

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

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Tubes, buses, cars and bicycles



By DAVID FENTON AND
GILL SHEPHERD

In the last few days, Sadiq Khan has laid out the full horrors of the transport crisis facing London. Bus routes facing the axe or with their frequencies cut, and worn-out tube trains not replaced until the 2040s. Diesel buses still in use until 2037. And new cycle and pedestrian schemes ditched. Without guarantees, and something more than short-term bailouts, the whole system will enter a period of 'managed decline.'

These problems have been thrown into sharp relief by the limited use of tubes and buses made during the pandemic generating much lower income than usual. But problems are more profound than that.

The public transport networks of other world cities are not expected, even in normal times, to raise such a high proportion of costs through fares. While TfL has to contribute 72% of

overall costs through fares, Singapore only has to come up with 21%, New York, Paris and Hong Kong contribute about 38% and Madrid 47%. (TfL data). It is surely time for the same to apply in London. Business chiefs and unions have united to demand a proper long-term deal to protect services, and to help keep the city moving and maintaining its global reputation. But there are bigger implications too. As Ed Miliband pointed out recently, what happens to London Transport tubes and buses has profound implications for green transport and for a zero-carbon future.

Not only would it be impossible to make London's fleet of 9000 buses all zero emission by 2030, it would threaten Khan's efforts to bring down emissions and clean up London's air. The mayor has shown himself willing to work across party lines on a new deal for TfL, but ministers are putting party political interests ahead of the needs of the economy and the environment. Government talks the

talk on the climate emergency, but repeatedly fails to deliver.

TfL could save £200 million a year, says the mayor, if London buses went just 1 mph faster than they currently do. For that, more bus lanes are needed and choices need to be made about how buses can be prioritised in other ways, too.

But only too often, the very reverse is happening. In our own immediate Highbury area, the No. 19 and the No. 4 travelled at 8.4 and 8.3 mph immediately before the LTN trials, but by September 2021, average speeds had decreased to 6.8 mph in the case of the number 19 - a 19% reduction in speed - and 6.9 mph in the case of the No 4 - a 17% reduction (TfL bus performance data). These delays add up to thousands of lost hours for passengers, and steadily make it less likely that passengers will choose the bus in future.

Tubes, buses, cars and bicycles

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This is no way to get people to choose public over private transport. We need a far more comprehensive and inventive approach to the harmonisation of longer and shorter journeys in our large world city.

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The London Screen Academy

By TOM RUBENS



The London Screen Academy is fortunate enough to occupy a very large building in Highbury Barn which was once an annexe of London Metropolitan University. It is excellent that after so many other hypothetical destinies, it continues to be used for educational purposes.

The Principal, Charles Kennard, explained that the Academy was part of a programme, launched over seven years ago, by a number of influential film producers determined to promote the growth of film-making in this country. They saw the value of introducing film-training in a school setting, and when the building became available, it was chosen as a venue for film-training for young people aged from 16-19. In the Principal's opinion, film remains a uniquely exciting visual experience, given its unmatched physical and technical dimensions, and in that respect it continues to out-do television.

The Academy only became really operational in September 2021, after the pandemic lock-down, though its official opening was September 2019.

Young people come here from across the whole of London, and some of them are actually older than 19. They vary widely in their social and ethnic backgrounds.

Three quarters of the training offered focuses on cinema, while the remainder is actually conventional academic teaching - with the option of 'A' Level English or 'A' level Maths. On the cinematic side, there are four courses : 1) costume, hair-and-make-up and some directing 2) visual effects and editing 3) camera, lighting, sound 4) producing, directing. Successful students receive an Extended Level Three Diploma from the University of Arts, London. This award shows that the student has acquired the knowledge, behavioural practices, tuition and work experience necessary for performing effectively in the film industry. The award is equivalent to achieving three 'A' level passes in academic subjects.

In addition, the Academy runs a 'summer university' for children from 11-15, and a Saturday school. Charles Kennard can be contacted on enquiries@lsa.ac.uk

THE Highbury LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD TRIAL

Short list of main errors and mis-statements in the figures on the Summary Page, and in the Full Report

Highbury West and Highbury Fields people-friendly streets trials

Results from the interim monitoring report



By Highbury Scrutiny Sub-Group

1. “On average motorised volumes have changed... on Holloway Road by -42%, Blackstock Road north by +16% and Blackstock Road South by +49%”

The Report actually states that

- “Traffic volumes have increased on Holloway Road.” (Page 40)
- the Blackstock Road findings for North and South were accidentally reversed (pages 100 and 102). The Blackstock Road South count showed a 30% (not a 16%) increase (Pages 34 and 102), while the Blackstock Road North count rose by 49%.

2. “Air quality data from within the Highbury neighbourhoods shows that nitrogen dioxide levels have decreased at all sites since the start of the trials”

The Report actually states that

- NO₂ levels in Highbury have **increased by 26%** since the schemes were implemented (page 54)
- there has been a **44% increase** in NO₂ levels outside **Highbury Grove School** (page 61)

3. “On local streets within the neighbourhood, numbers of vehicles speeding fell by 45%”

The Report actually states that on internal roads:

- “Average speeds have fallen by 3%.” (page 32)

• the greatest speed decrease is 3.6 mph (page 111)

4. “Cycling has increased by 66% on the internal roads”

Cycling data should have been ‘normalised’ for COVID in the report as vehicle traffic has been. There should also have been an adjustment for seasonality to reflect differing cycling levels between November 2020 and May 2021 (25% according to DfT 5-year average daily pedal cycle traffic flow by month). Based on corrected report data (table 10 p46, where correct figure is 50% not 66%) and after normalisation (23%) and seasonal adjustment (25%), there has actually been an increase in cycling on internal roads of **2%**, not **66%**

5. Cycling increased at 80% of sites. Highbury Place has seen an 80% increase in cyclists

After normalisation and seasonal adjustment, and based on the report (Table 10 p.46)

- cycle trips **decreased at 60% of sites**, rather than increasing at 80% of them
- Highbury Place has seen a **32% increase** in cycle trips, not an 80% increase

6. Islington Council has repeatedly stated that, “Traffic on local roads in London – including many parts of Islington – has increased by up to 72% in the last ten years.” This statement is based on a figure for minor roads in the whole of London, (recently revised downwards to a 58% increase).

THE Highbury LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD TRIAL Short list of main errors

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But actually, local figures are far lower.

- London-wide: there was a **21% increase** in motor traffic (on all road types) between 2009 and 2019. (<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/regions/6>). By 2019 this increase was almost evenly split between A roads and minor roads.

- In Islington there was only a **5% increase** in traffic (on all road types) between 2009 and 2019. (<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/local-authorities/96>). So, although we have no figure for minor road traffic increases in Islington, we know that the figure must be well under 5%.

A fuller analysis will become available in January 2022.

Crime and safety in Highbury and Islington

Islington is unfortunately among the top 10 most dangerous areas in London. The overall crime rate was 106 crimes per 1000 people in 2020 against the London average of 87. The most common crimes were antisocial behaviour, followed by violence, theft, theft from the person, and vehicle crime. Antisocial behaviour, public order, bicycle theft and drug crimes are on the rise, while theft, theft from the person, vehicle crime, burglary and violence are decreasing.

These issues are flagged up here because, perhaps surprisingly, Highbury Fields is the second most dangerous neighbourhood in Islington, after the Angel according to police records. (<https://crimerate.co.uk/London/Islington>)

In this context it is worth noting that Islington Council has launched a Commonplace consultation, currently active, where you can mark on a map the places in the borough where you personally feel safe or unsafe. (<https://saferspacesislington.commonplace.is>)



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Awards for the Islington Ecology Centre

JO CORRALL NATURE CONSERVATION OFFICER



As an extra bit of excitement, the judge for London in Bloom was a gardener from Buckingham Palace, which we think gives us the royal seal of approval!

We're especially happy to have got full marks for the involvement of local people and opportunities for education and learning. There is such a strong sense of community about Gillespie Park – made clear by our long serving volunteers, some of whom have been working with us for 15 years! We also love welcoming children of all ages into our reserve throughout the week to discover the joys of the outside world. Getting new generations to care about our environment will help ensure it will remain protected in the years ahead.

A celebration took place at the Islington Ecology Centre in October as staff and volunteers congratulated each other on winning two prestigious awards for Gillespie Park. Not only did we get the [Green Flag Award](#) again, we were also given Gold in [London in Bloom](#) and best in category for Conservation Area of the Year.

With a whopping 186 out of 200 points, we're delighted that our reserve, and the hard work of our volunteers, has been recognised.

We were 'mystery shopped' for the Green Flag Award so it was a relief to know that even without lots of prepping, the park was worthy of this famous flag.

A huge thank you to our volunteers for helping us keep the park so beautiful and accessible. Never were green spaces more needed, used and loved than during the last two years and we're thrilled that Gillespie Park has been there for everyone that has needed it.

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Finsbury Park + Stroud Green Neighbourhood Forum

By LINDA ROYLES FORUM CHAIR

The formation of the FP&SG Neighbourhood Forum was approved by Hackney, Haringey and Islington: the three boroughs with parts of wards in the defined area. The key objective of the Forum is the creation of a Neighbourhood Plan - to promote or improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the area. Membership of the Forum is open to anyone who lives or works in the area. As the map shows, the northern part of Highbury falls within this area.

We have reviewed the London Plan and the three Boroughs' Local Plans. This has helped to indicate the possible scope of the FP&SG Neighbourhood Plan and the key evidence needed.

During this period, the group has prepared and submitted a bid to central Government to be an urban design pilot, worked to identify funding sources and continued to liaise with all three Boroughs via our elected members and contact with the borough planning officers.



We've been making lists of local groups and contacts with whom to engage and we would welcome further contacts.

The aim is to develop policies against which development proposals in the Area will be considered - Planning applications will be



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Finsbury Park + Stroud Green Neighbourhood Forum

Continued from page 6...

determined in accordance with these policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies cannot, of course, contradict existing National, London or Local Policies, but they can often flesh them out.

Please join the Forum if you live or work in the Neighbourhood Plan area and would like to be involved in shaping development in the area. You could join one of the sub-groups (Engagement, Planning, etc) – or simply receive updates via emails and attend Forum meetings.

You can find out more – and join online via the website www.finsburyparkstroudgreen.com

Expansion of the North London Waste Incinerator in Edmonton

By GILL SHEPHERD

Despite excellent arguments put forward by local pressure groups, the Green Party, local Lib Dems and the Mayor of London, Islington Councillors - led by Rowena Champion and Satnam Gill - have voted to go ahead with the 30% increase in capacity of the North London Waste Station, rather than pausing to reconsider what has changed since an expansion was first mooted in 2013.

Large incinerators in the UK have been shown to depress recycling efforts by local government. They also emit huge quantities of CO2, dioxins and other toxic gases. The Council's disappointing decision casts real doubt on its capacity to reach net zero carbon by 2030..



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‘Exploring London as a Deep City’

Tom Chivers, 2021, Transworld Digital

By SARAH POTTER

The poet Tom Chivers in his recent book *London Clay, Journeys in the Deep City* (Doubleday, 2021) explores the underlying geological landscape of London and the traces it has left on our city. The ancient alluvial river valley of the Thames and its hidden tributaries was also shaped by layers of sandy gravel terraces, and outcrops of the clay on which the city rests, dating from c. 50 million years ago.

These combined into a landscape of streams, woods, marshes and islands which, Chivers argues, still marks our streets. The author provides us with eight walks, carefully documented and charted on geological maps, following the now hidden rivers rising in the joins between clay and sand and flowing eventually into the Thames.

His first walk takes him back to his childhood and teenage years in Herne Hill, when he first became fascinated by London’s lost rivers, and he traces the River Effra on its journey south. He then walks the Walbrook, one tributary of which rises high up in Islington, and which reaches the Thames near London Bridge. It is on this walk that he develops a sense of London as a ‘liquid city’, geologically formed by water and with the lost rivers as its paths into the past. His third exploration takes him to the River Fleet, which, according to the sixteenth century chronicler John Stow, had been known as ‘the river of wells’ since the age of William the Conqueror. These wells included the Clerk’s Well in Clerkenwell, and two wells just off Farringdon Street behind Mount Pleasant, Black Mary’s Well,



and Bagnigge Wells, which became a fashionable spa in the eighteenth century because of its iron-rich waters. Chivers views London’s ancient wells and springs as the ‘nuclei around which the axes of life once turned’ (p. 89) as sacred sites of pilgrimage and spas. Today, in Margery Street, you can still see two blocks of flats, Spring House and Bagnigge House, which mark the site of these local wells.

Chivers completes his walks by exploring the hidden rivers of Westminster, Lambeth, Bermondsey and the Olympic City. In all, reading this book is to share his passion for the architectural gems, archaeological finds and geological phenomena of London’s deep city.