

IslingtonNow

Issue 4 May 2007

your local magazine from Islington Council

Spring has sprung!



The Spa Fields Launch Festival takes place on 20 May. To find out more, turn to p15.

With the sun out and the flowers blooming, spring has truly sprung in Islington. So what better time to get out and about in the borough's parks?

It's the perfect time of year to go out and enjoy the great outdoors. And with 127 parks and open spaces in Islington, you're spoilt for choice.

We're working hard to ensure all our green spaces are cleaner, greener and safer for everyone to enjoy. Spa Fields in EC1, near Exmouth Market, was an underused park with old plants and a graffiti problem. But now the space has been completely

“ We have 127 parks and open spaces in Islington, and we're working hard to make them cleaner, greener and safer for everyone to enjoy ”

transformed and the old Spa Fields is a thing of the past. In its place is a wonderful, modernised green space with a games area, a chill-out zone designed by young people, a grass kickabout field, Mediterranean style picnic areas and new plants and trees. A cool new adventure playground is also being constructed.

A lot of people have been involved in revamping the park, including many volunteers who devoted their time to planting a new wildflower meadow, nectar rich shrub plants and fresh flowerbeds. And the Friends of Spa Fields group is already up and running to ensure that the park stays clean and green for the future.

 To find out more about your nearest park, to join Friends of Spa Fields or set up a new park group, please call Contact Islington on 020 7527 2000, email contact@islington.gov.uk or go to www.islington.gov.uk

INSIDE

2 **LETTERS**
The leader of the council replies to your letters

3 **NEWS**
Should the polluters pay?

4 **ENVIRONMENT**
Get wild in your garden for Biodiversity Month!

6 **SAFER ISLINGTON**
We talk to new Borough Commander Bob Carr

7 **YOUR VIEWS**
The latest consultations

8 **IN FOCUS**
What's really happening at City Road Basin



10 **LOCAL LIFE**
Local shops – the truth behind the fiction

11 **LIFESTYLE**
A new text service for asthmatics

12 **YOUNG ISLINGTON**
Helping our children get healthy

14 **NOTICEBOARD**
The all-important contact numbers

15 **OUT AND ABOUT**
Great outdoor activities this spring

2 LETTERS



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.

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



The borough's young people enjoyed a fashionable day of fun as they transformed old clothes into their own fantastic new creations at the i-recycle centres fashion workshop.

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.

Contact us:

IslingtonNow, Town Hall, Upper Street, London N1 2UD
Email: islingtonnow@islington.gov.uk
Phone: 020 7527 3416

Letter of the month

Energy efficiency

I think it is important to do all we can to reduce our energy usage, but by far the biggest source of wasted energy in my home is the heating. While I have a modern gas heating/hot water system, the windows in our estate are old, single paned and very poor at containing heat.

I would like to suggest that some of the Climate Change Fund be put towards ensuring that all of Islington's single-paned estates have their windows replaced.

Rob Tsintas, N19

I'm glad to see you're concerned about wasting energy as it's an area I feel strongly about. I'd first like to explain that there are environmental issues that can create a dilemma for anyone thinking of replacing their windows. The production and disposal of uPVC windows can harm the environment, but the windows themselves can be very effective and they last a long time. Although timber windows are more environmentally friendly, they often don't last as long. They also require

regular maintenance to ensure we get the longest life from them.

We've looked at the windows on our estates and around one in eight of them will be replaced over the coming three years. Taking many factors into account to ensure that replacements are environmentally friendly and cost effective, the best solution is that half the new windows are uPVC and half are either aluminium or timber. The remaining windows will be refurbished and redecorated.

Money from the Climate Change Fund is not required to pay for this work. But I hope that some of the money will be used for other projects on our estates such as renewable energy schemes. Details of how residents can apply for grants under the fund will be announced soon, and details will be in a future issue of IslingtonNow

If you want advice on energy saving please call the Energy Centre on freephone 0800 512 012, email energy.advice@islington.gov.uk, go to www.islington.gov.uk/Environment/388.asp or visit the centre at 159 Upper Street, N1.

A right mess

I'm currently training for the London marathon, and as I'm running in Islington I've noticed I'm having to dodge around increasing amounts of dog mess. What is being done about this health hazard?

Rachel Lonsdale, N7

I do appreciate that dog mess around the place is very unpleasant and a health hazard. I'm as frustrated as anyone by dog owners who don't clean up this mess.

A team of environment wardens will be in place in the coming months, and they will have the power to issue instant fines of £80 to people who don't clean up after their dogs. We also encourage responsible dog ownership by holding dog handling events to educate people on how to look after their pets and the health hazards of not cleaning up after them.

You can help us by letting us know of specific 'hotspots' in the borough by calling Contact

I'm having to dodge around increasing amounts of dog mess. What is being done about this health hazard?

Islington on 020 7527 2000, and we can then focus on the surrounding streets with our education and enforcement campaign.

Fixture fix

I was delighted to see you advertise the upcoming Arsenal match days in IslingtonNow.

Unfortunately, I noticed that one of the fixtures listed in the April edition was incorrect. While many residents can

check online, there are still many without internet access. Please can you make it a priority to ensure that changes are widely publicised.

Caroline Russell, N5

I'm sorry the wrong information was printed in last month's IslingtonNow. We do everything we can to make sure we have the most accurate information when we go to print but sometimes changes are made at the last minute - usually by the TV networks!

As you rightly say, it's important people know about changes as soon as possible to help ease congestion when Arsenal play at the Emirates Stadium. The best way to get up-to-date match day information is at www.islington.gov.uk/arsenal, and don't forget that if you don't have internet access at home you can go online for free at all the borough's libraries. There are also signs at local tube stations before games and on controlled parking zone signs in the area.

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.

Have your say – should the polluters pay?

All residents are being asked to vote in an official electoral referendum on whether owners of 'gas guzzlers' should pay more for parking permits to encourage them to switch to greener, less polluting vehicles.

The changes to the permit system would link residents' parking permit charges to CO2 emission rates and vehicle engine size. The charges are not designed to raise extra income for the

council, but could mean a reduction in permit charges for around two thirds of our residents.

In last year's budget consultation, the majority of people told us that they want us to listen to them and involve them in decision making. It is believed this will be the first referendum on tackling climate change in this country.

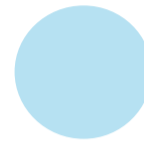
Residents can expect to receive ballot papers in the first week of June. To find out more about the referendum, go to www.islington.gov.uk or look out for the next issue of IslingtonNow.



Join the
pollution debate

did you know?

There are lots of exciting spring activities taking place in Islington this month. Turn to page 15 to find out more!



Taken any great pictures in the borough? Email your favourite photos to islingtonnow@islington.gov.uk

IN BRIEF

If you love it, lock it!

Cyclists in the borough are being reminded to lock both wheels and the frame of their bike when out and about. Make sure you lock your bike to an immovable object such as a cycle stand, secure any removable accessories and utilise as much of the lock as possible. For more information call 020 7527 2000.



Advice on hand

Islington Citizens Advice Bureau is closing but there are still a range of alternative services available to those affected by the closure.

All existing clients who needed advice have been referred to other agencies. A new permanent service should be set up in October but, in the meantime, those seeking advice can go to www.adviceguide.org.uk

Free first aid training

If you're a voluntary, community or faith organisation working in Islington, your staff could get free first aid training.


If you have 12 willing participants, and space for St John Ambulance to carry out the training, call Pascal Coyne on 020 7527 3371 or email pascal.coyne@islington.gov.uk. For more information on the training, go to www.sja.org.uk



A licence to skill!

Islington's young people can now take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme after the Duke himself presented a licence to Islington Council's Children's Services.

The award is open to those aged between 14 and 25 who live in the borough and encourages them to learn a range of new skills. So go on – take the challenge!

 For more information about the Duke of Edinburgh's Award in Islington, contact Fotene Georgiou on 020 7527 5594 or email fotene.georgiou@islington.gov.uk. Information about the award scheme can be found at www.theaward.org

New route on the PlusBus!

The PlusBus, a hail and ride service for elderly and disabled people, will continue to operate for the rest of the year thanks to Islington Council working closely with Transport for London (TfL) to secure funding.

However there are some changes to the service. Routes PB1 and PB2 are being replaced by the new route 812. This route is based on a combination of the PB1 and PB2 routes so many of the same streets and destinations will continue to be served. Buses operate at half-hourly intervals, five days a week, from Southgate Road to Angel, and then down to Bunhill Row via Percy Circus.

The Department for Transport's Urban Bus Challenge funding for the service had come to an end, but the

council helped find a solution to keep the service running. While the council is not responsible for providing public transport, we're matching funding from TfL to keep PlusBus running for the rest of the year. We will continue to lobby TfL to convince them of the value of this service so they keep it operating in the future.

Freedom Pass holders can use the PlusBus for free, and anyone else can use the service for £1 per journey. Children travel for free.

 For more information about PlusBus call Hackney Community Transport on 020 7275 2400



Cut out the fags!

Local girl and Fast Show star Arabella Weir attacked a giant cigarette at The Garden pub on Upper Street which went smokefree for National No Smoking Day. From July 1 this year all pubs, bars and workplaces will be required to be smokefree by law.



Arabella shows her support for a smokefree Islington

Brush up your English!

Would you like to improve your English? Or gain some computing or desktop publishing skills? If so, you can enrol on a free course at the Mayville UK Online Centre near Newington Green. Courses run throughout May, June and July.

Call 020 7249 8286, extn 2 to find out more.

Going wild in Islington!

May is biodiversity month, and it's time to get wild in your back garden!



ISLINGTON

Lock both the wheels and frame to the stand

LOVE IT? LOCK IT.

We are installing new bike stands across the borough.

If you love your bike lock it right. Lock both the wheels and frame to the stand.

bikeoff ISLINGTON

Living in a city doesn't mean we can't enjoy what nature has to offer, and we can all do our bit to protect, conserve and enhance the borough's wildlife.

The theme of this year's biodiversity month is wildlife gardening, and we've got tips aplenty to help you create your own miniature wildlife park – even if all you've got is a windowbox!

WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

In its simplest form, biodiversity means the variety of living things from animals and birds, trees and flowers to insects and

fungi. It's not just about the rare and threatened. Just as important is the wildlife we see and experience every day.

Islington has produced its own Biodiversity Action Plan to protect, conserve and enhance the borough's wildlife. Part of this plan is to encourage the residents of Islington to play their part by creating wildlife friendly areas in their own backyards.

WHY WILDLIFE GARDENING?

As the homes and habitats of many animals and plants disappear, back gardens are becoming increasingly important refuges for wildlife. And with a bit of know how, every garden, however small, can be developed to provide a safe haven for wildlife.

Many garden plants are a vital source of nectar for bees and butterflies and provide cover and food for numerous bird species. Bird feeders can be a great way of helping to look after our feathered friends. Creating a wildlife area doesn't have to be time consuming, expensive or difficult, but can be fun, with even the simplest things often making a big difference.

did you know?

Private gardens represent about 25 per cent of the borough's landscape and are the most important habitat for its wildlife.

“ Bird feeders can be a great way of helping to look after our feathered friends ”

WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP?

Even if you're not green fingered, there are many small things you can do to make your backyard wildlife friendly. To help, Islington Council has produced an information pack in partnership with the London Wildlife Trust, which will give you advice and useful tips on how you can create your own wildlife oasis. The pack is being launched on Saturday 19 May at the Islington Ecology Centre in Gillespie Park.

➔ For more information call 020 7354 5162 or email ecologycentre@islington.gov.uk. And to get you started why not check out the helpful hints opposite!

95,000

visitors to the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre in 2006 – an increase of 10 per cent on 2005

4,930

new recycling bags ordered during our recent door knocking campaign

5

Getting greener – make your garden a wildlife retreat!



GROW NECTAR RICH PLANTS
Forget-me-nots, lavender and marigolds all encourage insects and butterflies as well as providing a fragrant display. Herbs such as chives, comfrey,

marjoram and mint are also great for both wildlife and your cooking.

CREATE A WILDFLOWER AREA
Wildflowers can be grown at home in hanging baskets or window boxes. Not only are wildflowers pretty to look at, they are excellent for insects, birds and mammals. Try

sowing seed mixes such as field poppy, cornflower, corn marigold, corncockle and corn chamomile. Wildflower seeds can be easily bought from your local garden centre or online.



PROVIDE FOOD AND DRINK!

Birds need to be fed all year round, not just in the winter. You can buy a feeder and fill it with peanuts and sunflower seeds, or use a prepared seed mix. Nuts should be unsalted and bear the British Trust for Ornithology's 'safe' kite mark. You can also provide a birdbath. A year round supply of fresh water is vital for birds to drink and will increase the variety of visiting birds. Watching them is also an enjoyable and entertaining pastime!

INSTALL A NEST BOX
Bird boxes provide shelter and a place for birds to nest. Try to position your bird box in a sheltered and shady location at least two metres above the ground.



Spreading the message door to door!



“It was really informative to talk to someone about recycling. Although I recycle quite a lot it's great to have an expert on hand to tell me what else I can recycle”

We're boosting the borough's recycling rate by getting more people to recycle their waste. A recent door knocking campaign encouraged residents to recycle more on estates and in flats above shops, and raised the profile of the doorstep recycling collection services. The council's recycling champions visited over 26,000 properties and spoke to more than 10,000 residents – nearly half of whom requested new recycling bags.

Local resident Jenna-Lee Anderson said: "It was really informative to talk to someone about recycling. Although I recycle quite a lot it's great to have an expert on hand to tell me what else I can recycle and give me some ideas on how to reduce the amount I throw away."

did you know?

Islington Council has collected over 11,000 tonnes of paper, glass, tins and cans, cardboard and plastic bottles from doorsteps across Islington for recycling in the last year.

Get pedaling and win a trip to Paris!

To celebrate le Tour de France coming to London we are offering one lucky person who lives, works or studies in Islington a trip for two to Paris. But first you will need to complete your 'tour' by cycling to work for 21 days before 15 June.

To enter log on to www.islington.gov.uk/greentravel or send an email with your details to transportplanning@islington.gov.uk

WILD ABOUT ISLINGTON

There are loads of great places you can visit this month to see wildlife in action!

Gillespie Park Local Nature Reserve

Check out the musical notes of the park's resident crickets and grasshoppers. The park is home to a huge range of insects, some of which are found nowhere else in the borough.

Regents Canal

Hidden away is Islington's only open waterway. A great place for a gentle stroll and to see many of this year's fledgling water birds such as swans, moorhens and coots.



Regents Canal

Culpepper Community Gardens

An urban oasis and a great place to sit and relax. A fantastic display of flowers in this garden makes it a great place to go and see bees and butterflies.

Parkland Walk Local Nature Reserve

The longest nature reserve in London is a great place to go bat spotting. Look out for summer bat walks run by the Nature Conservation Team.

Barnsbury Wood

This secret wood on Crescent Street is a real gem. Open on Tuesday afternoons, it provides an excellent opportunity to see some great woodland wildflowers, with a tremendous display of cow parsley in particular.



For further information contact the Islington Nature Conservation Team on

020 7354 5162 or email ecologycentre@islington.gov.uk

Policing the issue

Living in a safe place is important to all of us, and new Borough Commander Chief Superintendent Bob Carr is determined to keep crime down on the streets of Islington.

“Islington is such an interesting place to be working,” says new Borough Commander Bob Carr. “It’s a really vibrant area and I’m looking forward to working here.” Previously Borough Commander in Harrow for two and a half years, Bob is no stranger to this area having worked in some of our neighbouring boroughs. “I have worked in Camden and Hackney – in fact I began my career in Camden – so the area isn’t completely new to me.”

So what does the role of Borough Commander involve? “All 32 London boroughs have a Borough Commander that

takes the lead on policing for that area. Of course there are certain Metropolitan Police guidelines that we have to work to, but I will also be working very closely with my senior management team here to deliver on certain areas that are key to this borough.”

CRACKING DOWN ON CRIME

Bob says that his main challenge will be to continue to bring down crime levels in the area. “There have been substantial reductions in crime here over recent years, and we are very close to meeting government targets to reduce

“I think this is a great area and there is so much going on here. And we want to make sure the borough continues to be a safe place for people to live, work and visit”

specific crimes by 20 per cent over a period of time.”

And of course there are some key areas on which Bob and his team will be focusing. “I don’t believe gun crime is an Islington problem, but I am really keen not to see any escalation in this type of violent crime, and we will be taking very robust action to ensure that gun crime never becomes a big issue in the area. Of course we are also doing a lot of work around knife crime, and I hope local people will be aware of Choose Life, Not a Knife, which is a joint campaign with Islington Council. This is a very large



Bob Carr

scale operation which will be continuing with education in schools and stop and search activity at major transport hubs.”

Taking the lead on policing issues in Islington will certainly be a challenge, but it is one that Bob is relishing. “I think this is a great area and there is so much going on here. And we want to make sure the borough continues to be a safe place for people to live, work and visit.”

 To contact Islington Police, call 020 7704 1212 or go to www.met.police.uk/islington

Award for DVD crackdown

The Nag’s Head Safer Neighbourhood Team has been commended by the Federation of Copyright Theft for continuing to crackdown on pirate DVD sellers. Since the patrols started the number of illegal traders at the Nag’s Head has fallen dramatically, and over 32,000 pirate DVDs have been seized.



Islington’s knife crime campaigning is ongoing

YOUR VIEWS

200 people signed
up to WebLab

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.

Childcare funding reminder

You have until 8 May to have your say on the council's review of funding for the expansion of childcare and other services for under fives and their families.

Consultation open to: Parents, childcare providers, local taxpayers

For more information, call Children's Information Services on **020 7527 5959** or email cis@islington.gov.uk
www.islington.gov.uk/consultation

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



The Listen Up project listens to the views of young people

Listening to Islington

We're really stepping up our efforts to find out what local people think about Islington and the services the council offers them. And most importantly, we're doing our best to be open about these thoughts and views, act on them and give honest feedback on the action we take.

SO HOW ARE WE LISTENING?

Firstly, we are trying to be more creative in the way we consult. For example, when we consulted on our budget late last year we used several methods for listening to your views. All residents received a questionnaire in IslingtonNow and focus group discussions were held with over 50 residents. We held in-depth phone interviews with a number of local businesses and we surveyed a representative sample of residents. In total over 2,200 people gave us

their views. We reported back on how the budget will be spent in last month's issue of IslingtonNow.

LISTENING TO EVERYONE

Engaging with groups in the community whose voice is often not heard is particularly important. Our acclaimed Listen Up project aims to listen to the views of young people on a range of topics, and the Social Services Forum is a quarterly public meeting for listening to social services users and voluntary organisations.

GET INVOLVED AND HAVE YOUR SAY

For those with access to the internet, our website has a dedicated consultation area at www.islington.gov.uk/consultation. It enables you to see current consultations and respond online to questionnaires.

We have also developed our 'WebLab' of nearly 200 local people who have agreed to receive and respond electronically to surveys. It is still early days but it promises to be an innovative and cost-effective way of listening. It may also be an effective way

of engaging with young people in particular.

MOVING FORWARDS

We want more of you to get involved, and we're working to make sure we flag up key consultations as early as we can to give everyone a chance to take part. Feedback Finder on the web is being improved and will include details of past, present and planned consultations. It's a great tool to keep residents informed. And of course we will continue to provide information on key consultations on this page every month. Let us know what you think of this page by emailing islingtonnow@islington.gov.uk or calling 020 7527 3416.



You told us...

Ashmount School

The majority of people that responded to the council's recent consultation about the future of Ashmount School said they would like to see the school relocate to a new site at Crouch Hill.

Over 500 parents and residents were consulted between December 2006 and January 2007, and two thirds favoured relocation of the school, which is currently unfit to be used, to nearby Crouch Hill.

The council also supports relocation of the school to Crouch Hill, but before any decision can be taken plans would need to be approved by the Mayor of London. The council also needs to show that refurbishing the school on the existing site is not a viable option.

Street trading

Several hundred people, including consumers, traders and businesses, responded to a recent consultation about street trading. Questionnaires were distributed to find out what people thought of Islington's markets.

More details on the results of the consultation will feature in a future issue of IslingtonNow.

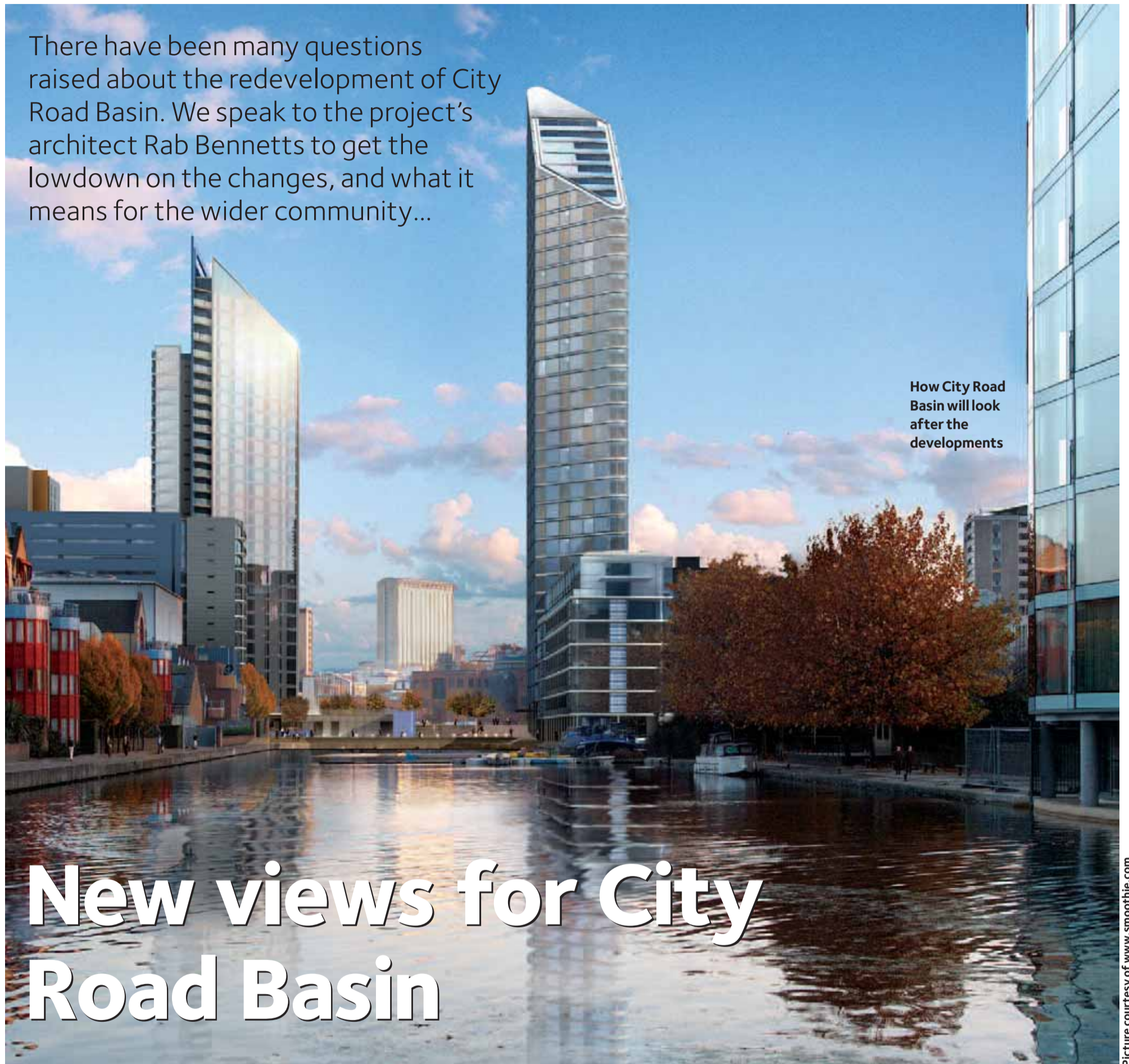


We asked for your views on street trading

 To sign up to WebLab, please call **020 7527 3501/3899**, email weblab@islington.gov.uk or go to www.islington.gov.uk/weblab

There have been many questions raised about the redevelopment of City Road Basin. We speak to the project's architect Rab Bennetts to get the lowdown on the changes, and what it means for the wider community...

How City Road Basin will look after the developments



New views for City Road Basin

Picture courtesy of www.smoothie.com

It's been controversial, but the development of City Road Basin will help regenerate a rundown area and benefit the whole community.

IslingtonNow: What changes will we see to City Road Basin?

Rab Bennetts: At the moment, much of the Basin is inaccessible to the public and

blighted by underused industrial premises. The redevelopment plans will change this into a lively residential neighbourhood and will open up the Basin as a proper amenity with access for all. The buildings that line the sides of the Basin will be medium in height, and there will be two slender towers where the Basin meets City Road.

IN: Why are these changes important to the area and how will the local community benefit – as well as the borough of Islington as a whole?

RB: Islington desperately needs new housing of all kinds, and the scheme will include about 900 new homes. It also includes a wide range of other activities, such as the new boat club, cafes

and a few shops, an extension to the existing park and space for a community healthcare facility. Instead of being a rather barren part of Islington, its location mid-way between the Angel and City Road roundabout should be thriving and attractive – that's what the scheme is intended to achieve.

IN: This all started back in 2001 – why is it taking so long?

RB: To be honest, the easy bit was the design of the masterplan, even though there was a lot of time-consuming consultation before the final decision was made. The difficult part of the process is getting legal agreement from several separate landowners,

900 new homes
being built at
City Road
Basin

1970 the year Islington
Boat Club was
formed

9



Rab Bennetts

Photo by Clare Park

market demand but also because local councils, the Greater London Authority and the government are all encouraging higher densities of development. Islington Council has identified very few sites that would be suitable for tall buildings but one of these is the head of the Basin at City Road. We produced several computer-generated images for the planning application that, in my view, show how the two tall buildings will be a positive addition to the area. We even did some long-distance views from Hampstead Heath, to show that views of St Paul's Cathedral would not be obstructed.

including property companies and the council itself. The agreements are now almost complete but I must admit that, as an architect, I do find this part of the process very frustrating as little appears to be happening on the ground. The fact is that inner-city regeneration is hugely complex and large schemes like this often take several years to get going.

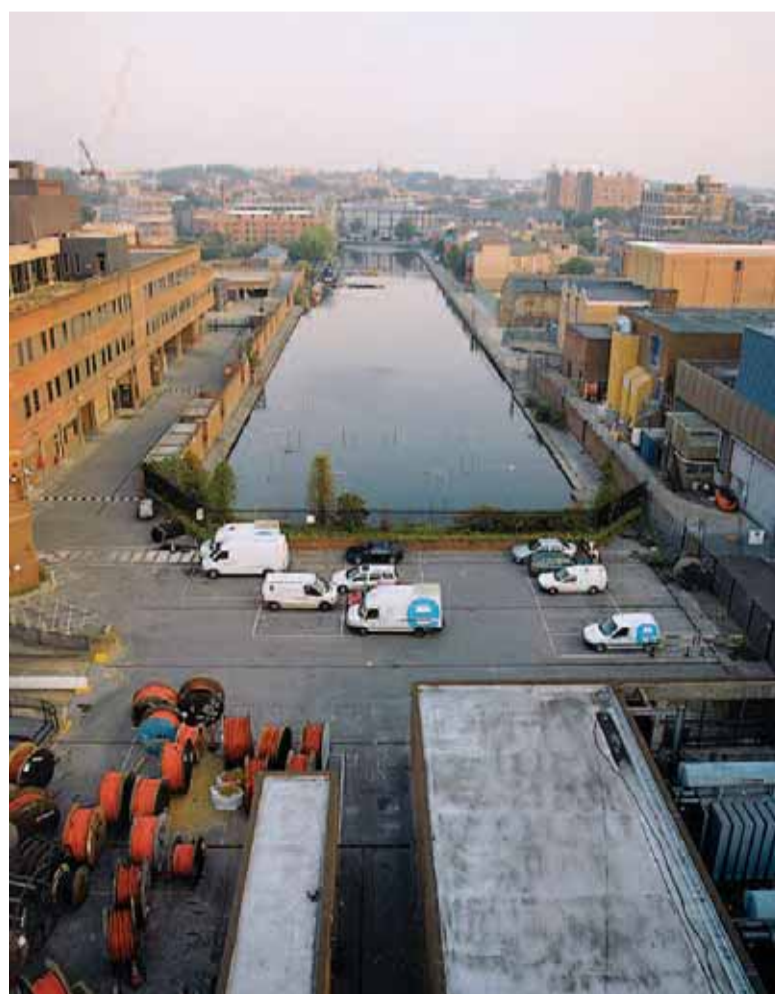
IN: There have been some concerns raised about green space and Graham Street Park, and the continued use of the canal as a waterway. How are you addressing these concerns?

RB: During the public consultation exercises we said we had no intention of building on the Graham Street Park. In fact the final masterplan extends the park and the amount of green space round the Basin is more than doubled. The masterplan also safeguards the future of the waterway, which will remain open to the kids who use the boatclub, but there will also be better access for narrowboats in appropriate areas.

IN: Are tall buildings really appropriate for this area?

RB: There is huge pressure all over London for taller buildings, not just due to

“Islington desperately needs new housing of all kinds, and the scheme will include about 900 new homes. It also includes a wide range of other activities, such as the new boat club, cafes and a few shops, an extension to the existing park and space for a community healthcare facility”



City Road Basin as it looks now

Boost for the boat club



Islington Boat Club was established in 1970 by enthusiastic local residents and, over the years, the club has introduced thousands of Islington's young people to activities such as canoeing and sailing. Francis Chronnell, chair of the club, talks to IslingtonNow about the changes and challenges ahead.

Islington Boat Club has been involved in all aspects of the discussions regarding the redevelopment of City Road Basin. "It's been going on for over six years!" says Francis.

And it hasn't all been smooth sailing. "As with any negotiations, they have not always been easy or straightforward. There have been periods of intense discussion and at other times it seemed like nothing was happening. Perhaps inevitably over such a time scale, the people we were dealing with sometimes changed and the overall plan continuously evolved. This meant that on several occasions we had to revisit and renegotiate areas that we thought had been agreed!"

The club itself plays an important role in helping young people in the community, and the redevelopments will be a big boost for them. "Lots of people make use of the extensive and lively programme of activities at the Boat Club, including 16,000 young people, 39 schools and 46 community groups, and we will all benefit from the new facilities," says Francis. "We'll also receive additional funding which will be used to support and expand existing projects and enable the club to develop new opportunities to meet the often challenging circumstances of Islington's disadvantaged young people."

It's been six long years of negotiation, but Francis strongly believes the hard work will pay off. "It may still be a couple of years or so before our new club building is ready, but we now feel we are very close to the whole deal being completed. We believe our continued presence will make the Basin a lively and attractive location."

UP YOUR STREET



Getting what you deserve!

It's important that people get money they're entitled to, especially older people. Since last July, Islington Council's benefits team has visited around 1,200 older people, resulting in a lot more people getting the money they are supposed to.

One such person was Mr Dimond, who contacted our team to ask for a benefits check. "I spoke to Denise Brewster from the Joint Visiting Team, who said I might be entitled to housing benefit, council tax and pension credit, so she arranged an appointment to visit me at my home address.

"Denise was very helpful. She gave

me all the information I needed and helped me complete all the necessary forms. And now, I'm £2,496 better off a year! Because of this extra money, I don't need to worry about keeping the heating on during the cold spells, as I can now afford to pay any extra heating costs.

"I would recommend anyone who thinks they may be entitled to benefits to contact the Joint Visiting Team to have a benefit check done."

 **For more information, call 020 7527 3696/7 or email benefitcheck@islington.gov.uk**

Shop Local – why we're selling our properties

Why is the council selling some of its properties?

The council has acquired a lot of properties over the years through various investments, and they cost a lot to maintain. We're giving local businesses the opportunity to buy their premises, while releasing millions of pounds to reinvest in services that will benefit the community.

We don't think local councils should manage commercial property portfolios and act as a landlord – we think they should be spending their money on services like schools, social housing and roads. And we have to spend money maintaining these properties, which we don't think is the best use of council taxpayers' money. We think residents would rather we spend our money on improving local services.

So what will the money from the sale be spent on?

Millions will be spent on regeneration projects that benefit local people. This will include investment in schools, new council housing and green energy projects.

Can people buy their own shops?

Yes, and in fact many businesses have expressed an interest in buying the premises they occupy. We made sure we gave them early notice of the sale

so they had plenty of time to decide what they wanted to do.

Why can't these businesses get a discount to buy their own premises?


The council is obliged to get the best possible price for council properties – and the best deal for our council taxpayers – under Section 123 of the Local Government Act.

What if the shopkeeper doesn't want or can't afford to buy their shop?

People who own the premises can remain as tenants if they want to, and their rights won't be affected. Any new owner has to respect the terms of the tenant's existing lease.

Does the council have any planning powers to protect local shops?

Yes, the council does have powers to protect some of our local shops, and it does use them. We strongly believe in protecting the character of our shopping centres because local shops are important to all of us and that's why we have these controls in place.

 **For more information, call Contact Islington on 020 7527 2000, or email contact@islington.gov.uk**

Best bar none

Best Bar None is a national scheme that can give you the confidence to drink in pubs, clubs and bars knowing they are meeting high standards. Look out for the Best Bar None logo when you're out and about in Islington.

Many venues in the borough have already been accredited, and the council hopes other venues will apply for the award.



 **For more information contact the Licensing Service on 020 7527 3879 or email licensing@islington.gov.uk**

I LOVE ISLINGTON

I love smokefree Islington

In preparation for going smokefree in July, several pubs and restaurants in Islington went smokefree for No Smoking Day in March. Deborah and Timothy Noble enjoyed the chance to spend the evening in a smokeless pub, and even Deborah's partner Peter saw the benefits despite being a smoker. "My mum died from smoking and suffered for years before that through arthritis which was caused by it," said Deborah. "Even in a wheelchair after having a leg removed she still wanted a cigarette. Not smoking is really important to me and it's great to be out together as a family in a non-smoking environment."

Peter added: "I'm not finding it too hard tonight. I don't think the ban will hurt at all and in fact I think it will be a good thing. Not being able to smoke inside has been a real help and I've definitely smoked less."



LIFESTYLE

2 months free on selected Aquaterra memberships

11

GET OUT AND ABOUT!

Its time to get trim on the trail. Elthorne Park has a series of exercise stations around the park, known as a trim trail, which is free for everyone to use. The route of the trail is next to the ball court area and can be combined with a jog or a walk in the park. For more details call the local Greenspace Ranger, Laura Sanna, on 07958 741587.

The route of the trail is next to the ball court area and can be combined with a jog or a walk in the park. For more details call the local Greenspace Ranger, Laura Sanna, on 07958 741587.




Running to victory!

Duncombe Primary School were the happy winners of this year's Sportshall Championships. Students from 24 Islington primary schools received specialist coaching and took part in a range of track and field events to battle it out for the coveted title.

Take the test

Thousands of Islington residents will be invited to take part in a bowel cancer screening programme over the next two years. Early detection is crucial to lowering the number of deaths from bowel cancer, which is currently the second most common cause of cancer deaths in the UK.

Over 11,000 men and women aged between 60 and 69 and registered with a GP in Islington will be sent a simple test kit to complete in the privacy of their home. Those aged 70 and over are being encouraged to call a freephone helpline on 0800 707 60 60 and request a kit.

 For more information, please contact your GP.

GET YOUR FIVE A DAY!

Add some berries or sliced banana to your morning cereal!

AirTEXT

If you suffer from asthma or a respiratory condition, you can get free air pollution alerts sent direct to your mobile, email or home phone.

 For more information and to sign up to Islington airTEXT, visit www.islington.gov.uk/airquality, email pollution@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 3228. You can also pick up a leaflet from your local GP.



Fitness for free!

Join your local Aquaterra gym now and you'll receive free one-to-one sessions with an instructor and a personal fitness programme specially designed for you. Members can use any of the seven centres in the borough.

Join before the end of May and you can receive 14 months for the price of 12 on selected memberships. Go to www.aquaterra.org or call 020 7253 5365 for more information.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A fishy blunder!

You may have noticed a mixed message on last month's lifestyle page. To clear up any confusion, you should aim to eat one portion of oily fish every week.



Too much sugar weighing you down?

REDUCE SUGAR

Too much sugar can cause weight gain.

REPLACE SUGAR

With water or diet drinks.

Islington 
Primary Care Trust

A can of fizzy drink has up to 8tsp of sugar.





Ruby Horton with fellow student Max Hodgkinson

Healthy kids

It's never too early to start leading a healthy life. And walking to school and cooking healthy, wholesome meals can benefit you and your children!

Parents and pupils are being urged to ditch the car and walk to school, and we're working to make the streets safer for pupils to get to school on foot.

Cars produce more pollution on short journeys when the engine is cold and the car keeps stopping and starting in traffic jams, making the morning school run one of the most polluting car journeys you can make. Walking to school means less pollution and congestion, and great exercise for you and your children.

We recognise that it's not always safe to walk to school with traffic roaring by during peak hours, and that's why the council has been working with 20 schools in the borough to develop School

Travel Plans to make it safer and healthier for pupils and their parents to travel to and from school on foot, by bike or by public transport.

Positive changes

Canonbury Primary School is a great example. Parents and pupils discussed their concerns with the council and, as a result, the pavement on Corsica Street has been widened by 1.5 metres.

According to Jay Henderson, headteacher at Canonbury Primary School, the feedback from parents has been really positive and, best of all, more families are now getting their days off to the perfect start by walking to school.

“We have noted recently that more families are choosing to walk to school, which is obviously a positive result. We look forward to more improvements and pedestrian enhancements around our local area”

“It was great to see our School Travel Plan being used in a pro-active way that enables our children to walk to school in greater safety,” said Mr Henderson. “In fact, we have noted recently that more families are choosing to walk to school, which is obviously a positive result. We look forward to more improvements and pedestrian enhancements around our local area.”

Ruby Horton, Head Girl and Junior Road Safety Officer, is really pleased with the changes. “There are always loads of people walking along here, and it used to be really busy and squashed,” she said. “Now it's much better because there is more room to move around.”

Walk to School Week runs from 21 to 25 May, and there will be a range of activities taking place. For more information, please contact Jason Newton on 020 7527 2319, email jason.newton@islington.gov.uk or go to www.walktoschool.co.uk

Cooking up a storm!

Four year old Lee Brownlie loves going to Archway Children's Centre – and his parents Peter and Emma have a great time there too, especially since starting cooking classes. The classes focus on healthy eating and parents can have fun while learning new skills. Recipes have included sugar and dairy free muffins and rock cakes, fresh pasta sauces and healthy homemade pizzas.

Peter and Emma, who already are keen cooks, are learning a range of new skills. “I cook a lot at home but these classes are good because I can get new ideas,” says Peter. “Lee is great as he eats loads of different things and he loves helping out in the kitchen. Of course we have to keep a close eye on him, but we want to encourage him to cook. And it's really good if we can make sure that what we're cooking is healthy!”

Emma loves learning how to cook healthy meals from scratch. “The classes are really good fun. It's so much better and healthier to make your



Peter Brownlie loves cooking healthy meals for the family

43% pupils in Islington that are eligible for free school meals

2,000 Year 4 Islington children that have taken part in the council's Walk Safer pedestrian training scheme since 2002

13

Healthy scheme for schools

The healthy school scheme is a nationally accredited scheme that helps schools become healthier places for young people and their teachers to learn and work. The scheme aims to increase the number and variety of health-related activities in the school, get more children and their parents involved in health-related activities and school life and promote healthy lifestyles. Since 1999, when the scheme began, 47 schools in Islington are fully involved, and a further 11 are involved through projects.

For more information, please go to www.islingtonschools.net/learning/healthyschools

own food because that way you know exactly what's going in to what you eat. We made pasta sauces with loads of fresh veg last week which were so quick and easy. The jars you buy have so much salt and other additives in them, so cooking fresh is much healthier for all of us – and it's lots of fun."

For more information on the borough's children's centres, go to www.islington.gov.uk/education or call Contact Islington on 020 7527 2000.



Students get their say

Children from Clerkenwell Parochial School paid a visit to the council chambers to have their say on their school. Two pupils from each year group form the school council, and they came to the town hall to discuss their hopes for the future of the school.

Popular suggestions from the children were a more colourful playground with flowers and plants, good test results, no bullying and better recycling facilities.

Students speak their minds in the council chambers

Win an iPod!

Young people have busy, active lives so it can be difficult to find the time to get information and advice about important life decisions. But we have the solution – advice on wheels!



Two trucks jam packed with advice on a range of topics and trained youth workers will be visiting estates across the borough to answer queries about finding jobs, furthering your education or health and relationship concerns. Plus the trucks will include fun activities such as sports and music making equipment.

This is an exciting new project but it's missing a name. So if you're aged between 8 and 21 and have any bright ideas, let us know for your chance to win an iPod shuffle. Send your entries by 31 May, with your name and number, to:

iPod competition
Fitzroy Taylor
Block B Barnsbury Complex
Offord Road
N1 1QG

Every day matters

Children with the best school attendance achieve the best results, and that's why we want to encourage children and their parents to recognise that every single school day matters.

Arsenal Football Club is behind our campaign, and they are giving children sticker books and a sticker for every week that they are in school every day and on time.

There are 12 primary schools currently taking part in the programme, and so far the students with 100 per cent attendance have received a signed certificate from Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger and were entered into a prize draw for a VIP trip to

the Emirates Stadium and match tickets.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

- , Make sure your child comes to school every day, on time
 - , Plan any trips during the school holidays
 - , Impress upon your child the importance of being at school. Better attendance mean better achievement and better life chances!
 - , Each day at school is a unique experience – don't let your child miss out
- If you are experiencing problems with school attendance, contact the Education Welfare team on 020 7527 5833.

A capsule for the future

Year 3 pupils at New North Community School have buried a time capsule in the grounds of their new school building in the hope that students of the future will get a glimpse of what life was like for children in 2007.

Items were chosen by the children themselves to represent what life is like today. They included a newspaper, some money, post-it notes and a pencil, a London Underground map and takeaway menus.



smokefree restaurants



smokefree clubs



smokefree cafes



smokefree socialising



Islington will be smokefree from 1st July 2007
0800 093 90 30 - www.smokefreeislington.nhs.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** (8.30am to 6pm on Wednesday only) for your face-to-face service needs. It also opens **every fourth Saturday of the month, from 9am to 1pm** (third Saturday if coinciding with Bank Holiday weekends). **Phonelines are open from 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 6pm every Saturday.**

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.islingtongschools.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 May 7.30pm
Performance Review Committee Meeting, Town Hall, Upper Street N1
3 May 7.30pm
Regeneration Review Committee Meeting, Town Hall, Upper Street N1
10 May 7.30pm
Overview Committee Meeting, Town Hall, Upper Street N1
22 May 7.30pm
East Area Committee Meeting, Location to be confirmed

22 May 7.30pm
North Area Committee Meeting, Postgraduate Lecture Theatre, Holborn Union Building, Archway Campus, Highgate Hill N19

 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 the website before attending.

Web watch

Direct debit online form

Direct debit is an easy method of paying your council tax and saves filling out a payment voucher for each installment. It also gives you the option to pay over 12 months instead of ten! The Pay It section of the council website explains further. You can complete a direct debit form online at www.islington.gov.uk/directdebit

 For further details go to www.islington.gov.uk/counciltax

May match day



Sunday 6 May 4pm
Arsenal v Chelsea

All fixtures are subject to change. Please check www.arsenal.com/fixtures.asp for the most up-to-date information.

Not just books!

Choose from a wide range of music CDs, which you can borrow for just 50p (30p for concessions), the latest feature films on video or DVD for just £2 per night, or Playstation and Xbox games at the bargain price of £2 per week.

Libraries are free and easy to join. Simply take one current and official proof of address and one proof of identity to your local library.

You can also apply for membership online.

 For more on your local library, go to www.islington.gov.uk/libraries or call 020 7527 6900



"We're not always trouble!"

We'll help with

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

Foster a teenager with Islington

0800 073 0428
or email us at fostering@islington.gov.uk
www.islington.gov.uk/fostering



Nature events

PICTURE YOUR PARK COMPETITION



Calling all 16+ amateur artists! Capture the Peace Garden in its spring hues. A friendly panel of judges will give advice and decide the winner. Prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. It's free to enter, and tea, scones and shade will be provided!

Noel Baker Peace Garden, Elthorne

Drawing Category

5 May, 1-3.30pm

Watercolour Category

6 May, 1-3.30pm

Please book your place by calling Laura Sanna on 07958 741587 or emailing laura.sanna@islington.gov.uk

DAWN CHORUS AT GILLESPIE PARK

Get up early to hear wonderful bird song. You don't need to book, and tea and toast will be provided.

Gillespie Park, meet at Islington Ecology Centre 6 May, 4am-6am

For more information, please call 020 7354 5162.

STORYTELLING IN THE SQUARE

A fun free event for the under 9s. Meet by the ranger's gazebo. There's no need to book, just turn up on the day.

Wilmington Square 9 May 3-4pm

WILD IN THE CITY

Make space for the wildlife on your doorstep. Help create homes for all kinds of creatures – some for your garden and some for the park. Build a bird box, a bat box, a loggery or a ladybird lodge. Sow seeds to bring in the butterflies and get some advice on even more ways to be a good neighbour to nature.

Barnard Park

10 May, 3-7pm

FREE – no need to book, just turn up on the day.

AQUATIC INVERTEBRATES

Find out all about the main groups of aquatic invertebrate that can be found in ponds and how to identify them. Booking is essential.

Gillespie Park, meet at Islington Ecology Centre 12 May, 2-4pm
To book call 020 7354 5162.

SPRING PLANT SALE

A range of plants raised organically at Culpeper will be on sale including herbaceous perennials, shrubs, vegetables and houseplants. When you have enough of browsing, enjoy exploring the garden and relax with teas and homemade cakes.

Culpeper Community Gardens

13 May 11am-3pm

Call 020 7833 3951 for more information.

EVENING BOTANY TALKS

An informative series of talks exploring the basics of botanical identification. Our objective is that by the end of the course you are familiar with plant structure and are able to identify the more common members of a variety of plant families. Booking is essential.

Islington Ecology Centre 14 and 21 May, 6.30-8pm
To book call 020 7354 5162.

TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC

Come along for a fun family session. You can bring a picnic, and there will be fun activities on the day. Suitable for under 6s and their family / carers. You don't need to book, just meet at the ranger's gazebo.



Myddleton Square

15 May, 12noon-2pm

WILDLIFE FOR ALL

Join us for a day dedicated to helping wildlife on your doorstep. Make bat boxes and insect homes, and join in with children's arts and crafts.

Islington Ecology Centre

19 May, 11am-2pm

For more information please call 020 7354 5162.

SPA FIELDS LAUNCH FESTIVAL

Come along to this free event to celebrate all the new features at Spa Fields, including the new avant garde design community hut, fantasy adventure playground and Mediterranean picnic area. Come and sample taster sessions of activities soon to be available in the park, listen to chilled music and enjoy activities for all ages. You can bring a picnic, although refreshments will be available at a charge.

Spa Fields

20 May 12noon-5pm

LONDON'S SWIFTS

Join us for an exciting and informative talk by swift expert Edward Mayer. Hear about London's swifts, amazing birds that live with us for just three months of the year, and how you can help them survive and thrive.

Islington Ecology Centre 22 May, 7-8pm

Please book your place by calling 020 7354 5162.

WILD ON THE GREEN

Come and try your carpentry skills at bird and bat box making and see what creepy crawlies live in Newington Green. Suitable for all ages.

Meet at the ranger's gazebo.

FREE – no need to book, just turn up on the day.

Newington Green
Wednesday 30 May
12noon-4pm

Visit to Eco-Park Compost Centre and Composting Workshop

Ever wondered how food and green waste is recycled? Come on a free tour of the Eco-Park Compost Centre to find out! Booking is essential and lunch and transport from the i-recycle centre is provided.



Meet at the i-recycle centre, 1 Cottage Rd, N7

9 May, 12noon to 4pm

For more information and to book call 020 7527 5996/4766 or email irecyclecentre@islington.gov.uk

Find out what happens to your food waste

FREE COMPOSTING WORKSHOP

Freightliners Farm, 12 May, 12noon

For more information and to book, email jean.hughes@islington.gov.uk or call 020 7527 5157.

email us at
events@islington.gov.uk

The Connaught Opera performs Precious Memories

Claremont Project is pleased to welcome the extraordinarily glamorous Connaught Opera. The Connaught Opera performs for older audiences all over London and has an ethos of being inclusive through a diverse range of music and lively show. There is a free performance for members of the Claremont Project multidisciplinary centre for people over 55 on the first

Friday of every month. Membership to the Claremont Project is free and open to people over 55.

New Hall, Claremont, 24-27 White Lion Street, N1 9PD
4 May, 2pm

For more information on the Claremont Project, and to book, call 020 7689 8091 or go to www.claremont-project.org

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

We can't guarantee that all events will be published

A common sense parking charter for Islington

Islington Council has a priority of listening to the community. We are listening to what residents, businesses and others say about parking. You told us you accept there are more cars than parking places preventing everyone having what they would like. Therefore you want us to:

- ◆ ensure our roads are safe
- ◆ enable the traffic to flow freely to minimise the environmental impact
- ◆ give residents and businesses in the borough priority parking over commuters
- ◆ provide priority parking facilities for key groups such as disabled people or health care workers.

Our commitments to you are that we will:

- ◆ focus our parking attendants on offences that have a serious impact on road safety or traffic flow
- ◆ protect parking spaces allocated to residents and businesses
- ◆ provide a permit system to support key groups such as the disabled people and health care workers
- ◆ apply common sense when we enforce parking rules and not issue tickets for trivial offences
- ◆ ensure that ticketing is correctly done and evidence is fully and properly recorded
- ◆ ensure appeals against tickets are responded to quickly and professionally within 10 working days
- ◆ ensure any money made from parking enforcement is invested into transport projects, such as funding the Freedom Pass for elderly and disabled people, maintaining roads and road safety
- ◆ communicate clearly with residents and businesses about parking and adapt our policies based on your feedback.