

IslingtonNow

Issue 1 February 2007

your local magazine from Islington Council

Gym and tonic!

If your New Year's resolutions are starting to slip, joining the revamped Highbury Pool could be the perfect tonic! The leisure centre has transformed over the years, but its latest modern makeover is definitely the most impressive yet.

"It's brilliant," says Asif, who has been a member for three years. "It is perfect here now, and much better than before. I'll be telling all my friends to come to Highbury Pool now."

And it's easy to see why members are so pleased with the changes.

The gym has doubled in size and new machines have been added. Two fantastic new

exercise studios mean the centre can now run exercise classes.

Craig MacIntyre, centre manager at Highbury Pool, says: "This expansion gives our members so much more variety. For example, there's people who really don't like going to the gym, so they now have a great range of over 70 classes to choose from. We've expanded our sauna and steam area too."

PERFECT NEW LOOK

Built on the original site of the old Highbury Fields Lido, Highbury Pool has been extremely popular since it opened in 1984, and now gets around 400,000 visitors a year. And with the centre's fantastic new look, even more people are sure to take advantage of the great facilities.

Craig has some advice for people thinking about joining the gym, but who are not quite ready to take the plunge.

"I think people will be really surprised at what we can offer and by the great mix of people we get here"

"Come along and have a look round. I think people will be really surprised at what we can offer and by the great mix of people we get here. And best of all there's a great atmosphere! Everyone gets on and has a good time."

You can pay monthly, annually or per visit, and there are big discounts for people on low incomes, students and over 60s.



For more information, call Highbury Pool on 020 7704 2312. See www.aquaterra.org for more on all of Islington's leisure centres

WIN! FREE PLATINUM MEMBERSHIP!

We are offering one lucky reader a free platinum membership to all of Islington Council's leisure facilities, plus an Everyday Sport goodie bag for the winner and 20 runners up. Simply send a postcard with your name, full address, phone number and email address to Aquaterra Leisure Marketing Department, 1-11 Ironmonger Row, EC1V 3QF by 28 February. You must be over 16 to enter. Please indicate on your entry if you do not want Aquaterra to contact you with details of special offers.

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What's on in the borough this month



Councillor James Kempton, Leader of the Council, answers your letters...

I've made listening to what residents have to say about life in Islington, and what the council can do to improve it, top of my priorities. That's why I became a councillor in the first place, back in 1994.

I can't promise to solve every problem - especially when different residents have different views - but as Leader of the Council I do promise to read and consider all your letters carefully and get the council to help wherever it can.

Send your letters to:

Cllr James Kempton, Leader of Islington Council
IslingtonNow, Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD
Email: islingtonnow@islington.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7527 3416

PICTURE OF THE MONTH



Andover Estate is getting back to books with its estate library. Read all about it on page 8.

Email us your favourite pictures of the borough at islingtonnow@islington.gov.uk

If you would like IslingtonNow in large print, audiotape, or another format, please call 020 7527 3416

IslingtonNow is printed on 100% recycled paper. Please use your green box to recycle IslingtonNow when you have finished with it.

Letter of the month

Car crime crackdown

I park my car in Hardwick Street and, in the two years I have had the car, it has been broken into 10 times! I am really interested to know where my council tax is being spent since the last two years has made me feel like I am under siege in my own home.

Marcus, EC1R

The priority for residents that took part in the council's recent spending priorities consultation told us that crime and community safety in Islington remains their prime concern, as it does for residents across London. This means it has to be a council priority too, and we are doing all we can to support the police in making Islington a safer place to be. For example, there are now 18 local police teams covering every part of the borough including teams at the Angel and

Nag's Head shopping centres.

Car crime remains a problem in Islington, but figures for April-December 2006 show a reduction in the number of offences here and improved detection rates. Offenders are taken to court or ASBOs are used. But accurate statistics depend on car owners always reporting a break-in to the police - I know I have not always done this in the past and I am sure that I am not alone. Crime reports help the police identify motor vehicle crime hotspot areas.

There are now 89 fixed CCTV cameras around the borough and I hope that they are also playing their part in detecting and deterring crime too.

Car break-ins can often be preventable. For tips on securing your vehicle, please turn to page 6.

Shop support

I am very concerned at reports that Islington Council is preparing to increase the rents on shops in Amwell Street. These hardworking shopkeepers are the focal point of the community, and it would be a terrible blow for all of us if they were forced out of business.

Sebastian, WV1X

In the 20 or more years since I moved back to Islington, commercial rents have gone through the roof, just like house prices. I know this is impacting on small shops, and many of the shops I once used have now gone.

The council owns shops that are let on commercial leases, and at a rent similar to what other owners charge. Some people are urging us to use council tax to subsidise rents to private businesses. I am not sure that is right and it is also tricky for us from a legal position. Actually, I think the real question is how much local councils should be in the property business at all. Owning schools and community centres is obviously right, but shops and offices as well? That is why we are currently consulting

about selling some of the commercial properties we own and using the money raised to fund new schools and building our own new council houses - something the council has not done itself for years and years.

The council does support small businesses and there is a debate going on about how we can do more. We are expanding our business support work. Businesses can find out more about the training, advice and support on offer by emailing businesspartnership@islington.gov.uk or by calling 020 7527 3185.

Badge watch

I was pleased to read that the council and police are cracking down on the fraudulent use of disabled badges on match days. However, I hope this is not a token gesture. Anyone displaying a badge illegally should be reported and charged.

Name and address withheld

Blue badges make life easier for people with disabilities by allowing more flexibility over where to park. We have a dedicated team of parking

Shopkeepers are the focal point of the community

attendants patrolling the streets around the Emirates Stadium on match days, and the police use the council's mobile CCTV van to help identify illegal blue badge holders. Last year, we became the first council in London to abandon the practice of clamping illegally parked vehicles for almost all offences, but because we take this so seriously, cars illegally displaying blue badges are still being clamped. And I want to see Arsenal Football Club taking action against these football supporters too.

We are constantly on the lookout for people showing blue badges illegally. During the last 12 months, the council has confiscated almost 300 illegally held or fraudulent badges throughout the borough. We have also taken many cases to court with successful prosecutions in each case.

Tell us what you think of IslingtonNow - contact us at the above address or drop us an email

Please include your full address on all correspondence. Anonymous letters cannot be published, but names and addresses can be withheld on request.

We cannot guarantee to publish all letters received, and we reserve the right to edit letters for both length and content.

Transport boost for borough

Transport for London has allocated £5.7million to help improve transport in Islington. The amount reflects well on the council's ability to deliver high quality transport schemes such as green travel plans and cycle safety programmes.

The money will be spent on improving road safety around 20 schools, as well as providing improved facilities for greener transport alternatives such as cycling, walking and better access to public transport.

For more on cycling in the borough, turn to page 4.



True grit

Winter gritting teams are poised for action with four road gritters available for use on a 24-hour basis.

Last winter, 565 tonnes of salt were used on Islington's roads to make sure they were safe to drive on. And this year, Islington Council is

using an environmentally friendly product called safecoat to tackle freezing roads. Safecoat is grit coated with a 'syrup', meaning less grit is required which helps reduce the environmental damage often associated with gritting.

did you know?

Drivers are on permanent standby to make sure lorries are on the road as quickly as possible if needed

24-hour service: making sure Islington's roads are safe to drive on

IN BRIEF

Supermarket loses licence

Somerfield supermarket on Caledonian Road has had its licence to sell alcohol revoked after failing three under-age sales tests in six months.

Plain-clothed police officers witnessed five teenagers, aged 14-15, being sold alcohol at the supermarket.



All change at Finsbury Park

The area around Finsbury Park station has been transformed. Station Place now has a futuristic canopy, and there is more open space to wait for buses, new CCTV cameras, better lighting and a 125-space cycle park.



Canine capers

More than 30 young people and their dogs turned up to the council's first ever dog handling event at Cornwallis Park, N19. Owners received advice on all aspects of dog care and ownership, as well as a fact pack and tips on dog handling.

Parking enforcement

You can help influence parking attendants' working standards, behaviour and their relationship with residents.

We want 12 local volunteers to contribute to the design, development and fair implementation of Islington's new parking enforcement contract between February and April.

For more information, call 020 7527 2000, email contact@islington.gov.uk or go to www.islington.gov.uk



Thumbs up for council housing benefits service

The council's housing benefits service has been rated as 'excellent' and given four stars – the highest rating – by the local government watchdog, the Audit Commission.

The service has been transformed over the past three years, with 94 per cent of claims being dealt with in 14 days and 90 per cent of calls answered within 20

seconds. The number of complaints has plummeted from 3,000 a year to just 300.

The Audit Commission gave special mention to the council's housing office in Manchester, which was opened due to difficulties retaining staff in London.

Lorraine Constantinou, pictured here with Brenda Windsor of the Hollbrook Co-op,

manages 115 properties for Brook Park Tenants' Co-op in Archway. She has been delighted with the changes to the service. She said: "Today I hardly have any contact with housing benefits and that's a good thing. I am happier and my tenants are happier because we get responses to queries and problems are resolved so quickly."

Match day changes

Making sure 60,000 fans travelling to the Emirates Stadium on match days don't cause chaos isn't an easy job. The council is pleased that the match day transport arrangements have been working and, following a review, several significant changes to loosen up the arrangements are being applied.

After successful lobbying by the council, London Underground has agreed to improve access to Holloway Road tube station by:

- reducing the duration of non-stopping trains (eastbound) from 90 minutes to 60 minutes before kick-off
- opening the station to way-in customers travelling westbound
- keeping the station open until the final whistle, when the station will close for at least an hour.

Also, from spring, residents will have vehicle access to Elfort Road, Stavordale Road, Aubert Park and Martineau Road.

We'll keep monitoring the situation, and trying to put in place more improvements for residents, businesses and visitors.



Saying no to knives

Hundreds of people signed up to our Choose Life, Not a Knife campaign, which aimed to educate young people about the dangers of carrying a knife.



For the most up-to-date information about match day arrangements, go to www.islington.gov.uk/arsenal

Cycling is a great way to get fit and healthy this year, and leaving the car at home means you'll be helping the environment too.

Get on your bike!

“Cycling really gets me started for the day, making me far more alert and energetic”

Cycling is a really great way to improve your health while getting round the borough. And by getting on your bike, you'll be helping to protect the environment at the same time.

Laura Jackaman, a 26 year old Islington resident, took up cycling two years ago and now rarely uses any other form of transport. “When I first started cycling I was a bit worried about the traffic, but that soon passed and now I feel really confident,” says Laura.

“I enjoy cycling because of the freedom it gives me to go where I want, when I want. I've got a speedometer on my bike – in one week I clocked up 70 miles! I didn't realise how much healthier I'd feel from regular cycling.”

CYCLE IMPROVEMENTS
By 2011, the council would like to see an 80 per cent increase in the number of cycle journeys made each day. And we have made a number of improvements to encourage more people to get on their bikes, including the installation of over 60 cycle stands. Another 500 are planned at key spots by 2010.

Improvements over the next few months will also include new cycle routes from Finsbury Park to Smithfield Market, and between Crouch Hill and West Holloway.

FREE TRAINING
Plus we offer free cycle training for everyone, young and old. Training is usually in the summer months, but you can book a place now.



Hopefully, these improvements will encourage more residents to cycle to work. “If people can cycle to work, then they definitely should,” says Laura. “Cycling

really gets me started for the day, making me far more alert and energetic.”
She adds: “You don't have to cycle every day, but people should try to cycle three times a week. It's good for the environment, it's a bit of exercise and most of all it's a great way to see London.”

ISLINGTON

Fostering

We'll help with

- training
- 24 hour support
- generous allowances up to £408 per week

To Foster with Islington call
0800 073 0428
or email us at fostering@islington.gov.uk
www.islington.gov.uk/fostering

We hope to achieve:

- more than a 50 per cent reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads
- a reduction in road traffic and congestion levels
- a significant increase in the number of people walking
- every junction and crossing point made wheelchair accessible
- continued expansion and improvement of the London Cycle Network
- improved road conditions on all borough roads.

→ For more information on the council's plans for sustainable transport or cycle training, visit www.islington.gov.uk/transport, email road.safety@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 2000

60% how much more we recycled last year

24 weeks to turn leftovers into compost

60 new bike stands installed last year

5

Get walking!

Walk Islington – Explore the Unexpected is a free guide with six great walks around the borough.

Resident Nicola Baird features in the guide. "Walking is a great way to get around Islington," she says. "We have some wonderful places to explore."

➔ For your free copy of *Walk Islington*, email transportplanning@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 2000



Leftovers rule!

Ten local schools are recycling their lunch leftovers as part of a new composting pilot scheme.

Children scrape any unwanted peelings or leftovers into special bins. The waste is then collected and taken to a special facility where it is turned into compost within 24 weeks. The children even recycled their Christmas lunches!

➔ You can also recycle your food waste if you have a brown kerbside waste bin. If you would like a container, call Contact Islington on 020 7527 2000 or email contact@islington.gov.uk

did you know?

Islington is the most improved London borough for recycling and composting, with rates improving by 60 percent in 2005-06

Getting greener – reduce your waste

RECYCLE MORE! If your recycling box or bag is full, order another one for free by calling Contact Islington on 020 7527 2000. If you recycle all your paper, cardboard, tins and cans, glass and plastic bottles, you'll notice how little you're throwing away.

SCRAPE THE PLATE! About a quarter of what we throw away is food waste. To stop all this waste ending up at the landfill, scrape your plate into your brown recycling box and we'll collect this from your doorstep and compost it. A lot of this compost is returned to Islington and used in our local parks to improve the gardens.

SHOP SMART! There are many ways of reducing the waste you produce:

- ➔ buy fruit and vegetables loose
- ➔ use bags for life or reusable bags
- ➔ buy good quality goods that last longer
- ➔ try to buy products with less packaging.

➔ For more ideas go to www.islington.gov.uk/recycling

WILD ABOUT ISLINGTON



First signs of spring

The outdoors may seem a cold and frosty place to be in February. But if you look around, you will find many things to brighten even the chilliest of days. The first plants and animals of the year begin to emerge from their winter sleep, and bulbs such as snowdrops, crocuses and daffodils will already be displaying their delicate flowers. These plants not only provide a welcome splash of colour, but are also a valuable source of food to the insects waking from winter hibernation.

Busy bees

Bumblebees are increasingly active at this time of year, appearing from their winter nests and feeding on the rich nectar of winter. Bumblebees are becoming increasingly scarce, with many in danger of becoming extinct because of habitat loss. So why not give them a hand by planting some of their favourite food plants? Herbs such as lavender and rosemary are great for bumblebees, but even better are some of our native wild flowers. The best of these are viper's bugloss and foxgloves, which look great in any garden or window box. Plant some of these and enjoy observing these docile creatures flitting from flower to flower.

➔ For more information, visit www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk or call the council's Nature Conservation Team on 020 7354 5162



More recycling facilities unveiled

Junction Road has new recycling facilities complete with a fresh new logo. Local resident Arlette Mascoll of Fayetteville House, pictured here with Aisling and Benjimen Lee, said: "These recycling facilities are great, I use them all the time and I really like this new design. They're cool."



did you know?

Every plastic bag buried in landfill takes 500 years to decay!

Real change not small change

The streets are no place to live. A partnership between the council, the police and homeless charity St Mungo's is helping to get homeless people off the streets for good and combat aggressive begging, making Islington safer for everyone.

During the holiday season, the council and police worked closely with homeless charity St Mungo's to offer practical help and advice to street beggars. Individuals who were begging were taken to drop-in centres, and given access to resources such as housing services and drug outreach teams to help get them off the street.

Aggressive begging was also targeted. Twelve people were arrested for continuing to harass people, and then asked to sign voluntarily agreements not to beg in Islington. So far, 11 people have signed up and kept to this promise.

WAYS TO HELP

If you want to donate money, the best way to help is to give to charities such as St Mungo's, which aims to get people off the streets, find them housing and employment and deal with other problems they may face.

Luton Sinfield, group manager for outreach services, St Mungo's, says: "It is important that we at St Mungo's have the opportunity to help



Picture courtesy of St Mungo's

➔ For more information on St Mungo's, go to www.mungos.org, call 020 8762 5500 or email info@mungos.org

inform the public on how their generosity can achieve long term change for London's homeless men and women.

"The money raised by diversionary giving campaigns like 'Spare change or real change' helps charities continue to provide support and

treatment around addiction, work and training, and getting off the streets for good, as well as help with accommodation."

The council will work with St Mungo's and other partners later this year to launch a poster campaign that informs people of the best ways to give.

A poster campaign will be launched later this year

“It is important that we at St Mungo's have the opportunity to help inform the public on how their generosity can achieve long term change for London's homeless men and women”



Protect your vehicle

Coming back to your car to find the window smashed and your things gone is bound to make you let out more than a few choice words. As well as the violation of your property, you have to get the car fixed and deal with your insurance company. The council works with the police to reduce car crime in Islington, and here are some practical tips to help keep your car safe.

- ➔ Never leave anything on view in your car, but if you have to, lock it in the boot where it is out of sight.
- ➔ Electronic engine immobilisers prevent your vehicle from starting and are the best way to stop car thieves.
- ➔ When parking outside, always try and park your car in an attended car park. Try to look for a public car park which is part of the police approved Safer Parking Scheme and displays the Park Mark brand.
- ➔ Buy a steering wheel lock and use it every time you leave your vehicle.
- ➔ Get an alarm fitted – alarms can deter thieves not only from stealing your vehicle, but also from taking items from it.
- ➔ Secure your wheels – locking wheel nuts are cheap, easy to fit and stop thieves from taking your wheels.
- ➔ Have your vehicle registration number or the last seven digits of your Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etched onto all windows, both windscreens and your headlamps.
- ➔ Mark all your equipment, like your car stereo, with your vehicle registration number.



YOUR VIEWS

73%

residents that support the council's commitment to listen to the community

7

Talk to us...

The council makes a lot of decisions for the community, but we don't want to make them without knowing your thoughts and views on issues that may affect you and your area.

Below is a list of consultations that you can contribute to. You will be able to find out more on the council website. Consultations are open to everyone unless specified.

Nag's Head town centre strategy

This consultation sets out a vision for the future of the Nag's Head town centre. Anyone interested in commenting on this strategy should visit the exhibition at North Library or visit the council website.

Running from 15 January to 9 February
www.islington.gov.uk/consultation

Archway development framework

A copy of the draft development framework to guide the future development of the Archway area is now available to view at Archway Library, Central Library, Islington Municipal Offices at 222 Upper St or on the council website.

For more information please contact John Norman on 020 7527 1869 or email john.norman@islington.gov.uk
Running from 15 January to 23 February
www.islington.gov.uk/consultation

Street markets strategy

The council is currently developing a street markets strategy. We want to hear what you think about your local markets and how you'd like them to develop in the future.

You can do this by completing the short online questionnaire. Copies are also available by phoning Islington's Business Partnership on 020 7527 3185 or emailing businesspartnership@islington.gov.uk
Running from 1 February to 28 February
www.islington.gov.uk/markets

Rehabilitation and continuing care services for older people

Islington PCT is asking for your views on proposed changes to services for older people in Islington. The proposed changes focus on rehabilitation and continuing care services for older people at St Pancras Hospital in Camden.

Running from now until 8 March

Go to www.islingtonpct.nhs.uk and click on News, or call Kevin Halden on 020 7527 8132 or Andrew Gawthorpe on 020 7527 8049.


Gender equality in NHS services

Islington Primary Care Trust is asking for the views of the public on how the NHS can make sure that services are delivered fairly to both men and women.

Islington PCT is looking for practical suggestions to make health services more sensitive to the specific needs of men or women of all backgrounds and ages.

Running from now until 16 March

See www.islingtonpct.nhs.uk or call Jenny Singleton on 020 7527 1089.

 To view all current consultations, go to www.islington.gov.uk/consultation

You told us...

Budget consultation

Responses to the 2006 budget consultation were up 20 per cent on the previous year.

People's main investment priorities were crime prevention (61 per cent), cleaner streets (56 per cent) and raising education standards (43 per cent).

When asked what they wanted the council to do, 73 per cent of local people supported the council's commitment to listen to the community and involve them in decision-making. Also, 78 per cent agreed that the council should promote equal opportunities and actively support disadvantaged groups. The council will use the information collected to help decide where to spend money in 2007/8.

Hillrise West area CPZ survey

The CPZ survey that was carried out in the Hillrise West area showed that:

→ 73 per cent of respondents believed

that the introduction of the CPZ had been a success

- 70 per cent of respondents felt that enforcement of the CPZ was effective, only 5 per cent did not
- 72 per cent of respondents thought the consultation packs and questionnaires were clear and easy to understand.

Magazine survey results

In September 2006, we ran a survey to ask residents for their views on this magazine. The responses were taken into account and, as you can see, the magazine now has a fresh new look!

Readers said they most wanted to see information on the environment, safety and local events. So we now have dedicated sections on all these subjects.

We will continue to develop this magazine, and welcome your views on the new look. Call 020 7527 3416, or email islingtonnow@islington.gov.uk



New scheme improves access

Wheelchair users at York Way Court are having a smoother ride thanks to a new crossover designed by the council to help them navigate places where there are raised kerbs and cobblestones.

One person delighted with the results is Kevin Rice, the York Way Court resident who raised his concerns about the uneven surface with the council: "Before this was put in place I used to find it very difficult to get out and about," he said. "Now the road is much more accessible for everyone. I'm really pleased Islington Council listened to our plight and has really improved the quality of our lives."

In order to improve accessibility without compromising the conservation of the

cobblestones, the council came up with an innovative design to help all mobility users. Two lines of flat edge granite kerb were laid to create a tramline, and the footpath on either side has been re-laid to stop rainwater collecting.

The council wants to ensure that residents with disabilities have a say on what happens in Islington, and are welcome to give their views through the council's mobility forum.



For more information on the forum, please call 020 7527 3017, email linda.brosnan@islington.gov.uk or go to www.islington.gov.uk/Health/PeopleWithDisabilities

There's a lot going on at the Andover Estate, and it's not what you might think. Over the past few years, the estate has had a serious revamp, transforming its heart and soul.

New beginnings on the Andover Estate

Life hasn't always been easy for the thousands of people living on the Andover Estate, but all that is changing. Thanks to a huge partnership effort between the council, Homes for Islington, the police and the Andover residents, the estate is reaping the benefits of better design, better policing, better housing and stronger communities.

Lifelong estate resident Theresa Coyle talks to us about one hugely successful project that is getting the Andover community back into books.

CHANGES ON THE HORIZON

One of the many creative projects that is changing life for the better on the Andover Estate is the New Horizons estate reading campaign.

Theresa Coyle, community centre manager at the Andover Estate, says: "The aim of the project is to get those people who have got out of the reading habit back into reading."

Set up three years ago, the roving library makes regular pit stops at five estates in the borough. Each Monday, Andover's community centre is turned into the estate's tailor-made library, complete with staff, books, newspapers and magazines. The sessions are informal and there are no traditional library procedures to follow such as silence-only, library cards or deadlines for returning items.

BACK INTO BOOKS

"We want to provide an opportunity for those people that have never read to discover the enjoyment of books," says Theresa. "We also want to encourage people to take their new reading skills and knowledge back into their homes to help their children discover the joys of reading as well."

"But the service is not about telling people what to do," adds

did you know?

£6.5million has been set aside for environmental improvements to the Andover Estate, with work due to start in May

Theresa. "Everyone's free to read whatever takes their interest. So whether reading a magazine or a comic or doing some research, it's irrelevant – we just want to get people reading."

A true local, Theresa has used her insider knowledge to help make the scheme a success. "I've lived on the Tollington Estate all my life so I think I know how the

Library facts

- There is a 'no return date' policy, which works well with almost all books returned after use.
- The library is open every Monday between 10am and 2pm.
- Over 80 per cent of the material bought for these community libraries is a direct result of requests from local residents.
- 77 per cent of those that have joined had never previously registered with their mainstream public library, or had not attended a public library within the last 12 months.



94 books borrowed from the Andover Library's first day of 2007

200 young football fanatics registered on the Andover coaching scheme

1,034 homes on the Andover Estate

9



Many residents visit the library, borrowing around 100 books in each session

community works. I knew that we had to adapt this project to suit the way people live so, for example, cutting out all the red tape like fees and fines works because if people are treated with trust, then they will repay it."

CATERING FOR ALL

Catering to the specific needs of the Andover population, 51 per cent of whom are from

black and ethnic minorities, the library is used by many people to take out books in their own languages. It is also helping to develop important skills which residents can use to improve their lives. For example, the library has books specifically for those with dyslexia, and one young resident who had never before even tried to read a

book now visits regularly.

The popularity of the New Horizons project is also helping to reposition the newly refurbished community centre at the heart of the estate. Hosting a range of other activities and support schemes from keep-fit to crèches and ethnic community meetings, it has become a genuine community hub.

“Everyone’s free to read whatever takes their interest. So whether reading a magazine or a comic or doing some research, it’s irrelevant - we just want to get people reading”

Theresa Coyle says the estate reading campaign is making a real difference to residents

Arsenal football friends

Over 200 young people aged from nine to 19 are registered on the Arsenal Positive Futures project. For the last two years, the project has been running football coaching for young people on the newly-built Astroturf pitch. There are four sessions during the week, and one on Saturdays which is tied in with literacy and numeracy classes.

Thanks to the coaching sessions, there are now several teams playing other teams from across the Tollington Estates, helping the children make friends.



Digging for victory

Young offenders are helping to transform the gardens of Andover residents as part of a scheme to encourage them to put something back into the community.

Homes for Islington is working with Finsbury Park Safer Neighbourhoods police team and the probation service to bring in young people who have been

given community sentences. From digging, planting and sprucing up people’s front gardens to redesigning communal walkways, the project has been welcomed by tenants.



For more information on the community centre, please call 020 7272 3493



Home to the estate library, the newly refurbished community centre has become a hub of activity on the Andover Estate, with events ranging from fitness classes to children’s crèches.

Upper Street

To many, Upper Street is the bustling centre of the borough. Open all hours with a vibrant mix of shops and bars, cafés and restaurants, there really is something for everyone.

Upper Street is a shopper's delight with a variety of high street shops intertwined with unique independent retailers, wonderful antique shops in Camden Passage plus the N1 shopping centre at the Angel. And if all that shopping works up an appetite, you can head for a bite to eat at one of the many cafés or restaurants. From Mexican to Moroccan there is just about every cuisine under the sun and something to suit all budgets. You can even catch a movie afterwards at the Screen on the Green.

James and George Louca work at The Master Cobbler. "We've been here for four years, but the shop has been here for over 50," said George. "It's one of the oldest standing shops on the street.

"This is a really fun place to work, and we are always busy. All our customers are really friendly and we get a real mix of people coming in, from office workers to local residents."

HOW TO GET THERE

Upper Street runs between Highbury & Islington and Angel tube stations.
Buses 19, 43, 30 and 4.



UP YOUR STREET

Paul sweeps up!

Clerkenwell has the honour of having Islington's top sweeper clean its streets.

Paul Smith has lived in Islington for 64 years, and has been looking after the streets of Clerkenwell for the past seven years. He has worked for Islington Council for over 20 years.



"It's been a good and happy time serving this borough," he said. "I'm very pleased residents have gone to the trouble of voting for me. I'm very dedicated to keeping our streets clean."

A resident that nominated Paul said: "Come rain or shine, he is always there doing a great job."

The best collection crew of 2006 were Wayne Probert, Mark Jobe, Ralph Torres and Alan Frater of Tufnell Park, and the recycling crew winners were Martin Delaney, Stuart Farrance and Saadedin Sulimen who look after the east of the borough.

I LOVE ISLINGTON



did you know?

Islington has more than **127 parks, open spaces and playgrounds.**
The largest park is **Highbury Fields, which is almost 30 acres**

"I love the mix of quirky shops on Upper Street. There's a really great choice of places to go and you can buy so much cool stuff here

Hannah Kumari, shopper

Top traders

A new scheme designed to promote local shops and help consumers identify responsible traders has been launched at the N1 Shopping Centre. Traders involved in the scheme will have stickers in their window showing they have signed up to agreed standards of customer care. Before being allowed to join the scheme, traders have to demonstrate to council officers their understanding of basic customer rights and general consumer law. So look out for the logo in shop windows!

The scheme will be introduced to other Islington shopping areas later this year.



"We're here from the States and we think Islington is great! Exmouth Market is adorable and just so lovely

Phyllis and Faye, USA

did you know?

Following the success of the free Christmas parking vouchers, the council has increased your annual visitors' vouchers entitlement from five to 10. For more information, call 020 7527 2000



Dive on in

If you're looking for a great incentive to get fit, why not join this year's Swimathon?

GET OUT AND ABOUT!

Make a racket playing tennis in our parks. Tennis courts within parks are free until 31 March from Monday-Friday from 8am-4pm. For further details call Glendaes on 020 7700 3252.



Getting involved in this year's charity Swimathon is the perfect way to get fit and do your bit for a great cause. Sign up this year and you'll be raising money for Marie Curie Cancer Care.

2007 is the 21st anniversary of the Swimathon, which is the world's largest swimming fundraiser. You can take part in 1,500m, 2,500m, or 5,000m swims, or teams of up to five people can take part in the 5,000m challenge as a relay.

And as an added incentive, Aquaterra will be giving away prizes to the individual and team participants who raise the most money. Participants under 16 could also qualify for one month free swimming.

The event will be held at Ironmonger Row Baths on 23 March and at Cally Pool on 24 and 25 March.

➔ For more information, call Cally Pool on 020 7278 1890 or Ironmonger Row Baths on 020 7253 4011

Revamp your routine

Spice up your exercise routine by joining some classes at your local leisure centre. Exercise classes are a great way to revamp your routine and keep your interest levels up – and you can meet new people.

Islington's leisure centres offer a range of classes to suit people of all ages and fitness levels. Why not try spin or salsa? Or what about yoga or belly dancing?

➔ For more information, visit www.aquaterra.org or call your local health club (see page 14 for contact details)

GET YOUR FIVE A DAY!

Try adding a handful of chopped peppers to your pasta sauce



Join the network

Take advantage of the leisure facilities in Islington as well as across London through membership to the London Fitness Network! There are over 75 gyms and more than 50 pools across London that are part of the network.

And everyone with a London Fitness Network card bought in Islington can swim free with the Cally Masters.

➔ For more information, go to www.londonfitnessnetwork.org or ask at your local leisure centre

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Eat more fruit and vegetables

We should all be aiming to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

As a rough measure, a portion is a handful, and one of the portions can be a glass of pure fruit juice! To get a good balance, aim to eat a rainbow of different coloured fruit and vegetables.

And look out for our monthly five-a-day tips!

Do you feel like chicken tonight?

REDUCE FAT

Eating too much can lead to obesity.

FAST FOODS

Take aways can be loaded with fat.

Islington **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

Fried has 6x more fat than grilled.





Foster carers Kwame and Maura Kwartens with their children Namali and Taali

Words of wisdom

Adam* has been looked after by his foster carer since he was only nine years old. Now in his teens, he has some advice for anyone thinking about



“I used to run my own business, but fostering has been so much more rewarding”

If you want to make a real difference to a child’s life, and to your own, fostering could be for you.

Show that you care

Meet foster parents Maura and Kwame Kwartens. They joined our fostering family last year and are already reaping the rewards of a new way of life.

Children become separated from their families for a variety of reasons, which is why it’s vital that people like the Kwartens make sure they are looked after and cared for.

“We only registered to foster in February of last year,” said Maura, “and already we have three children living with us – a baby and two teenage boys – as well as our own two children. We didn’t expect to have three children to care for quite so soon, but it’s been an amazing experience for our whole family.”

As Maura and Kwame know, fostering a child is a rewarding and challenging experience. Children may need foster care for many years, or a couple of days.

Islington Council offers all its foster carers 24-hour support and a dedicated social

worker, as well as financial help. Up to £408 per week can be offered to meet children’s needs and enable foster carers to give the best care possible.

BOWLED OVER

The council recently organised a fun bowling event for all its foster carers and their families. Maura and Kwame Kwartens took along their children, Taali, 10, and Namali, 7, as well as their three foster children. “Events like this are the perfect way for us to meet other foster

carers, and of course its great for the children too,” said Maura.

Taking teenagers into their home has been a whole new challenge for Maura and Kwame. “Having teenage boys around certainly keeps you on your toes, but they are really great boys,” said Maura. “They are both in college and have high hopes for the future. It’s definitely been hard work, but I wouldn’t change it for the world.”

Fostering has been a truly life changing experience for the Kwartens. “I used to run my own business, but fostering has been so much more rewarding. I would definitely recommend that people get involved if they can – it can really make a difference.”



A GOOD START IN LIFE

Foster carer Chris Dixon (pictured below) has welcomed many children into her home in a short space of time. “I’ve been fostering for around 18 months and I’ve looked after five children in that time,” she says.

Chris is currently looking after 18 month old Robert*, and she says that foster carers can make a real difference to young people. “These children are just like any others. They need a good start in life and someone to care for them and give them the support they need. And foster carers can really make such a huge difference to them.

“It is a challenge, but I would say to anyone who is thinking about fostering to go for it. Pick up the phone and find out more. It doesn’t matter what your background is, as long as you have lots of love and patience.”



For more information call free on 0800 073 0428, fax 020 7527 3418, email fostering@islington.gov.uk, or see www.islington.gov.uk/fostering

18 Islington schools have gained the national healthy schools standard

20 new families became foster carers last year

45 the number of Islington primary schools

13

becoming a foster parent. "Be prepared for a challenge!" he says. "You have to give foster children lots of support and help. It's also really important that you try and understand their backgrounds and where they've come from."

"It's definitely not easy to be a foster carer, but it's a great thing to do. I would say to anyone to give it a go if they can give support to a young person who may really need it."

Adam is looked after by Jean Dunn, who has lost count of the number of children she has fostered over the last 25 or so years. With Jean's support and encouragement, Adam is thriving at school and is currently doing his A-levels.

***names of fostered children have been changed**

Who qualifies?

You don't need to be married or living in a big house to qualify to foster a child. You could be single, married, living together or a same sex couple, and you don't have to own your own house. If possible, we try to place children with people that have a similar background to their own.

YOU DO NEED TO BE:

- ➔ over 23 and under 65
- ➔ fit and active
- ➔ able to speak and write English.



Healthy schools officers Ella and Bahar with assistant headteacher Angela Noronha

Getting healthier

Health is on top of the agenda with 18 schools gaining the national Healthy Schools Standard, which recognises schools that improve their pupils' health and well-being.

St Joseph's Primary School is one of our schools taking up the health challenge. They have appointed two pupil healthy schools officers and present a trophy to classes that eat the most fruit and veg. The school is also planning a summertime sun protection campaign.

To find out more about Islington's schools, contact our education provider CEA by emailing info.cea@islington.gov.uk or calling 020 7527 5800

did you know?

The first construction phase of St Mary Magdalene Academy has been completed. The Academy will start its first intake of Year 7 pupils in September 2007

Schools offer more

Islington schools are not just places that children go for lessons – they are also providing an exciting range of out of school activities.

Twelve Islington schools are providing a full range of extended school activities that give children and parents advice and the opportunity to learn new skills.

On offer are GCSE classes where children and parents learn together, healthy breakfast clubs, counselling services and parenting classes. There are also many after school activities on offer, ranging from capoeira and astronomy to cookery, football and art.

To find out more about the extended schools programme and what is on offer to your children, contact your local school.

GET AHEAD

The City and Islington College Centre offers free training in English and maths for people of all walks of life. The courses allow people to drop into the centre whenever they have free time.

Margaret Talbot recently studied at the centre. She said: "I work full-time so finding such a flexible course was great. I was able to go at my own pace and get all the support I needed. I can now apply for higher positions in my job as a teaching assistant."



For more information, call 020 7281 8739, see www.candi.ac.uk or visit the centre at 36 Junction Road, N19



Lottery lunch fun

Thanks to help from the Big Lottery Fund, students from the Islington Arts and Media School served a delicious Christmas lunch to local pensioners and performed Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet.



FRESH START FOR 2007

Are you looking to improve your English? Would you like help with your literacy and numeracy or maybe you would like to gain some computing or multi-media skills?

There is a variety of courses starting right now in 20 learning centres across the borough.

Courses are available in:

- Literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- Computing
- Arts and media
- Health and community
- Employability



Call the Adult and Community Learning Team on: **020 7527 5782** for more information on courses available near you. www.islington.gov.uk

CONTACT ISLINGTON

Contact Islington is the council's telephone and customer service centre based on the ground floor of **222 Upper Street, N1**. Contact Islington can help you with a range of services including housing advice and environmental queries.

The service centre is open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday for your face-to-face service needs. Phonelines are open from 8am to 8pm. It is also open every fourth Saturday of the month, from 9am to 1pm.

Phone: 020 7527 2000
Email: contact@islington.gov.uk
Minicom: 020 7527 1900
Fax: 020 7527 5001

Other useful contact numbers

CEA@Islington
020 7527 5800
www.islingtonschools.net
HFI Direct (repairs)
0800 694 3344
(minicom 0800 073 0536)
repairs@homesforislington.org.uk
Islington Police
020 7704 1212
Report non-emergencies at
www.online.police.uk
NHSDirect
0845 46 47
www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk

Local leisure centres

Archway Leisure Centre 020 7281 4105	Ironmonger Row Baths 020 7253 4011
Cally Pool 020 7278 1890	Islington Tennis Centre 020 7700 1370
Finsbury Leisure Centre 020 7253 2346	Sobell Leisure Centre 020 7609 2166
Highbury Pool 020 7704 2312	www.aquaterra.org

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR

Islington has 48 councillors. Councillors make decisions on council policy and spending. They are the people who know what's going on in your local area, and are there for you to talk to about any problems you may have with council services. They can take up your case themselves or point you in the right direction to get more advice.

You can meet any of your ward councillors in person at one of their regular surgeries, write to them at the Town Hall, email or telephone them.

For councillors' contact details and to find out when they hold surgeries, call 020 7527 2000 or go to www.islington.gov.uk/askislington and enter your property details for up-to-date information about your councillors.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

1 February 7pm Standards Committee, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1
1 February 7.30pm Sustainability Review Committee, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1
5 February 7.30pm Regeneration Review Committee, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1
5 February 7.30pm South Area Committee, Finsbury Town Hall
6 February 7.30pm West Area Committee, Barnsbury Centre, Offord Road, N1
8 February 7.30pm Executive, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1
13 February 7.30pm East Area Committee, London Voluntary Recourse Centre

13 February 7.30pm North Area Committee, Holborn Union Building
27 February 7.30pm Council, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1
27 February 7.30pm Executive, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1



For more information and details of licensing and planning sub-committee meetings, call Jakki Crowder on 020 7527 3251, email jakki.crowder@islington.gov.uk or see www.islington.gov.uk/democracy

All meetings are subject to change. Please check before attending.

February match days

Tuesday 6 February 8pm
Brazil vs Portugal
(international friendly)

Sunday 11 February 4pm
Arsenal vs Wigan



Tuesday 14 February 7.45pm
Arsenal vs Manchester City
(will only go ahead if neither team is involved in an FA Cup 4th round replay)

All fixtures are subject to change. For up-to-date information please check www.arsenal.com/fixtures.asp

Web watch

Pay it online!

Did you know you can pay your council tax using the Islington Council website? The whole process is quick, easy and secure.

All you need are your council tax details and a debit or credit card – we accept Visa, MasterCard, Switch and Solo.

All online transactions are secure and help is always available.

www.islington.gov.uk/payit

Books to your door

If you can't get to your local library, the free Home Library Service lets you choose books, tapes, CDs, DVDs and videos and have them delivered direct to your door. Many items are available in a range of languages.



For more information, ask at your local library, call 020 7527 7980 between 9-10.30am, Monday to Friday, or apply online at www.islington.gov.uk/libraries



Are you getting all your benefits?

If you or your partner are over 60, let us carry out a benefit check – extra money could be yours.

Call 020 7527 3696/7 for friendly and confidential advice regarding NEW claims for:

- Pension Credit
- Attendance Allowance
- Council Tax Benefit
- Disability Living Allowance (for over 60's)
- Housing Benefit

We have a team of Visiting Officers who will come to your home and help with all the paperwork to make a NEW claim.

www.islington.gov.uk

AGE Concern Islington
Partnership for Well-being
ISLINGTON

Quick-fire choreography combines with photography for an exhilarating show



Australian Dance Theatre – Held

Held is a new stage experience where quick-fire choreography is captured via photographs, which are taken live on stage and instantaneously flashed onto giant screens. Loud, fast and different at every performance, Held allows the audience to experience movement in a startling and unexpected way.

Held created a sensation when it premiered in Adelaide in 2004, winning six national awards.

Sadlers Wells
Tuesday 20 and Wednesday 21 February at 8pm

0870 737 7737 or www.sadlerswells.com
£10 - £24

WIN TICKETS!!!

We have two pairs of tickets to give away for Held at Sadlers Wells. To be in with a chance to win, answer the following question:

WHERE DID HELD HAVE ITS PREMIERE IN 2004?

Send your answers to islingtonnow@islington.gov.uk or by post to IslingtonNow, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD by 9 February. Please specify which date you would prefer.

Heartstone Foundation story exhibitions

Heartstone is a non-profit organisation that addresses prejudice in our communities. The new exhibition, Descendants of All Worlds, is run in conjunction with the Islington Community Safety Partnership, and consists of stories told in photographic form by journalists working in a variety of worldwide locations.

Finsbury Library, St Johns Street, EC1V
Now until 8 March

For more information contact John Archell or Sean Lynch on 020 7527 3434 or email sean.lynch@islington.gov.uk

Beginners Ice Skating

This is a beginners' open session, especially for those who don't like speed skaters whizzing past!

Sobell Ice Rink, Hornsey Road, N7
Every Monday, 6.45 – 8.00pm

020 7609 2166 or www.aquaterra.org
£3.60, with discounts for Izz card holders

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender History month

A number of events will be taking place throughout February to celebrate the contribution of LGBT artists. Events will include a poster competition for schools, a talent competition, a quiz night, an art workshop, a Proud Heritage exhibition, and a civil partnership gallery.

Various venues in and around Islington throughout February

For more information, contact Vernal Scott on 020 7527 3330 or vernal.scott@islington.gov.uk
Prices vary



Ian McElhinney, Aidan McArdle, Elaine Cassidy and Imelda Staunton in *There Came a Gypsy Riding*

There Came a Gypsy Riding

To mark the 21st birthday of their late son, the McKenna family gather at their remote West Ireland holiday home. The story revolves around the family trying to hold it together after a visit from an eccentric cousin, who is set to reveal a family secret. *There Came a Gypsy Riding* is written by Frank McGuinness.

Almeida Theatre, Almeida Street, N1
Until 3 March

020 7359 4404 (24 hour) or www.almeida.co.uk
£6 - £29.50

Micky Flanagan – What Chance Change

It's 1980: Micky feels trapped and angry, working as a porter in Billingsgate fish market, living in the bleak East End. It's now 2007: Micky is slightly upset at the cost of a latte, working as a stand-up comic and living in East Dulwich. Join him as he recounts his journey, including countless jobs and a belated higher education.

Pleasance Theatre, Carpenters Mews, North Road, N7
19 February 7:45pm

020 7609 1800 or www.pleasance.co.uk
£8/6.50

The organisers of events can change their arrangements at any time. Please check with the venue before you go out of your way.

If you want to see your event listed here, email us at events@islington.gov.uk

Spare change or real change?

Giving money to people who beg keeps them on the streets

The best way to help is to give to charities
that support people who beg to leave the
streets for good.

To make a donation please contact
St Mungo's on 020 8600 3000
www.mungos.org

Campaign supported by:

