

Fighting inequality:
Report is published **p10**

Shape the future:
Take part in local plan **p13**

New cinema: Acton's
new old friend **p34**

NEW HOMES

2500

Target to be smashed **p19**



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www.ealing.gov.uk

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From **1 April 2022**, it is a legal requirement for most privately rented homes in Ealing to be licensed.

- Applications received from 1 April – 1 July may receive a 25% discount on fees
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SPRING22 EDITORIAL

Welcome to the spring 2022 edition of Around Ealing.

Fighting inequalities is one of the council's three key priorities and, in this magazine, there are a few examples of how this touches people's lives in our borough: From overcoming health challenges, to finding a fairer start in life; and from a helping hand for families struggling to afford everyday basics because of the ongoing crisis in the cost of living, to support for local homeless people to find jobs and somewhere safe to live.

Meanwhile, the independent Ealing Racial Equality Commission has published its report into inequalities in the borough and how these might start to be tackled – you can read a bit more on pages 10-11 and the full report is available online.

The next magazine (summer) will be out in June. As ever, please visit aroundealing.com in the meantime.

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FRONT COVER: Homes at Copley W7 in Hanwell, among the 2,500+ new ones



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Help is at hand



The pandemic has hit the borough hard. And if you are one of those struggling to pay for even the basics like food and heating, the council might be able to give you extra support.

Many local families have been left struggling because of the rising cost of living, and the impact of COVID-19 on the economy – in particular, on Heathrow Airport and its supply chain.

Ealing Council's local welfare assistance (LWA) scheme is designed to help households that would otherwise find it difficult to pay for food, heating, electricity, and water bills.

The scheme has been temporarily expanded so it can be offered to even more residents in need of help. Because of extra funding from the government, the council has been able to widen the criteria, meaning more people could be eligible.

This extra funding is in place until the end of March. Residents who have applied before, but were not successful, have until 31 March to see if they can now receive help under the new rules.

All payments are discretionary and the

criteria for who is eligible is listed on the council's website at www.ealing.gov.uk (click on 'health and adult social care' and then 'local welfare assistance').

'LEAVE CYCLE OF DEBT AND CRISIS BEHIND'

The LWA team can also provide financial advice and also signpost residents to local charities and organisations that can assist you in other areas of life.

Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, the council's cabinet member for decent living incomes, said: "Our local welfare assistance team offers residents a wide range of support. As well as crisis payments, they'll help people to check they're receiving all the benefits they're entitled to and give debt, employment, and skills advice."


Councillor Steve Donnelly, cabinet member for inclusive economy, added: "We also have a team of experts on

hand to work with people longer term to help them on to a more stable financial footing and leave the cycle of debt and crisis behind."

FREE SCHOOL MEAL VOUCHERS

The extra funding also means that the council has been able to give a helping hand to local families who qualify for free school meals, because of their low income.

Those who were eligible received a £50 voucher per eligible child over the Christmas holiday, a further £25 for the February half-term holidays and will also get £50 in March to help them through the Easter holidays.

Families who think they might be eligible for free school meals can apply via the council's website at www.ealing.gov.uk/education (click on 'education grants and financial assistance' and then 'free school meals'). 

Leader's Notes

'This has been a community effort of which we can all be truly proud'

Councillor Peter Mason

Leader of the council



➔ Four years ago, we set out an ambitious and challenging agenda to deliver on the key issues facing communities across the borough.

While we knew of the challenges we faced over big reductions to our budget and the rising demands on council services, no-one could have predicted at that point that a global pandemic would occur. It has upended our own lives, but also so much of how communities and the council have worked together.

Thanks to a thousand acts of love and kindness, with family, friends, neighbours, businesses, faith and voluntary groups, and the council pulling together, Ealing has protected its most vulnerable residents through COVID-19. We hope that the worst of the pandemic is now behind us, and that we can now go back to a society that looks out for each other, not just in times of crisis, but always.

The big issues facing us remain: Our economic recovery from the pandemic and the need to ensure people have access to decent living incomes from well paid jobs; the growing gap between those who are well off and those who are not; the lack of genuinely affordable housing; the climate crisis.

CONTINUING THE WORK

Throughout these difficult few years, despite the challenges we have all faced, we've continued to deliver. This month, Around Ealing sets out where we have arrived (see pages 26-29).

We've exceeded our hugely ambitious target of delivering 2,500 new genuinely affordable homes that cost no more than a third of average household incomes. But, with

11,000 families still on the waiting list, we need to do much, much more, and ensure that developers are building the homes we need.

We brought our waste, recycling and street sweeping teams back under council control and we massively overshot our target by planting 37,000 new trees planted in the borough since 2018. This is just the start of our ambition on improving biodiversity, growing our green spaces and tackling the climate crisis.

Ealing has delivered on these and many more pledges despite the challenges of the coronavirus, of Brexit, and the continued impact of cuts in our funding leaving us in a constantly precarious position. The pressure on council services increases at the same time as the cost of living rises.

So, we have prioritised the most vulnerable by establishing one of London's largest and most generous council tax support schemes.

Nearly 24,000 Ealing residents benefit from reductions of up to 100% in their council tax. This will help to protect struggling households from the small increase we have had to introduce this year to keep crucial services running.

A COMMUNITY EFFORT

Thank you again for everything you have done to help our seven towns get through this pandemic. This has been a community effort of which we can all be truly proud.

 **CREATING**
GOOD JOBS

 **TACKLING**
THE CLIMATE CRISIS

 **FIGHTING**
INEQUALITY



Register to vote

The local council elections are coming up on 5 May 2022, and Ealing Council is reminding residents who have moved address in the last year or changed their details to make sure they are registered to vote as soon as possible.

You are not automatically registered to vote, even if you pay council tax. Unless you are registered, you cannot vote and you will miss a critical opportunity to have your say on what happens where you live and the services on offer in your community. Not being registered could also affect your credit rating.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS

New boundaries dividing up the borough into neighbourhoods (or 'wards') mean that Ealing Council will have 24 wards, represented by 70 councillors.

Two of the wards will each be represented by two councillors, whereas the other 22 wards will have three councillors each.

Nearly all of the borough's existing ward boundaries changed following an independent review by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

You can view a map of the new wards online at maps.ealing.gov.uk and then click on 'New Wards 2022.'

If you are not sure which ward you live in, you can search by post code at online at maps.ealing.gov.uk and then click on 'My Location.'

Ealing Council provides hundreds of services to local residents and businesses – everything from social care to recycling, from schools to food hygiene inspections, and from sports centres to libraries. The council's priorities, and budgets, are set by its councillors, and most of its decisions are made by them. Your vote can influence who those councillors are and the decisions they make on your behalf.

HOW TO REGISTER OR TO APPLY FOR A POSTAL VOTE

Being registered to vote does not mean you have to vote, it just means you can.

You should register to vote as soon as possible, but the absolute deadline

for these elections is 14 April 2022. Even if you will not be around on 5 May to vote in person, you may still be able to vote if you register and apply for a postal vote.

In order to register, you can go to www.gov.uk/register-to-vote and complete your registration online. Make sure you have your national insurance number to hand, because you will need this to complete your online registration.

To apply for a postal vote, you can download and print off an application form by going to www.ealing.gov.uk/postal - and, again, you should do this as soon as possible. The absolute deadline for you to apply for a postal vote for the local elections is 19 April 2022.

Alternatively, contact the electoral services office to ask for forms to be sent to you:

- Call 020 8825 7777
- Email elections@ealing.gov.uk

1 On **Holocaust Memorial Day** in January, a ceremony in Walpole Park was attended by the mayor of Ealing, Councillor Munir Ahmed, and the council leader Peter Mason. It saw the rededication of the Holocaust Memorial Trees that have been relocated from outside the Perceval House offices in Uxbridge Road to a new home in the nearby park.

2 Young people's views, ideas and opinions – along with those of voluntary and community groups – are continuing to be collected on the **future of the borough's youth services**. The council opened a consultation on a draft plan for the borough to make sure future programmes and activities for young people are the right ones. It went live in early December and will close after 12 weeks on 2 March. Find it online at www.ealing.gov.uk/consultations or at www.youngealing.co.uk

3 You are being asked to suggest topics for councillors to investigate in the year ahead. Anyone who lives or works in the borough can submit ideas by 31 March. In May, the chosen topics will then be assigned to '**scrutiny panels**' of councillors and also give you the chance to air your views and get involved. This past year's topics included children's mental health and the climate emergency. Email your ideas to scrutiny@ealing.gov.uk

4 **Hanwell Carnival** is looking for volunteers ahead of its return on 18 June. The event is run and organised entirely by volunteers from the community. It has been partially-funded in recent years by the council's local ward forums. With an estimated 25,000 visitors, organisers believe the carnival to be the second largest in London after Notting Hill – and possibly the oldest (with roots going back to 1898). Visit www.hanwellcarnival.co.uk for more details. Anyone interested in volunteering can email info@hanwellcarnival.co.uk

speedread

Solar at home

Did you know you can help fight the climate crisis by kitting your home out with some solar panelling?

Backed by Ealing Council, the Solar Together scheme offers high quality solar panel installation by vetted suppliers. More than 1,300 solar installations have already been completed across London, leading to an estimated carbon reduction of roughly 13,500 tonnes. If you already have solar panels installed, you can register to have battery storage installed under the scheme to ensure you are getting the most out of your panels.

The scheme is supported by the council as part of its climate action strategy, which is working towards a target of net zero carbon for the borough by 2030. Find out more about Solar Together – including a video and a simple breakdown of how it works – at www.solartogether.co.uk/ealing/home



Read more at aroundealing.com/news/solar-home

Southall Parkrun

In January, Southall held its first Parkrun event, and become the borough's third Parkrun.

It takes place in Southall Park every Saturday from 9am and is completely free to take part in – and you can walk or run the 5k route around the park and have a chat to friends along the way.

The new event came about after an approach from residents through Let's Go Southall, a project run by local community groups and funded by Ealing Council and Sport England.

Monica Jaswal, event director, said: "As a local resident it's a great opportunity for us to get everyone active."

Councillor Josh Blacker, the council's cabinet member for healthy lives, took part in the first ever Southall run and said: "The event is for anyone, no matter their experience."



Read more at aroundealing.com/news/southall-parkrun-gets-more-of-us-moving





Councillor Blacker getting
booster jab in Acton

Boosting protection

A huge push over winter has seen many residents having their first jab against coronavirus, school pupils receiving their second vaccine, and adults getting their boosters, reports Jack Butler.

Ealing Council has been working with the NHS to put on pop-up vaccination events across the borough and in schools.

'SAY YES TO THE VACCINE'

The COVID-19 vaccine gives you the best protection against coronavirus. By taking the vaccine, you are not only protecting yourself, you are also protecting those around you. Vaccines significantly reduce the risk of serious illness and hospitalisation; and they can also help to reduce

the spread of COVID-19, but only if enough people are vaccinated.

The council has been putting on a number of events in Acton, Southall,

and Ealing so that people are able to walk-up to get their first, second, or booster jabs.

At a pop-up at St Marys Church

in Acton there have been a number of residents getting theirs. You can see some of them pictured on these pages.

It is easier than ever to get your vaccine, and you can walk into a number of local pharmacies, pop-up events or vaccine centres to get it done. Find out more on the council's website at

www.ealing.gov.uk/coronavirus



GET FULLY VACCINATED

Councillor Josh Blacker, the council's cabinet member for healthy lives, said: "It is now more important than ever to get fully vaccinated, to protect yourself and others against the virus.

"You are eight times more likely to end up in hospital if you are unvaccinated.

"The vast majority of patients in hospital with COVID-19 have not had their vaccines – getting yours is the best way to protect yourself from serious disease and hospitalisation.

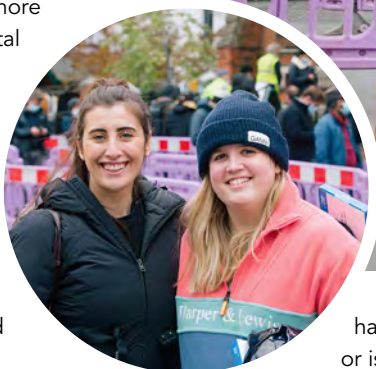
"For me, the only side effects have been a slightly sore arm. Other than that, I feel comfortable knowing I am as protected as I can be against COVID-19.

"You can walk-up to a number of centres in the borough, but we recommend booking a vaccination to reduce queue time."

GET YOUR BOOSTER

You can visit walk-up centres or book an appointment to get your booster dose if you had a second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine at least three months ago and:

- You are aged 18 or over
- You are aged 16 or over with a health condition that puts you at high risk of getting seriously ill from COVID-19
- You are a frontline health or social care worker
- You live or work in a care home
- You are aged 16 or over and are a main carer for someone at high risk from COVID-19
- You are aged 16 or over and live with someone who has a weakened immune system (such as someone who has HIV,



has had a transplant or is having certain treatments for cancer, lupus or rheumatoid arthritis).

Find out more online at

www.nhs.uk/coronavirus-vaccine

GET TESTED

If you have a cough, high temperature, or a loss of sense of smell or taste you should isolate and get a test immediately.

The best way of knowing if you are carrying COVID-19 without knowing is to get tested regularly. The council is working with local pharmacies and libraries so that you can walk-up and get rapid testing kits at a number of locations across the borough.

Find more information online at

www.ealing.gov.uk/covidtest

STAY SAFE

Remember that making sure you clean your hands regularly, wearing a face mask in confined spaces and keeping your distance from others where possible can all help to reduce the spread of COVID-19 – as can keeping rooms ventilated or meeting outdoors.

Councillor Blacker said: "Government guidance may have changed, but rates

of COVID-19 in Ealing and west London still remain high. And, as a council, our priority is to protect you and the staff who serve you. Our council buildings, like local libraries, will still require a face mask to be worn and you must still wear one on TfL public transport services.

"Because rates remain high, we also recommend wearing them whenever in a crowded public space or indoors with others." 

MENTAL HEALTH

The last few years have been stressful for everyone and the council wants to remind residents that there is always support out there for you, no matter how big or small your issue might seem to you.

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health and experiencing distress, or are in crisis, or if you want urgent advice about mental health, please call West London Mental Health Trust free on 0800 328 4444 – 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

For general advice on mental health and wellbeing tips, visit **www.ealing.gov.uk/mentalhealth**



Time for action

Ealing's independent Race Equality Commission has published its findings after a year of listening to the experiences of local people.

The full report can be read online, at erec.dosomethinggood.org.uk/report

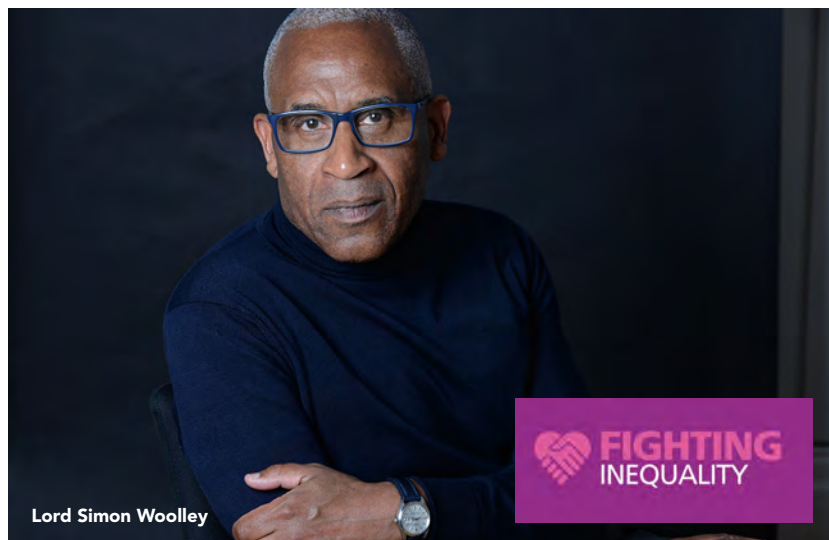
Set up in January 2021, and chaired by activist and life peer,

Lord Simon Woolley, the Ealing Race Equality Commission has held public meetings and heard from the community, businesses and local groups and organisations.

It was established in the wake of George Floyd's murder and the Black Lives Matter movement. Lord Woolley, alongside 11 independent commissioners, all of whom live or work in the borough, gathered submissions from local people and groups on critical issues such as education, crime and policing, and the health service. The goal was to better understand experiences of race equality and to present an agenda for change.

SEVEN PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

The report was unveiled at an online event in late January, when Lord Woolley and the commissioners presented their findings to Ealing Council, representatives from the Metropolitan Police, the NHS, local schools and the people and groups from around the borough who gave evidence to the commission.



Lord Simon Woolley



It sets out seven priorities for change, each of which contains several recommendations demanding action on crucial issues. These include better educational achievement for Black Caribbean students; combating health inequalities; ending the disproportionate use of stop-and-search by police; and building improved trust and engagement between local communities and organisations like the council, the police and health organisations.

The council announced it would create an action plan and set up an independent group to monitor progress.

'WE WILL ACT'

Council leader Peter Mason said: "I want to express my appreciation to Lord Woolley, to all the commissioners, and to everyone who has taken the time to contribute their lived experiences; their thoughts, their emotions, their fears and their hopes to the commission.

"With the clarity, freedom and confidence that only an independent commission would be able to muster, the commission has delivered a challenging report.

"The real action is now up to us and our partner organisations. We are all called to act. Race inequality is a crisis that demands an urgent response. And we will act.

"We accept the commission's recommendations and commit to implementing them. In the coming months, my cabinet will come forward with an action plan to deliver on those commitments.

"We will set timescales and we will expect to be held to account for them.

"We will establish a citizen's tribunal, of a panel independent from the council, that will in 12 months' time hold us accountable, in public, for our progress against the commitments we will make and the progress of our partners. And we will deliver on the resourcing needed to make these commitments a reality."

'This won't be done in a day, but, if there's real investment, it can be achieved'

'UNLEASH EALING'S HUGE POTENTIAL'

Lord Woolley said: "This is a bold report with full backing from the local council and support from the various agencies in the borough from schools to health, to the police and many others. We've set

a tough challenge, which residents have demanded, but we strongly feel all our goals are achievable.

"Working on this report has been a great pleasure but also an enormous

challenge. We have put together a set of recommendations that will unleash Ealing's huge potential. This won't be done in a day, but, if there's real investment, it can be achieved."

REPORT BEING DISCUSSED

As Around Ealing went to press, the report was due to be discussed by the council's cabinet on 9 February – and then by a meeting of the full council on 1 March. You can find out more details of these meetings at www.ealing.gov.uk/committees ⁸⁶



Commissioners Callum Anderson and Laura Forrester with Colin Brent, senior youth worker for the council at Bollo Brook, during a visit.

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Shape our future



Thousands of residents are already taking part in Shaping Ealing – the big conversation on how you would like to shape the borough over the next 15 years. *Lobna Benllahssen reports.*

The Shaping Ealing survey went live online in November, and there was an immediate response. By January this year more than 7,000 residents and business owners had taken part, to tell Ealing Council how they really felt, sharing what mattered most to them in their communities.

You have until March to take part in the online survey. It is the first in a series of activities, which will include events across the borough. The first event was held in Southall in December with others due to be held from January onwards.


This summer, following these conversations, the council will be presenting a draft Local Plan, which will shape the future of the borough for the next 15 years. There will be further opportunities to comment at that stage.

The document will contain a set of planning policies and a framework from which the borough will look to address all kinds of issues, from housing and jobs to health and climate action.

'A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY'

Council leader Peter Mason said: "This is a fantastic opportunity to get involved in how you want to see the borough evolve. A key aim of the big Shaping Ealing conversation is to listen

and understand the personal priorities of residents and businesses to ensure that the borough meets the needs of everyone in it. The vital work of shaping your borough cannot be done without the opinions and views of the people in it, so the more people that get involved, the better."

You can find out about upcoming Shaping Ealing activities, and read more, at www.ealing.gov.uk/shapingealing 



First steps to more active life

Getting a bit more activity into your routine is vital for staying healthy and building fitness – but taking those first steps can be a bit daunting, particularly if you suffer from any issues around your day-to-day wellbeing.

That is why leisure centres across the borough are offering bespoke support to residents with long-term health problems who want to increase their activity levels.

Local leisure provider Everyone Active runs exercise referral schemes on behalf of Ealing Council, allowing people to try activities in a supportive environment, working at their own pace to settle on an enjoyable and rewarding routine.

The programmes are delivered by qualified professionals and typically consist of 12-weeks of activities which can include gym-based activity, group fitness classes and swimming – all with the aim of improving physical and mental wellbeing.

'IT IS VERY INCLUSIVE'

Everyone Active staff member Austin Lumley was tasked with setting up

the referral scheme just over five years ago. He sees people on the programme every day – who have all kinds of reasons for coming.

He said: "We have a really good mix of people here and it is very inclusive, which helps put everyone at ease. Some people can feel very intimidated before they arrive for the first time because they may have never been to a gym before, but they soon realise they do not have anything to worry about.

"There is a social aspect for many people. Some go for a tea with others on the programme and everyone gets on so well."

'SO IMPORTANT'

The referral schemes can help people who suffer from conditions that either make it difficult to get active or, for whom specific activity would help their health. This could include those with diabetes, asthma, arthritis, depression, anxiety, osteoporosis, high blood pressure and for those who are overweight or obese. It is also helping people rehabilitate after suffering COVID-19.

Councillor Josh Blacker, the council's cabinet member for healthy lives, said: "It is so important that local people with long-term conditions are given opportunities to stay healthy through being active. I encourage anyone



Leigh: 'It changed my life'



who thinks they might benefit to get involved."

'IT CHANGED MY LIFE'

Leigh Hayes from Hanwell started the scheme at Everyone Active Acton Centre for a second time after previously having to stop for health reasons. She explained: "I did it four years before and did really well, losing six stone in six months. It changed my life. This scheme is so important. Coming here helps with mental health as well as physical health. Everyone is so friendly and make you laugh so, by the time you leave, you always have a smile on your face."

Keith Hatfield, 82, has a heart

condition which had started hampering a previously very active, outdoor lifestyle. A few years ago, he and his wife also began attending the exercise referral scheme at Acton on the suggestion of his GP. He said: "It made me very much more agile and supple, as well as maintaining a good level of fitness and enabling us to keep up our active interests – from camping and trekking to gardening at home and Tai Chi."

'IT WAS ABSOLUTELY BRILLIANT'

Tim Dinsley of Ealing started going to Everyone Active Acton after being referred to the scheme by his GP three years ago, well before the pandemic struck, because of high blood pressure problems.

"Never having been in a gym in my life, I had preconceptions," said Tim, 69. "But there was a complete cross-section of folk. It was absolutely brilliant. They gave me achievable targets; plenty of support; and I lost weight and became fitter and healthier."

"However, when the lockdown struck, like lots of people, I lost my good intentions and my health suffered."

"So, once lockdown ended, I went back and I started to do an hour a day, five days a week. I've nearly undone the excesses of lockdown now. My blood pressure is down and I've lost weight again."

"It's not just the physical side but also the sense of wellbeing it gives you, too."

"You can very easily become isolated when you're retired but you make friends there, so there is a social element as well. In fact, to all extents, it's a community."

FIND OUT MORE

If you are interested in joining the scheme, talk to your GP or healthcare professional for more information and a referral.

You can also now self-refer – if you are interested then email ealingcommunity@everyoneactive.com or ask at one of the following leisure centres: Dormers Wells, Everyone Active Acton or Northolt.



Read the full article at aroundealing.com/news/active-health

“I
- actually -
UNPACKED



MY BAG”

Novia, aged 13

Do you remember what it was like to be a teenager? Now imagine your family was having difficulties and all you wanted was somewhere safe and stable to stay. Fostering a teenager can be challenging, but it's a hard time for them too. We need you to understand the needs of our young people and be there for them through the highs and lows, to support them on their journey. As a foster carer we will provide you with excellent support and training, including our new virtual sessions. We also pay teenage fostering allowances of between £336 to £466 per week for each young person you look after, depending on their age and your experience.

Together we can do this at ealingfosteradopt.co.uk Freephone: **0800 731 6550**

Email: fosteradopt@ealing.gov.uk Facebook: [/ealingfosteradopt](https://www.facebook.com/ealingfosteradopt)



Could you foster, too?

"We both benefit because I really enjoy it and it is rewarding. It's most gratifying when you see the positive effect it has on the children," said Lonely Sterling, who has been fostering for six years.

Previously, she had worked in special needs for 15 years and had been looking after autistic children and young people aged 11-16 before deciding to retire early.


Lonely, who lives in Southall, said: "I've always cared for people – that's my calling. It's in me and I still wanted to make a difference. That's why I considered fostering. There are so many children needing help and I wanted to make a difference in any way to children who could do with my help.

"I had the energy and the time, and it has been lovely ever since. It has its challenges too, but in lots of ways it is not much different to the challenges you have with your own children.

"I want the child to feel secure, and

to know that someone cares about them and realise that there are people who want the best for them – and just to show them some love. It helps to give them a different mindset."

Like all foster carers, Lonely receives ongoing training and support and is part of a network of other carers through Ealing Council who support each other. Foster carers also receive an allowance.

 Read Lonely's full story at [aroundealing.com/news/fostering-calling](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/fostering-calling)

MORE CARERS NEEDED

Councillor Kamaljit Nagpal, Ealing Council's cabinet member for a fairer start, said: "Currently, the council has approximately 100 fostering households but, with around 350

looked after children, more carers from all backgrounds, ethnicity and ages are needed – and especially those who can look after teenagers and sibling groups.

"People like Lonely are an inspiration and it is hearing stories like hers and about how rewarding fostering can be that often encourages others to find out more. Foster carers make such a difference to children's lives; and I'd urge anyone who thinks fostering might be for them to have a chat to our team."

FIND OUT MORE

Foster Care Fortnight takes place in May. But, to find out more about fostering any time, call the team on freephone 0800 731 6550, email fosteradopt@ealing.gov.uk or visit www.ealingfosteradopt.co.uk 

Help shape Ealing Council's priorities for housing in Ealing

Tell the council what you think about housing and homelessness issues in the borough



Homes on target

"My family and I could not have bargained for more than this home," said Nilesh Ladwa, who moved into his new socially rented flat in July 2020. *Quinton Drawbridge reports.*

"We've got three spacious bedrooms, a utility, underfloor heating, a separate toilet as well as a shower room, a balcony and extra storage space, in a new, clean building."

Nilesh, who lives in South Acton, is just one of thousands of residents who have moved into a newly built, affordable rented home in the last four years, thanks to the fact that Ealing Council has almost hit its hugely ambitious goal of delivering at least 2,500 new, genuinely affordable homes by 2022 – and it expects to

surpass the target by May.

At the time of writing, the council was 98% toward the target, with 2,442 affordable rented homes completed or under construction. With a cluster of schemes due to get under way in March, Ealing is on course to smash through the target with a total of almost 2,700 new homes.

The council has directly provided 460 of those genuinely affordable homes. The rest have been built by housing associations and private developers thanks to the council's planning system, which ensures that a proportion of all new homes are let

at rents within the budgets of local people on low to moderate incomes. Around 35% of all homes built each year in Ealing are now classed as 'genuinely affordable'.

One of the ways the council has been able to grow its homebuilding plans has been through setting up the arms-length company Broadway Living to create new homes.

Last September, the council's plans were given a further boost through a £109million grant from the Greater London Authority (GLA) to continue building genuinely affordable flats and houses over the next five years.



NEW HOMES TO LET

Councillor Lauren Wall is the council's cabinet member for genuinely affordable homes. She said: "Despite the challenges and delays caused by COVID-19, we are well on our way to delivering more than 2,500 new homes which are 'genuinely affordable', which means they are let at social rent, London Affordable Rent or London Living Rent.

"Just 10% of private rentals in Ealing are affordable for people on low incomes, so it is vital that councils lead the way in building new homes to let. Our socially rented homes are typically around a quarter of the price you would expect to pay for a private rental.

"We have ensured that developers and housing associations are letting homes at London Living Rent levels, which means they are set at around one third

of average incomes in the borough and allow tenants to save up to buy a home.

"At the moment, demand for affordable homes in the borough far outstrips supply. With more than 11,700 households waiting for a council home, this is just the start. To meet their needs, we must continue building homes long into the future."

'IT'S FINISHED TO SUCH A HIGH STANDARD'

Residents who have moved into new homes over the last three years have told us how pleased they have been.

Christine Hill, who moved into her new home in Hanwell in December 2018, said: "I love my new flat – It's absolutely fantastic. It's finished to such a high standard – oak floors, oaks doors, and a balcony, which I've always wanted.

We're so lucky to have this flat."

Katerina Tsygikalo moved into a newly built home on the Copley Close estate in January 2019. She said: "I've always wanted some outside space. I love it – it's amazing. After living in a one bed flat with my son, it's great to have two bedrooms. The flat is massive, with an open plan kitchen / living room. I've always wanted some outside space, so it's fantastic to have a balcony."

"I love my new home – it's great", said Peter Sinclair, a Northolt resident who moved into his new Ealing Council home in December 2021. "I couldn't be happier," added Peter, after moving into his one-bedroom flat in new sheltered accommodation. "It's like a family here, and we all get on already. I feel like I've got my independence back." 

"I love the green space in the area and the homes are safe, secure and elegant," said Susan Packwood after moving into one of the redeveloped sections of Copley in Hanwell. She is pictured with her daughter Angela and council leader Peter Mason in late 2018.





3

In development

1 Norwood Road, Southall - this Broadway Living development, costing roughly £3million, will include six three-bed townhouses for local families. It is being built on the site of a former car park, and work is under way. The homes are expected to be ready in 2023.

2 Shackleton Road, Southall – at this site, Broadway Living is building three one-bed and seven two-bed flats. This roughly £4.2million development is replacing a derelict day centre which has relocated to another site in Southall. It is expected that tenants will be able to move in some time in 2023.

3 Seasprite Close, Northolt – in total, 92 new homes will be built at Seasprite Close by the council – a mix of three bed houses and maisonettes and one, two and three bed flats, as well as 11 flats specifically designed to meet the needs of older people. The first phase of development is now complete and phase two is due to be finished by spring 2022.

4 Dean Gardens and Maitland Yard Car Park, West Ealing – this site, just off Uxbridge Road, will host 53 new homes, a commercial unit and a public car park. 21 flats will be available at London Affordable Rent, with a further 10 as shared ownership. Work is under way and is likely to be completed next year.



1



2



4

'Can start living life again'

Ealing Council's Work Ealing and housing services have co-funded a project to help local homeless people find work, reports Iva Manova. This has included rough sleepers and residents in temporary accommodation.

The project is being run by Beam, a crowdfunding platform at beam.org that provides homeless people with funding and a supportive online community. Members of the public can donate and leave encouraging messages and local employers can offer work.

'BACK ON MY FEET'

Rob was made redundant during the COVID-19 pandemic. With the state of the job market, he found it impossible to secure a new job, which led to him

'It feels nice to know that with all this drama going on in the world, people still want to help each other'

sleeping on the streets. Thankfully, he found help at a homeless hostel in Ealing and was referred to Beam so

he could retrain, find work in construction and move into a new, rented property.

He said: "I'm looking forward to being able to get back on my feet and start living my life again because

it feels like my life has been put on hold while I've been homeless. It feels nice to know that with all this drama

going on in the world, people still want to help each other."

'THE PAST FEW YEARS HAVEN'T BEEN EASY'

Thanks to Beam, Ealing resident Piotr also managed to leave homelessness behind and has found construction work, like Rob. He was able to raise £4,495 from 84 members of the public to fund a deposit on a flat and his first month's rent, plus work training and other essentials.

Piotr said: "I want to live a happy life. The thought of getting a job and getting a new place to live makes me so happy. The past few years haven't been easy. For a few years, I was living



Piotr: 'With Beam's help I can focus on my future'



**£ CREATING
GOOD JOBS**

'The thought of getting a job and getting a new place to live makes me so happy'

on the streets and working what cash-in-hand jobs I could find.

"In my life, I've always wanted to do everything myself. I never liked sharing my problems, but now I know that by sharing with others and asking for help, it can change things for me and save my life. With Beam's help now I can focus on my future."

Eligible residents can be referred to Beam by their housing officer or support worker at a local charity. Anyone can donate to the people being helped at beam.org/donate and local employers can get in touch about hiring Beam beneficiaries at beam.org/recruit

'FANTASTIC TO SEE THE IMPACT'

Councillor Mahfouz, the council's cabinet member for decent living incomes, said: "It's fantastic to see the impact that this programme has had on Piotr and Rob in getting them in warm and secure accommodation and work. Getting Ealing residents into good jobs is a key priority for us and we can achieve it by working with partners like Beam."

Councillor Lauren Wall, cabinet member for genuinely affordable homes, said: "Even though we've had a lot of success in reducing the number

of families who are in temporary accommodation, there is still an increasing high demand for it. Our work in helping Ealing residents into stable and affordable homes where they can feel safe and secure has ranged from building affordable homes, asking social housing landlords to offer tenants lifetime tenancies to working with partners like Beam."



Read more and watch a video at aroundealing.com/news/help-changed-my-life

HOUSING ISSUES?

If you, or someone you know, is at risk of homelessness, get in touch with the council's housing solutions team on 020 8825 8888 or 020 8825 8881 (9am-4pm, Monday-Friday) or email housadv@ealing.gov.uk



A world of opportunity

By creating a team of dedicated digital champions, the council is helping residents gain confidence online, access important online services like the council's digital customer portal My Account, and learn new skills so they can participate more fully in society. *Neelum Bains reports.*

Before the pandemic, people without access to the internet were already at a significant disadvantage in terms of seeking job opportunities, accessing financial support and ordering online. This was only made worse when people had no choice, because of COVID-19, to rely on the internet and digital devices to get things done.

The digital champions are there to show you how to get the most out of being online. Starting with the basics of setting up an email address and how to search online, you can learn at your own pace.

Need help getting started? Anyone living in the borough can call a free helpline on 0808 196 5883. You will be put in contact with a digital champion, who will be able to train you remotely, either online or via the telephone, whichever is most appropriate. The training is completely free. Meeting the digital champions in person in our libraries will be dependent on COVID-19 restrictions.

GET LEARNING ONLINE, TOO

As well as online shopping, social media and entertainment, getting more confident being online, and when you are ready can open up routes into adult learning courses and employment.


Whether your ambition is to prepare for work, develop new skills, get a better job or just be more active online, Learn Ealing has a course for you. Find out more about Learn Ealing's adult learning courses at learnealing.org.uk

'TAKE IT ONE STEP AT A TIME'

Councillor Steve Donnelly, Ealing Council's cabinet member for inclusive economy, said: "Being able to get online and be independent opens up a world of opportunities. From staying in contact with loved ones, near and far, to managing household transactions with the council, banks and schools. Building your confidence online can also help you navigate your way into education, employment and skills.

"The digital champions have been fully trained and will start from the basics if that is what you need and take it one step at a time. They will help you gain the skills you need to be more resilient and reduce your need to have face-to-face contact with lots of services, including the council, in the future."

LEARNING IN OUR LIBRARIES

Each library has public computers where you can get online and practice until you are more confident. There is also free WiFi for library members, which makes it easier getting online from your personal devices. 

Are you interested in becoming a library volunteer? Full training is available. To find out more, head over to aroundealing.com/features/news/could-you-be-a-library-volunteer or email LibraryVolunteer@ealing.gov.uk

In business

The pandemic has affected the careers of thousands of local people and, according to a report, it resulted in a large rise in unemployment among the over-50s. However, as *Iva Manova reports*, a free training course is offering to help these workers become self-employed and set up businesses.



Laura, working here in Acton, has set up a copywriting business

Startup School for Seniors is a free, eight-week online course being offered locally in partnership with the council's Learn Ealing service for residents aged 50 and over. Two-thirds of new businesses in the UK are set up by people in the 40-60 age group.

A report by London Councils, which represents the capital's 32 borough councils and the City of London, found that the over-50 demographic was more likely to have lost their jobs during the coronavirus pandemic. In fact, the national Office of Budget Responsibility has warned that 14,000 Londoners might drop out of the labour market altogether as a result.

Startup School for Seniors includes more than 25 hours of video lessons, qualified mentors to guide you, a weekly call to help you to articulate and develop your business ideas – and also a supportive private Facebook group of peers.

'A GREAT EXPERIENCE'

Laura Sironi, who lives in Ealing, has used the course to set up a copywriting business. She said: "I subscribed to the programme because I really needed to have some fundamental knowledge of how to set up a freelance business. And I have to say it's been a great experience for me. I'm still in the early stages but the business is slowly but steadily growing. And I have enough knowledge to know which steps I need to take to bring my business forward."

Hear more about Laura's experience in a video at [aroundealing.com/news/your-business-idea-into-reality](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/your-business-idea-into-reality)

'TURN YOUR IDEA INTO REALITY'

Business coach Mark Elliott, 57, is co-founder of the school. He said some people who signed up even earned money before the course had finished. He said: "Many people later in life find it difficult to obtain a job that suits the pace or flexibility that they need, so

self-employment or starting a business is often the best way for them to achieve this. Startup School for Seniors shows them what to do and helps them do it."

Fellow co-founder and entrepreneur Suzanne Noble, 60, added: "It was important for us to create a course that fits in with our people's lifestyle and where they could meet others in similar circumstances."

Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, the council's cabinet member for decent living incomes, said: "If you have a business idea in mind or an already existing business, which you want to develop, I'd encourage you to sign up for the Startup School for Seniors and turn your business idea into reality with their help."



To find out more about signing up, visit

startupschoolforseniors.com

'Pandemic has shown

Life in 2020 and 2021 has been dominated by coronavirus. But building back from it has given us opportunities to do things in a better way, and together as a community. It has changed priorities and focused minds on how society might be fairer and more inclusive.

This has been borne out by the community's response to COVID-19 over the last couple of years, which has involved an extraordinary outpouring of public spirit to help those who have needed help and reflected in a general desire to do something good.

Ealing Together was set up in response to the pandemic in early 2020 and the coalition of local groups and organisations, led by Ealing Council, did remarkable things and pulled in volunteers from across the borough. As you could see in an infographic produced in March 2021, which summed up the first year's response to the crisis, the collective effort by the council and Ealing Together was impressive. Take a look at [aroundealing.com/news/year-of-covid](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/year-of-covid)

'MILLION ACTS OF LOVE AND KINDNESS'

Council leader Peter Mason said: "The coronavirus crisis has shown us what matters most. It's extraordinary that a situation that has often required people to keep their physical distance from each other has resulted in a community that is closer in spirit than it has been in my lifetime. 2021 was a year of a million acts of love and kindness bestowed on



each other. As we move into 2022, we now need to go back to a society where we look out for each other. Not just in times of crisis, but always. Ealing's strength lies in our incredible communities, in our strong sense of identity and pride, and we've really seen that demonstrated over the course of this pandemic as we have faced countless challenges together."



CHANGING PRIORITIES

The pandemic has changed many things, but also shone a light on areas of life that needed improving.

The council updated its priorities in 2021 to reflect this need for change, to stand up for and protect those who need it and to tackle the most pressing concerns.

As a country, we are far from being 'business as usual' and still responding to a crisis. As a result, some pre-2020 plans in Ealing have had to reflect the new reality. Other emerging crises, not least the

pressing need for climate action, have also dictated a change in approach.

However, despite the changed circumstances and the new priorities, the council has also kept on working hard to deliver on the commitments it made in 2018 – from

delivering 2,500 genuinely affordable homes, to improving recycling. And many of them are embedded within the new priorities. Read more on the following pages.

us what matters most'



Project Choice helps young people with learning difficulties get work

Creating good jobs

The pandemic is expected to have long-term devastating effects on our local economy. Ealing has been one of the hardest hit boroughs in London and had one of the highest furlough rates in the country. So, when the council announced its new priority of creating good jobs last summer, this included a Good Jobs for Ealing plan to help the council and its partners focus their efforts on supporting businesses and residents and on the road to recovery.

Generating new job opportunities goes hand-in-hand with training and retraining opportunities for residents and also encouraging the development of growth industries in the 'green economy'.

The council has been working with partner organisations to support local people into work – and between April and September last year, nearly 1,000 residents were helped to find a job and more than 2,300 achieved a vocational qualification or completed training.

Visit aroundealing.com/jobs to see what else has been going on; and workealing.com for the latest job and training opportunities.

£ **CREATING**
GOOD JOBS

Apprenticeships

Towards the end of 2021, the council and its partners marked the milestone of supporting more than 750 people into an apprenticeships to retrain, upskill or start a new career since 2018. The number has continued to rise and further residents will be helped into apprenticeships. Over the past year, around half of all apprenticeships have been in education and childcare, with another 20% in business administration, 7% in construction and 5% in health and science.



Apprenticeship got Mah-jabeen back into work after years away

Council tax

The council has, through careful and prudent management of its finances, done its best to keep council tax as low as possible by minimising rises despite the reality of a long-term reduction in core funding and a rising demand for the council's services. Read more on page 33.



Tackling the climate crisis

Ealing Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and, in 2021, the council's new leadership signalled a step change by naming climate action as one of its top three priorities for the borough and then publishing an ambitious climate strategy.

The idea is to work with other organisations and residents to make it easy for everyone to play their part – from how we get around, or heating our homes, to how we view and value nature and green spaces, and the way we buy food.

As well as plans to substantially reduce the borough's carbon emissions and make it a greener, healthier place to live, the climate strategy also intends to contribute to our economic recovery from COVID-19 by encouraging the growth of 'green' jobs in industries contributing to tackling climate change.

One part of everyday life very important to climate action is recycling our waste. Reflecting a common view that more public services should be run directly by councils, rather than being outsourced, the council decided to bring its environmental services back in-house. Greener Ealing Ltd (GEL), which also now looks after the borough's parks and open spaces, is owned by the council and started operating in summer 2020 with climate action at the forefront of its ethos. Despite more people being at home during the lockdowns and beyond, and therefore generating more household recycling and waste, the GEL teams stayed on top of bin collections – and complaints about missed collections dropped considerably.

Visit aroundealing.com/climate to see what else has been taking place recently – from the borough's biodiversity plan for wildlife to innovative new ways to heat council homes.



TACKLING
THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Genuinely affordable homes

The capital has been in a housing crisis for some time and the council was seeing an ever-increasing demand from families and individuals for somewhere to live, including a rise in need for its homelessness services and other support. In 2018, the council set a target of providing 2,500 new genuinely affordable homes in the borough by 2022. As you can see on pages 19-21, this target is due to be hit soon despite the challenges presented by the pandemic. It has been achieved by a combination of the council ramping up its own home-building programme while working with developers and housing associations. Meanwhile, the council has been working with private landlords on improving standards for those tenants living in privately rented homes. Visit aroundealing.com/homes



New homes in
South Acton

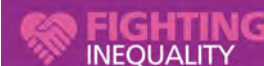
Green borough

In support of the climate strategy, and to make the borough an even more pleasant place, the council and GEL have been working to keep our parks of the highest quality, with 21 Green Flag awards and two community awards rewarding those efforts. Since 2018, the council has also planted more than 37,000 trees – beating its target of 30,000.



New tree nursery helps planting programme

Fighting inequality



Councillor Aysha Raza was appointed the council's first ever cabinet member for tackling inequality last year. In December, she said: "Sadly, not everyone is born with equal opportunities in our borough. Ealing is a patchwork and differences in income, health, housing and opportunity vary massively from neighbourhood to neighbourhood."

"The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a light on the deprivation that exists, and we are determined to do whatever we can to fight inequality and ensure that everyone has access to opportunities and services, regardless of where they live, what language they speak, their sex, race, religion, disability, sexuality or parent's income."

Thankfully, during the pandemic residents were able to access the accident and emergency services at Ealing Hospital thanks in part to a long-running campaign, by the council and the community, to save them.

But, in the first year of coronavirus, it was shown the

virus was having a disproportionate impact on certain communities and there was also the emergence of the Black Lives Matter movement.

The council named fighting inequality as one of its top three priorities in 2021 and commissioned an independent body to look into inequality in the borough. The Ealing Racial Equality Commission reported its initial findings in January. You can read more on pages 10-11.

The large number of EU citizens living here before Brexit had long been a key element of the borough's impressive diversity. They formed an integral part of the community, and the council worked hard to encourage as many as possible to stay here after Brexit. Happily, the third-highest number of EU citizens in London decided to attain 'settled status' to remain in Ealing. This will not only benefit our social and cultural life, but also our local economy.

Visit [aroundealing.com/fighting-inequality](https://www.ealing.gov.uk/fighting-inequality)

Shaping the future

As we move into 2022 and beyond, Shaping Ealing is a chance for you to help decide how our

communities can best recover from the twin effects of the pandemic and the struggling economy.

It is a programme that will help shape how the borough and your town should change in the coming 15 years, with a firm eye on the huge challenge of climate change – as well as helping to address issues connected to health and inequality.

Following a number of activities you can get involved in, including a survey and events, the council will present its first ideas for a local plan. This will be a set of planning policies that will guide our future as we all work together to try to emerge from the pandemic as a fairer, greener and more prosperous borough.

Read more on how to get involved on page 13 and at www.ealing.gov.uk/shapingealing



Knife amnesty and crime

As part of the borough's knife crime and serious violence strategy, launched by the council in 2019, 10 knife bins were installed with the aim of taking weapons off the streets, by providing an easy way of getting rid of them safely. The strategy also looks at ways of educating young people – especially in schools – reducing youth violence, making sure offenders are brought to justice and supporting victims and their witnesses. Southall police station was kept open with the council's help and, while there are always new challenges to meet, there is now a focus on tackling an increase in burglary. And there is also a concerted attempt to deal with a rise in violent crime – especially against women and girls, with a Safer Ealing Partnership survey (December-February) having been gathering people's thoughts and experiences.



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MAYOR OF LONDON



'Everywhere, I have seen climate change'

Across the borough, local people are stepping up to take climate action and help their communities move towards a greener future, reports *Dan Stephens*.

These 'climate leaders', as they are known, are residents, business owners and community leaders taking practical steps to be more environmentally friendly on a local level. Ealing Council has so far named 14 climate leaders, who are setting an example on how we can all take practical steps in our community to help secure positive changes and fight climate crisis locally.

Each one has a different project they have been developing, from growing their own food to helping others get into cycling, mending clothes or even 'greening' parts of the borough.

'TRYING TO DO AS MUCH AS WE CAN'

One of these is Sue Charlton, of St Stephen's Church in Ealing. She leads a growing number of church campaigns and causes where climate change impacts communities both locally and abroad.

Sue said: "I've been a member of

the church since 1970, and particularly active at St Stephen's since my retirement in 2010.

"I've always had a love of nature here in the UK and also when visiting Africa, Nicaragua, Iceland and the Himalayas. Everywhere, I have seen the effects of climate change in such a short space of time – it is so obvious unless you have your eyes closed.

"It is nice to be recognised as a climate leader, but it is a team effort here at St Stephen's. We are trying to do as much as we can, working with charities on climate change issues and supporting the Wolf Fields nature reserve in Southall."

Sue and her colleagues at the church are registered with the Eco Church scheme – an initiative involving more than 4,000 churches. It focuses on five main areas of church and personal life to promote green living.

Sue explained: "It is about encouraging us all to switch to renewable energy, to pray for and teach

about caring for Creation; and sharing practical tips – things like reducing car use, reusing and recycling, using peat free compost and feeding birds – things that everyone can work towards.

"As a church, we want to make sure we are as green as possible and currently hold the Silver Award for the Eco Church scheme – we are now working towards Gold."

TAKING THE LEAD

Councillor Deidre Costigan, the council's cabinet member for climate action, said: "I'd like to thank all our climate leaders for their great work.

"These local people are taking the lead to cut carbon emissions, address air pollution and make the borough a greener place and we will do everything possible to support them in the future."

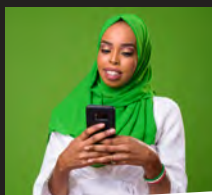
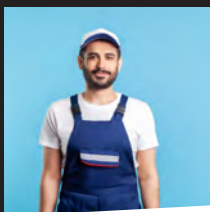


Read the full article at aroundealing.com/news/climate-change-everywhere and find stories about other climate leaders, too. 

Has COVID-19 left you
struggling to find work?

Are you selling yourself
short in job interviews?

Are you applying for jobs
and not hearing back?



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- ✓ Learn new skills and change sector
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shaw trust

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SUPPORT

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Coach Trips from London Ltd. 2022 Schedule

Sat 26 March Cambridge & Chippenham Park gardens
Sunday 24 April Oxford and a cruise to Abingdon
Saturday 7 May Leonardslee Gardens in Sussex
Sunday 22 May Margate - sandy beach & fairground
Saturday 28 May Sudeley Castle and Winchcombe
Sat 11 June Chichester Cathedral flower festival
Sunday 19 June Clacton or Frinton-on-Sea
Sat 25 June Coton Manor garden + Grand Union Canal
Sunday 10 July Rye or Hastings as preferred
Saturday 16 July Aldeburgh & Southwold, Suffolk
Sunday 31 July Canterbury or Broadstairs, as preferred
Weds 10 August Cranborne Manor Garden & Salisbury
Monday 15 August New Forest tour and Broadlands
Sat 27 August Bournemouth or Compton Acres

Most day trips in 2022 cost between £25.50 and £39.50 depending on what is included. Ask for our brochure.

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Next year's council tax

Ealing Council's cabinet has agreed to recommend a 1.99% council tax rise in 2022/23 to protect local people by investing in vital services.

It has also agreed to add the government's 1% adult social care precept to bills, to help with the increasing costs of caring for the borough's older people and adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Social care continues to be the biggest bill that the council pays – with costs rising every year as more people need support. Around 60p in every £1 that the council spends goes towards helping adults and children.

If the full council votes in favour on 1 March, the council tax bill for the average band D property will rise by £1.36 a week (including the Greater London Authority precept), throwing a much-needed cash lifeline to important services that local people on low incomes rely on.

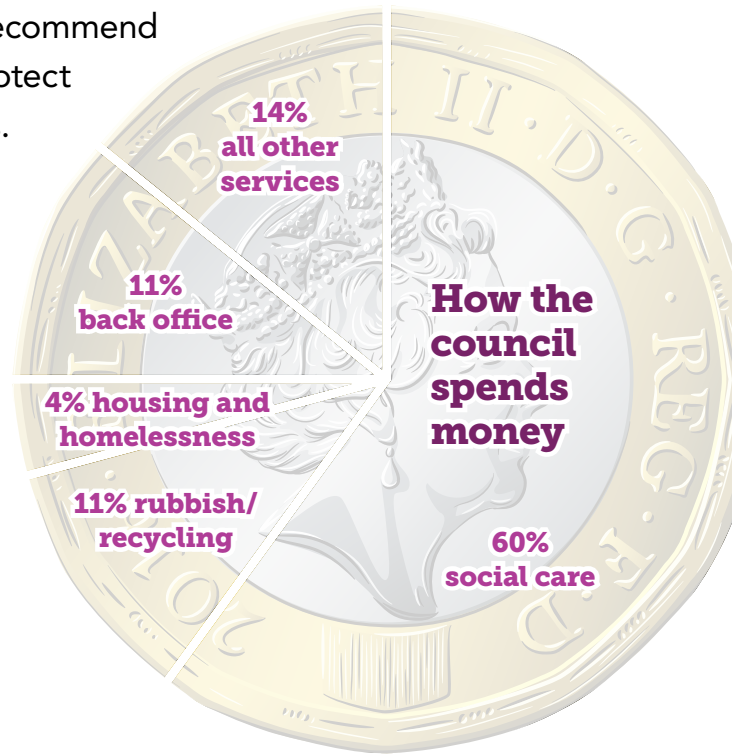
Around 16,000 local people of working age, and 7,900 pensioners, currently receive help paying their bills through the council tax support scheme – providing up to 100% discount to the most vulnerable. This scheme will remain in place.

'SUPPORT AND PROTECT LOCAL COMMUNITIES'


Councillor Steve Donnelly, cabinet member for inclusive economy, said: "Ealing has been hit hard by COVID-19 and, as a borough, we are still recovering.

"We want to do everything in our power to help. Particularly our hard-up households, which bore the brunt of the pandemic and are now on the frontline of the cost-of-living crisis. Now, more than ever, we need to make sure that our services can support and protect them as much as possible. Unfortunately, after 10 years of government cuts, inflation at a 30-year high, and with more people needing our help, this means raising council tax."

Council leader Peter Mason said: "We expect more people than ever to turn to us for help in the coming year and, when they do, we want to be in the best possible shape to support them and keep them safe. It is only right that we stand on the side of our most vulnerable residents and invest in protecting people.



"Everyone was affected in their own way by the pandemic and the lockdowns, but we know that hard-up people on zero hours contracts and black and ethnic minority households were hit particularly hard. The community expects that the council will provide support when it is needed.

"Our council tax support scheme is there to help those on very low incomes, as well as young care leavers and injured army veterans. We've also made it easier to get help to pay for food and essential bills over winter through our local welfare assistance scheme. If you need help, please get in touch with us. We want to help." 

GET HELP

- Check if you can get help paying your council tax bill. Apply online at www.ealing.gov.uk/counciltaxsupport
- See more about the local welfare assistance scheme on p4 (and back page) of this magazine.



Acton's new cinema

Acton has always been fond of the building that sits on the corner of Winchester Street and the High Street, *reports Richard Bolton.*

Built at the turn of the 20th Century, the Grade II listed building was designed by famed British architect Maurice Adams FRIBA and was part-funded by philanthropist J Passmore Edwards. At the time, it was presented in the form of a gift to the town as The Library and contained some 8,000 volumes of literature.

In 1989, the library closed and remained disused until 2014 when Ealing

Council opened it for potential community bids. In May 2018, the Acton Arts Project was formed, with the remit to expand culture in the community. It was successful in its bid to take over the building in November 2019 and, in April 2021, it took over the lease and got started on its plans to transform the venue into a cinema while restoring some of its original lustre.

After successfully applying for the Bright Ideas and Architectural Heritage fund, alongside investment

Watch a video at
[aroundealing.com/
 news/act-one](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/act-one)



'AMAZING COMMUNITY SPIRIT'

"There was a lot of buzz for a cinema to return to Acton," said Amanda Mason, one of the directors of Acton Arts Project.

"The old library was a focal point for the community and, when it closed, we were determined not to lose that hub. We had more than 100 volunteers coming in to transform the building into the venue that you see today. There's been an amazing community spirit and we're delighted with the results."

'FRIENDLY, WARM EXPERIENCE'

Fellow director Nick Jones said the clamour for a community-led, pop-up cinema grew from a popular film club he and another director had been running for several years.


He said: "Once the pandemic struck, it became very clear that people became much more interested in having something on their doorstep, a local venue where they could walk to, instead of having to travel on a bus, tube or drive."

"We wanted to create a friendly, warm experience so that, when people walk in, they're not only coming to see a movie, but they can relax, have a drink, have a bite to eat; the kind of place where you can sit and meet your friends and anticipate the film that's coming up."

'EXCITING NEW ERA'

Councillor Jasbir Anand, the council's cabinet member for thriving communities, said: "We want our borough to be an even better place to live, visit and work and we believe the Acton Arts Project and its team of volunteers have done a wonderful job of giving the former Acton Library building a new lease of life. They have taken it into an exciting new era and I'm sure Act One cinema will prove enormously popular and add significantly to the town's cultural and social life."

Councillor Shital Manro, cabinet member for good growth, said: "We want our town centres and high streets to continue to be focal points for our communities and the hub of opportunity for good jobs and growth. Act One cinema is the kind of project that helps to do exactly that – it enhances the town. And the upstairs floors of the building are being used by an independent training provider Global Skills, offering courses and other qualifications. The combined effect should contribute to the economic development of the area."

 Read the full story and watch a video at [aroundealing.com/
news/act-one](https://www.aroundealing.com/news/act-one)

and community donations, the project raised £115,000 in pledges from the local community and contributions from the council's ward forums for South Acton, East Acton, Southfield and Acton Central – and Acton BID.

Finally, in October, the Act One Cinema was officially opened with one 60-seat screen, a café/bar and a lounge area. There are plans to open a second screen later this year, to offer a wider choice of films.

Key:

■ Acton ■ Ealing ■ Greenford ■ Hanwell ■ Northolt ■ Perivale ■ Southall

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 Poonam in Walpole Park,
part of the trail

On the write trail

"Everyday life can be so demanding for so many of us. I've always loved outdoor games and writing, so to find a way to combine to them to inject some fun and play seems natural," said the woman behind a creative new project promoting wellbeing.

The Ealing Writing Trail is due to begin this spring and will include a scavenger hunt giving everyone an imaginative way to explore Ealing – whatever the age, whatever the weather. QR codes for smartphones will be placed strategically in and around Ealing Broadway, with an interactive and downloadable map for participants to use and navigate with.

Along the trail, people will seek and find quotes by British writers, musicians and artists, both past and present, that celebrate the relationship between creativity and wellbeing; as well as activity prompts to make people think or help them get creative; and also a clue to a wider puzzle.

There will also be writing workshops taking place on certain dates along the trail, providing opportunities for people of all ages to boost their creativity and wellbeing through writing.

CONNECTING, MOVING, LEARNING

The project has been created and co-ordinated by Poonam Madar, who has run writing workshops herself. She said: "We've all had to social distance for so long but of course the need to connect with others never leaves us.

"Part of the inspiration for this trail is the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing', which is backed by the NHS. It promotes things like connectivity, staying active and learning – these are all the themes that I'm bringing to the writing trial."

Her idea is set to benefit from money from Ealing Council's Future Ealing Fund (FEF), which has been set up to support local people with big ideas about improving the local community.

A share of the £100,000 fund (up to a maximum of £10,000 per project) was offered as a pledge towards people's active crowdfunding campaigns for community-led ideas that help the recovery of business, neighbourhoods and the local area.

Poonam has also been using the council-backed crowdfunding website Spacehive to help get the Ealing Writing Trail off the ground.

'DECISIONS IN HANDS OF RESIDENTS'

Over the previous year, the FEF has provided financial backing to community-led ideas including everything from a junior golf academy to food growing schemes.

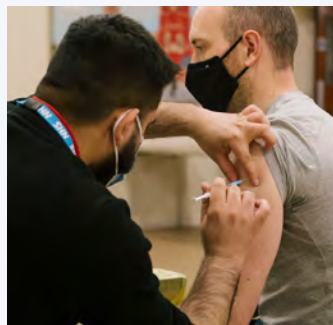
Councillor Jasbir Anand, the council's cabinet member for thriving communities, said: "Through the FEF, we have made significant funding available for local projects which bring community together, improve our high streets, or create hubs for learning. Ultimately, it is about helping to put decisions about how we invest in our communities firmly in the hands of residents."



Read the full story at
aroundealing.com/news/writing-trail

Walk up and get your **1st 2nd booster JAB**

- 📍 Across the borough
- 📍 CP House
- 📍 Many local pharmacies



www.ealing.gov.uk/coronavirus



Struggling to pay for basics like food or heating?

The pandemic has hit the borough hard and the council's local welfare assistance scheme might be able to help you with financial support and expert advice.

Eligibility criteria have been temporarily expanded – so that more people can be helped. Get in touch before 31 March.