

CUSTOM HOUSE & CANNING TOWN »» IN FOCUS

Covering Canning Town North, South and Custom House

Hello from Councillor Pat Holland

Hello and welcome to this month's issue of In Focus. As always, it's jam-packed with all your local news. If you've got a community story you want to tell us get in touch (see bottom of page two for details).

Don't forget - your local councillors are here to help you. So, if you need something fixing or are concerned about something in your area, get in touch with your local councillor by going along to his or her surgery and they can help you out or signpost you in the right direction.

Enjoy the read!

Community lead councillor, Pat Holland



Parks officer Jackie Freeman (r) explains to Cllrs (L-r) Clive Furness and Pat Holland what work will take place in April from the almost complete amphitheatre

Memorial Park to benefit from improvements

Parks across Custom House and Canning Town are being transformed as part of Newham Council's £24m Environmental Improvement Programme (EIP) to improve roads, parks and play areas across the borough.

Memorial Park is next on the list to benefit from EIP funding with work due to begin next month to build a new play area for children aged seven to 12 years.

Last year council officers asked you what play space improvements you wanted to see to the park and - based on your feedback and suggestions - a final plan was drawn up for the play area. This means that your suggestions are now being turned into reality.

The new play area is being built next to the new amphitheatre at the Valerian Way end of the park. The new area will contain climbing structures, a selection of different sized swings, a giant slide on a mound, a rotating disc and hand carved wooden sculptures. New benches, bins and cycle stands

will be put in place along with the planting of grasses, hedges and trees.

The council is also working in partnership with New Deal for Communities (NDC) to build an amphitheatre which, as In Focus was going to print, was in the final stages of completion. The amphitheatre, funded by the Government's Playbuilder programme, is an open-air stage that will be used by local theatres as well as community groups and schools. In Focus will keep you posted on when work is completed.

Community lead councillor Pat Holland said: "We are continuing to listen to what kind of improvements you want and delivering them to you. These improvements are part of our commitment to provide better parks and play areas for generations to come."

Stay gas safe

As the cold weather continues to bite, homeowners and private sector residents across Newham are being encouraged to check their gas appliances to make sure they're safe.

People living in council-owned, Newham Homes or social housing association properties will have their own safeguards in place - that's why the council is targeting residents with private housing arrangements.

Boilers and gas cookers should be checked every year and homes should to be equipped with a carbon monoxide alarm that sounds if dangerous levels are reached.

The official body for maintaining and improving gas safety is the Gas Safety Register. You should always use a Gas Safe registered engineer for any maintenance and repair work.

All engineers are listed online at www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk or you can call freephone 0800 408 550. Always check the front and back of your engineer's Gas Safe Register ID card to ensure they're qualified to do the necessary work.

Contact the council's Private Sector Housing Group if you are having any problems with your heating that isn't being attended to by your landlord.

For more information visit www.GasSafeRegister.co.uk or call 0800 408 550. You can contact Newham Council's Private Sector Housing group on 020 3373 1950 or by emailing env-private.sectorhousing@newham.gov.uk



Badminton players (l) Benjamin Chan and (r) Timothy Chan at the heats in Royal Docks Community School with Cllr Paul Schafer

Badminton thrills and spills

Badminton players recently dusted off their shuttlecocks and racquets to represent their area in the council's inter-community forum competition.

Scores of children, teenagers and adults from Custom House and Canning Town competed in knock-out heats at the Royal Docks Community School in Prince Regent Lane. The group winners on the day went on to the prestigious grand final at Newham Leisure Centre where they thrashed it out in front of 70 spectators.

Canning Town North ward councillor Paul Schafer said: "Congratulations to everyone who participated and don't forget to take part next year."

All winners and runner-ups took home trophies and all participants in the heats were awarded medals for their sporting prowess.

If you would like to get involved in badminton or find out more about sports clubs in your area contact Nicole Napier on 020 8430 2484 or email nicole.napier@newham.gov.uk

Community Resource Centre hosts Prime Minister

The Community Resource Centre in Canning Town North welcomed the Prime Minister Gordon Brown in a special visit to see some of the excellent work being done to improve the health and quality of life for older people in Newham.

The centre helps older people who have suffered a stroke or are visually impaired, for example, to regain their independence. It has around 350 service users and is made up of two units; Cumberland, which offers more general care such as support for stroke survivors and those that are visually impaired, and Samuel Boyce which specialises in caring for those with dementia.

Marina Wilson, senior day care centre officer, said: "Our main aim is to help people referred to us to become more independent."



Prime Minister Gordon Brown has a chat with (l-r) service user Rose Saddington and day care officer Eileen Sapsed on his recent visit to the centre

And to do this, the centre has a jam-packed schedule that equips older people with the skills they need to become more independent - everything from cooking demonstrations to exercise and health and beauty classes, all of which are a bucketload of fun too!

To find out more about the centre speak to Marina, Gill, Rakhi or David on 020 7474 4922.



[fifth l-r] Marie Collier and Pat Holland check out the healthy fruit and veg that Community Food Enterprise are offering with local children and ACT volunteers (back centre) Sara Watson, [second l] Betty O'Connell and [far r] Dennis James



ACT volunteer Dennis James and children show off the worms they've caught in a worm charming stomping session!



Keir Hardie Primary School pupils' handiwork

Green factor fun

Hundreds turned out to enjoy the sunshine - with some showers on the side - at a fun packed green-themed day in Cundy Park.

More than 600 people picked up tips on how to grow their own fruit and veg while learning how to make their own compost. There was also plenty of cheap local fruit and vegetables on sale from the Community Food Enterprise.

The worm charming competition, which involved attracting worms out of the soil by stamping on the ground,

proved super competitive. The winning team won an MP3 player, while prizes also went to Linda Francis (two tickets to the Grand Designs show at ExCeL); Terry Hicks (a hamper from London City Airport); and Nasreen Kauser (an MP3 player) for filling out questionnaires on the day.

Keir Hardie Primary School made hand painted watering cans for the event and Edith Kerrison Nursery School pupils made their own hand-crafted scarecrows.

Canning Town North ward councillor Marie Collier was impressed with the event and said: "It was great to see so many people enjoying themselves and I hope that people picked up some tips on how to grow their own."

The event was organised by your Custom House and Canning Town community forum and its Active Community Team. **For more information about community forum events in your area call freephone 0800 519 4014.**

Rathbone Good Friday market

If you're looking for somewhere to pick up last minute bits for Easter next month, then look no further than Rathbone's traditional Good Friday market on 2 April.

The Good Friday market, which has been running for more than 50 years, has become a tradition with traders, who come from as far as Cornwall, Birmingham and Gloucester to sell clothing, art, flowers, bric-a-brac, butchers' goods, jewellery and much more.

Good news for traders – pitches are FREE. All you have to do is apply (see details below). If you're a shopper then get there for 9am for the pick of the crop, or alternatively visit later on as the special market will be open until late in the evening.

If you would like to rent a stall then get in touch with The Markets Team, Unit 7, Queens Market, Green Street, E13 or call Jim on 07748 137 264 or 07814 253 551.

Rathbone Good Friday Market, Barking Road, E16 from 9am to late

Rokeby Secondary School almost complete

The new £28.4m Rokeby Secondary School building is in its final stages of completion and was 'topped out' recently to mark its structural completion.

Last October, In Focus reported that the new Rokeby School was being built as part of Newham Council's £250m Building Schools

for the Future (BSF) programme with additional funding from the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation (LTGDC).

In a special ceremony attended by community lead councillor Pat Holland and head teacher Charlotte Robinson, the final piece of concrete was poured into the ground. Cllr Holland

said: "This state-of-the-art school will mean that children who live not

just in Custom House and Canning Town but throughout the borough will benefit from this fantastic development."

The school is being moved from its current site in Pitchford Street in Stratford to the brand new building off Barking Road in Canning Town.

The 900-place new school will have a six court sports hall, a fitness suite and outdoor fitness trail; and a floodlit all-weather pitch. It will also feature a high-tech information technology system to accommodate an increased number of computers and laptops and a wireless network. The school is due to open in September.



[l-r] Cllr Holland, head teacher Charlotte Robinson and LTGDC's John Middleton lay the final piece of concrete in Rokeby School

SPOTLIGHT ON...

WHAT'S ON IN NEWHAM

If you missed the recent Sunday Fun Day in Stratford Park don't despair. There are lots of activities and events happening every week in Newham – you've just got to know where to find them.

Our range of events is as diverse as our community. From flag raisings to fun days, you'll find something to suit you. The easiest way to be in the know is by turning to the back pages of your fortnightly Newham Mag and In Focus where you can find regular council events including library listings and our comprehensive sports programme for young people. And you can now check out 'Newham Events' on facebook (www.facebook.com/newhamevents) for an up-to-date listing and photos from all events.

Discover upcoming community forum events or find out about committee meetings. The pages also contain an 'Other Events' section, where residents and community groups can showcase what they've got coming up. Listings have included bowling clubs, Tai Chi and sports.

As well as your handy paper guide there's also a comprehensive online What's On calendar, where

you can also upload your own events. Find out more by visiting www.newham.gov.uk/whatson

In Focus always welcomes information about local events. If you want to promote something get in touch by calling 020 3373 2684 or email infocus@newham.gov.uk



Forget it and regret it - dates for your diary

Don't miss two days of family fun at Central Park on 17 and 18 July. This annual event kicks-off with a carnival that'll make its way around East Ham.

On Bank Holiday Weekend, 26, 27, 28 and 29th August, get ready for four nights of musical magic at Under the Stars.

To find out more keep reading The Newham Mag and In Focus.

WHAT'S ON CUSTOM HOUSE AND CANNING TOWN

Rathbone Good Friday Market

Friday 2 April
9am – late o'clock
Barking Road,
Canning Town, E16
(see pg 3 for more information)

Free sports at Ascot Hall Football, girls and boys, eight -15yrs

Saturdays, 10am-12noon
Street dance for girls, all ages
Saturdays 12noon-1pm
Non-contact boxing, eight-12yrs
Saturdays 2-3pm
Cost: Free. For more information call
020 8430 4775

Ascot Hall, Hermit Road, E16

For even more things to do check out the What's On section in Newham calendar, where you'll find listings for more than 6,000 events. Have a look for yourself at www.newham.gov.uk/whatson

If your group has an activity to promote please contact us on 020 3373 2684 or email infocus@newham.gov.uk

MEET YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR

Councillors out and about: If you would like a councillor to visit your community organisation, school, place of worship, meeting or event please call 020 3373 1269 or email liz.whitworth@newham.gov.uk



Marie Collier



Clive Furness



Paul Schafer



Alan Craig



Denise Stafford



Simeon Ademolake



Patricia Holland



Conor McAuley



James Butler

Canning Town North Ward

Every Monday (alternating)
10-11am
7a Avondale Court
Avondale Road
Canning Town, E16

Canning Town South Ward

First and third Saturday of the month,
(alternating) 10am - 12pm
St Luke's Community Centre
85 Tarling Road
Canning Town E16

Custom House Ward

First Saturday of the month
Councillor Patricia Holland
Second Saturday of the month
Councillor James Butler
Third Saturday of the month
Councillor Conor McAuley
10 - 11am
St-Joachim's Catholic School,
Shipman Road, Custom House, E16

Need to talk to Mayor Sir Robin Wales? Being an elected mayor, Sir Robin is directly accountable to you. Look out for Question Time times and dates in the Newham Mag, visit www.newham.gov.uk/mayor or call 020 3373 0437.