

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

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A new community centre for Highbury

By TANIA WITTER

Right on church path, where Jack's coffee cart stands at present, Christ Church plans to build a new community centre. It will be an attractive, low, one-storey building, which will be easily accessible to all and will have a reception area, church office, one large, or two smaller meeting rooms and a small cafe and kitchen. This building has been beautifully designed by Matthew Lloyd Architects.

Our vision for this building is that it will enable us to be more open to the world and to connect better to the community. The space we have in the church itself is used almost to capacity by various groups meeting through the week and by the church congregation on Sunday. This new building will allow us to expand our children and youth work and will enrich what we can offer to the community and our charity partners. In addition to having more space for projects we already run, such as the winter night-shelter, the Memory Cafe, and the community playgroup, we will hope to develop new ministries of benefit to the wider community.

There will be more space for community groups to rent for their activities and we will make a proportion of the time free for charitable purposes. It is our hope that the new building will be a real asset to the community, as well as enabling the



church to expand its own ministries.

We have all the necessary permissions in place and are ready to start building, as soon as we have secured funds for 85% of the cost (approx £1 million). We are well on

the way and have launched the 'Heart of Highbury' campaign to raise the rest of the funds needed.

We are running a number of social events, which we hope will raise awareness of this project.

Christ Church would like to invite you to a garden party on Sunday 30 June, from 12:00pm to 3:00pm, which will be a day of fun activities and a chance to contribute to the realisation of this exciting project.

The Garden Party at Christ Church (next to the Clock Tower at 155 Highbury Grove, N5 1SA) will be officially opened by local celebrity Clive Anderson.

Control measures agreed for the Community and Wireless festivals

By DIANE BURRIDGE

Representatives from the HCA and other residents, met with Council Officers and Festival Republic (the concert organisers) on 15 May 2019 to give feedback on plans to improve security, cleaning, anti-social behaviour, and crowd and traffic movements during and after the Community Festival on 30 June and the Wireless Festival on 5, 6 and 7 July. Melvin Benn, the Director of Festival Republic and Claire Armstrong from Festival Republic attended, as well as Council Officers from Noise Control, Traffic Management and Licencing. The meeting was chaired by Niall Forde from Public Protection in the Environment and the Regeneration Section of Islington. Cllr Una O'Halloran, Executive Member for Community Development, is now the lead councillor for this initiative.

45,000 people are expected each day with live music acts ending at 9.30pm on 30 June and 7 July, and at 10.30pm on 5 and 6 July.

Further improvements will hopefully include the following:

- The Council and Festival Republic will meet with residents living in

Finsbury Park Ward and Highbury West Ward in June, and the morning after each event day to monitor the situation.

- Noise monitoring point: There will be one point in Highbury West outside 2 Romilly Road, decided upon by Officers from an analysis of complaints last year. The HCA expressed concern that noise levels can be worse on the upper floors of buildings. Islington Officers will do 'roving' monitoring also.

- There will be three Active Hotlines for noise and other disturbances. The Residents' Information Line is: 020 8396 7701. Festival Republic will employ a Resident Liaison Officer to respond to concerns. This number of Hotlines is an increase from only one in 2018, when people complained that it was often not answered. Hotlines will operate from 22 to 29 June from 8am to 8pm whilst the stages for the Community Festival are being set up; from 8am to 2am on 30 June during the actual Community Festival. And from 1-4 July from 8am -8pm during the setting up of stages etc for the Wireless Festival, and then from 8am to 2am during the Festival Days on 5, 6 and 7 July.

- If the Hotline number does not work, local Councillors can be con-

tacted. Residents in Islington can call Haringey's Licencing section on 020 8489 8232 during office hours and 020 8489 0000 during out of office times.

- A Response Team of 10 people will be employed, to encourage Festival Goers not to travel through residential streets but to walk along Seven Sisters Road to the tube stations when going home. There will be staffed road closures along Blackstock Road, at the junctions with Ambler, Monsell, Chatterton & Gillespie Roads; along Gillespie Road at the junctions with Plimsoll, Avenell and St Thomas's Roads; and at the north entrances to Prah and St Thomas's Roads. Local residents and their friends/visitors will be able to enter these roads.

- There will be a geofence for Uber for the 90 minutes during which the Seven Sisters Road is closed at the end of the Festivals.

- Temporary toilets outside Finsbury Park will be trialled, not too near people's homes: when such toilets were placed in nearby Hackney streets last year, people complained. There will also be more toilets within the Park this year.

- The Council is writing to and visiting off-licences in the area to ask

Continued on page 3...

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Continued from page 2...

them not to sell alcoholic drinks in glass containers, and not to sell more than four cans to any one person.

These measures build on the experience of Hackney Council which has worked pro-actively with Festival Republic to protect residents as far as possible. Let us hope that loud noise levels, anti-social behaviour, and traffic chaos are all reduced this year. Please do use the Hotline and feedback to the Council for any problems.

And please do contact HCA via the website or the email address with your thoughts on or responses to the impact of this summer's festival. If you would like to monitor impact regularly and join monitoring meetings, we would be delighted to hear from you too.

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Final update on Sainsbury's planning application for the Old Police Station on the Blackstock Road

By SARAH POTTER

Last August, Islington Council planners refused planning permission for a Sainsbury's convenience store at 211 Blackstock Road with an on-street parking bay for their delivery lorries. This bay would have occupied part of the pavement outside the store, necessitating the loss of two street trees.

HCA joined the campaign of local people against Sainsbury's planning application and submitted an objection to the plan. Since then, Sainsbury's have appealed to the Planning Inspectorate against the Council's refusal. Local people again campaigned and submitted evidence against this move by Sainsbury's, including the HCA.

The Planning Inspector's decision on the appeal was issued last month on May 21st.

Sainsbury's application in their appeal for planning permission for the loading bay and the use of the Blackstock Road site for retail purposes has now been dismissed by the Inspector.

In reaching this decision, the Inspector's findings were that neither the removal of trees nor the loading bay were in line with the Development Management Policies of

the Islington Local Plan. It was noted in the report that the two trees are significant as the first two in a line of street trees running south, and that their loss would have a 'significant detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the street scene', contrary to the Local Plan and an associated policy which protects green infrastructure.

It was also noted that the use of the proposed loading bay by Sainsbury's delivery lorries would result in displacing parking in the area, thus affecting other road users and buses.

Risks to pedestrians and cyclists arising from the use of the loading bay were also identified. The Inspector concluded that harm to the 'safe and efficient use of the highway' required by the Development Management Policies would result from Sainsbury's proposed bay.

In all, the Planning Inspector's decision upholds last year's refusal of planning permission by Islington Council planners.

An acceptable use now needs to be found for this site. Highbury East Councillor Sue Lukes has asked HCA whether we will join the local debate on this issue. **We would like to invite suggestions from our members, and formulate a response at our next committee meeting.**

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Facing up to the ‘climate emergency’ in Islington

By BEN GRIFFITH, member of Islington Extinction Rebellion

The demands of Extinction Rebellion (XR) moved to the forefront of the agenda following April’s actions – ‘tell the truth, work for net zero carbon emissions by 2025 and set up a citizen’s assembly to decide how we achieve these aims’. During the month, XR met with the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove MP, and the House of Commons passed a motion declaring a climate emergency. But fine words need to be followed by urgent radical action.

The civil disobedience followed months of preparation. Locally, we established Islington Extinction Rebellion; we leafleted, put up posters and organised public meetings, including a packed event at the Ecology Centre in Gillespie Park. We continue to work alongside other campaigns like Fossil Free Islington and the monthly school strikes. On the 23rd April, local children handed a letter to Jeremy Corbyn’s constituency office, urging him to take the lead. More than 500 people signed a petition to Islington Council urging them to set up a citizen’s assembly, which we handed to Councillor Claudia Webbe on the steps of the Town Hall on 16th May. On 24th May, children from ten local primary schools marched along Upper Street.

Islington XR has now drawn in hundreds of members. A street party is being organised and we plan to reach out to local communities, set up stalls at local events, lobby Councillors, campaign through social media and tackle air pollution. A dozen working groups have been set up, all in a highly inclusive, mutually supportive and non-hierarchical spirit.

There is so much to do and almost no time to do it. As individuals we can consider our actions, but it is collective

and political action that is essential.

The emphasis of Extinction Rebellion is in the name – the need for mass involvement and civil disobedience, building on the excellent work of global environmental campaigners and addressing the almost total failure of our political leaders to rise to the challenge. Please contact Extinction Rebellion Islington via Facebook or twitter and help us avert worldwide ecological breakdown.

The Highbury West Ward Partnership Meeting is being held on Wednesday 26 June 2019 from 7.30pm to 9pm - at the Arsenal Hub, Benwell Road.

This meeting is open to residents and will, hopefully, discuss the results of monitoring of the new traffic management scheme in and around Gillespie Road. People who wish to give feedback to councillors and officers on this may wish to attend!



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Tackling crime and rough sleeping in the Finsbury Park area

By DIANE BURRIDGE

... TACKLING CRIME ...

Thankfully, after many complaints by local residents, concerted action is being taken to tackle local crime in the Finsbury Park area by the Metropolitan Police and Islington Council. Over the last year, there were 435 intelligence-led drug-related stops and more Police have been promised- as yet the number is still undecided.

A knife amnesty bin outside St Mellitus Church saw 651 knives deposited there over a three-month period, and moped-enabled snatch-theft has decreased by 70% across Islington.

In the Highbury West Ward, a new CCTV camera has been installed in a hotspot area covering Blackstock Road and the surrounding streets. The environment of the Blackstock Triangle Area has been reviewed and the Council has promised to improve lighting, cut back shrubs and reduce moped access. Stronger gates are planned for St Thomas's Church to stop nefarious activities going on there at night. Knives and drug paraphernalia have been left in the grounds of this Church recently.

The area under Stroud Green Road Bridge is being cleaned more regularly and works are now underway to improve the lighting. Calls to mobiles have been suspended from the BT InLink Booths on Seven Sisters Road and Blackstock Road as these booths were being used for drug dealing.

The Council is working with City and Islington College on Blackstock Road to redesign the layout of the main entrance where people congregate and can cause problems. A noticeable increase in fly-tipping is being dealt with by the Council visiting local businesses to advise them on responsibilities and procedures for waste disposal.

Youth Clubs, such as at Elizabeth House Community Centre on the Blackstock Estate and at Finsbury Park Mosque, are advertised to young people.

Various teams including the Integrated Gangs Team, based at Islington Police Station, and the Council's Youth Offending Service and The Exploitation and Missing Team have been set up. The Council's Anti-Social Behaviour Line is: 020 7527 7272. Website: www.islington.gov.uk/reportASB

If you see drug dealing/drug related activity, you can report this to the Police via 101. The next Police's Safer Neighbourhoods Meeting will be on Wednesday 26th June, from 6pm to 7.30pm at The Arsenal Hub, 56 Benwell Road, N7, if you wish to attend.

... TACKLING ROUGH SLEEPING ...

The appalling sight of up to ten people sleeping rough for months at a time under Stroud Green Road Bridge has questioned how civilised this country is - with the fifth largest economy in the world. Despite many complaints the numbers are not reducing. What many of us may be unaware of is that, over the past two years, Islington and Haringey Councils have supported 34 people into accommodation who were bedding down at this site. Despite this, some of these people have been drawn back to rough sleeping, due to the money that they can get from begging which can be used for Class A drugs. The worry is that the 'temporary' structures built are dangerous and people living in these are at great risk of harm. Islington Council is hoping to set up a 'Somewhere safe to stay hub'. The Council's plans to seek an injunction over begging and anti-social behaviour have now been scrapped due to feedback from groups helping homeless people, such as Street Kitchens.

For more information on what the Council is doing here please visit: www.islington.gov.uk/roughsleeping



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A new history of Anglo Saxon London

By SARAH POTTER

Rory Naismith's recent book *Citadel of the Saxons: The Rise of Early London* (I. B. Tauris, 2019) traces the history of London from the fifth to the eleventh century. Naismith concludes that by the Norman Conquest in 1066, Anglo-Saxon London had transformed itself into the leading city of the kingdom, with economic and military strength, and a close link with an increasingly powerful royal government. His story begins in the empty and ruinous provincial Roman city of *Londinium* in 400, which survived only in its name and its surviving walls once the Roman imperial armies withdrew from Britain. Then Saxons, Jutes and Angles, warriors and settlers, then began to move into the south and east of Britain. Two centuries later, a new Anglo-Saxon settlement known as *Lundenwic* emerged, different in population, language and character.

This settlement grew into a prosperous community of about 7000 sea-going traders and craftsmen which began to populate the area around today's Strand and Covent Garden, outside the Roman walls. Bede's History of 731 referred to it as 'an emporium (market) for many nations', benefitting from its river location near the sea and a period of economic growth and political stability among the emerging patchwork of Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.

The massive and devastating Viking raids and invasions affecting the country from the mid-ninth to the eleventh century changed London once again. The population relocated within the Roman walls, forming a growing settlement with the pattern of streets and many of the street names that still exist in today's City of London. In Naismith's view, the military threat of the Viking raids was the greatest risk faced by Londoners between Boudicca's sacking of the Roman city in 60/1 and the Blitz of the Second World War. Only by becoming warriors and



Photo: Matt Brown of londonist

defending their city against these numerous raids did Londoners preserve their prosperity and increase their trade. And by doing so, they laid the foundations for a unified Anglo-Saxon kingdom using London as its base. This alignment emerged first under King Alfred the Great from 878 and was consolidated by his increasingly powerful and effective successors from the end of the tenth century.

Naismith quotes the contemporary view of one of the knights who accompanied William at the time of the Norman Conquest. 'It is a most spacious city, full of evil inhabitants, and richer than anywhere else in the kingdom. Protected on the left by walls and on the right by the river, it fears neither armies nor capture by guile (p. 185)'. Naismith's own view of this community of some 20,000 in 1066 is that Anglo-Saxon London combined 'the tight-knit familiarity' of its small medieval scale with 'the self-importance that comes with the consciousness of being a major city (p. 9)'.

Sadly very little of this Anglo-Saxon city has survived above ground level. It lies buried deep beneath our modern city. A possible exception is a church, All Hallows-by-the-Tower, where the Blitz uncovered an archway that may be late Anglo-Saxon, especially since fragments of Anglo-Saxon sculptures were found there. However, most place names in the London area are Old English, the vernacular of the Anglo-Saxons. Some appear in records from the 7th and 8th centuries and many are first found in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book of 1086. Islington's Old English name appears in a manuscript of c. 1000 as Gislandune (Gisla's Hill), together with Tollandune (Tolla's Hill, now Tollington). The Domesday Book also records Islington's Upper Street, Lower Street (now the Essex Road) and Hollow Way, with a branch from this road crossing Tollandune along the route of the present Hornsey Road, according to Mary Cosh's History of Islington.

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The ballad of Highbury Barn

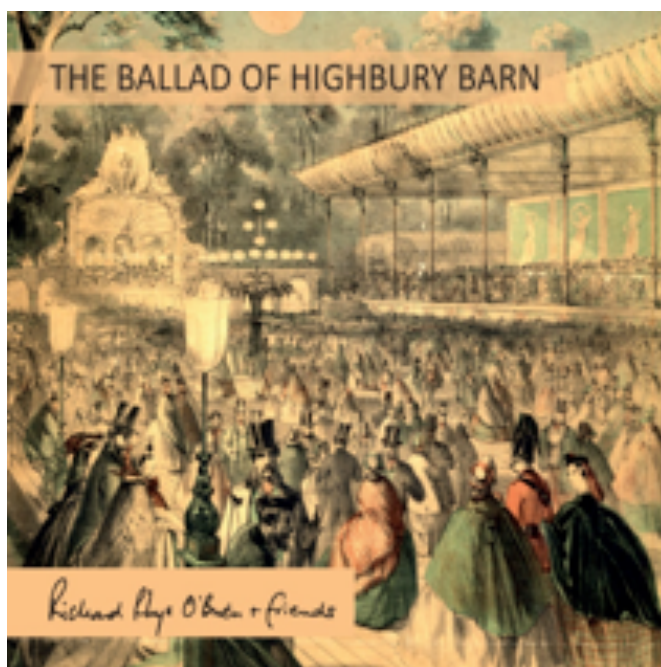
By RICHARD O'BRIEN

When Dave Poyser, the Mayor of Islington, switched on the Christmas lights at Highbury Barn in December 2018, he also brought back to life some moving echoes of the long-departed Highbury Barn pleasure gardens, closed down in 1872 for disturbing the residents of Highbury and for corrupting their morals.

Since December the 18 song CD *The Ballad of Highbury Barn* has raised more than £3,500 for the Mayor's two charities, CARIS (Islington's night shelters, and Freightliners Farm), and for the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants. Written, narrated and sung by Highbury Resident Richard O'Brien, supported by his musical friends especially from Highbury-based choir *Eclectic Voices*, the songs, with new tunes and with tunes performed back then, have brought back to life some of the drama of those days. When the Female Blondin tightrope walker fell almost to her death one rainy night, fireworks flashing on the ends of her pole; when hundreds of babies were lined

up to win prizes; when a member of the famous Green balloon family ascended over the borough; when Mlle Colonna's Can-Can troupe shocked the closely observing bobbies; when the resident musical director Charles Handel Rand Marriott's *Highbury Polka* helped thousands dance the night away on the Leviathan Platform, lit by half a million gas lights; when up to 4000 came for dinner under a huge marquee; and when 500 sugar bakers and their wives were not allowed a few tunes at their annual dinner. Not to mention the Highbury Dissenters and Oliver Goldsmith coming to take the country air and to eat well and cheaply at the Tavern.

CD sales were made possible thanks to the collective effort of more than 30 stalwarts of the Highbury community: shops, libraries, the museum, bars, churches, agencies, and hairdressers. They are still on sale, all money to the charities, at the Highbury Barn Tavern and at Kissawa Café, Corsica Street.

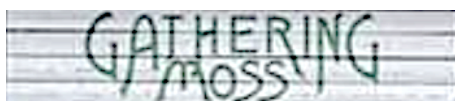


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'Inspiring Islington' photo exhibition

By SAIRA BANO

Most of us get inspired by a high achiever - perhaps a popular sportsman, singer, dancer, actor or politician. You wouldn't imagine that a person you come across every day on the street could bring you inspiration by the way they overcome the challenges of daily life. But sometimes a hidden tale beyond the ordinary makes these common people turn into our heroes.

Nicola Baird runs a blog about these extra ordinary people of everyday life, called: www.islingtonfacesblog.com. Recently the blog organised an exhibition in Islington Museum called 'Inspiring Islington'. The stunning pictures of these real life heroes were displayed in a low ceilinged room powerfully projecting the interesting stories behind these faces. There was an excerpt from the blog about each

image displayed, giving you a flavour of the lives on the other side of these pictures. Mrs Sau Li the lady from 'Mix' on Blackstock Road particularly caught my eye as a fascinating British Asian character. Ethiopian singer Hanisha Solomon's portrait also captured my attention.

Her upbeat songs bring people to the dance floor and that's what she likes about it, the feeling of hope on her beautiful face conveying a contagious joy. London based photographer Kimi Gill (who works in partnership with the writer/blogger Nicola Baird) has a real talent of bringing life in its purest with her shots.

On a wall in the gallery there was an opportunity given to the visitors to nominate their own idols by answering the question 'Who has inspired you?' Which was a great interaction feature and visitors young and old participated in it enthus-

astically. They drew faces of the people they have been inspired by, as well as by writing a little account of their achievements. Nicola took this opportunity to ask visitors to suggest on a wall in the gallery 'who should be there in next Islington Faces?' Features like that made the exhibition interactive and interesting. (www.islingtonfacesblog.com has 300+ interviews with people who live or work in Islington. Also see www.kimigill.com)

The Exhibition also showcased artefacts from Islington's past right up to the present. There was a mug and a newspaper cutting from *Islington Gazette* about Alfredo's café which was an Essex Road landmark for about 80 years until it closed down in 1999.

Also, there was a black bicorne hat with gold embellishment worn by male Islington Mayors until 2011. The hat was retired when it had faded and is now being kept in the Town hall. An Elizabeth House tote bag on display gives a contemporary Islington feel as well as some laughing gas canisters collected from the pavement.

Islington Museum, 245 St John Street, EC1V 4NB is open Mon-Sat 10am-5pm (closed Wed and Sun). Tel: 020 7527 2837. The Inspiring Islington show is going on tour and is due to be visiting Ringcross Community Centre, 60 Lough Road, N7 and also London Met University's post-grad campus on Holloway Road. Also look out for photos at The Cottonworks on Seven Sisters Road.

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