

# HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

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## We've had enough!

Police and Council take action after residents raise concerns over street violence, drug dealing and antisocial behaviour

By WILL PARKES

More than 70 local residents attended a meeting held last month to discuss what the authorities are doing to tackle a recent increase in violent crime, drug dealing, antisocial behaviour and rough sleeping. The event was hosted by Rev Stephen Coles at St Thomas' Church with representatives from the Metropolitan Police in Islington, Highbury West councillors, Islington Council officers, members of the Plimsoll Road Neighbourhood Watch and others attending to listen to and answer questions from concerned residents.

The meeting was called in response to complaints received by residents living in the 'Blackstock Triangle', the area bounded by Blackstock Road, Gillespie Road and the railway tracks. The area is predominantly in the Highbury West Council ward.

Parents expressed concerns that they did not feel their children were safe on the streets, that drug dealing had been openly taking place and levels of antisocial behaviour had been on the increase. Other residents also gave first hand accounts of having seen drug dealing, antisocial behaviour and aggressive begging in and around Finsbury Park station. Residents also expressed concerns that the annual takeover of Finsbury Park for large scale music concerts would again lead to a spike in drug dealing on local streets and other



The meeting was chaired by Rev Stephen Coles of St Thomas' Church

forms of antisocial behaviour.

Councillor Andy Hull has taken a lead in trying to coordinate the response and gave an account of actions the council has been taking to reduce crime in the neighbourhood. The other Highbury West ward councillors, Roulin Khondoker and Teresa Debono also attended the meeting.

The Highbury West Neighbourhood Police Team have increased their patrols, both on foot and in vehicles. Proactive police work has led to a significant increase in stop-and-search operations, with 16 taking place in the month before the meeting took place. Dispersal powers have been used to stop groups gathering and causing antisocial behaviour.

A problem address, which many local people believe is the cause of the recent increase in crime, has been served with a 'Notice Seeking

Possession'. The property was recently raided by Police, who posted a photo on Twitter showing the house was daubed in graffiti, with 'Smoke crack, worship Satan' scrawled on the walls in red paint. There was a sign outside the house telling Police to keep out!

A new CCTV camera is to be installed to give full coverage of the junction of Blackstock Road, Highbury Park, Gillespie Road and Mountgrove Road. The street lights have also been converted to LED, giving a much whiter, brighter light in the evenings and at night.

Residents were encouraged to assist the police by reporting all instances of crime and antisocial behaviour.

The Highbury West Neighbourhood Policing team can be contacted on 020 3276 3030 or 07407 487254 or email [highburywest.snt@met.police.uk](mailto:highburywest.snt@met.police.uk)

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# Sainsbury's in yet ANOTHER bid to open in Blackstock Road

BY GILL SHEPHERD

Highbury East Cllr Caroline Russell, one of the leading campaigners against Sainsbury's previous attempts to open, said the new planning application to Islington Council was "extraordinary". It comes despite the company having already been rejected twice.

Sainsbury's has been planning to open a "Local" shop on the site, which was formerly Highbury Vale police station, since 2015. In February last year, Islington Council rejected the planning application, with councillors saying it would harm the town centre's "vibrancy" and that loading bays would cause congestion in Blackstock Road. The supermarket giant appealed the decision, but the government's Planning Inspectorate threw it out in October.

But it has now made a fresh bid. Cllr Russell said: "This is really devastating news for the campaigners, and for the people who live around the site. "Sainsbury's has been shown the door already, and by a really well organised group which made its case very coherently. What does Sainsbury's think it's playing at, having another go at Blackstock Road? It's extraordinary."

In its planning statement, Indigo, an agent representing Sainsbury's, claim the concerns about congestion have now been addressed. It said that after "extensive engagement" with Islington Council, the pavement would be shrunk by 0.5m in order for the 6.4m road width to remain the same.

Cllr Russell, a staunch campaigner for safe walking and cycling, said of this plan: "That's ludicrous. Ridiculous. They shouldn't be taking up pedestrian space. We have a crisis of obesity and physical activity in this borough and we need pavement space for people to walk. "This is another example of a big company trying to run its business by stealing the community's pavement space. It's outrageous and selfish."

Indigo said the application demonstrates "servicing and

highway safety concerns have been addressed and an agreed solution provided".

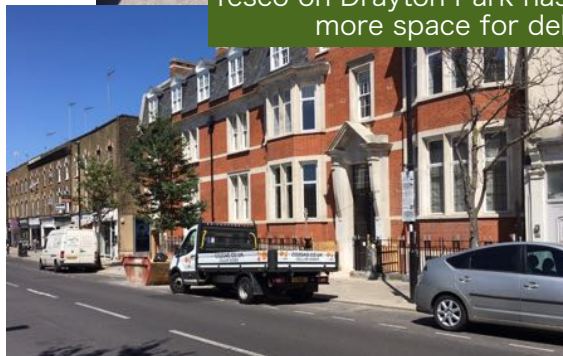
Sainsbury's, which has another Local shop in the Finsbury Park end of Blackstock Road, has been approached for comment. Islington Council has yet to set a date to decide the application.

The photos below show Tesco, on Drayton Park, which has ample space on its forecourt for trolleys and for delivery, and The Sainsbury's site which is on a narrower road and which has much less pavement space than Tesco.

HCA has been active in collecting signatures, attending meetings and writing an Association response to the new bid.



Tesco on Drayton Park has much more space for deliveries



The Old Police Station: Sainsbury's want another store with no forecourt at all

Photos: David Braine



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# ‘A wall Trump would be proud of’

## Residents AND concert goers express their disappointment as Finsbury Park is once again taken over for a summer of loud music concerts

Finsbury Park is once again under siege, denying local people the opportunity to enjoy the park due to the number of loud music concerts taking place. Throughout the summer, Haringey Council are allowing 45,000 people a day exclusive use of a large section of the park for Wireless and other events. A huge section of the park has been cordoned off for a month to allow some of the concerts to take place. Local people face the inconvenience of having to skirt around the cordon if they do decide to use the park, even on days when no event is taking place.

The sheet metal wall surrounding the compound has been described as ‘a wall even Trump would be proud of’. The HCA has expressed concerns again that Haringey’s policy essentially amounts to the privatisation of the public

realm for commercial gain by the multinational corporations hosting the concerts. Festival Republic, the company running Wireless, made over £6.3m in profits in the year to the end of December 2016. Tickets cost between £55 and £62, pricing out many local people, even if they did want to attend.

Questions have been raised over how well the concerts have been organised. People attending the concerts have complained that queues to buy drinks took up to an hour and a half, and queues for the toilets lasted half an hour.

Similar problems were reported by local residents as in previous years. Again people living in Hackney and Islington bore the brunt of the worst of the concerts, which, of course, are sanctioned by Haringey Council. Residents complained about the noise levels and took to social media to express their frustration that once again their weekend summer evenings were ruined by the concerts. Complaints made to local representatives via social media have seemed to fall on deaf ears. Only Catherine West, one of Haringey’s MPs, has said she will be raising concerns.

Streets were clogged as those leaving the park were waiting for their Uber minicab to pick them up. Local residents again had to put up with people using their streets as a public toilet, with some people even seen squatting between parked cars to relieve themselves.

Will Hodgkinson, reporting in the Times newspaper said, ‘The Finsbury Park experience calls into question the whole value of the urban music festival, a phenomenon that has grown exponentially over the past two decades and become something that cash-strapped councils rely on increasingly to boost their coffers.’

The Friends of Finsbury Park, who campaign tirelessly to protect the use of the park for all residents, received a legal setback earlier this month having been told they would not be allowed to appeal their long running case to the Supreme Court. The Friends issued the following statement: ‘By law, all income generated through a public park must be spent on its maintenance or improvement. At the moment, however, the park generates substantially more money through commercial events than that which is spent on the park itself, meaning that the Council is not living up to its obligations as trustees of the park.’

‘Although we have lost this legal case, we have done much to raise awareness of the importance of our public parks and green spaces. This would not have been possible without your help and financial support.’



No entry: residents face unwelcoming sight of this high wall to keep locals out

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# Barbecues on Highbury Fields to be restricted: residents and Council agree a way forward

By MICHAEL KUHN, 38 DEGREES 'SAVE Highbury FIELDS' CAMPAIGN

A settlement in the nuisance claim brought by Highbury Fields residents in Highbury Magistrates' Court over barbecuing in the Fields has been reached with Islington Borough Council. The agreement involves the Council allowing barbecuing only within a permitted area in the main field of Highbury Fields, with a restriction on time to before 9pm. The Council will carry out consultation on a new byelaw to designate the permitted area and timings in the following months.

A spokesperson for the group, Save Highbury Fields, Barry O'Brien, said: 'We are very pleased that we have reached this sensible agreement with the Council..... We very much hope that this will permit everyone to enjoy the Fields in future and will reduce significantly the smoke and odours which affect residents living near to the Fields.'

The residents who brought the case, supported by over 1,200+ supporters to the Save Highbury Fields campaign, hope that further steps will be taken to allow a more constructive dialogue about shared use of this precious green space in future, in the context of Islington Council's stated commitment to clean air and public health.

In 2011 Islington Council decided to permit BBQs on Islington's green spaces. The impact of this policy was greatest on Highbury Fields where in fine weather hun-

dreds, even thousands, of people gathered with scores of barbecues, releasing clouds of smoke and fumes into the air.

After seven years of trying to persuade the Council to temper or reverse this policy, as a last resort residents instructed Richard Buxton Environmental & Public Law and counsel William Upton to bring a case of statutory nuisance against the Council for the nuisance caused to them by the smoke and fumes from BBQs. The case was due to be tried at Highbury Magistrates Court in July.

The Council has agreed to sponsor a new bye-law to regulate the use of barbecues in Highbury Fields to reduce the impact from smoke and odour on local residents. Public consultation will take place with the aim to have new byelaws in place by 1 May 2019.

Until then the Council will continue efforts to encourage people to barbecue only within the permitted area on the Mother Field and in a way that respects the Council's "7 BBQ tips".

As part of the settlement, the Council has agreed to make a substantial contribution to the costs incurred by the residents bringing the claim.



Photo: Caroline Russell

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Do you have a local news story you would like to see in a future edition of Highbury Community News?

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# ‘Fighting Apartheid in Islington’ - Islington Museum’s recent exhibition

By SARAH POTTER

Islington Museum’s recent exhibition on “Fighting Apartheid in Islington” documented a significant social movement with strong local roots in our borough. Commitment, courage and willingness to face risk and danger emerged as the hallmarks of many of those who participated in this movement, who included shoppers, women activists, churchmen, councillors and Islington students from the Young Communist League working under-cover in South Africa.

The Anti-Apartheid Movement in the UK was first formed to boycott South African goods such as fruit, gold and clothing, following the call in 1959 of the President of the African National Congress, Albert Luthuli, for people in this country to support the movement. The boycott remained central to the UK Anti-Apartheid movement until 1994, when free multi-racial elections were called in South Africa and Nelson Mandela was elected President.

By 1986, with Mandela and other leading members of the ANC still in prison, anti-apartheid activism in this country was strong enough to achieve substantial success in promoting the boycott, with 27% of people at that time refusing to buy South African goods. Archive photographs in the exhibition showed members of the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Islington urging shoppers at Sainsbury’s in Holloway Road to join the boycott in 1986, and in 1987 picketing the Shell garage opposite, since Shell were evading the oil embargo then in place against South Africa and still supplying oil.

Organisations crucial in opposing Apartheid here also had their offices or their representatives located in the borough. Canon Collins of St Paul’s Cathedral, who had

contributed to the founding of the World Council of Churches and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, founded the International Defence and Aid Fund, which had its offices at 64 Essex Road in Islington from 1983. This organisation raised and managed to send to South Africa over a hundred million pounds for the legal defence of those tried for participation in the struggle against Apartheid, and for the support of their families. The Revd. David Haslam, minister at Claremont Chapel in White Lion Street in Islington, played a major role in the World Council of Churches’ Programme to Combat Racism in the 1970s and 80s, which was at the forefront of efforts to stop companies investing in South Africa.

At 28 Penton Street, just off the Pentonville Road in Islington, was the UK office of the African National Congress from 1978 to 1994, another very significant channel of support for the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. On 14<sup>th</sup> March 1982, an explosion caused major damage to the building, and a research worker was injured. In 1999, at the Truth and Reconciliation Committee, the South African security police admitted responsibility for the bombing. The attack could have been an attempt on the life of Oliver Tambo, who was expected in the office that morning to give a briefing for an ANC rally later that day.

Islington Council was one of the main local authorities in London acting against Apartheid by boycotting South African goods, disinvesting in South Africa, and supporting sporting and cultural boycotts. Islington Mayor Bob Crossman joined the four year picket of the South African Embassy which began in 1986.

The Museum’s next exhibition, Echoes of Holloway Prison, opens on Friday 13 July and runs until October.

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# Farang: local Thai restaurant

By SEB HOLMES, CHEF AT FARANG  
72 Highbury Park, N5 2XE

I find it very amusing seeing the look on people's faces when they ask how many years I have spent in Thailand learning how to cook, when I respond with the honest answer, "I learned how to cook Thai food in Peckham".

I still consider myself an accidental chef. I fell in love with food when I stepped into my first pub kitchen in Oxfordshire for work experience when I was a kid. Since then I have been cooking full and part time for the rest of my life so far, breaking only to travel and get a degree in Journalism from Kingston University. When I finished University, I knew I wanted to cook and I knew I wanted to write about it, however all the bits in between I had absolutely no idea of, so I packed my bag full of chef whites, knives and CVs and stomped my way towards the bright lights of London.



Almost immediately I found myself at the Begging Bowl in Peckham. It was this restaurant that developed my knowledge and understanding of good quality Thai food, into a passion that I have now devoted my career to. I was lucky enough to work closely with some amazing people who taught me a lot about the cuisine, the culture and Thai cooking methods. After a few years here I was delighted to get asked to join the Smoking Goat, Soho, as the head chef for the launch of their Thai street food barbecue restaurant. This was a smash hit and still is.

Just over a year ago, I started my own Thai street food restaurant concept called 'Farang London'. This restaurant ended up being in Highbury as my step-father Marco Fossaluzza was about to retire from running his Italian restaurant, 'San Daniele', and there was an opportunity for me to step in and keep the site as a family-run restaurant. Even my mother Vicky, has stuck around to help me run 'Farang'. Increasingly I'm surrounded by family helping me to run the place with Marco offering his words of business wisdom whenever I call on him. 'Farang' has really been welcomed by the local area, so much so that now most of the staff live within walking distance of the restaurant. We take great pride in our focus of making everything we possibly can ourselves, using only the best quality ingredients we can get our hands on and the community seems to have really supported what we are trying to do.

Come and give us a try sometime!

The **Highbury Community Association (HCA)** represents local residents and businesses living and working in Highbury, Lower Holloway and Finsbury Park. **Membership is free.** Members receive bi-monthly newsletters like this one. New members will receive the newsletter by email (unless you don't have email). To join or talk to us about anything Highbury-related, visit our website, or email [hcanews@hotmail.com](mailto:hcanews@hotmail.com). The HCA can also be contacted on Facebook and Twitter.

The opinions expressed in Highbury Community News are not necessarily those of the HCA.

**Please let us know if you move, so we can keep our membership list up to date.**

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# Christ Church Highbury granted planning permission for new community centre



Architect's impression of how the new community centre will look

By ROSIE STRACHAN

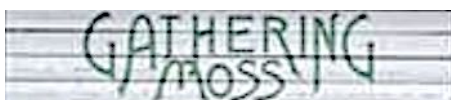
Good news from Christ Church Highbury - they received news last month that their application to build a new community centre has been accepted by Islington Council. The church wishes to thank Highbury Community Association for its support for this exciting project.

The plans for the new community centre have been created by award-winning outfit Matthew Lloyd Architects which specialises in producing sensitively-designed spaces to complement existing church buildings. Christ Church Highbury, despite having a congregation of over 130 and offering many community outreach groups, does not currently have a church hall. The new centre will include office space for the clergy and other staff, a versatile communal space for a range of church and community

activities and a small cafe. The plans have been endorsed by the Victorian Society which is vital given the church is a listed Victorian building. Tania Witter, priest in charge at Christ Church Highbury, said: 'we are so thrilled to pass this milestone. The centre will be a huge asset to our church mission of 'roots down, branches out' which basically means that we want to grow in faith and serve our community. Everyone is very excited about the decision and looking forward to seeing the plans realised.'

The planning permission lasts for three years so the next step is for Christ Church Highbury's new vicar, (who will start in August), and its community centre committee to consider the fundraising plan and project timings.

The church again thanks HCA for its support in reaching this outcome. For more information of Christ Church Highbury's community work and worship, please visit: [www.christchurchhighbury.com](http://www.christchurchhighbury.com)



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HCA News | Issue 106 | July 2018

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### Scrutiny of HCA Accounts

Those members who were present at the AGM will know that the 2017 accounts have not yet been independently scrutinised.

Is there someone who can and will do this, please? It should only take an hour or two, once a year.

If you can help, please email John Egan at [egan17a@virginmedia.com](mailto:egan17a@virginmedia.com).

# Keeping the Highbury Community Association going...

## New Committee Members

If you are able to give two evening hours, about 6 times a year, to serve on the Committee we would love to hear from you. We mainly discuss the sorts of local issues which appear in the Newsletter, over the Highbury area broadly defined, from Finsbury Park in the north to Highbury Fields and Highbury Corner in the south.

Over recent years, our main concerns have been influencing planning applications; improving the environment and enhancing traffic management.

We would also love to hear from you if are interested in the many literary figures we have living in the

area, or in local history issues (like the excellent article on the anti-Apartheid movement in Islington in this issue of the newsletter). Members of the Committee have different interests and we all share some responsibilities.

To find out more, write to Diane Burridge ([dianeurridge@btinternet.com](mailto:dianeurridge@btinternet.com)) ,

Sarah Potter ([sc.potter57@outlook.com](mailto:sc.potter57@outlook.com)) or to the newsletter editor Gill Shepherd ([gillshepherd@compuserve.com](mailto:gillshepherd@compuserve.com)).



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