

AUGUST

NEWSLETTER

August is here, and the heat isn't the only thing rising. Across Thames Life, people are organising, showing up for each other, and pushing back against the things that make life harder than it needs to be, rising costs, unfair housing, services stretched too thin. That's community organising in action, and this month we want more of you in the room. Whether it's a tenants' rights session, a mutual aid drop-off, or just turning up to hear what your neighbours are dealing with, this is how change actually happens: not from the top down, but from us, together. So don't just survive August, use it. Come to something. Ask a question. Bring a mate. The work doesn't stop for summer, and neither should we.

Recent Community Actions

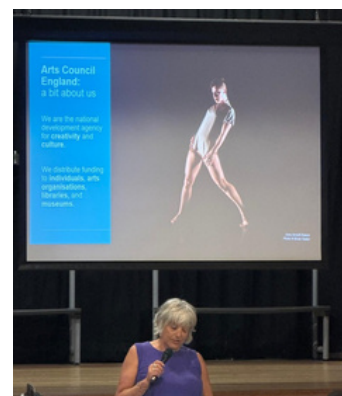
Let's recap all the events, projects, and moments we've been part of over the last month.

Barking Food Forest brought its vibrant community spirit to the Riverside School Summer Fete with a lively stall packed full of activities. Visitors were invited to

take home free plants, while children and adults alike enjoyed getting creative with pot painting. The team received plenty of appreciation for the passion, dedication, and hard work that goes into making Barking Food Forest the thriving community garden it is today.



Earlier this month, our team attended the BDCVS Meet the Funders Fair, a fantastic networking event that brought together community organisations from across the borough. The event welcomed a wide range of funders, including the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Arts Council England, the National Lottery Community Fund, and LBBD, giving local groups the opportunity to build relationships, explore funding opportunities, and gain valuable insights into the application process. It was an inspiring afternoon that highlighted the wealth of support available to help deserving community projects thrive.



Our team joined Citizens UK, local residents, schools, housing organisations, and campaigners in support of the long-promised Cable Street Community Land Trust. Together, we called for genuinely affordable, community-owned homes that will remain accessible for generations. It was an inspiring show of solidarity, proving that when communities come together, they can shape a fairer future.



Community organiser and Cllr Marion Hull run Hockley Mews project where Residents received helpful advice on staying safe from scams, while housing

concerns were shared directly with community officers, who took away a list of issues for follow-up.

Upcoming events



THAMES LIFE PRESENTS

Monthly
PLANNING FORUM

Thames Life

YOUR VOICE MATTERS. YOUR PRESENCE COUNTS.

We'll discuss the Mayor's London Plan, share updates on local planning, heritage and green spaces, and ensure residents' housing needs are heard.

WEDNESDAY
AUG 05
ONLINE
6.30 ONWARDS

Guest Speakers:

MICHEAL BALL
Just Space

SIMONE PANAYI
Be First

FREE & OPEN TO TO JOIN

Scan the QR code to join the meeting

Meeting ID: 372 524 537 630 62
Passcode: hD9HY3qZ

COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING

Join our residents planning forum online or in-person, a vital space for residents to discuss issues on housing decisions that affect their community. Micheal Ball, Just Space will discuss the latest London Plan and Simone from Be First will discuss the heritage and green spaces of the borough.



The Ripple Effect group presents

RIPPLE NATURE RESERVE
NEEDS YOU

Come and be a part of shaping the future of one of the South of A13's most valuable green space.

Let your voice be heard

Tuesday 18 August
6:30pm onwards
Rivergate Centre

This event is free. Please scan to register to help us plan for attendance

Why Participate?

- 1 Join the public meeting to help form a Ripple Nature Reserve Steering Group and play a role in the future opening, protection and community management of the reserve.
- 2 Help build a model of community-led ownership for Ripple Nature Reserve.
- 3 Everyone deserves access to green spaces that support our minds, bodies and sense of belonging.

Join the new group and be part of the journey to create a community-led future for Ripple Nature Reserve. Help shape plans for a greener, wilder space where local voices are at the heart of its future. Attend and be a part of shaping the future of one of the south of the A13's most valuable green space.

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MAKE ME A FILMMAKER

SATURDAY 8 AUGUST 2026

TRAINING WORKSHOP 11:00AM – 15:00PM

RIPPLE CENTRE
121 - 125 Ripple Road, Barking IG11 7FN

FREE training workshop for 16 years and above.




CARER'S CORNER
Recharge & Reconnect

FREE 6-WEEK WELLBEING PROGRAMME
FOR CARERS, PEOPLE LIVING WITH CHRONIC ILLNESS, DISABILITY & THOSE FEELING ISOLATED

6 WEEK WELLBEING PROGRAMME





REAL CONNECTIONS **PRACTICAL SKILLS** **IMPROVED WELLBEING** **GREATER CONFIDENCE**

- 1 RECONNECT WITH YOU**
Put yourself back your priority list
• Wellbeing check in
• Skincare workshop
• Personal wellbeing goal
- 2 FUEL YOUR BODY**
Nourish your body, lift your energy
• Nutrition education
• Healthy smoothie making
• Foods for wellbeing
- 3 MANAGING FATIGUE & BURNOUT**
Practical tools to manage energy & reduce overwhelm.
• Energy mapping
• Hand massage techniques
• Self-care strategies
- 4 STRESS LESS**
Relax your mind, restore your calm.
• Mindfulness & breathing
• DIY face mask workshop
• Relaxation techniques
- 5 CONFIDENCE THROUGH SELF-CARE**
Rediscover your confidence and self-worth
• Nail care/ Skincare/ hair care or Braiding
• Identity beyond caring
• Confidence boosting
- 6 THRIVE & CELEBRATE**
Reflection, growth and looking ahead.
• Creating your own body butter
• Reflection & goal setting
• Celebrate your journey!

SPECIAL COMMUNITY EVENT
SATURDAY 22 AUGUST 2026
Family Festival & Backyard Olympics
Celebrate your journey with a fun-filled day of activities, wellbeing, connection and community.

PROGRAMME SCHEDULE
WEEKLY WELLBEING SESSIONS
Every Friday

24 July 2026	- Session 1
31 July 2026	- Session 2
7 August 2026	- Session 3
14 August 2026	- Session 4
21 August 2026	- Session 5

MEETING ROOMS 1 & 2
121-125 Ripple Road, Barking IG11 7FN

GRAND FINALE COMMUNITY CELEBRATION
Saturday
22 August 2026
FAMILY FESTIVAL & BACKYARD OLYMPICS

- ✓ Family activities
- ✓ Wellbeing activities
- ✓ Sports & games
- ✓ Food & refreshments
- ✓ Celebration of achievements
- ✓ Certificates & recognition

TO REGISTER
EMAIL US AT: empoweru_uk@hotmail.com
SPACES ARE LIMITED – RESERVE YOUR PLACE TODAY!

FIND MORE INFORMATION AT WWW.EMPOWERUTODAY.ORG

@EMPOWERUTODAYCIC (INSTAGRAM & TIKTOK)
@FATHERSPLAY101 (INSTAGRAM)
@FATHERSPLAY101 (TIKTOK)

B&D **SPORT ENGLAND**

Take a look at the other events bringing our community together.

SEMenofit Project
MENOPAUSE AND PERIMENOPAUSE AWARENESS
IT'S TIME TO TALK ABOUT IT
IT'S EVERY WOMAN'S JOURNEY

SALSA DANCE CLASSES
WOMEN ONLY BEGINNER LEVEL

Did you know Salsa, as a form of exercise can help manage and alleviate menopause symptoms?

Move your body, have fun, enjoy the beat!!!



EVERY SATURDAY

Thames Community Hub,
Bastable Avenue, Barking, IG11 0LG

FREE

1.30-2.30

Dynamic Bridges C.I.C **Sporting Equals**

07340 839 857 info@dynamicbridgescic.com

FREE LUNCH! **ACTION 4 GASCOIGNE** **FOR 11-18 YEAR OLDS**

PRESENTS...
GET ACTIVE!
FREE SUMMER HOLIDAY WORKSHOPS



TUESDAY 11TH - THURSDAY 13TH AUGUST 2026
11AM - 5PM EVERY DAY

JOIN US FOR A 3-DAY SUMMER PROJECT - DRAMA, STREET DANCE, HEALTHY TIPS & FREE FOOD. FOR 11-18 YEAR OLDS FROM BARKING & DAGENHAM.

@ BARKING LEARNING CENTRE (Above Barking Library)
2 TOWN SQUARE, BARKING IG11 7NB

Email admin@chainreactiontheatre.co.uk
Call 02089819527 or Text 07841026248

CHAIN REACTION **GET IN TOUCH TO BOOK YOUR PLACE! *PLACES ARE LIMITED*** **COMMUNITY FUND**

Spotlight

Our team is delighted to welcome our newest member, Dianne, to Thames Life. Get to know her in her own words below.

My name is Dianne and I am the new community research network support officer. I am looking forward to getting to know you all and supporting you along the project. I am coming to the meeting on Tuesday, where I will share more about myself but in the meantime here is a bit about me:

I am a born and raised Thamesmead resident, who has a strong passion for community and social justice. This led me to volunteer in my community and go on to study Sociology at University. Since graduating, I have worked with organisations such as The Mayor's Fund for London, The Equality Trust and Partnership for Young London on a range of projects that amplify marginalised voices to influence change. I also enjoy creative storytelling such as poetry and film, so I am very exciting to see the output of all your research.



Leading Thoughts

by CEO Matt Scott

Trust, Connection and Belonging Are Not Enough

If there is one lesson I have learned from nine years working in Barking & Dagenham, it is this:

Justice matters more than platitudes.

Across regeneration, local government and even parts of the voluntary sector, we are repeatedly told that what communities need is more trust, more connection and a greater sense of belonging.

The words change slightly. The message does not.

We were told we are One Borough, One Community. Barking Riverside invites people to Be. Belong. Become. Everywhere we are encouraged to trust, connect and come together.

These are attractive ideas. They are also incomplete.

Trust is not something that can be communicated into existence. It has to be earned.

Belonging cannot be branded.

Connection is not the same as justice.

When people experience unaffordable housing, poor services, decisions made without them and a growing sense that powerful institutions are insulated from accountability, asking them simply to trust more becomes counterproductive. It creates dissonance between lived experience and official narratives.

Eventually people stop believing either.

The answer is not to persuade people to trust institutions that have not earned that trust. The answer is to make institutions worthy of trust.

That means greater transparency. Shared power. Independent scrutiny. Genuine participation. Real accountability.

It also means protecting the independence of civil society.

When funding determines who gets a seat at the table, independence is often the first casualty. Civil society exists to speak truth to power, not to make power sound truthful.

As someone said to me recently:

"If developers provide the money and councils provide the power, the voluntary sector risks becoming the applause."

That is uncomfortable, but it points to a genuine danger. Any organisation—public, private or voluntary—can become more concerned with maintaining relationships than challenging injustice.

Communities need organisations that are willing to ask difficult questions, not simply repeat reassuring messages.

This challenge extends beyond Barking & Dagenham.

We live in a time when technology promised greater connection but often delivers greater division. Social media rewards outrage, certainty and performance. Public relations increasingly substitutes for public dialogue. Institutions become better at managing perception than addressing underlying problems.

The response cannot simply be "more connection."

In other news

Wildfires are becoming an increasing risk as hotter, drier conditions linked to climate change create the perfect conditions for fires to spread. Recent grass fires in Rainham and Barking show this is now a local issue as well as a global one.



Wildfires in the UK: Understanding the Growing Risk

Explore the growing threat of wildfires in the UK, including the causes, consequences and how you can help to prevent them.

nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk

Communities, emergency services, and local organisations must work together to prepare, prevent, and build resilience for future emergencies.



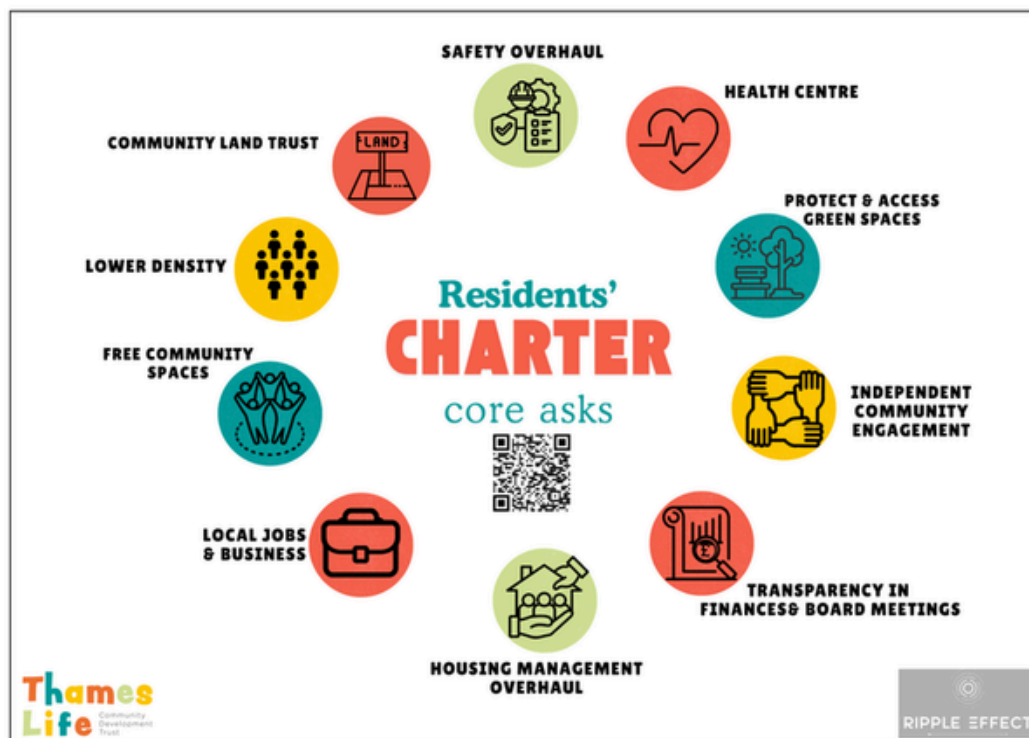
NEWS PRESS RELEASES

Deprived communities in England experience higher emissions of air pollution from all major sources

New research highlights the growing environmental inequality in England, showing that people living in the most deprived

communities are exposed to higher air pollution emissions from major sources including transport, heating, industry, and power generation.

Poor air quality remains one of the biggest environmental health risks, making cleaner air and environmental justice a key part of creating healthier, fairer communities for all.



Residents' Charter: A voice for fair regeneration

Over the past few years, Thames Life has held more than 3,000 conversations with local residents. One message has come through consistently: regeneration must improve everyday life for the people who already live here.

The Residents' Charter sets out ten practical priorities, from a health centre and affordable homes to protected green spaces, greater transparency and genuine resident influence.

As Barking Riverside continues to grow, the Charter asks a simple question:

Is regeneration making life better for local people?

Thames Life will continue working with residents, community groups and partners to turn these priorities into lasting change.

Nothing changes without honest, independent and unbiased insight, which is why we do things differently. Everything we do is shaped by the Thames Life Resident Charter, meaning our research stands apart from developers, is clear about its intentions, and welcomes all perspectives, including challenge and disagreement. These are not PR exercises. They are genuine conversations, driven by residents, for residents.

Our latest round of engagement has now wrapped up, and we will be sharing findings over the coming months.

If you want to have your say in a safe, independent space, we would love to hear from you. Reach out to us directly at info@thames-life.org.

Because real change begins with truly listening.

That's it from us!

Hasta la vista till next month.

Until then, keep being the change that you want to see in society.

