

OCTOBER

NEWSLETTER

Nine years ago this month, Thames Life began its journey as a humble school project. Today, it has evolved into the Thames Life from the previous Thames Life Community Ward project, a beloved part of our neighbourhood that continues to challenge the odds while fostering empowerment, strength, and justice in our community. Thank you for being part of that story.

The weather is turning too. Mornings are crisper, the leaves are changing, and the rain is a bit more regular.

Autumn has always been a time of change in Barking. In September 1939, the skies above Barking Creek saw what became known as the Battle of Barking Creek, a friendly-fire incident between RAF squadrons and the first British air battle of the Second World War. A year later, in September 1940, the Blitz began over East London, and our community faced those hard months with determination. That same resilience is what Thames Life is built on.

Halloween is just around the corner, too, and we can't wait to see what's in store.

We've had a busy month, and we'll be sharing all the updates from it, along with what's coming up. So tell us: are we ready for an eventful autumn?

We won an Enterprise Award!



Thames Life Community Development..

Thames Life Community
Development Trust is one of the
2026 winners of the SME
Greater London Enterprise
Awards.

This recognition celebrates organisations making a positive contribution through innovation, impact and commitment. For us, this is more than an award. It strengthens our ability to continue building community power through grassroots organising, resident led research, planning forums, youth action, Barking Food Forest, skills sharing and collective action.

Our belief remains simple: lasting change happens when residents have the power, voice and confidence to shape their own future.

The work continues, led by residents and driven from the ground up.

We are running a Climate Ready Barking and Dagenham Crowdfunder.

We lead the borough-wide Resilience Network, working with the LBBD Civil Protection Team and British Red Cross to help communities prepare for and respond to emergencies. We are prepared to do the work that needs to be done to make our borough better prepared when the climate crisis hits. Funds will support resident-led climate resilience activities, including training Community Climate and Resilience Champions, developing neighbourhood emergency plans, mapping

local support networks, and helping communities prepare for heatwaves, flooding and severe weather. What we need now is your help to fund it. .

Thanks to match funding from London Resilience and Aviva, your donation goes three times further. Triple the money, triple the impact, triple the reasons to give. £1 becomes £3 and £20 becomes £60.

Help this cause so residents like you can live and work in the borough, whatever the climate throws at us.



Donate and help make the borough climate ready!

SCAN ME



A community crowdfunding campaign to help local people prepare for climate-related emergencies such as heatwaves, flooding and severe weather, led by

Thames Life
Community Development Trust

Raise £5,000 for community resilience projects.



Every donation supports practical, resident-led action.

Help build a safer, stronger and more climate-ready Barking & Dagenham



The has identified Barking & Dagenham as a priority area due to its high risk from climate-related emergencies such as flooding and extreme heat. **Every donation will also unlock match funding, helping your contribution go even further.**

Recent Community Actions

We were busy bees last month! From showing the Leader of the Council what a successful community land trust project looks like, to our staff taking part in a well-informed trauma-informed practice workshop, to our Staff and Trustees Away Day, where we found our strategic direction through Lego building. Let's unpack it all.

Trauma-informed practice in action 🧠

Our staff attended a powerful workshop at John Smith House in Barking, led by Sarah Robertson, multi-award-winning youth worker and CEO of Future M.O.L.D.S Communities.

We explored the ABC framework (Acceptance, Behaviour, Curiosity), how ACEs and the epigenetics of trauma shape the brain and body, and practical tools for managing stress.

The key takeaway? Self-mastery is everything: knowing who to turn to, where to go and when to seek support. We recommend you to take this training too as having a better understanding of trauma can be a real beacon of light in tough moments.

Trauma Informed Approach



Thanks to Protection Approaches for delivering a workshop that helped local residents become better bystanders. Through real-life scenarios, we explored active versus passive bystanders and when to run, call for help, step in, or simply bear witness.



Community organisers Marie and Abhi visited our health outreach project, Hockley Mew, to share drama and group singing with the residents.

These initiatives strengthen our health outreach by connecting older residents with activities, services, and ongoing support.



Housing justice in action

We feel incredibly lucky to have hosted an amazing housing justice event!

Cllr Michael Ball of Just Space, who helped save Jubilee Gardens and stop the £185m Garden Bridge, showed how citizen awareness can topple a profit-led housing model.

Pablo Sendra, Associate Professor at UCL's Bartlett School of Planning, worked with residents to co-design a community-led plan for Barking Riverside, mapping the infrastructure and green spaces the current development lacks.



Community land trusts: seeing is believing

Our CEO Matt and BD Citizens took the Leader of the Council to visit a Community Land Trust at St Clement's in Mile End.

A CLT keeps homes permanently affordable by pricing them to local incomes, not the open market, so long-term residents aren't priced out. Barking and Dagenham doesn't have one yet, and the Leader came away inspired to change that.



Building our strategy, brick by brick

We held our Away Day for staff and trustees at Valence House, working with Jump In Puddles, a B-Corp certified innovation and change consultancy founded by Janine Chandler. Jump In Puddles uses the LEGO® SERIOUS PLAY® methodology to help organisations build strategies, navigate transformation and solve complex problems.

Last but not the least our CEO Matt Scott along with the BD Citizens team met the Dagenham MP Margaret Mullane to discuss

Upcoming events

Join us online or in person at any of our upcoming events. Whether you're a one-person team or a small organisation, there's a place for you in the conversations on housing, fundraising and our community repair day.



Join our residents planning forum online or in-person, a vital space for residents to discuss issues on housing decisions that affect their community featuring Simone Panayi, Heritage and Engagement officer from Be First.

Join BDCVS on 9th October, 2pm to 5pm, at The Ripple Centre, 121-125 Ripple Road, Barking IG11 7FN.

Help shape how funding is used to suit your needs, share your take on engaging the Local Authority, schools and the NHS, and get involved in table discussions and an open mic, with refreshments provided.

Join Barking Food Forest for Repair Day 2026, sponsored by the East London Waste Authority, on Saturday 10th October from 10am to 2pm at Fielders Crescent, IG11 0FU. Bring along your small home electronics and broken toys

**BARKING
FOOD
FOREST**




REPAIR DAY 2026
Sponsored by the East London Waste Authority

**Saturday, 10th October 2026
10 - 2pm**

- BRING YOUR SMALL HOME ELECTRONICS
- BRING YOUR BROKEN TOYS
- LETS REPAIR TOGETHER
- COMMUNITY GARDENING WITH GOODGYM - B&D
- COMMUNITY CHOIR & DRUMMING
- REFRESHMENTS



FREE!



Let's grow together!

 @barkingfoodforest

 Fielders Crescent IG11 0FU

and let's repair together!

There will also be community gardening with GoodGym Barking & Dagenham, a community choir and drumming, and refreshments. It's all free, so come along and let's grow together! Follow @barkingfoodforest on Instagram for more.

 **Barking People's Theatre**
– A Free evening of theatre and creative workshops

 **SCAN TO BOOK**



Join in! Musical Theatre workshop, storytelling, enjoy mini performances from our professional actors, with a relaxed space to create your own too or simply relax and enjoy!

- Acting
- Singing
- Performing
- Creative Writing
- Creative Group Discussion
- Free Refreshments
- Complimentary Theatre Tickets up for grabs

On: Wednesday 30th September, 26.
Time: 7pm
At: The Wilds, Northgate Road, Barking IG11 0AN

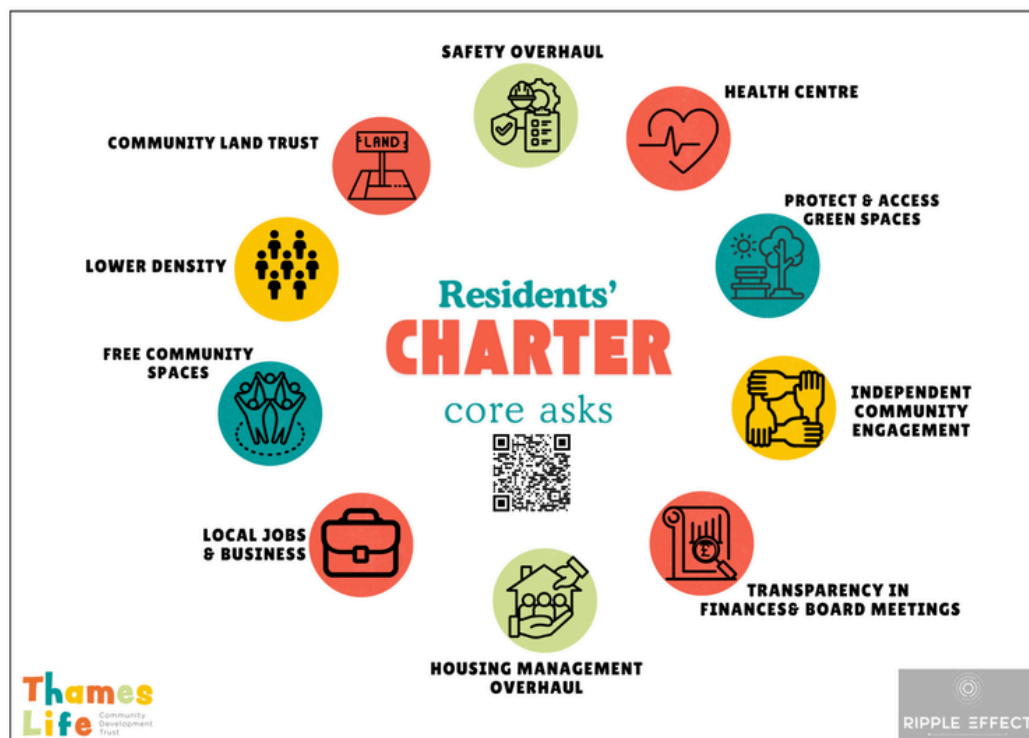


In other news

Green councillors and campaigners celebrated after a green space threatened with development at Devon County Hall was saved, described locally as a "jewel in Exeter's crown". It followed months of resident-backed campaigning, including a protest in March against the proposed sale of the land.

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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.

The logo consists of a teal circle containing the words "Thames" and "Life" in white, stacked vertically.

**Thames
Life**