

REDBRIDGE**LIFE**

CELEBRATING LOCAL HEROES

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HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

page 14



CRACKING DOWN ON FLY-TIPPERS



page 23



Redbridge's biggest ever Christmas



Christmas events, family activities and more, page 6

**A CAREER WITH
OVER 300 ROLES**

Join Essex Police

ESSEX POLICE **#FIT THE BILL**

Protecting and serving Essex

Visit the Essex Police website today

Christmas tree collection

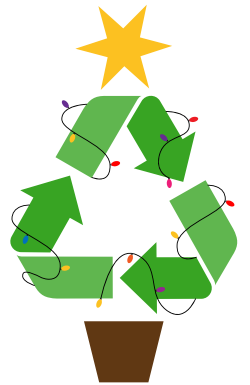
Once the festivities are over, we'll collect real Christmas trees, for free, to recycle.

To ensure collection, you must:

- Leave your tree at the boundary of your property by **6am on Monday 6 January**
- Remove all decorations
- Ensure your tree is clearly visible

We'll be collecting your tree anytime between 6 and 17 January, so please ensure your tree is placed at the boundary of your property by 6am on Monday 6 January to avoid missing collection. You do not need to book a council tree collection in advance.

Alternatively, you can take your Christmas tree and other items to Chigwell Road Reuse and Recycling Centre, just remember to check opening hours over the festive period:
www.eastlondonwaste.gov.uk/chigwell-road



Customer Contact Centre opening hours over Christmas and New year



23-24 December	8am to 6pm
25-27 December	CLOSED
30-31 December	8am to 6pm
1 January	CLOSED
From 2 January opening times return as normal	

Our face-to-face service at Lynton House will be open on the dates shown during the hours of 9am to 4pm

www.redbridge.gov.uk/contact-us/
• For urgent enquiries call 020 8554 5000

HAVE YOUR SAY AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

All meetings will be held in person at the Town Hall, High Road, Ilford, IG1 1DD.
Visit www.redbridge.gov.uk for information, agendas, and links to view online.

Council Meetings

Thursday 23 January **7.15pm**

Budget Council

Thursday 27 February **7.15pm**

Cabinet Meetings

Thursday 19 December **7.15pm**

Thursday 16 January **7.15pm**

Thursday 13 February **7.15pm**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 12 December **7.15pm**

Thursday 9 January **7.15pm**

Thursday 6 February **7.15pm**

Planning Committee

Monday 16 December **7.15pm**

Monday 13 January **7.15pm**

Monday 10 February **7.15pm**

Health Scrutiny Sub-committee

Tuesday 17 December **7.15pm**

Tuesday 14 January **7.15pm**

General Purposes Committee

Thursday 19 December **8pm**

Education Scrutiny Sub-committee

Wednesday 15 January **7.15pm**

Licensing Committee

Monday 20 January **7.15pm**

External Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday 22 January **7.15pm**

Produced by Redbridge Council

The editor can be contacted via email, at redbridge.life@redbridge.gov.uk

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Next issue out in March



For information on how to ask a question at meetings, please email councilquestions@redbridge.gov.uk and for additional public meeting dates, visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/about-the-council/public-meetings/

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LEADER’S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Winter edition of Redbridge Life

Hi everyone,

December has arrived, and people from across Redbridge, and from further afield, are already jingling their bells and flocking to our town centres, forests and country parks this year for the borough’s biggest ever Christmas.

We are all about making Redbridge the best borough for local people to live in, and as part of this we have been working with partners to put on the biggest and best Christmas programme yet. Many of the activities on offer are free or low-cost, and we hope this will give everyone a good dose of winter cheer and the chance to enjoy spending time making memories with friends and family. You can find out what’s on, on page 6.

We haven’t done this alone, and most of this has been funded and organised by our partners.

The enormous event in Ilford and the ‘I Love Ilford’ light is courtesy of Ilford BID, with partners

including Exchange Ilford shopping centre and Mercato Ilford. Vision have supported with a Christmas show, and other activities across our libraries and in Hainault Forest and at Fairlop Waters.

We are grateful to Hasbro, who are kindly donating 35,000 brand new toys to children in our borough. I’ll be out during the Christmas period, helping to hand out toys to children most in need in Redbridge, including those who will be in hospital over Christmas, and I’m sure they’ll bring smiles to their faces. We have been blown away by Hasbro’s generosity and know it will make Christmas truly special for these children.

We know this can be tough time of year and if you’re struggling with your finances, please don’t suffer alone. There’s lots of support available (see page 24), from benefits checkers and debt advice, to community living rooms where you can spend time and stay warm. You are welcome, so please do visit if you would like to.

There’s lots more in this edition of Redbridge Life, but I’d like to draw your attention to all the wonderful members of our community that we have featured, who are all doing their bit to help make Redbridge the kind, clean and great place it is. Thank you to Herbert, who joined Community Voice (page 4), Bashir whose community group made use of the healthy bus to stay well (page 16), and Timandra who became a youth ambassador (page 21), to name a few. It’s clear if we all play our part and take care of our local area, our neighbours and our families, we can make our borough that extra bit special. We Are Redbridge... together.

I’d like to wish everyone in Redbridge a joyful Christmas and a happy new year.

Councillor Kam Rai
Leader of Redbridge Council



We’re number one in London, and second in the country, for productivity

Redbridge Council has been independently recognised for delivering value for money.

A recent report by the independent organisation, Impower, found that Redbridge Council is ranked number one in London and second in the country for delivering value for money to residents.


Impower assessed how councils across the country perform, how much they spend, and how effectively they use their budgets.

The report highlighted that we are achieving great results and delivering excellent services to our communities. These include children’s services, adult social care, waste collection, leisure and cultural services, and supporting those in need through essential services like housing.

The Top 10	
Rank	Local Authority
1st	York
2nd	Redbridge
3rd	Essex

IMPOWER

Councillor Kam Rai, Leader of Redbridge Council, said,



“Due to the unfair formula used to allocate council budgets, we receive the second lowest funding in London, per person, and like all councils across the country, we are facing incredibly challenging times. Since 2010, we have lost 54 per cent of our Government funding, and have experienced a continued rise in demand for statutory services. This means that every £1 we spend in Redbridge needs to stretch further and have greater impact than in other areas in the country.

“We don’t get everything right all the time, but this ranking reflects the dedication and drive of our staff in Redbridge to go the extra mile, support those in need, and deliver all our services to the very best of our abilities.

“In Redbridge, we always do our best to rise to the challenge to meet the demand as best we can, with the funding we have available.”

Help us save Broadmead Road Bridge

Join our campaign to source funding for this 87 year old bridge.

Why we closed the bridge

An inspection of the bridge revealed cracks, falling concrete, and corrosion, affecting the legs, spans, and underside of the bridge. If left, falling debris could have endangered the tube line. We could not risk the bridge collapsing. We must and always will protect lives.

The cost of fixing or replacing the bridge will be more than £25 million. It will take time to replace or rebuild – even if we had the funds, it would likely be a three-year project to redesign and rebuild the bridge over the tube line. The Government must step up, as they have in other parts of the country.



We have worked constantly on the bridge since it was closed, by:

- painstakingly assessing every part of the bridge to identify areas of weaknesses within the concrete structure to the spans and legs
- commissioning engineers to do a detailed survey of the bridge and its spans
- testing concrete samples via a lab.

We recently held an online meeting where we updated local people on the current status of the bridge, and the work undertaken so far. We have taken on board the questions people asked us. You can view them, and the response to each one on our website. We will have further meetings in person, and in the coming months, when we have the next structural reports back.

We have reopened the bridge to cyclists and motorcyclists following the most recent structural advice from engineers.

Councillor Kam Rai, Leader of Redbridge Council said,



"I share in everyone's frustration that the bridge is not currently open, and I am acutely aware of the disruption this is causing to people who live, work, or study near to this junction and in the wider area.

"We are in direct and serious conversation with Central Government for funding for this infrastructure. We have been stripped of around half our funding as a Council since 2010, and while we are stretching the funding we have as much as we possibly can to maintain our core services, we simply do not have millions to repair or rebuild this bridge."

Community Voice

Your voice matters

Join our resident panel to help make Redbridge an even better place in which to live and work.

Would you like to have your say on decisions that affect local council services and your life? Do you want to make a real impact in Redbridge? Your voice matters, and we want to hear what you think.

A group of 80 local people from across the borough meet six times a year, either online or in person, for 90-minute sessions. Together, we focus on crucial projects and decisions, such as addressing poverty and climate change. Join us and you can directly influence the future of Redbridge and be part of positive change.

Your time and input are valuable, and we will reward you for it. Those with high attendance at the end of the year receive a £100 voucher.

Don't miss this chance to make a difference in Redbridge. For more information, please visit <https://engage.redbridge.gov.uk/apply-to-join-community-voice>

Scan the QR code



Herbert joined Community Voice, and said

"A range of different people in Redbridge come together to talk about some of the big issues affecting our borough. We have discussed climate change, community safety, leisure and culture, tackling poverty and mental health stigma, anti-social behaviour, and the transport strategy. Our panel is inclusive and respectful of different views which is essential as we all have different priorities and solutions."



Join Community Voice and help shape the decisions that impact Redbridge



Let us know about YOUR LOCAL HERO!

Our borough is full of kind and wonderful people who do great things for their local community, but we don't always get to hear about it. We think it's time to shine a spotlight on the everyday heroes that help make Redbridge a great place to call home.

Meet Neo, Rico, and their family, who spread smiles and kindness through chocolate

This fabulous local family have found a sweet solution to help children who need a little extra smile in our borough.



Neo (left) and Rico (right) donating easter eggs at a foodbank

Like those in comic books and movies, these local superheroes rarely paused to rest. After the success of the first donation campaign, the family came together to think of other ways to help. They decided to make it an annual tradition, and even expanded it to include a second campaign for Easter. This time, their focus shifted to collecting chocolate eggs so that children who might otherwise miss out could still enjoy some chocolatey cheer. The children's enthusiasm grew each year, as did the number of donations.

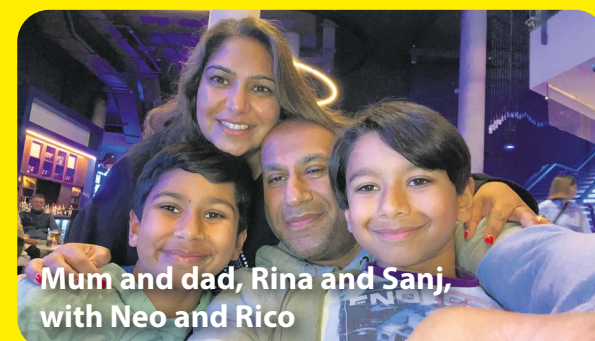
It all started in 2020, just as the country sadly entered the Covid-19 lockdowns. Neo, who was just eight at the time, asked his mum if they could do something to bring a smile to other children in the borough, by giving them chocolates and treats. Determined to spread happiness, the family created digital posters and invited local people to donate advent calendars to distribute to children in need.

The response to their first Christmas donation drive was a huge success. The call for help was met by hundreds of other local heroes who donated over 2,000 advent calendars. With so many advent calendars to hand out, the family loaded the choco-mobile and set off delivering hundreds of calendars to local charities, children's hospital wards, hospices, food banks and schools in Redbridge.



Neo and Rico with a haul of advent calendars

Since starting their initiative, Rina and her children have sourced and donated over 16,000 advent calendars and chocolate eggs to local causes. Neo, 12, created a website for the charity and even uploads blogs. Rico, 10, joins his mum and dad on donation drives. Dad, Sanj, keeps the choco-mobile running velvety smoothly and even Grandad Ramnik gets involved by visiting local supermarkets to check on prices and set up charitable connections.



Mum and dad, Rina and Sanj, with Neo and Rico

Looking back on all they have achieved, Neo said, "I enjoy doing Treats for Kids. I'm really glad that I can make a difference to children around me by making them happy with a treat. I want to continue with Treats for Kids to bring a smile to even more children, as all children deserve treats no matter what their circumstances are."

This caring family continue to spread joy and hope to those who need it most, making Redbridge a brighter place for everyone. If you would like to donate to this wonderful cause, visit www.treatsforkids.com

Could you be a local hero too? What could you do in your community?

If you know someone doing something amazing in Redbridge, let us know so we can give them a shout out in Redbridge Life! Email community@redbridge.gov.uk with the subject line 'Everyday Hero'.

Things to do this Christmas

There are plenty of family activities taking place across the borough this December to get everyone into the Christmas spirit!

Hainault Skatepark

Saturday 14 and Sunday 15 December

Experience the festive spirit with delicious food, unique gifts, live music and more.

Bring your family and friends to enjoy a day filled with holiday cheer and fun activities.

Christmas Market – Ilford High Road

Open every day except Wednesday, until 5 January 2025 | 9am to 6pm

Discover an array of seasonal delights, from handcrafted gifts and artisanal crafts, to festive treats and street food. Whether you're shopping for loved ones or simply soaking in the festivities, this market offers something magical for everyone.

In the evening, enjoy the Christmas lights and be amazed by the larger-than-life light installations. Walk through the dazzling Christmas tree and snap a festive photo with the 'I Love Ilford' sign positioned by Redbridge Town Hall.

Visit Santa's Christmas Workshop

**14–15 and 21–22 December
10am–4pm**

Come and visit Santa's Workshop and see his hard-working elves getting ready for the big day. Enjoy the elves' Magical Interactive Christmas Show, make a Christmas decoration for home, and write your letter to Santa in the Elves Workshop. After the show, you'll get to meet father Christmas himself in his grotto, where his helpful elves can take your photo with your own phone or camera.

Tickets are £15 for children three years and over. The experience will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Purchase tickets at vrcl.uk/santaschristmasworkshop



Find more Christmas activities at

visionrcl.org.uk/events/christmas-fun-in-redbridge

Visit Fairlop Ice Kingdom

Fairlop Waters has its own ice-skating rink for 130 people to whizz and stumble around – depending on how good your balance is! After skating, enjoy rides at the fun fair or some food and drink at the many vendors on site. You can even toast your own marshmallows!

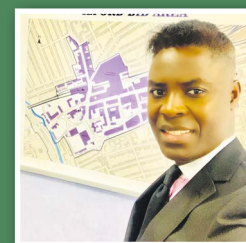
From 29 November to 18 December
Open Wednesday to Sunday

From 19 December
Open daily until 5 January
(closed Christmas Day)

To find out more and book tickets, visit www.fairlopicekingdom.co.uk



We caught up with Cyril Bekoe, Manager at Ilford BID, who is organising many of the Christmas activities. He said,



"Our goal is to create a vibrant and welcoming festive atmosphere that brings people together. We're excited to welcome everyone to experience a new festive market on Ilford High Road, with new festive lights in the town centre, at Exchange Ilford, and Mercato Ilford. We hope to see you all in Ilford this Christmas."



OUR STREETS

Help us create great streets and neighbourhoods

Christmas 2024
and New Year
changes to bin collections

Due on

Collected on

Wednesday 25 December

Friday 27 December

Thursday 26 December

Saturday 28 December

Friday 27 December

Monday 30 December

Monday 30 December

Tuesday 31 December

Tuesday 31 December

Thursday 2 January

Wednesday 1 January

Friday 3 January

Thursday 2 January

Saturday 4 January

Friday 3 January

Monday 6 January

Monday 6 January

Tuesday 7 January

Tuesday 7 January

Wednesday 8 January

Wednesday 8 January

Thursday 9 January

Thursday 9 January

Friday 10 January

Friday 10 January

Saturday 11 January

Monday 13 January - back to normal

London Borough of
Redbridge

Redbridge

CHARITY CHRISTMAS
TREE COLLECTION

Leave the effort to us,
we'll collect your real Christmas tree
and recycle it locally!

Trees
collected
from 10-13
Jan 2025

Kindly sponsored by

TIPPERHIRE

SELF DRIVE VEHICLE HIRE

FOR MORE INFORMATION
AND TO REGISTER YOUR
TREE WITH A DONATION

havenhouse.org.uk/tree

Haven House

children's hospice

Registered with
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR

Christmas
in Redbridge

Join us for some magical festive Celebrations whilst
you countdown to Christmas.

For more information please visit: visionrcl.org.uk/christmas

Vision
Redbridge Culture & Leisure

child friendly
Redbridge

Scan Me

Protecting against floods in Redbridge

We're installing the latest technology to keep homes and businesses safe from floods.

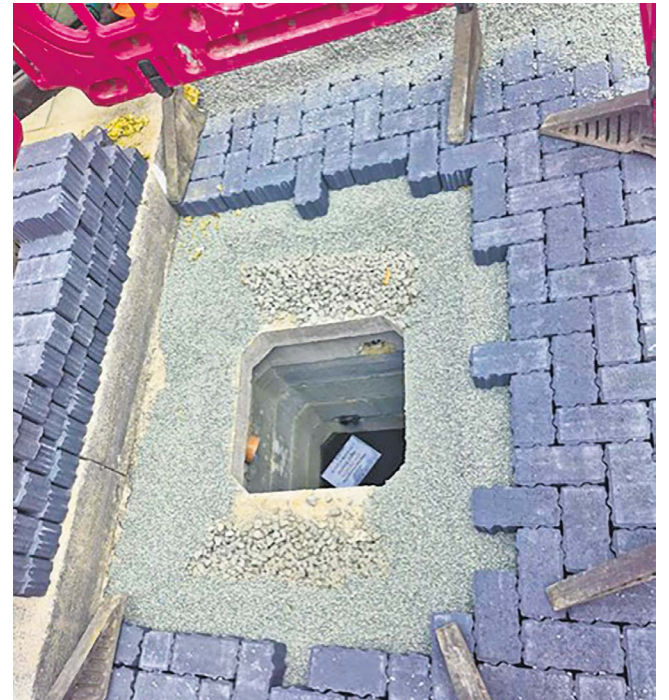
Hydrorock is new technology whereby a device sits underneath the road and acts like a sponge, soaking up surface water and slowly releasing it into the sewage system. Our trial using this tech in Seven Kings has helped reduce surface water since it was installed.

Seven Kings High Road, which is not only an essential connecting road in the borough, but also a key bus route and home to many different businesses, frequently had issues in heavy rain. As Hydrorock is easy to install, we were able to keep parking bays and pedestrian walkways open as this technology was built in. Since installing it, there has been no flooding at this location, despite recent heavy rainfall.

Councillor Jo Blackman, Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability, said,



"Redbridge is embracing new innovations to tackle surface water flooding in the borough. Hydrorock is one of a number of measures we're installing across Redbridge along with rain gardens, gully sensors and water butts to keep our residents, businesses and communities safe from flooding."



Hydrorock's advanced multi-layer absorption system being installed on Seven Kings High Road to tackle excess water

Did you know you can help reduce flooding in your area by adding a water butt outside your home?

Water butts collect rainwater from drainage pipes, help save money on water bills and relieve stress from the local water system during heaving rainfall.



Reducing Flood Risk in Redbridge

The Environment Agency are working with partners to reduce flooding to properties and infrastructure in the Woodford and Ilford areas.

The River Roding Project includes building a flood storage area (FSA) on the River Roding at Shonks Mill Bridge, north of the M25. The FSA will allow the river to flow naturally most of the time. However, during periods of heavy rainfall, the FSA will temporarily hold excess water behind an embankment, releasing it to reduce downstream flooding. In addition, we're reinforcing a flood embankment in Woodford to ensure it withstands impacts of climate change.

We started construction in June 2024, which has included piling and excavation for the new control structure. We have also installed a temporary river crossing and started digging the new river channel, which is shown in the picture opposite. We have also repaired an embankment in Woodford as part of the works.

We expect the project to start protecting properties in Redbridge in 2026. **Please scan the QR code** for more information on the project, or email us at riverrodingproject@environment-agency.gov.uk



The site pictured from above, showing the river diversion works at the top and an excavated area for the new flow control structure on the right



Bring colour to your local street by adopting a tree pit

Do you want to add some colour to your street? Want to help increase the biodiversity in Redbridge and help bees and butterflies prosper? If you answered yes to both those questions, you'll be glad to know that the much loved 'Adopt a Tree Pit' programme is back!



Last year, local people adopted over 650 tree pits, transforming them into vibrant habitats that supported bees, butterflies, moths and other small wildlife. These small but vital animals, known as pollinators, play a vital role in transferring pollen, helping plants to produce seeds and fruits. Once you apply, you'll receive a packet of beautiful wildflower seeds to plant and attract essential pollinators like bees and butterflies, and add a splash of natural colour to your street.

Jan Parish has adopted a tree pit for the last three years and enjoys watching them grow and flower and then the wildlife arriving. She said, "It's great for the community as no cost is involved, and even those without a garden or much gardening experience can take part. Planting the tree pit put a smile on my face and others in the street, who stopped to chat about it."

A tree pit is the soil area at the base of trees on the street and are perfect for planting with wildflowers.

2025 Applications Now Open!



Scan here to apply:



Or visit:
www.redbridge.gov.uk/our-streets/adopt-a-tree-pit-and-pollinator-pathways

OUR STREETS

Help us create great streets and neighbourhoods

Applications for individual tree pits close on 5 January 2025. For more information on how to get your free wildflower seeds, please visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/our-streets/adopt-a-tree-pit-and-pollinator-pathways/

Transform your life, through adult education

Studying at the Redbridge Institute of Adult Education has given Stephanie from Redbridge hope.

After many years of personal trauma, abuse and health issues, Stephanie turned to adult education to help her change her life. Her inspirational journey has been recognised by The Mayor of London, and she won the Learning for Personal Progression Award.

Looking back on her experiences, Stephanie said,

"When I enrolled on a counselling skills course at Redbridge Institute, I was nervous and anxious. For many years I had been told I wasn't capable of anything and wouldn't amount to much, so that is what I believed.

"Once the course started, I found it hard, but I slowly began to realise that I could do the work. I started to get some incredible feedback and support from my tutors and peers, which inspired me to do better.



"Suddenly, I was being seen and heard, soon realising how much I had within me. Now out of the women's refuge, I am confident and have plans for a future that I no longer fear, with the determination to turn my goals into reality for a better future. I know that with a positive mindset and a heart full of passion I can achieve anything. For the first time in my life, I have hope."

The Redbridge Institute of Adult Education has hundreds of courses that you too could take, for personal development, or to step up your job or career prospects.

Browse the upcoming courses, at www.redbridge-iae.ac.uk

Stephanie Webber is the proud winner of the The Mayor of London, Learning for Personal Progression Award



REDBRIDGE REWIND

Exploring the Rich History of our Borough

Discovering Barkingside

Redbridge Museum has recently opened a new display about the history of Barkingside in the newly refurbished Fullwell Cross Library. Let's delve into its history.

Barkingside was originally a rural village surrounded by farms and large houses, including Dunspring, Gaysham Hall and Little Gearies, which all live on as street names or house names in the area.



Dunspring Farm, about 1910

Its location on the far side, or boundary, of the old parish of Barking gave Barkingside its name. Barking Abbey was at this time the largest landowner in the area.

Barkingside originally comprised two small hamlets at either end of the current High Street. To the south was Mossford Green and to the north was Fullwell Cross, once called Fullwell Hatch, 'hatch' meaning 'an entrance gate' to Hainault Forest.



Blacksmith at Mossford Green, about 1900

Barkingside is best known as being the home of children's charity Barnardo's. In 1876, Dr. Thomas Barnardo opened a Girls Village Home on land gifted to him as a wedding present. His orphanage quickly grew into a series of villas around a village green, complete with a clock tower and children's church.

Dr. Barnardo believed children from difficult backgrounds who had often come from the impoverished East End would be happier in the rural surroundings of Barkingside. The Village is now private housing, but Barnardo's still have their headquarters on the site.



Barnardo's Village Home for Girls, about 1920

One of Barkingside's notable buildings, Fullwell Cross Library, opened in 1968 alongside the adjacent swimming pool, both designed by architect Sir Frederick Gibberd.

In 2014, a new town square opened in front of these buildings. The square was named after Ken Aston, headmaster of Newbury Park School and a famous football referee, who introduced yellow and red cards to football.

Fullwell Cross Library has recently been refurbished in a £380,000 scheme funded by Vision Redbridge Culture & Leisure, Redbridge Council and Arts Council England. The library features a digital maker space, upgrades to digital technology, more study space, and an improved children's library.

Pictures courtesy of Redbridge Heritage Centre



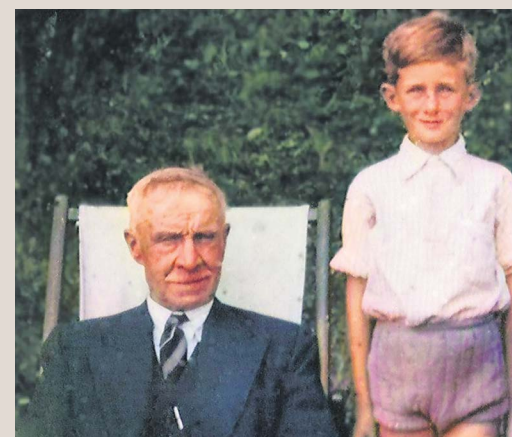
Fullwell Cross Library, about 1968

Explore 200,000 years of our borough's history in the newly refurbished Redbridge Museum. See page 11 for more information on what you can find at the new museum.



High Street, about 1951

"I remember two shops in particular. The first was Marments, a toy shop. After the austerity of the Second World War, Marments was a ray of light. The second shop, Rossi Bros – the best ice cream in the world!" David Martin, a boy in the 1940s



David Martin on the right in 1955, with his grandfather

Come and explore Ilford’s cultural quarter

A museum, art gallery, historical buildings and a bustling food market all sit within a few hundred metres of each other.

Looking for historic buildings? Ilford’s cultural quarter has tonnes of those. Want to see a life-sized replica mammoth skull and explore over 200,000 years of local history? You can find that here too. How about being captivated by artwork created by local artists? We have that too! Want to be transported to the bustling streets of Istanbul or the izakayas of Japan where delicious foods are aplenty? You can find all this at Ilford’s cultural quarter.

You might be asking yourself what the cultural quarter is. It began as a vision in 2021 to repurpose under-utilised buildings and spaces, not only to bring exciting activities to Ilford but also to spark economic growth in the borough. Fast forward to 2024, the cultural quarter is now here, offering locals and visitors plenty of things to see and enjoy.



Have you ever wondered what Redbridge was like 50, 100, or even hundreds of years ago? You can now find the answers at the newly refurbished Redbridge Museum, located on the top floor of the Redbridge Central Library. Here, the past comes alive with exhibits, including a life-size replica of an Ice Age mammoth skull discovered in Ilford. These ancient creatures once roamed our borough! Admission is free, so visit for a fascinating and fun family afternoon!

Once you’ve been brought back to the current day, how about spending an hour or two discovering artwork created by local artists? Just over the road from the museum, SPACE Studios Ilford sits at the rear of the historic Redbridge Town Hall, and offers free art exhibitions, and regular free creative workshops and events.

If you’ve worked up an appetite, why not pop into Mercato Metropolitan, just next door. Home to over 20 different food stalls, Mercato Ilford offers hungry tummies a delicious range of authentic food. With Turkish kebabs, Ethiopian injireh, Italian pizzas, and American style BBQs, there are endless options to try. And it’s not just food they’re serving – Mercato organises cookery classes, workshops, and holiday food clubs for young children.

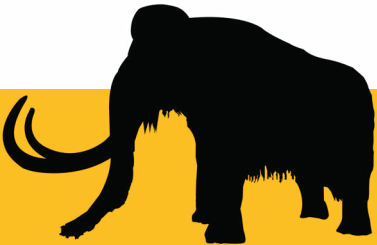
Councillor Vanisha Solanki, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, said,

“Despite reduced funding from central government, we continue to invest across Redbridge. I’m proud that the Redbridge Cultural Quarter not only provides visitors with unique places to enjoy and create memories, but it also supports our local economy and provides local people with jobs.”





What are you waiting for?
Why not pop down to the cultural quarter this weekend?



Which club would you join at Parkside Community Centre?

The hidden gem that quietly impacts hundreds of lives.

Parkside Community Centre in Goodmayes buzzes with activities and events for young and old alike. Birthdays and weddings are celebrated in the larger halls, and meeting rooms are hired for smaller occasions. Young people can get GCSE Maths and Science tuition or learn Wing Chun martial arts.



There's gymnastics, yoga, Zumba, karate and performing arts. The Ilford Magical Society even holds sessions in one of the halls – so come along and be astounded!

If you're over 70, you're invited to the tea and dance sessions, which are full of friendly faces and open to everyone, no matter your dancing ability.

Week-to-week there are dozens of clubs and groups to join. **Which would you do?**

Sylvia, who regularly enjoys the tea and dance sessions, said,

"I have been going to Parkside Community Centre for the past 30 years. There is a tea and dance club with a mixture of men and women. We chat about things that affect us and how we can support each other. The staff at the centre are very helpful and took us all to a Christmas meal, and provided a mini bus at no cost to the club. I enjoy going to the centre."



Would you like to join in?

Visit www.parksideca.org.uk or pop in and see what's happening today!

Parkside Community Centre

176 Goodmayes Lane,
Ilford, IG3 9PP



Redbridge Council Pest Control



What we do

- we offer advice to residents and businesses about how to get rid of insects or rodents
- we have effective treatments for certain types of pests and can help with identifying pests and information about what to do

Officers will

- investigate the cause of infestations and recommend a treatment
- give you safety information, offer proofing advice and tell you roughly how long the treatment may take

Pests we treat and cost

Rats	£170
Mice	£170
Cockroaches	£209
Bedbugs* up to three rooms	£291
Each additional room	£40
Garden Ants	£130
Pharaoh Ants	£237
Fleas	£180
Wasps*	£81

*Our wasp treatment service runs from 1 June to 31 October every year

Book an appointment at:

www.redbridge.gov.uk/book-it
or call us on 020 8554 5000

(Monday to Friday 8.30am-6pm)

The charges for these services are reduced by 50% for Residential Owner Occupiers who are in receipt of 85% or more Council Tax Reduction

These prices may be subject to change at the time of booking

What is a misconnection?

A misconnection is where drainage from your home has been connected to the wrong part of the sewer or surface water network.

TYPES OF MISCONNECTION

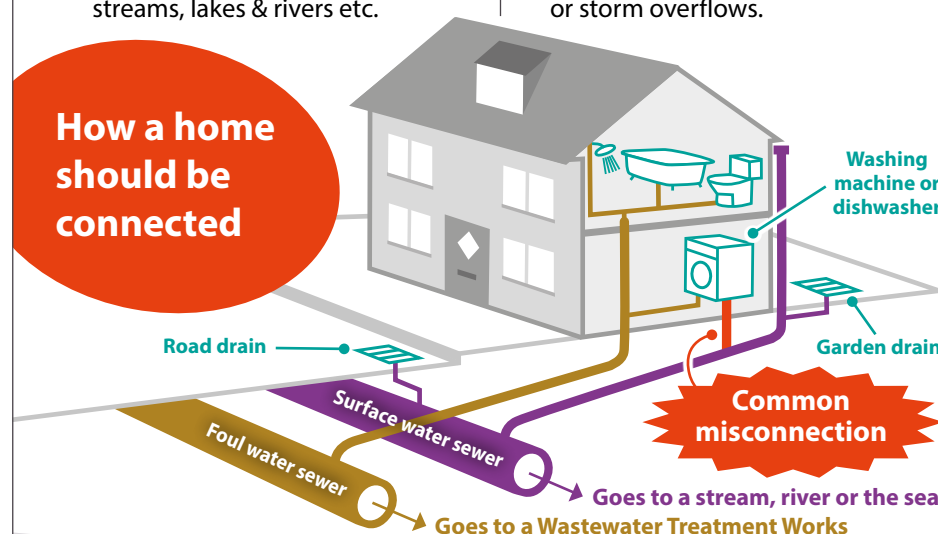
1. Foul Water Misconnection

Wastewater from toilets, sinks, and washing machines etc. connected to surface water drains pollutes streams, lakes & rivers etc.

2. Surface Water Misconnection

Rainwater connected to foul water sewers can cause system overload, leading to flooding from manholes or storm overflows.

How a home should be connected



Further information

If you believe you have a misconnection, need help or have any questions contact **Thames Water customer service** on 0800 316 9800 or visit the **Thames Water misconnections webpage** by scanning the QR code.



What's on our doorstep

Come with us as we explore Redbridge's town centres.
In this edition, we're heading to Wanstead.



Wanstead has an authentic village feel

Wanstead exudes an appealing village charm. Its tree-lined streets and picturesque green open spaces make it a gem in the hustle and bustle of East London.

Wanstead is a vibrant hub with a thriving night-time economy. Its excellent schools and educational facilities make it ideal for families with children.

The High Road is alive with young families, dog walkers and visitors coming to sample the many food establishments and coffee shops.



Steve Best does a great job in keeping Wanstead spotless



Julie Donovan, who has lived in Wanstead for sixty years, said, "I love Wanstead. It's right on the doorstep of Epping Forest and has excellent transport links. It also has a butcher's and fish shop, which are rare nowadays."

Wanstead offers unparalleled access to central London. The convenience of having two Central Line Tube stations, Snaresbrook and Wanstead, at both ends of the High Street is undoubtedly one of its unique selling points.

Located on the doorstep of Epping Forest, Wanstead offers the perfect blend of city and nature. This location makes Wanstead a place that is both well-connected and close to nature.



Daisy Osborne, owner of Daisy's Flowers, said, "Wanstead has a lovely community. People are always very supportive of local businesses. It is always spotless and has lovely green spaces for families."

One of the main attractions in Wanstead is the monthly farmers' market. The market is a food-lover's paradise, with traders plying artisan food products, which include mouthwatering cakes, cheeses, breads, vegetarian foods and even doggy ice cream.

The market's success is a testament to the vibrant and supportive community in Wanstead, making it a must-visit for locals and visitors.

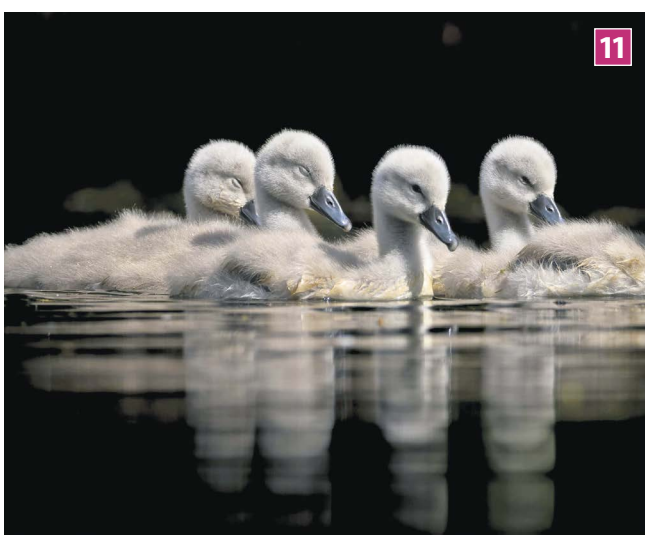


Wanstead High Street looks stunning in all seasons



The Redbridge Review: 2024 in pictures

We provide over 400 services for communities in Redbridge. Here's a snapshot of some of our work.



- 1** Following an inspection by Ofsted in June, Redbridge Council's Children's Services were given an **Outstanding rating** across every single criterion.
- 2** We've cracked down on fly-tipping to keep our streets clean, and have **prosecuted 180 fly-tippers** this year.
- 3** After a makeover, **Fullwell Cross library reopened** in time for the summer holidays.
- 4** Earlier this year we introduced a service allowing local people to speak to Council staff using a video **British Sign Language service**.
- 5** Redbridge Council brought back the highly successful injection patcher machine, which allows us to repair a pothole in two minutes. So far this year, we have repaired over **12,000 potholes** in the borough.
- 6** Nine of our parks were once again given a Green Flag award. Hainault Forest and Valentines park were both voted into the **top 10 in the country!**
- 7** Redbridge Council's Public Health team partnered with the NHS and InHealth to **invite eligible women for routine breast screening**.
- 8** During the school holidays, we ran the popular Holiday Activities & Food programme, **offering children free meals**, multi-sports, creative sessions like music and arts, nutritional workshops, and fun days out.
- 9** Pupils in Redbridge once again saw the fruits of their and their teachers' exceptional dedication and hard work, with **excellent GCSE, A-Level, T-Level and BTEC results**.
- 10** Over the last year, we've **built 159 homes** in Redbridge for local people who were living in temporary accommodation.
- 11** Over 350 local people took part in the first ever **Redbridge Photography Awards**. Due to its popularity, we'll be bringing back the competition next year – so keep your eyes peeled on our social media channels!
- 12** We've been independently ranked **second in the whole country** for our excellent efficiency, giving local people solid **value for money**.

Councillor Vanisha Solanki, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance said,



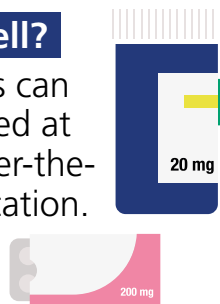
"With so many services to run, prioritising our spend can be challenging. Despite the known drop in Government funding, we are proudly producing some of the most efficient services in the country, which are being recognised at every level. We are driven to give the best value for money for people in Redbridge."

Your route to urgent help



Feeling unwell?

Minor illnesses can often be treated at home with over-the-counter medication.



Need treatments?

Pharmacists are medical experts who can offer advice as well as medication.



Your surgery first!

Your GP surgery should usually be the first place you contact for all medical questions. You can also book out-of-hours GP appointments online or on the phone.



Contact 111

NHS 111 online provides help with a range of medical issues. They can connect you to an appropriate health professional for advice. They may also direct you to GPs, pharmacies, emergency dental services or other local services. If you can't go online call 111.

Dial 999

You should only call for an ambulance if you have a life-threatening medical emergency, or have a severe injury.



For more information on urgent care visit northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/urgentcare

Contacting your GP practice online can be faster, more convenient and more flexible.

Download the NHS App today.



Tackling air pollution together

Join us in helping to improve the air quality in Redbridge.

We know how bad air pollution can be for our health, so we've been working closely with local community groups, GP surgeries and schools to help make the air in Redbridge as clean as possible.

Our efforts led to the launch of 'We Care for Our Air,' a project that supports local people to help raise awareness of the importance of air quality, and empowers local people to help in the battle to make the air in Redbridge great.

Communities supported using devices that monitored the quality of the air which helped us develop an air quality map. As a result, we can now focus our attention on the areas that most need it, and work with those communities to improve local air quality.

Others took part in free bicycle training and riding sessions, and schools and young people hosted Clean Air Street Parties.

With the help of local people, the air in Redbridge has improved. But there's still more to do. We need your suggestions on how we can continue improving the air we all breathe in.

To take part in the survey, and to access all the useful information we've created, please visit <https://engage.redbridge.gov.uk/our-air-redbridge>



Local people discussing air quality at a climate picnic

Pat, who got involved in some of the projects, said

"I enjoyed being involved in checking the air quality in my neighbourhood.

"It will be good to see the air quality maps around the borough so people can be happier to go to areas that have lower levels and be careful in higher levels areas.

"It might help them make better decisions like walking, cycling or using public transport to help reduce pollution in their area."



Bringing health services direct to local people

Visit our community clinics to access health services.



Local people have been getting their blood pressure check ups

Redbridge Council has partnered with local organisations to make health services more accessible to the community through our convenient community clinics. You can find the clinics on high streets, engagement hubs, faith sites, the Healthy Redbridge Bus, and community cafés and events.

Services include vaccinations, blood pressure checks, sexual health testing, and support with diabetes. No appointments are needed – just check the timetable and plan your visit, at www.redbridge.gov.uk/health-and-wellbeing/healthy-redbridge-bus/

Bashir Patel, local community champion and Chair of the Ilford Muslim Society, said

"Working with the council has enabled us to provide free health information and advice, vaccinations and check-ups at mosques, which has been beneficial for local people. I would encourage other community organisations to get in touch with the team and extend supportive services further."



Since launching, our community clinics have provided:

- + 94 community outreach sessions across the borough
- + 47 vaccination clinics
- + 36 health check clinics
- + 11 sexual health testing clinics
- + health promotion on topics like cancer screening, mental health services, and childhood immunisations

We want to bring our services to more groups and organisations in the community, so if your community organisation or business would like our clinics to visit your group, please email communityhealthchampions@redbridge.gov.uk

WINTER VACCINATIONS



Millions of people will be eligible for free flu and Covid-19 vaccines this winter, including everyone **aged 65 and over**, **pregnant women**, **care home residents**, people with **certain health conditions**, and **frontline health and care staff**. Children aged **2 to 16**, or aged **6 months to 17 years** old with **certain health conditions**, can get a free flu jab.



Who is eligible

FLU VACCINE

- All adults aged **65 and over**
- People aged **6 months to 64** in a **clinical risk group**
- People who are **pregnant**
- People who live in a **care home**
- People who receive a **carer's allowance**, or are the **main carer** for an older or disabled person
- People who live with someone who has a **weakened immune system**
- Children aged **2 to 16**, or aged **6 months to 17 years** old with **certain health conditions**.

Find out more:

www.nhs.uk/flu-vaccine

COVID-19 VACCINE

- All adults aged **65 and over**
- Residents living in a **care home for older adults**
- People aged **6 months to 64 years** in a **clinical risk group**, including people who are **pregnant**
- **Frontline** health and social care workers
- Staff working in **care homes for older adults**

Find out more:

www.nhs.uk/covid-vaccination

RSV VACCINE

- Adults aged **75 to 79**
- Adults who turned 80 on or after **1 September 2024**
- Women and people who are **pregnant (from 28 weeks)**



How to book

FLU VACCINE

If you are eligible you can book a flu vaccine through:

- Your doctor's surgery
 - Your local pharmacy
 - The NHS App
 - Children from reception to year 11 will be offered vaccinations at school. 2 to 3 year olds can get one from your GP.
 - Visiting
- www.nhs.uk/book-a-flu-vaccination

RSV VACCINE

RSV is a common respiratory virus that can make babies and older adults seriously ill.

If you are pregnant:

You should be offered the RSV vaccine around the time of your 28-week antenatal appointment. Speak to your maternity service or GP surgery if you're 28 weeks pregnant or more and have not been offered the vaccine.

If you are aged 75 to 79:

Your GP surgery will contact you about getting the RSV vaccine. This may be by letter, text, phone call or email.

COVID-19 VACCINE

If you are eligible you can book a Covid-19 vaccine through:

- The NHS App
- Visiting www.northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/wintervaccinations
- Calling **119**

OTHER VACCINATIONS

If you are aged 65 and over your GP will also offer you the **Pneumococcal vaccine** to protect against pneumonia, sepsis and meningitis.

Find out more by visiting northeastlondon.icb.nhs.uk/vaccinations



Children's social care: we're leading the way, nationally

Our Children's Services team has been selected to trial new ways of supporting families.

Following another Outstanding rating by Ofsted earlier this year, our Children's Services team has been chosen to work with the Department for Education on a programme to revolutionise children's social care. Called The Families First for Children (FFC) Pathfinder Programme, it aims to help more children stay with their families in safe, nurturing homes and protect vulnerable children from harm.

As one of ten local councils participating in this initiative, Redbridge will work with professionals from the local Safeguarding Children Partnership, which includes health, education, police and voluntary organisations. Together, we will provide housing support, benefits assistance, parenting guidance and financial advice.

Our professionals will actively work with families to plan the support they need, together. This will help ensure their individual needs and circumstances are taken into account.

The programme is part of our commitment to ensuring that every child receives the best possible start in life.



The team have been busy helping families across the borough

**Families First
for Children**
Pathfinder Programme



**Councillor Lloyd
Duddridge, Cabinet
Member for Children,
Young People and
Education, said,**



"The FFC Pathfinder Programme will allow us to shape how Children's Services might run nationally in the future, whilst delivering more comprehensive and accessible support for local families who need help right now."

To find out more, please visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/news/march-2024/redbridge-chosen-to-lead-the-way-in-children-s-social-care-innovation

DROP IN SESSIONS at Redbridge Music Lounge



Come along with your instruments and play, or just sing, or just listen and enjoy the convivial company. Don't be put off if you think you are not good enough it really doesn't matter.

**every
Tuesday
Wednesday
& Thursday
12.30pm-3.30pm**

Cranbrook Centre, IG1 4SB
near the Melbourne Road
entrance to Valentines Park



<https://www.rmluk.org>



Redbridge Music Lounge

'Make Music , Enjoy Life '

Caring for Redbridge's children

More than a job: Lauren Curran supports local families to keep Redbridge's children safe and well.



Lauren (pictured below right) originally hails from Dublin, where she qualified as a social worker. Lauren made the short trip over the Irish Sea to Redbridge in March when she joined the Child Protection and Assessment Team.

When a family is first referred to the child protection team, Lauren and her colleagues are the first people the family speaks to. She gives them essential support from the start.

Lauren has already deeply impacted local children's lives. She shared, "It's been a positive experience so far and massively insightful. I work closely with families referred to us and visit them in the family home or at school. In this job, you learn so much in such a short space of time."

Most referrals come via schools and the police. Lauren explains, "Teachers work closely with children daily, so they can often sense when something is up with a child. They have built up that rapport."

"The police will inform us when they are investigating allegations of domestic violence in the home environment, and when children could be at potential risk."

"We also get safeguarding referrals when children are at risk of neglect or emotional abuse."

Lauren explains one of the main challenges of her role, "For many families, it can be overwhelming to have social work professionals come into their home. What's important is that you try to break down those barriers and explain that you're there in a caring and supportive capacity. We must break the stigma that social workers are there to remove people from their homes. That couldn't be further from the truth."

Leader of the Council, Kam Rai said,

"This year, we've budgeted to spend £45 million on children's social care. This spend includes a team of social workers, residential care costs, tailored support, and providing on-the-ground help for families who most need it. This makes up a large part of our council's yearly budget, but we will always take care of those in our community who are most in need of support. I am proud of our social workers, whose unwavering dedication helps keep children in Redbridge safe."



"Ultimately, we want children to stay with their families, develop, flourish and enjoy their formative years."

Lauren quickly points out why she loves her job, "It's so rewarding to be around children and to be able to give one-to-one support to a family through a time when they're in a real crisis, and then see them become more stable and happier in their home life. There's no better feeling."

Our social care costs (adults and children) form just over half the Council budget. The work these dedicated Council staff do with our local families, however, is not just essential or statutory, but so important to our borough beyond this. They provide life-changing support to local people and help keep some of our most vulnerable people safe and well.



If you're interested in a career in social care, please visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/socialworkerrecruitment/jobs/

Spotlight on our superb local businesses

Let's shop locally where we can, to support small businesses.

Saturday 7 December 2024 is Small Business Saturday. It's a reminder of how important small businesses are to our communities, and that we all need to use local businesses to help support them to thrive.



Afrikana is cosy and welcoming

Afrikana Restaurant Ilford

Having lived in the area for over 15 years, business partners Yusuf and Uzair recently opened the Afrikana restaurant. The menu offers a unique African-inspired dining experience, which combines bold, authentic flavours with a contemporary twist, appealing to a wide range of tastes.

The pair pride themselves on providing excellent service and a welcoming atmosphere for guests, ensuring that every detail reflects the brand identity.

Yusuf, said, "What stands out most about Redbridge is its incredible diversity. It is a melting pot of cultures and communities, which makes it the perfect place for a restaurant like Afrikana.

"The sense of support from the local community is unmatched. There is always something happening in the borough, and people here are open to trying new experiences, which makes operating in Redbridge exciting and rewarding."

We caught up with several small businesses in Redbridge, to find out what life is like running a company in our borough.

One Planet

One planet isn't like any other supermarket, every purchase is taken home in reusable containers, fabric bags or paper bags. Shoppers can buy everything from dry goods, cleaning products, toiletries, snacks, sweets and more, and we sell everything plastic free with minimal or no packaging.

Run by Redbridge local Zuzana, who has a passion for waste reduction following a 12-year career in the waste industry, and who has an ambition of owning a community-minded business aimed at supporting local people to reduce their waste and recycle things as much as they can.

Zuzana, said, "I found cleaning products were the easiest. When I used up a bottle, I set it aside and at the end of the week I took it to the refill shop and refilled it. You can't stop using all plastic immediately, it would be too hard, which is only because the convenience plays a big part in our life, but we can start making little changes that lead to bigger changes.

"I want the shop to be a hub for the community, to start a conversation and see how we can make our area better; to see what we can achieve together."



Zuzana is helping local people to reduce waste by recycling materials as much as possible

How we're supporting local businesses

New workspaces for businesses

Do you need somewhere to work from, or to collaborate with other people? We are converting Queen Victoria House, Ilford, into a business and enterprise hub for small local businesses. Partly funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the fresh new hub will provide an affordable workspace from which entrepreneurs can grow their businesses.

To find out more or to register your interest in the workspace, visit <https://engage.redbridge.gov.uk/qvh-business-hub>



Queen Victoria house is set to be transformed to office spaces

Made in Redbridge festive market

We are inviting businesses, visitors and local people to take part in the Made in Redbridge Festive Market. This community event offers the perfect opportunity to showcase handmade and creative products during the festive period.

If you're interested in joining this or future events, or would like to learn more about Small Business Saturday, please contact our team, at business.enterprise@redbridge.gov.uk



The market will take place on Oakfield Road IG1 1EF (between Santander & Redbridge Town Hall)

Saturday 7th December, 11am-5pm

Redbridge is becoming a recognised Child-Friendly Borough

Become a Youth Ambassador!

Timandra told us about her experience as a youth ambassador – could you join her?



Timandra says, "The Child Friendly Redbridge programme is a UNICEF UK led initiative that is helping Redbridge to amplify voices of young people."

"I joined the Ambassadors in September 2023 and it has been an amazing experience so far. We received training where we learned about the rights of the Ambassadors group. I was hoping to be able to voice my opinions on wider issues within our borough which I hadn't been able to do before."

"Child Friendly Redbridge opened me up to many opportunities where I could share my views about our community. These included attending Safer Neighbourhood Board meetings to discuss the safety of our borough for young people. I feel that young peoples' voices are often overlooked and undervalued in society, so it's important to speak up. If we don't represent ourselves, who will?"

Redbridge is working towards becoming officially recognised by UNICEF UK as a Child-Friendly Borough (possibly the first in England!)



Could you join Timandra and help us make Redbridge the best place possible for young people to grow up?

To apply for the role of a Child Friendly Ambassador, please email simeon.earnshaw@redbridge.gov.uk

Play Streets: We're bringing neighbours and generations together

We're making every part of Redbridge as child-friendly as we can.

Play Streets are when a road is closed for a couple of hours each month, for the community to be able to safely come out and play together. They're managed by adults, but children are at the heart of the scheme. The vision is of playing out near home to be a normal, everyday part of life for all children, as it once was.

Each play street has a lead and volunteers who steward the two-hour road closure, enabling children to play freely on the street and neighbours to socialise and get to know each other better.

One of the first residents to run a Play Street in the borough was mum-of-four, Nargis Jahan. **Nargis, said,** "I got to know more people on our street in the first two months of Play Streets than in the two years I'd been living there."

"Starting a Play Street is one of the most positive and beneficial things you can do for your street, community and family as it brings people together, creating new friendships and more active neighbourhoods."



Would you like to run a Play Street in our borough?

Visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/leisure-sport-and-the-arts/play-streets

"It's great to see children playing outdoors together, and different generations and cultures coming together and bonding. I can honestly say Play Streets has brought our street alive. We've created our own little community, and some of my closest friends are now the ones I made through Play Streets."

Redbridge is working towards becoming a
UNICEF UK recognised Child Friendly Borough,
meaning children's rights are put at the heart of local decision-making,
and children's voices are heard at all levels.

Keep your home and family safe this festive season

Don't make your home an easy target for burglars.

We all look forward to unwinding with family and friends at the end of a long year, however, it's important to remember that the festive season can be a prime time for burglaries.

You can take control of your home's safety by following a few simple tips:

- Always lock (or double lock) your doors and windows before leaving the house and before going to bed
- Keep your home well-lit, as a dark house can be an easy target for burglars
- If you have a house alarm, check and activate it regularly
- In the evening, leave a lamp on before leaving home so it looks like someone is inside, or use a timer-lamp
- Install security lights around your house to prevent dark spots

Please report crime, at www.met.police.uk/ro/report/
In an emergency, always call 999.



Mark, from South Woodford is protecting his home. He said,



"I installed a steel gate across my porch. I've also made sure my house alarm has batteries and installed a ring doorbell."



Winter is when burglaries can spike

Let's unite together to stop antisocial behaviour

We work very closely with our policing partners in Redbridge, to tackle antisocial behaviour so that everyone feels safe and happy in their neighbourhoods.

Redbridge is statistically a safe borough. Yet the actions of certain individuals, such as dropping litter and fly-tipping, which many see as not serious, can often create a false perception of safety, increase the fear of crime, and even lead to a decline in property values.

We're fortunate in Redbridge that the majority of people take their rubbish home and consider their neighbours and the community when they're out and about.

We know that having clean and tidy streets is important for you, too.



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

However, there are those who think nothing of eating takeaway food in their cars and then dropping rubbish from their windows. This behaviour is totally unacceptable, and it must change now.

Each of us has the power to influence our neighbours' behaviour. Let's all lead by example and be the kind of neighbour who takes their rubbish home, doesn't leave gas canisters on the street, loiters in groups, and is considerate of others. These simple actions will ensure our borough is always clean and tidy, and improve our sense of safety.

By coming together as a united community, we can make a real difference in tackling antisocial behaviour.

If you see a crime, however small, please report it to the police (always dial 999 in an emergency):

<https://www.met.police.uk/ro/report/>



Let's make Redbridge a no-go area for fly-tippers

This year alone, we have taken 180 people to court for fly-tipping and fined them thousands of pounds.

We're fortunate to live in one of the greenest boroughs in London. However, a minority of people are undermining the great work we all do to keep our streets clean and make Redbridge a nice place to live.

This problem is not unique to Redbridge. It is happening across the country, but we will leave no stone unturned in tracking down and prosecuting anyone caught fly-tipping in our borough.

Your vigilance is crucial in helping us identify and prosecute these offenders. Let's work together to keep our streets clean and safe.

If you spot someone fly-tipping in the borough, report it, at www.redbridge.gov.uk/report-it/



Anyone caught fly-tipping faces a £1,000 on-the-spot fine

We will prosecute and fine people who fly-tip in Redbridge

If you're feeling unsafe in your home or around a loved one, don't suffer in silence

Reach Out is here to help.

Our Reach Out service is here to support people experiencing domestic abuse and is open to anyone facing abuse aged 16 and over.

Our friendly team support people from all backgrounds, ethnicities, genders and sexuality. The support includes:

- one-on-one confidential, non-judgemental **support**
- information on how to **stay safe at home**
- help to find **refuge or safe accommodation**
- help with **contacting the police**
- help **managing your finances** and **accessing debt advice.**

Reach Out empowers clients to feel safe and in control. We ensure the perpetrator is held accountable, giving clients the power to reclaim their lives.

Reach Out also offers a behaviour change programme to individuals who want to stop their abusive behaviour and provides therapeutic support for children involved in these situations, offering age-appropriate counselling to help them cope with the trauma they have experienced.

Reach Out supports people suffering domestic abuse



Telephone: 0800 145 6410

E-mail: reachout@redbridge.gov.uk

Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (excluding bank holidays)

www.redbridge.gov.uk/reachout

If you are in immediate danger, always dial 999.



Keeping costs down this winter

At this time of year, costs can creep up on us, and it is very easy to overspend or to get into debt. Help is available.

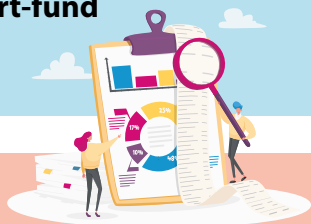
It's no longer just festivities putting pressure on our tightening budgets this time of year. With rising heating costs and food prices, many people find the winter months challenging.

Support is available for you, and your family, so please don't worry alone. Visit our cost of living website, at <https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/>



Support with energy bills

With rising energy bills, it is important to understand your heating controls. You could consider using timers, switching off appliances when they're not in use, and finding out whether you're eligible for discounts on energy. Our Household Support Fund can also help with energy bills. <https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/household-support-fund>



Holiday Activities and Food programme



The Holiday Activities and Food programme provides free meals and fun activities for eligible children during the holidays, and can be found in a number of locations, mainly in schools across the borough. The programme will be open during the Christmas holidays, so please book your place if you're eligible.

<https://find.redbridge.gov.uk/haf>

Household Support Fund



As the cold months approach, many households find it difficult to make ends meet, but the Household Support Fund is here to help. Funds can be used for a variety of essential needs including help with utility bills, food, warm clothing, school uniform and essential travel. You do not need to be receiving benefits to apply but you must evidence a genuine need for assistance. When you apply for a Household Support Fund Payment you will gain access to other services including income maximisation, money management and debt advice.

<https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/household-support-fund/>

Priority bills

Housing Costs are priority bills and it's essential to stay on top of them. If you are struggling to pay your rent or Council Tax, contact the Council as soon as possible. The sooner you reach out to us, the sooner we can help. We understand that times can be tough and discretionary payments are available to help you through difficult periods.

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/benefits/discretionary-housing-and-hardship-payments/>

Samaritans

The Samaritans are here for you, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. If you are feeling worried about money, or anxious in general, please do reach out for help. You are not alone. Call or visit,

116 123 | www.samaritans.org



In debt and need help?

If you're worried about debts or have missed payments, advice is available. Please seek help early. You can get free independent help and advice from agencies, including the National Debtline.

<https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/debt-and-money-advice/>

National Debtline 0800 808 4000

Payplan 0800 280 2816

Work Redbridge

If you are long-term unemployed and need some advice on getting back into work, our qualified advisors can offer free support.

<https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/help-finding-a-job>



Warm spaces

If you're struggling with heating and your home isn't warm, there are places across Redbridge where you are very welcome. Some have activities and some are quiet spaces. Please come along and you will find them warm, friendly, and dry places to be.

<https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/community-living-rooms/>

Spend wisely

Celebrate the festive season without financial worries. Use a budgeting tool to keep on track and avoid slipping into debt. Look for deals and discounts and take advantage of special offers to reduce your spending. Loyalty cards can significantly reduce your spend.

<https://www.moneyhelper.org.uk/budget-planner>

Financial support checker

Could you be eligible for financial support that you're not currently receiving? Check and find out online. It could make that little bit of difference this winter.

<https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/welfare-benefits-advice/>

CALLING ALL LANDLORDS!

Selective Licensing Schemes

If you're a Landlord or Agent and you operate any rented property, you may need to apply for a property licence.

Redbridge Council has two selective licensing schemes in place. Selective Scheme 3 (2 wards) has been in operation since **1 November 2023** and applies to rented properties within Ilford Town and Valentines wards.

Selective Scheme 4 (15 wards) came into force on **Monday 8 April 2024**. The wards affected are: Aldborough, Barkingside, Chadwell, Churchfields, Clementswood, Cranbrook, Fairlop, Goodmayes, Hainault, Loxford, Mayfield, Newbury, Seven Kings, South Woodford and Wanstead Village.

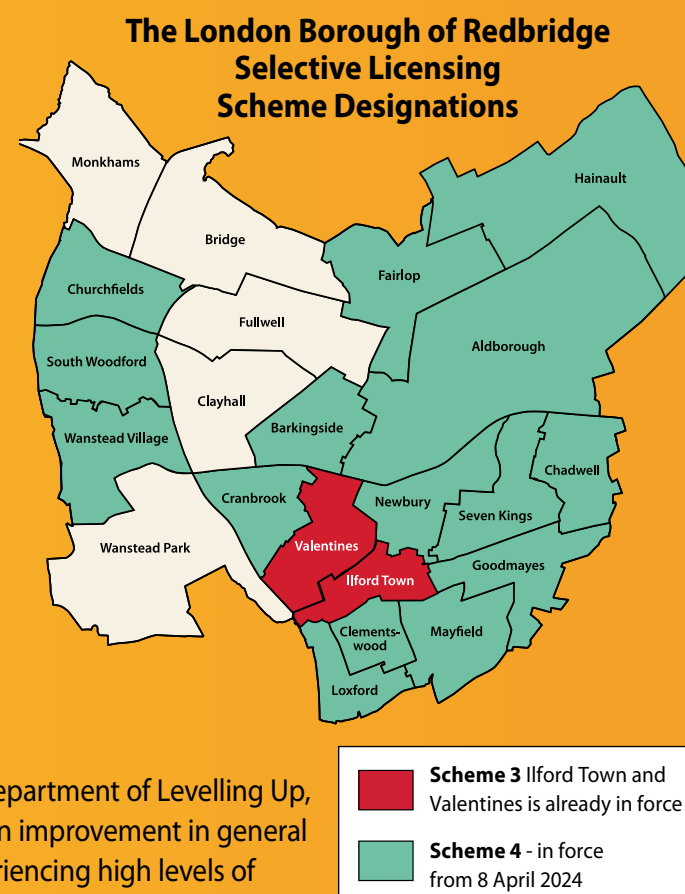
These schemes require landlords or agents of most private rented properties in these areas to apply for a selective property licence. To apply, visit <https://propertylicensing.redbridge.gov.uk/>

If you already have a selective licence for a property in these wards and it is still in date, the licence will remain in force until the expiry date shown on the licence.

These new schemes were introduced after a full public consultation and confirmation by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), who were satisfied that these schemes will contribute to an improvement in general housing conditions in the areas, and that private rented housing in the designated area is experiencing high levels of deprivation, high levels of migration, and significant and persistent antisocial behaviour.

Failing to get a property licence can result in receiving a civil penalty of up to **£30,000** or prosecution in Court, where the fine is **unlimited**. Additionally, not having a property licence may prevent you from evicting tenants using the 'section 21' process. Tenants may also be able to claim back up to 12 months' rent from you, via a **Rent Repayment Order (RRO)**. The Council will normally publish any prosecutions, enforcement, or legal action in the press and update the GLA's public Rogue Landlord and Agent Checker and government intelligence databases.

To find out more information and check whether your rental property needs a Selective or any other type of Licence, visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/privaterentals



Scan the QR code to see the Public Notice for Scheme 4



Additional HMO Licensing Scheme

Redbridge Council approved a new five-year Additional Licensing scheme for small Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) across the whole borough. Additional HMO property licensing is now a legal requirement, as of **Monday 18 September 2023 until 17 September 2028**.

This means that any property which is rented to three or four occupiers forming two or more households that share (or lack) a toilet, personal washing facilities or cooking facilities needs to have an HMO Licence.



This includes certain converted blocks of flats (known as Section 257 HMOs), but only where all accommodation units are privately rented, and the building and accommodation units are in the same ownership or control. This includes buildings within mixed use developments or above non-residential premises.

The introduction of this new HMO Licensing Scheme comes after a full public consultation. Overall, it was found that there are significant issues such as poor housing conditions, ineffective management, crime, and antisocial behaviour persisting within HMOs in the borough.

For more information on whether your rental property needs an Additional (HMO) Licence, visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/housing/private-rentals



Scan the QR code to see the Public Notice



New homes built for local people most in need

103 new council homes set to be enjoyed by families waiting on council waiting list – just in time for Christmas.

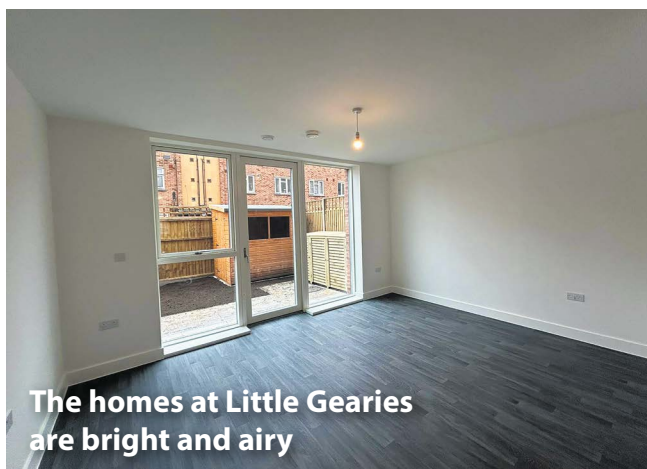
Back in 2019, we committed to building 600 brand new, affordable council homes. While the COVID-19 lockdown may have slowed construction work, it didn't slow down our determination to deliver new homes for local people. Fast forward to 2024, and we are on the brink of meeting our target, having just handed over 103 new homes at Little Gearies, Ilford. These homes will provide much-needed housing for families on the waiting list, just in time for Christmas.

The high-quality homes at Little Gearies will support local families with long-term homes, reducing the number of families living in temporary accommodation in Redbridge. Each home features bright, modern kitchens, triple-glazed windows, air source heat pumps and low-wattage radiators to help keep energy bills low. Mechanical ventilation systems have been installed to prevent mould and retain heat, making the new homes a healthier and more sustainable living environment.

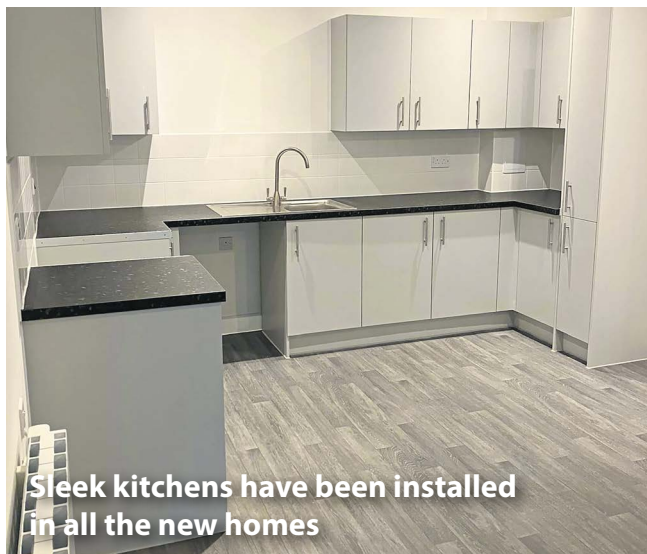
We spoke to Renae, who recently moved into her new home in Little Gearies, about how life has changed for her and her daughter since moving in.



The modern homes at Little Gearies are ready to be enjoyed by families



The homes at Little Gearies are bright and airy



Sleek kitchens have been installed in all the new homes

Renae, said,

"When I got my offer it was like a dream come true. It felt like a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. Having lived in temporary accommodation for a long time where there was less space, my daughter now has her own room. Our new home has more space which has made a huge difference to our lives.

"The area is peaceful and clean, and has given me and my daughter a brand new start and a place we can finally call home."

We're laying the foundation for more homes – not just at Little Gearies, but across the borough, and are building 33 new homes at the Heathcote and Glade Court site in Clayhall, 20 at Budoch Court in Ilford, and 105 in Loxford.

Our advice to anyone struggling with their home is to seek help early, from your landlord or mortgage provider. Try to get your finances in order wherever possible, as getting a Council house like Renae has, takes years. The wait for a three-bedroom house is currently 16 years and rising. If you join the housing waiting list now, chances are you'll need to wait for decades for somewhere to live long-term, and it may not be in the borough as we just have so few homes.

Useful contacts:

Debt advice helpline: 0808 808 4000

Check you're receiving everything you're entitled to, at www.gov.uk/check-benefits-financial-support

For more financial support, see our cost-of-living page (page 24).

Supporting people to move from temporary accommodation into long-term homes

Do you live in temporary accommodation?
Speak to us to find out your options.

Our mission is to make Redbridge a brilliant place to call home. Our borough has so much to offer, from excellent schools to forests, parks, and leisure facilities, as well as communities that come together to support one another. However, to truly make Redbridge great, we have to make sure everyone has access to a warm, safe, and stable home for the long term.

Councils across the country have very few council homes, and the situation is no different in Redbridge. The national housing crisis, which is particularly acute in London, has left 3,000 households in Redbridge living in temporary accommodation. This costs our Council £52 million per year, making it one of our largest and most unsustainable expenses. Reducing this cost while supporting local people is an urgent priority.

We understand deeply that living in a hostel often means small rooms with shared kitchens, while hotels frequently lack cooking facilities and offer cramped conditions. We don't want this for our residents, especially those who are vulnerable and need our support. Hotels are not homes. That's why we are intensifying our efforts to move people out of temporary accommodation and into more stable, longer-term housing – even if this means helping families relocate outside the borough.

In more affordable areas, families are finding homes with gardens, separate bedrooms for their children, and space to study and relax. Most importantly, these homes provide stability and are available for the long term. Over 1,000 households have made this move so far, and most have shared that they are happy to have traded uncertainty for a stable, permanent home without a long wait.



Are you looking after a child who is not your own?

London Borough of
Redbridge



- is the child under 16 (or 18 if they have a disability)?
- are you NOT the child's step parent, sibling, aunt, uncle or grandparent? This also includes host families to overseas students
- do you plan to have the child with you for more than 28 days?
- this is called '**private fostering**' and we must be LEGALLY notified to ensure the child is safe

Please contact Redbridge Children's Services

020 8708 3885 CPAT.Referrals@redbridge.gov.uk

or visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/private-fostering for more information

Empower a child Foster for Redbridge

LOCAL COMMUNITY
Fostering
REDBRIDGE

Imagine having the power to change
a young person's life for the better.

The power to re-shape a future.

There are over 300 children in Redbridge who
are unable to stay with their families each year.
You could be the one to transform a life and
provide the change that they need.

call 020 8708 6068

visit www.redbridge.gov.uk/fosteringlife



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MAYOR OF LONDON

STEPHANIE WEBBER, WINNER
THE MAYOR OF LONDON,
LEARNING FOR PERSONAL PROGRESSION AWARD

