

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

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The Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants

By ANNA GIOKAS

What does the Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants do?

The Islington Centre for Refugees and Migrants provides refugees and asylum seekers with the emotional support, practical help and sense of community they need to be happy and have a decent quality of life in the UK. Our approach is to show people kindness, respect and compassion while providing the tools people need to move forward in their lives.

We are based at Cross Street Baptist Church and open our doors for hot food and support to people every Wednesday. Recently, we have started to offer services at Christ Church Community Centre in Highbury as well, where the wonderful light space is perfect for our English classes and appointments with our Support Service Coordinator. We offer a full online timetable of classes and activities, and offer support five days a week on the phone.

Who comes to you?

Currently we have 187 men and women on our register from 46 different countries worldwide including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Syria, Eritrea, Turkey, China and elsewhere. Our clients are brave



people who have fled war, persecution and human rights abuses to come to the UK for sanctuary. Most are without a permanent home, either 'sofa surfing', or in a hotel or a hostel.

Raphael (not his real name) said: 'Islington Centre is a family to me. I don't hesitate to share my personal concern with the staff. They are the ones who help me with advice, orientation and make me comfort with the situation I'm going through. Islington Centre is my home.'

How can people help if they would like to?

We are looking for committed, motivated volunteers to help with casework. Anyone who would like to find out more, will find information on our website <https://islingtoncentre.co.uk/vacancies/>.

Donations

We are always looking for donations of toiletries: toothpaste, toothbrushes, sanitary towels, soap, incontinence pads, shampoo etc. We also need warm clothes and bedding. We have very limited storage space so cannot accept furniture or larger appliances, but we do occasionally put out a call on social media for larger items. For details, please follow us at: <https://www.facebook.com/IslingtonCentre> and <https://twitter.com/IslingtonCentre>

We also need regular cash donations. £40 will pay for a destitute person - who has no right to claim any government support and no right to work - to buy food for a fortnight. To make a donation please visit: <https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/18591#!/DonationDetails>

Now The Main Roads

By JEREMY DREW



Islington Council is implementing Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTNs) across the borough. LTNs have brought benefits to residents in those areas but there is still too much motor traffic on main roads and, on a few, LTNs have caused traffic to increase. It is now time to consider what to do about main roads. Motor traffic generates noise, emits carbon, and is the largest source of some forms of air pollution in London. It is also a problem for other road users, particularly cyclists and scooter users, who increasingly seek safety on pavements. Whether directly or indirectly, the pedestrian suffers.

The underlying problem is that there is simply too much traffic. Some car journeys are arguably not essential or could be made by other modes. Cars, including EVs, emit more carbon than other modes, and are far less efficient in their use of road space than

buses, cycles or pedestrians.

The Council's Transport Strategy aims to reduce vehicle km by 15.7% by 2041. But a much faster decline will be required if we are to reduce carbon emissions (the council aims to achieve Net Zero in the borough by 2030!) and pollution in line with other council targets, and if main roads are to become tolerable for residents and others.

Achieving this will require higher parking charges

(including for electric vehicles whose tyres cause pollution and which use road space). It will also demand better alternatives to individual car ownership, such as car sharing, better public transport, and more and cheaper parking for bikes. Coordinated changes are needed across London since much traffic on our main roads is through traffic.

The main road network should in future be designed primarily for buses, cycles (including e-cargo bikes) and pedestrians. This requires better traffic management through the improved design of junctions, more separated bike lanes, more restrictions on parking, and more space and priority for pedestrians. It also requires joined up local routes for cyclists on minor roads so they can avoid busy main roads, make cycling more pleasant, reduce cycling in bus lanes and thus speed up buses.

Limiting car ownership to where it is essential will reduce pressure on family budgets, and help the community by reducing emissions. Households should consider whether they really need a car and make serious attempts to reduce their use. Finally, we all need policies that reduce the need for car ownership.



Help us keep our membership list up to date. Let us know if you have moved, or have updated your email address.

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What next for large events at Finsbury Park?

By KATIE DAWSON



On 1st November Jeremy Corbyn MP joined councillors from Haringey and Hackney and around 70 local residents at a community meeting organised by the Friends of Finsbury Park. The meeting at Muslim Welfare House on Seven Sisters Road had been called to discuss issues of concern, particularly public safety and the borough’s return to hosting major commercial events.

The police explained recent efforts to address anti-social behaviour and crime, particularly drug-dealing and mugging, in and around the park. Another attempt at tri-borough co-operation has been made recently, the area having suffered from its location at the boundaries of Islington, Hackney and Haringey in the past with inconsistent and unco-ordinated approaches to tackling problems.

Trustees from the Friends’ group gave a presentation on this year’s Wireless event, which had led to serious safety concerns, and anger about the increased area of the park taken out of public use for a large part of the summer. This year Live Nation, the organisers of Wireless, had not only fenced off most of the southern section of the park with high steel barriers, but had also taken over all

eight tennis courts for use as a toilet area. As a result, local people were unable to use their tennis courts for virtually the entire month of July, with much of the park also removed from public access during this time. Many at the meeting felt that making local residents, many of whom lack a garden, lose access to their park because of huge commercial events, was grossly unfair and urged Haringey to reconsider.

Safety concerns around these events were illustrated with hair-raising footage posted on social media by festival-goers and subsequently covered in the national media. This showed people being crushed as they tried to enter Wireless via the Seven Sisters Road gate with many climbing the railings in panic. At a similar event in Texas, in 2021, also organised by Live Nation, 10 people had died in a crush, and lessons had clearly not been learned in Finsbury Park.

Jeremy Corbyn commented that Wireless went on for too long and took over too much of the park. He called for more community defence of the park, noting how wildlife had decreased in recent years. As he said, ‘A park is a park is a park.’ Quite so!

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Highbury Fields School Rated Outstanding

JESSICA GAVIN, SCHOOL BUSINESS MANAGER, HIGHBURY FIELDS SCHOOL



Ofsted has set in place a new tougher framework for measuring levels of achievement in schools. Only 20% of schools are retaining their "outstanding" status under this new framework, so Highbury Fields school is particularly proud to have been able to retain the status. This is a fantastic result for both staff and pupils.

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Highbury Roundhouse Community Centre – latest



After many delays, Islington Building Control finally signed off the building as legally ready to be opened, on 29th of November. The Roundhouse team took possession of the building on the 7th December and can start to plan a grand opening for January 2023. The New Year will see an exciting new chapter for this important and well-loved space.

Help us keep our membership list up to date.

Let us know if you have moved, or have updated your email address.

Do you think your neighbours would like to receive the newsletter? Simply ask them to email us and we'll do the rest...

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HCA NEWS

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Wildlife in London

By SARAH POTTER

The London Wildlife Trust's new book, *London in the Wild, Exploring Nature in the City* (Kyle Books, 2022) guides us through



habitats. Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath make up half London's surviving heathland, and at Hutchinson's Bank, very close to New Addington in Croydon, a North Downs site of chalk grassland survives, surrounded by ancient woodlands.

Our reservoirs are more recent, dating from the 1830s to the 1970s, supplying London's water, and now protected as habitats for waterfowl, reed warblers, swallows and kingfishers, for example at Woodberry Wetlands, easily accessible from Islington.

Many of London's public parks were created for the working classes in the 19th century as

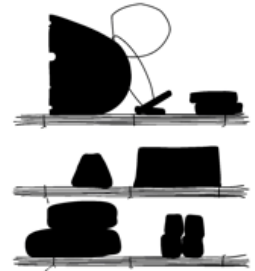
spaces for enjoyment and exercise. This book suggests that now more parks, more evenly distributed and with greater biodiversity are necessary, to promote a greener and healthier city.

Finally, in parts of London in the 1970s, often on derelict land colonised by nature, ecoparks, city farms or community gardens have been pioneered. Our own Gillespie Park in Islington is situated in former railway sidings. It has both natural and created areas. It has been colonised by unusual plants, and a wide variety of bird species visit it.

Illustrated with colour photos, this book also has listings of nature sites that can be visited, including a top ten hidden gems.

the range of habitats in our city and their characteristic natural life. The Thames is its starting point, as our largest open space. It was declared biologically dead in 1957, but is now home to 125 species of fish, and seals, porpoises and the critically endangered eel, which reaches us from the Sargasso Sea and was eaten in London as jellied eels, one of the city's most traditional dishes.

The widest range of London's wildlife survives in the small fragments of ancient woodlands, acidic heaths and chalk grasslands, still unbuilt on but surrounded by the expanding city. Here, rare birds, flowers, butterflies and fungi survive, benefiting now from greater protection and care for these



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Operation Perch: the policing operation around Finsbury Park and the top end of the Blackstock Road

SERGEANT JOE JOHNSON, FINSBURY PARK AND TOLLINGTON WARDS

The local police with responsibility for the Finsbury Park and Blackstock Road area have been listening to comments from the public and taking action where possible. This is their latest report.

You said:

Community leads and residents have been informing us that there appears to be an increase of drug supply along Blackstock road and disconnect between Haringey, Hackney and Islington police.

We acted:

Earlier this month two individuals were arrested along Blackstock Road by Haringey officers for possession with intent to supply controlled drugs. Another male was also arrested earlier the same day on suspicion of robbery. These are just a couple of examples of how well the tri-borough policing approach is working and what we are all doing to make Finsbury Park a safer place to live/work/travel through. We are taking an in-depth look, and assisting local authorities with enforcement action where appropriate, as well as using our own Anti-Social behaviour legislation.

You said:

Numerous reports from businesses and residents of individuals gathering outside the College on Blackstock Road and dealing drugs later in the evening.

We acted:

The Finsbury Park team were out in plain clothes on late shifts on Friday and Saturday alongside our colleagues in the Met Taskforce Dogs

unit. Areas across Finsbury Park were covered, but there was a special focus on the Blackstock road. A thorough search of the area recovered an array of phones/laptops/etc and a hand size block of suspected Class B drugs. Alongside this, the team also arrested a male who was wanted for Recall to Prison. We also undertook numerous stop and searches over the two days.

It doesn't stop there: we are continuing to work hard to identify the owners of stolen items. I highly recommend that everyone registers their electronic devices with

<https://www.immobilise.com/>.

This is one of the ways in which we try to locate owners of the property in the hope of reuniting them with it. More proactive policing is planned across Finsbury Park. Watch this space for more good news stories. The more information we have from the community, the more we are able to effectively tackle the issues most affecting them.

If you would like to receive regular Operation Perch emails, please send an email to Joseph.Johnson2@met.police.uk

Please donate to Elizabeth House's Christmas Wish List

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Collections accepted
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Highbury Community Association is making a gift of £500 to Elizabeth House, for emergency Christmas supplies, on behalf of all of us in the Association.

Electronic Parking Vouchers or Paper Parking Vouchers?

By GILL SHEPHERD

Islington Council are planning to phase out paper parking vouchers and replace them with electronic parking vouchers at greater inconvenience to residents and visitors. It means that you will have to find out the registration number of your plumber or other visitor in advance. You can't buy 'blank' vouchers (akin to the paper ones) for unpredicted future use. The account-holder – you – will also be liable for parking offences or overstays caused by those for whom you have purchased electronic vouchers.

You can order e-vouchers (resident visitor permits) through Islington's parking partner RingGo. They are paperless vouchers linked directly to a vehicle number plate. If you are new to RingGo you will need to register online first, but after that you will have more choice over how you order vouchers – through the RingGo app, online, or by calling 0203 046 0005. You can order e-vouchers for immediate use or up to two days in advance

How much do they cost? 50p per 30 minutes £14.25 all day Discounted e-vouchers If you are 60 or over, or are getting Incapacity Benefit, Disability Living Allowance or Employment and Support Allowance, your 30-minute, three-hour and all-day vouchers are half price.25p per 30 minutes. £7.10 all day.

If you are reluctant to see the end of paper parking vouchers, do raise this with your local Councillors. There has not, as far as HCA is aware, been public consultation about this.



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HCA News

Issue 126

December 2022

© HCA 2021

Editor: Gill Shepherd

Layout: Susana Liveras

Published by the HCA