Newham Voices
Community News and Views

FREE
Issue 72 | December 2026
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A place for homeless people over Christmas

SHEILA NURSIMHULU

The homeless charity Crisis will be offering support for people facing homelessness over the Christmas period.

The charity will run a day centre at School 21 in Stratford from 24 to 28 December, including Christmas Day. Guests can attend without a referral and access food, warmth, activities and practical support.

Crisis will also provide hotel accommodation across East London from 21 December to 12 January 2027. Hotel places must be arranged through outreach services, so individuals cannot self refer directly.

Anyone who wants to help bring warmth, companionship and practical support to homeless people can volunteer, donate and share information about services.


YourPlace, image via Facebook

Anyone who wants to help bring warmth, companionship and practical support to homeless people can volunteer, donate and share information about services.

Volunteers are needed to welcome guests, serve refreshments and help with activities. Most roles require a commitment of at least two shifts. Behind the scenes, the Canning Town warehouse needs volunteers to sort donations and pack food and essential supplies. Visit **crisis.org.uk** or email **ccvolunteering@crisis.org.uk** for details.

Local charities also provide ongoing help. NEWway Project's NEWday service, based at Bobby Moore Sports Pavilion, 118 Napier Road, East Ham, offers food, showers, laundry and advice for people sleeping outdoors. Contact **admin@newwayproject.org** or **0300 102 4479** to check festive opening arrangements and ways to contribute.

Your Place, formerly Caritas Anchor House, provides accommodation and individual support in Canning Town. Enquiries about helping residents over Christmas can be made to hello@yourplace.org.uk or 020 7476 6062.

Lola's Homeless Ladder supports people facing homelessness and financial hardship with food, toiletries and clothing. Visit **lolashomeless.org.uk** for requests.

Newham Voices is inviting readers and supporters to our holiday celebration: King Edward VII pub Stratford Broadway 21 December from 6pm. Refreshments and snacks for all!

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Newham Voices
Community News and Views

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.

www.newhamvoices.co.uk

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Newham Health Hub launches new services

The University of East London (UEL) Neighbourhood Health Hub (NHH) celebrated its first year of operation in November. **Richard Stubbs** *attended the event that saw the launch of two new services, plus a new research opportunity that residents can join.*



Neighbourhood Health Hub event ©UEL

Here is the proof that a university can do far more than just train students by combining education, healthcare and community partnerships.

Over the past year, NHH has delivered more than 1,800 individual sessions, involved 120 students and provided 2,500 hours of student placements. Some of those sessions went to a friend of mine who was suffering from tennis elbow.

He gave an excellent reference for the Health Hub stating: "It's fantastic and it's free and self-referring," he said, "No queue and seen promptly. Able to book the next appointment there and then. It was great that the gap between appointments was only a week. It was all good".

Kamilah Tomlinson, manager of the new Community Counselling Service, said it will provide a supportive and confidential space for individuals to discuss emotional and psychological challenges. The service aims to improve access to counselling within the community, support mental wellbeing and help address barriers to timely support.

The new Rehabilitation Service was also introduced, offering personalised assessment, treatment and rehabilitation for people experiencing musculoskeletal conditions, injuries or mobility difficulties. The service focuses on exercise to improve function, support recovery and help individuals return to their daily activities and maintain independence.

Finally, the Research Project was introduced by Dr Anna J. Schreiner of MBST Global, a firm that has signed an agreement with UEL to work together to develop a new model for prevention-led healthcare that combines research, education and treatment.

The equipment uses magnetic resonance technology designed to support the body's natural repair processes. It is used by the England women's cricket team, rugby and football clubs and will be freely available to residents of Newham who qualify for the research program. At present you can only express an interest in participating and receiving more information.

Use the QR codes (see below left) to express an interest in either of the services or the research.



Once a month not enough?

Sign up for our newsletter so you get the biggest stories from Newham every second week!

Opposition parties react to neighbourhood group leadership plans

Green Party Councillor quits in racism row

BY DAISY MILES

A Green Party Councillor has left the party after allegedly experiencing racism from another councillor.

Ibrahim Alom, 21, has stepped down as the Co-Deputy Leader and will serve as an Independent councillor for the West Ham ward.

In a statement, Councillor Alom said he reported the allegation in October and that the party had taken 'no action'.

"On 5 October, I reported an allegation of racism directed at me by a fellow councillor to a member of the group's executive. When I followed up over three weeks later, I discovered that no action had been taken to progress it," he said. "No formal finding has been made, but I believe a complaint this serious deserved prompt attention."

Leader of the Newham Green Group, Councillor Arshan Baskaran, said: "We're sorry Councillor Alom has decided to leave the Green Group. He was an important part of our group and its leadership, and his work in the election helped us win 16 seats, including our first ever win against Labour in West Ham.

"We take any allegation of racism extremely seriously. Councillor Alom had a right to expect a quicker response than three weeks, and we apologise unreservedly for the delay. His complaint hasn't been ignored: we're actively progressing it, and his resignation doesn't change that. So it wouldn't be right to comment on it further."


Newham Town Hall

He added: "We wish Councillor Alom well, and our door remains open."

Councillor Alom, who joined the party around the general election two years ago, is the second Green councillor to leave the group since local elections in May, after Danny Keeling resigned from the Green group on Newham Council. Unlike Councillor Keeling, who is still a member of the Green Party of England and Wales, Councillor Alom will leave the Green Party entirely.

In his resignation statement, Councillor Alom also cited disagreements with the party's boycott of neighbourhood leadership roles.

He is one of four opposition councillors who have defied their party and accepted roles in the neighbourhood groups at the invitation of Mayor Forhad Hussain.

He said: "Whatever our views on the mayoral system, residents need us to work together and make the best use of the opportunities available now."

Councillor Alom will take up the position of Lead Commissioner for the Forest Gate and Maryland Community Neighbourhood.

"Although I don't represent these wards, I'll work with local councillors and residents to bring their priorities to the Mayor and help improve local services," he said.

The community neighbourhood scheme, which will strengthen links with local residents, has been controversial with the Council opposition, despite the Mayor making concessions to involve all parties in the scheme.

Councillor Baskaran told the Local Democracy Reporting Service last month that community neighbourhood leaders should be elected by members of the ward.

He has since told *Newham Voices*: "We haven't boycotted Community Neighbourhoods. Our position is that each neighbourhood's lead should be chosen by the councillors who represent it, and we'll take part on that basis."

The Mayor has opened the roles – which are eligible for a £15,000 allowance in addition to a basic £15,960 councillor allowance – to every party, but he still picks who fills them.

Three councillors from the opposition Newham Independents Party have also accepted leadership roles in the neighbourhood groups in defiance of a party decision to boycott the process which they say should be led by people chosen by the parties which won the majority of votes in these areas at Council elections in May.

Councillors Nasreen Shamima, Monia Khan and Oli Rahman have all accepted posts at the invitation of the Labour Mayor.

Newham Independents Party leader Mehmood Mirza said on social media: "I have concerns that these appointments are being used to undermine the independence of opposition councillors."

Bin that food waste! More homes get a new weekly recycling service

Thousands of households across Newham are receiving their new food waste recycling caddies as the Council rolls out the latest phase of weekly collections to around 76,000 street-level properties.

The first phase involving 12,000 households led to the recycling of 533 tonnes of food waste in just 10 months - equivalent in weight to 42 double-decker buses.

Councillor Susan Masters, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Environment and Councillor Reverend Canon Ann Easter, her deputy, (pictured) joined the Council's waste crews to support the latest service rollout. The waste is sent to a special facility where it is turned into renewable energy and bio-fertiliser. The smallest scraps can make a difference – recycling six used tea bags, for example, can generate enough electricity to boil a kettle.



A final phase of weekly food waste recycling, extending to remaining flats and flats above shops will take place in Spring next year. To find out how the service works, including what can and cannot go into a caddy, go to **newham.gov.uk/foodwaste**



©Save Newham Libraries via Facebook

Mayor urged to honour library cuts commitment

The campaign group Save Newham Libraries is calling on Labour Mayor Forhad Hussain to honour his election promise to fully reverse £174,000 of cuts to Newham's library service.

Months of campaigning by the group included a petition signed by more than 2,500 people and a rally outside Newham Town Hall in February.

Under pressure from residents and with the local election approaching, the previous Labour administration dropped proposals to cut the library budget by as much as 50 percent. However, £174,000 of cuts remained in the Council's plans: £147,000 in 2026/27 and a further £27,000 in 2027/28.

A statement by the campaign said: "Mayor Forhad Hussain promised a different approach. He supported the campaign to end austerity for Newham libraries and pledged to scrap the proposed cuts and fully restore library funding. Four months into the new administration, however, the £174,000 in proposed library savings remains in the Council's financial plans.

The Council's latest Savings Tracker continues to describe the £147,000 saving for 2026/27 and £27,000 saving for 2027/28 as "on track".

Campaigners have raised the issue directly with Councillor Lakmini Shah, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Communities. She was clear that the Mayor would honour his commitment and has since written to the Mayor seeking confirmation.

"The Mayor still has an opportunity to establish a different legacy: protecting Newham's library service, ending the cuts and keeping his word to residents", said a spokesperson.

savenewhamlibraries@gmail.com

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BETTER

WELL NEWHAM For a healthier you

in partnership with Newham London

Newham youth charity seeks a new home

Youth Leaders of **Ashok's Vision International** *celebrate a seven-year milestone and issue an appeal for new premises in the year ahead*



In 2019, our founder, Shofa Miah, a Newham resident of 25 years, created Ashok's Vision International in memory of her brother Ashok, who lived with schizophrenia.

Shofa's objective is to turn personal loss into something positive: a safe space where young people could grow, support their mental wellbeing, connect with nature and be inspired by Ashok's love of nature, play and spirituality.

Thanks to Woodgrange Market Manager Laura Glendinning, our first youth stall found a base at the market. From day one, young people started turning up to volunteer, develop ideas and build leadership skills. It became their safe space and community hub.

Seven years later, we have been involved in more than 600 youth-led projects, engaged more than 12,000 young people and helped secure over £60,000 in funding. Some of the young people who started with us are still involved today. We have a strong alumni network, and two former youth members are now trustees, helping to shape the charity's future.

Our journey showcases the best of Newham's youth excellence: young people leading, creating opportunities and showing what is possible when our potential is recognised and supported.

One of our proudest moments was winning the Greener London Award 2026 at the London Youth Achievement Awards, supported by the office of Sadiq Khan, Lord Khan of Tooting and Mayor of London. The award recognised our youth-led environmental action and contribution towards creating a greener London.

On Saturday 7 November, more than 100 young people and residents joined our Youth-Led Community Climate Day outside Forest Gate School. We welcomed Councillor John Gray, Statutory Deputy Mayor of Newham and Cabinet Member for Housing, and Councillor Lakmini Shah, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Communities. Also present was Councillor Mehmood Mirza, Councillor for Boleyn Ward, and Samarah Islam MYP, Member of the UK Youth Parliament for Newham.

What we appreciated most was how much time they gave us. They listened, asked questions, laughed with us and really connected with our youth leaders. Everyone loved the atmosphere, and it felt like genuine community engagement rather than simply an official visit or photo opportunity.

Our youth leaders spoke openly about our achievements, experiences and challenges through a lively question and answer session, before everyone got stuck into the planting and enjoyed some biryani. Our celebration cake even doubled as a birthday cake for Councillor John Gray. He kept his age a secret, but thankfully he was much more willing to share his TikTok dance moves with us!

Why our youth space matters

Our celebrations come at an important turning point. Our regular Saturday base welcomes up to 20-30 diverse young people each week.

It is more than a stall. It is somewhere young people from all backgrounds can turn up consistently, volunteer, gain experience, develop friendships and leadership skills, and feel that they belong. That consistency matters.

Across the UK, around 981,000 young people aged 16 to 24 were not in education, employment or training between April and June 2026, representing around 13 percent of this age group.

Youth engagement should not begin only when something goes wrong. Young people need safe spaces, opportunities, positive relationships and experience before they reach crisis point.

From next year, our weekly presence at Woodgrange Market will no longer be available in the same way. As the market increasingly focuses on commercial traders and businesses, charity stalls will instead be offered space once a month on a rotational basis. We understand the importance of a thriving commercial market and recognise the role our original market base played in giving us our start.

But what happens when the youth space is no longer available every week? We risk losing regular contact with young people who actively choose to engage with us. We do not want that engagement to disappear.

Our Community Climate Day did more than celebrate the past seven years. It set out a strategy for the future:

- **A stronger voice with senior leadership:** Councillor Lakmini Shah will support Ashok's Vision International to join Newham's Youth Committee, giving young people a direct voice with senior leadership. This means bringing our own experiences and ideas into play in conversations and decisions affecting young people in the Borough.
- **A youth takeover of the Council Chamber:** Councillor Shah will also arrange a youth-led Council Chamber session next year, enabling our youth leaders to meet the Mayor, share their views and engage directly with senior leadership.
- **A new indoor home:** Our immediate priority is to find a safe, accessible and permanent base where young people can get access to mental wellbeing activities, volunteering, work experience, mentoring, environmental projects and leadership opportunities. This would provide reliable toilet facilities and appropriate access for females and young people with mobility needs and others who may find an outdoor market setting difficult to access..

Our message to Newham's leaders, businesses, partners and community is to give young people a voice. Give us space to lead. Help us find our next home so we can continue our extraordinary journey. We say give young people a safe space, meaningful opportunities and the chance to lead, and we will turn up. We are not hard to reach.

A date for the diary: Something to celebrate on 2 February!

On Tuesday 2 February 2027, we are planning an Awards Celebration at Smith Square Hall, home of Sinfonia Smith Square, in Westminster.

The evening will celebrate our youth leaders, alumni, parents, carers, trustees, partners and supporters who have helped a Newham-based charity grow from one small market stall into what it is today.

So, keep the date free and get your tuxedos and best outfits ready!

We cannot promise Robert Pattinson, but after years of planting in the wind, rain, snow and storms, surely we have earned one glamorous evening in Westminster!

Ashok's Vision International is a registered CIO charity (1193446) with no political affiliation.

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Terri is taking care of Newham's fur-babies

CHRIS EK

Little did I know that when I took my Persian cat to be groomed at Parkside Grooming salon, Dames Road, I would meet a woman who fixed the US Navy multimillion dollar mainframes.

Terri Gifford, owner of the salon, has lived in Newham for 20 years.

Born in 1968 near the Great Lakes of North America, Terri joined the military as a young woman, when computers used to take up whole rooms 'the size of my grooming salon now'.

Imagine the movie *Battleship* (2012 - with Rihanna), the scene of the final battle which took place during real-world naval exercises in the Pacific: Terri maintained and fixed that exact computer system on those carriers and airbases. They were the PC3 Orion sub-hunters.

Terri left the Navy after eight years. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts and made a career as an interior architect in Florida. After 20 years, in 2006, she moved to the UK with her English partner and helped set up the grooming salon. Her partner returned to Cheshire for family reasons and Terri stayed on in Newham.



Terri Gifford, photo courtesy of Chris EK

She had met her destiny – fur babies – cats and dogs. Cats are mainly Persians or older cats as they have trouble grooming themselves. But Terri will groom any cats from short to long-haired, from happy to aggravated.

Dogs include Labradors, Jack Russells, bully breeds, poodles, and Bichon Frises. Clients include sports celebrities, photographers, costumiers, actors, vicars and even the Royal Albert Hall stage manager.

'A source of pride to me,' says Terri, 'is training work-experience students from schools and colleges, such as Capel Manor College, which runs animal behaviour and grooming courses. Several kids have gone on to be groomers, and one is now competing'.

Terri has carried her salon through despite a three-month hospital stay followed by several months of recovery therapy after an accident. She is an example of courage and good humour.

During Covid, an Irish folk artist, Lou Price, used to sit on a log opposite the salon and write his album. He called it *Parkside Grooming* and the front cover is a picture of himself outside the salon.

You can find the salon on Instagram @parkside_grooming.

https://www.instagram.com/parkside_grooming

Government boost for Newham to end the year

Newham Council ends the year on a high following the decision by the government, announced on 25 November, to lift a notice that raised concerns about how the Borough is run.

The Best Value Notice was issued by the Ministry of Housing in May 2025 addressing concerns about how the council finds "best value" for residents in its services. It was extended in May 2026. Lifting the notice recognises that there have been improvements in the Council's work.

The Mayor, Forhad Hussain (pictured), said: "The Government's decision to lift the Best Value Notice, recognises the significant progress Newham Council has made in strengthening its leadership, governance, services for residents and financial sustainability."





Westgate House celebrates quality rating

Westgate House care home in Forest Gate achieved a 'Good' rating across all five key areas in a recent assessment by the Care Quality Commission. The home is rated Good across all categories - safe, effective, caring, responsive and well-led.

The report recognises the dedication, compassion and commitment of the team in providing high-quality, person-centred care. Residents, staff and guests came together to celebrate the achievement along with Councillor Reverend Canon Ann Easter from Newham Council, (pictured centre) who joined the celebrations.

Why we need a Creative Spaces Charter

More than 200 artists, cultural leaders, developers, researchers and community representatives came together for Creative Newham's Creative Spaces Symposium 2026, held on Tuesday 3 November at English National Ballet, London City Island.

The event explored how creative spaces can be made more accessible, affordable and sustainable, and how local communities can have a greater role in shaping the places in which they live and work.

The Symposium forms part of Creative Newham's ongoing work to champion a Creative Spaces Charter for Newham. It took place against a backdrop of increasing pressure on London's cultural production infrastructure.


Creative Newham Symposium

Research published by the Greater London Authority in its London's Cultural Production Spaces Health Check 2025 reported that the average price per square foot for artists' workspace had risen by 37 percent since 2017.



OUT AND ABOUT IN NEWHAM

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



Ashley Joseph (Robin Hood) in rehearsals for Robin Hood and the Merry Mandem. Image ©Mark Senior

THEATRE

Award winning actor **Ashley Joseph**, a Stratford East Youth Theatre Alumni, will play Robin Hood in Stratford East's production of *Robin Hood and the Merry Mandem*, an East End take on the classic tale.

Ashley told *Newham Voices* why he feels connected to the role: "I was born in Newham and went to nursery, primary and secondary schools, as well as college in Newham. I went to youth theatre in Newham, danced for *Boy Blue* in Newham and performed at nearly every venue in the Borough.

"So, from the youth centres to the schools, to the bus routes I know Newham and the community, which means all of my Newham knowledge can be placed into Robin. Robin is a West Ham supporter but…I'm an Arsenal supporter!"

Robin Hood and the Merry Mandem's music and lyricist Robert Hyman, from Newham, has been associated with the Stratford East pantomime for the last 28 years.

Robin Hood and the Merry Mandem, Stratford East from 21 November 2026 – 2 January 2027
stratfordeast.com

DANCE

English National Ballet's new class for dancers over 60 focuses on both ballet and contemporary dance techniques. No previous dance experience is needed.

4 December, 10.30am – 12pm, £3, Mulryan Centre for Dance, 41 Hopewell Square, nearest station is Canning Town
ballet.org.uk

TELEVISION

Danny and Dani Dyer will give Priory Hill residents a festive celebration before the caravan park closes its gates for the winter.

The Dyers' Caravan Park: A Merry Elfing Christmas is scheduled to be on Sky and NOW on 15 December at 9pm

Paralympian and TV Presenter **Ade Adepitan**, who grew up in Newham, is taking part in *I'm a Celebrity…Get Me out of Here*.

The show's producers adapted the camp to enable him to move around easily. Ade said: "It is amazing to me to think that I'm going to be the first wheelchair user to go into the jungle. I definitely know there'll be lots of people out there going "how is he going to do this, he can't even go down the Barking Road".

The programme started on 16 November on ITV1 and ITVX. It ends in December.



I'm A Celebrity 2026 Ade Adepitan ©Joel Anderson/ITV



Carers Community Mental Health Group ©Neandra Etienne

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Award winning and non-profit **Carers Community Mental Health Group**, which began in Stratford Advice Centre about 11 years ago, was founded by Joy Murrell, Zhenreenah Muhxinga, Glenda Grant, June Henshaw, Joan Green and Florence Olanquio.

After they received a grant in 2025 to make a wellbeing scrap book the group gave themselves the nickname the Scrappers. The group, who are all Newham residents, started making their scrap books in Plaistow library. Each member has designed their own themed project and there's an exhibition planned for the new Plaistow library next year.

Plaistow's new library will open on 9 December. The new library is located at 198 Plaistow Road E13.

AWARDS

Sky Arts Award 2026: Marc Brew and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's *An Accident/ a Life* won the Dance award. I attended the press performance at Sadler's Wells East.

BOOKS

Momtaz Begum-Hossain's new book *Colour Therapy: A Hue-Themed Mood Journal for Joy, Balance, and Well-Being*, a wellness journal grounded in colour psychology and designed to support emotion-based self-care, is released on 10 December.

Momtaz, from Newham, is an award-winning journalist, podcast host, colour consultant, and certified colour therapist.
momtazbh.co.uk

MUSIC

26 December is the 60th anniversary of when **Jimi Hendrix** wrote the lyrics to *Purple Haze* at the Upper Cut Club Forest Gate.

I was the Creative Director for Jimi's new Purple Haze Newham Heritage blue plaque, which was installed in 2021.

COMEDY

Newham-born actor, comedian and presenter **Kiell Smith-Bynoe** was one of the judges for the BBC New Comedy Awards 2026.

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



Momtaz Begum-Hossain ©Anthony Lycett



London College of Fashion, Winter Adventure, 2025 ©Rahil Ahmad

FESTIVE EVENTS

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Winter Adventure free programme features 24 festive events at 24 venues across 24 days.

Highlights: East Village Christmas Light Switch On, ABBA Voyage Welcomes Festive Swedish Choir, crafting, live music and winter cheer at The LightHouse and Gardens, and Merry Making free festival at Here East.

Winter Adventure is on daily from 1 December to 24 December
queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk

Community neighbourhood Christmas Lights Switch-On events

- 1 December, 5pm - 6pm, Outside Plaistow station
- 4 December, 4pm - 7pm, Outside Manor Park Library
- 4 December, 3pm - 6pm, Kingsford Square Beckton
- 5 December, 3.45pm - 5pm, Woodgrange Market Forest Gate
- 10 December, 4pm - 7pm, Outside East Ham Library
- 11 December, 3pm - 6pm, Rathbone Market Canning Town

www.newham.gov.uk

Local school choirs will perform festive songs for the **Westfield Stratford City** annual Christmas Choir competition Sing Along to the Season.

8 - 10 December, 10.30am - 3pm, first floor outside John Lewis.
westfield.com/en/united-kingdom/stratfordcity

Act Up! Newham's new filmed online performance, Rachel Reeves' Night before Christmas by Together! 2012 CIC, is for International Day of Disabled People.

Free tickets are available from Eventbrite.

3 December from 2.30pm - 3.30pm via Zoom
www.together2012.org.uk

Could you be the next Bake Off star?

The Love Production casting team for the popular tv show *The Great British Bake Off* has written to *Newham Voices* announcing that applications are now open for the next series. And they have targeted Newham and surrounding areas to encourage participants.

A spokesperson said: "There are people who bake. And then there are people who really bake. The ones who make their own bread when the supermarket is two minutes away. Who turn up to birthdays with a cake that's taller than the birthday boy. Or who shudder at the thought of a shop bought short crust. If that sounds like you, we'd like a word."

Any talented home bakers can apply at **applyforbakeoff.co.uk** or by email **applyforbakeoff@loveproductions.co.uk** or phone **0117 456 8530**. Closing date for applications is 1pm on Friday, 11 December.



Once Upon a Time in Canning Town

***John Hudson** has published his first book at 81 years old. Here he describes the desire to tell his story of growing up in Canning Town*

My book is about five children growing up in the East End in the years after the war. It tells of the companionship we shared and the adventures we had among the debris the Germans left behind after the Blitz in our area, close to the docks.

We were just like the *Famous Five*, except that our childhood played out in the back streets of Canning Town. Another difference is that my book, *Once Upon a Time in Canning Town*, is not fiction. It is about real people.

I have been careful not to be unkind about anyone. It is all totally true, because what I have written is something you couldn't make up if you tried. I wrote the book because, at the age of 80, I felt compelled to put my story on paper: the story of us children and the social history of our area, walking year by year through to the day we left school.

The second part of the book is about going to work at 15 and the jobs the five of us did. Mine was as a butcher's boy in Old Rathbone Street and, as a teenager, in the new market on Barking Road.

About ten chapters are devoted to the characters of that old market street. People of my age will remember, among others, Olly's pie and mash shop and Murkoff's ice cream. There is music from the late 1950s and, of course, from the Swinging Sixties, that magical decade in which, at the age of 17, I became a sailor boy in the Merchant Navy.

I also write about the football club we started, the Ruscoe Rovers, the 1966 World Cup, the gangs of the East End and the parties we boys attended, before I met my wife in 1968 in a rather comical but fateful way, written as a poem.

The book is on sale at a Newham Bookshop and the Custom House Bookshop, and I am donating copies to four neighbourhood public libraries. It comes in 100 short chapters and with 100 illustrations. It's something for older people to remember and for people of all ages to enjoy.



John Hudson

All change in 2026
a year of political u

AIDAN WHITE

2026 was a momentous year for Newham.

In politics, voters abandoned their traditional support for Labour, creating a council with no party in overall control for the first time in a generation.

In culture Darcy Tosun, aged 10, won an award for his National Theatre role as Young Thomas in the play *The Land of the Living.*

In sport, West Ham were relegated from the elite Premier League and ended the year struggling to keep pace with leading teams in the Championship.

But it was a year of some hope and optimism, with new homes for many (promised at reasonable and affordable prices), the continued success of Newham schools where bright youngsters continue to soar, and celebration of young achievers from across the Borough.

In **January** the political party leaders began the year with fighting talk about the upcoming elections. It was not just the usual political blah-blah; on the doorsteps party activists were getting a strong message from grumpy residents about the need for change.

Local schools were in the headlines with top marks for schools in Canning Town, for sharing solar power with residents, and Plashet School leading the way in maths, and a tidy £750 million boost for the local economy was promised with plans to move London's famous markets – Billingsgate and Smithfield – to Newham.

The Labour Council in **February** talked up the local economy – "austerity is over" – they said, a claim later roundly challenged. But Newham's children were in good hands said education regulator agency Ofsted who graded Newham's education service as 'Outstanding'.

A 'David and Goliath' story in **March** highlighted the victory of disabled driver Shilpa Patel who challenged Newham Council over parking tickets that came her way due to defective CCTV surveillance.


Shilpa Patel

In **April** we reported some good news: Newham's housing crisis was on the mend, the Borough was in the vanguard of voicing concern over climate change, and a new report recognises the Borough as a nationwide beacon for diversity.

The **May** elections brought a political earthquake. Former Labour leader Sir Robin Wales had 'found his tribe' in Reform UK and the Labour Party were rocked in the local elections as the Green Party and Newham Independents surged, sending Newham into uncharted political territory with no party in overall control of the Council.

But the new mayor, Labour's Forhad Hussain, said he was keen to work with other parties. In **June** a deal with the Green Party led to the election of Nate Higgins as Council Chair and Newham Independents took over leadership of some key Council committees..

Some new housing developments were agreed (with 355 new homes in Pudding Mill Lane and promises of almost 80 per-cent of them to be affordable) and Newham won an architectural award. But plans for a Windrush Festival celebration collapsed when the Council refused a drinks licence to the organisers.

July brought cheery news for campaigners trying to save the Denmark Arms in East Ham. They won their battle to stop the old pub being converted into a


Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz at Ferndale Park, a site for new homes in Newham. Image from Newham Council/Facebook


Darcy Tosun


Forest Gate Festival


Messages of sympat

: Moving stories in ups and downs



gambling den, but the future of the site remains in doubt as the year ends. Also on the community frontline, Ashok's Vision in Forest Gate won a London award and the Hibiscus Centre in Stratford was saved from closure thanks to local campaigning.

More people power was in focus in **August** with the Forest Gate Festival and an award for a new Maryland Community Group. But parking issues, which have featured all year, were also in the news with a fresh survey being launched. And we highlighted a forgotten treasure of the Olympics – a gift of statues left abandoned in the Borough.

The tragic story of five year old Aalim Ahmed who fell to his death from Jacobs House in Plaistow two years ago highlighted issues of home safety in **September**, a month which also brought optimistic promises to end rough sleeping in Newham and elsewhere by Christmas. There were also pieces that highlighted planned cuts in mental health support and a thoughtful reflection on modern challenges – what does it mean to be a man?

The goodwill and promises of co-operation at the Council ran into trouble in **October** over the appointment of leaders for Newham's new neighbourhood councils, with the Mayor selecting Labour people to lead these advisory bodies – even in areas which had voted for other parties. This caused waves which still ripple despite the Mayor's attempts to reassure all sides. Meanwhile, residents were offered £100 reward for tipping off the authorities when they spot a fly-tipper.

In **November** there was optimism all round that Stratford International station will get back on track to become a gateway to European destinations with pledges in the Government budget to find the cash to revive this dream inspired by the London Olympics, a long-running ambition of local MP Sir Stephen Timms.

Finally, we reported that Newham has got its own Pearly King and Queen (a genuine indicator of East End status) and for good measure we celebrated the amazing achievements of young people who were winners of this year's Jack Petchey Awards.



Abba's Benny Andersson and Anni-Frid Lyngstad



Image: Christian Lue/Unsplash



thy for Aalim Ahmed



Site of a car crash at Green Street



Image via Denmark Arms Facebook

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Voices of hope and community inspire Black Health Summit

Councillor Thelma Odoi *reports on a powerful message of hope for Black men with mental health issues.*



Newham Mayor Forhad Hussain spoke out at the Black Health Summit held at City Hall at the end of October calling for health support for Black people that fully understands their needs.

He said people need services that understand their experiences and enable them to speak openly without fear of judgement.

The summit included a moving rendition of *This City* by Daniel Acheampong, which was followed by testimony from a Newham resident who spoke candidly about his mental ill health and shared a recovery story illustrating the importance of hope and compassion provided by a diverse community of professionals.

James Asser MP reinforced the message and throughout the summit, speakers challenged stereotypes that Black men are unwilling to discuss their mental health.

Instead, they highlighted examples of Black men leading research, advocacy and community action while calling for greater investment in culturally informed services and community-led support.

A recurring theme was the importance of reaching people through trusted spaces such as community groups, faith organisations and grassroots initiatives before they reach crisis point.

The summit featured contributions from Emmanuel Owusu, Guest Lecturer; Dr Patrick Nyikavaranda, Academic at UCL; Kevin Howell, Black Health Equity Engagement Manager at Prostate Cancer UK; Godwin Deveer, Head of Educational Development at Step Now; Ruqia Osman, Equality and Racial Justice Manager at Rethink Mental Illness; and Augustine Sagoe, Mental Health Nurse Consultant.

Information stalls were hosted by Ayati Mind, led by Founder Daniel Acheampong, Betknowmore UK, represented by Ryan Hines, and young people from Ashok's Vision International, demonstrating the vital role grassroots organisations play in supporting local communities.

The summit moved the next day to Cundy Community Centre, where residents discussed barriers to seeking healthcare, including delaying medical help and mistrust of medicines, hospitals and health services.

Dr Olivia Ariyo, Founder of Resilient Wellness UK, said attitudes such as "men shouldn't cry" and "be strong" discourage people from expressing their feelings and seeking support. She said it was important to create safe spaces where health is discussed openly and without stigma.

Finally, Yoyin Odusanya, The Fitness Revivalist, said there was a strong connection between physical activity, mental wellbeing and overall health and the summit closed with a call to action: nurture hope, strengthen community networks and rebuild trust in services.

COMMUNITY NEWS ROUNDUP

By Neandra Etienne



Elizabeth Line train ©Neandra Etienne

Elizabeth line disruption

There are no Elizabeth line trains scheduled between Stratford and Romford from 27 December to 3 January due to works being carried out in Forest Gate.

U3a AGM in December

Newham u3a holds a monthly talk, tea and coffee meeting at Clapton Community Football Clubhouse in Forest Gate.

Their event, on 3 December is at 1pm, and will be their annual general meeting followed by a talk about the ethos of the u3a movement.

Non-members are welcome on a taster/one-off basis to meet them and possibly join

Inequality music fund

Creative organisations working with children and young people and that are led by communities who experience racial inequality can apply for the Youth Music Recharge Fund.

Applications close 4 December at 5pm

www.youthmusic.org.uk

Night shelter project

Our Lady of Compassion Catholic Church, Upton Park will welcome 15 invited guests to their hall as part of NEWway Project's Night Shelter at the end of the year.

Local Project Coordinator Agnieszka Pogorzelec leads the team of volunteers who prepare fresh meals and desserts in the kitchen, play music and socialise with the invited guests.



NEWway Night Shelter 2026 ©Neandra Etienne

Team leader of the East London Filipino Social Club, Dellie Elsom, told *Newham Voices* she volunteers because, "it's giving back to the community". The volunteers will help bring festive cheer to the invited guests with a special Christmas dinner in December. Youth team members will be performing songs and presenting them with decorated boxes filled with essential items.

NEWway's Night Shelters includes 25 congregations based in 14 Newham venues. Guests are referred to NEWway Night Shelters from either StreetLink or from Bonny Downs Day Centre.

newwayproject.org

Proud to do something for peace

A Windrush Poppy Quilt, designed by Heritage Community Crafts CIC and funded by the Veterans Foundation, was displayed in Plaistow library in November. The centre of the quilt includes a quote from Plaistow resident, RAF veteran and Windrush pioneer Gilbert Clarke: "I feel really proud that I did something for Peace".

Gilbert was a beloved figure in the community and much treasured member of the Unique Stars Dominoes Club based in Plaistow library. His son Alan and daughter Norma were joined by his friends, Elizabeth from Heritage Community Crafts and local councillors for the unveiling.

Gilbert was born in Montego Bay, Jamaica, and enlisted with the RAF at age 17 and served as a radar mechanic in Yorkshire. On his 100th birthday in December 2025 he received letters of commendation from King Charles and President Macron of France.

Local student Adanya presented Gilbert with 101 birthday cards, heartfelt messages and expressions of gratitude.

Gilbert passed away this year at the age of 100. Alexander Williams, High Commissioner for Jamaica, was one of the attendees at his funeral service, which was held at East Ham Town Hall in July.

heritagecommunitycrafts.org.uk



Heritage Community Crafts CIC designed Windrush Poppy Quilt ©Neandra Etienne

Plashet School celebrates joining City of London Academies Trust

Staff, students, families and the wider community marked the formal opening of Plashet, City of London Academy school, having officially joined City of London Academies Trust earlier this year.

The event, attended by many former students, was an opportunity to recognise the dedication of beloved premises manager, Pat Moran, with the opening of the Pat Moran Eco Oasis, a memorial garden in his name. A new climbing wall was also opened at the school in East Ham, funded by the City of London.



Community voices for a changing Newham

FARZANA RAHMAN

Stratford Town Hall hosted an inspiring community gathering on 3 November, organised by the Newham Community Research Network, under the theme Our Stories, Our Research... Changing Newham.

The event brought together community researchers, local organisations and residents to celebrate the power of shared experiences, knowledge and collaborative research in creating positive change.

Visitors had the opportunity to explore different research projects and interactive displays, including Citizen Science at C.R.O.W.N, Collaborative Research and Outreach for Women in Newham. The exhibition highlighted how local women's experiences and perspectives can contribute to research and help identify the needs of diverse communities.



Representatives from Compost London also showcased their work, demonstrating the importance of community engagement and environmental awareness.

The network's founding groups included young adults with SEND, migrants and refugees, and marginalised women. These groups demonstrated how people from different backgrounds can contribute valuable knowledge to research, decision-making and social change.

LOCAL NOTICES

Published 27th November 2026

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for a New Premises Licence

We KAANDHAL LTD have applied to NEWHAM COUNCIL for a premises licence for **209 High Street North, London, England, E6 1JG** so that the following licensable activities may be provided on the following days and hours:

Provision of recorded music and sale of alcohol (on sales)
- 10am-1am Monday to Sunday

Provision of Late-Night refreshment
- 23:00-01:00 Monday to Sunday

Newham Council's Licensing Register is kept at the office of the Licensing Team, Town Hall, 328 Barking Road, East Ham, E6 2RT (open from 10.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday) any queries should be sent to licensing@newham.gov.uk.

Any representations against the application must be made in writing and received by the Licensing Team at the above address or via email, by no later than the **10th December 2026.**

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.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for a New Premises Licence

We MG ONE HOLDING LIMITED have applied to NEWHAM COUNCIL for a premises licences for **Mockingbird Golf London, 8 Royal Wharf Walk, London E16 2HE** so that the following licensable activities may be provided on the following days and hours:

The sale of alcohol on the premises
- Weekdays 11:00–22:00 and Weekends 9:00–22:00

Indoor sporting events on the premises
- Weekdays 11:00–22:00 and Weekends 9:00–22:00

Recorded music on the premises
- Weekdays 11:00–22:00 and Weekends 9:00–22:00

Newham Council's Licensing Register is kept at the office of the Licensing Team, Town Hall, 328 Barking Road, East Ham, E6 2RT (open from 10.00am to 4.00pm 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 **11th December 2026**.

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.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for a New Premises Licence

We Lakers Chicken 907 Ltd have applied to NEWHAM COUNCIL for a premises licence for **907 Romford Road, Manor Park, London, E12 5JT** so that the following licensable activities may be provided on the following days and hours:

Provision of Late-Night Refreshment
- Mon-Sun 11pm-3am

Newham Council's Licensing Register is kept at the office of the Licensing Team, Town Hall, 328 Barking Road, East Ham, E6 2RT (open from 10.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday) any queries should be sent to licensing@newham.gov.uk. Any representations against the application must be made in writing and received by the Licensing Team at the above address or via email, by no later than the **17th December 2026**.

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.

LICENSING ACT 2003
Application for a New Premises Licence

We SIK4UK LTD have applied to NEWHAM COUNCIL for a premises licence for **Star Kebab & Pizza, 319 Romford Road, London, E7 9HA** so that the following licensable activities may be provided on the following days and hours:

Sale of Hot Food
- Monday-Sunday 8:00am-2:00am

Newham Council's Licensing Register is kept at the office of the Licensing Team, Town Hall, 328 Barking Road, East Ham, E6 2RT (open from 10.00am to 4.00pm Monday to Friday) any queries should be sent to licensing@newham.gov.uk. Any representations against the application must be made in writing and received by the Licensing Team at the above address or via email, by no later than the **17th December 2026**.

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.

ADVERTISE YOUR LICENCE HERE

Book your licence advert or notice with your local community newspaper

Email for a quote to **licences@socialspider.com** or call Klaudia Kiss **07732 000 430** or Mark Brown **07728 520 116**
Next publication date: **23rd December** | Booking deadline: **21st December**

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***Newham Voices* issue #73 January**
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Publication date: 23rd December

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SOMETHING'S BREWING

Christmas lunch at the pub is becoming more popular, but book now or there may be no room at the inn, warns **Phil Mellows**



Image: Amy Vann ©Unsplash

More people these days are choosing to have their Christmas dinner at the pub. While some might say that it detracts from a traditional family occasion, others see the advantage in leaving the cooking to others while they concentrate on enjoying themselves.

If you're planning a large gathering it also makes it easier to cater for different tastes – not to mention allergies. Your biggest problem, though, could be finding a table.

Brewer Greene King, which runs the Golden Fleece in Manor Park, one of the few pubs in Newham offering a full service on 25 December, reports that by the end of October bookings for Christmas dinner were up by 30 percent on last year.

It's not exactly cheap, at £63 for three courses, but for that you get a variety of dishes you can't easily do at home. For example, there's seafood and steak and a nut roast as well as turkey, a soufflé among the starters, and triple-choc brownie and cheesecake alternatives to Christmas pud and mince pies.

It shows how pub food is changing in general. While certain staples, such as fish and chips, are as popular as ever, there's a definite move away from the standard 'pub grub' menus towards more exotic dishes, and 'small plates' and sharers to suit those occasions when you're mainly there for a beer and a chat.

A quick survey of the Newham scene reveals a wide range of menus. The Boleyn, East Ham, mixes trad mains and burgers with gochuchang glazed wings and 'Roy's curry goat'. The Forest Tavern in Forest Gate is more eclectic with crispy duck salad jostling with a Korean fried chicken burger, while the Windjammer at Royal Wharf has a bias towards fish, in keeping with its riverside location.

The Black Lion, Plaistow, has perhaps the most traditional offer featuring things with chips alongside cold platters, while the Cart & Horses in Stratford, 'Birthplace of Iron Maiden' matches the heavy rock theme with spicy burgers, hotdogs and wings, and the Husk Taproom leans on the South African heritage of its licensees by making its own beef and bone marrow burger patties.

So, if you're planning to get together over some delicious food and drink, there's plenty to choose from – any time. A pub is not just for Christmas, remember. Enjoy the festivities.

Winter in West Ham Park: mince pies and plenty to sing about

CHARLOTTE COOK
Friends of West Ham Park

We are looking towards the end of the year and the festivities it will bring. It's hard to remember the heat of June and July, and indeed August and September, with the nights well and truly drawn in, and people sporting bobble hats and woolly scarves.

The trees have now shed most of their leaves – I hope some of you came to Newham's Biggest Leaf Pile last month! Many of the park's furrier residents will be in hibernation mode. Much as many of us are, to be honest!

December heralds many events, including the Friends of West Ham Park's annual Park in the Dark on 5 December. We welcome once again the choir from Park Primary – they will be joined this year by the Dad Choir. We are quite sure that there will be angelic voices in both!

Do come along and join us for hot chocolate and mince pies, and explore West Ham Park at this very special event.



Image: Friends of West Ham Park

It's quite magical to see the chain of lights bringing the school choir to the bandstand.

For more details check out the Friends' social feeds: facebook.com/FriendsOfWestHamPark and instagram.com/fwhp_e9.

If you enjoy our events, and can afford it, please consider donating to our GoFundMe page (gofund.me/fdc6038f).

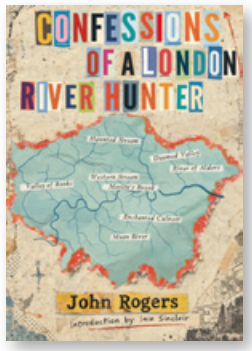


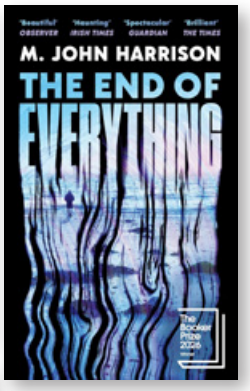
Good reads in Newham

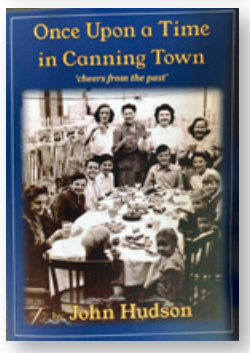
The Newham Bookshop in Barking Road tells us these are the top sellers this month:

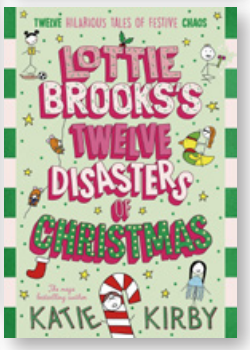
- ***Once Upon a Time in Canning Town*** *(local author, signed copies available)*
  By John Hudson
- ***Confessions of a London River Hunter*** *(signed copies available)*
  By John Rogers
- ***The End of Everything*** *(Winner of the Booker Prize 2026)*
  By M. John Harrison
- ***Your Horse***
  By Jon Klassen
- ***Dog Man: A Sprinkle in Time***
  By Dav Pilkey
- ***Lottie Brooks's Twelve Disasters of Christmas***
  By Katie Kirby

– *Compiled by David Ceen, Newham Bookshop*













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

Preparing for the worst:

Cash appeal to meet disaster relief in Newham

A Newham charity has launched an appeal for cash to help residents prepare for upcoming disasters.

One Newham's Sustainable Newham network has launched a crowdfunding project to raise money to help Newham residents prepare for events such as heatwaves, floods, severe storms, power outages, poor air quality and rising living costs associated with climate disturbances.

If the crowdfunding is successful, One Newham will be able to coordinate a plan with communities all across Newham, local organisations, local charities, residents, faith groups, the voluntary sector and the statutory sector to help everyone in Newham move from reacting to emergencies to being prepared for them.

By bringing together all different sectors and voices of the community, with the sector experts and through sharing living experiences of Newham residents, the final result would see the development of emergency plans that will help different communities identify local risks, map resources, and create practical plans for dealing with emergencies without leaving anyone behind.

The project already has support from the Borough Resilience Team and if successful the Community Emergency Plans would be incorporated to complement the Severe Weather protocol of Newham Council, and contribute to the wider ambitions of the Sustainable Newham Network by helping communities adapt to the impacts of climate change while building stronger, safer and more resilient neighbourhoods

For the crowdfunding to be successful, One Newham is seeking donations from residents to reach a £2000 target. If that is achieved, Aviva Foundation and London Resilience will match it with £4000 to fund a £6000 project.

A statement on behalf of the charity said: "The clock is ticking as there is a deadline for the end of the crowdfunding and now Newham has less than a month to find £2k donations from residents to help communities face some of the biggest threats of our generation.



Image: Alexander Castillo/Unsplash

The final result would see the development of emergency plans that will help different communities identify local risks, map resources, and create practical plans for dealing with emergencies without leaving anyone behind.

Joy Caron-Canter, One Newham added: "Climate change is no longer a future challenge – it is something our communities are experiencing now through extreme weather, rising costs and increasing pressures on the most vulnerable residents. This project is about making sure that no one is left behind when emergencies happen. By working together, we can build practical community-led plans that strengthen local resilience, protect our neighbours and support Sustainable Newham's vision for a greener, safer and more connected Borough. Every donation will help us unlock additional funding and ensure Newham communities are better prepared for whatever challenges lie ahead."

Link to the Crowdfunding: **https://communitiesfund.avivafoundation.org.uk/p/newham-climate-resilience**

One Newham is a collaborative network and registered charity that brings together voluntary, community, faith, and social enterprise organisations across the London Borough of Newham

Send some seasonal kindness

SHEILA NURSIMHULU

Newham residents are being invited to make handmade cards to bring some festive cheer to neighbours experiencing loneliness.

The Community Christmas campaign aims to collect more than 1,000 cards. Newham Council's Be Connected Team, Newham Libraries, Time Givers and Age UK East London are working with schools, community groups and volunteers to reach people who might otherwise feel forgotten.

Recipients will include care home residents, hospital patients without support networks, people using foodbanks and adults aged over 75 who live alone.



Cards need not have a Christmas theme: a colourful design and a kind, inclusive message are welcome. Organisers ask contributors to use their first name only, avoid religious messages and personal contact details, and leave cards without envelopes.

Residents can join a library card-making session or create a card at home and drop it into a festive postbox at any Newham neighbourhood library. The deadline is 6 December 2026.

To join a library session contact: **https://www.newhamfestivalofstories.org/events/little-cards-big-stories-1/** or email **beconnected@newham.gov.uk** or call **020 3373 9799**.

Seasonal recipes

Jamaican Wray and Nephew Rum Punch for the festive season

Zhenreenah Muhxinga *offers her recipe for a fruity punch that also carries a kick*

Ingredients

- 500ml pineapple juice
- 500ml orange juice
- 250ml cranberry juice or sorrel drink
- 100ml fresh lime juice
- 100ml grenadine
- 2–3 tablespoons sugar syrup (adjust to taste)
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- A little grated nutmeg
- Orange and lime slices
- Ice cubes

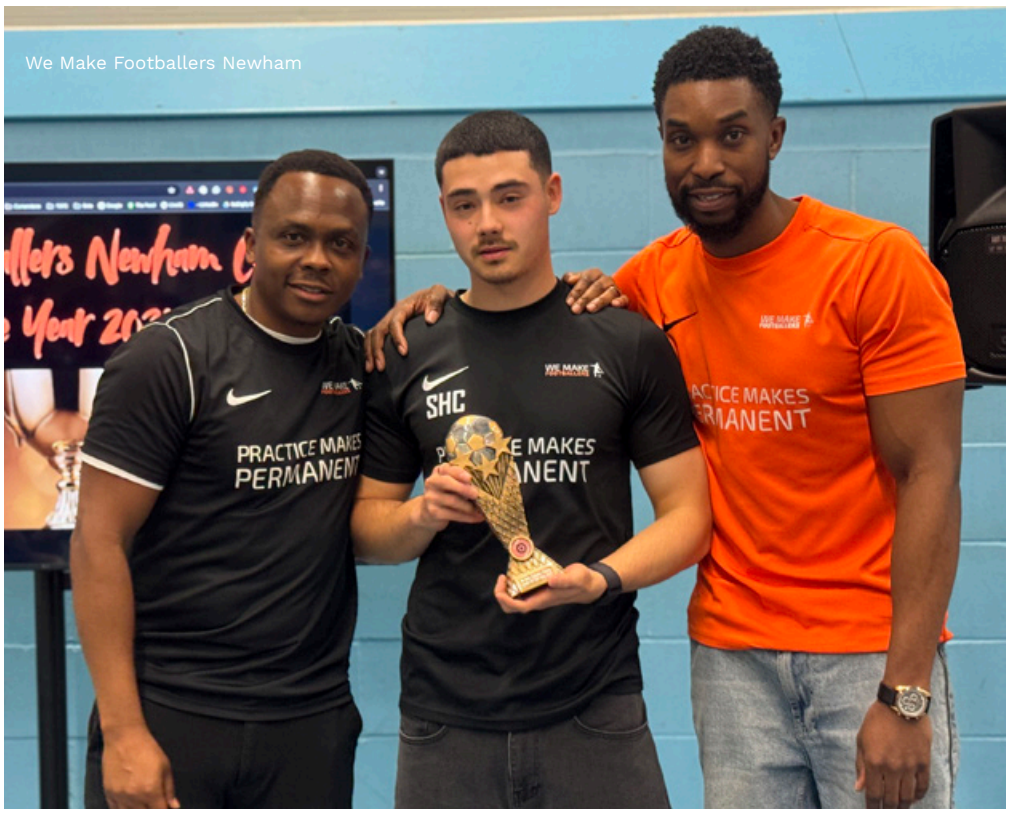
How to make it

1. Pour all the fruit juices into a large punch bowl or jug.
2. Add the rum, lime juice and grenadine.
3. Stir well and taste. Add sugar syrup if needed.
4. Add cinnamon sticks and a little grated nutmeg.
5. Add orange and lime slices.
6. Chill in the fridge for at least 2 hours.
7. Serve over ice.



SPORTS SHORTS

Compiled by **Neandra Etienne**


We Make Footballers Newham

Clapton CFC women's first team are scheduled to play AFC Greenwich Borough in a London and South East Regional Women's Football League Division One North match.

13 December, 2pm Kick off, Old Spotted Dog Ground Forest Gate
claptoncfc.co.uk

Chris Hughton, from Newham, has been inducted into the re-launched Tottenham Hall of Fame. Chris spent 27 years at Tottenham Hotspur. Another Newham star making his mark is former St Bons student and Ipswich Town player Chuba Akpom who scored in the Premier League game against Manchester United and against Arsenal in the EFL Cup game.

Also on target was **Ezri Konsa**, from Newham, who scored during England's National League win against Spain as well as former St Bons student **Divin Mubama** who starred in England's U21 National Team friendlies in November. He scored in the match against France.

Rio Ngumoha, also from Newham, played during England's National League win against Croatia.

London Aquatics Centre has become the only venue in the world to have under one roof three PoolPod 3.0s to help people in wheelchairs, with a dedicated system permanently stationed at each of its three pools.

The PoolPod 3.0 uses a powered seat to lower people into and lift them out of the water. Its fully automated design means wheelchair users and people with mobility needs can operate it themselves, without relying on staff.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities afternoon of free activities includes accessible swimming sessions and lessons. 3 December, 12pm - 6pm. Book through the Everyone Active app or at reception

For more information, email **LondonAquaticsCentreActivities@everyoneactive.com**

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Winter Adventure free programme features 24 free events at 24 venues across 24 days.

Sports highlights include: West Ham United at Christmas, brass band performance of festive songs and renditions of West Ham's football tune; Cycle with Santa at Lee Valley VeloPark, Festive Family Tennis, and Elite Dive Display and Festive Aqua Class.
queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk

We Make Footballers Newham and **Beyond Sports** are hosting *Beyond The Pitch: Community Day and Youth Awards* to celebrate young people, community spirit and wellbeing in Newham.

Activities on the day: football, badminton, table tennis and basketball. The first 100 tickets are free

13 December, 2pm - 5pm, Newham Leisure Centre
wmfnewham

Mind Your Strides Run Club with Newham-born Olympic Sportsperson Christine Ohuruogu

16 December, 8.30pm - 9.30pm, from £10, the Olympic Stadium E20
christineohuruogu.com

Essex County Football Association has a Christmas special session in December with the East London Filipino Social club. This includes a football session and a female digestive health workshop with the NHS.

3 December 2-4pm, the Foundry West Ham Foundation
essexfa.com

Overground FC are scheduled to play the Victoria line on 15 December in a Transport for London and LU Football League match.
XLULeagueLondon

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**


London Aquatics Centre, Winter Adventure, 2025 ©Rahil Ahmad

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Success may be a way off for the Hammers

ON THE BALL

Fans are left scratching their heads after West Ham's failure to clinch vital points in recent matches, says **Mickey Ambrose**



Scott Parker is the new Head Coach for West-Ham United and he has chosen his former teammate and club Sporting Director Mark Noble to share the load in somehow getting the Hammers back to winning ways and a return to the Premier League.

Parker has experience in the Championship, gaining Burnley promotion in the 2024 – 25 Championship season. The question is how will Parker and Noble inspire a set of players where Nuno failed. The Hammers now lie twelfth after being held by bottom team Preston North End in a 1-1 draw at the Olympic stadium and a loss to Portsmouth, which leaves them three points short of the playoffs and 11 points adrift of the league leaders.

The results extended West Ham's winless run to six games and left head coach Scott Parker still searching for his first victory in his first home match back at the club.

Despite dominating territory and creating clear cut opportunities against Preston, West Ham were undone by a familiar defensive vulnerability from a set piece before failing to convert their overwhelming pressure into a winner.

Preston's Opener (18'): Against the run of play, Preston took the lead via a set piece. Alfie Devine's inswinging corner was inadvertently flicked backward by West Ham striker Joël Piroe, striking the crossbar/far post before falling to centre-back Liam Lindsay, who smashed



Scott Parker ©West Ham United

home from close range. Debutant goalkeeper Finlay Herrick – handed his first league start in place of Mads Hermansen – was faulted by the pundits for failing to deal with the delivery into his box.

West Ham's Equaliser (60'): Preston dropped deep into a low block, absorbing relentless second-half pressure before finally conceding on the hour mark. Konstantinos Mavropanos rose above two defenders to power in a header from six yards out off an Arne Engels cross for his sixth league goal of the season.

Recent Slide: After keeping consecutive away clean sheets in mid-October against Lincoln and Swansea, West Ham conceded 12 goals across their last five league games (2.40 per game) - letting in three against Southampton (2–3), West Bromwich Albion (1–3), and Cardiff City (3–3), two against Blackburn Rovers (1–2), and one against Preston North End (1–1)

> "I got the brilliant performance from the players, but not the three points... The thing that went missing today was the result."

Parker said: "Everything that I was thinking about last night as I was looking at a ceiling, everything that I was feeling about today, what took place was never this scenario. It was a different vision.

"I got here really early today and I had a vision of ending the day with three points and a brilliant performance.

"I got the brilliant performance from the players, but not the three points, so in that sense, I am devastated. The thing that went missing today was the result.

"But with a rational head, there were a lot of good things, and if we played that game a hundred times, we would win every other time.

"Did we do a lot of good things today? One million per cent, so I have to keep the players on a consistent pathway."

Key Moments: West Ham dominated possession and hit the woodwork multiple times—including consecutive efforts off the post by Bowen and Veltman—while 20-year-old goalkeeper Finlay Herrick made a notable league debut in place of Mads Hermansen, producing a key double-save around the 40-minute mark.

The fans are left scratching their heads. So what next ? How will the Hammers repay the West Ham faithful? Only time will tell. Let's hope they improve soon, very soon.

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

Local athlete Jawany Scott wins Cage Warriors European title

KAYLA MARIE TROY

Local professional athlete Jawany Scott made history on Saturday 14 November as he became the Cage Warriors Interim Flyweight Champion. His journey from competing at local amateur shows to the professional stage is a proud moment for Fight for Peace and Newham, showcasing the talent coming out of the Borough.

Born and raised in Stratford, Jawany's martial arts journey began at the Fight for Peace Academy in North Woolwich when he was just a teenager. He quickly became a dedicated member of the youth organisation, which provides free boxing, martial arts and other support services to young people aged 7–25.

Now 29, Jawany has spent over a decade building his reputation in mixed martial arts. After competing as an amateur for Fight for Peace, he progressed to train under former UFC fighter Brad Pickett at GB Top Team in south London, all while remaining connected to his Newham roots and inspiring the next generation.

Following his previous title defeat to Shaj Haque in July 2025, Scott had made it clear he intended to return and claim the belt. And that's exactly what he did.

Facing Brazil's Willians Nogueira at Cage Warriors 213 at London's BBC Studioworks Television Centre, Scott stepped onto one of the biggest mixed martial arts stages in Europe.

Cage Warriors is Europe's premier mixed martial arts promotion and a key pathway to the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), making the title victory a significant milestone in his professional career. The two athletes went the distance, completing all five championship rounds, with Scott taking the victory by unanimous decision.

Speaking in his post-fight interviews, Scott said: "It was tough, it was always gonna be tough, he's [Noguiera's] game. But at Team GB we've got the skills... I definitely feel like I'm ready for the UFC!"

From a teenager taking his first steps in martial arts at Fight for Peace, to now holding a major European championship title, Jawany's journey demonstrates the importance of self-belief, ambition and perseverance. With the UFC now in his sights, he continues to show what's possible when you back yourself and keep working towards your goals.

fightforpeace.net



Jawany Scott
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