities or severe health problems into work and a Culture Led Growth Programme which promotes employment into the creative industries focused on the cultural district that has emerged in the Olympic Park around Sadlers Wells, BBC Music Studios, and the Victoria and Albert Museum East.

Councillors also discussed the Digital Data Innovation Programme conducted with the University College Institute for Global Prosperity. This aims to make Newham a hub for the emerging data economy.

Children in need get a holiday boost

Peter Landman reports on a £2 million programme for families in poverty

Newham Council leaders are preparing a fresh programme of support for poorer children and their families during school holidays in the coming year.

The Council Cabinet meeting on 19 November agreed to seek funding of around £2 million to pay for the project which will provide food and activities to help families suffering from financial hardship.



Image: Richard Stachmann/splash

The programme supports the provision of food and activities to both primary and secondary school children, particularly those who receive free school meals and whose parents are on welfare benefits. But this year the Council is extending the support to families not getting public funds. Young carers and children in care will also benefit.

The main parts of the programme are one nutritious hot meal per day, 60 minutes of daily physical activity, and also possible links to holiday clubs.

The Cabinet members were told that the Council expects to receive between

£1.8 million and £2.2 million for this year's programme.

£1.5 million boost for East Ham High Street

East Ham High Street will be the main beneficiary of a million pound scheme – the *Pride in Place Programme*, set up by the Government to help councils revitalise run-down high streets.

The Council has received £1.5 million which will be spent on improving infrastructure and sprucing up High Street North in East Ham, further development of the Stratford Vision; and development of the empty City Farm Site in Beckton.

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Cash crisis puts pressure on People Powered Places

Shofa Miah highlights what we have to lose if the showpiece community programme is hit by cuts

Uncertainty has been raised over the future funding of People Powered Places (PPP), one of Newham's most inspiring initiatives.

The programme puts power in the hands of residents to shape the future of their neighbourhoods. Since its launch in 2018, the programme has funded hundreds of community projects.

The projects are funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), a charge to developers which pays for improvements in the Borough. This money is ringfenced so that it can only be spent on certain things like street or park upgrades, housing, community, and PPP projects.

But in her November 2025 newsletter, Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz said that setting the 2026/27 Budget will be "the toughest one yet" and will involve difficult trade-offs.

She announced: "We won't at this stage be able to commit the full People Powered Places budget available this year because we may need to use the money to offset other budget pressures. I made this decision ahead of the Big Vote events taking place in November, so it means you can still decide how some of the money will be spent in your neighbourhood. As always, your vote could really make a difference in improving your local area!"

This decision has raised questions about how much of the ringfenced CIL allocation will remain for community-led projects. Residents have



Image ©Andrew Baker

said they want transparency and clear information about any changes, as the announcement of the budget cut feels vague. Clear communications, they say, will help maintain trust and ensure communities feel supported as these challenging decisions are made.

For the current cycle, funding is divided into voluntary, community faith sector projects, resident-led projects, and youth-led projects. Grants range from £5,000 for resident-led projects to £20,000 for voluntary and faith groups.

Rob Callender, a local Green Party campaigner and councillor candidate, has been tracking the annual council infrastructure spending reports.

He says: "Each year for the last five years, the Council had millions of

pounds of CIL funds left over, unspent and unallocated. Since this money is ringfenced, it seems bizarre to me that they are cutting the PPP funding. What are they planning on spending that money on instead? We need clarity over what they are doing with these leftover CIL funds and the PPP money."

Among the organisations shortlisted this year is Distinctive Solutions CIC, a social enterprise that empowers young people and families through leadership training, financial literacy, and special educational needs inclusion. Their work includes transformative workshops on money management, entrepreneurship, and resilience.

They commented: "We are delighted to have been shortlisted for PPP funding this year. The opportunities this

support could unlock for the local community are truly transformative. We are concerned that proposed funding cuts may undermine the positive impact these projects are ready to deliver.

"We hope the full PPP funding is directed toward the community improvements it was set aside to support, to avoid frustration for residents and for the organisations working hard to serve Newham."

Previous PPP cycles attracted thousands of voters, funded hundreds of projects, and benefitted tens of thousands of residents.

But it is a demanding process that requires time, resources, energy, and passion. While some projects will celebrate success, others may face disappointment.

The programme has revealed a deep and inspiring commitment to Newham's communities that continues to inspire change.

Particularly important has been the impact of the new youth-led PPP category, which brings fresh ideas and energy to the Borough. While some of the youth applicants may be disappointed if they are not successful, it is vital, say supporters, that they receive continuing support for their mental wellbeing, given the emotional challenges after the investment of so much effort in the projects.

Newham Voices will continue to monitor developments around PPP and the allocation of CIL funds. The programme has shown that dialogue with residents, fair processes and transparent communication are key to maintaining confidence in community-led initiatives that can make a positive difference.

MP acts over Daniela death mystery

Stratford and Bow MP Uma Kumaran has taken up the case of Daniela Terciu, the homeless woman found dead in Bow, over police handling of her death, which was reported by Newham Voices last month.

Her loss shocked members of the Stratford and Carpenter's Cafe, where homeless and local people in need gather, and where Daniela had been a much loved member of the community.

But despite an early arrest and suggestions that she had been murdered, the Met Police have not issued any public information about her death.

The lack of information and mystery over Daniela's death has angered her friends, who have not been included in police enquiries. The Met Police told Newham Voices they are investigating what they describe as an "unexplained death."

Now Uma Kumaran, the MP covering the Carpenter's Estate and the canal area in Bow where her body was found, is asking questions of the police over the case.

Her office in Westminster said the first they knew about the death was from Newham Voices.

Newham focus on Gaza

The annual meeting of Newham Palestine Solidarity Campaign will take place on Tuesday 9 December at 6pm at Clapton Community Football Club, Old Spotted Dog Ground, Walter Tull Way, 212 Upton Lane E7 9NP.

The guest speaker will be Mohammed Elkhatib, a Palestinian English graduate and former student of Refaat Alareer, the author and academic who was killed in an Israeli airstrike two years ago. A

posthumous collection of his work, *If I Must Die*, tells the stories of Gaza in a plea for change. Mohammed grew up in Gaza and left Gaza to pursue his education just 10 days before the recent conflict began.

With the conflict now in a fragile period of 'ceasefire', the PSC says the killings and destruction continue. Newham is part of the network of PSC branches across the country and is the leading Palestine solidarity organisation in the UK.

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Challenging the threat of violence to women and girls

SHEILA NURSIMHULU

The 16 Days of Activism campaign which ends on 10 December focuses on raising awareness and challenging gender-based violence abuse in Newham.

Image: Tori Wise/unsplash



Domestic abuse comes in many forms. It includes not just physical violence, but controlling or coercive behaviour, online harassment, stalking, and other forms of emotional or economic abuse, with women feeling less safe than men when they are

walking around their neighbourhood.

This campaign is part of Newham's three-year Domestic Abuse Strategy, launched in 2022, which is focused on prevention, support for survivors, and changing harmful behaviours.

Local organisations, including

through the Council's women's safety initiatives, including its Women's Night Safety Charter and its collaboration with White Ribbon UK.

Residents are encouraged to sign the White Ribbon pledge via the White Ribbon UK website, and to talk with

Stop violence against women and girls - online and offline.

16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

25 November – 10 December 2025

newham.gov.uk/16Days



WE ARE NEWHAM

Cash crisis threat to Richard House Children's Hospice

Richard House, Newham's much-loved children's hospice, faces an uncertain future with a cash crisis threatening to lead to dramatic cuts in services.

Set up 25 years ago, Richard House, which is London's first childrens' hos-

pice, launched an anniversary appeal to raise £1,274,000 in the face of a funding crisis as a result of increasing demand in recent years.

The trustees and management have promised a strategy plan to cope with the crisis and as November drew to a close supporters were anxiously waiting for news.

The hospice, based in Beckton, has supported more than 300 children and families from across London in the past year. It faces a dramatic increase in demand for services CEO Paul Richard told television news, putting intense pressure on limited finances of the Hospice which relies heavily on cash support from beyond the NHS.

To learn more about Richard House Hospice, please visit: richardhouse.org.uk and for more information about the 25th anniversary appeal or to donate, please visit: richardhouse.org.uk/25thappeal



Hestia, East London Rape Crisis, nia, Ashiana, Victim Support and others have been running workshops, advice stalls, talks, and learning events.

A new film, *Harassment Stops Here*, has also been launched to highlight how everyday behaviours, like catcalling, staring, and unwanted remarks, contribute to an unsafe environment for women and girls.

In addition a White Ribbon Day on 25 November called on men to pledge to never commit, excuse, or stay silent about violence against women. The White Ribbon campaign is supported

friends, family or colleagues about taking a stand.

People can get support if they are affected by any of these issues. People affected by domestic abuse can call Hestia's 24-hour helpline on 0808 196 1482. Even people concerned about their own behaviour can reach out to the Respect helpline. (National Respect helpline: 0808 802 4040.)

More information about the 16 Days of Action events is available on Newham Council's page: Newham 16 Days Events or email: co-production-team@newham.gov.uk

Christmas Rum Punch

Zhenreenah Muhxinga prepares a simple tipple for the festive season

Ingredients (Serves 6-8)

2 cups white rum (or dark rum for a richer flavour)
2 cups fruit punch or cranberry juice
1 cup orange juice
1 cup pineapple juice
1/2 cup lime juice (fresh is best!)
1/2-1 cup grenadine (to taste, for sweetness + colour)
1 cup ginger beer or soda water (added last for fizz)
Fresh fruit slices – oranges, limes, cherries

Instructions

In a large jug or bowl, mix the rum, fruit punch (or cranberry juice), orange juice, pineapple juice, and lime juice.

Add grenadine slowly until you reach your desired sweetness and colour.

Chill in the fridge for at least 1 hour to let the flavours blend.

Before serving, add ginger beer to give it a festive sparkle.

Pour over ice and garnish with fruit slices and maraschino cherries.

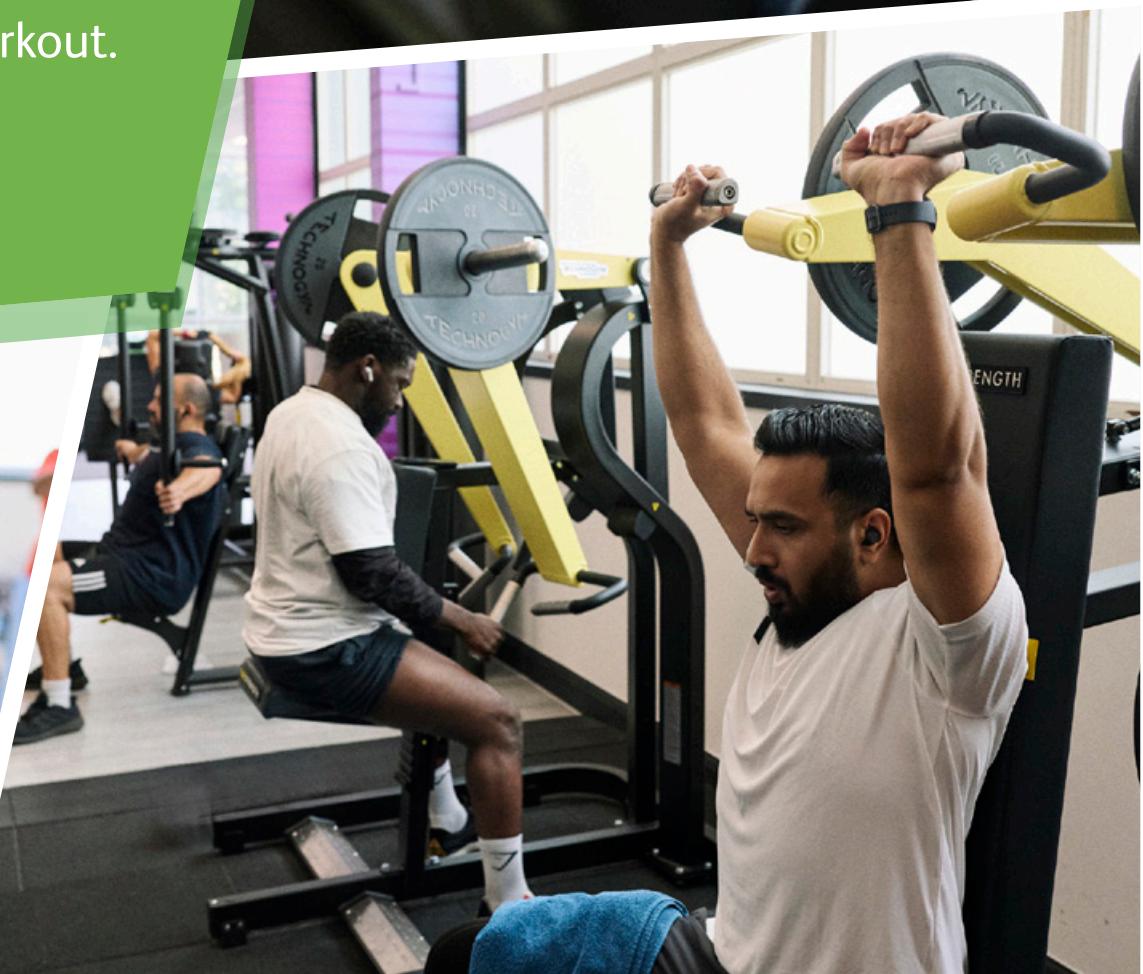
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Research that reflects lived experiences

Newham Community Research Project hosted an event in October that opened with a powerful dance by Natasha Cox, setting the tone for a day of collaboration to make Newham a better place for its most vulnerable residents.

The project establishes a community research network that helps people in marginalised communities to ensure that academic research reflects the realities of their lives by creating networks and mobilising citizen social scientists.

The feedback collected will shape the network and influence policy. The project is funded by UK Research and Innovation and The Young Foundation and is delivered in partnership with Compost London, Newham Council and The London Prosperity Board, UCL.

Find out more from: marilyn@compostlondon.org.uk

Illuminating Newham with heartfelt poetry and music

Be Manzini and Friends took centre stage for a powerful celebration of creativity, belonging and community. Curated and hosted by award-winning local poet and filmmaker Be Manzini, the event brought together an impressive line-up of performers.

Throughout the night the audience was offered poems and meditations exploring identity, memory and the search for home.

Poet, musician, producer and soundscape artist Shadé Joseph, the 2025 Charles Parker Gold Award winner, provided a moving set that touched on belonging, childhood and friendship. Her performance invoked a beautiful sense of kinship and collective memory.

The audience was also treated to a performance by star of page, screen and stage babiryebukilwa, celebrated for their role in the BAFTA



L-R babiryebukilwa, Be Manzini, Shadé Joseph and Eklipse

award-winning *Dreaming Whilst Black* (BBC), *Domino Day* and more. The set blended deep vulnerability with sharp insight, captivating listeners by weaving stories of personal history, and the challenge of carving space for oneself in an ever-shifting world. The poems were peppered with everything from guttural sounds, song, to silence and

singular words that chimed emotional clarity.

Finally, the evening featured the dynamic Eklipse, featured by Radio 1, 1Xtra SBT and more recently being used by the Premier League. He offered a rare, introspective reading of his words, followed by a rhythmic, infectious song selection, merging rhythm and poetry in the uniquely power-

ful way only Eklipse as a rapper can, perfectly accentuated by the force of his notoriously rich baritone voice.

He brought a diverse set; from his John Betjeman award winning poem on Newham, to his politically inspired London City and then saxophone laden songs looking at his interior landscape.

Be Manzini and Friends was presented as part of the Newham Festival of Stories, where the unifying force of creativity was both harnessed and joyfully shared. Through poetry, song and candid dialogue.

Those who want to be part of this process can join free online workshops under the Newham Poetry Prize winter programme, which is founded and directed by Be Manzini. Stay in touch with the project via Instagram [@newhampoetryprize](https://www.instagram.com/newhampoetryprize) or email newhampoetryprize@gmail.com.

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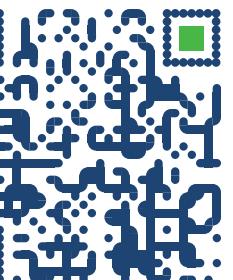
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Fighting for a corner of Newham that has international status

CHARLES BLAKE

The end of World War One is commemorated each year in a small corner of Newham. But what made this Remembrance Sunday event different to all the others up and down the country is that it commemorates the little known fight for survival of Romania after it declared war on the Austro/Hungarian axis, and thus joined the side of Britain.

Founded by local people seven years ago, a war memorial plaque and protected tree in the grounds of the Olive Garden Restaurant community courtyard at 344 (350c) Katherine Road has been recognised by the Imperial War Museum as unique in Britain and has international status.

This year's theme was special. In a gesture of peace and reconciliation, and regretting all wars and loss of life on all sides, German student Victor Vogel asked Romanian resident Alex Panduru and British resident Pat Thrale if he could join in. It was particularly touching for Ms Thrale, as her father fought in WW1.

Local resident Ahmed Pandero said: 'We are SO lucky having a residents association here to come up with these types of ideas. I was shocked to hear that the Council is starving them, the Monega Association, of their running costs and it's disgraceful.'

'What is just as bad is that the Council is considering a sixth attempt to develop the site, when only last year hundreds got together to rename it Hari's Garden of Peace, which was so nice.'

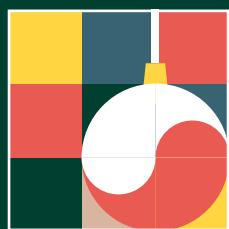
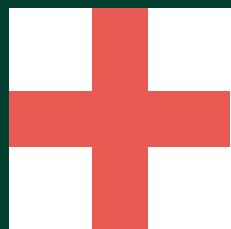
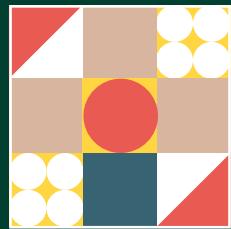
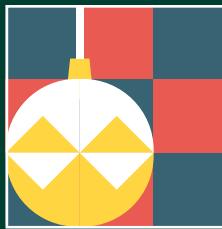
The Council has been consulting with the property developer since May, causing the residents association to keep raising funds to counter the repeated planning applications.

MP Sir Stephen Timms, London Assembly Member Unmesh Desai and many residents have lodged objections, and copies of the Association's community before profit documents have been sent to former MP Lord Gove, Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz and Chair of the Participatory Democracy Commission.

Plans for next year's commemoration involving the French and Romanian Institutes will be cancelled if property development is granted.



Victor Vogel, Ms Pat Thrale and Alexandru Panduru after formal laying of poppies



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Getting the numbers right at Plashet School

The maths department at Plashet School has been nominated for a prestigious teaching award.

The nomination is for the PTI (formerly the Prince's Teaching Institute) Bernice McCabe Award. It comes as a result of staff development work that has seen teachers gain greater confidence in strategies and curriculum design leading to more inclusive student-focused lessons that emphasise reasoning, discussion, and high expectations for all.

Plashet is one of three schools on the shortlist to win the national award of a £5,000 prize and a trophy which are awarded annually to an exceptional department which demonstrates the ethos and values of the PTI through their work. The winner was due to be announced at a gala dinner as *Newham Voices* went to press.

Newham College wins Climate Action Award

Newham College has been highly commended in the 2030 climate action category at the 2025 UK and Ireland Green Gown Awards, sponsored by The Energy Consortium, TEC.

College Principal Jamie Purser said: "This affirms Newham College's role as a catalyst for sustainability, empowering learners, supporting employers, and shaping a fairer, cleaner future."

We are very proud of this award."

The Green Gown Awards recognise sustainability, innovation and leadership in post-16 education in the UK and Ireland.

This year's awards saw 112 finalists from 76 institutions shortlisted, with 23 winners and 24 highly commended. They were announced at a ceremony at the Library of Birmingham on 6 November.



OUT AND ABOUT IN NEWHAM

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

ENTERTAINMENT

Performers showcased their talents in front of local judges Omar Bynon, Crystxl King and Byron Gold, at **The Docks Factor** during the Royal Docks Originals festival at City Hall on 3 October.

Amy Wood, Gallions School deputy head teacher, told *Newham Voices*: “Our Senior Orchestra were extremely proud to perform at The Docks Factor. Being early in the term, our pupils learnt their piece in just four weeks. Our pupils were excited to discover that we were the first ever orchestra to perform at City Hall!”



Edwin Shoesmith and his family
©Neandra Etienne

Performer/musician Edwin Shoesmith, aged ten, was voted the winner by the audience.

The Docks Factor was commissioned by the Dock Local Panel creative residents group, supported by the Royal Docks Team and produced by Learning Stages.

royaldocks.london

Fulham FC and Nigerian national team player Alexander Iwobi (pictured), who grew up in Newham, is hosting the YouTube series *The Locker Room*. Presented by StockX the series fuses football, fashion and culture. Episode 5 airs on 4 December.

@alexanderyaadigg



MUSIC

Sound Waves uncovers six decades of Newham's music history and culture. Zillah Minx and her partner Sid Truelove (pictured above) are teenage sweethearts who met in 1979. Their photo taken at the Bridgehouse is featured in the project. Zillah told *Newham Voices*: “Growing up in Newham's youth clubs and pubs shaped my punk roots and led me to become Rubella Ballet's singer.”

The exhibition is at Beckton Library from 1 November–13 December. There is also a limited-edition book with an introduction by Emma Warren.

Sound Waves was made possible with funding from the Heritage Fund.

soundwavesnewham.co.uk



Children from Elmhurst primary school
Elmhurst Primary School has recorded a new song called *Little Seeds, Big Dreams*.

Head of Year 1 and Music Coordinator Tara told *Newham Voices*: “The song came about because every year Elmhurst enters the Newham Place of Worship competition. Entries have to be art inspired by our RE topics in class, in year one this is ‘belonging’.

“In previous years I have chosen a song my class loves and re-written the lyrics. This year I decided to challenge myself and write an original song, which could then be the Elmhurst School Song.

“The song reflects our school's values and centres around our school motto, Little seeds, Big Dreams.”

The school choir will be performing a Christmas concert in their school theatre, and they will be performing at Green Street Library Christmas coffee morning on 11 December.

elmhurstprimary.co.uk

FESTIVE EVENTS

Westfield Stratford City's Christmas celebrations programme includes live entertainment and immersive experiences.

westfield.com

The Department for Education's **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF)** programme will be running across Newham.

The HAF Christmas 2025 programme is for children and young people aged 4–16 who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals.

20 December – 2 January

Contact Haf@newham.gov.uk for any information

equo.org/newhamhaf

Rights Equality in Newham (REIN) winter HAF programme includes activities and trips for 10–16 year olds. 20, 22, 23, 24 and 29 December.

reinuk.org

Forest Gate Festive Market features local artists, artisans, makers, charities and creatives. The festival's food bank donation drive will be running at The Forest Tavern leading up to the market and on the day itself.

6 December, 11am – 5pm, The Forest Tavern

Stratford Shopping Centre's festive series of magical Christmas events will see Santa in his grotto from 10:00am to 4:00pm.

- 6 December: Singing elves and festive games
- 13 December: Christmas storytelling sessions
- 20 December: Make your own reindeer food workshop

Stratford Shopping Centre is supporting the Kevin Jenkins OBE Newham Christmas Toy Appeal, now in its 46th year. The toy appeal was renamed in 2021 to honour its late founder.

Shoppers will find the Toy Appeal donation box in Central Square from 23 November until 14 December.

stratfordshopping.co.uk



Newham Super Choir

Newham Super Choir and **Singing for Health** free concert

9 December, 1.30, St. Bartholomew's Church, 292b, Barking Road, E6 3BA

newhamsuperchoirdotorg.wordpress.com

The Drop-in Centre Christmas Party. Spaces are limited for this special, no-cost event. Call 020 7511 6444 to reserve your spot.

13 December, 6 pm – 10 pm, St. Mark's Community Centre, 218 Tollgate Rd, Beckton E6 5YA

thedropinbereavementcentre.co.uk

Community Carols with St Marks

21 December, 4pm–6pm, The Old Slade Yard, The Railway Arches, 460 Sebert Road, E7

theoldsladeyard.co.uk

Art in the Docks *Into the Night* midwinter community lantern parade and workshop activi-

ties. 2.30pm, parade begins 4pm, 13 December, 25 Shackleton Way, E16

artinthedocks.com

Local schools will be performing **Christmas Carols** at the Market Place East Ham at 10am and 1pm on 2, 4, 5, 9, 11, 16 and 18 December.

themarketplaceeastham.co.uk

Christmas Carols on the Village Green.

10 December, 6pm, Britannia Village Green E16, if it's raining try Britannia Village Hall.

wsfroyaldocks.org

Christmas Market fundraiser for **Friends of Godwin School**

6 December, The Cider House, Avenue Road, E7

@theciderhouse_e7

Mindful Dining and Perinatal Parents and Infants Relationships Programmes end of year 2025 and New Year 2026 celebrations. Free entry, meals cost £1 per person. Register to attend via Eventbrite

This event is sponsored by ANKH Place CIC/Supported by She Inspired Her CIC

28 December, 1pm–5pm, Plaistow Fire Station, 142 Prince Regent Lane E13



Stratford Cross

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Festive Programme includes 24 events across 24 venues over 24 days. All

activities, which feature music, winter market and performance, are free to access and are suitable for all ages.

From 1 December to 24

December, the Park will open a different door each evening at 6:00pm, to reveal a surprise festive moment at one of 24 locations across the Park.

Full details of the programme can be found on the website: queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk

FASHION

Not just a shop x LCF Founders Club pop-up features emerging designers from London College of Fashion and across University of the Arts London (UAL).

6 November – 20 December, Tuesday – Saturday, 11am – 6pm, 105 Carpenters Road, Stratford arts.ac.uk



LCF Founders Club pop-up
©Neandra Etienne

THEATRE

Composer, lyricist, musical director and performer Robert Hyman wrote the music for Stratford East's panto **Mama Goose** and co-wrote the lyrics alongside Vikki Stone.

Robert Hyman, who was born in East Ham and has been associated with the Stratford East panto for the last 27 years, told Newham Voices: "East London is



Reclaim the Street, a performance by Immediate Theatre's Over 60s drama group, features Thelma Sharma, a performer from Newham.

Reclaim the Street performance, 5 December, info stall at 1:00pm, show at 2:00pm, Memorial Community Church, 395 Barking Rd, E13 8AL. Free tickets are available from Eventbrite

Immediate Theatre also recently launched BrightSide Theatre group, a Newham-based drama

group in collaboration with Jazanne Arts. BrightSide Theatre is a group of talented older adults who have been working together for over two years. Using improvisation, poetry and music they explore a range of themes related to their lived experience.

BrightSide Theatre meets every other Thursday from 12:30pm to 3:00pm in Forest Gate library. The last date for this term will be 4 December.

immediate-theatre.com

unique in the musical landscape for its rich invention and diversity of sound. Grime, Indie, Electronic, Dance, it's all here on the streets of Newham. So, every year I try to write a range of styles and sounds for the beautifully diverse audience."

21 November 2025 – 3 January 2026

stratfordeast.com

Unheard Now Spoken is a new theatrical production born out of the book Voices in Harmony, which was published in April 2024.

The play, which includes some Newham cast, explores the lived experiences of women, and delves into themes of adversity, identity, culture, and migration to the UK.

Unheard Now Spoken has an ongoing collaboration with Forest Gate based East London Black Women's Organisation (ELBWO) who sponsored their November performance.

The next performance is scheduled for the New Year.

GARDENS

Manor Park: Upcycled Art in the Garden project, organised by Manor Park Community Garden, was designed to tackle



Upcycled Art Turning Rubbish into Treasure in Manor Park ©Frederic Billet

pollution and encourage creativity by giving unwanted items a new life.

Local artist Jo Wood led two engaging workshops, which helped participants transform their discarded items using customisation and colouring techniques.

The project, supported by a micro-commission from Newham Council and in partnership with Age UK East London, proves that community upcycling projects can help build a greener Newham.

Watch out for new Manor Park Community Garden Upcycled Art in the Garden projects in 2026!

[@manorparkcommunitygarden](http://manorparkcommunitygarden.org)

All events are subject to change. Please email your event details and news to neandra.etienne@newhamvoices.co.uk

Advertisements

A STRATFORD EAST PRODUCTION

FRI 21 NOV 2025 – SAT 03 JAN 2026

STRATFORD EAST

MAMA GOOSE

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY VIKKI STONE & TONDERAI MUNYEVU

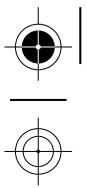
SONGS BY ROBERT HYMAN

SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES

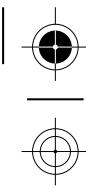
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT STRATFORDEAST.COM

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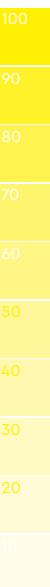
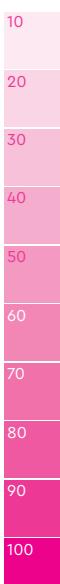
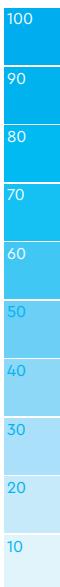
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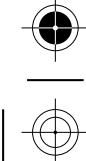
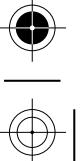
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Taskin: a fighter and a carer

CHRIS EK

Newham resident Taskin Saleem recently advised me on how to help an elderly family member with dementia. A lovely lady, Taskin is a qualified social worker, proud grandma, and long-time CEO of Newham's Subco Trust Ltd, the charity for Asian elders and carers.

The Subco Elders Day Centre started in 1993, in Upton Park. It offers activities and support for elders through various stages of dementia, and helps with some key aspects: NHS liaison, kitchen provision including meals on wheels, an elderly daycare centre, exercise classes, nutritional help, advocacy and end of life care.

Taskin's moment that unlocked her own potential to help others began when she refused to accept an arranged marriage.

She wanted to marry the man she had met and loved – and after 39 years, still loves: "I had to take that step. My parents luckily came round and supported my choice in the end".



Taskin Saleem (centre), CEO of Sub Co Trust Ltd. ©Steve Lawton

Taskin was involved in the first Asian Women's Refuge in Newham. In the 1980s she was involved in anti-racism protests, sitting outside the old Forest Gate police station. She

even spent one night in jail, arrested at 22 years-old!

Due to her success as CEO of Subco Trust Ltd, Taskin has been given the responsibility of daycare for the white

and Caribbean communities. During Covid, it was one of only a few organisations that didn't close its doors.

After 32 years of growth, their rent in Upton Park was

increased beyond their means so in 2024, after fighting for their survival, Taskin and her team were able to organise a new space in the Stratford Arcade. Walls needed breaking down, space refurbished, kitchens built. The main item left to get is a giant extractor.

Taskin's highlights include being on the committee of the Newham Monitoring Project, a 1980s grassroots anti-racist organisation, and now she is Chair of Diverse Communities Health and Wellbeing Forum, supported by the Council, to help with inequality issues and elderly access to services.

Her work includes visits to Parliament to raise awareness of their work for the elderly in Newham, including dementia, one of the most ignored demographics in the UK. Taskin does not forget those who do forget.

People can contribute to an older person's Christmas by dropping off a gift at Sub Co Trust between 9.30am and 3pm, Monday to Thursday by 11 December at 107-109 The Grove Stratford, E15 1HP. subcotrust.org.uk

COMMUNITY NEWS ROUNDUP

By Neandra Etienne



Hammers support for homeless and people in trouble

In November West Ham United Foundation welcomed 80 people from the local area, experiencing or at risk of homelessness, as part of 'Hammers for Hope', a community support project held at the Foundation's new hub, The Foundry, in Beckton.

The programme, predominantly being delivered in partnership with local char-

ity Your Place and supported by the Premier League and the Professional Footballers' Association, is designed to offer a pathway towards long-term independence.

West Ham has also collaborated with Mind and Ripple to offer free online workshops. There will be a Christmas and Mental Health workshop on 10 December at 5pm and a Self-harm Awareness session on 17 December at 5pm. Register to attend at health@westhamunited.co.uk

Step up for stations

Plaistow and Upton Park Tube stations are going to be assessed for possible step-free access.

Alex Williams, Transport for London's Chief Customer and Strategy Officer, said: "Making more Tube stations step-free is a major part of our work to make the transport network more accessible."

Culture programme boost

The creative people and places programme for *Culture Within Newham* has been awarded three more years of funding from Arts Council England.

Culture Within Newham Programme Director Stella Toonen said: "Since our programme began, we've seen so many people discover their creativity, participate regularly, and then step up to lead creative projects or join our resident voice panels. We're proud to create impactful ways for Newham locals to take ownership of their borough's culture."

Lottery cash for youth work

The local charity Aston-Mansfield, currently based at their community centre in Manor Park, has received National Lottery funding to support its work em-

powering young people. Diane Betts, CEO of Aston-Mansfield, said: "Thanks to National Lottery players, we will be able to continue our work empowering and up-skilling young people, while building a more connected and inclusive community."



Jamboree in the Park. Image ©Navneet Jayakumar

Blooming marvellous: Wild Green E13 is a neighbourhood winner

Wild Green E13, a volunteer-led community garden based in New City Green, Plaistow, has achieved an outstanding rating — the highest level of recognition — in the prestigious *It's Your Neighbourhood* awards organised by London in Bloom.

The honour is a milestone in a journey that began in 2019, when residents first came together to transform an underused green space into a thriving community asset. Since then Wild Green E13 has grown into a well-loved hub at the heart of the New City Estate.

Support from Newham Council's Community Assemblies, Plaistow South Big Local, and dozens of volunteers have helped the group create a colourful community mural and



Wild Green E13 committee members Joseph Huang (left) and Cristabel Parker receive the award last month.

organise events that have brought the neighbourhood together. Today, the garden is a safe space where residents of different ages and backgrounds grow food, learn about sustainability, and enjoy a vibrant mix of flowers, plants, vegetables and fruit trees.

Founding member and co-chairperson Joana Simoes said: "Our project is more about social justice and fighting inequality than it is about gardening and flowers. We have a free library, free organic food, free hot drinks, and the community cohesion we have achieved is palpable which makes me really proud."

People who want more information or want to get involved should contact wildgreene13@gmail.com or follow @wildgreene13 on Instagram.

UEL partnership boosts support for Indian students

The University of East London has signed a deal that will strengthen the welfare, employability and success of Indian students in the UK.

UEL and the National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that establishes a new model of collaboration that will deliver initiatives to help international learners, and provide practical support from pre-arrival through to post-graduation, aligned with the India-UK "living bridge" strategy.

It is a model that univer-

sities worldwide may look to replicate as it provides a blueprint for inclusive and globally minded education.

The agreement was signed in October at the University's Stratford Campus by Professor Amanda Broderick, UEL Vice-Chancellor and President, and Sanam Arora, Chairperson of the Alumni Union SAU. The signing was witnessed by local MP Sir Stephen Timms MP, who is also Minister for Social Security and Disability; Lord Patel of Bradford and Virendra Sharma, former MP of Ealing Southall and Patron of NISAU.



Image via UEL

Barrels of solidarity

Zhenreenah Muhxinga on how family and neighbours responded to the Hurricane disaster in Jamaica

When news of Hurricane Melissa's devastation reached East London, we felt compelled to act.

We realised that the victims of the hurricane needed help immediately, so we rang around for three large blue barrels to start collecting emergency supplies for families in Jamaica whose homes had been flooded.

We asked people in the neighbourhood to help and word quickly spread through the community. In short order, Reggae Choir members, neighbours, churches, friends, and families all rallied together.

Donations poured in: tinned food, blankets, shoes, soap, sanitary products, baby items, toys, towels, and warm clothing. Everyone pitched in, even a young boy, Amar who contributed his favourite toy, Bop it, hoping it will make somebody happy with a smile.

Residents shared stories, memories, and concern for relatives back home. Melonie recalled a previous incident



The Harder They Come audience ©Neandra Etienne

when her uncle's house was underwater.

Rose remembered previous hurricanes and the resilience of Jamaican families. As the barrels filled, the room buzzed with unity and generosity.

With the help of Zara volunteering, three barrels were packed, sealed, labelled "Hurricane Melissa Relief," and shipped the next morning.

This was not just an act of practical support, it is an example of community at work and love in action.

As the barrels left East

London, they carried not only essential supplies, but also hope, care, and the enduring message that Jamaicans at home and abroad always look after each other.

In addition, audiences from the Stratford East Theatre show *The Harder They Come* have raised £4,902.86 for those affected by Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica.

To support relief efforts, visit: supportjamaica.gov.jm or gov.uk/government/news/hurricane-melissa-what-you-can-do-to-help



SOMETHING'S BREWING



Phil Mellows discovers a community pub in Stratford that is reversing its fortunes



It's always been an odd one, with its doors on two parallel streets, but the Queens Head in Stratford is one of Newham's great survivors.

Every time I pass by, I wonder that after 150 years it's still there as others close – the latest casualty being the Victoria Tavern in Plaistow, where trading ceased at the beginning of November. But current owner Stonegate, Britain's biggest pub company, has trust in it. Refurbished in 2023, it feels looked after, and in

October a dynamic new manager popped up behind the bar.

Hazel Southwell has already made a name for herself in the pub world having brought two decades' experience, including stints with J D Wetherspoon, to bear in turning around the Royal Oak in Dartford.

Contemplating her next challenge, Hazel wanted "something more central, in Zone 2, and Stonegate needed someone experienced to run the Queens Head".

"There are a lot of conditions on the licence – it's nine pages long. But it didn't need any work, there was no broken furniture – which is incredible in this business. It's a nice pub with everything you need."

"Most of all, I was back in my favourite boozer territory, and I could immediately see a few things I could do to help the pub."

Despite the conditions imposed by Newham Council, including mandatory security on the doors on weekend evenings, Hazel insists that "it's not a trouble pub".

"It has a strong community who regard it as 'their' pub", a community that she's quickly got to know, making sure she's "very present, to get a feel for the place".

With sports on multiple screens, the Queens Head is busiest for West Ham's home games and enjoys a steady daytime trade from "the racing crowd".

A former motoring journalist, Hazel is keen to widen the entertainment to other sports, including Formula 1, and she has a long list of ideas to bring more life to the pub. Among them Sunday afternoon karaoke, comedy, open mic sessions, Latin American nights, a board game club, charity events and deals with local cafes that will mean customers can eat at the pub.

And boldly, at a time when most London pubs are ripping out the hand-pumps, she also wants to bring back cask beer.

"This isn't about reinventing the pub," she says. "Where you've got a community, you can build a business. We're not starting from scratch."

Feeding Birds – Good or Bad?

BY ALAN COOPER

Friends of West Ham Park

Well, it depends. A clean bird feeder with proper bird food – seeds, fat balls – is always good. But throwing old bread or other food in a park? Er, NO!

Watching or photographing birds in a park is far better than feeding them unsuitable food because it helps protect their health, behaviour, and the environment.

Some people feed birds bread, chips, or processed snacks, believing they are being kind, but these foods can cause serious harm.

Bread and similar items fill birds up without providing nutrients, leading to malnutrition, weak bones, and deformities such as "angel wing". Regular feeding can also make birds

dependent on humans instead of learning to forage naturally, which is essential for their survival.

Feeding spots often attract large flocks, increasing the risk of disease spread through droppings and contaminated water. Leftover food litters a park, pollutes ponds, and can attract pests such as rats. In the long term, this disrupts the park's natural balance and damages the habitats that birds and other wildlife rely on.

In contrast, watching or photographing birds allows people to connect with nature in a positive, sustainable way. Observing birds in their natural behaviours—singing, nesting, feeding on insects—helps us appreciate their role in the ecosystem without interfering with it.

By choosing to watch or photograph birds instead of feeding them

unhealthy food, we show real care for their well-being and help ensure that parks remain safe, thriving places for both birds and people to enjoy.

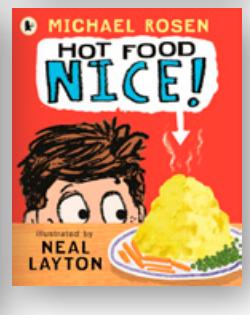
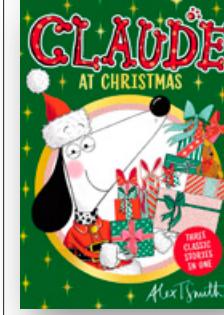
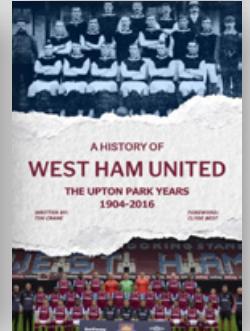
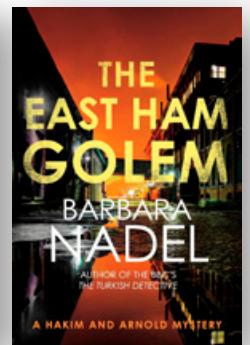


Good reads in Newham

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

- **Luxury Player** (signed copies available)
By Joe Cole
- **A History of West Ham United: The Upton Park Years 1904-2016**
By Tim Crane
- **The East Ham Golem** (From the author of the Inspector Ickmen series, inspiration for the BBC's The Turkish Detective)
By Barbara Nadel
- **Claude At Christmas: Three Stories In One!**
By Alex T. Smith
- **Dog Man 14: Big Jim Believes**
By Dav Pilkey
- **Hot Food: Nice!**
By Michael Rosen

– Compiled by David Ceen, Newham Bookshop



For full details or to request a copy, visit: newhambooks.co.uk

RESTAURANT REVIEW

Roz Café, a diamond in the Royal Docks

James Morgan reviews a wholesome delight in the south of the Borough

Roz Café has become an institution in the south of Newham, serving residents and workers from local businesses, as well as passing tourists on the Thames Path trail.

Located in Pier Parade, North Woolwich, this traditional establishment offers a wide range of typical café fare, from full English breakfasts to filled jacket potatoes, to curries and roast meals.

On my visit, I opted for a cheese omelette, baked beans and chips – a large portion and piping hot.

The café is open every day Monday to Saturday from 6.30am until 4pm. Lunchtimes are busiest as a diverse range of customers – local workers, families and residents young and old – fill up the small yet very func-



tional interior.

The menu is wholesome, honest, freshly made in front of you, and with plenty of options. The café also has a five star hygiene rating which talks to the cleanliness of its kitchen facilities, all visible to diners.

What really sets Roz apart

for me is the warmth and generosity of the welcome you receive from the proprietor. When I stopped by, I found the service was of the highest standards and the atmosphere set by the hosts was extremely pleasant.

Locals tell me that the breakfast menu is particu-

larly good, although you are recommended to arrive with an appetite as the plate sizes are not for the faint hearted!

As well as being a reference point for the local community, Roz café was also a filming location for the much acclaimed BBC TV series *Bodyguard*, causing the café to close for a day, and creating much excitement on the streets outside.

For those who find themselves down south in Newham, on the north banks of the Thames, I highly recommend stopping in at Roz, the welcome will not disappoint. And as the lettering on the front of the café suggests, 'you've tried the rest, now taste the best!'

Roz Café is located in the centre of North Woolwich in the Royal Docks ward of Newham Borough and can be reached on the DLR at King George V or via the 473 and 474 buses.

Congestion Charge increase

Newham motorists have been warned that from 2 January, the daily Congestion Charge for travel into central London will increase from £15 to £18.

Any daily charges from that date will be automatically debited from registered payment methods. There will also be discounts for new cleaner vehicles, but in future increases in charges will be made without public consultation, meaning the Congestion Charge could be increased each year in line with Tube fares, inflation plus 1 percent or a lower amount.

These increases would only apply to the Congestion Charge and not the ULEZ where any future increase is still subject to a decision by Transport for London and the Mayor of London.

There is no charge from 25 December (Christmas Day) until Thursday 1 January (New Year's Day) inclusive when travelling within the central London Congestion Charge zone.

MP inspires Priory Park learners

East Ham MP Sir Stephen Timms visited the Priory Park Centre of Our Newham Learning and Skills, Adult Education, to engage with learners and share insights into the life and responsibilities of an MP.

During his visit, Sir Stephen spoke passionately about his journey in public service, the role of Parliament in shaping communities, and the importance of civic engagement. Learners had the unique opportunity to ask questions on a wide range of top-

ics, including the NHS, safer streets, getting people into work, and much more.

The discussion provided a valuable platform for learners to voice their concerns and ideas, while gaining a deeper understanding of how government policies impact everyday life.

Sir Stephen emphasised the value of education and lifelong learning, encouraging attendees to stay informed and involved in their local communities.

"It was a very good lesson," said Yuliaa Andrushak.

Escape the chill with a visit to the library

People looking for a place to stay warm and to grab a hot drink as the winter takes hold will be pleased to hear that the Newham Council Warm Havens winter programme is once again open to all at libraries in the Borough.

From November the libraries are open 10am-5pm Mondays – Saturdays, with many open longer and all of them are providing a place of refuge for people who want to escape the winter chill, relax and stay warm.

There will also be a range of activities available through the libraries or, naturally enough, people can simply borrow a book, for a good read in the cold days ahead.

The ten libraries also allow people to use public computers with free Wi-Fi for job searches, staying connected with loved ones and much more. At East Ham library there is also free, bookable study space. For more information email CN.Eastham@newham.gov.uk.



Image: Manuele Sangalli/unsplash



Image: Sajidur Rahman/unsplash

SPORTS SHORTS

Compiled by Neandra Etienne



London Lions ©Nathan Green

London Lions launched their basketball and culture weekly podcast series *Baseline* on 12 November.

There are new episodes every Wednesday. London Lions are scheduled to play two home games in December at the Copper Box Arena Stratford.

thelondonlions.com

For the holiday season there is a range of activities in the **Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Festive Sports** free to access programme. This includes:

- Cycle with Santa at Lee Valley VeloPark, 12 December 6:00pm – 7:00pm
- Hammers Festive Fun Day at West Ham United Football Club, 14 December 11:00am – 7:00pm
- Serve with Santa in partnership with Salvation Army at Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre, 17 December, 6:00pm – 7:00pm
- Festive Aqua Splash at London Aquatics Centre, 22 December, 6:00pm – 6:45pm
- Smash into Christmas at Copper Box Arena, Wednesday 23 December, 6:00pm – 7:00pm

queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk

We Make Footballers Newham are hosting a community day and youth awards to celebrate youth achievement, promote health and wellbeing, encourage inclusion and strengthen community ties within Newham on 14 December.

wemakefootballers.com/newham



We Make Footballers ©Studio Sands

Active United Playmakers - Walking Football for Parkinson's sessions are designed to improve mobility, confidence and wellbeing. The programme is fully funded by Parkinson's UK, with in-kind support from the West Ham United Foundation. Fridays 5, 12 and 19 December, 12pm-1pm, West Ham United Foundation, The Foundry, E6 5NX.

Participants need to register to attend the session health@westhamunited.co.uk



Ezri Konsa was named Aston Villa's captain for the first time at Villa Park on 6 November. Ezri, who is from Newham and also plays for the England national football team, told the club's website: "It's always nice to lead the team out. It's a role that I've always wanted to play."

[@ezrikonsa](http://ezrikonsa)

Liverpool player **Rio Ngumoha**, from Newham, scored a goal during England's UEFA U19 Euro 2026 qualifier against Latvia on 15 November and Stoke City on-loan Manchester City player and former St Bons student **Divin Mubama**, from Newham, scored a second-half penalty during England's U21 UEFA Euro qualifier against Republic of Ireland on 14 November.

During the Euro U21 qualifier on 18 November Divin scored twice and was named the Young Lions Player of the Match.

[@divinmubama](http://divinmubama)

A new study analysing and combining musical energy, tempo, and positivity has revealed which Premier League clubs have the best walkout songs. **West Ham United's** *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles* was ranked fourth.

Newham Safer Neighbourhood Football Tournament includes U13 and U16, 11-a-side, 8 Teams. Trophies for winners and runners-up, refreshments will be provided.

20 December, 11am-3pm, Wanstead Flats, Aldersbrook Rd, E12 5HH
[@londonapsa_yp](http://londonapsa_yp)

West Ham United made history as they became the first Premier League team to take part in the Lady Mayor's annual parade, which dates back over 800 years, on 8 November.

The team's float showcased the history and legends of the Club since its formation as Thames Ironworks FC in 1895, the Hammers' achievements,



Lady Mayors parade.
 Image: City of London

diversity and the community work delivered by the Club's Foundation.

[https://www.whufc.com](http://www.whufc.com)

Dates and times of all games and events are subject to change. Please email your sports news, games and fixtures to neandra.etienne@newhamvoices.co.uk

Irakli is one to watch

British Judo confirmed that Irakli Goginashvili has been named a finalist for SportsAid's prestigious One-to-Watch Award. Each nominee is put forward by their sport's national governing body, based on exceptional performance, potential, and broader impact within their discipline.

Irakli, who is from Newham and trains at Palavani Judo Club in Canning Town, has had a successful 2025 season. At the Junior European Championships he captured gold and the continental title, becoming the first British male judoka in 25 years to top the podium at the event.

He followed this with a bronze



Irakli Goginashvili (in white). Image ©European Judo Union

A Cherry becomes a Hammer



This month Mickey Ambrose finds something to cheer as Hammers show fighting spirit against Bournemouth

After back-to-back wins against Newcastle and Burnley before the International break, there was a hope for Nuno Espirito Santo to make it three on-the-trot against Bournemouth, fondly known as the Cherries. He almost did it.

Callum Wilson, an ex-Bournemouth star, marked his return to his former club with two first-half goals to take the Hammers 2-0 up. This was his first 'brace' in the Premier League for two years, however, he did not get the chance to make it a hat-trick, when he was subbed.

But as he went off, West Ham's momentum went with him. The 33-year-old, who scored 67 goals in his six-year-spell at Bournemouth, was substituted early in the second half and received warm applause from all sides of the ground as he is still respected by the Bournemouth faithful.

Bournemouth then pulled one back through Marcus Tavernier, from the penalty spot, before international striker Enes Ünal marked his competitive return from a second anterior cruciate ligament tear, by scoring a dramatic equaliser, securing a crucial point for the Cherries. The 28-year-old was visibly emotional as he celebrated.

Ünal made a permanent €16.5 million move to the Cherries from Getafe in the summer of 2024; however, he has endured a gruelling 10-month spell on the sidelines following ligament surgery. The Turkish forward, making his second substitute appearance, struck nine minutes from time to deny West Ham a first away win under Nuno Espirito Santo.

Bournemouth could have won it, but Tavernier lifted a glorious last-gasp chance over the crossbar at the death. The club were also without Antoine Semenyo, who picked up an ankle sprain on international duty with Ghana.

Now we head towards the holiday season and something strange and sad in many ways. For the first time in over 100 years, English Football's top-



Image via West Ham United

flight will not be hosting a full fixture of Boxing Day Fixtures.

Instead, a full round of matches was listed for the following day – though the Premier League confirmed games can be brought forward to 26 December, if they are to be shown on television.

For some fans this is sacrilege. Football on Boxing Day has been a staple of the festive period and to see it wiped from the calendar sees another slice of English football heritage cast into the dustbin of history. Of course, for some others, it will come as a welcome relief, no longer having to navigate a limited, or non-existent public transport system, to watch a football match.

So, what was the reason for it? The crux of the matter is the deal the Premier League struck with the Football Association around the congested fixture calendar.

In exchange for scrapping FA Cup replays, (a move I and fellow players/managers, football fans condemned and campaigned against) – the Premier League has agreed to restore the FA Cup fifth round to a blank weekend, having previously been shunted into a midweek slot. It also agreed to not schedule matches on the same weekend as the sixth round.

At that point, it also committed to a 38-game season,

comprising of 33 weekend dates and five midweek fixtures. The only way to have 33 weekend dates in 2025-26 is for the 27 of December to be

classified as one of the regular match weekends – which puts the boot into the traditional Boxing Day routine.

There is also a hard stop end to this season on 24 May, with the Champions League final a week later and the World Cup follows. Phew, it's a massive pile up of fixtures and hard to make sense of, even for me!

Finally, in our November edition I mentioned the heroics of boxer Fabio Wardley who became the mandatory challenger to Oleksandr Usyk following his stunning victory against Joseph Parker, stopping Parker in the 11th round to earn the right to challenge Usyk.

Usyk has since vacated the WBO belt, so Wardley is the new Champion, without even having to throw a single punch, such is the enigmatic world of professional sport.

Meanwhile, our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Mark Kaylor a British and Commonwealth middleweight champion who has died at the age of 64. A passionate West Ham United fan, Kaylor was born in Canning Town and raised in Stanford-le-Hope in Essex before

returning to his birthplace as a teenager to pursue his boxing dreams.

Joining West Ham Boxing Club, he won the prestigious ABA England Boxing National Amateur Championships trophy in 1980 and competed in the Moscow Olympics the same year, reaching the quarter-finals.

Kaylor and boxing legend Frank Bruno rose through the ranks together, training alongside each other and frequently appearing on the same fight cards. The tragedy occurred on Frank's birthday, leaving the boxing icon heartbroken.

He said: "RIP Mark Kaylor – we trained together in various gyms and were quite often on the same bill when I was going through the ranks. From memory, a big West Ham United fan. Very poignant for me as he passed away on my birthday aged 64 – the age I am now." Rest In Peace Mark.

Meanwhile a peaceful and joyful Xmas to all Newham Voices readers.

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

Support for charities? It's a walk in the Park!

St Bonaventure's School made its annual sponsored walk at West Ham Park in November. The event is part of the Catholic Church's Jubilee Pilgrims of Hope initiative – a day dedicated to acting with compassion and service.

Deputy Headteacher Andy Lewis said the event reflects "lots of different work including charitable and community service, and gardening work here in West Ham Park".

Benefiting this year are charities that reflect the school's mission. They are BCCS offering counselling and financial support to families; Mizen Foundation empowering young people to be change-makers and peace-builders; CAFOD tackling global poverty; YourPlace, the Newham-based charity supporting the homeless; and The Magpie Project which helps mothers and young

children in temporary accommodation in Newham.

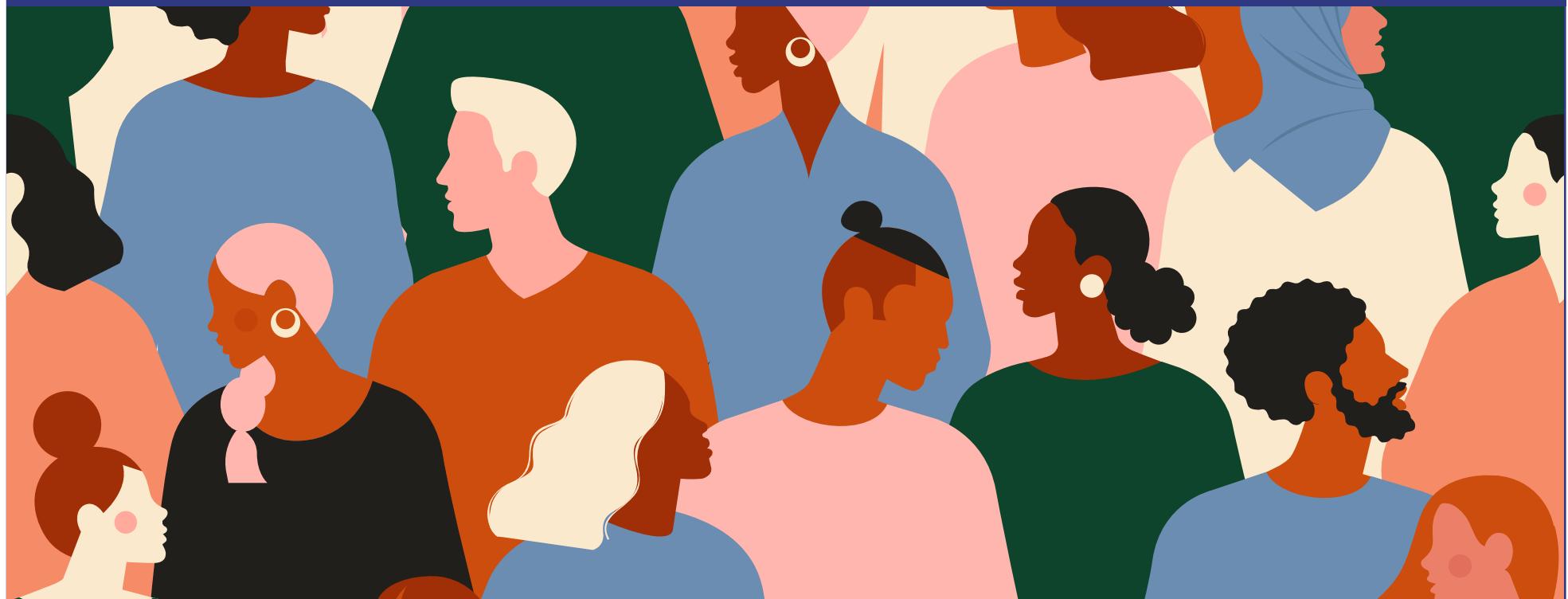
Meanwhile, St Bonaventure's is preparing to celebrate its

150th anniversary with a year-long programme of community events, service projects, and celebrations.



Students take part in the St Bons Sponsored Walk. Image ©St. Bonaventure's School

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