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The existing Selby Centre building in Selby Road, Tottenham **Credit** The Selby Trust

Tottenham to receive £20million in 'levelling up' cash

BY JAMES CRACKNELL
& FRAN DI FAZIO

The government has awarded funds to Haringey Council to develop its vision for 'Selby Urban Village'

A Tottenham community centre is set to be transformed after the government awarded Haringey Council £20million from its flagship Levelling Up Fund.

The redevelopment plans for the Selby Centre complex – which currently includes a community

centre, sportshall, foodbank and offices used by more than 60 different organisations – feature the creation of an “urban village” with “state-of-the art community facilities”. A second phase of work, which will need to be funded separately, would see 215 new homes built on the Selby Road site.

The current Selby Centre buildings are around 50 years old and have high maintenance costs. The £20m government grant – the highest awarded from the Levelling Up Fund to any London borough – will help provide 4,820 square metres of multi-purpose office space, a new community café, a community hall, soft play area and crèche, health and care spaces, a boxing club for young people and the provision of a credit union to support low-income residents.

In addition, the money will also go towards a revamp of nearby Bull Lane Playing Field, which will be transformed with a “revitalised” sports and leisure hub containing a four-court sports hall, floodlit full-sized artificial grass pitch for football and rugby, two junior grass football pitches, an artificial non-turf cricket pitch and multi-use games area.

An “inclusive community park” will also be created to promote health and wellbeing and will include a new adventure playground, communal planting and food growing areas and new paths to encourage active travel and improve connectivity.

In a joint statement, council leader Peray Ahmet and cabinet member Ruth Gordon said: “I’m delighted we’ve been able to secure such a significant amount of funding, which

is a real vote of confidence in our ability to deliver this fantastic new community facility for our residents.

“The ‘Selby Urban Village’ is an ambitious place-making project that brings together the knowledge, expertise and passion of the Selby Trust, users of the centre, the local community and the council.

“We are delighted that together we can bring forward the changes to the Selby Centre and Bull Lane that the community have asked for.

“This scheme will support local enterprises, provide much needed new sports and leisure space and give the community an opportunity to connect with nature. The economic, health and wellbeing benefits of this scheme for Tottenham and the surrounding area will be invaluable.”

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Local news that matters to you

Wed 1st Feb Tues 28th Feb



ABOUT

At *Haringey Community Press* we believe that the borough deserves a newspaper that is written by and for local people, and which celebrates community in all its diversity. We believe that local news brings people together around the issues that matter most to them and ensures everyone can have a voice in local decision-making. Now more than ever we believe that the media should be responsive and accountable to the community it serves.

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LTN protests unfold in Wood Green on Saturday, 4th January. For your chance to have your pictures featured in our next issue, use the hashtag #haringey and tag us @haringeycp on social media Credit Stephen Furner



Continued from Page-1

Paul Butler, the Selby Trust chief executive, said: "I describe it as a three-way partnership between the community, the trust and the council. That really has worked because of the engagement with the community. Also, we're seeing this as an opportunity to recognise the good work that a lot of organisations in the centre are doing."

The project development involved three rounds of public consultations. Community engagement activities were accompanied by design exhibitions organised by the Karakusevic Carson Architects studio, which is in

charge of rebuilding the space.

"The community deserves to be valued and that['s] in a space that is modern and where organisations are able to deliver quality services," Paul added.

Edward Ihejirika, chair of the Selby Trust board of trustees, welcomed the news. He said: "This is great news for the Selby community and

brings much-needed resources to the neighbourhood. It's a £20m kick-start for the Selby Urban Village and is an exemplar for how partnerships between community organisations and local authorities can work.

"The Selby Urban Village vision is for a sustainable partnership that has the Selby Trust's culturally rich communities involved at

its heart. The community will find high-quality community services and inspirational spaces, which will provide connectivity, engagement and learning for all."

The new Selby Centre and Bull Lane sports and leisure facilities form part of the first phase of works to the area, with the development of 215 new homes and further improvements to sports fields forming part of a second phase.

No timeline for the redevelopment scheme has yet been set out, with a full planning application still needing to be drawn up, submitted and approved.

"The economic, health and wellbeing benefits of this scheme for Tottenham and the surrounding area will be invaluable"

AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITOR

Hello and welcome to issue 16. I'm excited to greet you as the new editor of *Haringey Community Press*. It will be an honour to continue the work of the previous *HCP* editors in representing the brilliant and diverse voices of Haringey's residents – it's a fantastic borough, and I hope to showcase and celebrate all it has to offer.

I grew up just south of Finsbury Park, where I have lived for most

of my life (minus a short stint in Cambridge working at a community magazine). However, with all the vastness and change that any area in London harbours, there is still so much to learn and explore in Haringey. Our readers are absolutely crucial in helping us to reflect what matters in the borough, whether that be council controversies (namely the ongoing LTN debate), environmental concerns, new creative spaces or grassroots initiatives.

In this issue, we home in on Chris Storey's Pan Nation and how it has bolstered its local community; we delve into Haringey's incredible and little-known LGBTQ+ history; and tussle with issues such as community trust in policing. I want to ensure we are covering stories from across the entirety of Haringey, hearing from those in every corner of the borough. If you have a story you think we should be covering – or just want to say hello – please do

get in touch at hcp@socialspider.com.

In the current climate, it's incredibly difficult for small, independent media outlets to survive and I would like to end my introduction with a reminder that membership subscriptions are available for as little as £3 a month. You, our readers, are what allow this independent, community-focused newspaper to thrive.

We hope you enjoy reading!

Miriam Balanescu

Drapers' Almshouses in Bruce Grove



Concern over almshouses redevelopment

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Plans to redevelop listed almshouses have been submitted to Haringey Council.

The Drapers' Almshouse Charity wants to alter and extend the Victorian buildings in Edmansons Close and build new homes and an apartment block at the site.

It claims the scheme will "bring the current substandard accommodation up to modern standards and back into beneficial use".

Built in 1869 "for the poor, elderly people of Tottenham and Bow", the almshouses comprise 61 retirement homes. But according to plans submitted to the council, the housing is small, cramped

and fails to meet modern standards, with many units now standing empty.

The proposals would involve adapting and extending the existing almshouses, with two new "pavilion" structures also planned. In addition, a laundry block and 1970s infill building would be demolished and a new almshouse and three-storey apartment block constructed.

If approved, the overall number of homes on the site would decrease from 61 to 48, with several 'studio' almshouses expanded. The proposed scheme would provide 26 family-sized homes and 30 car parking spaces.

All of the units would be for private sale because, according to the plans, a financial viability assessment shows the scheme "is unable to support provision of any affordable housing".

The almshouses sit within Bruce Castle Conservation Area, home to some of Haringey's oldest buildings. The almshouses, chapel and lodge all have Grade 2-listed status. Local objections cite the impact on heritage among the main concerns. One opponent, local resident Jan Chappell, said the "beautiful Victorian buildings are a very special historical asset to Bruce Grove and Tottenham".

"Any development must be very sensitive indeed," she explained. "These buildings define the character and appearance of Bruce Grove."

But Mark Imms, project development manager, said the plans "take a very sensitive approach to ensure that the character and appearance of the original almshouses is not adversely impacted".

Public survey launched on future of Wards Corner

The local community has until mid-February to have their say on the project

BY FRAN DI FAZIO

Wards Corner Community Benefit Society (CBS) is seeking the local community's input on its plans for Wards Corner's future.

As part of the Wards Corner Community Plan, the Seven Sisters Indoor Market and historic Wards Buildings will be refurbished for community development purposes. The buildings would be democratically owned by Wards Corner CBS and the surrounding community.

Elara Shurety, secretary of the CBS, said: "The Seven Sisters Market and Wards Corner site have experienced years of neglect and managed decline. The Wards Corner Community Plan is a viable and coherent answer to this problem, offering a model for communities across the country seeking to rethink urban change."

Elara added: "In addition to this, as soon as possible, we hope to see a temporary solution for Seven Sisters Market traders, who have had to deal with the consequences of the market's closure since March 2020. This is of utmost importance, given the economic uncertainty and precarity resulting from the long delays traders have experienced."

Wards Corner CBS will bid for a lease on the site, which is currently owned by Transport for London. The Seven Sisters

Market Traders Association (SSMTA) has lent support to the project.

In addition, Wards Corner CBS is going to open up membership for the local community and beyond through a community share offer. People will be able to become members by buying shares, enabling them to have their say on the project's direction.

Key aspects of the community share offer, including membership costs, are the topic of the current survey, which will be running until mid-February.

Elara said: "We believe we have a massive opportunity to show how the same old story, of redevelopment and gentrification, should be different – and can be when the power of a community comes together."

For more information: wardscorner.org

In the doghouse

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A Highgate dog-walking and daycare company is being investigated for operating without a licence.

Haringey Council launched an investigation into The London Dog Walking Company, based at 28 Aylmer Parade, but confirmed it was no longer operating within the borough.

The business describes itself as a "family-run company" that provides "professional, affordable dog walking, dog grooming and dog day care services". Owners pay £40 to £50 for day care services and £20 to £25 to have their pet taken for a one-hour walk.

Government guidance states dog daycare businesses need licences issued by councils, following an inspection. Approached for comment, business owner Mick Doran admitted the company "did not have the correct licence" but had now applied.

The government guidance sets minimum standards, including each staff member having ten dogs or fewer to care for and each dog having 6sqm of space. One former employee who spoke to the Local Democracy Reporting Service alleged the guidance was not always followed. Mick declined to comment.

A council spokesperson said: "We are investigating The London Dog Walking Company following a complaint of the premises undertaking activity without a licence. Until the investigation is complete, we are unable to make further comment. We can confirm the operator is no longer trading in Haringey."



Credit Theodor Vasile/Unsplash

NEWS

Haringey Council faces challenges in housing Ukrainian refugees

Funding cuts are putting pressure on the pivotal Homes for Ukraine scheme

BY OLIVIA OPARA

A recent report has found that local authorities are facing challenges to support Ukrainian refugees due to limitations and reduced funding in the government's Homes for Ukraine scheme (HFU).

Local councils have been central to supporting Ukrainian refugees through the HFU, which enables Ukrainians with no family ties to the UK to be sponsored by local individuals or organisations which can offer them housing. However, a report published by the Work Rights Centre reveals that councils are struggling following reduced funding for the scheme.

The initial council tariffs for the HFU of £10,500 have been reduced to £5,900 per Ukrainian refugee, whilst optional 'thank you' payments, which sponsors housing refugees can apply for, have increased to £500 as of January. Councils receive separate funding for the monthly payments and a one-off £200 payment to refugees.

“
A local solution
simply doesn't work
”

Haringey has welcomed more than 450 Ukrainian refugees over the past year and the council's resettlement team has provided them with housing support and access to key services with help from residents, schools and community organisations.

Cabinet member for health, social care and wellbeing, Lucia das Neves, said that the pressure on the housing sector is critical and needs to be addressed by the government.

“A local solution simply doesn't work,” she claimed.

The council currently faces difficulties in finding affordable housing for Ukrainian refugees, despite offering grants of more than £4,000 per household for deposits and fees. They find the reduction in government funding concerning.

“[The] government must address the true resource requirements of supporting Ukrainian refugees, with a national long-term response put in place,” said Cllr das Neves.

“Nonetheless, we will continue to do everything in our power to support Ukrainian refugees in Haringey.”

Fifth edition of Alexandra Palace children's book award launched

Readers aged nine to twelve have been invited to vote for their favourite book from the shortlist

Biblio-buzz, the Alexandra Palace Children's Book Award, is back for its fifth edition. The launch event took place at Wood Green Library on Saturday, 14th January.

Hundreds of young bookworms between the ages of nine and twelve took part. They will read six works by professional authors and vote for their favourite. The winner will be announced in March.

The launch event was attended by the competition's 2022 winner, author Jack Meggitt-Phillips, and included a free performance by the Chickenshed community theatre.

Mark Civil, who is head of the creative learning programme at Alexandra Palace, said: “Biblio-buzz is a great example of how we aim, through the Palace's learning programme and by working with partners, to offer exciting opportunities for local people to immerse themselves in culture, build skills and find creative ways to express themselves. If you've not tried



Last year's Biblio-buzz winner Jack Meggitt-Phillips kept young bookworms entertained. Credit: Sophie Harbinson

Biblio-buzz before, then now is the ideal time to get involved.”

Thrilling adventure, fantasy and nature dominate this year's shortlist. The selected titles are *The Consequence Girl* by Alastair Chisholm; *The Elemental Detectives* by Patrice Lawrence; *Twitich* by M.G. Leonard; *S.T.E.A.L.T.H Access Denied* by Jason Rohan; *Tyger* by S.F. Said; and *The Bird Singers* by Eve Wersocki Morris.

Alexandra Park and Palace Charitable Trust chair of trustees, Emine Ibrahim, said: “It is fantastic to see young people from across Haringey taking on the

Biblio-buzz challenge. The initiative is a real borough-wide effort, with Alexandra Palace, the library service, local schools and book shops joining forces to provide a range of opportunities for those taking part to build skills and develop an interest in the literary world.”

The award ceremonies will take place on Friday, 24th March in Alexandra Palace Theatre, and on Saturday, 25th March in Wood Green Library. Young readers who took part in the literary challenge will meet the authors and the winner will be unveiled.

Council leader blasts Home Office after asylum seekers' removal

Peray Ahmet said she was “incredibly disappointed” asylum seekers were moved from Muswell Hill hotel without council's knowledge

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The leader of Haringey Council has criticised the Home Office after asylum seekers were moved from a hotel in Muswell Hill to a barracks in Kent.

Council leader Peray Ahmet raised concerns for the welfare of the three individuals who were housed at National Hotel before being relocated to Napier Barracks near Folkestone on Sunday, 8th January.

The barracks became notorious for its poor conditions and, in June 2021, a High Court judge ruled that it provided inadequate accommodation. The Home Office says improvements have since been made.

Protestors gathered outside the hotel on 20th December following reports that the asylum seekers were to be relocated imminently, and officials from the Home Office left without moving the individuals. Last month, however, councillors learned that officials had relocated three of the asylum seekers without informing the council.

In a joint statement, council leader Peray Ahmet and cabinet member for health,



Asylum seekers were moved from the National Hotel in Muswell Hill to a barracks in Kent

social care and wellbeing Lucia das Neves said they were “incredibly disappointed” that the officials “elected to remove people without telling us or our staff and on a weekend”.

The two councillors said they were particularly concerned about “the mental health needs of these refugees, who have often fled from horrifying situations”, warning of a “risk posed to these residents should they be moved away from existing support networks”.

They added: “They [the Home Office] know that had local residents and welcome groups been aware, they would have come out to demonstrate as they did in December. The Home Office removed

these residents without informing the council, and without confirming that they had undertaken the necessary health assessments that are their legal duty.”

Cllr Ahmet and Cllr das Neves have written to immigration minister Robert Jenrick asking for the council to be given advance notice of such moves. They have also requested a meeting “to discuss the way in which the Home Office works with councils and partner organisations to get the best outcomes for our asylum seekers”.

A Home Office spokesperson said: “The Home Office continues to provide safe accommodation for destitute asylum seekers who need it as we work to end the use of hotels which are costing UK taxpayers almost £6million a day.

“Our accommodation contractor at Napier provides full board accommodation which is safe, comfortable and meets our standards of service.

“Individuals housed in our accommodation may be moved to other locations in line with the allocation of accommodation guidance and no-one will be moved if deemed unsafe for them.”

The new medical centre is currently in development in Tottenham Hale. Credit: Haringey Council



Major new medical centre arriving as local NHS services under strain

A “much-needed” medical centre in development in Tottenham Hale is set to deliver healthcare to an estimated 25,000 residents.

Based at the corner of Monument Way, Chesnut Road and Park View Road, Welbourne Health Centre will sit adjacent to a site where 130 council homes are also currently being built. The medical facilities, delivered by Haringey Council and NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board (ICB), are intended to provide primary care services and safeguard quality healthcare for residents living in the new development and elsewhere.

Across the Welbourne site, three blocks of one, two and three-bedroom flats will be built, along with a raised landscaped courtyard and roof terraces for all residents. Local GP practice, The Lawrence House Group, will be relocating its four Haringey-based surgeries to Welbourne Health Centre.

The development was given the go-ahead in the hope that it will “significantly improve health facilities and opportunities” in the borough.

In a joint statement, Ruth Gordon, cabinet member for house building, placemaking and development and Lucia das Neves, cabinet member for health, social care and wellbeing, said: “This is a milestone for residents in Tottenham and across the borough as health partners work to deliver a much-needed healthcare centre on the Welbourne site. We are committed to working closely with our partners in the Integrated Care Board, to develop a facility that will give local people access to excellent health facilities.

“Our community is at the heart of everything we do. We continue to work in partnership with local NHS partners to help deliver new facilities in additional locations that meet the health and well-

Welbourne Health Centre, delivered by Haringey Council, is expected to serve 25,000 Haringey residents

BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

being needs of people in our borough, to help them live healthy and fulfilling lives.”

This comes amidst widespread pressures in the NHS, with a national staff vacancy rate of 9.7% recorded in September 2022.

Rachel Lissauer, director of integration for Haringey at ICB, said: “The Welbourne Health Centre development is part of a series of primary care estates improvement projects. Some GP practices are operating from converted residential properties that are not fit for purpose or fully accessible. This transformation programme aims to address these issues and we will see a number of GP practices moving into modern, spacious buildings more suitable for delivering GP services over the next few years. This is fantastic news for Haringey patients and for practice staff too.”

Dr John Rohan, GP partner at Lawrence House Surgery, said: “The Welbourne development is great news for our patients and staff. It has been a long process to get to this stage, but we are very excited to be within touching distance of achieving our aim of having a fit for purpose, state-of-the-art facility.

“Our patient list size has increased over time and given

the new housing developments locally, we expect patient numbers to continue to rise. The new surgery will allow us to expand and develop the primary care services that we can offer to our patients.”

Rachel added: “In terms of developing and expanding the primary care workforce, many Haringey GP practices are teaching practices, training our future GPs and practice nurses. Plus, practice teams now include a wide range of health professionals, such as community pharmacists and health and wellbeing coaches for example, who work as part of a multidisciplinary team with GPs and practice nurses to support patients.”

To address staff shortages, Health Education England (HEE) has also confirmed funding for 200 apprentices to train as doctors over the next two years, one first step in resolving nationwide NHS staff shortages.

The latest data published in January regarding North Middlesex Hospital, located nearby Haringey in Edmonton, showed that in December 2022 1,425 patients waited for more than four hours to be seen in A&E, while 859 patients waited for more than twelve hours. These pressures further culminated in

strike action for fair pay taken by ICB on 15th and 20th December, and by London Ambulance Service members on 11th January.

Chief executive of North Mid Dr Nnenna Osuji said: “North Mid's emergency department sees some of the highest numbers of patients in London and a combination of factors – weather, circulating viruses, patients with multiple conditions who require complex care – can add to demand for emergency and inpatient care.

“A range of measures have been introduced to ensure our patients receive the best care possible. These include: a GP service to assess patients when they arrive at our emergency department; expanding our same day emergency care area to enable more patients to receive treatment without being admitted; opening a community rehabilitation ward to help facilitate early discharge; opening a medical day hospital where elderly and frail patients can receive specialist care to help keep them healthy and avoid hospital stays.

“Our staff are working above and beyond in challenging circumstances, and I would like to put on record my thanks to every member of Team North Mid for their ongoing dedication.”

In 2015, a joint report from Haringey Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS England identified a need for a new medical facility in the borough, following which a task force was formed including officers from the council, NHS England and the CCG, local councillors and Healthwatch Haringey. The former Welbourne Community Centre was selected as the most suitable location for the development.

The development is expected to be completed by Haringey Council in the summer this year.



Chris Storey (pictured, centre) has been making music with his band Pan Nation for 13 years
Credit Olivia Opara

Local steel pan teacher recognised in New Year's Honours List

Tottenham resident Christopher Storey has been uniting the local community through music, finds Olivia Opara

ATottenham steel pan teacher has received a British Empire Medal for his services to steel pan music and his work in the local community.

Christopher Storey grew up in Tottenham and has been playing steel pans since he was aged seven. Supported by the Haringey Music Service, Christopher now teaches steel pan music in schools around Haringey, helping to ensure that people across the borough have access to the instrument.

Christopher's dedication to promoting steel pan music was recognised in the King's first New Year's Honours List this year.

"I was shocked to have won this award," said Chris. "I just love what I do and this title – I want to use it to continue to promote steel pan music and show how we can cherish it."

He added: "This award is more than just me. This award is for steel pans."

Aside from this latest honour, Christopher has won numerous competitions and awards. His unique musical arrangement style has garnered the admiration of many, including renowned arranger and pannist Duvone Stewart. Christopher was also awarded The British Association of Steelbands Lifetime Outstanding Achievement award in 2018.

Christopher wants to bring the community together through the common interest of music and create a "haven" for people to create music together, especially in the wake of the Tottenham Riots.

"Tottenham gets a bad rep. We are not a group of people that everyone wants to put into a certain box," said Christopher. "We are more than that."

He added: "There are so many talented people in Haringey, so many young people with aspirations."

Christopher founded the Pan Nation Steel Orchestra 13 years ago and it has become one of the leading steel bands in the UK. The steel band acts as a safe space for young people and the wider community to engage in positive activities and develop their musical skills. His weekly classes attract students and fellow pannists from across London and beyond.

Pan Nation placed in the top three bands in the 2022 UK Panorama Competition and was voted winner of the People's Choice Awards in 2019. The steel band is still young and has grown

into four mini bands – one major professional band alongside three adult learner bands. They have become the official steel band for Tottenham Hotspur Football Club and play live at Spurs' home matches throughout the football season.

Kerry, 18, was taught steel pans by Christopher during her time at Hornsey School for Girls. She joined Pan Nation in 2019 and plays the double second pan for the main professional band.

"The Panorama Competition was one of my best experiences," said Kerry. "After that, I brought my little brother to join the band."

Kimarnè, meanwhile, started playing steel pans when he was 17 as part of the Haringey Steel Orchestra. He now plays the four cello pan for Pan Nation's main professional band and went on to study music at university.

"When I found Christopher and saw how amazing his arrangements were, I wanted to play with him," said Kimarnè. "I would like to thank Christopher for inspiring me."

Christopher's weekly classes attract students and fellow pannists from across London and beyond

Pan Nation also hosts 'Blockorama', a free, live steel pan event showcasing multiple steel bands. The performances are held at Lordship Recreation Ground every summer and as part of the annual winter concert at Gladesmore Community School.

"Steel pans are still not recognised as instruments by western standards," said Christopher, "but they are musical instruments."

Steel pan music originates from the town of Arima, Trinidad which was twinned – meaning a long-term partnership between two communities in two countries – with Haringey in 1989. Steel pans have grown in popularity in the UK since they were first played at the Festival of Britain in 1951 and have since become much more widely accepted as a musical and cultural artform.

After receiving his medal, Christopher is now working towards encouraging more young people to take steel pan courses accredited by the PRSSV Institute of Performing Arts and Heritage, the leading examination board in music and dance in the UK. These courses are designed in the hope of getting steel pans on a level playing field with other western instruments within taught musical education.

For more information:
Visit pan-nation.co.uk

Ukrainian refugees recount the horror of fleeing war

Young Ukrainian refugees living in Tottenham have told their story of having to escape the war that has devastated their homeland over the past year.

Since fleeing Ukraine, teenagers Maksym and Anhelina have been given housing assistance by Haringey Council and support to claim Universal Credit and other benefits. Now both living in Tottenham, they have been joined elsewhere in the UK by their friend Anna-Mariia.

They had all attended school as normal on 23rd February 2022, hanging out with their fellow classmates and friends. That night, they were woken by the sounds of explosions and bombs as "life suddenly changed", according to 17-year-old Anhelina, from Kolomyia in western Ukraine. As the sound of sirens and alarms filled the air, they knew Russia had invaded – the war had started.

"We were confused," said Anna-Mariia, also 17 and from Kyiv. "We didn't know what to do."

Maksym is from Mariupol, the eastern port city that was besieged for three months at the start of the war and is now controlled by Russia. "Everyone in the Mariupol thought that the city wouldn't last two weeks," said the 16-year-old. Mariupol was bombed continuously over the first five days of the war and, with no electricity, water or gas supplies, Maksym and his family had to escape to a bomb shelter already holding about 350 people, realising that "everything would only get worse".

Maksym's family spent two weeks in the shelter waiting for aid from the Red Cross and for the Ukrainian government to create a 'green corridor' for everyone to safely evacuate the city. However, "that did not happen," Maksym said, and on 14th March, his father told them that they had to leave as they "couldn't stay in the shelter any longer". Everyone evacuated into 44 cars, packing what they could carry.

"It was scary," said Maksym. "We had to drive on bomb [ridden] roads, going around bomb shells and craters".

Two hours later, Maksym's family arrived at a village occupied by the Russian military. A "kind old lady" hosted his family for two days so they could rest but, on the morning of the third day, there was a massive explosion and "we realised we had to keep moving". The explosion also caused the roof of a nearby shelter to collapse. "I was afraid that my children might die," said Maksym's mother. "But I wished [our roof] would collapse and end this quickly without the pain."

Fearful, Maksym's parents had written down their emergency contact details on slips of paper and told

Olivia Opara meets young Ukrainian refugees living in Tottenham and speaks to them about their journeys to the UK a year on from the start of Russia's invasion



Maksym and Anhelina pictured together
Credit Anhelina Vovk

Maksym and his siblings to keep them "just in case". Deciding to travel towards central Ukraine, Maksym's family made their way towards a bridge not far from Orikhiv in hope of getting to

the Ukrainian territory on the other side, but it was destroyed. Reversing, they went through a field of bombs noticing that the surrounding buildings were on fire. "We had driven into a

We had driven into a war zone and the Russian army was waiting with guns and bullets

war zone and the Russian army was waiting with guns and bullets," said Maksym. They would later arrive safely in Zaporizhzhia, before heading to the Polish border. "Once we boarded the bus, we felt relieved. We were safe."

"It was a miracle that we escaped and survived," said Maksym's mother. "People were saying 'you are lucky to have survived'".

Maksym's grandfather had to escape through Russia after his home was burned down. He would later join the family in the UK, but Maksym's great-grandmother did not make it due to her poor health.

Anna-Mariia and Anhelina's families had also fled in search of shelters. Fortunately for Anna-Mariia's family, they were able to find flats to live in during the spring, in the western city of Lviv. They would later head to Poland after Anna-Mariia's mother found out about the sponsorship programme in the UK. "It was really hard mentally," said Anna-Mariia.

Anhelina's family headed to the Hungary-Ukraine border to stay with her grandmother's friend while waiting for a visa to join her mother in the UK. They had only spent two hours in a shelter next to an airfield before it was bombed. "We were scared," said Anhelina. "My grandparents didn't want us to live like this, but we didn't know if we should stay or go."

All of the men in Anhelina's family, excluding her younger brothers, joined the military – her uncle is currently fighting at the frontline. "I have been struggling with feelings of guilt because I [had] to leave," said Anhelina. "I still have nightmares."

"War is the hardest thing that someone can go through and those who have not been through it will not be able to understand how it feels."

Since arriving in the UK, Maksym, Anna-Mariia and Anhelina have all been supported by services set up by Ukrainians to help Ukrainian refugees in London. They have also been given guidance on how to access charitable support such as Tottenham Foodbank.

"My teachers help me a lot," said Maksym, who now attends Gladesmore Community School in South Tottenham. The school has set up provision to support him such as extra time in exams, free school meals and uniform. "We are still not used to the different culture and lifestyle here in the UK, but I like it and I hope that peace will come to Ukraine."



Maksym (far right) pictured with his family outside 10 Downing Street

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Remembering LGBTQ+ history in Haringey

As LGBTQ+ History Month begins, Miriam Balanescu speaks to three Haringey natives who have been central to shaping the borough’s queer history

Veronica McKenzie, founder of Haringey Vanguard
Kindled in 2018 and finally coming to fruition in 2021, the Haringey Vanguard collection at the Bruce Castle Museum brings together archival material, photographs and testimonies to tell the stories of Haringey’s BME LGBTQ+ residents. The project was kickstarted by filmmaker Veronica McKenzie, who initially set out to make a documentary about the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre active in the 80s.

“I was at an event and a young woman said that, as far as she could see, there wasn’t any kind of black queer history in this country and that we should start to organise spaces,” said Veronica. “I was actually at the event with somebody who was very active in the 80s and 90s. We both started saying how incredible it was that nobody knew about this history.”

Armed with her brother’s high-quality camera, she started work: “I wanted to tell the story of the Black Lesbian and Gay Centre, because that was the epitome of what people were saying we needed now – but there already had been a project back in 1985,” she explained.

Veronica claimed that the events of the past were not so dissimilar from what she was seeing in the present: “We’re seeing attacks on working classes, we’re seeing attacks on unions, we’re seeing othering of migrants and all the rest of it. We are seeing quite a lot of political similarities to what happened in the 80s. I think for a lot of people, they made a bit more effort to try to find pictures or materials that could help the project because they could see it happening again.”

Members of the local community were called upon to donate any materials they had lying around or hidden in boxes at home, and gradually a huge collection was amassed, containing everything from iconic political banners used in major protests to flyers for well-known gay nightclubs – with Veronica sometimes “jumping in an Uber” to make sure she got hold of items. “I found it quite exciting to uncover stuff and just see what they had,” she said. “It was a really lovely process.”

“Haringey has always had a very radical community, because if you look at the makeup of Haringey, it’s always been very diverse,” said Veronica. “It was very difficult to find queer spaces [in central London], so you had to move further and further out.”

Among her biggest revelations while curating the project, Veronica discovered that Section 28, a law prohibiting the “promotion of homosexuality”, all led back to Haringey.



Bolts had a regular presence at the London Gay Pride march



Femi Otitoju holds the 'Haringey Lesbian and Gays' banner

Edwin Star picks up the mic at Bolts



“*Haringey has always had a very radical community*”

A children’s book featuring same-sex parents was found in a local library in Haringey and sparked outrage, while the work of the Lesbian and Gay Unit at Haringey Council added to the furore.

“Section 28 stemmed from a handful of people who objected to talking about LGBTQ+ issues in the classroom,” explained Veronica. “A handful of people led to national legislation, which affected thousands.”

“[Haringey Vanguard] was a way of encouraging local people to go to a local venue and find out the history of the area,” Veronica added. “Growing up in Haringey, it was a very difficult time – the LGBT community was very underground. I didn’t know anyone. And so, when I came out, I ended up going to places

in the West End, going into places in South London, going to places in East London, not really knowing that there was all of this stuff happening in Haringey.

“Haringey always had such a negative reputation in a way. It seemed really important to rectify that, to reposition Tottenham and Haringey as actually very progressive areas in terms of the work that was being done and is being done, at the forefront of people’s fight for their rights, whether that be LGBTQ+, whether that be [those of] the Black community. Haringey’s always been a place where people struggle for their rights, and people took on new ideas, and had those discussions that maybe were not happening in other areas.”



George Michael hits the dancefloor at Bolts

Nicky Price, founder of Bolts

Physical spaces to exist in safely and meet others are crucial to any community, but especially groups which have been traditionally marginalised in society. In Haringey, Bolts, one of the first gay club nights in the UK, was a mainstay for LGBTQ+ residents throughout the 80s – eventually spreading across the UK and hosting the launch party for the Terrence Higgins Trust.

Nicky Price founded Bolts in 1981 together with a group of friends, based at his own venue Lazer Club in Harringay Green Lanes. He recalled how some of the period’s greatest performers found their footing within Lazer Club’s walls.

Sent a group by Innervision, which at the time was little-known on the music circuit, Nicky was disappointed to find that they preferred to “mime”. During their second performance at Bolts, he tricked the group into taking microphones onstage. When their backing track was due to play, it remained silent. “To this day they think it was the DJ who made the mistake,” Nicky said. “That group sang for the first time ever live on our stage anywhere in the world, and that was George Michael and Wham!”

Nicky added: “For two years, George would spend most of his time at the club, especially when he was going through a hard time with his record label.”

Later in the decade, Lazer Club was hit hard by the global HIV/Aids epidemic and one of Nicky’s business partners, Philip (nicknamed “Pickles”), contracted the disease. Despite this, Philip continued working on the door at Bolts. “I wasn’t going to stop him,” said Nicky. “We lost a lot of business because people were scared. They didn’t understand what Aids was

and how you contract it.”

Today, Nicky remembers the club’s heyday fondly: “The atmosphere was electric. People didn’t stop dancing.”

Nicky said that prior to Bolts’ opening, during the 70s, people were much more fearful of being openly queer. “By the time we opened up Bolts, people would leave the club as loud as they were in the club,” said Nicky. “People were loud and proud outside as well as inside.”

Femi Otitoju, former member of the Lesbian and Gay Unit

“I was one of about six women who met in a workshop for lesbians at a conference for women of African and Asian descent that was held in the neighbouring borough of Islington,” Femi Otitoju, founder of the first Black lesbian group in the UK, told me. “There was no specific provision for Black lesbians in Haringey at the time and the other women who had turned up said there wasn’t anything where they lived either.”

Femi went on to get involved with activism in multiple groups, from Stonewall to the Women’s Movement, eventually becoming one of a cluster of people working at the Lesbian and Gay Unit (LAGU) which was part of the community services department of Haringey Council. “The idea for the unit grew out of community action, mostly by lesbian and gay members of the local Labour Party,” Femi explained.

This was all during a decade which saw immense changes for the LGBTQ+ community not just in the borough but around the country. “I was inspired to get involved in lesbian and gay organising the 80s through my work on Lesbian and Gay Switchboard,” said

Femi. “It’s a 24-hour helpline which was and still is run by us for us. Sometimes on a single shift I might talk to about 40 different people, all calling about something connected to sexual orientation or gender identity.

“Taking all those calls highlighted to me the life-damaging inequalities faced by members of our communities: things like the unequal age of consent for gay men which was 21 when it was 16 for everyone else. I got real insight into how easy and legal it was to discriminate against people at work, or even sack someone, on the basis of their sexuality. We could be denied housing and other services too.”

The discovery of the children’s book *Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin* in 1986 at a Haringey library sparked the creation of Section 28 – and LAGU was largely blamed. “If it hadn’t been that book, if it hadn’t been that library, it would have been caused by a different catalyst in different borough,” claimed Femi. “Section 28 was the manifestation of a backlash that had already begun before the LAGU came into being.”



Historic ‘Smash the Backlash’ protests against racism and discrimination in Haringey followed in 1987, a collaboration between two activist groups, The Positive Images Campaign and Haringey Black Action.

Meanwhile, budgets for local authorities shrank towards the end of the 80s and LAGU was abolished – and Femi started to make other plans. “During the 80s lesbians had allied with gay men during the Aids crisis, with heterosexual woman over abortion campaigns, [and] with miners and other groups,” said Femi. “I wanted to build on those alliances, so I started my company Challenge to do just that.”

Femi emphasised the importance of remembering Haringey’s queer history today. “It is important to honour and recognise LGBTQ+ History Month to remind us not just how much we have received but also to remind ourselves how important it is to stay vigilant,” she urged. “Once discrimination takes hold, in law, in practice or in people’s minds, it can take decades to address. Section 28 went from discriminatory comments to the statutes in an incredibly short time – we simply didn’t see it coming. Knowing our history makes it easier to prevent it from happening again.”



The People's Pantry co-founders Lisa Jones and Stephen Thomas in their milk float Credit: Mischa Haller

Five minutes with Lisa Jones

INTERVIEW

Lisa Jones, co-founder of The People's Pantry in Muswell Hill, reveals her favourite places in Haringey to eat, drink and enjoy a night out

Home is... Muswell Hill, for 25 years and counting.

Where do you go for a good time? Comedy nights at The Village Green in Muswell Hill and Crouch End's Downstairs at the King's Head for a laugh. Ally Pally for gigs – we are lucky to have a global platform on our doorstep!

Why do you love Haringey? For the community in all its wonderful diversity. Since launching The People's Pantry we've been involved with all sorts of community projects and been blown away by the amount of volunteering that goes on, by the efforts to improve our lives and spaces and the support for each other that quietly runs through the borough – from foodbanks and churches to sustainability campaigners and food

growers, to wider events that directly engage and galvanise the community.

Where do you go for a moment of quiet? We are blessed to have so much green space around us in Haringey. My quiet times are spent walking the dog around Alexandra Palace Park and Highgate Woods. The woods, in particular, take on a new beauty and light with every season which is always uplifting.

What's your secret Haringey spot? Ludo's Bar in Blue House Yard, Wood Green, which is a bar on a vintage double decker bus, and so much more. Charley and James, who took on the bus last year, have filled it with local brews, comedy nights, supper clubs and great music. Blue House Yard is a cool, buzzy little hub for local artisans.

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be? Fave e Cicoria. It's a Puglian dish of pureed garlicky fava beans

and potato topped with wilted bitter greens.

Where in the borough would you recommend for a first date? How about The Goodness Brewing Company in Wood Green for a pizza and one of their 'beer and Beethoven' nights. Relaxed, quirky, funky and cultured. That's got to be a second date-winning combo, right?

Where do you get your culture fix? Park Theatre in Finsbury Park rarely disappoints. It's a tiny, intimate theatre, but with a quality of performers, innovation and writers that belies its size. At the other end of the scale, the cavernous Alexandra Palace Theatre is an atmospheric joy.

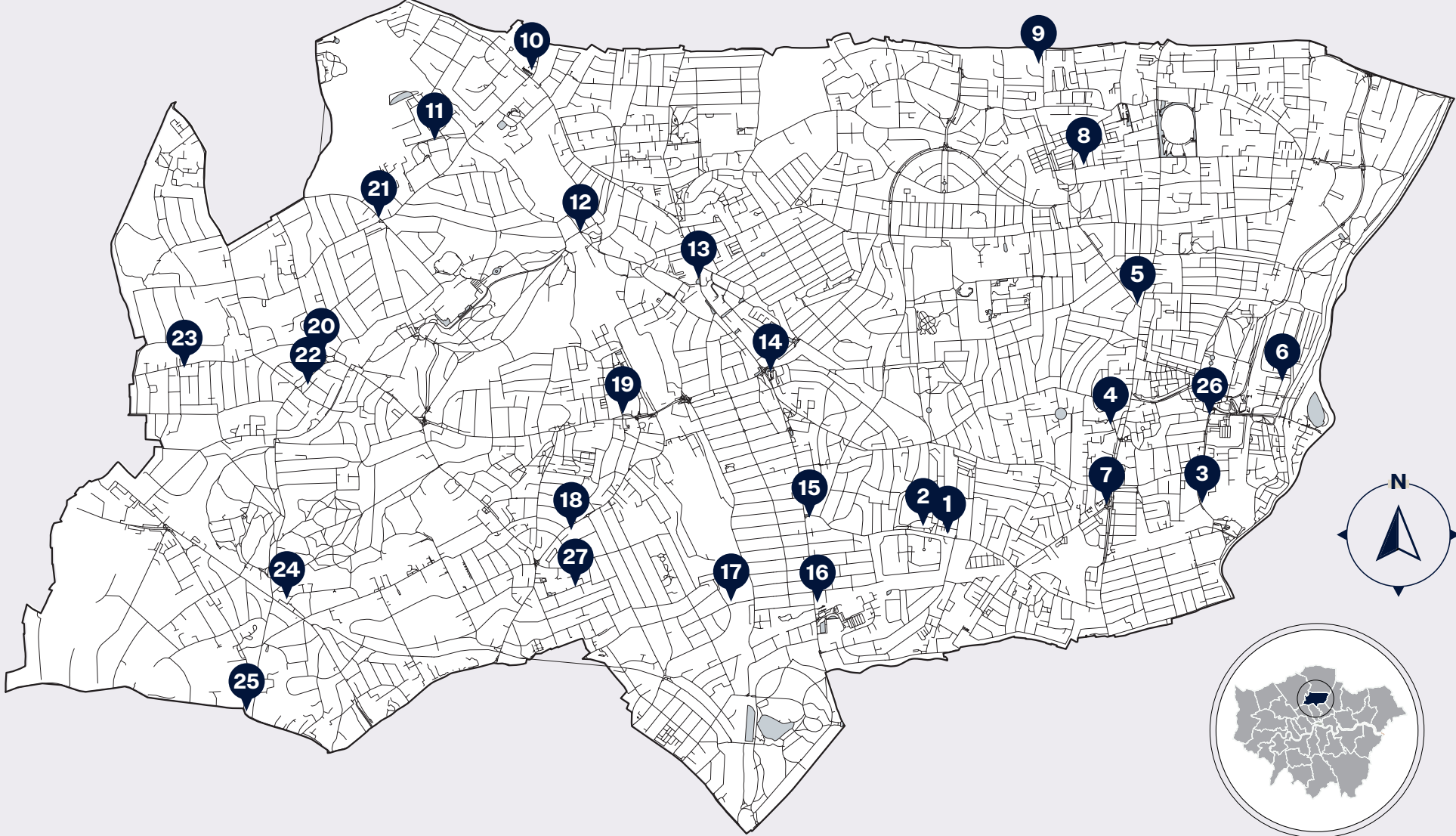
Best pint in Haringey? The Muswell Hillbillies Taproom in Avenue Mews. They serve some really interesting craft beers, including local ones like Jiddler's Tipple and their own Hillbillies range, made from homegrown hops. They're passionate about real beer and it shows.

Where is your go-to coffee spot? Hedgehog Café on Muswell Hill Broadway, which is an independent beacon in a sea of coffee shop chains.

What should HCP readers be watching/reading/listening to right now? *Is It Really Green?* by Georgina Wilson-Powell is a brilliant little book for guiding you around the minefield of living more sustainably. For cooks, I'd recommend the new recipe book *Foolproof Veggie One-Pot* by Haringey resident Alan Rosenthal, for inspiring budget, health and simplicity-focused supper solutions. For films, if you haven't seen it yet, *The Banshees of Inisherin* by Martin McDonagh is the most beautifully shot and acted tragi-comic story of friendship.

What are you working on at the moment? We're continuing to expand our stock offer, listening to what our customers want and responding when it fits our criteria; we now offer over 250 sustainability-vetted products across pantry, beauty and eco-cleaning staples. We are also continuing to develop relationships with local, like-minded, independent businesses. Our coffee, honey and beer are all Haringey sourced and we'd like to keep promoting local producers.

HCP Distribution



Distribution points	
1 The Laurels Medical Centre	15 The Salisbury Hotel
2 Chestnuts Community Centre	16 Harringay Green Lanes Station
3 Craving	17 Stroud Green and Harringay Library
4 Bernie Grant Arts Centre	18 Crouch End Picturehouse
5 The Trampery	19 The Great Northern Railway Tavern
6 The Engine Room	20 Muswell Hill Library
7 Seven Sisters Station	21 Maid of Muswell
8 Antwerp Arms	22 The Hedgehog
9 The Selby Centre	23 The Clissold Arms
10 Bounds Green Station	24 Highgate Station
11 The Pavilion Sports & Cafe	25 The Gatehouse
12 Alexandra Palace Station	26 Living Under One Sun
13 Wood Green Library	27 Hornsey Library
14 Turnpike Lane Station	

* Note: we cannot guarantee each location will always stock the paper

Haringey Community Press is available to pick up from dozens of locations, including cafes, libraries, community centres, pubs and more. We distribute 15,000 copies in total. Distribution is usually complete by the end of the first week of each month. The map shows a selection of our regular stockists, but is not an exhaustive list.

If you would like to become a stockist or help distribute papers in your area: Email hcp@socialspider.com

Sign up to the HCP newsletter: bit.ly/3nUI9fS

Our weekly newsletter will keep you up-to-date with the latest news, features, and comment found on the HCP website



Art in the right place

Jo Gold is a local illustrator who has been capturing the borough in prints – she explains why Haringey offers her endless creative inspiration

I am a designer and illustrator and I’ve lived in Haringey for 18 years. For most of this time, I worked in brand and packaging design, but just before the pandemic I decided to take a break from this to spend more time with my two young children. During this period, I decided to set up my own business, ‘Colour in Gold’, creating cartoon portraits and colourful prints including some of my favourite Haringey landmarks. We have such awesome buildings in Haringey, from Art Deco tube stations like Bounds Green, and Wood Green to

shopping, and through this I feel really connected to my local community. My most popular prints are the local ones, and my goal is to complete the rest of the Piccadilly Line (north of Finsbury Park!) by the end of this year. I love that art is part of the framework of Haringey – there is inspiration in every direction, from the fabulous luminous sign outside Hornsey Baths, to the murals around Wood Green (I especially love the Wood Green Library mural by Anna Nicolo, and the Wood Green car park mural by Matt Dosa), as well as the everchanging graffiti on the Parkland Walk. As a result, Haringey attracts creative people and I’m pretty chuffed I am one of them.

iconic landmarks like Alexandra Palace. I love bright colour and simple shapes and I find joy in taking these iconic buildings and giving them a colourful twist. I love symmetry too, and hunt out the symmetrical details in buildings – the arches in Ally Pally for example or the octagonal shape of Bounds Green Station. When it comes to selling prints, local markets are fab and there is no shortage of them in Haringey! I love Myddleton Road Market, Muswell Hill Creatives and Blue House Yard to name a few. I sell fairly regularly at Myddleton Road Market in Bowes Park, which is local to my kids’ school and the community is so supportive of local artists and makers. I love the mix of people you meet trading and



LISTINGS

Theatre

On the Ropes

Running until Saturday, 4th February
Park Theatre, 13 Clifton Terrace, Finsbury Park N4 3JP

Bringing the life of the famous boxer, Vernon Vanriel, to the stage, this original play is co-written by Dougie Blaxland and the sportsman himself. Vanriel gained a reputation as a North London legend in the 1970s and 1980s, earning his sporting stripes alongside the likes of Terry Marsh, Maurice Hope and John Conteh. In 2018, he hit the headlines again as a victim of the Windrush Scandal, brought to light by ‘The Guardian’s’ Amelia Gentleman. His story is one of tackling prejudice and injustice within the ring – with the set even transformed to look like one.

Tickets from £10

Visit parktheatre.co.uk/whats-on/on-the-ropes

Concert

Ellie McCann at Bowes Park Folk Club

Thursday, 9th February, 7.45pm
143 Myddleton Road N22 8NG

Bowes Park Folk Club has announced its spring roster of events, with the singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist Ellie McCann set to perform this month. Hailing from Bedfordshire, among Ellie’s instruments are banjo, mandolin and guitar, with which she crafts a traditional folk sound. Fresh from releasing her first EP in 2018, ‘Long Way from Home’, this gig is a chance to catch her on the way up.

Free entry

Visit bowesandbounds.org/group/bowes-park-folk-club

Education

Haringey Learns

Thursday, 2nd February – Thursday, 30th March
Haringey Adult Learning Service
3rd Floor Central Library, 187–197 High Road N22 6XD

Free development courses are on offer from the Haringey Adult Learning Service, spanning career development for the neurodiverse to leadership for women – all focused on upskilling and professional development. Participants can even gain a qualification at the end of their course.

Free entry

Visit bit.ly/3XwVMkR

Theatre

Circ-ulate

Friday, 24th and Saturday, 25th February 7:30pm
Jacksons Lane Arts Theatre, 269A Archway Rd N6 5SS

Piloted by Phoebe Hyder and Imy Wyatt Corner, over the course of one hour three theatrical shows in their early stages will be tested out on the Jacksons Lane stage, showcasing collaborations between playwrights, actors, directors, and circus performers. Expect experimental and boundary-pushing work.

Tickets £8

Visit jacksonslane.org.uk

Children

Woodside

Throughout February
59 White Hart Lane N22 5SJ

From the ‘Baby Wonder Parenting Programme’ to ‘Baby Massage’, it’s a packed programme at the Woodside Children’s Centre, a local service for children and families. Courses are available to book from January until March.

Visit bit.ly/3H6M5CX

Sports

WeSwim

Monday evenings 7.15pm – 8.15pm
1 Philip Lane N15 4JA

The community disability swimming club, WeSwim, is seeking both participants and experienced swimming volunteers to join for its weekly sessions. The inclusive club aims to increase the confidence of disabled swimmers in the water.

Free entry

Visit weswim.club/volunteer/swim-volunteer-role-description/

Art

Shereen Tabet at Low Volume

Friday, 10th – Monday, 20th February
341 Seven Sisters Road N15 6RD

A new art space has flung open its doors on Seven Sisters Road and will play host to the Scottish Lebanese artist Shereen Tabet, whose collection, Dreaming of Sunshine, is inspired by a trip to El Cotto.

Free entry

Visit lowvolume.co.uk

Concert

easy life

Saturday, 25th February 6.30pm
Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way N22 7AY

easy life will perform their biggest headline show to date at Haringey’s largest music venue this month. Lauded by the national music press, the band are heading out on tour in readiness for the release of their second album, ‘MAYBE IN ANOTHER LIFE...’.

Tickets £31.75

Visit alexandrapalace.com/whats-on/easy-life/

Exhibition

Anne Frank: A History for Today

Throughout February
Commerce House, Commerce Rd N22 8DZ

In collaboration with the Anne Frank Trust in Amsterdam, this new, educational exhibition will be available to view by schools this month. The exhibition, whose arrival marks Holocaust Memorial Day on Friday, 27th January, features 40 panels aiming to immerse young people in the story of Anne Frank’s life.

Free

Visit bit.ly/3J7T556

For next month’s listings, email the details of your event to hcp@socialspider.com by Monday 13th February

Tottenham schools offer food and more to tackle rising costs

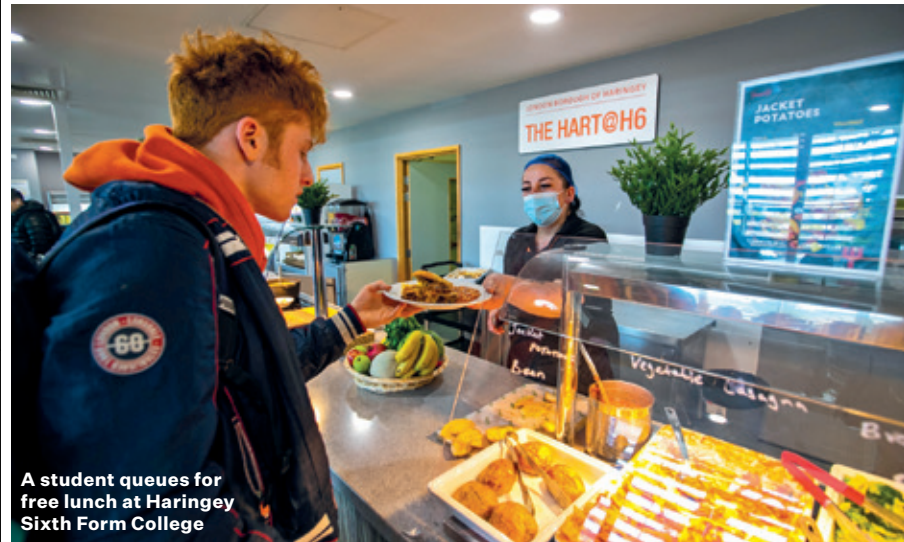
Olivia Opara investigates the steps local schools are taking to help support students through the cost-of-living crisis

Tottenham colleges have taken action to support students and their families amid the cost-of-living crisis.

Haringey Sixth Form College will be offering free school meals to all students in the coming months, following a proposal approved by the board of trustees. The college found that many students experiencing economic hardship do not fit the restrictive eligibility requirements to qualify for free school meals. The new plans took effect as of January.

The school’s principal Lisa Westray said: “It may be a small token of support but at least our families will be sending students back to college in January knowing that this will help them.”

The college chose to take immediate action “rather than wait for external policy change”, said chief executive of Haringey Sixth Form Education Trust, Russ Lawrance.



A student queues for free lunch at Haringey Sixth Form College

The board hopes that this will help families with surging food and energy costs, as well as encouraging other schools to do the same, despite the proposal stretching beyond the college’s planned budget.

London Academy of Excellence Tottenham (LAET) also made provisions towards food support for its students by setting up an in-school ‘festive foodbank’ prior to the holidays. The foodbank is available to all, with staff and students donating food and non-food items. Leftover food at the end of last school term was donated to Tottenham Foodbank.

An official spokesperson of LAET said: “[We] are proud to support those in need within the school community at this

increasingly difficult time.”

To further alleviate costs for students, LAET has decided to not raise the price of school meals in line with inflation. Funding for college bursaries, available to eligible students to support travel and learning, has also been doubled, with further grants available to provide support with the costs of educational resources.

At The College of North East London (CONEL), 155 students are currently in receipt of free school meals, with a rise in the number of students qualifying for its discretionary bursary scheme this year. To help raise awareness among its student body, CONEL distributed information on financial support offered by Haringey

Council to students on free school meals during recent school holidays.

All courses up to Level 2 and short courses throughout the year are offered at zero cost by the college – in recognition of the fact that finance can be a major barrier to learning. The school also refers students to local foodbanks and provides information on warm spaces that are run by local businesses, organisations, and places of worship in Haringey and Enfield.

A spokesperson for the Capital City College Group (CCCCG), which includes CONEL, said: “Many students attending CCG colleges come from some of the most deprived areas in London and have been hit hard by the cost-of-living crisis.

“We recognise it is incredibly tough for families right now and will continue to support our students in any way that we can at this difficult time.”

Calling on the government to deliver on its ‘levelling up’ promise by making school meals free for all, executive director of the Food Foundation, Anna Taylor, said: “Ensuring children receive a hot, nutritious meal at lunchtime will be a lifeline for many Londoners facing extreme cost-of-living pressures – many of whom are having to spend less on both cooking and eating at home to make ends meet.

“All children should have an equal chance to thrive and be healthy, no matter where they live or how much their parents earn.”

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“Knife crime is a huge problem”

Tash Alexander, founder and director of Head Held High, on the urgency of protecting young people at risk of exclusion

Haringey is the third most dangerous borough in London, according to CrimeRate. In 2021, 106 crimes were committed for every 1,000 people. This is part of the reason why many schools are saying yes to the help of Head Held High.

I’m Tash Alexander, the founder and director of social enterprise Head Held High, soon to be a charity, which is now in its tenth year. I set up Head Held High as I wanted to encourage individuals to become the best versions of themselves, not limited by their environment, self-beliefs or past. This was my objective based on what I had personally experienced and also what I could see around me, especially in London’s young people. I noticed that there was a deep disconnect between how a young person was truly feeling compared to how they were behaving. I found it devastating that London was losing so many innocent lives to knife crime and believed that if we can wake people up to their true selves then that could help save lives.

Head Held High works in partnership with the anti-knife crime charity The Ben



Tash Alexander and her team have worked with young people across the borough

Kinsella Trust, supporting young people at risk of involvement with knife crime, including those who may face exclusion from school. We also run our powerful confidence-through-comedy course ‘Stand up for yourself’, enabling people to dig deep to find the funniness in life and reveal their inner selves. We have worked with the Department for Work and Pensions, numerous secondary schools,

pupil referral units and youth offending teams as well as the charity Mind. Our work is life-changing and focuses on improving mental health, education and employment opportunities. We have helped numerous young people maintain their place in secondary school and enabled them to start on a new track.

There is a massive need for this work. Knife crime is a huge

“*Young people start taking new action from the moment they work with us*”

problem in this country, with mental health also being at the fore of this issue. Our obstacle is a lack of funding and resources. In 2022, which was a very tough year for us, we were forced to let go of staff due to the absence of funds and resources as well as office spaces. We are seeking permanent funding, even if it was for a year, so that we can get out there and deliver this powerful work. I have always been a proud Haringey resident and feel very passionate about the young people in this borough. It is very frustrating when we are contacted by an overwhelming number of schools which have a concern about their young people, behaviour and lack of motivation and we are unable to take action to make a difference! We are looking for local volunteers who could support Head Held High in areas such as project partnership work, social media, administration and marketing.

Currently, Head Held High is aiming to raise £20,000 to work with 60 young people at risk of exclusion in London. Our work is so crucial to transforming negative and aggressive behaviour. We have found that young people start taking new action from the moment they work with us. We support the teachers and the inclusion units in order to help young people hold a mirror up to their faces and ask, “Can I do better?” If we can encourage one person to take full responsibility for their actions and believe in a new way, then we have won.

We want to continue to do what we can to help as many individuals walk with their head held high.

Haringey residents can contact Tash Alexander at tash@headheldhigh.org.uk

LETTERS

Ghost streets

Dear HCP

I much appreciate the paper – you really fill a serious need. Local papers are a foundation stone of democracy.

I was tremendously relieved to read of the opposition to the LTNs and disconcerted, but not surprised, that it has a profiteering side. I’m 76 and live near Woodside Park. I find it really strange that the streets around have become ghost streets, devoid of the cars that gave them life and function. With asthma, I need good air, but feel the deserted neighbourhood is too high a price to pay. It makes me feel completely isolated.

But the worst thing is that I can’t rely on a quick bus journey to Wood Green anymore. Often, I have to walk the whole way (three bus stops) to avoid sitting in the daily traffic jam on the way to Wood Green Station. I can walk it now, but in a year or so may no longer be able to. Likewise, Bounds Green Road is often a continual traffic jam, with consequent air pollution and stalled buses.

Clare Frances Evans
Woodside Park

Make votes matter

Dear HCP

2022 was historic for Labour. Their party conference voted overwhelmingly, both constituencies and trade unions, to replace our current voting system with one of proportional representation, but Labour’s leadership hesitates.

Among Labour MPs, support is growing. With Edmondson MP, Kate Osamor, being the latest, it’s looking like most North London Labour MPs are now on board.

So, last month, the local North London branch of grassroots group Make Votes Matter, running the campaign for equal votes, delivered postcards from their constituents to Haringey Labour MPs, Catherine West and David Lammy, seeking their support for reform.

With three prime ministers, four chancellors, five education secretaries, and six fiscal events, 2022 resoundingly put paid to the claim our present voting system provides “strong” and “stable” government.

Our country badly needs a reset, a new start, a political ‘New Deal’. The way we vote is the place to start.

David Brown
Crouch Hill

Leap for literacy

Dear HCP

I’ve seen your excellent publication a number of times now (I moved here fairly recently) in the libraries and my local Tesco.

We recently set up the Haringey branch of a national charity – Read Easy – which aims to help adults who cannot read or who have low literacy skills.

Nearly 8% of Haringey residents have very low levels of literacy. 8.6% of residents have no qualifications. In the Tottenham area, that figure exceeds 14%.

We’re looking to recruit readers but also coaches – especially in Tottenham. We would be delighted if you could spread the word.

Carmel Turner
Haringey

Road rage

Dear HCP

Four of us Haringey residents and a local business owner have just met for lunch and saw your newsletter email come in. We wanted to take this moment to thank you collectively for focusing on the horrid LTN initiatives – below is a very quick and partial list of the adverse consequences we have experienced daily since the introduction of the LTNs, in no particular order: flawed consultation; division among local residents; increased frustration and pollution; more incidents of road rage; delayed emergency service provision; damage to local businesses; erosion of basic freedoms, including the elementary freedom of movement; discrimination by reducing the ability of disabled and elderly residents to move around the borough; loss of trust in the local authority acting in the best interest and on behalf of locals.

Guy
Haringey

Send us your letters

Email HCP@socialspider.com before Monday 13th February



▲ Dawn Barnes represents Fortis Green

“Met Police reform is not enough – overhaul is needed”

Dawn Barnes, Lib Dem councillor for Fortis Green, on paving the way forward as trust in the Met dwindles

It has been a shocking few years for the Met, the people we rely on to keep our streets safe and to help us when we have to report a crime. We have seen scandal after scandal, and public trust in our police is falling rapidly.

With the Metropolitan Police telling the BBC that it is “investigating 1,000 sexual and domestic abuse claims involving about 800 of its officers”, it is impossible to continue treating these tragic cases as unusual incidents. In addition, all 45,000 Met officers and staff are to be rechecked in case more previous offences or troubling behaviours have been missed.

This comes at a time when the Mayor of London is requesting the largest hike in contributions from council tax to help fund, among other things, policing. If vetting had been thorough, if we could be confident in the police officers on our streets, then this would not be such a bitter pill to swallow. As it is, the Met is crying out for additional staff and will be needing more if this major re-vetting operation uncovers other “dodgy” officers.

Last month, police officer David Carrick pleaded guilty to 48 counts of rape, making him one of the UK’s most prolific rapists. Like Sarah Everard’s murderer, Wayne Couzens – known as “The Rapist” by colleagues – Carrick had the work nickname

of “B*stard Dave”. How did these nicknames not raise a red flag?

Carrick was arrested in the same month that then-commissioner Cressida Dick was apologising for the actions of the officer who duped, raped and murdered Everard, and yet he wasn’t suspended from duty.

The police appear to close ranks and protect their own, but their job is to protect us, the public. I’m sure many of us remember the “advice” given by the Met following Sarah Everard’s murder, with women told to flag down a bus or run to a house if they have concerns when stopped by an officer, and advice given on how to tell if someone was a real police officer – failing to comprehend that Couzens was a legitimate officer.

This is simply not good enough. My niece, my neighbour’s daughter, me, you – none of us – should be worried when stopped by an officer. Equally, those many police officers who serve their communities do not deserve the doubt that is now cast upon them.

These two cases paint a picture of an institutionally misogynistic body, but sadly it does not stop there. The inquiry into the crimes of Stephen Port, the so-called “Grindr killer”, heard last year that the Metropolitan Police are institutionally homophobic. Furthermore, the police

have long faced accusations of institutional racism. Despite some steps in the right direction, it is clear that not enough progress has been made. The Black Lives Matter protests in the UK showed that many people of colour, particularly Black people, still feel, with justification, that they are not treated fairly by the police.

In my view, “reform” of the Met is not enough. It is a failing police force, and it must be broken up into smaller forces. It is incompetently managed, and far too large to be successfully reformed. This would be equivalent to the southern third of England having one police force. Attracting good senior officers from elsewhere is virtually impossible due to the size differences. Breaking off the national responsibilities, such as counterterrorism, is a no-brainer that should have happened long ago, but the remaining force would still be much too big. There is no reason we couldn’t have three or four forces serving different parts of the capital, which would begin to restore trust from our communities.

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“*None of us should be worried when stopped by an officer*”

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