

NEWS
Hornsey residents fear future floods caused by overflowing sewage
PAGE 3

FEATURE
A look at environmental initiatives around the borough
PAGE 6

INTERVIEW
Award-winning Tottenham author Derek Owusu on his latest novel
PAGE 12

COMMENT
Hope in Haringey on how young people are impacted by cost-of-living
PAGE 14



Protesters lose battle to save 100-year-old ‘Hairy Oak’ tree

BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

Performance activist group Red Rebels joined protesters to protect a mature tree from the chop in a bitter dispute with Haringey Council

Protesters defending the ‘Hairy Oak’ from being cut down by Haringey Council have lost their battle to save the tree. The 100-year-old tree on the Parkland Walk faced the chop on Wednesday, 22nd February to clear the way for “surveyance, investigation and

repairs”, as well as increasing accessibility, according to the council. Up to 20 trees had already been felled at Stanhope Road bridge, Mount Pleasant Villas bridge, St James’ Viaduct and Northwood Road bridge since work commenced on Monday, 13th February. The protest was part of a dispute which began in February 2021, when work began to remove trees and reduce vegetation on the Parkland Walk – resulting in the formation of a local campaigning group, Haringey Tree Protectors. Jane, a spokesperson for the group, claimed: “Teams of unsupervised tree surgeons from Turney Landscapes were let loose on the nature reserve.” Further work was prevented from being carried out by protesters in

March 2021. The work resumed last month, with the council claiming they wished to have vegetation reduction complete before the bird nesting season in March. The council then applied for an injunction to remove protesters from the ‘Hairy Oak’. The fierce protection of the ‘Hairy Oak’, which protesters claim had “more than 100 years left” of life, is indicative of a concern among residents that mature trees are not accounted for in the council’s plans to increase canopy cover in the borough, despite their increased environmental benefits. Jane said: “[The council’s] whole policy is focused on increasing canopy cover but it does not compensate for the loss of mature trees. “What we are making a stand on

now is that this is a nature reserve and that they have taken decisions contrary to this being a nature reserve.” The work has been described by Haringey Tree Protectors as “environment vandalism”. “There were alternatives which they chose to ignore,” said Jane. “It’s become the practice of developers to clear sites. They’re [seen as] an unnecessary hindrance. There’s no climate value put on them at all as providing clean air, habitats for insects and shade from increasingly hot summers.” Along with Haringey Tree Protectors, the Red Rebels – a sub-group of Extinction Rebellion – had been onsite to help protect the ‘Hairy Oak’. A “mourning procession” in anticipation of the tree felling took place on Sunday, 5th February.

Continued on Page-2

Local news that matters to you

Wed 1st Mar

Fri 31st Mar



Waxing
Gibbous
70%/0.5



Waxing
Gibbous
72%/0.49

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.

CREDITS

Publisher

David Floyd

Editor

Miriam Balanescu

Designer

Jonathan Duncan

Head of Advertising

Klaudia Kiss

Local Democracy Reporter

Simon Allin

Tottenham

Community Reporter

Olivia Opara

Contributors

Luke Newcombe, Julie Brown, Geanina Ursache, George Ursache, Jeff Probst, Ava Glass, Amanda McGrath, Omar Alleyne-Lawler, Cllr Cathy Brennan

CONTACT



HCP@social
spider.com



The Engine Room
N17 9FU

ADVERTISING



07732 000 430
Klaudia Kiss



klaudia@social
spider.com



HCP is regulated by the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO). For more information on HCP's complaints policy and how to make a complaint visit: haringeycommunitypress.co.uk/complaints

An image taken for Muswell Hill Residents Association in celebration of their 75th anniversary. For your chance to have your pictures featured in our next issue, use the hashtag #haringey and tag us @haringeycp on social media **Credit** Zoe Norfolk @muswellhill.photography



Continued from Page-1

One of the reasons given for the reduction in vegetation is increasing access and improving health and safety on the Parkland Walk. A former ecological management plan enforced a zone of five to ten metres between bridges and trees and vegetation. Following complaints from residents, however, this has been amended to two metres, in line with Islington Council regulations.

Another concern for Haringey Tree Protectors is the planned development of Stanhope Bridge, with the council ignoring a petition of more than 6,000 signatures calling for an environmentally-friendly 'green bridge'.

Mike Hakata, deputy leader and cabinet member for climate action, environment and transport said:

"We appreciate and understand the strength of feeling that removing trees invokes among residents in our borough. In most cases, trees are only removed when they are dead, diseased or dying. Occasionally, trees must be felled because they pose a significant risk to safety or structures. The bridge repair works at Parkland Walk are vital to allow residents to use them safely and to access this beautiful part of our borough.

"Where possible the trees taken down will be retained on site to

create additional habitats and increase the biodiversity of the area. Our expanded tree planting programme means that we are more than replacing the lost trees elsewhere in the borough, with a focus on areas with low canopy. We've investigated the option for the Stanhope Bridge put forward by Haringey Tree Protectors, but it is not viable for that location. It would mean building a larger bridge and removing more trees and vegetation making the site less green than the current plans. In fact, our approach

"The policy is focused on increasing canopy cover but it does not compensate for the loss of mature trees"

with embankments made of soil rather than brick will deliver a 13% uplift in biodiversity net gain."

Catherine West, MP for Hornsey and Wood Green, commented: "It is very important that green spaces such as the Parkland Walk are made accessible to be enjoyed by everyone in the community, however it is also crucial to protect the natural environment as much as possible, particularly in urban areas.

"I have highlighted concerns raised by local residents during my meetings with the council leader and chief executive and I know that the cabinet member for climate change, Cllr Mike Hakata, has engaged with local groups and residents on the plans for the bridge to try to find a solution which works for everyone."

AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE EDITOR

Hello and welcome to issue 17. Spring is finally here, with the days getting ever so slightly warmer and greenery beginning to return. Simultaneously, environmental issues seem to have come to the fore this month in Haringey, with the ongoing conflict at the Parkland Walk over Haringey Council's decision to cut down trees showing no sign of simmering down. In this issue, we hear from those on both sides of the debate, from the Haringey Tree Protectors and Red Rebels still battling to defend mature trees threatened with the chop, to Cathy Brennan, a councillor for

Muswell Hill, on the financial challenges facing the council in maintaining this vital green space for the community. We also get to grips with other prominent environmental issues, with local democracy reporter Simon Allin examining the council's new proposals on bin collections and waste, while we hear from a new campaign group tackling fly-tipping and unclean streets, Tidy Up Tottenham.

We also look at some of the positive environmental initiatives cropping up around the borough, hearing from Noel Park's pro-gardener Luke Newcombe about green goings-on in

Haringey and the director of a local fruit-and-veg-box scheme on how their initiative is helping to make agriculture fairer.

There is also literary news aplenty in this issue, with already award-winning Tottenham author Derek Owusu up for the esteemed Dylan Thomas Prize. We speak to another garlanded writer, Roy Williams OBE, about his play which will be coming to the Bernie Grant Arts Centre this month. Two local novelists, Ava Glass and Jeff Probst, plunge us into the inspirations behind their books – including years of working alongside real-life spies – while two Muswell

Hill book industry businesses are shortlisted for major literary awards.

As ever, please do consider supporting us by taking out a membership for as little as £5 a month. Our paper costs nearly £6,000 per month to produce and distribute, with members providing a vital 11% of our income. The support of our members enables us to continue what we're doing. And lastly, if you have a story you think we should be covering, we are always keen to hear from you – get in touch at hcp@socialspider.com.

I hope you enjoy the issue!

Miriam Balanescu

Hornsey residents hit by overflowing sewage ‘living in fear’ of next downpour

3

HCP
March
2023

Nº 17

Social housing tenants who were forced out of their flats by sewage-contaminated water fear floods could strike again as a sewer continues to overflow.

Residents living on the ground floor of Colorado Apartments in Hornsey had to evacuate their homes when they were hit by a flood in July 2021 that left their flats uninhabitable and their belongings damaged or ruined.

Following a lengthy clean-up operation, during which residents were housed in temporary accommodation, landlord Clarion Housing Association told them at the end of last year that they could move back into the building.

But the tenants want guarantees that they will not be flooded out again. With sewage repeatedly overflowing from a sewer and pooling outside their block – even in relatively dry weather – they fear it is only a matter of time before another major flood strikes.

Iesha Plummer moved into Colorado Apartments in 2017 with her son Jamiah, now aged twelve, who has autism and delayed speech. She said: “We were both in the property when this [the flooding] happened. [There was] raw sewage, human waste. All our stuff got ruined, the property got ruined.”

Colorado Apartments is a six-to-seven storey block of flats in Great Amwell Lane, built on the site of a former waterworks beside the New River that was owned by Thames Water. It is part of the 622-home, £70million New River Village scheme developed by St James between 2005 and 2007 – initially a partnership between the water company and Berkeley Group.

When she first saw the property, Iesha said it was “all being done up” and looked “fabulous”, adding it was in a “super calm, really quiet” area. But after moving in, she learned from long-term residents that the flats had been hit by flooding before – if she had known at the time, Iesha said she would not have moved in.

After being forced out by the flooding, Iesha spent a year and three months in temporary accommodation, during which she had to continue paying rent for the property. Although Clarion paid the temporary accommodation costs, she paid for accommodation for one week so that her son could finish school.

Now staying with family and friends, Iesha does not want to return to the property because she says Clarion cannot guarantee the flooding will not happen again, fearing for the safety of her son. A further flood in December had destroyed machines that were cleaning up after the previous flood, she added. But by refusing to go back, she was told she’d be making herself “intentionally homeless”.

“I don’t think I should have to move back there because it is not safe,” she said. “We could have been electrocuted. All the electrics were on and all this water was coming in”



Years of flooding problems in “dangerous and disgusting” ground-floor flats built on former marshland, reports Simon Allin, Local Democracy Reporter

Iesha said health professionals had written letters stating that the property was not suitable for her son, which she made Clarion aware of.

Disrepair and damages

Iesha had also previously complained about rust-coloured water coming out of the taps. She added: “If you can say to me and put it in black and white that ‘we fixed the pipes and it is safe’, I will move back.”

Adnan Abo, whose mother Fatima Omar moved into one of the ground floor apartments in 2006, described the flooding as “awful”, adding that it had affected all nine flats on the ground floor and another block.

“It is not something you would want to witness,” he said. “We had to walk through dirty, sewage-contaminated water to get outside the property.”

After being moved out, Adnan said his mother was housed in a hotel for more than six weeks before she was given temporary accommodation, and she was told she was entitled to £40 per day to cover expenses for herself and her children.

Adnan’s mother was also expected to pay rent for the time she was not able to live in the property, he said, adding that she had been back in the flat for a month but no-one had told her what she was entitled to in terms of disrepair and damages.

Since Colorado Apartments was built, more developments have sprung up in the surrounding area, including 270-home Smithfield Square. The residents believe the sewage pipe that serves the blocks cannot cope with the volume of sewage and water now passing through it.

Adnan said overflowing sewage pooling outside the property had “become a daily occurrence”.

“We have to deal with sewage and wastewater [when we are] coming out of the

main door,” he explained. “I have got two little kids, and when I take them to nursery, I have to take them through the smell.”

“You have tissue and human faeces coming out,” he added. “That is a sewage system not working as it should.”

No compensation

Iesha and Adnan said they had not been told they would receive compensation. They said Clarion had told them they should take out contents insurance, but that would be unaffordable for most residents given the likelihood of high premiums and the fact they are on low incomes. Adnan claimed Clarion wants to “push the blame” for the flooding on heavy rain.

Another resident, Anita Garczynski, said she and her daughter moved into Colorado Apartments during 2006 but had to move out months later after being affected by flooding. She said remedial works on the building were eventually carried out to deal with problems caused by the flood but that workers told them they were effectively a “band aid” or “temporary measure”. The problem, she says, is that the flats are built on former marshland and the Victorian sewer is too small.

Anita said she eventually received compensation, but it took a lot of time and effort before it was finally paid. Despite being moved to the first floor, she said her new flat had its own set of problems, including water seeping in from the balcony. She claimed the block had been affected by flooding at least five times and didn’t think anything could be done to stop it from happening again.

“The constant flooding outside the block is because of the way the sewage systems have been laid,” Anita said. “We literally had another one the other day. That has been cleaned up. But the minute it starts

raining or gets too cold, it starts backing up – and we are literally walking through sewage, human excrement.

“This can’t be normal, and it is unacceptable.”

“Instances of hydraulic overload”

Thames Water said it was not able to obtain information dating all the way back to 2006 but added that recent flooding at Colorado Apartments was caused by “a blockage in the main foul sewer which was cleared on 22nd January”, adding that there had also been blockages in December and October last year.

The company said its waste operations team would carry out a full investigation “to confirm if there are any operational issues that could be contributing to the blockages”, adding that “as it stands the issues appear to be from wet wipes and fat, oil and grease building up in the network”.

Thames Water said there were “instances of hydraulic overload during wet weather which caused sewer flooding in 2021 and an instance of sewer flooding in 2018”, which would be reviewed.

A Haringey Council spokesperson said more “extreme weather events” were impacting large parts of London and the authority had spent £870,000 on drainage improvements and flood prevention measures following the London-wide flooding in July 2021.

They added: “Flood risk has always been a key consideration when assessing planning applications. Developers must submit comprehensive drainage and flood prevention schemes to mitigate risks, and statutory organisations are always consulted.”

“The applications for Colorado and Danube apartments, and Smithfield Square, included drainage enhancements to reduce surface water runoff. Smithfield Square was supported by a detailed flood risk assessment. Thames Water and the Environment Agency were satisfied with the drainage scheme provided and Thames Water did not raise any objection to the sewerage infrastructure for Colorado and Danube apartments.”

A Clarion spokesperson said: “We absolutely appreciate the inconvenience residents have experienced due to the flood, which arose as an unfortunate result of the storm drains not being able to withstand the volume of water from the flash floods at the time. We have supported the households impacted while they have been in temporary accommodation and now the refurbishment work is complete, the homes are ready to return to.”

The spokesperson added that Clarion had advised residents that it will “consider any claims for compensation via its complaints process”.

St James declined to comment.



Colorado Apartments in Hornsey

N
E
W
S

By-election set for Tottenham Hale after councillor quits



Ward councillor Yannis Gourtsoyannis stood down after less than a year serving at Haringey Civic Centre, reports Simon Allin, Local Democracy Reporter

A by-election will be held in Tottenham after a Labour councillor stepped down less than a year after he was first elected.

Haringey Council has announced that a poll will take place in Tottenham Hale ward on Thursday, 9th March.

Council leader Peray Ahmet said her Labour colleague Yannis Gourtsoyannis (pictured above), who was elected to represent the ward in May last year, had stepped down from the role “for personal reasons”.

She added: “I want to thank Yannis for all his hard work as councillor and his dedication to his ward work. On behalf of the entire Labour group, I want to wish Yannis the best for the future.”

Haringey now has 48 Labour councillors and seven Liberal Democrat members, with one independent councillor and one vacant seat. Labour won large majorities in the Tottenham Hale ward during the elections that took place last year.

By-election candidates

Amelia Allao Christian Peoples Alliance	●
Emma Chan Green Party	●
Miriam Negusse Ghebrawariat Independent	●
Sean O'Donovan Labour Party	●
Angelos Kyriacos Tsangarides Conservative & Unionist Party	●
Allen Windsor Liberal Democrats	●

For further information
Visit haringey.gov.uk/local-democracy/elections-and-voting/upcoming-elections

Proposal to collect bins every three weeks sparks concern

Opposition councillors slam council survey asking residents if they'd be happy to have waste collected every 21 days

BY SIMON ALLIN, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER, & MIRIAM BALANESCU

Opposition councillors have raised concerns over possible council cuts to waste collections – including a proposal to collect black bins just once every three weeks.

Warning overflowing bins are “already too common”, Liberal Democrat councillors called on Haringey Council to state clearly how it will ensure the problems do not get worse if any reductions to collections do go ahead.

A council survey on waste and cleansing services, which ended on 29th January with results to be published this summer, asks residents whether they agree with changing collections for general, non-recyclable waste from the current fortnightly rate to once every three weeks.

It also asks whether residents agree with providing fortnightly mixed dry recycling collections or keeping the current weekly service. The council says it wants an “honest and mature conversation” and will not necessarily take the proposals forward.

This comes amidst widespread concern among residents regarding fly-tipping and waste on streets – resulting in the formation of a group dedicated to tackling the problem, Tidy Up Tottenham, that is campaigning for direct action to be taken by the council.

Emma, a spokesperson for Tidy Up Tottenham, said: “Tidy up Tottenham community group welcomes the waste consultation from Haringey Council and the work that has gone into getting residents’ and businesses’ feedback so far. We do, however, have concerns that work is not being done fast enough to improve the amount of fly-tipping and litter in the



Credit Tidy Up Tottenham



east of the borough, particularly with the Veolia contract which isn't due to expire for another two years.

“We would like to see an immediate response to the challenges that we face, particularly in Tottenham, and welcome innovative approaches from Haringey Council urgently.”

Scott Emery, Lib Dem spokesperson for the environment, said: “Bin and recycling col-

lections are a vital service – the only contact many of our residents have with the council. We all want to see a reduction in waste, but any proposals to reduce the frequency of collections will be concerning to many.

“Bins overflowing or becoming infested with maggots are already too common at the current collection rate, and the council needs to be clear on how it will ensure these problems don't get worse if these proposals are adopted.

“We are also alarmed by how the council's survey has been written, with many leading and unclear questions, asking respondents

to agree with seemingly generic statements which make passing references to less frequent collections or increasing the number of recycling bins. Responses to this badly designed survey should not be used as evidence for less frequent bin collections.”

Other suggestions put forward in the survey include providing smaller general waste bins, fortnightly garden waste collections and issuing fines for “contaminating recycling”

by putting the wrong items in the bins.

Seema Chandwani, cabinet member for tackling inequality and resident services, said waste and street cleansing “needs to be driven by service users and not public servants or consultants”.

Cllr Chandwani added: “It's right that we have an honest and mature conversation, and present how waste services are delivered in other boroughs so residents can really explore the pros and cons of such initiatives in an open and transparent way.

“It has been clear to most that it does not mean we are taking all, some or any of these initiatives forward.

“All who have engaged have given deep thought and consideration to the challenges of tackling the levels of waste we produce and what would work in our borough. They have also presented their own initiatives and ideas we can look at.

“This is the first stage in a long process, starting with listening to users of the services, presenting a range of considerations and trusting their capabilities to give a well thought through judgement based on their perspective and lived experience.

“It's been exciting and very insightful to hear the opinions, ideas and thoughts of people in every corner of our borough.”

To find out more:
Visit haringey.gov.uk/environment-and-waste/refuse-and-recycling/shaping-our-waste-and-cleansing-services-survey



Three petitions to end LTNs dismissed by council

The petitions calling for removal of LTNs around Haringey had between 2,800 and 7,500 signatures

BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

Haringey Council has chosen not to take action on three separate petitions demanding an end to low-traffic neighbourhood schemes (LTNs) in Haringey.

The petitions were presented at a full council meeting on Monday, 13th February, calling for the removal of LTNs in West Green and St Ann's (4,238 signatures), Bounds Green (2,837 signatures) and West Green and Bruce Grove (7,603 signatures). A deputation from the Jewish community on LTNs was also heard.

The LTN 'experiment' was introduced on a trial basis last year, with schemes in Bounds Green and St Ann's launched in August 2021, and Bruce Grove and West Green in November. They are designed to reduce through-traffic and improve air quality by using physical barriers and enforcement cameras.

However, concerns have been raised among residents that they increase congestion, pollution and turn affected highstreets into 'dead-zones', worsening the impact of the cost-of-living crisis and forcing businesses to close.

A protest by those calling for an end to LTNs took place outside the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London (CONEL) on Tottenham High Road, while the council meeting went ahead. Opponents to LTNs claim that many were

denied access to the public meeting on the grounds of there being limited seating.

This meeting followed the cancellation of a prior full council meeting scheduled for November 2022 to discuss the St Ann's and Bounds Green petitions, called off at short notice by the council due to alleged "disruption by a small group of protestors".

Opponents to LTNs also claim that the third petition for Bruce Grove was forced to be heard on Monday with only six days' notice.

Opening Monday's debate, West Green councillor Nicola Bartlett said: "I think I speak for all councillors when I say that we had very much hoped to hold the full council meeting last time and that we didn't want to delay having this important discussion."

She continued: "The reason that this is an experiment is that we don't initially know the effects of some of these decisions. Personally, I would have liked to see a London-wide scheme being introduced."

Earlier this month, Local Democracy Reporter Simon Allin reported that drivers had been fined a total of £2million in just four months since the LTN rollout, with 60,000 penalty charge notices served between September and December 2021 – raising concerns among opposition party members and Labour councillors alike.

Scott Emery, Liberal Democrat spokesperson for transport and the environment, said during the meeting: "The implementation

of LTNs in Haringey has clearly left a lot to be desired, in particular consultation with businesses and disability groups.

"Signage has also been poor in many places, which is why we've ended up with millions in fines."

In a further statement, he added: "The implementation of the LTNs in Haringey has clearly divided opinion, and there remain significant issues we feel need urgent work such as more obvious signage at filtered junctions and improvements to the individual circumstance exemption scheme.

"However, we must improve air quality in the borough and create safer streets so we are supportive of these trials continuing, as evidence from other areas shows that LTNs generally do reduce traffic, leading to less pollution, less congestion, and fewer traffic collisions."

Mike Hakata, the council's deputy leader and cabinet member for environment, transport and the climate emergency, said during the meeting that 60% of Haringey residents use cars: "Councillors are residents too, and most of the councillors in this room drive. All of us use cars some of the time, so we know that this is a major change to how most people get around and we want to make this work as much as you. If you build for cars, you get cars, and you choose to take journeys by car.

"We have a basic problem in major cities and especially London which is

classed as the most congested city in the world [...] We know that there is a major problem and we need to address it, build safe spaces for active sustainable travel and make our roads safe for everyone."

He concluded: "I don't agree with the assertion that the people of Haringey reject the LTNs. I know there are very strong feelings on both sides of this debate. My colleagues and I have had thousands of people approach us [...] to talk about how they also support the LTNs."

In a further statement made to *Haringey Community Press*, Cllr Hakata said: "The council is listening to all the feedback we are getting from residents, businesses and other stakeholders. We know this is a major change to how people get around. All our LTNs have been introduced on an experimental basis. We are constantly monitoring what's happening on the ground. Where something clearly doesn't work, we will make changes. We want to get this right for everyone.

"There is a very specific timeline and time-frame for the LTNs, and we will assess the data we've collected, which includes all the feedback from residents. 18 months is the maximum amount of time we can have an experimental scheme in place. We need time to see if the LTNs are having their desired effects and will make a decision on the future of the LTNs before the end of the trial period."

5

HCP
March
2023
No 17

N
E
W
S

Advertisement

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES FACE INSURANCE PREMIUMS INCREASE OVER 1000 %

BM
BELLEVEUE MORTLAKES
CHARTERED SURVEYORS
PROPERTY & FIXED CHARGE RECEIVERS

Professional Indemnity Insurance (PII) covers professional practices, such as accountants, architects and surveyors, in the event of a client complaint in respect of the service provided. Many professions within the construction industry are required to have PII as part of their respective industry governing body's regulatory requirements.

Over the past three years, companies have seen increases in their PII premium by as much as 1000%. This has resulted in many practices having to cease trading. Ultimately, the consumer is suffering as the supply of professionals in specialist areas is reduced and costs are being passed on to the consumer. This adds yet more misery to the current cost of living crisis.

It is not just in professional services that there is an insurance crisis. As of January 10th, 2022, the Government set out a new plan to protect leaseholders from having to pay for unsafe



CREDIT UMIT YILDIRIM

cladding. Unfortunately, there is no such protection for other professional services and their regulatory required insurance. The Housing Secretary, Michael Gove, recently described the insurance market as 'failing' due to escalating increases, some of more than 1000%, including long leaseholders as a result of Grenfell.

Reasons cited for this dramatic premium increase include loss of profitability by insurance companies, decreased supply of providers within the market, future uncertainty and higher levels of exposure. Additionally, despite premiums increasing drastically, the coverage being offered is generally restricted and reduced.

Belleveue Mortlakes Chartered Surveyors started a trade body called PIFA (Professional Indemnity Fairness Association) in an attempt to assist and provide support, particularly to small/medium-sized firms in the broader construction industries who feel under-represented. The platform allows firms and professionals, in any industry, to put forward their views and concerns via <https://thepifa.com>. These are circulated within the industry and the working committee of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors on the subject of PII, of which we have a role.

It is our view that, unless the Government intervenes soon, our worst fears will be realised. There will be an almost complete annihilation of professional small/medium-sized businesses in the construction sector, leaving larger corporations dominating the sector, as always, to the cost of the consumer.

BM

IN SUPPORT OF



NOAH'S ARK
children's hospice

HELPING CHILDREN WHO ARE SERIOUSLY
UNWELL MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY DAY

Visit noahsarkhospice.org.uk
Email careteam@noahsarkhospice.org.uk

Green fingers

Noel Park resident, local ranger and professional gardener Luke Newcombe explains what makes Haringey such a verdant borough

As a resident of Noel Park, I have lived and worked in the area for over 40 years and always enjoyed the great outdoors, visiting the various green spaces around Haringey. The park at Alexandra Palace is my favourite and I regularly take my dog for long walks up the hill.

I am the founder of GrowN22, a community-based gardening business operating in Haringey, Enfield and Islington. GrowN22 offers a vast remit of gardening, landscaping and tree surgery services, as well as carrying out urban greening interventions to create wild community gardens. Project sites include Wood Green Library gardens, Haringey Learning Partnership's wild garden, the wedding garden at George Meehan House, the Westbury Banks Nature Reserve and Haringey's first official parklet to name but a few!

These project sites are developed with the local community in mind and dotted around the N22 postcode area. The community project sites do their part in helping to combat climate change by improving the environment and area – especially considering the fact there is no garden or green space prior to intervention taking place. Notably, civil pride returns and there is an uplift in mood, with residents able to take part in all kinds of voluntary gardening tasks while also meeting other like-minded people, sharing in the fruits of their labour.

As we work together to make Haringey a cleaner and greener place to live, work and relax in, we can be confident that the “green” is being put back into Wood Green!

To find out more:
Visit growN22.com

Haringey's first 'parklet', found in Gladstone



Turning a new leaf

National charity Trees for Streets has been planting around Tottenham – and hopes to make every corner of the borough greener

BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

In July 2021, Haringey Council, in a bid to make the borough greener, joined the national tree planting scheme, Trees for Streets. Since then, the initiative has been steadily greening Haringey with the help of locals, who have been sponsoring trees either as individuals or as whole communities. The move followed the council's pledge to line all streets with trees – following a wider ‘Tree Strategy’ announced in May 2022 – in the hope of increasing total canopy cover in the borough.

Last month saw Rosebery Avenue and Shelbourne Road in Tottenham given a new lease of life when a crowdfunding campaign raised £4,500 towards the scheme, with the final trees planted on Friday, 10th February.

Mash Alam, who works at a homelessness charity and is based in Wood Green, is one



The Tottenham community comes together to plant trees on their street

individual who sponsored a tree for his local community last month.

“I just wanted to make my local community greener,” he said. Mash has been actively seeking out ways to give back and foster community connections, including paying for a Christmas tree for his local

church, St Michael's.

“I’m from a Muslim background and I’m a big believer in fostering good interfaith relations between different faith groups,” he said. “This was a church in the parish where I live, and I thought this would be a really nice gesture to benefit future generations.”

Because the area outside the church was too narrow, the tree has been planted a few steps away on a verge on Bounds Green Road. The Black Walnut is expected to grow to a staggering height of 30 metres, and can live up to 100 years – perhaps even outliving its planter.

“The whole motivation is that not only does it benefit today’s generation but future generations as well,” Mash said. “100 years from now, if the tree is there and it’s still making a difference and it’s generating nice green scenery for the community, I think that’s a really good thing.”

Simeon Linstead, project director at Trees for Streets, commented: “[The scheme] gives residents the chance to put something back, and creates a sense of ownership and connection.

“Since our launch [in Haringey] over 500 extra trees have been funded through this scheme.”

For more information:

Visit treesforstreets.org/haringey

Growing communities

Julie Brown, director of a local scheme to put money back into the pockets of farmers, explains how Haringey residents have been making agriculture greener

Did you know that when you buy fruit and veg from the supermarket, the farmers who grew it receive, on average, less than 10% of the value of that produce? According to food campaigning charity Sustain, profit margins on common foods like apples, bread and cheese can be a little as 1p.

I think we can all agree it’s outrageous that the people who grow our food are struggling to feed their families, while supermarket bosses rake in millions. Sainsbury’s chief executive Simon Roberts earned £3.8million last year, 200 times more than his lowest paid employee.

Not only is the dominant food system failing farmers, it’s failing you and me and all the creatures we share the planet with. We’re in the midst of a climate and biodiversity crisis and changing the way we grow, produce and consume food can have one of the biggest impacts when it comes to lowering emissions and improving livelihoods.

So, in 1996 I set up Growing Communities (GC), and in 2020 we partnered with Sustain to launch the Better Food Traders Network, a UK-wide network of veg box schemes dedicated to helping small-scale farmers make a living while improving access to fresh, sustainably grown fruit and veg grown as locally as possible.

To me, this is a key part of the systemic changes we seek: we have to make it possible for more organic and nature-friendly farmers to survive and thrive if we are to make our food and farming system fit for the future.

A veg bag subscription from GC helps over 30 committed, hardworking, climate-friendly farmers to make a decent living for themselves and their workers. At GC, more than 50% of your £1 is returned to the farmer. But that’s not all: pollution and emissions are reduced, wildlife is supported and members tell us they are more adventurous in the kitchen, feel healthier, more connected to the seasons and enjoy connecting with neighbours at collection points.

Yet we are facing hard times. After a rushed eviction from their packing base at Grow Tottenham, Haringey’s ‘Better Food Trader’ Crop Drop asked us to help to keep the scheme going, which of course we agreed to. We now have over 1,600 members across Hackney and Haringey standing up for better food – just by ordering a weekly bag of veggies. There are more than 250,000 people living in Haringey



Growing Communities member Mary Hogan collecting veg from Hornsey Vale Community Centre

alone. Imagine the impact we could have on farmers’ livelihoods, on biodiversity across the UK and on the wellbeing of people living in the borough if even 5% of people joined our community. Let’s face it, supermarket bosses aren’t going to redistribute their wealth of their own accord, so let’s help them along the way by supporting an alternative, healthier food system.

The story behind Tottenham's key support group Women with a Voice

A Tottenham woman who experienced a decade of domestic abuse is rallying for a change in services for victims of domestic violence in Haringey.

Natasha Johnson had reached her breaking point when she called the police to report her abusive ex-husband for the final time eleven years ago. Expecting to finally be free from her abuser, Natasha would instead be arrested and rendered homeless.

"He got his stepdaughter to lie against me," said Natasha. "I couldn't go home to my two sons."

Natasha's ex-husband manipulated police into making them believe she was the abuser, in order to take out an injunction against her. She was arrested and spent the night at Edmonton Police Station. Natasha was released the next day and sofa surfed for a while in Northumberland Park before coming across an acquaintance who let her stay in their home.

"[My ex-husband] has a history of partners leaving him and he was terrified that I was trying to do the same. He did not want that to happen," she added.

Natasha's ex-husband was financially, physically, emotionally and psychologically abusive. He would control every movement Natasha made, who she spoke to and where she could go – even isolating



Natasha Johnson said police and social services "wouldn't believe me" when she reported abuse by her ex-husband. Credit: Natasha Johnson

"He would sabotage everything I tried to do," said Natasha. "I couldn't work, study or socialise. It was crazy."

She added: "I tried to tell social services and the police many times before, but they wouldn't believe me."

When Natasha took her ex-husband to court, he "dragged it out" by refusing

to show up. "He was trying to seize this opportunity to destroy me," said Natasha. "And I was fighting to clear my name, my reputation."

Natasha eventually won the case against her ex in 2012 and was finally able to see her sons again – but the whole ordeal traumatised her.

"You worry about keeping your sanity intact. You have to struggle to find yourself, to heal," she said.

Following this, Natasha started attending services and women's groups for domestic violence and found them to be re-traumatising and insensitive. She felt they left women feeling worse than when they came.

"I just wanted to go to a positive place where women can do wellbeing activities and leave feeling empowered."

So, in 2013, Natasha set up her own weekly peer-to-peer support group for women, Women with a Voice (WWAV). WWAV is volunteer-led and supports women who are victims of domestic violence and abuse, female genital mutilation, modern-day slavery and other sexual offences.

It provides counselling such as art therapy, group outings and similar wellbeing activities to help women forge

links, rebuild and heal. WWAV also helps women who struggle with food insecurity by providing fifty food parcels each week and hosting a monthly 'multicultural kitchen and cafe' for women to share cooking skills and tips on how to further get help. WWAV is now based at the Eric Allen Community Centre in Northumberland Park.

Since founding WWAV, Natasha discovered that there is a lack of cultural-specific support for victims of domestic violence, explaining that religion and cultural customs often make it harder for women to leave their abusers. She also noted that this is worsened by lengthy referral times, exclusive criteria for services, and authorities which, she claimed, "look down on you".

"The shame our communities put on domestic violence survivors is rife," said Natasha.

Natasha said that she wants to see a change in domestic violence services especially for children who can become abusers themselves.

She concluded: "There needs to be early intervention with an emphasis on a holistic approach so that victims can see a way out."

Advertisement

Upcoming

Business Events

For start-ups and SME's

HBSP

HARINGEY BUSINESS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

March 1

How to find your first 100 paying customers and keep them coming back

6pm-7pm | Wood Green

March 30

Free and low-cost ways to find new clients and customers

6pm-7pm | Wood Green

April 5

How to make your first £1000 from new business

6pm-7pm | Wood Green

April 12

6-Week Programme: Turn your ideas into a business in 6-weeks (Ends May 17)

7pm-8pm | Online Programme

May 16

Business networking for small to medium sized businesses in Haringey

4pm-6pm | Tottenham

September 20

Business networking for industrial businesses in Haringey

4pm-6pm | Tottenham

November 14

Business networking for industrial businesses in Haringey

4pm-6pm | Tottenham

All workshops are free

Scan to register now >

Haringey LONDON

To find out more about Haringey's business support programme visit: www.haringey.gov.uk/HBSP

Road less travelled

Roy Williams OBE will be bringing his latest play, *All Roads*, to the Bernie Grant Arts Centre this month – we spoke to him ahead of the show

While Roy Williams OBE has had his plays performed in some of the most highly-reputed venues in the UK – from the Royal Court Theatre to the National Theatre – what he is most passionate about is bringing his work to smaller, less traditional venues, reaching out to new audiences and “taking the play to them”.

Roy’s latest play, *All Roads*, is ready to set out on a four-week tour and do exactly that. The project is a partnership between Attic Theatre and Tramshed aiming to seek out fresh audiences around London, fostering a love of theatre in the next generation.

This new work itself is about the youngest generation, Roy said, explaining his starting point was “me acknowledging myself getting older, realising so much has been spoken and written about the Windrush generation, which my parents were a part of. They came here and had their children, the second generation, which I’m a part of. That’s been kind of running around my head for several years, brought on by the fact of me losing both my parents. I slowly realised we’re the old farts now.”

He adds: “It got me asking questions about the next generation, the third generation: who are they? And how British do they feel, as well as being Black? How do they view us as well? Are they frustrated with us, as we were frustrated with our parents?”

All Roads is a fraught love story between two Black teenagers living today, dealing with the fallout of tragedy. Roy said: “They’re fighting against a lot of stereotypes that have been imposed on them by other people, Black and white.”

The BAFTA and Olivier Award-nominee has written plays both contemporary and historical, allegorical and realist. “The difficult thing for me is I’m writing about young people who are considerably younger than myself now. I just wanted to get it right – get their lingo right, their attitude.

“One can’t be 100% authentic. That’s impossible, but you will at least try to get as close as you possibly can.”

Roy’s plays, he claimed, always explore similar conversations – those of race,

Roy Williams OBE



BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

identity, nationalism and dislocation. “As long as I still feel I can tell stories within that world, I will continue to do so,” he explained. “It’s looking at the complexity of all of these themes and there’s so many. So, I think it’s a writer’s job to find those

differences, those complexities in each story that I tell, and it helps telling it from a different perspective, a different attitude.”

The play is a two-hander, meaning only two actors take on all the characters – they have to shapeshift between roles.

“*That’s a driving force in all of my work – I write what I don’t see*”

When asked whether this made it a challenge to propel the plot forward, he said: “That’s standard for any play, regardless of how many characters you have – you’ve got to keep up the momentum. I did begin, actually, with an early draft with four characters, [including] the parents of each of them. As most writers will tell you, the more drafts you do, it becomes all about discarding what characters you don’t need and bringing in what characters you do need.”

It felt important to Roy to put these characters on the stage: “I don’t think I’ve seen characters like this portrayed before, at least not to my satisfaction. I just thought, I want these characters to be heard. I’ve seen them, I’ve heard them. We haven’t seen enough of that perspective. That’s a driving force in all of my work – I write what I don’t see.”

As discussion around ‘levelling up’ the arts and reaching audiences less likely to access theatres has increased, bringing *All Roads* to the Bernie Grant Arts Centre felt like the right fit. “I knew instinctively the kind of audience we would attract would be exactly what we’re looking for with this play,” Roy said. “That’s the vision: to inspire another generation to love theatre. That’s what I wanted to write a play for in the first place.

“Theatre is not about the West End, it’s not about the National Theatre or the Royal Court, even though they are strong, important venues.

“We’re in for a rough time and so many theatres I know and respect have had their funding completely cut. For some frustrating reason, new writing always seems to be the first to bear the brunt of it. I’ve never understood why because everything begins with the written word, everything begins with a new play.”

Despite having made home for his work on screen and on radio, Roy insisted he owed his career to the stage: “I wouldn’t be here talking to you if it wasn’t for theatre. It’s the only form I would say where the writer will have a feeling of being the most important person. In theatre it’s all about serving whatever the writer has written.”

‘All Roads’ runs at the Bernie Grant Arts Centre from Thursday, 30th March – Saturday, 1st April

Sign up to the HCP newsletter

We have launched a weekly newsletter to keep you up-to-date with the latest news, features, and comment found on the HCP website: bit.ly/3nUI9fS



Five minutes with Geanina and George

The former *Bake Off* stars and owners of Tottenham's Prestige Patisserie reveal their favourite Haringey haunts

9

HCP
March
2023

Nº 17

Home is...
Tottenham!

Where do you go for a good time?
We are very lucky to have so many brilliant pubs in Tottenham. We love them all, but if we had to pick: Bluecoats for burger and beers, The High Cross for fish, chips and beers, and True Craft for pizza. We also love San Marco in Bruce Grove!

Why do you love Haringey?
The sense of community is huge, and it brings together such a diverse group of people from different walks of life.

Where do you go for a moment of quiet?
Our favourite place to escape is the Tottenham canals and wetlands. Doesn't even feel like the city when you're there sometimes!

If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?
Both of us would answer the same – it has to be a good steak!

Where do you get your culture fix?
We usually love the cinema, but since we're often so busy and tired



Geanina and George starred on 'Bake Off: The Professionals' in 2021

from work, we sort of make our own movie nights at home!

What is the first thing you learned to bake?
Cheese puffs! They are buttery, flaky, cheesy, salty and addictive.

What's your one rule for life/motto?
Follow your dreams and never give up.

Best views in the borough?
Alexandra Palace.

What should *HCP* readers be watching/reading/listening to right now?
Watch *Bake Off the Professionals* 2021 to see us, of course! But we also recommend some shows on Netflix about the beauty of Romania, our home country. It's a big inspiration behind what we make at the patisserie and where our love for food began.

What are you working on at the moment?
We have lots of new recipes in development, as well as plans for classes to share our passion for baking. Watch this space for more!

I
N
T
E
R
V
I
E
W

Advertisement



168-170 CHURCH ROAD N17 8AS
WWW.ANTWERPARMS.CO.UK

BEER FESTIVAL

7 APRIL - 10 APRIL 2023

OVER 20 REAL ALES CIDERS AND PERRIES inc
REDEMPTION. GOODNESS AND OTHER LONDON BREWERS.
PLUS GOOD FOOD AND MUSIC

DISCOUNT FOR CAMRA MEMBERS

ADVERTISE WITH US

Our newspapers are a growing and valued part of the local community – loved by readers who want to read about what matters to them. Be part of that and advertise with us!

Our publications *Enfield Dispatch*, *Waltham Forest Echo*, *Haringey Community Press*, and *EC1 Echo* cover a wide area of North London and part of The City.

We distribute 52,500 free copies to readers via local newsstands, community venues, and door-to-door, with a total estimated readership of 157,500 people.

Call **Klaudia** 07732 000 430
Email klaudia@socialspider.com

Two literary triumphs for Muswell Hill

Muswell Press and The Children's Bookshop have been selected as finalists for two prestigious prizes in the publishing industry

Two bookish businesses in Muswell Hill have been shortlisted for coveted literary awards.

On Wednesday, 15th February, it was announced that Muswell Press was shortlisted for 'Small Press of the Year'. Hot on its heels, The Children's Bookshop was shortlisted for 'Independent Bookshop of the Year' on Friday, 17th February.

Both are part of The British Book Awards 2023 – otherwise known as 'The Nibbies' – which have been run by book industry trade publication *The Bookseller* since 1990. The awards aim to celebrate those responsible both for creating the year's tomes and putting books into the hands of readers.

Muswell Press was founded in 2017 by Sarah and Kate Beal and publishes contemporary fiction, crime, biography and travel – with a special focus on queer fiction. The independent publisher has been shortlisted for the same award three years running.

It is on a shortlist of nine London-based finalists – out of a UK-wide total of 48 – competing against Fitzcarraldo Editions, Unbound, Cipher Press and more for a Nibbie. London, as in previous years, remains dominant in this category, with more finalists than other UK regions.

Sarah, co-owner and director at Muswell Press, said: "It makes us hugely happy to be a regional finalist. We've been publishing books for six years, just two of us working together. It can be tough being a small publisher, particularly in the last few years, with costs rising and incomes diminishing, but we love what we do, and we are hugely proud of our authors and the list we have grown encompassing LGBTQI+, fiction, thrillers, travel and biography.



The Children's Bookshop

The competition is hot but we are honoured to be amongst so many brilliant fellow indies – we wish them all the best of luck."

Philip Jones, editor of *The Bookseller* and chair of the judges for The British Book Awards, said: "Whether they were staking their claim to the mainstream or mining their niches, these small press finalists responded magnificently to this year's challenges, reporting another year of exceptional sales and profit growth in the face of Brexit and escalating running costs. These publishers are reaping the rewards from dedicated and often inspirational publishing, hands-on author care and community building, showing that even in a toughened climate, grassroots book-making is alive and well."

Meanwhile, The Children's Bookshop, a family-owned business founded in 1974, is contending against Islington's BookBar, Haggerston's Burley Fisher Books and Brixton's Round Table Books.

Sanchita Basu De Sarkar, owner of The Children's Bookshop, said: "We have an incredibly knowledgeable and creative staff – between us we read all the thousands of books we stock – and we aim to impart joy and a love of reading in every child we meet. Over the last year, we've hosted huge events with Julia Donaldson, Cressida Cowell, Oliver Jeffers and Michael Rosen. We've visited schools all over London with book fairs, author events, library visits, and teacher

training sessions. Our book clubs are sell-out events (the graphic novel club is our most hotly-anticipated session), and our weekly storytimes for little ones are oodles of interactive fun.

"We've championed new authors, had gallery artists paint our windows, sent books all around the world... and we've cherished every minute of it. Being shortlisted is really a huge thank you back to the local community and families and teachers who support us everyday!"

Tom Tivnan, *The Bookseller* managing editor and chair of the Independent Bookshop of the Year judges, said: "If there is one thing that has been driven home by these finalists it is that independent bookshops have been one of the winners of the pandemic. Indies have come through what could have been a hugely devastating time for the sector in their strongest position in decades. We have seen this generally in the increased numbers of indies throughout the UK and Ireland. But we also see it more specifically in these finalists with the shops' innovation, entrepreneurship and creativity—all done in the service of local communities."

Regional winners for the small press category will be announced on 15th March, with regional winners for independent bookshop announced on the 16th. The British Book Awards ceremony will take place on Monday, 15th May at Grosvenor House in London.

Sanchita Basu de Sarkar
Credit Barb Turk



Sarah and Kate Beal at Muswell Press
Credit Muswell Press



LISTINGS

Gig

Cami Layé Okún powered by FELT Soundsystem
Saturday, 18th March, 9pm–3am
The Post Bar, 316 High Rd N15 4BP

Dive into Latin, afro-Caribbean, disco, cumbia and all genres beyond at Tottenham's The Post Bar, presented by Latinx events-organiser Movimientos. Cuban DJ and NTS radio host Cami Layé Okún will be spinning vinyl, joined by guests Brazilian DJ GeraH, Honest Jon's Records' Ritmo del Barrio, Cal Jader and Marta Chonga. Wrapping up at 3am, this gig is perfect for dancing the weekend away.

Early bird price £9.20
Visit ra.co/events/1652560#tickets

Workshop

LegalAliens Theatre
Throughout March
The Engine Room, Unit A, Eagle Heights, Lebus St N17 9FU

Weekly theatre workshops for migrants, refugees and anyone with English as a second language will continue on Mondays until mid-July 2023. The workshops aim to help attendees explore their creativity and express themselves, while also practising and building confidence speaking English as a second language. Members of the local community who cannot afford acting classes are also welcomed.

Free
Visit legalalienstheatre.com/events/free-classes-for-migrants-and-refugees

Concert

Voxcetera with Angela Henckel
Saturday, 25th March, 7.30pm
St Michael's Church, Highgate Village, South Grove N6 6BJ

The chamber choir Voxcetera will return to Highgate with soprano Angela Henckel in tow, boasting a fresh programme of Camille Saint-Saëns' rarely-performed 'Requiem' and four pieces by Benjamin Britten. Jane Hopkins will conduct the choir and soloist, plus Simon Hogan on organ, Rachel Wick on harp, a string ensemble and horn. A bar will be open for refreshments during the interval.

£6–£25
Visit bit.ly/3XLnhq8

Theatre

CHOOSH!
Friday, 3rd March, 7.30pm
Jacksons Lane Arts Centre, 269A Archway Road N6 5SS

The Estonian-born comedian Julia Masli brings her hit Edinburgh show to the borough this month. The show sees a hungry clown from an Eastern European village voyage to America in search of a hot dog, in what the comedian calls an 'absurd homage to migration'.

£14
Call 020 8340 5226
Email admin@jacksonslane.org.uk
Visit jacksonslane.org.uk/events/choosh/

Sport

Tottenham Judo Club
Throughout March
Tottenham Community Sports Centre, 701 High Road Tottenham N17 8AD

If you feel in need of some stress relief after the long working day, Tottenham Judo Club takes place every Thursday from 9pm until 10.30pm and is open to those of beginner or intermediate levels. In the sport, combatants aim to unbalance their opponent using holds and leverage. The first class is offered free to new attendees.

Prices vary
Call 07752 225 677
Email roland.white@blueyonder.co.uk

Comedy

Grace Campbell
Saturday, 11th March, 7pm
Alexandra Palace, Alexandra Palace Way N22 7AY

Grace Campbell, Alastair Campbell's daughter, is following her sell-out Edinburgh Fringe 2022 run with a brand new UK tour, 'A Show About Me(n)'. The comedian has turned heads ever since her viral op-ed was published in 'The Guardian' and she dives even further into the subject with her latest show. 'Fiery and explicit', her new material tussles with issues of misogyny and societal expectations of women.

Standard tickets £20.20
Visit alexandrapalace.com/whats-on/grace-campbell

Film

Black Lens: International Women's Day Triple Bill
Thursday, 2nd March, 7pm
Bernie Grant Arts Centre, Town Hall Approach Rd, Tottenham Green N15 4RX

Three films from Black female or femme directors take centre stage this month at Haringey's foremost arts centre. In celebration of International Women's Day, 2022's 'Black Beauty' (about Elle Moxey's experience of teenagehood in Ohio), 'Womxn, The Nightmare of You Know Who' (Eden Tinto Collins' bold short on police aggression), and 'Shakedown' (a documentary about Los Angeles' Black lesbian strip club scene in the 2000s) will be shown. Programmer Ephraim Webber will join audiences in conversation following the screenings.

Tickets £8
Student tickets from £7
Visit bit.ly/3YZ0g4a

Market

Mum2Mum Market
Saturday, 25th March 10pm–12pm
Earlham Primary School, Earlham Grove N22 5HJ

Organised by two mothers from Tottenham, this innovative market enables local parents to trade baby and children's items, from prams and equipment to books, toys and clothes – while also getting their hands on a bargain. Previous markets have been held elsewhere in London and in the South East, Haringey's second Mum2Mum to be held later this month.

For next month's listings, email the details of your event to hcp@socialspider.com by Monday 20th March

Waltham Forest College



think
BIG

OPEN EVENT

15th March, 4pm-7pm

Join us at our Open Event!

Guided Campus Tour

Chat to Students and Staff

Interactive Taster Events

Apprenticeship Workshops

Admissions Advice and Guidance

Apply for a Course



Visit waltham.ac.uk or
scan the QR code to register.

For Derek Owusu, whose second novel *Losing the Plot* was recently longlisted for the prestigious Dylan Thomas Prize (after his first, *That Reminds Me*, won the Desmond Elliott Prize in 2020) writing is mostly about what he terms “emotional research”.

“A lot of the time it just comes down to being able to sit down with yourself, pull out an emotion and try to get it captured on the page,” Derek said. “It’s an impossible task, but the effort is what I think people feel when they’re reading.”

“I know when people hear [emotional research] it might sound strange, but researching your own emotions and the emotions of others is a lot more difficult than reading a 300-page book on a particular subject.”

The former presenter of the *Mostly Lit* podcast and editor of 2019’s *Safe: Black Men Reclaiming Space* got stuck into research on African folklore – Anansi the Spider and Brer Rabbit – and religiosity of Pentecostalism for his debut. When it comes to *Losing the Plot*, however, Derek does not shy away from the fact that it is nearly entirely fabricated – imagination was much more key to illuminating the story.

“The plan was, at the beginning, to try to honour [my mother] in some way. I wanted to maybe write her memoir or something like that, but she was just not interested at all in having her story written down. I don’t know anything about my mum, because she’s very secretive.”

“We have a lot of information about what happened in terms of Windrush and the West Africans who came over to the UK,” Derek stated. “We have information, but there’s not enough emotional charge there for me. It just feels like: ‘Okay, this is what happened, but how did these people feel?’ It is due to [our parents] not wanting to disclose any emotional information about what it was like for them back in the day, especially to their children, and it sometimes feels like they just want to forget that time of their life – and I don’t want us to forget.”

Knowing that this would never truthfully be his mother’s narrative was creatively liberating. “Essentially, it’s not my mum’s story,” Derek asserted. “What I felt responsible for was how I was rendering a female character. A lot of male writers are very bad at writing women, very clichéd, they don’t really think about it too much and they are lazy.”

The Desmond Elliott Prize is awarded in special recognition of experimental writing and a fragmentary, sparse and yet internally rich style defines Derek’s work. It is an innovative mode which the author claims is more honest and realistic than the forms we have grown used to: “What we call a traditionally written novel is completely falsified, because



Mum’s the word

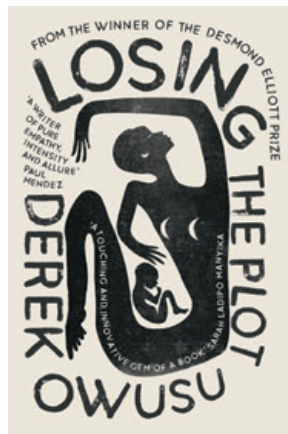
The Tottenham-hailing author Derek Owusu delves into his influences and shares his thoughts on whether the literary landscape is finally opening up for Black writers

BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

nobody tells a story in that way when you’re speaking to them,” he said. “The oral tradition has never been stretched out in that way where every single detail about what’s happening is [there]. The unimportant things are to give the semblance of reality, but, in doing that, what they do is take away because when you remember a day, you don’t

remember everything. When you think about a day, you don’t think about everything. You think about it in fragments.”

Derek added: “The reading public, as soon as they hear the word experimental, are put off because they think it means they’re going to have to work hard. When I pick up a book and it’s 200 pages and I can see there’s a lot of white space on



“*A lot of male writers are very bad at writing women*”

the pages, I get excited because I say to myself: ‘Right, this isn’t going to take me ages to read’. I think a lot of people can relate to that.”

That Reminds Me was the first book published under the Merky Books imprint – founded by Stormzy to ensure more underrepresented voices could be found on bookshop shelves. In the wake of Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, Derek became a founding member of the Black Writers’ Guild, which engaged in calling out hypocrisy in the publishing industry and systemic inequality. It’s something which is, Derek said, changing, though only slowly.

“Under close scrutiny, you have to realize that a lot of these books [by Black writers] are being published and then there’s no publicity or marketing behind them, so they just come out and disappear,” he said, adding that many who are successful tend to come from more privileged backgrounds. “Just because there are suddenly people of colour, the old mechanisms still exist for them as well.”

Though Derek said he cannot trace much of a writing community back to Tottenham, as a place it has got deep under his skin. “Broadwater Farm in Tottenham was a kind of proxy for me,” Derek explained. “It was a kind of way to connect with Ghanaian culture without actually being on the continent – so it’s very important to me and probably all of my books are going to be based in Tottenham in one way or another.”

Knowing the writer, who started out as a personal trainer, is a big Beyoncé fan, I asked him whether he was excited about her upcoming performance: “In my head, it doesn’t feel like Beyoncé is coming to Tottenham. It just feels like she’s going to Tottenham Hotspur Stadium – and then bouncing. Back in the day, there was this nightclub in Tottenham called Temple and Usher performed there. I remember the day he was going to perform, any limo that drove past on the high road or near our school, every kid would say: ‘Usher’s in that car!’” He also recalled hearing rumours about Destiny’s Child roaming Finsbury Park in search of hair-care products.

Having focused his two novels so far on characters vaguely resembling himself, then his mother, Derek will turn his gaze towards his father next. After that, he doesn’t know where his pen will take him: “When you’re really flowing, you’re really creating worlds and people and feelings and everything is just working, it does feel like how a superhero feels, like you’re doing something otherworldly.”

‘Losing the Plot’ by Derek Owusu is available now in bookshops and the winner of the Swansea University Dylan Thomas Prize will be announced on Thursday, 11th May

Spying a story

Former British Intelligence worker
Ava Glass offers a sneak peek into
her writing life



Author Ava Glass, who writes about the “hidden world of spies in London” **Credit** Jack Jewers

THE INSPIRATION FOR MY SPY NOVEL, *The Chase*, came purely from real life. In fact, it really started in 2006, when two Russian assassins dripped polonium into a pot of tea in an expensive Mayfair hotel in an elaborate plot to murder an ex-Russian spy named Alexander Litvinenko.

The plot worked. Litvinenko died, but the knock-on effects were huge. This incident could not be covered up. An attack using polonium on British soil was not something the government could pretend hadn't happened. It was brutal and clumsy, and it dragged the covert war between Russia and the West out of the shadows and into the light. For a brief moment, everyone could see that the cold war never truly ended, but raged on, furiously but quietly, just out of our view, and London was at the centre of it. This is a city of spies, a crossroads for the world, where all nations meet to betray and trick each other.

By the time the Litvinenko murder happened, I had some knowledge of this world already, as I was working then for the government in a role connected to intelligence. I wasn't a spy, but my job involved working with people who probably were. I am aware this sounds a bit vague, but in all honesty it's impossible to tell who is and isn't a spy. Nobody walks up to you and says: “Hi, I'm Frank – a spy.” They say: “I'm Tom from logistics.” Everything about them will say this is true – but it isn't.

Everyone I met had a job, none of those

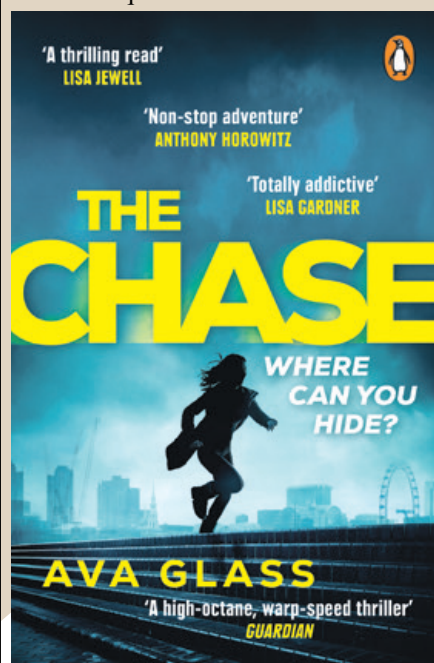
jobs was “spy” and yet a significant portion of them were. It was like a hall of mirrors. I suppose this is why I didn't know Eve was a spy when I met her. Back then, I'd only just started working in the office and my security clearance still hadn't come through. In this setting, Eve's sudden interest in me was a relief. She was friendly and chatty, about 28 years old, with wavy blonde hair and an open smile. She said she worked in the legal department and she asked a lot of questions about my family and my background, my relatives in the US, and how I ended up working for the government after a career as a journalist.

“Your brother was in the military? How interesting. When was that? Was anyone else in your family in the army?”

She had a knack for asking the kinds of questions that threw me slightly off balance, and meant I was always, somehow, explaining myself. But she was charming and funny, and for several weeks we were office pals, grabbing coffee or lunch. Until one day, without warning, she disappeared. Her name evaporated from the office email system. It was as if she'd never existed.

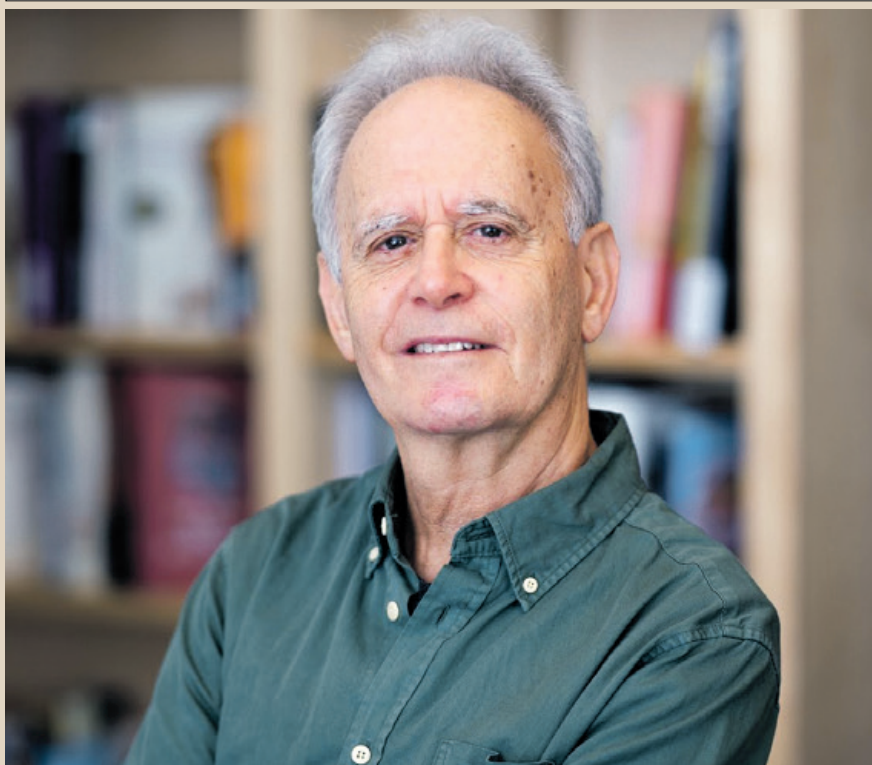
That same week, I received my security clearance. No-one ever acknowledged that Eve was investigating me but I firmly believe she was a spy. I felt like an idiot. How could I not see it? But in my defence, I'd never met anyone who lied so fluidly.

When I sat down to write a novel about a spy rescuing the son of a Russian double-agent, it was Eve who came to my mind. I wanted to write about her world, the hidden world of spies in London. The world we know is there, but which we can never quite see.



'The Chase' is published by Penguin and available in bookshops now

“I wasn't a spy, but my job involved working with people who probably were”



Write up your street

Author Jeff Probst unveils some of the inspirations behind his latest novel, *When the Moon was White*

I HAVE ALWAYS WRITTEN, BEGINNING in California, where I'm from – but living in Hornsey for the past 30 years has inspired my writing in new ways.

When my wife, from South Africa, and I moved to our flat in Hornsey, I was teaching English at a Romford secondary school, but I managed to find time to finish my first novel, *Bachelor Butterflies*, which I'd begun while living in Johannesburg. In Hornsey, I found something which I hadn't had before – a quiet study: a warm, wordy encampment in which to write.

After leaving the Romford school, I wrote a memoir about my decade there, *Teaching Shakespeare to Hairdressers: An American Teacher in London*. I've written memoirs about other periods in my life, and I wanted to write this one about teaching, which had been a baptism of fire for me when I'd moved to the UK.

At times I couldn't understand the pupils' East End accents, and they made fun of my American accent. Sometimes they made more than fun of it – I once found a note on my desk that said, “Kill the Kermit Yank”. But there were also many bright moments, like the time I muttered to a class, “I'm an idiot,” when I twisted the wrong way and strained my back, and a twelve-year-old girl in the front row said, softly, “You're not an idiot”.

I felt lucky to live in this unique corner of Hornsey, at the bottom of Alexandra Palace, where there are trees lining the streets, a hill to walk up and nearby bits of forest. I became a road rep for our residents' association. I began posting my poems about the area on our notice

board and in Priory Common Orchard, and I immersed myself in the local community. I also found there were Hornsey publications to write for, and I wrote about the ‘angel of plenty’, who stands atop Alexandra Palace.

For about a year, I wrote a column for the *Ham and High Broadway*, ‘Regards from Broadway’, interviewing all manner of locals, from our postman to community activists, from the nearby shop owners to the PC who walked our beat. As the PC said: “Being a community policeman you're approachable. I would like to think that will continue for a long time hence”.

My second novel, *When the Moon was White*, was published late last year. Living in Hornsey and walking around my neighbourhood for years provided scenes for my novel, people to base some characters on, and many different views of the moon, which was sometimes glacially sharp and other times lazily shrouded.

My Hornsey journalism also contributed in a large way to my novel. One of my *Ham and High* articles, ‘Small fries make a big impact’,

was about our local campaign that stopped McDonald's from building a drive-through with their golden arches at the entrance to Alexandra Park that backs on to our homes. I'm sure that event contributed to my invention of a fictional town for my novel, a small town in a beautiful spot where there is a sense of community, but the town – and the moon – become targets for an outsider's desire for “progress”.

For further information:
Visit jeffprobst.co.uk

Driving aid to Ukraine

Local resident Amanda McGrath discusses the essential voluntary work she does in delivering supplies to Ukraine

In August 2022, I volunteered to help the not-for-profit organisation Driving Aid to Ukraine, under the guidance of Haringey resident Michael Byrne. He set up the group after he witnessed several UK-based voluntary organisations struggling to get aid donated to Ukrainian refugee camps.

In lockdown, I had the opportunity to do some volunteering and afterwards joined Driving Aid to Ukraine as it felt very close to my heart; my mother was a refugee from Gdansk (now Poland) before the Second World War and I was aware of how this could really be any of us, at any time.

The aim is to raise funds for transportation fuel and remain agile and responsive – our long-term objective is to have two regular deliveries a month. In winter, the need is ever more urgent – hopefully this will lead to the rebuilding of Ukraine in the years to come.

As a logistics organisation, we get specific requests from inside Ukraine, working with our partners on the ground and delivering into areas where help is needed; the front line, to civilians

that can't easily be reached, and into refugee centres. A lot of the time the larger charities are struggling to do this, and this is what makes our organisation unique and personal. We are on a smaller scale, not only putting people together who are collecting goods, but enabling access to places which are difficult to reach by planning transportation. The organisation of this is

extremely challenging but we have succeeded where other charities have often failed.

We are developing a UK, Polish and Ukrainian network of trusted partners (some of whom are charities), bringing appropriate advisors on board as well as building local media support. Lacking experience in this field, I have found it both challenging and rewarding but am so pleased to have begun this journey.

Driving Aid to Ukraine is run by volunteers who are based in Haringey and Barnet, and we have received many donations from residents in both boroughs. All our time is unpaid and donations directly cover transport costs. We are also trialling an exciting new idea: sponsoring a pallet, whereby £100 will pay for one UK pallet to take up to one tonne of donations. We need to put 24 UK pallets onto an articulated truck to achieve that price.

Driving Aid to Ukraine is a small but growing organisation and we will be around for as long as we are needed.

For more information:
Visit drivingaidtoulkraine.org



Amanda McGrath, volunteer at Driving Aid to Ukraine

It felt very close to my heart – my mother was a refugee from Gdansk

C
O
M
M
E
N
T

Omar Alleyne-Lawler, communications manager at Hope in Haringey



Students face a cold welcome at home

Omar Alleyne-Lawler, communications manager at youth charity Hope in Haringey, on how the cost-of-living crisis is affecting young people

Dubbed a “cozzie livs” by some young people, our current cost-of-living crisis is being felt by every member of the family.

It's hard to put into words just how difficult this time of financial turbulence is for so many people in Haringey. In previous years, the long gap between the December and January payday meant it was normal for the start of a new year to feel like a squeeze. It usually means that as we get closer to the end of the month, spirits start to lift as households see a light at the end of their tunnel. This year, however, that tunnel has seemed longer than most with the fallout of financial hardship manifesting in unexpected ways – especially among our younger members of society.

For instance, I recently heard of a playground football match where one team had players who had heating on at home facing off against a team where the heating was off. Whilst I'm glad to see students are finding ways to make bonds in the coldest of

circumstances, I'm saddened to hear the 'heating off' team had enough players to field a competitive squad.

But heating isn't the only way students are separating themselves out against one another. With utility bills at an all-time high, families are listening to Martin Lewis' money saving advice and electing to turn the electricity off to fight skyrocketing bills. Facing a cold and dark welcome at home, one local teacher I spoke to wondered if some students are deliberately misbehaving so they can stay warm at school by sticking around in detention.

Such a possibility is worrying, which is why we at Hope in Haringey have been proactive in offering more after-school provisions than in previous years. Now offering after-school

Students are deliberately misbehaving so they can stay warm at school

opportunities in art, media, and a variety of sports, we're hoping students who want to stay at school have a healthy way of seeing that want realised.

However, not all young people are reacting to the discomfort at home in the same way. A 2007 Duke University study shows that when the household is financially anxious, children sometimes take on that anxiety and try – or are forced – to help. This is something we're aware of in our mentoring team as we connect 16–24-year-olds with professionals in the fields they wish to work in. With current anxieties around employment continuing to build, we're prepared to take on more referrals in 2023 than ever before to give people the best chance at starting their career on the right foot. For some families, this opportunity looks set to relieve the pressure going forward, but we know more solutions are needed if families are to shake off financial hardship.

For more information:
Visit hopeinharingey.com

Clean streets

Dear HCP

Tidy up Tottenham, a group of over 1,000 residents in the east of the borough, has launched a campaign expressing our dismay at the amount of littering and fly-tipping in Tottenham, and the lack of proactive action taken by senior leaders at Haringey Council to tackle its current failed strategy.

With car ownership amongst residents at only 30%, a cost-of-living crisis, and the closest available place to dispose of waste almost two miles away, we request a new cleaning plan which prioritises Tottenham residents.

We know from evidence that clean streets improve health, reduce crime, drive visitors to the area and help grow the local economy. More now needs to be done to 'tidy up Tottenham' for good.

Tidy Up Tottenham
Tottenham

No green light

Dear HCP

In January, a new national not-for-profit, Social and Environmental Justice, was launched in London. The organisation aims to take the lead on campaigning for environmental justice in the UK and is currently focused on trying to ensure that policies purporting to be 'green' do not have a disproportionate negative impact on the most disadvantaged groups.

The group includes a diverse range of people brought together by a shared concern that so-called low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) are both socially and environmentally unjust.

Whilst Haringey Council leader, Peray Ahmet, continues to suggest that most of those standing against LTNs are right-wing, climate-change-deniers, this group is anything but, with many community-minded environmental activists in its ranks and longstanding anti-pollution campaigner, David Smith (aka Little Ninja UK) giving its keynote speech.

Alexander Charalambous
Philip Lane

Fighting poverty

Dear HCP

I am writing on behalf of The Borgen Project, a not-for-profit organisation fighting to end global poverty by building nonpartisan support for life-saving initiatives.

Although the global population living in extreme poverty dropped from two billion in 1990 to 641 million in 2019, Covid-19 severely impacted millions. Unfortunately, this number rose by 75 million only in 2022.

In the face of the war in Ukraine and the increase of displaced persons worldwide, we need to do more to reduce these statistics. Considering the generous donations to foodbanks, I genuinely believe that the people of Tottenham, Hornsey and Wood Green will show solidarity with millions who struggle for life.

As a Borgen Project Ambassador, I urge readers to take time to email their MP asking for more support and funding for the Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Murathan Arslanacan
South Tottenham

Red heron

Dear HCP

During one half term, I'd take my sons to the playground daily. We noticed a man would arrive briefly each morning on a bicycle and cycle enthusiastically around the pond shouting "Henrietta" at the top of his lungs.

I would smile politely – I hoped he was OK – and that someone was looking out for him. This continued for some days. Then, on our last day, as the man completed his second circuit and "Henrietta" chorus, we saw a heron swoop down to meet the man on the bike.

Once she landed, he cracked open a little tin of sardines to her delight, and ours. In a matter of seconds she gobbled it up, took flight, and the man cycled off down the hill.

So, we came to know of 'Henrietta the Heron', who provided a delicious reminder of small surprises, and probably some form of life lesson on jumping to conclusions.

Catherine Kenyon
Finsbury Park



The Parkland Walk is an asset for the whole community

▲
A bug hotel
on the
Parkland Walk

Cathy Brennan, Labour councillor for Muswell Hill, on the future of one of Haringey's vital green spaces

The Parkland Walk is a wonderful natural asset and plays a noteworthy part in greening our borough. It is owned by Haringey Council and runs for 4.5 miles along the route of a disused railway line, from Finsbury Park to Highgate, and then, after avoiding a dangerous tunnel, picks up again to run from Cranley Gardens in Muswell Hill to the Grove in Alexandra Park. Designated as a local nature reserve, it provides a little pocket of countryside in our urban environment, frequented by joggers, dog walkers, ramblers, families and careful cyclists. The Friends of the Parkland Walk volunteers work hard alongside the council to preserve a rural feeling of undisturbed nature, spaces round pathways deliberately mimicking an untouched wilderness, so that ramblers can imagine that they are strolling through the countryside, while still in the centre of London.

The Parkland Walk local nature reserve is valued for its biodiversity, supporting a wide range of habitats and wildlife. At the northern end of Parkland Walk south, near Holmesdale Road, the Friends have constructed a wildlife trail with a natural pond, fed from rainwater collected from the roof of the helpful owner of

a neighbouring garage. Here, newts, frogs and water insects are encouraged to flourish. In this nature trail, children can explore bug hotels – carefully planned piles of wood set up as insect homes. Along the walk, there are colourful information plaques explaining the wildlife that can be nurtured. Fifty species of birds have been sighted on the walk. There is information on how to encourage hedgehogs, with suggestions to create small, ground-level holes in garden fences to enable hedgehogs to move freely. There are plaques on butterflies, bats, nettles, and more – and plans for more rainwater-fed ponds to be created. The Parkland Walk is an asset for the whole community, where children can learn about the countryside without having to travel.

In Haringey, both the council and residents highly value our green spaces. We are living in a climate emergency and we are doing all we can to combat this dire situation. In these circumstances, our natural habitat is fundamentally important to us all. By working to cherish our green spaces, we are doing more than just enhancing the landscape around us: we are safeguarding the lives of future generations and those living in the countries already ravished by climate change. I am pleased

that the council has shown its commitment to preserving our green spaces by trebling our number of expert tree officers, pledging that all new streets will be tree-lined and, by 2030, planting 10,000 more trees, working towards 30% tree canopy coverage throughout the borough, while retaining and protecting mature trees wherever possible.

Of course, we are all aware that we live in straitened times, and the council's finances must first and foremost be used to help those who are most in need of support. The council's budget is being stretched to its utmost. In this financial climate, I for one am delighted that we are managing to fund the maintenance and support of places such as this, including ensuring that the old railway bridges are safe. It is to be hoped that plans to extend green pathways to the Lea Valley in the east of the borough will come into fruition too.

To contact Cllr Brennan:
Write River Park House,
225 High Road N22 8HQ
Call 07966 525 909
Email Cathy.Brennan@haringey.gov.uk



▲
Cllr Cathy
Brennan

Send us your letters

Email HCP@socialspider.com before Monday 20th March

WE NEED YOUR HELP



WE ARE LOOKING FOR PEOPLE IN HARINGEY WHO CAN HELP SUPPORT US TO PRODUCE MORE HIGH-QUALITY LOCAL JOURNALISM IN HARINGEY COMMUNITY PRESS

- We have NO shareholders
- We have NO wealthy backers
- We are run by a small but dedicated team as part of a not-for-profit community interest company
- We hold authority to account, expose scandals, highlight inequality, promote good causes, and provide a platform for local people
- Every penny of income from HCP helps us deliver more journalism in Haringey
- The paper costs nearly £6,000 per month to produce and distribute, but monthly income is under £4,000 currently
- We currently have 100 supporters who contribute around 11% of our income, but we need more!

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

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

OUR CURRENT MEMBERS

Lynda Jessopp, Michael Buchanan, Susie Fairweather, Peter Corley, Ole Hedemann, Andrew Leimdorfer, Amanda Lillywhite, Caesar Gordon, Susan Moyse, Cherry McAskill, Ed Anderton, Karin Lock, Sarah Moore, Robert Lindsay-Smith, Mark Adams, Neil & Julie Le Milliere, Emily Darko, Quentin Given, Adzowa Kwabla-Oklikah, Ann Walsh, Harshavardhan Bhat, Diana Shelley, Emmie Robson, Nasser Baston, Jean Gray, Rennah Satsuki Mills, Mick Egan, Adam Saltiel, Christina Egan, Joe Culleton, Peter Richards, Joe Reeve, Alyson Bradley, A Fairer Chance CIC, Fiona Brindle, Lila Wisbeach, Ben Rider, Carsten Juang, Juliane Heider, Niv Hachlili, Neville Collins, Sally Sturgeon, Narmada Thiranagama, Ruth Valentine, Matthew Dickinson, Dexter Coles, Livingston Gilchrist, David Kitchen, Daniel Becker, John Power, Laura Dawson, Lewis Nebel, Annabel Gregory, Brian Cathcart, Tom Gwilliam, Trea Clenaghan, Nicholas da Costa, Anton Root, Michael Bimmler, Taylor Burge-Paxson, George Knock, Theresa Kemp, Aryan Tehrani, Justin Hinchcliffe, Anne Gray, Haringey Learning Partnership, Alicia Charles, Lucy Nabijou, John Field, Manuela Michel, Ogo Okafor, Alan Bentley, Michael McDonough, Elodie Sarvaiya, Jessica Owens, Alicia Pivaro, Amelie Noack, Clare Davies, Catharine Perry, Suellen Edgar, Jason Sarris, Martin Laheen, Tricia O'Dell, Candy Amsden, Daniel Henrique Alves, Michelle Howard, Joe Hart, Robin Taylor, Jamilia Wolf, Rita Gayford, Hannah Kuchler, Pamela Harling, Mike Hodges, Amit Kamal, Jonathan McKinley, Stuart Gillings, Emma Archibald and Lucie Holloway

