

JUNE

NEWSLETTER

June has arrived in all its fleeting, glorious fashion and what a month it is to be alive in Britain. The sun has been generous lately, casting long golden light over our streets and parks, coaxing us all outdoors after the grey months we so stoically endure. Yes, the occasional shower has drifted through to cool things down (this is England, after all), but even those brief spells feel refreshing, a gentle reminder that this land knows how to keep us on our toes.

Step outside and you cannot help but notice the flowers. Hanging baskets bursting with colour, front gardens putting on a quiet show, rose bushes heavy with bloom. Slow down for just a moment and let the scent catch you, it is one of those small, unhurried pleasures that summer offers freely to anyone willing to pause.

And the community? It is alive. Across every street, park and public square, festivals and gatherings are celebrating the rich tapestry of cultures, traditions and stories that make this borough so wonderfully, unmistakably ours. From the rhythms of a drum circle

to the aroma of food from every corner of the world, June reminds us that there is so much to celebrate together.

It is in this spirit that Thames Life continues its work here in Barking and Dagenham, nurturing the belief that residents are not simply witnesses to change, but its true architects. This summer, as the community blooms around us, we remain committed to standing alongside you: listening, connecting, and helping to turn local passion into lasting impact.

May was full of moments worth sharing. Take a look at everything we got up to across the borough last month.

Recent Community Actions



We were privileged to lead a **session on community organising**, co-hosted alongside Dr Ruby from the Race Equality Foundation. Bringing together a wonderful group of people from across the borough, the session explored the core principles of community organising and its power to drive meaningful, bottom-up change in the areas that matter most to local people.



Click on the link above and catch our CEO Matt Scott speaking at the **Barking and Dagenham Council for Voluntary Service meeting**. BDCVS is a brilliant umbrella organisation that supports and empowers the many charities and voluntary groups across the borough, helping them to organise, grow and thrive.



That is Pierre co-chairing our **monthly networking event**, which takes place every second week of the month. Bringing together local business owners from across the borough, the event is a warm and welcoming space for sharing stories, forging new connections and growing networks both within Barking and Dagenham and beyond.

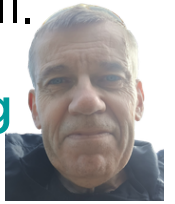


Pictured above is our monthly **Friends of the Earth meet**, held every third week of the month, and what a room it was. Environmental champions from across the borough came together to discuss the campaigns closest to their hearts, from waste management and clean air to clean rivers, green housing, cycling, the beloved Ripple Nature Reserve and the fight to save Footpath 47 from concretisation. The passion and energy in that room was something truly special, you really had to be there to feel it. Want to be part of the movement? Join us for the next one on 17th June at the Ripple Centre. Go green!

We were also privileged to host a **powerful gathering centred around housing justice**, held on the last Wednesday of the month. We were joined by Matt Lismore, a tireless champion of housing justice campaigns, and Kevin Hudson, Barking and Dagenham's very own 'nature geezer,' who took us on a fascinating journey through the history of environmental campaigning in the borough.

We will leave the last word to local resident Vic Stevens, whose reflections after the event say it all.

A Resident Reflects: Vic's Thoughts on the Evening



"I thought to quickly write open letter following meeting at Rivergate Centre on the splendid summery evening in Barking Riverside yesterday.

Hopefully it assists to share markers in this subject landscape, regarding our each pledging and living relating with one another in such.

What a tremendous poem George Brooker penned, that Matt (Scott) read out for us.

The meeting was chaired with passion, even in school-masterly earnest intent, but everyone gathered can in some measure witness to suffering of aspiring in our confusing times, and frustrating 'neck of the woods' - Barking & Dagenham - where too many folk too often in reality only meet akin to "ships in the night".

We're coming from everywhere, but we don't live from nowhere. The meeting had yesterday evening might bedeeded "historic".

1) Matt (Scott) is tremendous asset to Barking & Dagenham. I now for whatever 'reason(s)' am seeming to see a mellowed man - by some rumour able to be fierce - undoubtedly earnest.

2) We can all of us each always be wondering what might be the best 'track'. Everyone gathering in meetings, along with Matt, may be challenged to act

on the back of any such meeting. We can say where we stand. Thereby hope, including in context of what powers that be can do, can grow.

3) I - like the majority of persons living locally - live north of the A13 road. We too hold memory and dream. By pledging, with or without Thames Life Constitution, we can find and act on common ground - venturing and performing together - that living be better, and for others - "many more of and with us".

4) Everything is connected. Each of us 'runs deep'. Our meeting last night was not just about housing. It could not be just about the Residents Charter Matt focuses on - without the emerging of delights, not least needs of each living life.

Matt can wonder where he and each of us is in relation to our relating and apparent objectives.

We can identify downside to Neoliberalism. I note "Marsh... Street... East of the Lea..." about our setting and some governing realities.

There is possibility of Coalitions, and specific objectives. There are amazing possibilities: witness Mondragon Corporation.

It's always time to realise ourselves, and everything, in dialogue and by and for sharing.

5) Isn't it better to encounter one another - keep being curious, and each keep talking truly - dialoguing together, then acting as we each and all will?

6) Where do each of us stand? What will we do?

Each of us, and presence hereabouts, is involved with limit. We can initiate projects. There is challenge. Things can begin, fail or flourish, actually having middle - and do end.

Isn't our relating in such, though, a kind of loving making the world, and this Barking and Dagenham borough the stuff of it?

So for such a (brief) moment, in each life time..."

Such is the passion required to create a community where residents are not passengers but pioneers; connected by trust, united by purpose, and empowered to lead lasting change.



Hockley Mews/Thames View Lodge Elders Group Project, delivered by Thames Life, supports residents aged 55 and over in an independent living complex in Thames View, many of whom have mobility issues or mild dementia. Through activities led by our community organiser Marion Hull, the project helps reduce isolation and brings residents together, improving connection and wellbeing, as seen in residents enjoying learning to **line dance**.



The new gardening season is in full bloom at the Barking Food Forest and the volunteers have made amazing progress on preparing the ground and beds. We salute this wonderful team who turn up to grow and maintain the only free green space in Barking Riverside which the community uses as a garden.

"It was a wonderful place to learn and take part in the activities there, would recommend." —

Bethany Walker, Horticulture undergraduate and volunteer at Barking Food Forest.

Right then, what is next? Take a look at what we have lined up for you this June and come join us!

Upcoming events



Get your fingers moving and lend a hand to the BFF team. They are doing an amazing job keeping a green space alive in what can feel like an dystopian reality of concrete. Join them at the Terrible Gardeners Club, every Saturday from 12 to 2pm at the Barking Food Forest.

Residents Planning Forum

03/06/2026
Curzon Club,
Bastable Ave, Barking
IG11 0LG
7pm onwards

AGENDA:

- 1) Introductions, motivations, etc (15 mins)
 - Matters Arising from last Planning Forum and Ripple Effect meetings
 - traffic-lights approach
- 2) This and Planning Forum meetings going forward (20 mins)
 - chance to be reflecting
 - variety-&-focus in B&D Planning Forum meetings
- 3) Some ways of responding to nearer & farther LBBD-area built-environment plans (20 mins)
- 4) Advertising using slogan of Thames Road "Street Party" (10 mins)
- 5) Levels and aids in responding to planning authorities? (10mins)
- 6) Any Other Business, including Traffic Light issues (15mins)



Join our **residents planning forum** online or in-person, a vital space for residents to discuss issues on housing decisions that affect their community. Residents Paul Scott and Vic Stevens are chairing it. Join In. Speak Up. Make a Difference



WEDNESDAY, 10TH JUN.26
7-9 PM, RIVERGATE CENTRE, MINTER ROAD



COMMUNITY CANVAS

GROUP SINGING. STORY TELLING WORKSHOPS. OPEN MIC AND MORE

EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING CREATIVE TO SHARE

EVERYONE HAS SOMETHING CREATIVE TO SHARE



SCAN TO REGISTER FOR FREE

REFRESHMENTS PROVIDED



Join us for a free **creative social evening** bringing together local creatives, community organisations, volunteers, and changemakers to connect, collaborate, and share ideas.

Discover new opportunities, spark meaningful conversations, and explore how creativity can inspire positive change across our community.



Or come and be part of the **Barking & Dagenham Friends of the Earth** meeting, where vital environmental campaigns have been launched for the future of our borough; from fighting for clean air and water, to championing better health outcomes and open, accessible green spaces for all.

For this month's event, we have the chairman of East London Garden Society, Geoffrey Juden whose body of environmental campaign works include the saving The Bethnal Green Mulberry Tree, Cavell Street Gardens (Whitechapel), Mile End Road Air Quality Campaign, Limehouse Triangle and Urban Gardening & Community Work. He's a true legend and is a true inspiration for eco warriors.



Dust off your cowboy hats and get down for an unforgettable night of country music and cabaret with Chris Vegas! 🎵



Curzon Social Club, Barking



13th June | 🕒 8:30pm



£2 for non-members



On Saturday 13 June, Thames Road & Crossness Road will be transformed for a free, family-friendly street party celebrating the people, cultures and communities of Barking & Dagenham, as part of the London Festival of Architecture.

Tuesday 2nd June 1:00-2:00pm – Chair Yoga with Katy.

Thursday 4th June 10:30-12:30 – Coffee Morning and Gardening Club.

Friday 5th June 1:30-3:30 – Crafting afternoon making 'Oy 'Oy Bingo boards. We need playing cards, glue, firm card, laminator and laminating pouches.

Tuesday 9th June 1:00-2:00pm – Chair yoga with Katy.

Thursday 11th June 10:30-12:30 Coffee Morning and Gardening Club.

Thursday 11th June 6-7:00pm – Line Dancing with Kerry.

Friday 12th June 1:30-3:30pm – Boogie Woogie with Les

Tuesday 16th June 1:00-2:00pm – Chair Yoga with Katy

June 2026 Activities Itinerary for the Hockley Mews/ Thames View Lodge Elders Group

Thursday 18th June 10:30-12:30 – Coffee Morning and Gardening club.

Friday 19th June 1:30-3:30 – Movie matinee Laurel and Hardy on film.

Tuesday 23rd June 1:00 -2:00pm – Chair Yoga with Katy

Thursday 25th June 10:30-12:30pm – Coffee morning and Gardening Club

Thursday 25th June 6:00 – 7:00pm – Line Dancing with Kerry.

Friday 26th June 1:30 – 3:30 pm – To be confirmed.

Join us at Hockley Mews, an assisted living community for older adults. Come along to take part in our activities, connect with others, learn something new, and most importantly, enjoy yourself in a warm and friendly environment.



Placemaking is community organizing. It's a campaign.

— Fred Kent —

A quote or two to

brighten
your day.



In other news

Home > Area > Peckham

Aylesham Centre redevelopment rejected – it would have changed Peckham's skyline forever and given 12 per cent affordable housing

Critics called it 'gentrification on steroids' while Berkeley Homes argued that there is something fundamentally wrong when brownfield sites can not be built on during a housing crisis



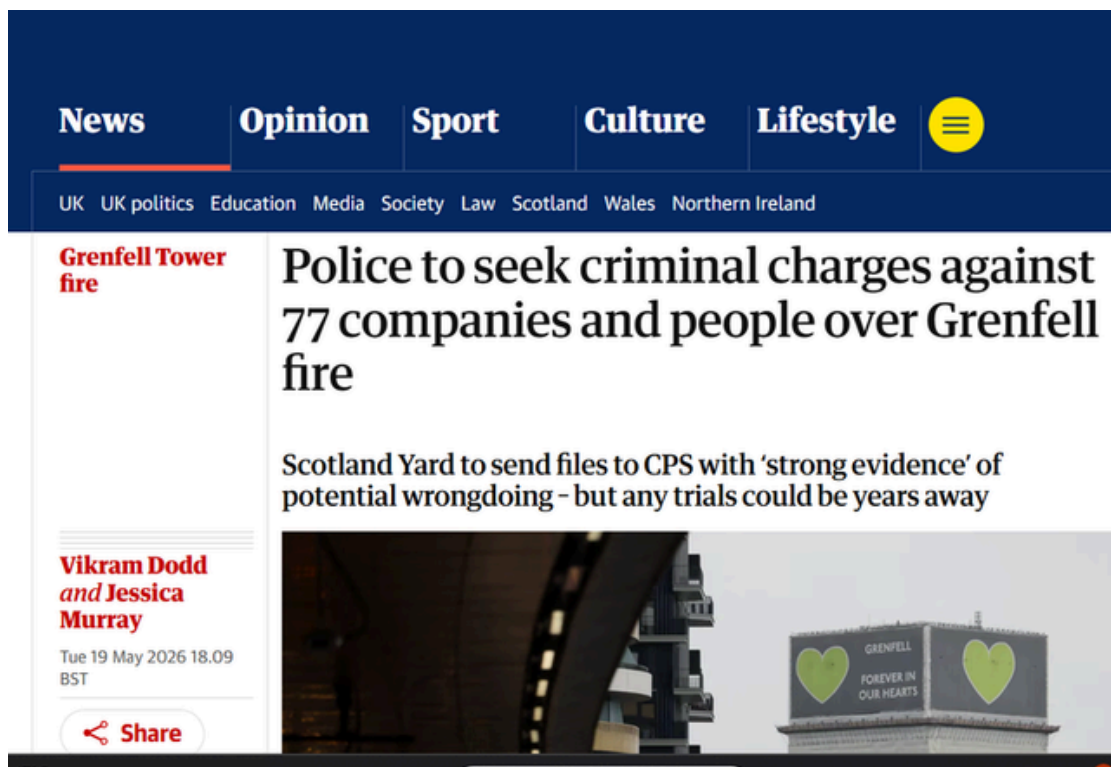
by Evie Flynn — 19th May 2026

in community, Featured, Housing, News, Peckham, Regeneration



The Aylesham Centre redevelopment in Peckham, which proposed 867 homes, was rejected by a planning inspector for offering only 12% affordable housing.

The decision was mainly based on concerns that the tall buildings would harm nearby heritage assets and the character of the area. The council welcomed the ruling, saying the scheme's design and low affordable housing provision did not deliver enough public benefit to outweigh the harm.

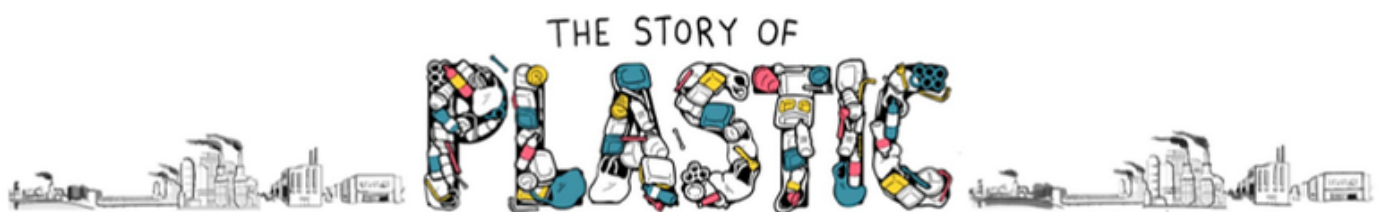


This Guardian article says that the police are set to seek criminal charges against around 77 companies and individuals linked to the Grenfell Tower fire, nearly a decade after the 2017 disaster that killed 72 people.

The potential offences include corporate manslaughter, gross negligence manslaughter, fraud, and health and safety breaches, following years of investigation and a major public inquiry.

Prosecutors are expected to decide on charges by June 2027, with any trials unlikely to begin until 2028 or later due to the case's complexity.

Check this out



The Story of Stuff Project

THE STORY OF
STUFF
PROJECT

@StoryofStuff • 211K subscribers • 177 videos
Rethinking Stuff, building a better future. ...more
storyofstuff.org and 4 more links

This Youtube channel has essentially become a platform for short, accessible, animated films tackling environmental and social justice issues. Here "The Story of Stuff", a short film by Annie Leonard that exposes the hidden environmental and social costs of our consumer-driven economy, tracing the lifecycle of products from resource extraction to disposal. It argues that our obsession with buying and throwing away stuff is rapidly depleting the planet's resources while exploiting workers and communities. Leonard calls for a shift away from throwaway culture towards a more sustainable, equitable system.

and last but not the least...



Stop. Look at this seal, what a cutie! Seals have once again been spotted along the Barking Riverside shoreline, a beautiful reminder that nature is still fighting to survive in our city.

This is exactly why we must protect Natural Wild Footpath 47 from being concretised and overdeveloped. These wild spaces are not empty land waiting for profit driven projects, they are living habitats that support wildlife returning to the Thames.

Do the developers really not want future generations to witness these incredible animals thriving here? Once natural shorelines are destroyed, they are almost impossible to restore.

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.**

