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Tottenham community centre faces court battle with maintenance provider

Goan Community Centre is being taken to court by the management company responsible for its building

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A Tottenham community centre struggling with disrepair is facing legal action from its maintenance provider for unpaid fees.

Goan Community Centre's chair, Candy Fernandes, explained to the Local Democracy Reporting Service that she was being taken to court by Haus Block Management over £5,000 in unpaid maintenance and legal fees.

But Candy disputes the fees, asserting the services the company had provided, such as accounting and auditing, external cleaning, management fees and landscaping, were not carried out.

She added she had not asked for them to be done and also said it was a "struggle" to get a breakdown

of the payments.

Candy spoke emotionally about the distress the legal issues had caused her, adding that her husband who had helped her run the centre had recently passed away.

Gareth Martin, managing director at Haus, acknowledged the dispute over the estate charges had been "going on for a long time" and said: "The simple fact is that the owner of the community centre must contribute to the upkeep of the communal estate in which it is situated. This is set out in the lease for the property, which she has entered into.

"It's much the same as the obligation of a flat owner, in a block of flats, to contribute to the upkeep of the building by contributing to a service charge."

Gareth added the organisation hadn't been fully clear on the reasons behind Candy's position, emphasising communication between the two parties was distant and difficult, saying there was no "indication" from her that "work had not taken place".

Candy explained the history of the centre, which opened 23 years

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Local news that matters to you

1st March



Waning
Gibbous
72%/0.51

31st March



Waning
Gibbous
67%/0.52

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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ago in a one-storey portable building, originally on a disused site in Keston Road, West Green.

The activities it offered ranged from a toy library to stage plays, with visitors varying in age from children to students and adults.

However, in 2017 the land was sold by Haringey Council to make way for a residential development and the centre was moved to nearby Apple Tree Road, a two-minute walk away.

Issues soon began as the centre, now on the second storey of a play-group building, proved difficult to access. The flight of stairs to get to the centre are troublesome for elderly visitors, according to Candy, adding the single lift the building provides breaks down often.

As a consequence, attendance from older users has dwindled and activities held especially for them such as the lunch club have

been halted.

Candy said she had feared this would happen when first moving in but said the council assured her the lift wouldn't break down.

Recounting one incident, she said: "One day the room [centre] was hired for a wedding and the groom and the father-in-law got stuck in the lift. I thought I was going to die that day, I couldn't face the world."

"One day the centre was hired for a wedding and the groom and the father-in-law got stuck in the lift"

"Luckily I phoned the emergency services and they came and managed to get them out after one hour."

The room the centre uses now is smaller than the original one, according to Candy, adding the only maintenance work she saw carried out was "pest control".

Along with the lift issues, she said the toilets were often blocked and the handle to the entrance door often fell off in visitors' hands.

Candy said the lift was a big issue and it had "never worked" properly despite the building being new when the centre occupied it. She said she reported this problem to Haus but had been told it wasn't their responsibility.

She also reported it to the coun-

no other option here.

"If Candy is prepared to engage with us properly we are happy to try and work through the problem, as we have been from the start."

In response to enquiries, Ruth Gordon, cabinet member for house-building, placemaking and local economy, said: "The lease agreement for the site is a commercial tenancy. The tenant is responsible for complying with their obligations under the lease arrangement, including items such as a lift and keeping it in good working order. We have been consistent on this point in previous communications with them."

"We have provided support to the group, including advice on letting out the space so they can maximise income to help pay for the repairs. We will continue to encourage the group to collaborate with council services and officers will visit to discuss their responsibilities for the building."



An image of Lordship Recreation Ground taken using infrared. 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

EDITOR'S LETTER

Hello and welcome to issue 29. In this edition, we've been incredibly lucky to have been able to share otherwise uncovered stories from local residents in their own words, including, on page 4, the first-hand account of Crouch End resident Kim Valdez, 78, on her experience of being

arrested for a Just Stop Oil protest. On pages 8–9, local writer Lara Bryant delves into the life of Tottenham-based artist Beatrice Offor ahead of Women's History Month. We also hear from the UK's foremost Italian radio station on page 13, which celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. We're always keen

to hear your ideas for stories and work with you on contributions, from flash fiction to first-hand stories about your experiences – email us at hcp@socialspider.com.

You're probably aware that the climate for journalism both on a local, national and international scale is becoming increasingly worrying. Over the past few months, we have been deeply saddened to hear of the publication closures and

rounds of redundancies journalists in the UK and abroad have been faced with. The need for independent journalism is greater than ever and we rely on your support. If you are able, please consider making a one-off donation through our website (haringeycommunitypress.co.uk) or becoming a supporter. Your support is what makes it possible for our work to continue.

Enjoy the issue!

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A Haringey Just Stop Oil member on their experience of going on trial for protesting

▲
Kim Valdez
with her room
installation
'The Great Wave
of Plastic'

Why do hundreds of ordinary people risk arrest, fines, and imprisonment by slow marching with Just Stop Oil?

The answer is because we are desperate – and so we should be! As I write, the Labour Party has joined the Tories in downgrading its policies on climate change. Just as the world records an annual temperature of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and we are already seeing the deaths and instability caused by floods, droughts, fires, and famines, our politicians are closing the door on hope.

I am a Crouch End artist and a founder of the Crouch End Open Studios. Over the years I have made a lot of art about environmental issues, climate change, protest and war. In October last year, I had a ceramic work about the Greenham Common protests exhibited at the Barbican Art Gallery in the exhibition *Re/Sisters: A Lens on Gender and Ecology*. After that, I felt I had to 'put my money where my mouth was', so I went along to Trafalgar Square and joined others in a Just Stop Oil protest march down Whitehall.

It's not every day you find yourself alone slow-marching through central London, the last one walking because all the others have been arrested. I am white, middle class, and too old to worry about my career. Many of the younger

Kim Valdez is an artist and activist from Crouch End who was acquitted in court last month

marchers had been arrested on other occasions and were putting their future and present careers at risk. We owe them thanks and great respect.

We were all driven off to various police stations. As we swept down Piccadilly past the Marina Abramovich exhibition at the Royal Academy, I laughed at the thought that in the last hour I had become a performance artist! How great would it be if all the Royal academicians and artists of the next summer exhibition were to turn out for a slow march from Piccadilly Circus to Hyde Park! Do we have any RAs in Haringey?

As we saw on Remembrance Day, the government is set on preventing protests of all kinds, and under their new laws we are

losing all our hard won civil rights. Currently there is a defence for some actions based on freedom of expression and freedom of assembly articles set out by the European Court of Human Rights, but I have read that the government is planning yet more serious restrictions and these new measures will be introduced as amendments at the report stage of the Criminal Justice Bill in the House of Commons. Instead of recognising climate change as a driver of migration and growing inequality, politicians spend their time and our money on repressive and retrograde new laws.

Just Stop Oil protesters are ordinary people from all ages and all backgrounds. If taken to court they face fines or imprisonment.



Kim Valdez' painting of the mirror in a police cell

They usually have to 'self-represent', since the starting price for a solicitor is around £1,500. Haringey resident Marcus Decker is still in jail after receiving a 31-month prison sentence for his environmental protest in 2022.

With the help of more experienced protesters, I survived a crash course in arrest and prosecution. I found out the police routinely bail you in the small hours when there is no transport home. The magistrates courts I visited were quite modern buildings operating an archaic and underfunded legal system. The courts are not geared towards 'self reppers'. The Crown Prosecution Service is chaotic – they won't or can't communicate with 'self reppers' by email and so deadlines are routinely missed and evidence is sent by post to defendants. Video evidence arrives on a CD that no one with a modern computer can read.

The good news is that many protesters have been acquitted or have had their cases dropped for a variety of mostly mysterious reasons that might only be understood if one had a solicitor. The bad news is that we are up against a group seduced by the powerful lobbying of 'big oil' and politicians who are not interested in a future beyond election day.

I'm back now in my 'normal life' but I wonder how much longer we will experience life as 'normal'.

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Credit Stephen Furner

Council told to pay thousands to family stuck living in hotels for over four months

Family with two autistic children forced to stay in five hotels over 18 weeks after being evicted and made homeless

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A watchdog has ordered Haringey Council to pay a family nearly £5,000 following a “failure” to provide suitable temporary accommodation. A report by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman found the council was at “fault” over its handling of the family’s stay in temporary accommodation. The family comprises two adults and three children, a son in year seven during the time of the complaint, and a daughter and son who are autistic and non-verbal. The council was unable to find alternative temporary housing for the family after their landlord evicted them. The family were instead placed in emergency bed and breakfast (B&B) accommodation for four months, with the council saying it was down to the “significant shortage of available accommodation” at the time. Following an investigation, the ombudsman recommended the council apologise to the family and pay them £4,600. In response to the report, Sarah

Williams, cabinet member for housing services, private renters and planning, said: “We will absolutely learn lessons from the Local Government Ombudsman’s findings and recommendations and have apologised to the family for the mistakes made. “Whilst we appreciate that hotel accommodation is not ideal, at the time the family became homeless there was no suitable fixed, self-contained accommodation available. “We moved as quickly as possible to secure settled accommodation, which I hope the family is happy with.” B&Bs are any type of temporary accommodation where there are no cooking facilities or shared cooking or washing facilities – and in most cases means living in cheap hotels. The ombudsman’s report noted – referring to the government homeless guidance for local authorities – that “wherever possible, the use of B&B accommodation should be avoided”. The report stated this accommodation could be “particularly detrimental to the health and development of children” and was “not suitable for families to occupy”. This accommodation should be used for families “as a last resort” and then “only for a maximum of six weeks”. The family were placed in B&B accommodation for 18 weeks between early April and August 2023, which represented a “service failure” by the council. The family moved between five different branches of one hotel chain,

representing seven moves during the time period, averaging nearly one move every two weeks. One hotel the family was placed in was outside the borough containing the younger son’s school. The child – referred to anonymously as Y – had an education, health and care plan (EHCP) and council policy states “priority” should be given to provide temporary accommodation “within the borough where an applicant’s children have special education needs and attend a school”. The ombudsman noted this along with “instability” caused by the regular moves placed the family “at a particular disadvantage”. The lack of “sufficient regard” to perform its “duty under the Equality Act to prevent indirect discrimination” to the two autistic children was also classed as a failing. The family eventually moved into suitable private sector accommodation in early August 2023. The report noted the council was taking “positive steps” to end its reliance on B&B accommodation using its “action plan”. Cllr Williams added: “There is a chronic shortage of family-sized accommodation in the borough and last year alone we received 4,400 homelessness applications, one of the highest in London. “That’s why we have an extensive plan in place to help us address the increases in demand and reductions in supply, so we rely less on hotel accommodation.”

“We [...] have apologised to the family for the mistakes made”

Haringey named ‘worst’ local area for low-paid jobs in UK

BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

Haringey has been named the ‘worst’ local authority for the proportion of low-paid jobs. A new analysis by Citizens UK found that one-in-three jobs (32.7%) pay below the real living wage in Haringey. The analysis also showed that the top five local authorities with the highest proportion of low-paid jobs are in London – despite the higher costs of living in the capital. Currently, the real living wage is set at £12 in the UK and £13.15 in London. After Haringey, Brent (29.5%), Waltham Forest (28.8%), Bexley (28.5%) and Redbridge (28.2%) had the highest proportion of low-paid jobs. Local authorities in outer London account for twelve of the top 25 areas with the highest proportion of low-paid jobs. Overall, 13.3% of jobs in London pay less than the real living wage – 574,000 jobs in total. The findings also showed that one-in-eight UK jobs is paid below the real living wage. The data shared last month also coincided with news that the UK is officially entering a recession. The analysis has come as part of the Making London a Living Wage City project, led by Citizens UK and the Living Wage Foundation – campaigning against in-work poverty.

“It is a matter of shame that London, one of the world’s greatest cities, has the top five local authorities in the country with the highest proportion of low paid jobs”

Revd Dr Simon Woodman, Bloomsbury Central Baptist Church and Citizens UK leader, said: “All of us who live in London will know first-hand how the cost of living has risen in recent times, but those who also live with low pay are bearing the personal cost far more than others. It is a matter of shame that London, one of the world’s greatest cities, has the top five local authorities in the country with the highest proportion of low paid jobs: nearly a third of people in these areas are living on the edge of poverty. It’s time to change this, and employers can act decisively by leading the way in becoming accredited as Living Wage employers, as we work together towards making London a living wage city and banish the scourge of low pay to the pages of history.” Gina Rodriguez, Citizens UK leader, said: “With the cost-of-living crisis, too many low-paid workers are worrying about whether they can afford to turn the heating on during winter or if they’ll be able to afford groceries. This shouldn’t happen in one of the richest cities in the world.”

CROUCH END

Council set to plant Priory Park hedge 'replacement' following spat over its removal

A vigil was held for the hedge by the local community last month

BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

HARINGEY COUNCIL HAS promised to replant a 40 metre hedge following a disagreement over its removal last month.

The Priory Park hedge dividing the bowling green from the west tennis courts was removed to make way for floodlights to be installed, as part of a £446,782 tennis court refurbishment.

However, a disagreement arose between the council and the local friends group after the council claimed that it had gained their support for the removal of the hedge. A sign was put up stating that there had been full engagement with the Friends of Priory Park (FoPP).

A vigil for the leylandii hedge was held by Extinction Rebellion Muswell Hill last month.

Alice Tringham, chair of the FoPP, said: "The removal of the hedge was not required to meet a request of

the friends' group [...]

"Free un-gated access to the junior courts was part of Haringey's commonplace and this was a shared vision of FoPP but we never insisted to the point of removing the entire hedge."

The group added that they had agreed to the removal of 5m of inner tree line to allow access into the courts.

Alice said: "The only comment we made regarding the leylandii trees was that if they needed to be removed Haringey should consult with the



The hedge after it was destroyed
Credit Jane Leggett

local community before acting.

"We were then excluded from the engagement and decision making process."

A 'replacement' hedge is now set to be planted, with a native species selected and FoPP to be in charge of maintenance.

A Haringey Council spokesperson said: "This is important work being undertaken by the council to improve accessibility [...]. It complements the major refurbishment of the tennis courts at the park, which will mean this valuable asset can be enjoyed by the local community for years to come.

"The new native hedge that we will be planting with the friends will increase biodiversity in the park.

"The plans for the tennis courts have been discussed at length with the friends, who attended several site visits with councillors and officers at which the works were thoroughly explained."

HIGHGATE

Anger over plan to build on 'beautiful copse' near Parkland Walk

Residents say there is a 40-year history of planning applications being turned down for the site

RESIDENTS ARE BATTLING TO save a "beautiful copse" near the Parkland Walk from a proposed housing development.

Architect Didier Ryan and photographer Candice Lake have applied to build a three-bedroom home at Shepherds Close, currently a "cherished green space" according to residents.

Ryan, however, claims the scheme "includes significant biodiversity and landscape enhancements".

A public consultation has prompted 16 objections, including claims that the plans threaten local wildlife, would be "incongruent" with the architectural style of the area, and even pose a flood risk.

One resident, Sergey, said: "As a resident of Shepherds Close since 1994, I've witnessed numerous attempts to develop a cherished green space, which have been consistently opposed."

Speaking to HCP, a group of residents added that a previous planning application had been made by Ryan in 2020. In spite of an appeal being denied, Ryan felled 19 mature trees at the site.

Resident Talia added: "The needless destruction of our beautiful copse, home to birds, squirrels, bats and foxes, exposed the fundamental inequitable [nature ...] of this awful project."

Sergey said: "The proposed development [...] threatens the architectural uniformity and Shepherds Close's ecological and social fabric."

Resident Pete commented: "This could set a disturbing precedent. Highgate is known for its extensive woods and small pockets of green space. What would remain of its character if all our green corridors

and spaces were built upon?"

"The view to the Parkland Walk [would be] gone forever."

Resident Aisha said: "Construction activities will lead to pollution affecting species such as the common darter. The disturbance from noise and light pollution will disrupt natural behaviours."

Ryan commented: "This planning application is a completely new design and approach.

"A mature hedgerow of cypress trees was removed following S211 procedures for removing trees in a conservation area.

"The neighbour currently has a view of the brick wall of adjacent garages. [...] The proposed gardens and courtyards will be well landscaped, with planted green roofs and the proposal would enhance the view from the neighbour's property.

"The proposal is thoughtfully considered, and fits in well with the modernist housing in Shepherds Close and the Highgate conservation area."

HORNSEY

Council accidentally approves 5G mast in 'shocking' IT error

Those who objected to the planning application included Hornsey Cricket Club, which will be forced to grant access to build the mast on their land

BY MIRIAM BALANESCU

HARINGEY COUNCIL HAS mistakenly approved a contentious planning application to build a 5G phone mast at Hornsey Cricket Club.

In a "shocking" IT error, the council's decision to refuse the application from infrastructure company Cornerstone to build the mast in Tivoli Road was accidentally sent a day late, meaning the council no longer has power to enforce its decision.

Local authorities have 56 days to respond to permitted development applications. National legislation says that if no notification is given by day 56, the application is deemed to have been automatically approved.

The mistake was due to a manual error in the council's configuration of its planning IT system.

A second mast in Bruce Grove was affected by the same error. Planning for a further mast in Priory Road, however, was rejected last month.

Those who objected to the planning application included Hornsey Cricket Club, which own the land where the mast is due to be built. Under the Electronic Communications Code, telecoms companies have the right to install masts on land despite the opposition of the landowner.

Hornsey Cricket Club has been approached for comment.

The land is also in a conservation area.

Luke Cawley-Harrison, leader of the Lib Dem opposition, said: "This is a shocking error from Haringey Council, and underlines why the 'last minute' culture, which affects planning enquiries, complaint responses, housing issues and more, is utterly unacceptable. Residents, and in particular Hornsey Cricket Club, are now left to deal with the consequences of the council's negligence – this

simply is not good enough."

Cabinet member for housing services, private renters and planning, Sarah Williams, said: "I would like to apologise for this regrettable error, which occurred owing to an unforeseen glitch in our planning team's IT system at the time. The fault has now been rectified and we have put in place stringent measures to reduce the risk of this happening again.

"We have a strong record of opposing inappropriate applications here at Haringey Council, including those through permitted development rights. Any planning refusal can be appealed.

"Our planning team deals with over 2,000 applications each year and it is pretty uncommon for them to make errors such as this. Indeed, they were praised in a recent peer challenge/review for the high standards in which they operate."



A Cornerstone spokesperson added: "Cornerstone understands that our mobile infrastructure can impact communities and lead to concern about proposed developments. For this reason, we give great consideration to the location and design of our developments. We have gained planning permission for a proposed base station at Hornsey Cricket Club which will provide network coverage for residents and visitors to the area. We can confirm that permission was gained via deemed consent and that we anticipate building this base station in due course."

Council budget set to be balanced for 2024/25 despite 'extremely challenging' financial situation

Haringey councillors are due to vote this month on a budget containing £19m of savings and a 5% council tax rise, reports Grace Howarth, Local Democracy Reporter

Haringey Council is set to balance its budget following a "number of tough decisions" on spending. Councillors are due to approve the council's budget for 2024/25 during its annual budget meeting on Monday, 4th March at Tottenham Town Hall – after finance chiefs found a way to plug a £16.3m hole.

Despite proposed savings to the budget of £19.3m, the council will need to use £5m of its reserves to balance the books. This has been needed to cover the cost of an extra £25.5m of growth built in for demand-led services such as temporary housing and social care.

This month's meeting will also set council

tax rates for the coming year as well as the proposed housing revenue account (HRA) and dedicated schools budgets.

The proposed 4.99% increase to council tax rates in Haringey – the maximum allowed – includes a 2% precept for adult social care.

The council admits the budget-setting process has been "extremely challenging" given the "wide range of financial and social challenges" and has called on central government to provide "fairer funding" for the borough in future.

Describing the financial landscape, the council's budget report states that interest rates are "high" and there remains "uncertainty" over continued inflation which has impacted residents and businesses, along with the national "unrest" of an upcoming UK general election.

The report also says local government funding settlements are still "insufficient" to meet the "increased cost base of providing services".

It also notes that councils across the country have highlighted "without recourse to additional funding" they might be "unable to set legitimate budgets for 2025/26".

Birmingham, Nottingham, and Woking



Tottenham Town Hall

councils all issued Section 114 notices last year, effectively declaring bankruptcy.

Haringey Council predicts that if forced to operate in similar conditions for the years to come, its 2025/26 budget gap could be £14m, while this would rise to £26.5m by 2027/28.

Despite these challenges, the budget report confirms Haringey is still on track to build 3,000 council homes by 2031. The council has also "put in measures" to its HRA budget to support improvements to housing services, fire prevention works, and issues with damp and mould.

Due to the high cost of borrowing, the council's capital programme has been reviewed and reduced until the financial landscape becomes more "favourable".

The capital programme consists of investment schemes for the short and long term but the council has removed proposals that are either "no longer required" or cannot be "progressed" because their "business case no longer works".

The council is also bringing more staff across the organisation in-house to ensure "value for money" by "driving down spending on agency staff, consultants and senior managers".

In terms of government funding, Haringey's share of the government's social care grant is £2.5m this year, which the council says does not provide "enough to cover the increased cost of delivering adults' and children's care" or address the "scale of future funding pressures".

The Household Support Fund, which has provided support for residents during the pandemic and cost-of-living crises, is said by the council to be an "invaluable resource" but will now be discontinued by the government.

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The female gaze

A major exhibition of Tottenham artist Beatrice Offor shows how this pioneering female creative pushed boundaries and made space for overlooked women

BY LARA BRYANT

Haringey has historically boasted a rich creative culture, with its female artists alone including the likes of Althea McNish and Elisabetta del Ponte. With March being Women’s History Month, now is a great opportunity to discover the work of some of Haringey’s most talented women.

Bruce Castle Museum in Tottenham is commemorating the work of one particular female artist in Haringey with its exhibition *Sisters, Sirens and Saints: Imagining the Women*

of Beatrice Offor.

Beatrice Offor was a painter and artist from Sydenham who resided in Tottenham, and her work primarily consisted of portraits of young women. The exhibition explores these portraits and creates a narrative by dividing her subjects into the three categories of sisters, saints and sirens. The exhibition draws on new research and the recent invigorated interest in her work.

Bruce Castle Museum has been working closely with relatives of Offor to create the exhibition and to uncover new research and art pieces. Deborah Hedgecock, the curator

at the museum, is keen to expose the influences behind Offor’s work.

Offor began her artistic career when she was accepted into the prestigious Slade School of Fine Art. She left her Baptist upbringing for a life in London and is celebrated as one of the first female students who trained there. She went on to become a commercially successful artist – a feat uncommon for most artists at the time, let alone a female artist.

Apart from two surviving interviews, there is no known evidence to show who Offor used as models in her paintings. Despite this, her work is highly symbolic and explores themes

of women’s passion, freedom, and frustration. Women in theatre were a source of inspiration for Offor and this is apparent in many of her paintings, including *A Melody* (1886–1906).

The exhibition begins with Offor’s collection of ‘sisters’, which includes *A Melody* along with a portrait of an older woman sitting at a spinning wheel. The exhibition then moves along to ‘sirens’ – portraits of bewitching and magical women who are often of an esoteric nature. These portraits include witches in fairy tales, folklore, and classical mythology.

These paintings include *Circe* (1911), a beguiling temptress from Homer’s *Odyssey*,

‘Aunties Best Bonnet’ **Credit** Bruce Castle Museum



‘Circe’ **Credit** Bruce Castle Museum



Beatrice Offor in her studio in Chelsea c1904 **Credit** Bruce Castle Museum

“She commented on the lives and treatment of women through her paintings”

‘Esme Dancing’ **Credit** Bruce Castle Museum

and *Esme Dancing* (undated), a portrait of a young woman dancing that expresses joy and freedom. *Circe* continues to be a popular painting with people all over the world.

Deborah, the curator of the exhibition, explains the attraction of Offor's *Sirens* is that they often push boundaries. “She was quite experimental; maybe she's playing around with messages,” Deborah says. “Some things may look quite conventional but actually she's testing things. You have quite a few women who she paints who are nude.

“There's *Esme Dancing*, which is quite a departure for her in that it's someone that is freely dancing and is wearing a lot of loose clothes. You've got this Victorian into Edwardian society; things are kind of loosening up literally.”

Following her time at art school, Offor moved in a wide range of social and cultural circles. She was friends with Annie Horniman, artist Moina Berguson, and her brother, French philosopher Henry Berguson.

Horniman and Berguson joined the newly formed ‘Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn’, a secret society devoted to the study and practice of the occult. Although Offor was not a member of this society, it was likely she was attracted to the romantic and bohemian lifestyles of its members and enjoyed meeting radical thinkers. She was curious about the supernatural, and her first husband, the artist William Farran Littler, had experimented in spiritualism.

Offor's paintings often rebelled against the constraints of a male-dominated society along with portraying the bohemian lifestyles of those she surrounded herself with. She commented on the lives and treatment of women through her paintings. “I do think by her choice of subjects she is commenting on the state of women,” says Deborah. “She hasn't written anything down, but it is a nudge towards being critically aware.”

The final part of the exhibition depicts Offor's ‘saints’ which are believed to have been completed towards the latter part of her life.

Following the deaths of her and Littler's infant sons in 1893 and 1896, Littler was admitted to an asylum where he remained until his death in 1899. In order to support herself, Offor took on more commercial work, including commissions for portraits of public figures.

She met her second husband, local alderman and businessman James Beavan, around this time and they married in 1907 and resided in Bruce Grove, Tottenham.

Offor, now adopting a quieter life, painted more religious subjects reflecting Christian and saintly symbolism. One within this category is *St Agnes*, which can be seen in the exhibition at Bruce Castle Museum. It was not until 2023 that the name of the saint depicted in the portrait was discovered on a postcard sent to the museum.

Many of Offor's paintings from this time are seen around the local area of Tottenham. *Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane* hangs in St Mary's Church, and her last public piece, a depiction of a triptych altarpiece, hangs in St Matthew's Church, Ponders End.

Throughout her life, Offor's art remained financially viable through commercialisation. This was not common for artists at the time. “Artistically it doesn't always look like she's being radical, but really just being at art school and becoming commercial and popular in her day is actually very progressive,” says Deborah. “She was meeting a demand in the market. It's the idea behind it, of commercialisation and being a female artist being paid to do this.”

Offor died in 1920 after falling from a window. Her death was ruled as suicide at an inquest. She is now buried at Brockwell and Ladywell Cemetery in Lewisham.

Although the story of Offor's life is deeply troubled, her legacy lives on and Deborah is determined to keep it alive through the exhibition. “Her story is a tragic one but also influential and encouraging at the same time”, she says. “What she went through is kind of what a lot of artists may go through today.”

Bruce Castle Museum is committed to showcasing the local art of Tottenham and the surrounding area. For LGBTQ+ History Month, an oil painting by Haringey-based artist Sadie Lee called *An Eligible Spinster* was displayed within the Beatrice Offor exhibition.

A further addition to the exhibition has been added for Women's History Month with an installation of Al Johnson's *Land of Laundries*. Al's work suggests that, despite a century of feminism, laundry and washing continues to be women's work.

“I made a series of pillories and I cast my own arms and there's seven sets of pillories for the seven days of the week,” Al tells HCP. “The arms are all doing washing activities. Then I collected lots of white linen, sheets, blankets, and then I embroidered the stories onto them, onto the textiles.”

Al explores political and social issues in her work and believes it is highly important for the work of local artists in Haringey to be presented at places such as the Bruce Castle Museum: “I think it's a really good jumping off point for local artists. It's very important that local art is shown. There's a lot of local artists in the area. There's the Crouch End Open Studio and I have been a part of that.”

It's unusual to see a large body of work by one artist at a museum and Deborah is eager to continue bringing Offor's work to life. The Offor exhibition, then, is a testament to the continuing power of this Tottenham artist.

‘Sisters, Sirens and Saints: Imagining the Women of Beatrice Offor’ is on display until the end of March at Bruce Castle Museum, Tottenham. Al Johnson's ‘Land of Laundries’ will be on display from Friday, 1st March until Sunday, 28th April

►
Models rely
on various
power sources
and can even
be made to
look more
realistic with
'weathering'



The inside track

The biggest festival for railway modelling returns annually to Ally Pally – Miriam Balanescu speaks with the event's organiser to find out more

INTERVIEW

For those of us uninitiated in the world of railway modelling, it may seem like a relatively niche pursuit. But this hobby will attract over 10,000 people to the halls of Alexandra Palace this month, insists the organiser of the UK's foremost festival dedicated to the activity.

"Saturday is usually the busier of the two [days] with many modellers keen to sniff out a bargain" Kathy McKenna says. "Sunday is more relaxed and definitely attracts more families."

And – perhaps even more surprising to those of us who know little about it – this is certainly not a new tradition. Festivals celebrating railway modelling go back over 100 years.

"The history of a major model railway exhibition in London each spring goes back to 1912 – when The Model Railway Club hosted its first public event," explains Kathy. "This annual exhibition grew over the decades and at one time ran for a week over Easter at Wembley. The current show is a reboot of those events, and has been run by British Railway Modelling Magazine along with The Model Railway club since 1999."

This version of the festival has been held at Haringey's Alexandra Palace since the turn of the century.

So, what is railway modelling? Simply put, it's the recreation of a fully functioning train line but on a much smaller scale – and it's been going on since the 1840s for almost as long as rail transport itself has been in existence. It can also get quite complicated: it involves scales and gauges to ensure each part is the proportional size, with said parts including couplers and connectors,

landscapes, 'weathering' (to make the model look as if it's been exposed to the elements) and, of course, power to make the trains actually move.

The London Festival of Railway Modelling gives railway modellers a chance to find the best equipment, as well as meet other enthusiasts.

"Exhibitions were originally founded as a way to show the wider public the skill and art of railway modelling – and also provide funds to pay for club facilities," Kathy says. "That is very much the approach today – giving a chance for modellers to come together to celebrate

each other's work, and an opportunity to buy models and materials from a much wider range of suppliers than can be found locally.

"It's a way to celebrate the breadth of the hobby – whether beginners or experts, or even those with a passing interest. The Model Railway Club selects around 40 of

the best model railway layouts in the UK – in a variety of scales, historical periods and regions – into one place, alongside a whole

range of specialist modelling societies and demonstrations."

The team behind the festival are responsible for carefully perusing the most up-to-date railway models and selecting the very best for exhibition. "The Model Railway Club uses its contacts around the UK, and goes out and visits layouts to check they not only look good but work well," says Kathy. "Their team then choose a good range to give as good a variety as they can each year – with every year

different and only a few layouts coming more than once."

The vast halls of Alexandra Palace provide the ideal location to showcase these exhibitors. "It's the perfect size for this show – and it's a beautiful building filled with its own history including an abandoned railway station just behind it," says Kathy.

How common really is railway modelling as a hobby, I ask Kathy? "It's a huge hobby with literally hundreds of thousands of enthusiasts in the UK," she insists. "There are some celebrity railway modellers too, such as Rod Stewart, Jools Holland and Pete Waterman. The hobby means different things to different people. For some it's recreating a slice of their youth, for others it's the social side of building and operating a layout with friends while others love the activity of creating a truly stunning model railway layout.

"For years people have been saying that it's a dying hobby yet our exhibition attendances show no sign of dropping. There are loads of youths coming into the hobby too so the interest is well and truly there."

Her advice to newcomers is, first of all, "start small and simple". "Most people enter the hobby with a Hornby or Bachmann train set in OO gauge," Kathy continues. "You can do so much too... model buildings, add scenery, weather your locomotives. It doesn't cost a fortune to get started either. You should also look for a local club or exhibition and get involved and buy a magazine or two. *BRM* (*British Railway Modelling*) is definitely recommended! You'll learn loads of skills and get to know a great community of like-minded enthusiasts. Check out the internet too. *World-of-railways.co.uk* is a great source of news and articles whilst *rmweb.co.uk* is a forum covering literally everything you could possibly need to know!"

To find out more:
Visit alexandrapalace.com/whats-on/the-london-festival-of-railway-modelling-8



Crowds at a previous London Festival of Railway Modelling

Haringey Lib Dem leader slams 'sheer incompetence' as council fails to list commercial properties

Luke Cawley-Harrison questions why the council could not provide him with an up-to-date list of commercial property it owns

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The opposition leader at Haringey Civic Centre has called it "laughable" that the council has been unable to provide him with a list of the commercial property it owns.

Commercial property includes any property used to make a profit and Liberal Democrat group leader Luke Cawley-Harrison recently approached Haringey Council's property management estates lead via a member enquiry to find out more about what it held.

But Cllr Cawley-Harrison was told the



Cllr Cawley-Harrison

council did not "currently" hold an "accurate up to date list", with the most recent list dating from 2019.

He was told the list was "being reviewed" as

part of the council's "property improvement process" to ensure accuracy, and identify property data held, how it was maintained, and what needed to happen to ensure the list was "accurate moving forward".

Reacting to the response, Cllr Cawley-Harrison said: "This reflects sheer incompetence from Haringey's property team. I have no idea how an organisation can just not know what property it owns."

"Commercial property should be providing an income for the council during these cash-strapped times, yet we don't even know what we own. This situation would be laughable if it weren't so serious."

Ruth Gordon, cabinet member for house building, placemaking and local economy, has said work is being done to rectify the situation and acknowledged the important role the council's commercial property portfolio played in delivering services to residents.

She said: "That's why last April [2023] we agreed a far-reaching asset management plan and, over the past twelve months, implementation is already showing significant improvements in the management of the portfolio

and has resulted in increased revenue to the council for the benefit of council taxpayers."

Prior to Cllr Cawley-Harrison's findings, an independent report from December 2022 had looked into the council's property holdings and concluded the team had "failed to keep proper records".

Cllr Gordon said the council continued to ensure all its commercial property was utilised "to provide the best return" and

said they were "on track" in implementing their "agreed action plan".

She said: "Our focus will remain on ensuring our commercial assets provide value for money for the council and residents and are benefitting the whole of the borough."

"This reflects sheer incompetence from Haringey's property team. I have no idea how an organisation can just not know what property it owns"

EASTER LISTINGS

Festival

Antwerp Arms Beer Festival

Friday, 29th March – Monday, 1st April, 5pm onwards
Antwerp Arms, 168–170 Church Road, Tottenham N17 8AS

The Antwerp Arms presents its third spring beer festival over the easter weekend, particularly showcasing real ales and craft beers brewed by local brewers. Beer snacks and food will complement the drinks. There will be a DJ on Friday, live band on Saturday and on Sunday '65 years of Motown' celebration.

Free | Visit antwerparms.co.uk

Kids Activities

HR Sports Academy Multi Sports

Tuesday, 2nd April–Friday, 5th April, 9am–4pm
Mulberry Academy, Woodside, White Hart Lane N22 5QJ

A week of fun and quality football coaching for boys and girls to develop their skills and techniques through a variety of activities. A packed lunch and refillable water bottle will be provided, and participants must wear appropriate clothing.

£15 per day
Call 07903 107 217 or 07947 530 498
Email holidaycamps@hrsportsacademy.co.uk

Broadwaters' Children's Centre Activities

Every day Mondays to Saturdays
Broadwaters Children's Centre, Adams Road, Tottenham N17 6HE

Various activities and classes from 'Muck Around Monday' to first aid classes for parents that aim to give all children the best start in life.

Free
Visit haringey.gov.uk/events/broadwaters-children-s-centre-activity-timetable

Volunteering

Nature Conservation Volunteering

Sunday, 31st March, 10.30am–2pm
Shepherds Hill Gardens, Shepherds Hill, Crouch End, London, N6 5RN

Join for a conservation volunteering session in conjunction with the Friends of Shepherds Hill Gardens. Tasks will involve general habitat management. All levels and abilities welcome. Volunteers must be 18 and over, or provide parental permission form. Under 16s must be accompanied by an adult. No previous experience required – just enthusiasm and a willingness to get stuck in! Please bring a packed lunch, suitable outdoor clothes and suitable outdoor footwear. Hot drinks and biscuits provided at the tea break.

Free
Call 020 8348 6005 (TCV)

Church Service

Easter Vigil Celebration

Sat, 30th March, 8.00pm–10.00pm
The Parish Church of St Mark the Evangelist, Ashley Crescent, Noel Park N22 6LJ

Join to witness the Resurrection at this first Mass of Easter – Easter Candle, readings from our Salvation history, Gospel of the Resurrection and celebration of the mass.

Free

50+ Activities

Winter Workout 2024

Weekdays until the end of March
Various centres across Haringey

Activities from Tai Chi, line dance, yoga and more, to help you shake off those winter blues and support you to become more active and make connections.

Free
Visit shorturl.at/jpEX1

Egg Hunt

Children's Easter Egg Hunt

Saturday, 30th March, 3pm–4pm
St Peter de Beauvoir Town N1 5AT

Crafts and fun to celebrate Easter!

Free

Music

Music Making with George

Every other Tuesday, 2pm–3:30pm
#ActuallyHaringey, Chad Gordon Campus, 20B Walthoef Gardens, Tottenham N17 7HS

This session invites you to explore varied ways of making music. You will have the opportunity to create music using electrical equipment as well as traditional instruments such as guitar, piano and ukulele. All equipment will be provided.

Free
If you would like to attend or would like more information:
Email autismhub@haringey.gov.uk

Submit your April listings

If you need to advertise your low-cost community event we can help you

Email HCP@socialspider.com before Monday, 18th March

We hope you enjoyed our Easter listings section. Our next listings selection like this will feature in our July issue for all kinds of summer activities in the borough.

You can submit your events here: forms.gle/XD3vFDTrWqHsu8J6



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►
A Heckel's Horse
Jr painting
Credit Edgeworth
Johnstone

Two horse race

The Muswell Hill painter Edgeworth Johnstone shares an insight into his collaborations with Billy Childish

Since winter 2013, the Medway painter and punk rocker Billy Childish and myself have been collaborating on a painting partnership we've titled 'Heckel's Horse'. Working in Billy's studio at Chatham's historic dockyard in Kent, as Heckel's Horse, we have made over 150 oil paintings to date, mostly on six foot Belgian linen canvases. In most cases, I will start a painting that Billy then finishes. Occasionally we work simultaneously, blending each other's styles into a single finished piece.

Over the last two years, I have begun making my own versions of Heckel's Horse paintings under the alias 'Heckel's Horse Jr' (being the younger of the partnership), which are being exhibited publicly for the first

time at Highgate Gallery at the Highgate Literary and Scientific Institution. From my home studio in Muswell Hill, I revisit the paintings I and Billy have made together, creating a fresh body of work I hope will introduce more viewers not only to my art, but also to the Stuckists manifesto I relate much of my painting to.

Stuckism is an art group founded in 1999 by East Finchley painter and poet Charles Thomson and Billy, named after an insult by Billy's then girlfriend Tracey Emin that he and his paintings were: "Stuck! Stuck! Stuck!" It was Charles' introduction of Billy to my work that the Heckel's Horse collaboration began.

Five of my drawings were exhibited at Exhibition #2 in

the Tate Modern in May 2010. Our collaboration paintings were exhibited in Pushkin House, London, in October 2014. A Heckel's Horse Jr painting was auctioned at Christie's London at their King Street location, for the charity Arms Around The Child in November 2022. My work is inspired by early twentieth century expressionism and contemporary naive art.

The main reason, initially, for making the Heckel's Horse Jr series was the need I felt to promote Heckel's Horse. Billy and I have been wanting to get Heckel's Horse off the ground since not long after we started painting them, but, so far, publishing has been kept very limited. However, as I started making the Heckel's Horse Jr paintings they took on a life of their own and I now wonder why it took me nearly a decade to get started on them. Both Heckel's Horse Jr and Stuckism have strong Haringey connections, specifically to Muswell Hill and are examples of like-minded artists organically crossing paths and collaborating to make something none of us could have foreseen or achieved independently.

'Heckel's Horse Jr' runs from Friday, 8th–Thursday, 21st March. All are welcome to the private view on Friday, 8th March at 6pm



►
A painting by
Edgeworth
Johnstone
Credit Edgeworth
Johnstone

ARTS

In retrospect

Joan Curtis, a founding member of The Friends of Lordship Rec and Lordship Hub, gives the lowdown on her latest exhibition as an artist

At 72, I looked at all the paintings filling my house and thought that perhaps it was time to have a retrospective and expose them (and myself) to others. Maybe I regret doing it, but it is a done deal now!

I drew and painted from an early age. There were little prints of Picasso and Van Gogh works on the walls at home which really inspired me. I used to copy Van Gogh's beautiful, strong drawings of peasants in the fields and never looked back. I was very lucky that my parents took me to see art as a child and I immediately felt an affinity with it.

Much against the wishes of my very stern, academic teachers at a school that didn't encourage art as a 'proper' pursuit, I applied to art school and for the first time started to develop skills that I had only hinted at before. I am so happy that I was 'taught' to draw because it has made my desire to capture the feeling I have for things and people come to life.

I stayed at art school for a couple of years but succumbed to peer pressure, dropping out in 1970. Times were turbulent: the Vietnam War, the women's

politics, a place I have inhabited ever since.

However, in between meetings, discussions and demonstrations I made time for personal expression apart from posters and community newspapers. Motherhood

then intervened and some years later I decided to concentrate more on developing my artistic ideas.

When I first started oil painting, it was always views through windows and doors, journeys to unknown places and, when later I got into larger, more abstract compositions, my obsessions did not

change and the imagery still drew me to journey into the dark, unknown.

As I began to tip over into old age, I felt the need to express

how that made me feel as a woman, as an artist. I felt myself to be changing in the eyes of the world around me. Some say you start to become invisible as an older woman. I thought more about the stages of life and the metamorphosis from soft, sensual,

and potent to more brittle vulnerability and went through my 'ageing period'. Along the way, I continued to be aware of geopolitical events and the

growing conflict that has exploded everywhere and I tried to capture that too.

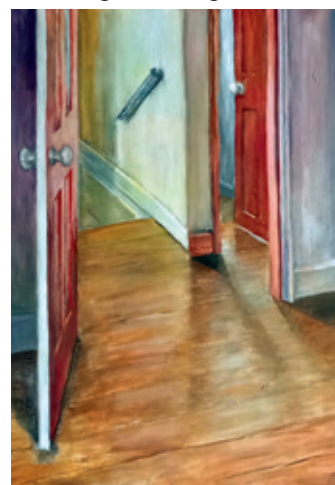
As you will see, my artistic journey has been a

long and winding one, and one I hope you will relate to, in part or in its entirety.

'Where to Now?' will be held at Hornsey Library's Original Gallery from Saturday, March 2nd – Saturday, March 16th.



Madonna of the Lockdown Credit Joan Curtis



Lockdown Escape Routes Credit Joan Curtis

"The imagery still drew me to journey into the dark, unknown"

I should not be involved in so-called 'establishment, elitist' endeavours but instead should use my talents for collective, political ends and I immersed myself in community-based radical

Inside Tottenham – and the UK’s – premier Italian radio station

Rosita Dagh at London ONE Radio reflects on ten years of a radio station celebrating the UK’s Italian community

We at London ONE Radio, the official Italian radio station in the UK, are celebrating our ten year anniversary this year, which also coincides with the 100 year anniversary of radio in Italy.

Founded in 2014, London ONE Radio is located in Tottenham Hale at the Millmead Business Centre, where you can also find Bally Studios, one of the most important rehearsal studios in the capital.

We are now recognised as the first Italian radio station to broadcast 24 hours a day in digital audio broadcasting (DAB) and online across the UK and Italy.

Over these ten years, London ONE Radio became a relevant voice in the UK by bridging the Italian and the British communities. We run shows that help Italians to better understand the bureaucratic, health, and political systems in the UK by keeping the audience updated with the latest news and by hosting doctors, experts, politicians, and lawyers.

However, the radio also runs shows that give the chance to discover both the Italian and British culture, traditions, and beautiful places both countries have.

The reason why radio will never die is thanks to its ability to adapt. Nowadays, radio has become visual too. We do broadcasts live with live videos on social media



Radio host Rosita Dagh

Editor Phil Baglini with Sennait Ghebraib



platforms. However, we were ahead of the curb, fusing radio-video production since 2014. We report news and events by going on the ground to offer a visual service to our audience too.

Things turned into something bigger in 2017, when we produced a radio-video documentary about radio inventor Guglielmo Marconi’s life. So, since 2017, we have also been focused on the production of documentaries that unveil the stories of Italian immigration in the UK and the history of Britain. For example, Lord Mayor Michael Mainelli hosted us to look into the history of the city of London; Sir Lindsay Hoyle then asked us to document the speaker of the House of Commons’ role historically.

We visited the Italians in Manchester, on the Isle of Man, and in Glasgow, who told us their precious stories that contributed to making Britain what it is today. The aim is to meet all the Italian communities across the UK in order to underline the importance of our

community in this country and show how it was able to integrate itself into British culture.

Our projects and developments throughout the years gave us the chance to sign an official contract with Rai, the national Italian television channel. Every week, Rai broadcasts our radio-videos telling interesting stories of Italians living in the UK or sharing Italian curiosities related to Britain.

One of our most successful shows is the ‘London ONE tour’ which aims to attract tourists to the UK. Every Saturday, the radio-video show brings the audience to hidden places in London and Britain by also sharing historical facts.

When we talk about radio we also talk about music. Since 2014, London ONE Radio has been focused on promoting emerging artists from the UK and Italy but they have also opened up a new market for mainstream Italian music in the UK.

By working alongside the big

record labels we are able to give them an insight into Italian music consumption in this country. That is why we are the official radio partner of Italian concerts happening in the UK and also, two years ago, we created the ‘London ONE Radio Award’. The annual award is given to the artist most requested by listeners. The first artist who won the award was Andrea Bocelli, followed by Luciano Ligabue, and last year won by Giorgia.

Our commitment to the promotion of the Italian music industry in the UK led to us being the official Italian broadcasting company that covers the Festival di Sanremo every year since 2018. We are accredited at the official media centre of the festival, so every year we go to Sanremo where we work to better represent all the artists selected in the competition. The winner of the Sanremo Festival goes to Eurovision where we are also accredited to follow and promote the Italian artist.

Looking ahead, we want to continue our successful journey in radio broadcasting. With the rapid development of digital technologies and the growing importance of online platforms, the station has the opportunity to further expand its reach and engage with ever-wider audiences. On this double anniversary of both ten years of London ONE Radio and 100 years of radio in Italy, we reflect on the extraordinary evolution of this medium and celebrate the vital role that radio continues to play in our ever-changing society.



A guest at London ONE Radio

The aim is to meet all the Italian communities across the UK

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HCP
March
2024
N° 29

FEATURES

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haringeycommunitypress.co.uk

We want to make it easier for women and others who menstruate to use reusable alternatives

When we commissioned a recent survey, 40% of respondents said they wanted to reduce the waste created by their period, but didn't know how or found it too difficult.

2,000 women aged 14–49 took part in the survey, commissioned by North London Waste Authority (NLWA). The poll also revealed that respondents would be most likely to switch to reusables if they were cheaper and easier to clean.

A brand new campaign from NLWA is hoping to address both these factors and more, making it easier for women and others who menstruate to use reusable alternatives to pads and tampons. Featuring online info, workshops, discount codes, and an awareness campaign across the streets of North London, the initiative is called 'Reduce, Reuse, Your Cycle'.

Officially launching the campaign last month was Islington councillor Rowena Champion, who said: "The survey data proves what we already knew about North Londoners: they want to reduce their waste wherever they can. They just need a little bit of help, and that's exactly what our new campaign is here to do."

Arming people with the information they need to switch to reusables is the campaign website, reducereuseyourcycle.co.uk. A one-stop shop for anyone curious to learn more about reusables, the website features how-to video guides for a range of period products and frequently asked questions tackling tricky and sensitive topics. No question is off-limits, as Cllr Champion explained: "Reduce, Reuse, Your Cycle is breaking down the stigma of talking about periods, helping us make better choices for the planet and ourselves."

The conversation doesn't end online, either: putting a friendly face to the expert advice is the Women's Environmental Network (WEN). The group are running a series of free, practical workshops to help women and others who menstruate get to grips with the different kinds of products on the market. With over a quarter (26%) of survey respondents saying they would switch to reusable period products if they were easier to use, these workshops are

The team at North London Waste Authority explain the roots of their new campaign around International Women's Day



► Islington councillor Rowena Champion is promoting the campaign

providing the kind of hands-on help people are calling for.

As well as education, the campaign is focusing on affordability, as almost half of survey respon-

dents (46%) suggested that they'd make the switch if reusable period products were cheaper. Discount codes available on the campaign website will offer up

While pads and tampons seem cheaper than reusables, buying them every month can add up – to as much as £1,500 over a lifetime

to 25% off when purchasing products from three campaign partners – Cheeky Wipes, Flowette, and All Matters.

Also helping to overcome the cost barrier is the Reduce, Reuse, Your Cycle online savings calculator. While pads and tampons seem cheaper than reusables, buying them every month can add up – to as much as £1,500 over a lifetime! Using the calculator, users can put in how many pads and tampons they use per period to see how much they could save by switching to reusables.

The campaign comes at a time when reusable period products are increasing in popularity. About a third of survey respondents said they already use reusable period products at least some of the time. When Reduce, Reuse, Your Cycle put out a call out for fans of reusables to appear in a bus stop ad campaign around North London, there was no shortage of volunteers to share their stories.

Campaign champion Rebecca said she loved the convenience of reusables: "I like that they are always to hand – you never have to worry about them running out! It also feels great to not be spending money every month on disposable products."

Fellow reusables fan Saskia cited the environmental benefits, saying that "it is so empowering to know that I'm doing my bit for the planet by having a zero-waste, altogether greener period".

Saskia's not alone; with sustainability a growing priority for consumers across all markets, many women and others who menstruate appreciate being able to make a small change that has a big impact. A lifetime of using pads and tampons adds up to about 200 kilograms of waste per person, and a lot of this is incorrectly flushed down the toilet. Switching to reusables even part of the time can make a huge ecological difference.

"Everyone should make the choice that's right for them and their body," said Cllr Champion. "What's important is that those who want to use reusables are empowered to make that choice by having the resources and information they need. That's what this campaign is all about."

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Penny drop

Dear HCP

The figures from the story 'Haringey named 'worst' local area for low-paid jobs in UK' [page 5] show that a large section of Haringey residents are the lowest paid in London.

Our residents are being let down by 40 years of neoliberalism, a political philosophy that has at its root a transfer of wealth from working people to the already wealthy.

There is only so much a local authority can do to raise pay in a borough, although an insourcing of many of its contracted out-services would greatly assist.

Since 1980, all Conservative governments have sought to limit union bargaining power to hasten this transfer of wealth; action is needed at national level to restore union-led collective bargaining across the economy.

The coverage of collective bargaining has declined precipitously during the period of neoliberalism from over 80% in 1980 to about 20% today.

Cllr Lotte Collett

Leader of Haringey Council's
Independent Socialist Group

Traffic jam

Dear HCP

I would like to thank *Haringey Community Press* for the excellent article published [online] 30th January, 'West Green residents on LTN boundary road claim trial is blighting their lives', regarding the problems we face as residents of Belmont Road. Despite boundary roads being the linchpin of these schemes, those running them decided that boundary roads should not be treated as parts of the schemes, depriving us of a voice.

The organisers of the scheme claim it's good for the environment but this is false. By bottling cars into a tiny number of roads, traffic has slowed down. Longer car journeys mean more exhaust fumes and more pollution for everyone. LTNs divert resources away from proper measures such as improving public transport. In fact, while the scheme was being implemented, two local bus routes were axed.

What I want to focus on, however, is Cllr Mike Hakata's claim that "LTN schemes benefit the whole community". As the Belmont Residents Group, we had a number of Zoom meetings with Cllr Hakata and explained how we were suffering. He kept asking us

to provide evidence until we were forced to explain that our eye-witness reports were evidence and, in any court trial, judges accept witness testimony as evidence.

It is not good enough for Cllr Hakata to dogmatically repeat the mantra that "everyone benefits". It is not true!

Demetrios Hadjidemetriou
Belmont Road

Stop bus problems

Dear HCP

Referring to the temporary 'out of use' of the bus stop at Palmers Green Station, the next stop, Broomfield Park, is half a mile or more away along Alderman's Hill. Why no lollipop stop when there is sufficient road space for one?

Now, for several days, travellers in my neighbourhood, many elderly or disabled, have had to inconveniently cope with the 'not in use' status of the Wood Green High Road bus stop, although it is apparent that a lollipop stop could be put in place. Having phoned through to Transport for London (TfL), I was told that the system was down and my report could not be acted upon!

Then, we discover that the stop at Arcadian Gardens is not in use although there is no evidence for that being so. But, more importantly, where's the lollipop stop? Is TfL totally unaware of distances between stops and the consequences for certain travellers?

TfL has whatever is required to cover the bus stop signs: the signs and a ladder in a van. If your people are going out to specifically 'close' a bus stop, their excursion ought to automatically include taking a few lollipop stops.

The council taxpayers of London get a raw deal from those who are employed at fare and taxpayers' expense. An aspect of sub-standard service was reported on *BBC News* very recently. Closer to my neighbourhood is the continued free for all mob rule at Wood Green Station bus stop H about which I complained for two years or more to TfL and, later, to Haringey Council, to no avail, and the traffic hiatus at bus stop D caused by Haringey's street planning office's stubborn refusal to acknowledge clear evidence of its street planning cock-up combined with Haringey Council's ostrich-headedness.

Michael Jones
Tottenham

The government has called on councils with budget shortfalls to use their reserves

Dana Carlin, cabinet member for finance and local investment, on balancing the council's budget

Once again, we in Haringey have managed to set a balanced budget which puts our residents first. But it has not been easy. It is a sad fact that six local authorities have already declared bankruptcy since 2018 and dozens more are on the brink.

Haringey has been hit with a combination of pressures beyond its control – insufficient money from the government, a spiralling demand for social care services, and persistently high inflation, interest rates, and costs. Haringey's funding from the government is around £143million less in real terms than it was in 2010/11.

But despite this demanding challenge, we have set a balanced budget for 2024/25. Our residents will continue to get the best possible services and we have always been clear that if the government is unwilling to step up for the people of Haringey, we will do so.

Next year, we will invest an additional £25.5m into our adult and children's services and

also into providing temporary accommodation for families who have been made homeless through no fault of their own.

There is a housing crisis in London, and in Haringey we need many more social homes. We are on track to deliver our promise to build at least 3,000 high quality, eco-friendly council homes by 2031, helping local families move into suitable council accommodation.

This has only been possible through the millions of pounds provided to us by the mayor of London to support our house-building programme.

We will continue to pursue our climate and air quality goals, create more school streets, and increase tree planting. We've planted thousands of new trees and are continuing to plant more. Our community has been amazing by sponsoring trees to help us meet this goal.

We want to make our council homes climate change-proof through retrofitting and smart design, and encourage active travel through installing more

cycle lanes and bike hangars.

Climate justice is social justice – and this administration's commitment to building a fairer, greener Haringey remains at the heart of all our decision making.

“There is a housing crisis in London, and in Haringey we need many more social homes”

There has been a lot of talk about our libraries. Across the country, nearly 800 public libraries have closed since austerity started in 2010. In Haringey, we are proud of our library service and we are not closing any of our libraries. We will work with our residents and friends' groups to ensure that our libraries thrive and are fit for the future, providing a free public space for all to enjoy.

Local authorities across the political spectrum have campaigned for the government to provide fairer funding. In response, the government has called on councils with budget shortfalls to use their reserves to fill the gap. This is simply not a sustainable long-term solution. Reserves can only be spent once, so as a responsible local authority we have sought to minimise their use as much as possible.

We want this budget to deliver for our residents. This budget is in line with our values and allows us to do what Haringey people elected us to do – to deliver a fairer, greener borough.

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Send us your letters

Email HCP@socialspider.com before Monday, 18th March

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