

FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Can you believe it's already February? How are those New Year's resolutions holding up? Whether you're crushing your goals or just trying to remember them, here's to a fresh momentum and new opportunities ahead. Let's take this month as a fresh shot at doing great things together. For us, at Thames Life, community work has been going strong. It's been fun, interactive, and truly empowering. Let's take a look back at some of the events we were part of this past month.

Recent Community Actions

UCL Planning Students Walk Barking Riverside

On 15 January, students from the Bartlett School of Planning (UCL) visited Barking Riverside, meeting at Rivergate Centre and taking part in a walkabout with Professor Pablo Sendra to explore the real-world challenges of urban regeneration and place-making.



Look at the students standing under their umbrellas in the rain, showing true dedication! Community-led development happens because of the commitment, passion, and belief of people who are identifying goals of the community with locals, shaping plans, and acting together and it's that kind of hands-on involvement that drives meaningful, sustainable change.

Community Resilience Kicks Off at Kingston University

We were part of the launch event of London Resilient Communities at Kingston University in South West London with Groundwork London and Communities Prepared. Building resilience is essential right now because it helps communities be better prepared for emergencies and future challenges, supports them to work together, and gives them practical tools to look out for one another when it matters most.

Voluntary, community and faith sector groups were brought together to explore the London Community Resilience Toolkit, and now 100 community emergency plans will be taking shape across London!



The London Community Resilience Toolkit was handed out to help London communities build stronger resilience. It provides practical guidance to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies and future challenges. Aimed especially at voluntary, community, faith, and neighbourhood groups, it supports identifying local resources, working with partners and volunteers, using community spaces effectively, and responding to growing challenges such as the climate crisis.

Thames Life and Council Leader Talk Shared Priorities

Council leader Dominic Twomey met with representatives from Thames Life, to discuss the charity's broad portfolio of projects and explore areas of alignment with council priorities.



The conversation highlighted shared goals around community empowerment, collaboration on local programmes, and strengthening partnerships to maximise positive outcomes for neighbourhoods across the borough.

Upcoming Community Action



A social evening for community groups and volunteers. In attendance will be The Ripple Effect along with Aspire Action. Come join as an organisation or as a volunteer to build bonds, share ideas and strengthen community.

Cabinet to Hear Nature Reserve Update

Ahead of the Cabinet meeting of Barking and Dagenham Council on Monday 16 February 2026, there is strong local interest in how the council will support the community-led initiatives, including the ongoing Ripple Nature Reserve campaign. Thames Life ensures that residents engaged in this campaign are connected with council processes and upcoming decisions that can help shape future support for green spaces and aligned community projects.

An afternoon for community groups to: Connect and support each other, Share knowledge and ideas, This event hosted by BDCVS is especially for small, informal, and under-represented groups. No long presentations. No closed agendas.



presents

VCS PRACTITIONER FORUM

THU 19 FEB 2026 | 2-5PM

RIPPLE CENTRE

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED



LET'S BUILD SOLIDARITY – NOT JUST TALK ABOUT IT

RISE UP

REGENERATION • IMAGINATION • SUCCESS
FOR EVERYBODY • UPLIFTING PEOPLE
BECAUSE THE ONLY WAY IS UP

A space for community groups to:
Connect and support each other. Share
knowledge and ideas. Build a shared
agenda. Take action together



SCAN TO REGISTER FOR FREE



No long presentations. No closed agendas.

In other news

Let's Bring Ripple Nature Reserve Back to Life 🌿

Ripple Nature Reserve has been closed for some time, and our community truly misses having this peaceful green space. In Barking, where access to natural areas is limited, the reserve is a place for residents to relax, walk, and connect with nature.

As plans are considered for the land, we hope care will be taken to protect its natural environment. Using hazardous herbicide on land that has historic contamination may not be the best way to support the wildlife and greenery that the reserve is meant to nurture.

Residents who care about the reserve and the environment are encouraged to share their thoughts:

✉ Neil Pearce, LBBD: neil.pearce@lbdd.gov.uk

Let's hope Ripple Nature Reserve can be enjoyed again by everyone in Barking ; a safe, green space for people and wildlife alike.



Is This the
National
Story We
Want Told
About
Barking &
Dagenham
?



Complex housing challenges are not unique to this borough, yet repeated national headlines risk overshadowing progress, resilience, and ambition. You are welcome to reach out to us on our socials or at info@thames-life.org.uk if you want to be part of finding better housing solutions for our borough.

Big shoutout to Social Spider Community News!

Congratulations on the launch of the free independent local news website which is a platform delivering community-focused reporting and giving residents a

voice in local affairs. Their work in publishing accessible local news that reflects the interests and lives of communities is hugely valuable. Keep up the great work!



And that's a wrap, folks!

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes fresh energy and new possibilities. We're excited to spend more time outdoors this year, reconnect with nature, and continue growing a vibrant, supportive community in Barking.

Best Wishes,

