



# HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

FROM THE HIGHBURY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

## Islington Foodbank: responding to food poverty

Islington Foodbank was started in March 2011 against the background of a long period of food poverty in the borough. Chi Ifeacho coordinates Islington's two sites, York House, 207-221 Pentonville Rd., N1, and 49 Tufnell Park Rd., N4, opening hours 2-5pm Mondays and Saturdays. These are part of the Trussell Trust's network of almost 400 foodbanks nationwide. The Trust is a Christian charity committed to community action against poverty and marginalisation in British society. The economic downturn has seen the need for foodbanks soar across the UK, with three new branches opening per week, feeding 346,992 people in the last year compared with 25,899 in 2008-09. Quoting government indices on deprivation, the Trust points out in its on-line video, about 13 million people in Britain now live below the poverty line, which according to the latest statistics represents 21 per cent of the population. In Islington the Council's Child Poverty Needs Assessment 2013 estimates between 35-45 per cent of children in the borough aged 0-19 are living in poverty, half of these in severe poverty.

Foodbanks provide emergency food boxes containing up to three days supply of meals per week for people who cannot afford to feed themselves or their families. Vouchers are issued to individuals who are referred by frontline care professionals such as doctors, health

visitors, social workers, CAB staff and police. Foodbanks are only equipped to provide emergency support and clients are limited to three consecutive food vouchers to prevent dependency. Volunteers make time to chat with clients over a cup of tea or a meal, which enables them to signpost individuals to other agencies for help with longer-term economic problems.

Like all foodbanks, Islington's relies on public donations for its food supplies, which are made through schools, churches, businesses and by individuals. Food items (see shopping list) need to be non-perishable and in-date. Some supermarkets have run one-off initiatives that have raised awareness, for example, in October volunteers collected over 413 kg of food from Waitrose on Liverpool Rd which had been purchased by shoppers.

You can make a donation of food in person to the foodbank or a financial contribution to the Trussell Trust's bank account either a single payment or a regular standing order. Trussell Trust bank: RBS plc 14 Minster St, Salisbury SP1 1TP Sort code: 16-00-21 Account No: 41129077

The HCA will also be collecting food on behalf of our community at our January social, so please do come and if you can, bring along something from the shopping list. The foodbank is always looking for new volunteers and if you want to find out more or take part visit [www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)

or contact Chi via email [info@islington.foodbank.org.uk](mailto:info@islington.foodbank.org.uk) or phone 07956 334 299.  
TOM RUBENS

### Shopping List

Milk (UHT or powdered), Sugar (500g), Fruit juice (carton), Soup, Pasta sauces, Sponge pudding (tinned), Tomatoes (tinned), Cereals, Rice pudding (tinned), Tea Bags/ instant coffee, Instant mash potato, Rice/pasta, Tinned meat/fish, Tinned fruit, Jam, Biscuits or snack bars.

### Party!

#### Come and meet neighbours & members of Highbury Community Association!

We will be hosting a social at the Ecology Centre, Drayton Park, 6.30-10pm on 24th January to cheer us up in those grey post-Christmas days.

All welcome & please RSVP to [hcanews@hotmail.com](mailto:hcanews@hotmail.com) so we have a rough sense of numbers, and bring some food to share. Wine and soft drinks at the bar.



The HCA represents over 900 residents and businesses on all aspects of 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, please email [hcanews@hotmail.com](mailto:hcanews@hotmail.com)

The opinions expressed in HCN are not necessarily those of the Highbury Community Association and its committee members.

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## Highbury Fields School celebrates

The girls of Highbury Fields School proudly showed their many visitors round their newly equipped and refurbished school at the Celebration Event for the completion of the building programme on 11th October. Technology, catering, science, dance, art and music are all now being taught in specialist classrooms at the school with significant benefits such as the excellent choir. The mayor and many council members and local MP Jeremy Corbyn attended in full support of its headmistress Gladys Berry and the school. Robert Peston, BBC Business Editor, spoke wholeheartedly in favour of comprehensive education, and the effective way it had prepared him and his family members for living and working in the wider society. Highbury Fields School now ranks in the top 10% of secondary schools in the country on the basis of its GCSE results and the girls' high attainment at Key Stages 3-4. SARAH POTTER

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## Planning Updates

**Arsenal Student Tower:** In our September issue, we reported that the High Court had supported Islington Council's decision against Arsenal FC (trading as Ashburton Trading) which refused Planning Permission for the proposed Student Accommodation tower at 45 Hornsey Road. Unfortunately, after we went to press, we heard that Arsenal had approached the Appeal Court for leave to appeal against the High Court ruling. This has been granted and it is expected that the Appeal Court will hear the case between January and April 2014. This is very disappointing, as Islington Council had a very clear and compelling case. We do wonder if the Club will ever let go of this matter - their jaws seem clamped around it like a terrier with no thought of ever letting go.

**Arsenal Additional Concerts Application:** The Council turned down the application to increase the number of non-football events and concerts. Just like with the Student Tower, the Club has appealed and a Planning Appeal hearing will be held on 10th-19th December 2013. HCA will be attending and presenting its own evidence in support of the Council's case. ROGER WRIGHT



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## Shopping locally this Christmas

According to figures cited in a recent article in The Independent on Sunday, the average person spends £445 at Christmas and in Highbury we are very fortunate to be able to do our shopping locally with less stress, excellent choice and personal service. At The Barn, To Be Established has presents for all, from babies to adults and stocks charity cards, diaries and calendars. Raymonds has bargain wraps, tags and a range of crafts, while Woodland Hardware has lights, candles and decorations. Godfrey's sells high quality poultry, game and meat and La Fromagerie has Stilton and Cheddar alongside their excellent French cheeses, such as Vacherin. Wine Rack always has a special offer going on good wines. Five Boys stocks fruit punch and gluten-free puddings and mince pies. At Kobkun Thai Therapy, with a £10 voucher, you can have a ten minute head and shoulder massage. Down Blackstock Road, towards Finsbury Park, Highbury Vintners are offer free local delivery on Christmas cases of wine and hire out glasses, Seasons and Blossoms stocks local produce including seasonal vegetables and fruit, and home-made preserves and jams. Gift shop Louis Farouk brims with colour and an eclectic mix of decorative glass and homewares, bound books, clothing and jewellery, while Gathering Moss' gift inspirations include, hand-made cards, candle-holders, buddhas, baskets and jewellery. Wools and Crafts stock craft kits for adults and children, and tapestry and wools, as well as cards. There are of course many of other individual local shops to explore too! SARAH POTTER

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# The Highbury Barn- A review

Located on a site of historical significance - see the plaque on the wall outside commemorating the 1381 Peasants' Revolt - the tavern started life as a tea garden in the 1740s and has undergone several metamorphoses since. The latest renovation returned the ceiling to its full height and reinstated many Victorian features, which are integrated with a contemporary 'pared-down chic' aesthetic. We booked for a Tuesday evening at 7pm. Having passed through the busy bar to the restaurant, sitting at our table the atmosphere was comfortable and ambient; the open kitchen and the background chatter from the bar, the tranquil colours, candlelit tables and comfy chairs. Although there were only diners at a couple of other tables, the familiar awkward feeling that can hang over an early evening booking was absent, and within an hour the restaurant had filled up.

Describing the cuisine as "modern British" Head Chef Steffan Isaac, who joined The Barn from The Walbrook Club in the City, has curated a seasonal menu which offers a good range of dishes, especially the starters and main courses. Not sure what to expect of the 'corn beef hash on a bed of spinach and a fried egg' (£5.95), we took the plunge and were impressed by the attractive presentation, taste and textures. Likewise, the complementary flavours of the 'beetroot and goat's cheese salad with roasted pine nuts and rocket' (£4.95) were perfectly balanced. The expectations set by the standard of

our starters were matched by the main courses. The pork belly on a bed of potato dauphinoise, with spiced creamed cabbage and a baked apple (£15.50) was delicious, the only thing missing was a bit of crispy crackling. As an in-house specialty we had to try one of the popular homemade pies. Choosing the fish option, the pie was a generous mix of sea bass, cod, salmon, prawns and scallops in a creamy and rich sauce, flavoured delicately with fresh dill and topped with a thin layer of browned mashed potato, served with a colourful side salad (£11.95). Using familiar ingredients, each dish we chose demonstrated a flair for innovative flavour combinations, testament to both Steffan's inspiration and the talented chefs. In the absence of any lighter option and with the lemon posset finished, we opted for the warm chocolate brownie and sticky-toffee pudding from a comparatively tame list of rather heavy desserts. But, as Steffan explained, the menu is seasonal and reflects the demand for "winter warmers". We accompanied the meal with a glass of Chardonnay and a notable Shiraz, recommended by our friendly waitress from an ample and averagely-priced wine list.

Food prices average around £6 for a starter and range between £8.95 and £19.95 for mains which, based on what we ate, seemed reasonable given the quality and generous portions. Deserts are all £5.50. While the preponderance of dishes include either meat (from Godfrey's) or fish, there are vegetarian options comprising of familiar dishes with a gastro twist such as the Vegetarian Wellington, made with wild mushroom, lentils,

hazelnuts and cranberry and served with sautéed potatoes.

Overall the experience was pleasingly impressive, with the high-quality food service and interior successfully adding to the history and character of the establishment, an altogether good value 'modern-British' experience. 2 course dinner for two with a glass of wine each, £50. The pub serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, with Sunday Lunch and other offers available during the week listed on their website: [www.thehighburybarnpub.co.uk](http://www.thehighburybarnpub.co.uk)  
HARRIET/LUCY BRADLEY

## Roundhouse festivities



Highbury Roundhouse is holding a Santa's Grotto & Christmas Market with local market stalls selling festive goods and treats

from mulled wine and hot drinks to cupcakes and cured meat. There will be fun activities for the kids, making Christmas lanterns, ornaments and cards as well as the opportunity to meet Santa at the Winter Wonderland with carol singing and a live band. Please join us to support and help raise awareness of the new community centre and most importantly, to have fun on Saturday 14th December from 12 to 3.30pm at the Highbury Roundhouse Car Park.

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# GetMore: welcome to social enterprise 2.0

Islington-based GetMore (founded 2011) is an award-winning family of social enterprises that runs GetMoreBikes, GetMoreFood and Thrifty Couture, all strongly committed to environmental sustainability- reducing waste and pollution- and the community. Profits are reinvested in an apprentice fund which helps employ young residents in London and trains them as cycle mechanics, 'upcyclers' and cooks.

Launched in 2012, GetMoreBikes offers both training and professional mobile mechanics' services across London. Teaming up with ATG Training, the country's leading provider of cycle mechanics' training and qualifications, workshops are open to individuals and businesses alike and teach everything from safety and basic mechanics, cycle maintenance and servicing to refurbishment of used bikes. Its mobile services are delivered by mechanics on freight bikes who provide a flexible, on demand service, from cycle maintenance, servicing and cycle repairs to technical support for charity rides. In a puncture emergency, think AA-type rescue service for bikes. Brilliant.



So delivering low carbon mobile bike maintenance and repair, what about what we wear when riding around? As I soon found out, Judith has that covered too! Enter Thrifty Couture, functional and stylish designer bike-wear for women, with a men's line coming soon. Judith told me that in 2007 DEFRA cited a whopping 1.2 million tonnes of unwanted but useable clothing being sent to landfill each year. So, employing innovative design and quality workmanship, Thrifty Couture applies 'closed-loop' thinking to fashion, diverting usable textiles away from landfill to produce functional and desirable new clothing. To date they have upcycled 2.81 tonnes of waste clothing and cloth and in the GetMore spirit, to satisfy

customer demand Thrifty Couture provides dress-making training opportunities for unemployed young people from inner city London and ex-offenders and helps older and retired residents refresh their skills. Judith hopes the Thrifty model inspires people to start their own designer-maker businesses.

Headed up by chef, Jean-Pierre Paris, at its heart GetMoreFood aims to educate people about good food and nutrition. The bottom line is, as Judith remarks, 'Good food makes people happy - it really is that simple!'. Providing both training in food preparation and employment opportunities for cooks, their catering service uses fresh, seasonal ingredients - often in glut - from local shops to produce quality dishes at affordable prices, cooked with 'love'. Their catering service is tailored on an event by event basis and Jean-Pierre is happy to quote for any size or type of event and any budget, from small dinner parties to large corporate events (see their website for menus, including bread and cakes made from organic and specialist gluten/wheat free flours). He also runs small weekly breadmaking and French cooking workshops that are open to all, with subsidised or free places to local residents.

Talking over a cup of coffee - which should be noted was fair-trade and organic! - at their Angel hub, Judith explained how the money raised through workshops is ploughed back into GetMore's community initiative; hiring local, unemployed 16 to 25 year-olds and offering skills training and professional qualifications, with mentoring and support for those who wish to further their own sustainable business or employment opportunities. Judith is clearly proud of the young people that have come on board and embraced the opportunities on offer with enthusiasm and dedication, citing that three quarters of apprentices have gone on to full time employment, work experience or further education. GetMore incorporates sustainability into their day-to-day activities. This includes growing vegetables, herbs and fruit in their office grounds; transporting materials and delivering their catering service by bike, as far as possible. Given what we have learned about air pollution in the borough (see Tom Rubens' article) it is clear that we should celebrate innovative local enterprises that demonstrate consistent commitment to environmental objectives throughout their business model. GetMore is offering our readers:

15% discount on Thrifty Bikewear. [www.thriftybikewear.com](http://www.thriftybikewear.com) Enter code: D64DB79 at the checkout. Valid until 31/01/2014 and 15% off GetMoreBikes' DIY Maintenance Classes. <http://getmorebikes.wordpress.com/services/workshops/> Email [bikes@getmore.so](mailto:bikes@getmore.so) with 'Highbury Community Offer' in the subject line. Valid until 31/01/2014 LUCY BRADLEY

## Air Quality Summit in Islington

The second Islington and Camden air quality summit was held on 17 October at Islington Town Hall, the first being 2011. The meeting addressed problems and proposed solutions. People also questioned whether the European Union Safety Limits are sufficiently stringent, when compared with those of the World Health Organisation. As our air pollution article in the September 2013 issue set out, dangerously high levels of pollution have been recorded and there is strong evidence of poorer health and higher mortality rates in areas with low air quality. In Islington and Camden, the chief source of pollution is diesel vehicles, which are largely 'through' traffic. Regarding solutions, Richard Watts, the new Leader of Islington Council, emphasised that the chief responsibility lies with the Mayor of London and the traffic systems under his control. Nevertheless, it was remarked that at the local level much can and is being done, such as schools promoting carbon reduction, introducing minimal speed-limits, improving cycle lanes, car-free/play streets, and using freight bikes for shop deliveries. The Council will be participating in a London-wide consultation on cycle lanes organised by Transport for London, which in light of the recent high number of cyclist deaths is much needed. Car-free streets include Cowcross St., Chapel Market and Exmouth Market. In play streets car movement is banned at specific times to encourage children to play safely outside. This was a valuable meeting, where participants displayed deep engagement with issues of paramount importance. All the responses the Council's Air Quality Consultation with official bodies are now being examined, and a final strategy will be released in Spring, 2014. In the meantime the Council remains open to all ideas from unofficial sources on how to improve air quality, email [Sukky.Choongh@islington.gov.uk](mailto:Sukky.Choongh@islington.gov.uk) TOM RUBENS

## Richard Meyers remembered

Many of you who have come on walks or to talks over the years at Gillespie Park will have had the great pleasure of being guided by Richard Meyers, a dedicated nature conservation officer for Islington Council for nearly 17 years. It is with great sadness we learnt that Richard passed away unexpectedly in October.

Richard, who retired as a Nature Conservation Ranger in 2011, was a self-taught naturalist who took a keen personal interest in Gillespie Park and the Parkland Walk. As the Friends of the Parkland Walk noted in their own obituary, he played a key part in the development of the tree walk that runs between the acid grassland on the Parkland Walk and Blythwood Road, and it was Richard who first drew attention to the importance of the acid grassland there. Following retirement, Richard volunteered on Thursday mornings at Gillespie Park, so dedicated was he to the Park and nature conservation in Islington. With the Friends of Gillespie Park, Richard also helped to organize the Gillespie Park Festival for several years, and gave talks to school groups visiting the Ecology Centre, as well as energetically leading evening bat and dawn chorus walks. He engaged audiences in a range of topics, chiefly the flora and fauna found within Gillespie Park, and how they interact with their respective habitats, as well as leading sessions on the creatures inhabiting our ponds, meadows and woodlands. With a unique perspective on nature and fascinated by the folklore associated with birds, trees and wild flowers, Richard could explain how many plants got their common names and have been used over time for medicinal and culinary purposes. The Ecology Centre has a collection box in the office and proceeds will go towards a memorial that will reflect his love for conservation in the area.

DIANE BURRIDGE

## Ladbroke House redevelopment



Originally known as Cossor House and built for the A.C. Cossor company as its factory, this building was a key element in wartime radar production. The building was sold in 1958 and converted into offices, becoming known as

Ladbroke House and ending up as part of London Metropolitan University. Now no longer required by the University, it has been sold and proposals have been drawn up to convert it to apartments. HCA is concerned that this proposal is another step in the "suburbanisation" of Highbury. Every large planning application since the Arsenal redevelopment has resulted in workplaces being converted to residential accommodation - the NCH building, Aberdeen Studios (of which many were sold to foreign investors) and now this. Each results in less employment in Highbury and more people commuting elsewhere to work, leading to the economy of Highbury being hollowed out. Part of the nature of Highbury, certainly since it was developed in Victorian times, is that it has had a mixed economy with people both living and working here. Recent Council Policies and Planning approvals have damaged this and Islington Council seems intent on turning Highbury into a "dormitory suburb". HCA will make these points in response to the proposal for Ladbroke House.

ROGER WRIGHT



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## St Thomas'- a hive of community activity in Highbury and beyond

In October Reverend Stephen Coles of St Thomas' Church (N4) received the honorary title of Prebendary of Wenlocks barn in St Paul's Cathedral for his 'services rendered to the Diocese of London'. He is also a member of the General Synod, being re-elected three times. At St Thomas' since 1989, Stephen has become well-known for his community activism, inter-faith work and advocacy for equal rights, including for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT).

The geographical area covered by St Thomas' parish is shared with the North London Central Mosque. Women from the mosque and the church are leading inter-faith work, supported by St Thomas' assistant priest, Pauline Nashashibi. Their work aims to promote greater understanding between local Christians and Muslims who, according to the 2011 census, together make up about 50 per cent of the local population. Stephen cites the example of a recent open day at the church when Muslim women brought food and helped church members to serve teas and refreshments.

International interfaith work has recently focused on raising funds - £4,000 to date- for 'Hand in Hand for Syria', an aid charity run by Syrian exiles in the UK which delivers vital medicine, food, housing and education to internally displaced Syrian refugees. Since 1998 St Thomas' has been linked with a parish in Mozambique's capital, Maputo and has been involved in a

longstanding Christian/Muslim project run by their bishop to buy mosquito nets. Stephen points out malaria is the country's biggest killer, greater than HIV. St Thomas' is also currently raising funds to buy computers for young people in the church in Maputo.

Closer to home, Stephen participates in local community initiatives, attending many meetings including those of Friends of Gillespie Park and Highbury West Ward Partnership. He is also a trustee of Highbury Vale Blackstock Trust which runs Elizabeth House and was one of the initial group of volunteers in the early 1990s who saved the building in Hurlock Street for ongoing community use. Functioning as a community centre since the 1950s, Elizabeth House re-opened in 2002 after a two-year refurbishment and runs a lively programme of after school and youth clubs, youth-oriented weekly activities from art to exercise and sports classes, as well as a holiday play scheme.

Underpinning all these initiatives is the desire to promote and nurture social cohesion and understanding, enhance communal wellbeing, and to link locals together whether religious or not. Several years ago a Street Drinkers' Project was run at the church in response to a survey of local residents which had identified on-street drinkers as a problem in the area. Stephen said his Church was keen not to just shift this social problem to another neighbourhood, as "these [people] are our neighbours".

Other current community involvement includes St Thomas' congregation collecting food and toiletries for the Islington Refugee Centre in Cross Street, N1, and, in line with growing interest across the country, the Parochial Church Council is considering what degree of involvement it might have with the local credit union. Stephen commented this is still at a very early stage, and that in the New Year they are hoping to learn more from discussions with staff from the London Capital Credit Union.

St Thomas' itself continues to host a vibrant range of activities throughout the week. Since 1991 parents have run a weekday morning playgroup; on Mondays a Baby and Bump group meets in mornings, while a chess club runs in the evening; on the third Monday of each month an informal women's singing group fills the hall with song and each Tuesday evening Highbury Chamber Choir rehearses there. On Thursdays there is a tea and chat drop-in from 2-4pm and in the evening the Hall is home to Guides and Rangers groups. On Sunday afternoons the Pentecostal Church worships there. This autumn the church also ran a popular film programme screening films from the 'Life of Brian' to 'London River' and 'Son of Man' - screenings will recommence in the New Year, so keep an eye out for updates. Every May with residents in Avenell Road, the church organises a street party and also runs a marquee at the yearly Gillespie Park Festival.  
DIANE BURRIDGE