

HIGHBURY COMMUNITY NEWS

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Arsenal celebrations – lessons learned

Richard Smith

‘There is much to learn from the experience of the Arsenal parade and subsequent celebrations’. This was the message from the club after it had asked the local community for feedback. The feeling within the club is overwhelming thanks for the patience and understanding of everyone who experienced inconvenience and disruption. At the same time, they been made aware of the issues that blighted the area, not least litter, toilets (or lack of them), road closures, parking restrictions and noise.

And what has also been conveyed to the club is what appeared to be a lack of information and apparent

coordination between stakeholders. There were web pages and links between sites, but there seemed to be no accountability, no single contact point to find out what was going on. The problem was that there were multiple organisations involved, not just Arsenal but also Islington Council, Hackney Council, the Metropolitan Police, TFL and the company that actually ran the parade itself... to name but a few. But that mattered little to residents and businesses. What counted is that they were often completely in the dark on important issues.

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**HIGHBURY
COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION**

STOP PRESS

We will hold the Highbury Community Association Annual General Meeting on Friday evening 11th September at 7.30, at the Gillespie Park Ecology Centre.

We have chosen a Friday evening to avoid potential clashes with Arsenal men’s and women’s football matches. At this moment the men’s fixtures are already published, but the women’s are not.

Our speaker this year is Caroline Russell, who has just retired as a Highbury Ward Councillor to concentrate more fully on her important work at the London Assembly.

We hope to see you there – please put the date in your diary!

Arsenal celebrations – lessons learned – continued from front page

We learned (after the event in the case of the general public) that the Met had actually been worried about a possible terrorist attack at the parade and that portaloos and waste-bins were deliberately not provided – or were removed – so that there were no hiding places for bombs. There was also a huge invisible plain clothes police presence in the crowd, in addition to those easy to spot in uniform.

So while the overall feeling is that the event was a great success – it has been cited as the biggest event of its kind ever – there is much room for improvement. Rather than blaming and looking for explanations – what should happen now is to look forward to any future celebrations, should there be more trophies next year, and to identify each of the issues and inconveniences, and ensure they are addressed well in advance.

But it's not quite as straightforward as it might seem, the club explains. More involvement of the community would seem essential, so that local



knowledge – of streets, of businesses, of disruptions to routines – can be incorporated into the planning. But the scale of this year's parade would mean including not just feedback from Highbury residents but also from Finsbury Park, Clissold Park, Canonbury, Angel, Holloway Road, Doable – but quite a major task.

Likewise, how to provide a single

point of contact, a single go-to location for information, when there is so much detail and given the fact that things kept on changing, how will that be possible right up to – and during – the parade?

Yet we have a year. There is time to prepare. Our hope – and message to Arsenal – is that the community needs to be kept informed, and how the community can access information needs to be simplified and clear; not a repeat of divisions between stakeholders.

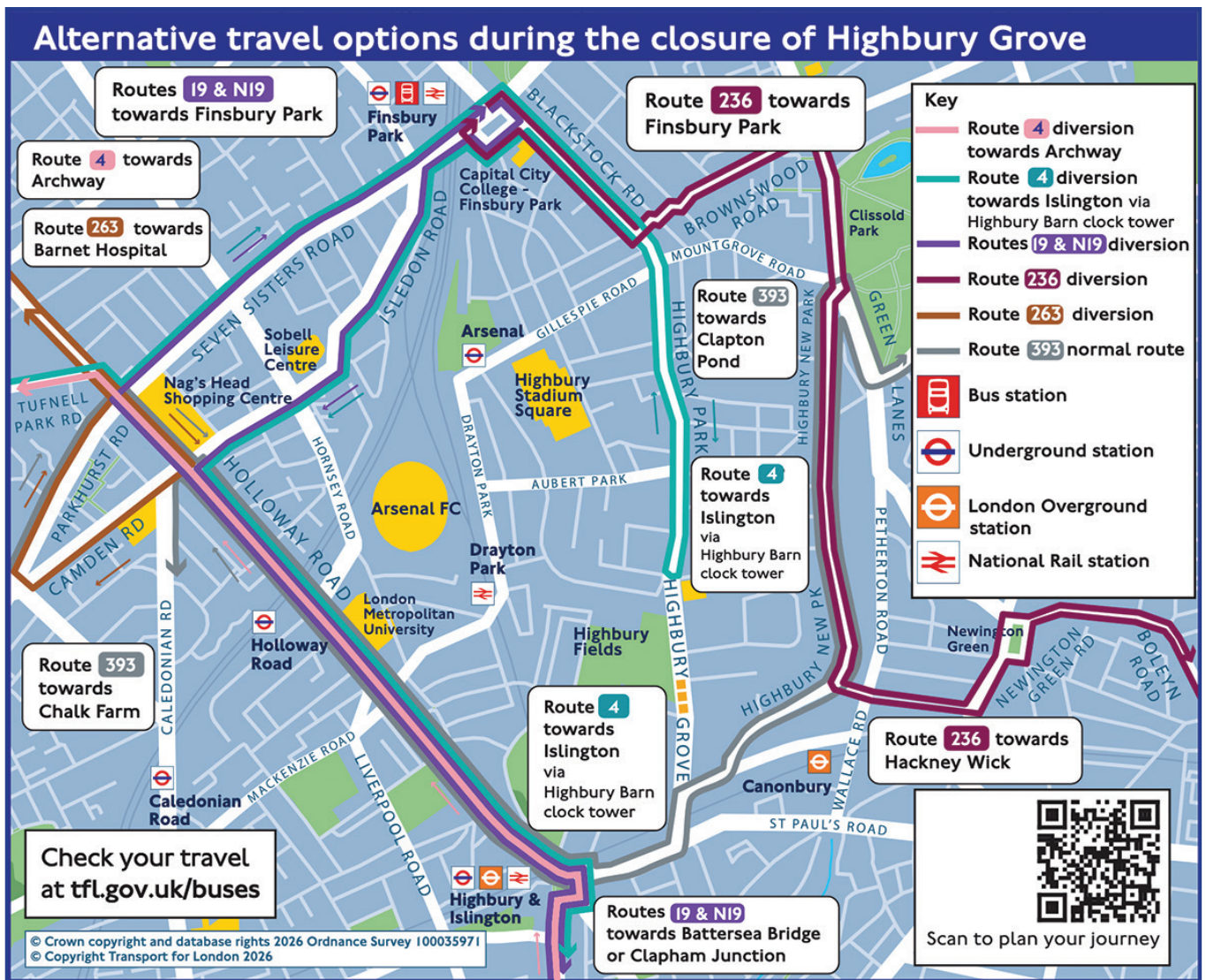
Comments in the local press have stressed that Arsenal must learn to be a much better neighbour to local residents. In a physical sense, never was it more evident than when Arsenal swept clean its own land but stopped when it reached the roads, leaving them strewn with broken glass and other litter.

An approach that unifies everyone involved needs to be planned; there is time and an opportunity to unravel and resolve the complexities, so that in eleven months, we're all ready. Let's not waste the opportunity.



Highbury Grove mains replacement

Thames Water



Timing

The work will start on **Monday, 20 July 2026** and will be completed sometime in **November 2026**. Works will be undertaken **Monday to Friday and Saturday mornings**.

Phasing

The work will be undertaken in three phases, each lasting about five weeks.

- Phase 1: Baalbec Road to Aberdeen Lane.
- Phase 2: Aberdeen Lane to Aberdeen Park.
- Phase 3: Aberdeen Park to the Leigh Road and Kelvin Road junction

LTN camera changes

Traffic cameras will be turned off at the Aubert Park-Highbury Hill junction; at the Highbury Hill-Martineau Road junction; in Highbury Place near Calabria Road; and at the Highbury Place and Highbury Crescent junction.

Although not yet confirmed, it is likely that the Drayton Park-Benwell Road camera will need to be turned off as well, because traffic will be heavy at the junction of Drayton Park with the Holloway Road and could be released by Benwell Road being opened.

Bus changes

No buses will stop on Highbury Grove at all. A shuttle bus will run to and fro between Highbury Barn clocktower and Finsbury Park.

The No 4 will travel from Highbury barn to Finsbury Park, will go across to Holloway Road and will then make its way south as usual via Upper Street to Blackfriars. Other diverted bus routes are shown on the map that accompanies this article.

Getting in touch

It will be possible to get in touch with Thames Water as and when problems arise in a variety of ways

Please quote the reference number for this work, which is **BB00699589**, whichever method you choose:

Telephone: 0800 316-9800

Email: customer.feedback@thameswater.co.uk

The possibility of creating an information Whatsapp group is being discussed. Meanwhile, the relevant website, which will be regularly updated, is: <https://www.thameswater.co.uk/about-us/projects/improvements-in-your-area/highbury-grove-mains-replacement>

Enfield's Crews Hill new town housing proposal – conflict and challenge in the Green Belt

Franc David



Photo: Council for the Protection of Rural England

The proposal - plusses and minuses

Crews Hill New Town is one of two proposed developments for Greater London, providing over 20,000 new-build homes, half of them at 'affordable' rent. Crews Hill currently has only about 500 residents in about 250 houses. The area has for many years been home to a plethora of nurseries, garden centres and market garden businesses.

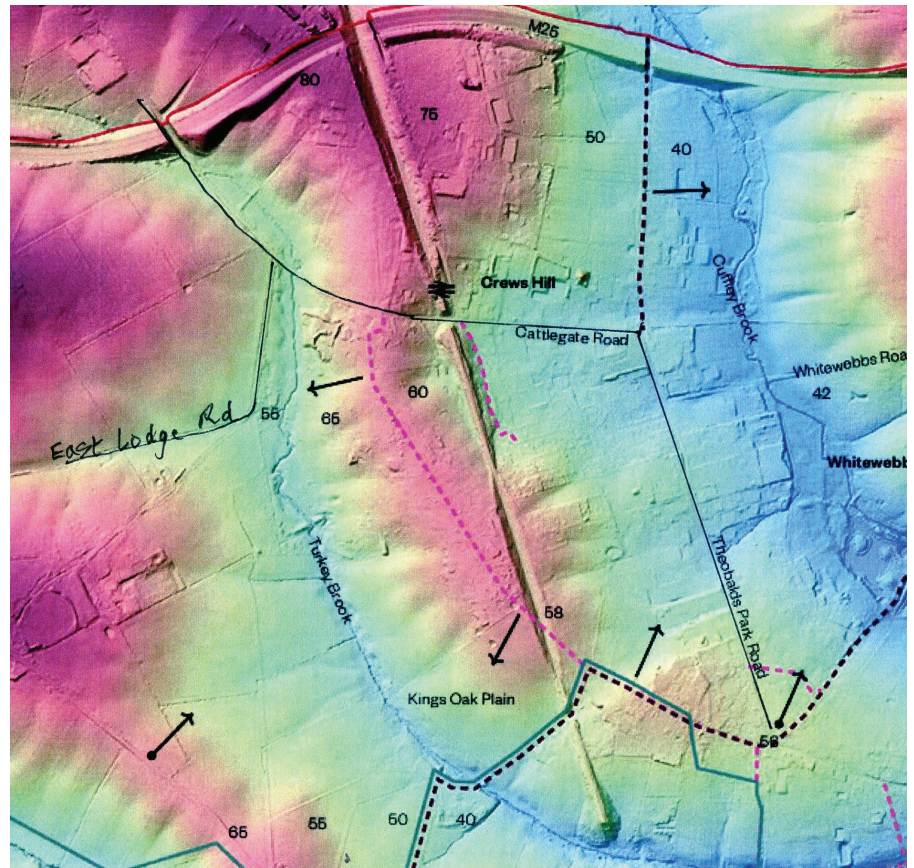
The site is attractive for development because it is only half an hour from Finsbury Park on the train and the M25 runs along its northern flank. Proposals include not only good quality housing but also medical and educational facilities, parades of shops and improved bus and rail services.

However, there are Green Belt and environmental hurdles to overcome with this proposal on 884 hectares (2,100 acres) spread over three square miles. Enfield Council and the Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) are pushing for a 'brownfield first' approach, which could mean

the choice of other sites elsewhere in Enfield such as Meridian Water in the Lea valley. But which here would mean building over the existing glasshouse and nursery developments.

Crews Hill's much loved 'Golden Mile' of green houses and garden centres serves not only the local community but much of North London as well. It is seen by many as an attractive semi-rural place to visit, not as brownfield 'grey belt' land which needs to be built on. Moreover, there would be significant employment losses (up to 1,000 skilled and semi-skilled jobs) as well. The boundaries, from Theobalds Rd in the east, to East Lodge Lane in the west and Cattlegate Rd in the south, enclose a substantial area - some of it as yet never built-on green belt farmland.

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'Elevation' (from 'Crews Hill Spatial Framework 2023, p.18')

Enfield's Crews Hill new town housing proposal continued

Could the proposed New Town site be shifted slightly to allow the greenhouses and local businesses to stay?

Previous structures and the landscape itself unfortunately present quite major challenges. The site is already bisected north-south by the main-line railway, and its northern edge is limited by the M25.

As the map shows, Cuffley Brook and Turkey Brook run through the area (draining eastwards into the river Lea). Water meadows flank these streams and present considerable areas of flood corridor which cannot be built on. Indeed, some estimates suggest that only 247 hectares (29% of the total) could actually be used for housing – shrinking the potential area for 20,000 new homes considerably. To achieve the numbers of dwellings envisaged, 6-12 storey blocks would need to be part of what was built.

The higher land is where the garden centres and glass houses are currently located, so there is little choice. That is exactly where the housing would have to be built in their place, – with adjacent land perhaps given over to amenity spaces, parks and leisure areas.

The newly-elected local Council has a Conservative-Green led minority government which is trying to withdraw the area from consideration for the New Town proposal. London Mayor Sadiq Khan

is considering invoking Devolution powers to strip Enfield Council of planning authority for this site and to establish a Mayoral Development Corporation to push this project through.

Many outstanding issues remain

The mayor and the Westminster government will have to develop a strategy to bring public opinion along with them if they are to push to change what has now been characterized as low quality grey belt' into much-needed affordable housing for homeless Londoners.

How much of the beautiful Green Belt farmland adjacent to the garden centres would have to go? Is it worth destroying 1000 jobs for an unknown future? And will private sector builders actually provide 'affordable' dwellings for 50% of the units built? (The achieved percentage has been much lower at other sites and contractors are already seeing Crews Hill as an attractive site for three- and four-bedroom houses with driveways, not affordable homes).

These issues will be battled out in the coming months.

- ◆ 'Crews Hill: can plans for a new town survive without council backing?' BBC 6/6/2026
- ◆ 'Crews Hill spatial framework, 2023'



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Challenging the role of the North London Waste Authority's incinerator in Edmonton

Islington Tribune, Hampstead and Highgate News, Waltham Forest Echo

Following recent local elections, the cross-borough waste body, the NLWA, governing Islington and six other boroughs (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, Waltham Forest) is undergoing a significant shakeup in leadership. Environmental campaigners have historically used the local papers' letters and opinion pages to press their councils and the NLWA to halt incinerator construction, with NLWA and local authorities also routinely publishing public notices and recycling awareness ads.

The Edmonton incinerator debate has intensified dramatically in the local press due to a major political shift in the May 2026 local elections. Recent published correspondence and reports outline a direct challenge to the North London Waste Authority ahead of its highly Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Thursday, 25 June 2026.

What has changed?

The NLWA had started to build a new super incinerator forecast to cost more than £1.5 billion. To justify this, the NLWA used a 2014 projection that it would collect 30% more waste by 2024. But this increase has not occurred - mainly due to reduced packaging and to improved recycling habits. In fact, the amount of waste collected has fallen, not risen. Government targets for further waste reduction mean that there will not be enough waste to feed the super incinerator.

At the same time the Emissions Trading Scheme tax will apply to incinerators from 2028. The scheme sets a limit on greenhouse gas emissions from energy intensive industries and taxes emissions which go above the limit. The costs to NLWA local authorities could be high, and could limit their ability to fund other essential services

A Commons committee was told in May that England's standards for air quality had fallen behind that of our European neighbours. Our permitted level of nitrous



oxide, for instance, is four times higher than the World Health Organisation's maximum.

Until now, the Labour Party has dominated the NLWA Board and has been strongly committed to the building of the new super incinerator. However, following heavy Labour losses in the May 2026 local elections, long-standing NLWA chair Clyde Loakes (who led the authority for over 14 years) lost his seat and is no longer involved with the NLWA. The projected composition of the new NLWA board shifts to a multi-party structure (estimated at 6 Green, 5 Labour, and 3 Conservative councillors).

As a result, environmental activists feel that the time is ripe for an immediate pause and fundamental review of the Edmonton super-incinerator project, pushing to repurpose the site strictly for waste sorting and recycling only instead of the incineration that damages the health of everyone. They point out not only that waste projections overestimated the amount of waste which would need to be dealt with, but also that replacement of the old polluting 1969 incinerator would not be able to occur until after 2030 - well past its intended design life.

It will be interesting to see what new decisions are taken in the coming months.

Dealing more proactively with Climate Change Adaptation

Gill Shepherd

Climate Change adaptation in the street

London councils, including our own here in Islington, regularly stress the need to bring nature back into the streetscape. In contexts where every square metre is claimed by concrete, cars, and infrastructure, it is more and more essential to green our streets in every way open to us with a focus above all on trees.

We know that doing so can cool down urban heat islands, clean the air we breathe, and create places where people can relax and feel happy. The right planting can also help to absorb stormwater and support greater biodiversity.

Space is limited but we must make more effort to prioritise what streets can offer to life, health, and resilience as well as to traffic movement.

Climate change adaptation and domestic gardens

While not everybody is lucky enough to have a garden, we know that, looking at London as a whole, gardens represent a surprisingly large percentage of the total city area. Domestic gardens represent a scalable, low cost, and widely distributed climate adaptation strategy for London. We know how important gardens are for absorbing stormwater, for biodiversity, and for reducing urban heat exposure.

Yet at the same time both front and back gardens are being increasingly paved over, often with low

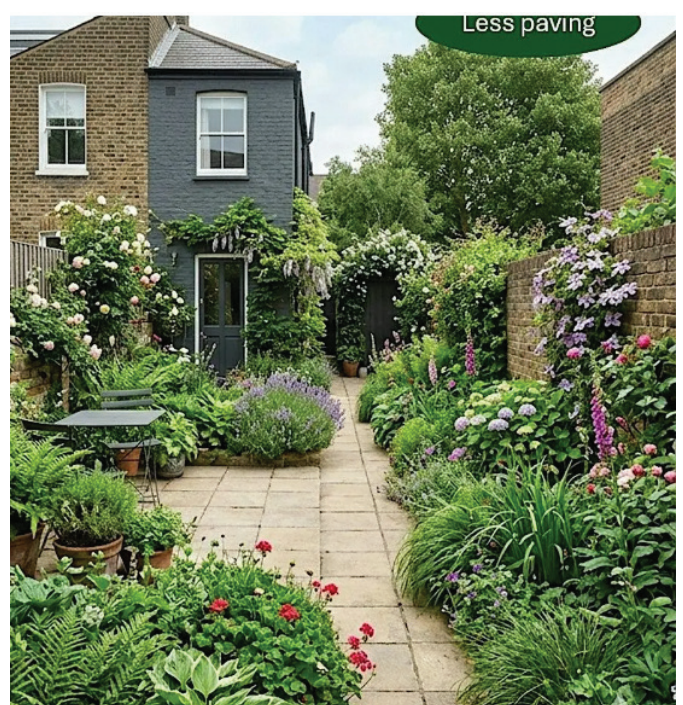
maintenance or car parking in mind, but also sometimes aesthetic preference. It is well known that doing so leads to higher surface run-off, and greater retention of heat.

The Sustainability Research Institute at the University of East London has decided to focus on this problem so that domestic gardens can play a more active role in fighting climate change.

Institute staff observe that although the evidence on the role that gardens could play in climate change adaptation is well known, that evidence has not yet been translated into coordinated, actionable policy across the London landscape.

They plan a one-day Policy Lab on the subject as a first step. Key policy and regulatory gaps will be identified along with barriers to implementation. The lab will develop actionable policy and planning recommendations and roadmap for scaling the paving interventions across London.

It will take time and effort to convince busy house owners and renters to change the way in which they manage their gardens, but the need is really urgent. Potentially, gardens have at least as great a role to play as streets in helping London adapt to ever greater climate change, but the pathway to making change happen is a great deal more complex than streetscape actions which councils can directly implement.



Enjoying the west reservoir

Gill Shepherd

The west reservoir, just off Green Lanes behind the Castle Climbing Centre, was originally built in 1833 to purify water flowing into it from the New River, and to act as a water reserve for London. It covers 23 acres

The West Reservoir Centre now offers open water swimming, training in kayaking and sailing and a variety of other activities. There is a café, and cycle parking spaces. Updates to the centre's infrastructure mean that it is now possible to walk or cycle right around the reservoir as well. It is a tremendous and beautiful asset which many in Highbury and Islington are still scarcely aware of.

The Centre is open throughout the year from 7.30 in the morning until it gets dark. It is open until 9.30pm from May till the end of August. Its telephone number is 0208-356-3000



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