

REDBRIDGE LIFE

PROTECTING SERVICES YOU VALUE MOST



pages 4 & 5

CELEBRATING INSPIRING WOMEN IN REDBRIDGE



pages 6 & 7

COMMUNITY IN ACTION



page 9

Redbridge becomes England's first UNICEF Child Friendly borough!



We're putting children at the heart of everything we do, pages 20 and 21

Shape the future of this newspaper

Take our reader survey and help us tell the stories that matter most to you

There are so many amazing stories to share in Redbridge. We'd love to share them all but can only put so many in the newspaper. That's why we're inviting you to take part in our reader survey and help shape the future of this newspaper.

By sharing a few minutes of your time, you'll help us understand who our readers are, which stories you enjoy most, and what kinds of topics and voices you'd like to see more of.

There are also many other consultations and surveys taking place across the council on Let's Talk Redbridge. This is where residents can share their views on a wide range of topics and help shape decisions that affect the borough. Get involved and use your voice to help shape Redbridge.

Check out what other consultations and surveys are taking place in Redbridge by visiting <https://engage.redbridge.gov.uk/>



Take part in the survey by visiting
<https://engage.redbridge.gov.uk/redbridge-life-survey>

Or by scanning the QR code

Thank you for reading
Redbridge Life.

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

Thursday 26 March **7pm**

Cabinet

Thursday 23 April **7pm**

Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Monday 23 March **7pm**

Health and Care Policy Development Committee

Wednesday 25 March **7pm**

Tuesday 28 April **7pm**

Planning Committee

Wednesday 15 April **7pm**

External Scrutiny Committee

Monday 27 April **7pm**

Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee

Tuesday 21 April **7pm**

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Monday 20 April **7pm**

Governance and Assurance

Wednesday 29 April **7pm**

General Purposes Committee

Thursday 23 April **8pm**

Health & Wellbeing Board

Monday 27 April **2.15pm**

Produced by Redbridge Council

The editor can be contacted via email,
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Next issue out in June

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Let's Talk Redbridge
have your say on our
latest consultations
and projects

LEADER'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the Spring edition of Redbridge Life

Dear neighbours,

I am proud to be Leader of our borough – where we've created family, not just those we live with, but our friends, neighbours, work colleagues and with those we just share a smile with. We celebrate together; whether it's Diwali's lights, Eid's togetherness, Christmas' joys, Hanukkah's miracles, and Vaisakhi's spirit. Our shared values – respect, compassion, and community – bind us, fostering an environment where every festival and religious day strengthens our collective bond. People have tried to divide our community, but we won't let them, because together we value the place we call home.



Councillor Kam Rai at South Woodford Islamic Centre with the Head Imam

This issue of Redbridge Life shows how we have fought for extra government funding and won, created a 'no cuts' budget that puts more money into vital services, and outlines our exciting new plans to make Redbridge an even better place to live.

Our libraries are much loved; that's why we've protected them. Our award-winning parks – nine of them proudly flying Green Flags – are open spaces for families to gather and children to play, and our leisure centres are spaces for people of all ages to improve their health and wellbeing. This is why we will be investing £37.6m in renovating and building leisure and culture facilities.

Even in difficult financial times, we've maintained weekly bin collections and the garden waste service, keeping our streets clean and our environment sustainable. Looking forward, we've allocated an extra £1m to street cleansing and £35m to maintaining our roads, pavements and street lighting.

Housing means security and every family, every child, deserves a stable place to call home. That's why we've built 600 council homes, providing affordable, quality housing for those who need it most. Our most recent budget allocated £57m to creating even more council homes and £31.4m over five years to improve the condition of the council homes we already own.

In education and childcare, our collaboration with schools, parents and young people means 96% of our schools have 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Ofsted ratings. We've earned an 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating for children's services and we're the only council in England to have been awarded UNICEF child-friendly status, reflecting our dedication to nurturing and investing in our children. We have more to do and are putting more resource into the area of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and building a new SEND school.



Councillor Kam Rai with Newbury Park Primary pupils at the town hall

We have fought to secure more funding for adult and children's social care because every resident deserves dignity and care. By increasing the budget for adult social care by £28.8m, we'll ensure no one is left behind. We are also maintaining our support for the Freedom Pass so older and disabled residents can continue to travel freely and stay connected to their community.

Every day we hold the police to account. We have seen improvements, but we want more from them. That is why we are investing £5.5m more into our CCTV system and £4m into our own enforcement teams.



Councillor Kam Rai with award-winners at the Mayor's Community Awards

Our green borough continues to thrive. Air quality has improved significantly, we're investing £3m to revitalise our waterways and lakes, planting 1,000 new street trees and 20,000 trees in our parks and open spaces, and driving forward our nature conservation and climate strategies.

We haven't stopped lobbying for the funding we need to rebuild Broadmead Road Bridge; and we will rebuild it. In March we submitted a very strong bid to the government's Structures Fund, and we continue to engage with key partners such as Transport for London.

Being a local councillor is a reminder that we must stick together and how our focus must remain on Redbridge. After 12 years serving our borough, I am always proud when I think of just how much we've achieved together. By staying united we can deliver our joint vision of making Redbridge an even safer, cleaner, greener and fairer place and together we will do that.

As you'll see in this edition of Redbridge Life, we have much to celebrate in our borough and we're investing to make it even better. Thank you for playing your part in making Redbridge such a wonderful place to live, and by remaining together we can achieve so much more.

Councillor Kam Rai
Leader of Redbridge Council



Budget

2026/27



Redbridge's fight for fair funding pays off with £61.5m Government boost

Redbridge Council runs more than **400** services

A much-needed boost that brings real stability – though pressures continue

After more than a decade of financial uncertainty, Redbridge is set to receive a long-awaited uplift: £61.5 million in additional Government funding over the next three years.

It's the first meaningful increase in more than 14 years, and finally begins to recognise the borough's historic underfunding.

But while the uplift is significant, it doesn't solve everything. The increase of £61.5m will come over three years, and largely corrects past shortfalls rather than providing new investment. The council will continue to push for long-term, sustainable funding to protect essential services.

Cllr Kam Rai, Leader of Redbridge Council, said,

"For more than a decade, Redbridge has been expected to do more with less, with funding cut while demand for essential services - especially social care, housing and support for our most vulnerable residents - has continued to rise.

"We've worked tirelessly to protect the frontline services our communities rely on, and that's why in the 2025 resident survey, 75% of residents told us they're satisfied with how the council is run, and 84% told us they trust the council. At a time when many councils across the country have been forced to close libraries and children's centres, we've kept ours open - a direct result of the tough decisions we've taken and our determination to shield and even improve vital community services.

"We've also been independently ranked, by IMPOWER, as one of the top councils in London for our efficiency. We know we have more to do but we have used every penny wisely.

"We've never stopped fighting for fairer funding. We've been clear about the historic underinvestment in our borough and persistent in making our case to Government. That determination and sustained lobbying is finally paying off.

"In the past year, ministers have acknowledged the scale of the funding gap councils like ours have been forced to manage. As a result, Redbridge has secured £61.5m in additional grant funding over the next three years. This is a major win for our community.

"But years of underfunding can't be undone overnight. Because the government grant to us increases in stages over the next three years we have asked the Government for further financial support to bridge the gap. This request, which will allow the council to use capital, capital receipts and borrowing differently, has now been approved in principle by the Government, to the full amount. This is because they recognise that we have been historically underfunded and it will take time for us to fully receive our improved grant settlement.

"Whilst it is welcome that we have received additional money and support for our day-to-day spending, one of our most pressing priorities is securing funding from the Structures Fund to replace Broadmead Road bridge - a critical piece of infrastructure for our borough. I am delighted to say that we have submitted a very strong bid to the Department for Transport (DfT) and we look forward to hearing from them in the coming weeks and months. We won't stop making the case and we will continue to champion this at every level of Government."



How we're investing in Redbridge



Supporting vulnerable residents

£28.8m investment in Adult Social Care to meet rising demand and complexity

£13.9m to support residents facing homelessness

£4.6m for a Crisis & Resilience Fund to help the council manage rising costs and protect essential services

£900,000 extra income secured for residents by the Welfare Benefits Team



Improving homes and tackling homelessness

£57m for new council homes so more residents have a stable, secure home to live in and enjoy

£31.4m over five years to maintain, improve and modernise council homes

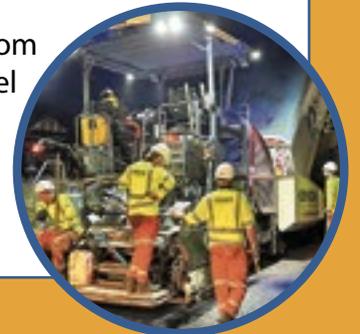


Transport, roads and infrastructure

£35m to improve streets, make walking and cycling safer, and upgrade crossings and cycle routes

£9.1m to provide **43,000** Freedom Passes, helping older residents travel freely and stay connected

£750,000 for new electric vehicle charging points



Safer communities

£5.5m to invest in and upgrade our 24/7 CCTV network, helping keep residents safe through a system directly linked to the police

£4m invested in Community Safety and Consumer Protection

£794,000 Government grant to help those experiencing homelessness, rough sleeping and domestic abuse

The Council is investing nearly **£1.3 million** to protect domestic abuse survivors and tackle violence against women and girls



Cleaner, greener neighbourhoods

£1m extra for street cleansing

£1.16m to invest in cleaner streets, greener spaces, and better public places - creating neighbourhoods residents can be proud of for years to come

£250,000 for new winter grit bins

Planting 1,000 street trees and **20,000** trees in our green spaces, while also creating new pocket parks for residents to enjoy



Leisure, culture and libraries

£37.6m to improve and build high-quality leisure and cultural facilities, including works at Kenneth More Theatre, alongside new, modern spaces for sport, fitness and community use

£11.5m to run and maintain leisure centres, libraries, cultural venues and community sports programmes

£302,000 for further improvements to Fairlop Waters

£150,000 for new pickleball courts



Broadmead Road Bridge

This is a priority, and we have submitted information and made our case for funding to the Department for Transport's Structures Fund. We continue to lobby Government for the vital investment needed to reopen the bridge.



Celebrating Redbridge's fantastic women, as part of this year's International Women's Day



Jo is a bin lorry driver, and currently drives Redbridge Council's food waste truck, which picks up food waste from 10,000 households, which is then converted into energy and biodiesel.

"I think women get to a certain age and they lose their confidence. It's hard to change your life. I was in a job for 28 years and I was in a cocoon."

But Jo wanted to do something different.

So, knowing she was a good and experienced car driver, at 51 she got her HGV licence. It took a few months, and she studied the theory part of the licence and had lessons on driving a lorry.

"It's different as the back kicks out as you go around a corner. So although you can drive a car, they need to teach you about driving lorries. You have to have your eyes out all the time, you've got to watch everywhere. Sometimes the road is blocked and you have to reverse out past parked cars, in the dark. But you've got your loaders, you're a team and they'll help you."

"They always go, 'You're clear, let's do it.'"

Jo loves being out and about all year, but even more so when the weather is bright.

"We had a beautiful summer last year, it was lovely. The loaders don't like the heat as much, but me as a driver, I'm alright. I get one side of the face tanned, one arm tanned and we're good to go."

Jo's advice for women thinking about applying for jobs that have traditionally been male dominated:

"I think go for it because I do believe workplaces have changed. Everyone here has been so nice, and there's always a good laugh. If I did it at 51 and changed my career at 52, I think anyone can do it. Have faith in yourself and there's always someone around to help you."



Mani Kohli, MBE, from Woodford Green is the owner of Khubsoorat Collection. She's run her successful business for decades, with shops in Forest Gate and her beautiful clothes have been worn by everyone from local people, Londoners, British actors, politicians and dignitaries. She's created costumes for films including Bend it Like Beckham, Amar Akbar and Tony and What's Love Got To Do With It. She is rooted in honouring where she hails from whilst constantly innovating her designs that balance heritage and modernity.

Mani says about the start of her business, **"I saw a gap in the market, in the late 70s, for smart Indo-western Asian wear. Starting a business is always challenging, as self-belief and confidence in the product has to be sold to oneself before approaching others. In the late 70s, it was a tough economy and to reach out to women with meagre resources and convince them to accept and buy, was a huge task. Raising capital for investment did not exist!"**

Mani, knowing clothing helps create identities for the wearer, chose fashion as her world. She says, **"In a highly competitive fashion**

environment, one has to stand tall in one's belief of the product they create. More so in the digital world we live in, where comparisons never stop. One has to step aside, evaluate the offering and steadily build a reputed market, which generates more business from recommendations. That will be one of the factors that will result in a profitable business."

Although very busy with her fashion brand and clothing stores, Mani also dedicates a significant amount of time to helping and supporting others. She recently returned from a trip to India, where she has been supporting the education of young women by building a girls' school.

Mani is a tremendous role model. **"I am deeply honoured to receive the MBE. This recognition, is not just for me, but for every woman who has to rebuild, reimagine and fight for her place. Being recognised for fashion, and for what it represents culturally is incredibly meaningful. I hope this encourages more women from diverse backgrounds to believe that their stories, creativity and resilience matters."**



Emma's story

Emma, from Redbridge, is a mum of two and a woman on a mission to help people through difficult times. She praises her foster mum, who gave her stability and love as she grew up, but it's Emma's drive, intelligence and warmth that has seen her work hard, study hard, and get a degree and career that will help other people who are in need of support.

Having studied psychology and counselling while raising her twins, Emma is working towards getting into counselling. She's building up her experience through volunteering and hoping to start her Master's degree this year to get even deeper insight and expertise.

Emma said, "I chose to study psychology and counselling degree because I wanted to understand people on a deeper level and to provide support to those who are going through a difficult time.

"I am most proud of how I've transformed my life despite coming from a challenging background. Raising my twin sons the way I wish I had been raised, is something I hold very close to my heart. Balancing work, study and parenting has been tough but also incredibly rewarding to create a better future for my family."

Reflecting on International Women's Day, Emma talks about the women who have inspired her. "There are a few women who inspire me deeply. My foster mum Geraldine who has dedicated 27+ years to caring for young children, showing incredible commitment, love and kindness. My nan is another inspiration; her strength and resilience through all the tough times is truly remarkable. Lastly my sister Jade whose love and support have been a constant source of comfort and motivation for me."

Emma is full of encouragement of other women. "To younger women, believe in yourself and your potential. It's okay to take your time to find the right path and don't be afraid to ask for help or seek out opportunities. So stay determined and keep pushing forward."

Emma recognises it's up to all of us to support women, particularly younger women to have great opportunities. "Supporting women means creating safe spaces where their voices are heard and experiences are valued. Small acts of kindness, mentorships and opportunities to grow can make a big difference. Together we can build a community where every woman feels empowered to pursue her dreams."



Eliyah's story

For nearly a decade, Eliyah Qureshi has led Barkingside Art Club, creating one of Redbridge's most inclusive and supportive creative spaces for children and young people. With more than 20 years' experience as a visual artist, she has dedicated her career to inclusive arts engagement, particularly for those with SEND, autism, ADHD and mental health challenges.

Since 2017, Barkingside Art Club has offered long-term, relationship-based support that families rely on. "For many of our young people, it isn't just an activity," Eliyah explains. "It's a trusted, safe space where they feel understood and valued."

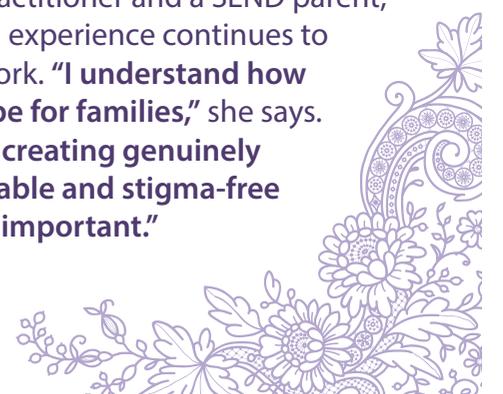
Many young people who joined as children are now mentoring others through the Creative Ambassador pathway, building confidence, leadership and accredited creative skills.

Seeing gaps in local provision, Eliyah established the borough's first SEND-only girls' Friday session. "There were no consistent, safe social spaces for SEND girls to connect, create and build friendships. So, we built one together."

Her commitment to visibility and inclusion has led to borough-wide campaigns such as Light Up for Inclusion and Empathy for Infinity, as well as public murals and creative solutions to exhibition barriers. "Visibility matters. I wanted every young artist's work to be seen, even when traditional spaces weren't available."

Eliyah has also founded networks to strengthen Redbridge's cultural community, including the Redbridge Women Network and Redbridge Creative Network, helping local women and artists connect and collaborate. "My aim has always been to bring communities together rather than work in isolation."

As both a practitioner and a SEND parent, Eliyah's lived experience continues to guide her work. "I understand how hard it can be for families," she says. "That's why creating genuinely inclusive, stable and stigma-free spaces is so important."





Our borough is full of interesting and wonderful people who do some really great things, 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 community hero Edward Hickman

For more than 40 years Edward Hickman devoted his life to being a teacher in Redbridge, helping shape young minds in the borough. **"Being a teacher is a calling. It's something I absolutely loved and enjoyed. It gave me the chance to give back to my local community by using my skills and knowledge to make a positive impact on young people in the borough."** said Edward.



Edward coming back from a litter pick

Following retirement Edward's commitment to the local community continued through his efforts to help look after his neighbourhood. His chance to continue making an impact came in the form of Redbridge Village Community Group, and since becoming a member he has been on the go with litter picking, reporting local street scene issues that need fixing and helping bring neighbours together for community activity days and events.

Edward has lived in Redbridge for over 56 years.

The married 72-year-old, from Falmouth Gardens, said: "When I retired from teaching there was a huge void to fill. In terms of helping people and being part of the community, I really missed being able to make an impact or support local people. I also wanted a sense of purpose again so looked towards community focused work to make meaningful use of my time."

The father-of-one, has been heavily involved in local litter picking efforts individually as well as organising an annual community litter pick in his neighbourhood.

The now well-established annual litter pick in and around Falmouth Gardens has seen hundreds of large bags of litter being collected over the last six years.

"The annual litter picking group has grown over the years and we now have a core cohort of regular locals taking part. I really couldn't do it without them," said Edward.

"We also get fantastic support from the Council who provide the equipment and collect all the bags of rubbish we end up with after the litter pick. I get a great

sense of satisfaction and feeling of reward from being able to help keep the local area tidy."

Edward also litter picks throughout the year individually.

Speaking candidly about littering he continued: **"Littering is a really selfish thing to do and can make a nice place look tatty. We all have a responsibility to look after the areas we live in if we want to see our neighbourhoods thrive."**

Alongside his efforts to keep his neighbourhood tidy, Edward has also been instrumental in helping bring local people together through his activities with Redbridge Village Community Group. Edward is one of the group members who volunteered to help run a successful community picnic day, which has since turned into a regular event over the years.

He added: **"Bringing people together creates strong community bonds and extra support networks for local people. It's great for mental health, a fantastic way to make new friends and makes you feel like you are part of something. Helping organise local activities for local people is hugely rewarding."**



Group litter pick led by Edward

COMMUNITY IN ACTION

People stepping up for Redbridge

Across Redbridge, council teams work every day to deliver the things that matter most, from safer streets to cleaner neighbourhoods. And across the borough, residents and community-based staff are stepping up too, giving their time, care and energy to support one another. Together, they are helping to build stronger, kinder communities and making Redbridge a place we can all be proud to call home.

Our digital campaign, Redbridge in Action is a celebration of the positive work that is happening, every day in Redbridge.

Many Redbridge staff are deeply embedded in the communities they serve and consistently go the extra mile for residents. Their work is not just about delivering services, but about building trust, offering support and making a real difference in people's lives.



Paula Purcell is one of those people. As Team Manager for the Reach Out Domestic Abuse Service at Redbridge Council, Paula leads vital work supporting some of the borough's most vulnerable residents. This year, her commitment was recognised nationally when she was nominated for Social Worker of the Year in the Practice Leadership and Management category and went on to win the silver award.

"I was absolutely thrilled," Paula says. "Not only was it lovely for me personally, but it was really lovely for Redbridge as well. It's a reflection of the work we do here and the impact it has."

Paula Purcell, Team Manager, Reach Out Domestic Abuse Service



Maureen, park volunteer

Beyond council services, Redbridge also benefits from a thriving voluntary community, with residents giving their time to support local spaces and initiatives. Park volunteers play a vital role in caring for our green spaces and creating welcoming environments for everyone.

Maureen, a park volunteer, describes why she gets involved: "Everyone's really happy when you turn up. It's just a lovely thing to do, especially when the weather's nice. You can really appreciate being in such a lovely environment."



Across the borough, groups are finding new ways to connect residents and tackle isolation. Mind, Body and Soul is one such initiative, offering weekly women's and men's sessions at the Ifford Engagement Hub.

The women's group meets every Wednesday, welcoming locals from all backgrounds to exercise, learn new skills, get creative and share recipes.

The men's group gathers every Friday in the same friendly space.

To find out more about these sessions, please visit <https://engage.redbridge.gov.uk/mbs>

These stories are just a snapshot of Community in Action across Redbridge. Whether through professional roles or voluntary efforts, people are stepping up every day: strengthening connections, supporting neighbours and helping our borough thrive.

Keeping Redbridge clean and tidy

Cracking down on the small minority who refuse to play their part



Redbridge is home to award-winning parks, outstanding schools, and vibrant high streets - a borough we can all be proud of and one we should protect.

Thanks to our hardworking street cleansing teams, reported fly-tips are cleared at record speed - often within hours - helping to keep our streets clean and welcoming for everyone. We also continue to offer free bulky waste collections, a service many councils have stopped providing, and we're fortunate to have a number of recycling centres available locally to make responsible disposal easy.

Teams across the council have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to track down offenders, clean up hotspots, and take firm action against those who think the rules don't apply to them. With all these services in place, there's no excuse for the small minority who choose not to dispose of their waste correctly. We're taking firm action to tackle offences quickly - supporting the overwhelming majority who care about keeping Redbridge beautiful.

Below is a snapshot of recent enforcement activity across the borough:

Councillor Khayer Chowdhury, Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety, said,



"The vast majority of our residents care about their local areas and work hard to keep our borough clean. But people are rightly fed up with the small number who think they can ignore the rules. We're stepping up enforcement, increasing patrols, and using every tool available to hold offenders to account. Redbridge deserves the best - and we're determined to deliver it."

Barkingside

A plot of land owned by a large supermarket on Civic Way, Barkingside has now been fully cleared following action by North Area Neighbourhood Enforcement officers. After repeated waste issues, officers issued enforcement notices and a Fixed Penalty Notice, prompting the landowner to carry out a deep clean.

The landowner is now working with the council to put long-term measures in place to stop waste being dumped. This case shows that we take firm action against fly-tipping, and that even large businesses are not exempt.

BEFORE



AFTER

Kensington Gardens, Ilford

Officers encountered another untidy front garden while on patrol.

After speaking with the resident and advising that a Community Protection Warning (CPW) would be issued, a follow up visit confirmed the garden had been fully tidied.

BEFORE



AFTER

Newbury Park

A Watford resident has been fined £600 for failing to meet his residential duty of care after handing his waste to an unlicensed carrier, who later fly-tipped it at Aldborough Hall Nature Reserve.

He was also issued a CPW requiring him to remove and legally dispose of the waste from the land - costing him an additional £384.

BEFORE



AFTER

In 2025, we issued **488** Fixed Penalty Notices for fly-tipping offences - with fines of **£1,000**

Reporting fly-tips

Everyone can play a part in keeping Redbridge clean. Reporting fly tips is quick and straightforward, use the Report It page <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/report-it> Or report issues on the go via the Love Clean Streets app.

Major dawn raids across the Borough lead to **nine arrests**

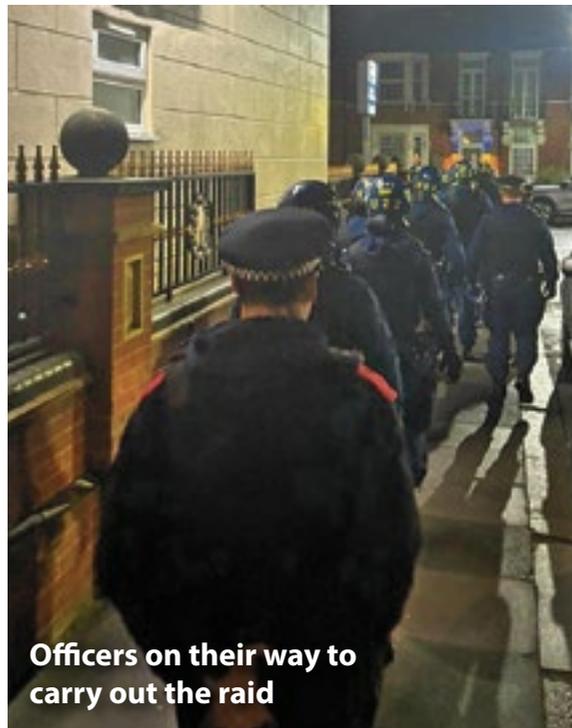
SAFER
Redbridge

Police and council partnership delivers results in operation

Nine people were arrested in a series of coordinated dawn raids across the borough late last year, following many months of long investigation into drug dealing in the area.

The early morning warrants were led by the police as part of their extensive work to tackle the supply of Class A drugs. While fighting crime is the responsibility of the police, we're doing our part as a council to support them. This includes investing in CCTV and Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras that help officers track offenders, creating a dedicated police hub in Woodford to strengthen joint working and having our enforcement officers support them on various operations. Information shared by residents reporting criminal activity was invaluable during this operation. Officers seized suspected Class A substances, cash and mobile phones as part of their investigation.

The raids involved officers from the Territorial Support Group and Redbridge Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, who carried out targeted warrants across the borough.



Officers on their way to carry out the raid

Superintendent Clare McCarthy, Redbridge Safer Neighbourhood Teams Lead, said,



"These arrests mark an important step, but our work doesn't stop here. We are committed to driving forward a problem solving approach that tackles the underlying issues behind crime and anti social behaviour."



Councillor Kam Rai, Leader of Redbridge Council, with police at the scene of a raid

Councillor Kam Rai, Leader of Redbridge Council, said,



"Seeing the early morning raid first-hand was a reminder of the determination of the Metropolitan Police and the council's community safety team to keep Redbridge safe.

"We are continuing to invest in community safety in Redbridge. There's more to do, but in partnership with the police - and with local people reporting issues that need attention - together, we can ensure Redbridge remains a safe borough for all of us to call home."

Keeping Redbridge Safe

The late 2025 raids form part of a wider partnership approach to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour across the borough. This includes:

- Targeted operations in crime hotspots
- Intelligence led policing
- Joint patrols with council enforcement teams
- Continued investment in community safety
- Support for residents to report concerns quickly and easily

How you can help

Residents play a vital role in keeping neighbourhoods safe. If you witness crime or antisocial behaviour, you can report it through:

- 999 in an emergency
- 101 for non-emergencies
- The Report It page on the Redbridge Council website
- Crimestoppers for anonymous reporting

ZERO TOLERANCE ZERO TOLERANCE ZERO TOLERANCE

Bin collection dates

Easter and Spring Bank Holidays

There will be a change to your normal household waste and recycling collection days over Easter and the May Bank Holiday periods so don't forget to jot down your revised collection dates.

OUR STREETS
Help us create great streets and neighbourhoods



EASTER

Due on	Collected on
Friday 3 April Good Friday	No change
Monday 6 April	Tuesday 7 April
Tuesday 7 April	Wednesday 8 April
Wednesday 8 April	Thursday 9 April
Thursday 9 April	Friday 10 April
Friday 10 April	Saturday 11 April

MAY BANK HOLIDAY

Due on	Collected on
Monday 4 May	Tuesday 5 May
Tuesday 5 May	Wednesday 6 May
Wednesday 6 May	Thursday 7 May
Thursday 7 May	Friday 8 May
Friday 8 May	Saturday 9 May

Chigwell Road Reuse and Recycling Centre:

If you're having a spring clear out, did you know many items can be recycled or reused via the Chigwell Road Reuse and Recycling Centre? Don't forget to check opening hours over the bank holiday period:

<https://eastlondonwaste.gov.uk/chigwell-road/>

END OF MAY BANK HOLIDAY

Due on	Collected on
Monday 25 May	Tuesday 26 May
Tuesday 26 May	Wednesday 27 May
Wednesday 27 May	Thursday 28 May
Thursday 28 May	Friday 29 May
Friday 29 April	Saturday 30 May



Free fortnightly Green Garden Waste Collections are back

Week 1 Garden Waste Collection:

Monday 2 March to Friday 13 November

Week 2 Garden Waste Collection:

Monday 9 March to Friday 20 November

We will collect up to **5 sacks** of your green garden waste on each collection. Please ensure the sacks are left open so that the garden waste is visible.



We're making lakes in Redbridge parks vibrant, cleaner and healthier

Three popular lakes in the borough have been given a major boost through a programme of council-led improvement works

The recent works at Long Water Lake in Valentines Park, Goodmayes Lake, and South Park Lake are part of a £3m investment package - over three years - to improve the quality of water in park lakes and waterways in Redbridge, as well as support wildlife preservation and boost local biodiversity around park lakes.

Redbridge's park lakes and ponds are home to wildlife and give local people a place to relax and enjoy nature.

Over time lakes and ponds can become shallow due to the build-up of silt and debris, reducing water quality and affecting local ecosystems, which is why the council is undertaking the essential works needed to restore and protect the borough's lakes.

It will also mean a much safer and improved environment for ducks, geese and other wildlife who rely on the waters in the lakes.

The recent works saw approximately 2025 tonnes of silt removed from across the three lakes - the equivalent of 113 fully loaded double-decker buses!



Lake being dredged and de-silted

Joint flood and resurfacing project promises eco-friendly results for Clayhall locals



One of the recently installed rain gardens in Clayhall

Following the impact of flash flooding in Clayhall in 2021 we've been working closely with the local community and partner organisations to reduce flood risks in the area, with our most recent works taking place at Heathcote Avenue.

Two new Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) in the form of rain gardens are being installed at Heathcote Avenue, adding to the existing 54 rain gardens and other flood reduction schemes already active across the borough.

Rain gardens are an eco-friendly water drainage system featuring plants, shrubs, and other materials inside the rain garden, which are designed to help absorb rainwater and drain it away slowly to stop Thames Water sewer systems becoming overwhelmed - one of the primary causes of localised flooding in Redbridge.

In addition to the rain gardens, Heathcote Avenue is also set to get an upgrade with footway and road resurfacing works to create smoother road journeys for locals.

The flood reduction and resurfacing works are being coordinated to take place together and both are being delivered with a view to meeting targets set out under Redbridge's Climate Action Plan.

Both initiatives will feature the use of eco-friendly materials, technology and machinery throughout to reduce carbon emissions and attempt to deliver a net-zero emissions outcome for the combined projects.

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



"It is great to see these rain gardens combined with resurfacing work using innovative low carbon materials and equipment. This is delivering improvements for residents as well as significant carbon savings of over 60 tonnes."

Transforming lives through adult education



“As a mother of two young children, arriving in the country from Albania, I lacked self-esteem, confidence and felt isolated.

“Joining Redbridge Institute has changed my life”, explains Brunilda.

Redbridge resident, Brunilda started her learning journey by joining a childcare course at Redbridge Institute of Adult Education.

“Before starting at Redbridge Institute, I was extremely nervous. Simple tasks like speaking on the phone or requesting a GP appointment had to be done by my husband, because I felt my English wasn’t good enough. I struggled to even leave my house.

“I soon realised, I needed to do something for myself!

“Now, not only has the learning helped me secure a permanent position as a key worker

at a local nursery, it has given me the grounding for a career in Early Years education. My language skills have improved tenfold and I’m now able to hold conversations and speak confidently.

“It has taught me that if you work hard and put your mind to something then you can achieve anything. I want that to be a positive example for my own children.

“I am grateful for the support of everyone at Redbridge Institute”.



Find out how you can transform your life

www.redbridge-iae.ac.uk

Redbridge Institute
Gaysham Avenue
Gants Hill
Ilford
IG2 6TD

RIAE Redbridge Institute
of Adult Education
Transforming lives through adult education

Free* Adult Courses

Get job ready & unlock
your future today!

*subject to eligibility

**Enrolling now
for April start**

www.redbridge-iae.ac.uk



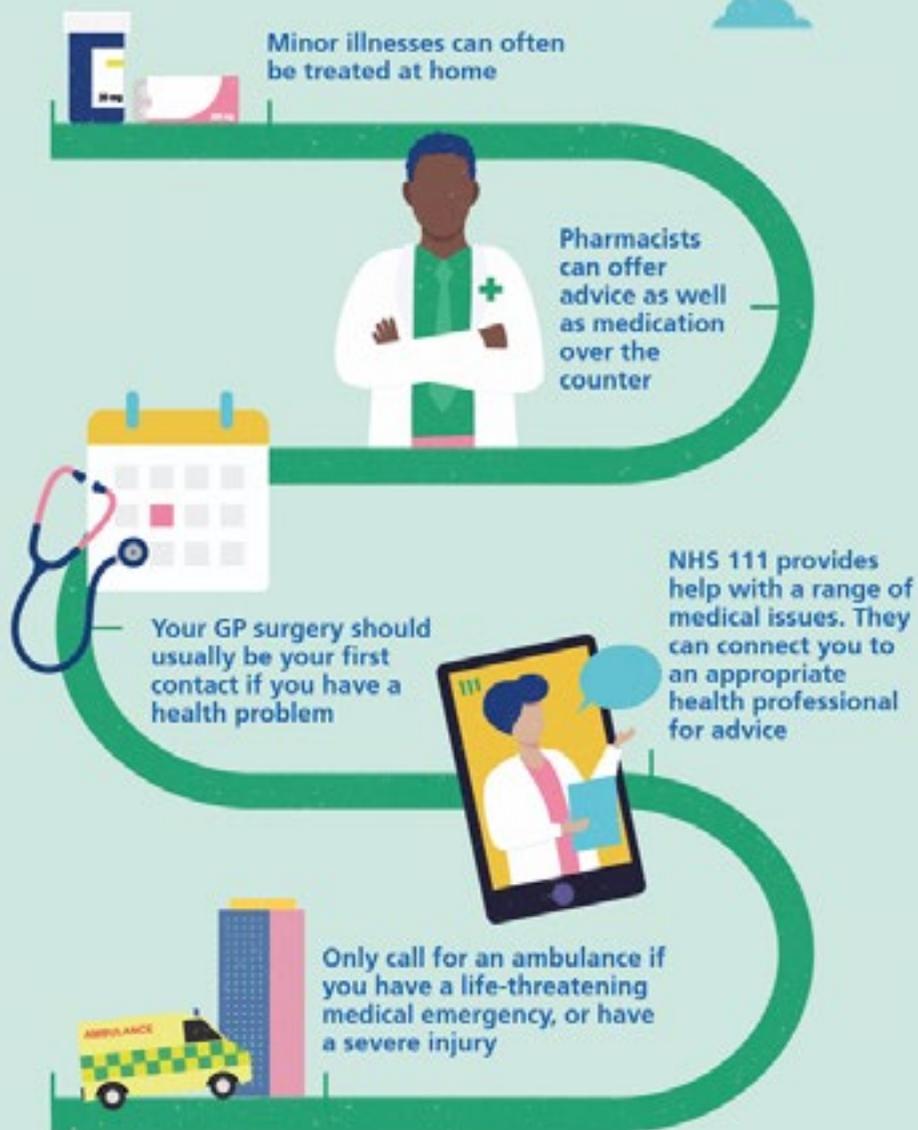
Childcare

English

Maths

Teaching Assistant

Your route to urgent help



If you are overwhelmed and feel you can't cope, you can contact your local mental health crisis line.

Call NHS 111, select option 2.

24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Unwell child?

High temperatures, sore throats, coughs, aches and sprains are common and can be treated at home.

Your local pharmacist or your GP can help.



Scan me



Download the NHS App and turn notifications on



Helping Redbridge's young people make positive health choices



With tempting deals and quick service, it's no surprise that fast food is popular with young people, with around a third of secondary school pupils eating it every week. That's why the Redbridge Public Health team is working hard to help students build healthier habits that last.

Working with Ark Isaac Newton Academy, the team launched a new School Engagement Project called 'Fast Food Flip' aimed at Year 7 students. Local data shows that by Year 6, obesity levels rise sharply (41% compared to 37% in reception), so helping children make good choices early on is key.

With the help of MasterChef: The Professionals contestant Chef Kuljit Singh and the local NHS Health Improvement Team, they've produced fun, easy-to-follow recipe videos and hosted a live

cooking demonstration in the school. Students learned chopping skills, and even made their own healthy chicken wrap, proof that quick food can still be nutritious!

Elvis Wang, Head of Art & Design, said, "The children thoroughly enjoyed the day and continued talking about it long after the programme ended, which is a real testament to the energy, expertise and enthusiasm brought to the workshops."

This project is running alongside Let's Move, another programme, delivered in partnership with Ilford Muslim Society, which supports school-aged children to stay active, through fun, movement-focused sessions. The project also includes upcoming cooking and nutrition sessions, designed to help families learn affordable and

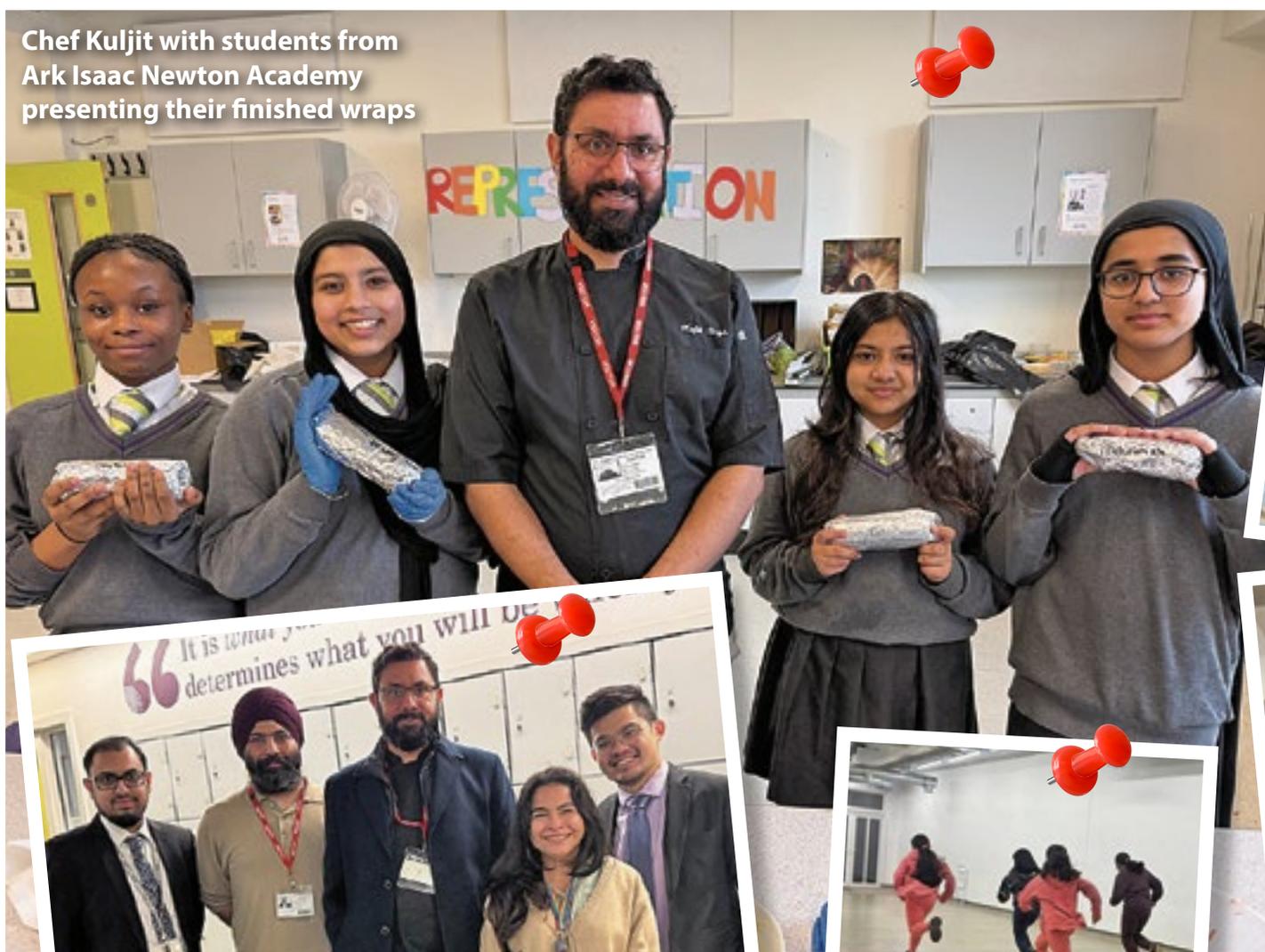
healthy recipes they can recreate at home. Let's Move aims to give children the tools they need to lead healthier, more balanced lives.

Chef Kuljit has also filmed a short series of healthy fast-food alternatives for families to try at home, helping young people make healthier choices beyond the classroom.

 You can watch these by searching 'Chef Kuljit' on YouTube or by scanning the QR code



Chef Kuljit with students from Ark Isaac Newton Academy presenting their finished wraps



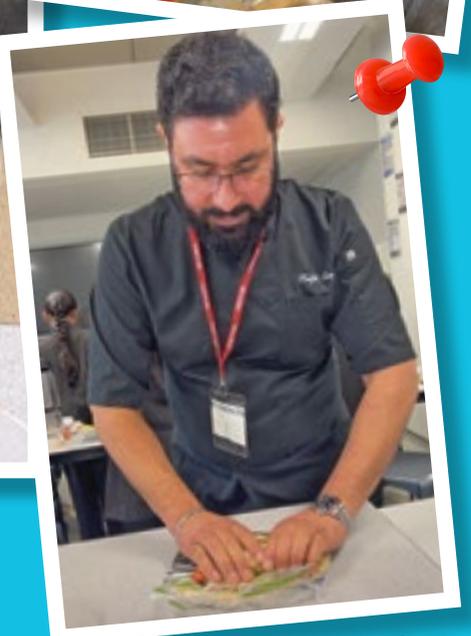
The students creating their wraps



Chef Kuljit and his sous chef with teachers from the school



Children exercising at a Let's Move session at Ilford Muslim Society



Chef Kuljit demonstrating how to close the wrap

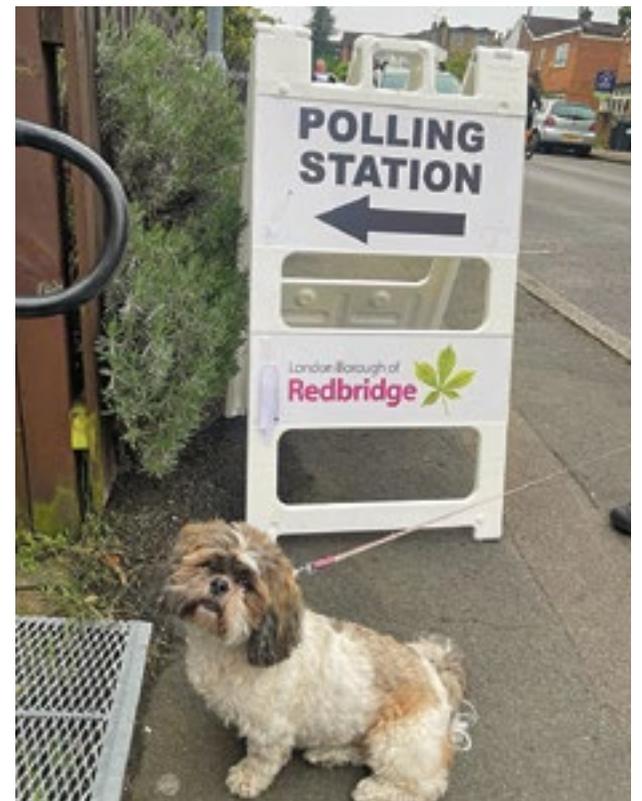
Voting in May 2026: Ten things you need to know

Local elections are coming up - make sure you're prepared

The Local Elections will take place on 7 May 2026. When you vote in local elections, you're voting for councillors to represent your ward, or local area. Councillors oversee the work of the council and set its strategies and priorities.

Here are ten things you need to know about voting in the local elections this year:

- 1 Make sure you're registered by **20 April** so you can vote on **7 May**. You only need to register again if your name, address or nationality has changed. Register at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).
- 2 Bring **photo ID** with you on the day. Passports, driving licences and Blue Badges all count. Full list at [gov.uk/how-to-vote/photo-id-youll-need](https://www.gov.uk/how-to-vote/photo-id-youll-need).
- 3 No ID? You can apply for a **free Voter Authority Certificate** by **5pm, 28 April** at [gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate](https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate).
- 4 If you'd rather vote from home, apply for a **postal vote** by **5pm, 21 April** at [gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](https://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote).
- 5 If you can't get to the polling station, you can ask someone you trust to vote for you. Apply for a **proxy vote** by **5pm, 28 April** at [gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote](https://www.gov.uk/apply-proxy-vote).
- 6 At the polling station, staff will check your ID. You may need to briefly remove face coverings, and a privacy screen will be available.
- 7 No photos are allowed inside.
- 8 Please remember that voting must take place in secret. To protect everyone's right to vote freely, only one voter is allowed in a polling booth at a time. Ask polling staff if you need assistance.
- 9 Find your polling station at [wheredoivote.co.uk](https://www.wheredoivote.co.uk).
- 10 Polling stations are open **7am-10pm**. If you're in the queue by 10pm, you'll still get to vote.



DogsAtPollingStations

Tag us in your polling-day pup photos so we can share them on our social media channels.

More information on all these points is available at www.redbridge.gov.uk/voting-and-elections

Repeat Prescriptions? Only order what you need.

By Dr Anil Mehta, Local GP and Clinical Director for Redbridge at NHS North East London

If you take regular medicines, you'll know how easy it is to tick "re-order" on your repeat prescription. But before you do this, it's worth having a quick look at what you already have at home. If you still have enough medicine to get you through, you don't need to order more just yet.

Only ordering what you need helps keep you safe. Having lots of extra medicines at home increases the chance they'll go out of date, meaning they may no longer work as they should.

" Ask your GP practice for a medication review."

If you've stopped taking a medicine or aren't sure you still need it, ask your GP practice for a medication review. This review is to make sure everything on your prescription is right for you.



"Unused medicines cost around £300 million every year."

It might feel like a small thing, but it genuinely makes a big difference. Across the NHS, unused medicines cost around £300 million every year. Ordering only what you need helps reduce this waste and helps prevent shortages for others who rely on the same medicines.

A quick check before you re-order is all it takes. When it comes to repeat prescriptions, only order what you need.

A mother to many: MBE awarded to Redbridge foster carer

Geraldine, a wonderful foster carer who takes care of children through Redbridge Council, was recognised in this year's King's Honours with an MBE



Geraldine and Emma, one of her now grown-up foster children

"When I welcome children into my home for the first time, I say, 'I am really happy that you are here.'"

What a warm and beautiful thing to hear for a nervous child if they're feeling unsure in a brand new home and life situation.

Geraldine has been fostering with Redbridge Council for more than 25 years and has looked after children of all ages, some for a short time, and some for a number of years. It's clear when you visit smiley and open-hearted Geraldine, that she is still in touch with and continues to support many of the children she's had in her care, and that she is proud of them all.

"They all worked so hard. And just seeing everyone fulfil the potential they could reach - it's just seeing them achieve what I know they can achieve, and it just makes me very happy."

Foster carers in Redbridge have a dedicated social worker to support them through their fostering arrangements, to answer questions, and give advice where needed. Sometimes it's as simple as getting advice on how to celebrate festivals from different faiths.

"I'm Christian, so I celebrate Christmas. I haven't had a child who's come into my care who hasn't liked to get a Christmas present, but we don't call them Christmas presents if they're of a different faith. We just say, 'That's your present pile.'"

"It's not hard to find out how to celebrate their special days, and after a few years you get to know different religions and different traditions. When I know that I'm going to foster a child who has a different faith to myself, I make it a priority to learn about their beliefs. I reach out to another foster carer, my supervising social worker or a neighbour of that particular faith to gain more of an understanding, so I can fully support the child and celebrate their faith with them."



Geraldine with Emma (left) and Joana (right)

We recently also recognised Geraldine in our annual Fostering Awards, for her 25 plus years' dedication to young people in Redbridge. She attended the event with one of her now grown-up foster children, who studied hard as a teenager living with Geraldine, and with her

foster parent's encouragement, she went to Open University after having her own children and gained a degree in psychology and counselling.

"I am incredibly proud of each and every child I have fostered and what they have achieved. One of my young people is about to finish their Master's in physiotherapy and another is in her second year at university, studying Psychology. I have another young person who is doing extremely well at school and is considering her GCSE options at the moment.

"The children I have fostered have an incredible relationship with each other, seeing each other as an extended family which is what I promote all the time."

We asked Geraldine if she has any advice for people in Redbridge who have been considering fostering a child with us. She said, "Every child who enters your home brings their own unique story, hopes and dreams. As a foster carer, you don't need to change who you are, but remember, a child shouldn't be expected to change overnight. It takes time, love and patience. Your role is to create a safe space where they can feel accepted, understood, and valued for who they truly are."

Thank you, Geraldine, for everything you have done for so many children in Redbridge.



Geraldine receives her award from Leader of the Council, Cllr Kam Rai and Claire Hamilton, Chief Executive of the Council

Business Spotlight: Celebrating Redbridge's diverse business community

Local enterprises showcasing the borough's creativity, heritage and global reach

Redbridge continues to show that the borough is a place where entrepreneurs can innovate, grow and build long standing relationships with their community. With global facing manufacturers, creative independents and long established family firms flourishing, our business landscape reflects the diversity and ambition that make it a dynamic place to live and work.

Premier Security Ballistic & Blast Ltd

Operating from Hainault Business Park, Premier Security Ballistic & Blast Ltd has grown from a three person team into a major UK supplier of high security doors, windows and curtain walling systems used by clients across the world. Under Managing Director Neil Johns, the company continues to expand its specialist offer, including a new £150,000 waterjet cutting division.

Neil credits Redbridge as a practical and strategic base for the business: **"The superb network of roads and rail services into Hainault makes it the perfect place for us."**

With a global customer network, accessibility is crucial. As Neil explains: **"Our business guests and suppliers have no issues whatsoever, which is vital for us."** Premier's continued growth reinforces its important role within the borough's thriving manufacturing and industrial sector.



Premier MD Neil Johns (left) and Operations Director Lewis Sinclair with their prestigious Metropolitan Police Service Award



<https://premier-ssl.com>



Heron's Nest

Heron's Nest in South Woodford has become a popular destination for handcrafted cakes created for weddings, parties and all celebrations. With 12 years in the industry, owner Mevish specialises in contemporary designs, vegan cakes and options for a range of allergies – even at short notice.

She says: **"The best thing about having a business in Redbridge are the customers, they are so supportive and many of them come back to us for every occasion."**

Personal relationships are central to her work: **"It's beautiful to build relationships with our customers, many of whom we have been on a journey with from their wedding cakes, to children's baptism or christening cakes to their first birthdays."**

Her advice to new entrepreneurs is clear: **"Do your homework and provide the local community with a niche product."**



<https://heronsnest.co.uk>

Posner Interiors

A South Woodford institution since 1952, Posner Interiors has served generations with fabrics, curtains and bespoke window treatments. The business values Redbridge's unique balance: **"We are close enough to central London, to attract commuters and near enough to some green spaces which gives it a great balance of lifestyle."**

Their advice for new businesses is rooted in decades of experience: **"The ones which stay understand the area, what people are looking for and connect with the community."**



<https://www.posnerinteriors.com>



Formally recognised by UNICEF UK!

Redbridge becomes the first area in England to achieve this recognition



In Redbridge, we believe every child should grow up feeling valued, heard and supported. Becoming a Child Friendly Borough isn't a badge or a project for us – it's a long-standing commitment rooted in our community and shaped by local children themselves.

For years, we've been working across the borough to put children's rights at the heart of how we make decisions. That means listening closely to what young people tell us about their everyday experiences – the places they spend time, the services they

use, and the hopes they have for their future. Their voices are helping to shape a borough where every child feels safe, welcome and able to thrive.

This is a collective effort. Schools, families, local organisations, community groups and the council are all working side-by-side to make Redbridge a place where children's rights guide how we design services, create opportunities and improve our neighbourhoods. It's about building a borough where children aren't just spoken for – they're part of the conversation.

And as we move forward, we're celebrating the creativity, leadership and insight of young people across Redbridge. Their ideas, energy and honesty are helping us grow a borough that recognises children as active citizens with something meaningful to say.

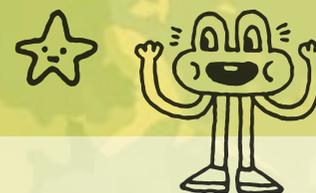
Together, we're creating a Redbridge that children are proud to grow up in – a borough shaped by their ideas, strengthened by their involvement and committed to putting them first.

What do our young people think?

Valerie, from Redbridge's Young Panel of Experts, said,

"My experience of being part of the Child Friendly Redbridge (CFR) journey has been really enriching and rewarding. I attended CFR meetings for well over 2 years before Redbridge's CFR accreditation assessment period by UNICEF and at every single meeting I have appreciated the chance to not only voice my opinion on issues affecting children in Redbridge but also the opportunity to make friends with other young people and meet others passionate about improving the lives of children in the borough.

I have many hopes and dreams for children in this borough that are equally applicable to my hopes and dreams for children across the country and the globe, but a few would be the eradication of violence against women and girls and greater support for disadvantaged children who may be overlooked both publicly and privately, such as asylum-seeking young people (including unaccompanied minors), young people who experience period poverty, and homeless young people."



Children's rights – did you know children have legal rights? They include:



- The right to be treated fairly and without discrimination
- The right to have their best interests put first
- The right to express their views and be listened to
- The right to relax, play and take part in cultural activities

Find out more about children's rights <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/childfriendly>



20 Examples of what we did to become a Child Friendly Borough

- 1 Stopped new fast-food shops from opening within 400m of schools.
- 2 Made a map that shows young people where to get mental health support
- 3 Created School Streets to make it safer and cleaner to walk to school.
- 4 Set up Child Friendly Redbridge Ambassadors so young people can help make decisions.
- 5 Worked with thousands of local children to hear what matters most to them
- 6 Supported the youth council so young people can share ideas with leaders
- 7 Helped young people point out places where they don't feel safe, so we can fix them.
- 8 Ran sessions where young people could talk openly about mental health
- 9 Supported creative projects run by children and young people.
- 10 Improved parks and public spaces using ideas from young people.
- 11 Listened to young people to help design better health services.
- 12 Taught staff about children's rights so they understand how to support young people properly.
- 13 Worked closely with schools, police, health teams and community groups to help children.
- 14 Used feedback from children to make local services easier to use.
- 15 Created campaigns that speak to young people in a way that makes sense to them.
- 16 Made walking and cycling safer to help children travel more safely and confidently.
- 17 Built children's rights into important council decisions.
- 18 Supported youth-led events so young people could talk about issues they care about.
- 19 Put information about activities and support for young people in one easy-to-find place.
- 20 Celebrated the achievements of local children and young people to show how valued they are.



John Bramston Primary pupils enjoyed a visit with Thomas at Hainault Forest, as a thank you for the ideas they had that helped create the Child Friendly Redbridge programme

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

"This is a proud moment for our borough. This achievement belongs to our children and young people, whose voices have guided us every step of the way, and to the partners and organisations who have been dedicated to upholding children's rights with us over recent years.

"However, this recognition is not the end of the journey, it just marks the beginning of our next chapter as we work to make sure that every child in our borough has the best childhood possible."



COOL!



See how children from John Bramston Primary School describe being part of a UNICEF Gold Rights Respecting School, originally filmed for World Children's Day, by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://youtu.be/uMk1-53aDI>



working towards
child friendly
Redbridge



What's on this spring?

Enjoy events, activities and days out across the borough this season

Spring is the perfect time to get out and enjoy everything Redbridge has to offer. From outdoor activities and cultural events to family fun and local markets, there's plenty happening across the borough over the coming months.



Arts, culture and libraries

Enjoy exhibitions, performances, workshops and talks taking place in libraries and community venues.



Redbridge Outdoor Arts

Sat 20 June Ken Aston Square, Barkingside
Sun 21 June Ilford Town Centre

Tech Ilford

13 June Redbridge Central Library

Find out more by visiting:
visionrcl.org.uk/events

Or scan the QR code



Active spring

Take part in outdoor fitness sessions, guided walks and sports activities for all ages and abilities.



Find out more by visiting:

visionrcl.org.uk/events/wellbeing-walks

Or scan the QR code



Family fun and school holidays

Megamix is back! The programme was created to give all children in Redbridge access to new experiences they might have had to travel outside the borough for. Enjoy fun, low-cost activities for ages 5+, including films, swim and splash sessions, and exciting events.



Mon 30 March – Fri 10 April

Find out more by visiting:
visionrcl.org.uk/megamix

Or scan the QR code



LONDON'S NO.1 FOR VALUE FAMILY FUN FAIR

OPEN WEEKENDS, SCHOOL & BANK HOLIDAYS

KIDZ WORLD

COME CELEBRATE *Everyone Welcome*

EID WITH US

First Eid
Fri 20th Mar
Sun 22nd Mar

Second Eid
Thurs 28th May
Sun 31st May

FAMILY WRISTBAND FAIR

SATURDAY 28 MARCH TO SUNDAY 7 JUNE

PAY ONE PRICE £14.99 PER PERSON PER SESSION

NON RIDING WRISTBAND ENTRY £1

FREE UNLIMITED RIDES ON ALL RIDES AND INFLATABLES

SESSION TIMES: 1PM-4.30PM / 4PM-7.45PM

FAMILY TOKEN FAIR

SATURDAY 28 MARCH TO SUNDAY 12 APRIL

FREE ENTRY 12PM-6PM

THIS IS A TOKEN OPERATED FUN FAIR NO CASH ACCEPTED ON RIDES
1 TOKEN: £1.20 10 TOKENS: £10
TOKENS ON SALE AT THE CASH DESK

Great News For All:
DUE TO POPULAR DEMAND WE WILL BE COMING BACK FOR MORE FUN AT FAIRLOP

SATURDAY 23 MAY TO SUNDAY 31 MAY

VALENTINES PARK

MELBOURNE ROAD ENTRANCE IGI 4SD

FAIRLOP WATERS

BARKINGSIDE IG6 3HN

HOTLINE 07956 245531 ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ [KIDZWORLD](https://www.facebook.com/KIDZWORLD) ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ www.parnhamfunfairs.co.uk

Investing in Redbridge

Redbridge is delivering a major programme of improvements across the borough - strengthening the leisure, cultural and community spaces residents rely on. From essential safety works to brand-new facilities, these projects show our commitment to creating modern, welcoming places for current and future generations.

Fullwell Cross Leisure Centre

A recent building assessment identified issues with the pool hall roof, leading to the precautionary closure of the swimming pool and Fullwell Cross Gym.

Alternative gyms

Ashton Playing Fields • Mayfield Leisure Centre • Serenity Ilford Women's Only Gym • The Gym at Redbridge Drama Centre • Woodford Green Library & Gym • Wanstead Leisure Centre

Swimming lessons

Now at Caterham High School.

What's open

The spa, reception, studios, and relocated swimming sessions at Loxford and Mayfield.

Progress

Engineers have confirmed the repairs required, and procurement for a specialist contractor is starting in **March**.

Looking ahead

Construction is expected to begin soon, with reopening planned by the end of **2026**.



Redbridge Cycling Centre

Redbridge Cycling Centre has had its track upgraded, and the upper circuit is now smoother, faster and more fun to ride. The centre is fully open with coaching sessions and recreational rides back in full swing - perfect for cyclists looking to push their skills or just enjoy the upgraded track.



Kenneth More Theatre

Structural issues in the auditorium roof have paused full-scale performances.

What's open

Bars, foyers and studio spaces remain open, with Redbridge Drama Centre hosting alternative performances.

Progress

We expect to award the refurbishment contract in the next few weeks. The company will then start getting everything ready for the works. This preparation stage mostly happens behind the scenes, but we'll share more details once the contract is confirmed on the council website and social media channels.

Looking ahead

Once the preparation stage is finished, you'll start to see work happening on site throughout spring and summer. The project is currently planned to be completed in **late 2026**, and we'll work closely with the contractor to speed things up wherever we can.



Janice Mews: a new community hub

Voluntary groups, charities, and small organisations are a lifeline for many people in our community - including those who may be on their own, experiencing isolation, living with health conditions, or looking to learn new skills. These groups give so much to our borough, and we want to give back by supporting the vital work they do. That's why we're creating a new Voluntary Sector Hub, providing a central, well-connected space they can book and use to continue supporting our neighbours.

Opening

Spring 2026



A brand new skatepark for Hainault

A new skatepark has opened in Forest Road Recreation Ground, replacing the much-loved facility that served local skaters for over 20 years. The new design, shaped through public consultation offers a safer, modern, community-led space.



South Woodford Library & Gym

Gym sessions have moved to Redbridge Drama Centre, and a pop-up library is offering books, children's activities and PC access. And with ten other libraries across the borough, residents still have plenty of places to borrow books from and enjoy a full range of library services.

What's open

Gym sessions have moved to Redbridge Drama Centre, and a pop-up library is offering books, children's activities and PC access.

Progress

Work to refurbish the library and gym has begun and is planned to finish in **September 2026**.



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

"These projects represent a major investment in the future of our borough. At a time when many councils are having to close valued facilities, we're proud to be investing in ours. Any temporary closures are simply to ensure we can reopen with safer, stronger, state of the art spaces that our communities can continue to enjoy. We're proud to be investing in leisure centres, cultural spaces, the new Lido Leisure Centre and a dedicated climbing centre - enhancing our facilities for future generations and continuing to build a borough our communities can be proud of."



New parent and finding things tricky? We've got you.

Redbridge Council can support you with access to healthy food, child-friendly activities, support groups and financial assistance



Health visitor support

Health visitors are there to support you right through from having your baby, until they are 5 years old.

You can contact our duty desk for advice or support on a range of issues including feeding, sleep, health and development and minor illness.

Mon-Fri 9am-5pm. Call 0300 300 1579 (option 1)

Parent and child activities

Have you been to one of our 11 libraries recently? Come along to story time, rhymes and tots singing, art and craft sessions for children, Lego clubs and so much more.

► <https://visionrcl.org.uk/libraries/eventsactivities>

In Redbridge we also have a number of children's centres, with general play sessions, and organised activities.

► <https://find.redbridge.gov.uk/kb5/redbridge/fsd/family.page>

Family leisure in Redbridge

Redbridge is one of the best places in London for family leisure, if not THE best place. We have nine green flag parks, two of which are in the UK's top ten, we have playgrounds across the borough, a forest, lakes, lots of picnic spots, Owls soft play and so much more.

Find out what's happening near you:

► <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/discover>

Feeding the family for less

We're proud to have helped set up the Community Grocery, which is supporting residents to put food on the table for less. Based on the ground floor of City Gates Church in Ilford, you can shop for items at prices far lower than supermarkets once you've purchased your £5 membership.

► <https://communitygrocery.org.uk/ilford>

Accessing healthy food and family essentials

If you are at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old, you can get a Healthy Start card to help you buy vegetables and healthy essentials.

► <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk>

If you receive certain benefits, you may qualify for free school meals throughout your child's schooling.

► <https://costofliving.redbridge.gov.uk/free-school-meals>

Debt advice

If you're struggling with debt, please don't feel alone. Redbridge Central Library, and Lynton House reception area in Ilford both have debt advice cubicles, where you will be connected to professional debt advice, completely free of charge.

Worried about owing a loan shark money? Contact Stop Loan Sharks immediately and they will help you resolve this. Call 0300 555 2222 or WhatsApp 07700 102773 for free, confidential support.

Benefits advice

Are you claiming everything you're entitled to? We have a team who are dedicated to helping people out of poverty in Redbridge, and who can help you find out whether you're entitled to more.

Call our friendly team on 020 8708 4180, Mon-Thurs 9am-12:30pm

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

Free childcare

The Government provides free childcare to support working families and promote early childhood development. Find out more at

► <https://beststartinlife.gov.uk/eligibility-checker>

Above all, although having children is wonderful, it's not easy being a new parent, so please remember you're not alone and please reach out if you need support.

The FIND website contains reams of information and contacts for parents
<https://find.redbridge.gov.uk>



REDBRIDGE IN ACTION

The people behind the service

Every day in Redbridge, while most of us are getting on with our routines, hundreds of frontline workers are already out and about, quietly keeping the borough running. They are the people who make our streets safer, our neighbourhoods cleaner and our parks places we can enjoy and feel proud of.

Frontline workers are the lifeblood of the borough. Their work often happens early in the morning, late at night or in challenging weather, but its impact is felt by all of us. From the moment you step out of your front door, their care and commitment shape the places we live.



Vince

Take street cleansing, for example. Last year, teams carried out daily cleaning in town centres and weekly litter picks in residential areas, helping to keep Redbridge clean, welcoming and safe. For Vince, who has worked in street cleansing for over 13 years, the job is about far more than clearing litter.

"I take my responsibilities very nobly," he says. **"I want to make a difference in the community. It gives me great satisfaction at the end of the day because I can see the difference it makes. Generally, the community really appreciate what I do and that's massive job satisfaction."**

When urgent street issues appear, another group of frontline workers step into action. As soon as reports come in, Redbridge's Rapid Response Clean Team is out across the borough, tackling problems quickly to keep streets clean and safe. Responding to things like offensive graffiti, large fly-tips and unexpected spills, the team works throughout the day using a specially equipped vehicle with all the tools needed for fast, effective clean-ups.

Ben, who supports the team, explains why the role matters to him: **"I enjoy knowing that when I go out, I'm helping keep our streets clean and safe for residents."**



Ben



Nick

Our parks and green spaces are also cared for by dedicated teams who work year-round to protect and enhance the natural environment. Nick, a Park Ranger, works across many of Redbridge's parks, helping to maintain nine Green Flag award-winning sites.

"We create and maintain wildflower meadows, grassland areas and ponds," Nick says. **"My main passion has always been wildlife, so this work is very rewarding. It's great to be outdoors and have a deeper connection with nature."**

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

"Our frontline workers play an essential role in keeping Redbridge moving. Much of what they do happens quietly and often goes unseen, and we can all help make their roles a little easier by showing consideration and support for the work they do. Their hard work makes a real and lasting difference to our residents every single day. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our frontline staff for their dedication and commitment."



A place to build from: How a new home is helping one resident look ahead

Loxford Lane's 159 new council homes are already changing lives and showing why investing in affordable, accessible housing matters more than ever

Moving into a new home is a milestone for anyone but for Isaac, one of the first residents to move into Redbridge's new 159 home development at Loxford Lane, it represents something deeper.

"It's quite exciting," Isaac says, welcoming us into his flat. **"I feel like I can be a bit more relaxed after the fight that I've had to get this place, but also the support that's come with it. I finally feel like I have a base."**



Isaac welcomes Councillor Saima Ahmed, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness into his new home

Isaac has been open about the challenges he experienced on his way to securing suitable accommodation, describing long periods of uncertainty and the emotional toll that came with not having a stable, accessible place to call home. While some issues from his previous situation are still being worked through, he says the move to Loxford Lane has allowed him to feel more grounded and hopeful again.

Being just ten minutes from his family has also been transformative. **"It makes it easier for Mum, who's much older now, to come and visit."**

One of the biggest shifts has been the accessibility built directly into the development. **"This is one of my first times I've actually been able to go through the front door to my own place,"** Isaac says. **"And I have friends who have visited, who've got different disabilities to mine and seeing their faces on being able to come into an accessible home also makes you feel good."**

The development is part of Redbridge Council's wider drive to deliver more affordable, safe and accessible homes for local people at a time when the borough, like the rest of London, is experiencing record housing pressures.

Isaac discusses how the move has given him a firmer foundation to focus on what comes next



Speaking after the visit, Councillor Saima Ahmed, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness said: **"Isaac's story shows why delivering good-quality, affordable and accessible homes is so important. Everyone deserves a safe and stable place to live, and we'll keep taking action every day to make that a reality for more residents."**

As Isaac looks ahead to summer barbecues on his balcony and reconnecting with his passions, he sums up the difference simply: **"I feel with a house and foundation like this, I will be able to get to a point where I'm able to call the shots."**



Aerial shot of the new Loxford Lane development

Bringing homes **back to life** in Redbridge

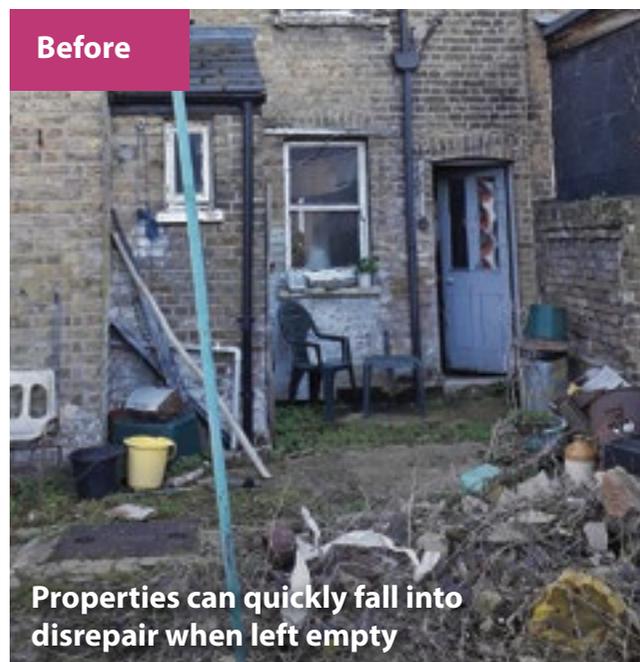
How we're unlocking empty properties to help local families

Did you know that while thousands of local families are waiting for a safe, secure place to call home, some properties in Redbridge sit empty for months or even years?

The reasons can vary from stalled renovations and inheritance delays to a simple lack of time, funds, or know-how. But empty homes can bring more issues than just lost housing - including problems like squatting, fly-tipping, and even arson - which can affect whole neighbourhoods.

That's why Redbridge Council is stepping up efforts to bring unused homes back into occupation. Our approach mixes advice and support with practical incentives such as empty homes grants to help owners get their properties back into shape. Where needed, we can also step in with enforcement to tackle issues like pests or rubbish.

Recently, one homeowner used the council's empty home grant to transform a long-vacant property. After renovations, the home will now house local families from the council's waiting list



for the next five years, helping to ease housing pressures while giving the property a new lease of life.



If you own an empty home and need guidance, or if you spot one in your area, you can report it via the Report It tool or the Love Clean Streets app.

<https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/housing/empty-homes/>



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Contact Us

0207 117 2671

Fairlop through time: Celebrating 450,000 years of history

Exploring the incredible story of Fairlop from the Ice Age to today

Fairlop Waters recently hosted a special event shining a spotlight on the incredible 450,000-year history of Fairlop Plain. Councillors, schools, community groups and heritage volunteers came together at The Boathouse to preview Fairlop Through Time, a new short film tracing the area's story from its Ice Age origins to the present day.

Created in partnership with the Fairlop Heritage Group, the film explores the glacial movements that shaped the landscape, Samuel Pepys' 17th-century visit to King's Wood, the lively 18th-century Fairlop Fair, and Fairlop's vital roles during both World Wars - including the Royal Naval Air Station in the First World War and RAF Fairlop in the Second, where personnel from 16 nations served. Alongside the film, a small display is now in place at The Boathouse, offering visitors a brief introduction to Fairlop's past.

The event also recognised the Fairlop Heritage Group and its founder, David Martin, whose dedication since 2009 has been central to researching, preserving and sharing Fairlop's remarkable history. Through his work with volunteers, schools and local historians, David and his wife Barbara have helped ensure that the stories of Fairlop - from its Ice Age origins to its role in both World Wars - continue to be understood and celebrated by the community.



Fairlop Waters



You can watch the **Fairlop Through Time** video by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://youtu.be/u281Fc7zddc>



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**AGES
5 YRS+**

**REDBRIDGE
HOLIDAY**

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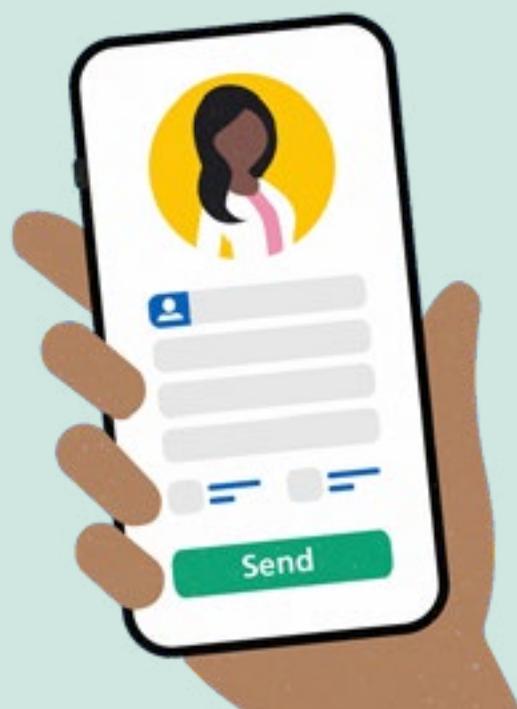
Advanced booking required.
visionrcl.org.uk/megamix
Open to Redbridge Residents only

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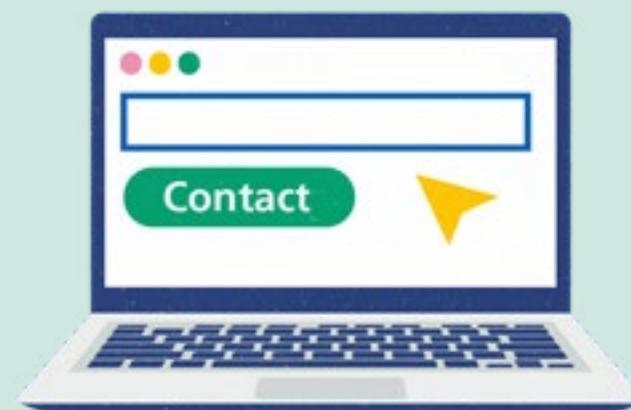
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website or the NHS App.

Use the secure form
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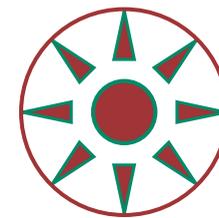
24 hours a day,
7 days a week.

We will ask you some questions and arrange an
appointment if you need one.



Safeguarding adults in our community

Safeguarding is about making sure every adult across our borough can live safely, and free from abuse. As residents, we can all help by staying aware and looking out for one another.



Redbridge Safeguarding Adults

Creating a safe, supportive neighbourhood is something we all contribute to. Safeguarding isn't only the job of professionals - it's a shared responsibility. It's about noticing when someone might need help and taking action.

Types of abuse to be aware of

Abuse can take many forms. Some of the most common:

- Physical abuse - hitting, pushing, misuse of medication
- Financial abuse - theft, fraud, pressure around money
- Neglect - failing to meet basic needs such as food, hygiene, or medical care
- Domestic abuse - abuse between partners or family members
- Self-neglect - when someone is unable to care for themselves

Signs that someone may need support

Residents often notice changes before anyone else. Look out for:

- Unexplained injuries
- Changes in behaviour
- Poor living conditions
- Unpaid bills or missing money
- A carer or family member speaking on someone's behalf excessively

Take action

You don't need proof to raise a concern - just a genuine worry. A friendly conversation with the person can make a big difference.



If you remain worried, contact the Redbridge Adult Safeguarding Hub via 020 8708 5927 or 020 8553 5825, if outside of office hours and where you feel the concern can't wait. Alternatively, email Adults.Alert@redbridge.gov.uk. The Team handle concerns sensitively and confidentially. If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

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