

aroundealing | winter 2024

around
ealing

Revealed

Photo contest winner p16

A PLACE TO GO
Centre reopens p7

FOOD LIFELINE
Winter support p8

BEAVERING AWAY
One year on p14



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To check your eligibility, visit:
nwlondonicb.nhs.uk/winter



8



13



14



16

Contents

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 LEADER'S NOTES
Council leader Peter Mason | 16 SEASONS OF EALING
Photo winners revealed |
| 6 NEWS ROUND-UP
Christmas card winner | 19 NEWS ROUND-UP
Competition and more |
| 7 YOUNG ADULTS
Southall YAC | 21 EMPTY HOMES
Higher taxes |
| 8 FOOD POVERTY
City Harvest and more | 22 FOSTERING
Changing lives |
| 11 NEWS ROUND-UP
Christmas hacks and more | 27 LONDON LIVING WAGE
Real life |
| 12 SHAPING SERVICES
Urban Hack course | 28 COUNCILLORS
Contact details |
| 13 HEADING UP
From pupil to headteacher | 31 CROSSWORD
Test your knowledge |
| 14 BEAVERS
New arrivals | 32 BIN COLLECTIONS
Christmas and New Year |

Winter 2024

Editorial

It's that time of year when we start thinking about new beginnings, and there is lots to look forward to as well as things to celebrate as we say farewell to 2024.

You may recall a family of beavers found a new home in Greenford, after being reintroduced to the borough after 400 years? Well, a pair of new kits were born there earlier this year and we paid them all a visit (p14).

Not all families will be looking forward to winter, however. While many of us are turning up the heating and stocking the cupboards full of festive treats, lots of people will be struggling. The good news is there are some fantastic projects happening across the borough to help (p8).

Wishing you all a very merry Christmas, or happy Chanukah, and a fulfilling year ahead.

Verity Adams

Deputy Editor

Contributors: James Bird (photography), Richard Nadal, Chandima Ratnayake and Alex Sturrock (photography). Front cover image of Ealing Common by Inna Ryskal.

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Leader's notes

'friends, family, good neighbours and community networks are the glue that sticks us together'

Council leader Peter Mason



Creating community is at the heart of everything that we do as a council, and putting communities in control of their town is how we do it.

It comes from a very basic belief that the people who live and experience their local neighbourhoods are the very best people to understand how and why the places we cherish should improve. My job as leader, and our job as a council, is to do everything

we can to deliver on your agenda.

Groups of friends, family, good neighbours and community networks are the glue that sticks us together, and it is through these relationships that we build a sense of common pride and identity and ownership over the spaces we live, work and play.

Everyone faces tough choices and decisions in our daily lives. Be they the worries of family life and

managing the household budget, juggling the stresses of work-life balance and the tricky calls you take at work each day – the same is true, too, for the council. And, for us, in dealing with the whole of the borough's budget; the pressures and demands caused by people who need help; and the money we get to deliver.

It is why we now spend so much of our time out in communities, engaging, listening and acting. Whether through the Your Voice, Your Town initiative or the network of Community Champions, what we do, and, importantly, what we change as a council on your behalf, must be because of what you want and need from us.

Housing crisis

Usually, we are all too aware that keeping our young people safe from harm, providing them with a great education and a chance to move forward in life is incredibly important. So, too, is ensuring that everyone can grow old, happy and healthy, with the right support and the care from families, carers and the NHS when its required.

The new and biggest threat to us all as a community is the rocketing levels of households

facing homelessness. The council does everything it can to address the need for families who fall on hard times and are evicted, to get emergency and temporary accommodation that's safe and secure.

This huge need is being driven both by the cost of living crisis, and the wider challenges about the lack of genuinely affordable homes in a city as big and complex as London.

Earlier this year, councils across London were collectively spending around £3million every day on temporary accommodation. This has risen nearly 40% from the year before. And it is estimated that 1-in-50 Londoners is currently homeless and living in temporary accommodation.

New house building in recent years has halved, with ever more people struggling to pay for increased mortgages or being prevented from getting on to the housing ladder because of the cost of housing, and with developers failing to build the homes they get permission to construct.

We will do everything we can. For example, prudently and carefully investing £150million in new council-owned temporary accommodation, to provide homes people desperately need, whilst also ensuring that the council stays financially secure.

Just as we always have done, we are not letting the wider financial

challenges we and other councils face suppress our desire, or our ability, to deliver for communities in new and better ways. For example, our record level of transport investment of £28million continues improving our pavement and road network to ensure that we are creating safe and pleasant ways for everyone to walk, cycle and actively travel throughout our borough.

In this edition of Around Ealing, I'm sure you will see other examples that demonstrate we continue to have great ambitions for our borough. We are holding on to hope that, as our economy improves, so

too will our ability to invest and deliver more on your behalf.

Very warm and hopeful wishes to everyone celebrating something special this winter. Have a very happy Christmas and, hopefully, a great new year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Mason'.

Councillor Peter Mason
Leader of the council



Your Voice, Your Town - Northolt



Your Voice, Your Town - Acton





Christmas card winner

Following much deliberation, the winners of the council's Christmas card design competition have been announced.

With 150 entries received, the judges made their decisions, and enormous congratulations go to Bianca Mocanescu, a pupil at Drayton Manor High School, who not only won the 12+ age category, but is also the overall winner.

The winner in the under-6 age category was Imogen Woolf from Christ the Saviour Primary School, and Marcel was the winner in the 7-11 age category.

Read more: aroundealing.com/news/christmas-card-winner-2024



Golden support for Armed Forces

Ealing Council has been given top-level status for its support of Armed Forces personnel and veterans, and their families.

The government's Ministry of Defence gave the borough a Gold Award (the highest level available) for its Defence Employer Recognition Scheme.

It was given on 31 October and then ceremoniously handed to the council on Armistice Day (11 November), after the minute's silence that is held nationally at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, following Remembrance Sunday.

Read more at aroundealing.com/news/gold-status-veteran-support



Council services over Christmas

During Christmas and new year only essential and critical cover will be in place for Ealing Council services between 25-26 December and on 1 January. Limited services will run on 27, 30 and 31 December. Your usual collection day for rubbish and recycling may also change over the Christmas and new year period.

See the back page of this magazine or visit www.ealing.gov.uk/recycling



Posed by model

A good place to go

A popular centre for young people in Southall will welcome visitors back in the new year, following an investment of more than £2million.

The Young Adult Centre (YAC), in Park View Road, will offer new and improved facilities for sports, IT and music– and much more. The centre is due to open to young people next month (January).

The council's cabinet decided in April 2023 to invest in renovating the building, and scrap plans to redevelop the site and move the building to a new location.

This followed a public consultation held by the council's Youth Service in 2022, and a meeting of Ealing Young Champions in 2021.

During the refurbishments, young people have been using a temporary

service at Dormers Hub, in Southall.

We asked Rubi, 12, to share her thoughts about the YAC. She said: "It's a good place to go when you're bored and have nothing to do, my mum wanted me out of the house doing something positive. I like going there to talk to people, play games, cook and socialise."

"I'm looking forward to seeing the new rooms, a bigger kitchen, more entertainment, the gym, even though I might be too short to use it, and the games room."

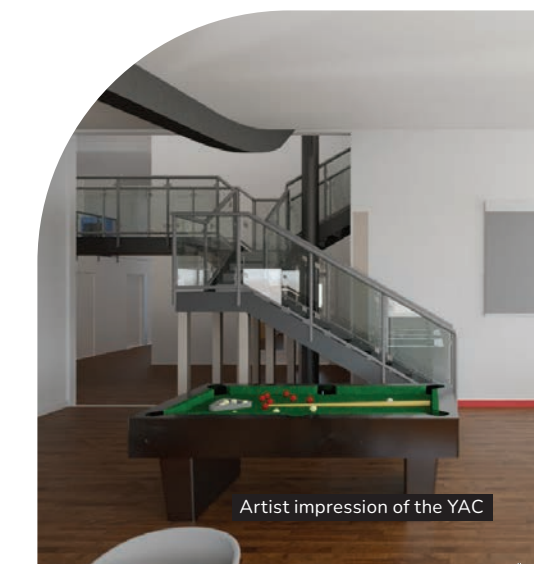
Coming soon

Look out for announcements about the official opening on aroundealing.com.

Council leader Peter Mason said: "The Young Adult Centre will be an incredible resource for young people in Southall well into the future. Our decision to invest in the future of the

YAC responded to the growing need for opportunities for young people in Southall, who themselves have been the key decision makers in bringing proposals forward."

Councillor Josh Blacker, the council's cabinet member for a fairer start, added: "I'm excited to see the reaction from the young people when they come through the doors for the first time, I think it will be a place that they will really enjoy and want to spend time there."



Artist impression of the YAC



Feeding the thousands

A food charity that helps to feed more than 11,000 people in the borough every week is celebrating its 10-year anniversary.

City Harvest, based in Acton, was founded in 2014 by a small group of people, who came together to address food waste and food poverty in the capital, forming London's first food redistribution charity.

In its first year it delivered 80,000 meals. A decade later, it has delivered almost 70million meals.

And, as the festive season approaches, it will be working harder than ever to make sure residents have access to fresh food by delivering tons of produce to 35 community projects across the borough. This includes food banks, soup kitchens, supported accommodation, schools, nurseries and more.

Sarah Calcutt, the charity's chief executive, told Around Ealing: "We

look after the community groups that look after your readers."

Relying on donations

Ealing Soup Kitchen, which is supported by Ealing Council, is one of the organisations that benefits from City Harvest's donations.

Angela Doreen, the soup kitchen's coordinator and one of the council's community champions, said: "We rely heavily on donations and its thanks to the generosity of donors, and the work of organisations like City Harvest, that we can help people who can't afford to eat."

How it all works

City Harvest has dedicated drivers for each London borough it serves. They deliver the crates of food that is donated from organisations, such as supermarkets that find they have surplus stock that will otherwise go to waste, and even local allotment associations. This is then picked and packed by a team of wonderful volunteers in the warehouse who, between them, have racked up

thousands of volunteering hours to help put food on people's plates.

'Our volunteers are golden'

Sarah Calcutt said: "It's really easy to volunteer here. We believe volunteering should be accessible and flexible, so we have a system which offers different sessions to choose from throughout the week, Monday to Sunday. Shifts range from 2 to 4 hours, and you can pick times that suit you.

"We currently have over 1,700 volunteers on our register, around 600 of whom have been volunteering regularly within the last 3 months. Our volunteers are golden."

Numbers have doubled

Sarah added: "We help to feed 130,000 people every week. That has doubled in 26 months.

"The fastest growing group that we look after are the working poor. They've got a regular job. There's a regular wage coming in, but it



Sarah Calcutt

doesn't cover the cost of living. There's this rising tide of parents who just aren't eating enough because they are making that parental sacrifice and feeding their children before themselves. And that group's really suffering."

Be a volunteer

For every hour volunteered, City Harvest is able to deliver enough food for 530 meals.

Sarah added: "A number of our volunteers have found great friends by spending time here; they often go out for a coffee and socialise – it's a place to connect with others too. And we're always looking to welcome more helping hands."

For more information, or to register as a volunteer, go to: www.cityharvest.org.uk/volunteer



Find a warm space

There are a number of warm spaces operating in the borough again this winter, offering warmth, company and often refreshments and activities.

Details of local warm spaces available can be found by visiting www.dosomethinggood.org.uk/community-support-search and scrolling down the 'filter by category' menu to the 'warm space' section.

Councillor Steve Donnelly, the council's cabinet member for an inclusive economy, said: "It's great to see communities coming together to support each other at our warm spaces. They can make a real difference to people who might otherwise be alone and worried about heating bills."



Food banks

Foodbanks are in high demand but you need a unique code and vouchers to use them, and to get those you need to be referred.

The most common types of referrals to foodbanks come from job centres, housing charities like Acton Homeless Concern and EASE, a local community development charity. But, Ealing Foodbank actually has more than 200 referral partners, including schools, local charities, health visitors and the council's local welfare assistance service.

There is also a national freephone hardship number if none of these apply to you, which you can call 0808 208 2138 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm)



Watch video at aroundealing.com/around-ealing

Volunteering opportunity



School admission appeals panels

Ealing Council is looking for members of the community to hear parents' appeals for school places at their preferred school. These appeals are heard by independent panels and the council organises these for many primary and secondary schools in the borough. Panels are made up of 3 members with at least 1 from each of the below categories:

- lay members: People without personal experience in the management of any school or provision of education in any school (unless in a voluntary capacity or as a governor)
- non-lay members: People who have experience in education or who are familiar with educational conditions in the borough or who are parents of registered pupils at any school

How to apply

Please email schooladmissionappeals@ealing.gov.uk

Please note: If your application was successful, you would be required to attend a training session prior to serving as a panel member.



Climate grant funding

Are you a local community organisation looking to future proof your premises? If so, you can apply for funding of up to £10,000 to cut carbon and help reduce energy bills. Applications close 31 January 2025.

Councillor Paul Driscoll, the council's cabinet member for climate action, said: "This programme offers a valuable win-win: vital support for community organisations that also helps bring us closer to net zero target." Go to: aroundealing.com/news/apply-for-community-climate-funding



Tips for a green Christmas

Why not embrace a greener, more sustainable Christmas this year, by making small, eco-friendly changes to holiday traditions? Through these small changes you can significantly reduce waste, conserve energy, and help protect the environment. We've got some great tips to help you enjoy a green Christmas. Go to: aroundealing.com/news/a-greener-christmas



New look libraries

Acton, Northolt and Southall libraries are to be given a £900,000 refurbishment. Acton and Northolt libraries closed in November until March 2025, but they have moved to smaller temporary new homes.

Councillor Blerina Hashani, the council's cabinet member for thriving communities, said: "We want to continue supporting our libraries to be vibrant and inviting places for the community, which is why we're making this significant investment in them." Go to aroundealing.com/news/new-look-for-libraries



Help with winter worries

The council has brought together a selection of cold weather support to help you stay warm and healthy. Councillor Polly Knewstub, the council's cabinet member for healthy equal lives, said: "Please don't struggle alone this winter. There is lots of support available. We're here to help."

Read more: aroundealing.com/news/winter-help

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Weekend Social Club Vacancies

Dementia Concern run clubs on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday at our centres in Greenford and Acton for people living with Dementia.

We are currently looking for support workers, cooks and cleaners to join our vibrant teams. We have bank and contracted roles available.

If you have experience of people living with Dementia and enjoy being part of a friendly team, please contact Linda or Mary on **0208 568 4448** for further details.



Design for life

A local high school has been a base for an innovative new course to help teach young people how to shape local services.

The Urban Hack course is part of Ealing Council's wider vision of involving residents more in the design, and running, of community projects.

Based at Greenford High School, the 8-week course started in October and is due to conclude this month (December). It is being led by DK&A, a strategic design consultancy.

The 30 sixth form students who have taken part have studied 4 modules and they will be presenting what they have learned to senior staff at the council.

This includes team projects where they may have looked at various challenges affecting their community, such as climate change, housing, and the cost of living crisis.

As well as developing their skills and confidence, the course also aims to give the students options for exploring future careers in the civil service, social policymaking, and service design.

Ricks Llewellyn-Davies, from the council, who led on organising the course, said: "We're all users of public services, but public services aren't always designed with users in mind. So, this project is about passing on this skill set to the next generation. We will have a room of Ealing residents going forth into the

world with a new heightened sense, perhaps, of civic engagement and problem solving."

One of the sixth form students said: "I feel like I have developed my skills and I have learned more about service design. It's maybe something I can consider in the future."

However, some of the benefits have proved to be immediate, and not just for the future.

"The most challenging thing for me was we had to go outside and talk to the public," said another of the students. "Public speaking is not really my thing. But this course really did help me get over that fear."



Watch video at aroundealing.com/around-ealing

A dream come true

"This place does very much mean a lot. It's where I grew up," Craig Ross told Around Ealing when he became the headteacher of a local school that he used to go to as a child.

Two years later, and Craig is still as passionate about teaching – and St Gregory's Primary in Ealing – as he was before.

He started as headteacher exactly 30 years after starting as a pupil aged 5.

"For a very long time, I had this dream of being, firstly, a teacher; and, secondly, becoming a teacher at St Gregory's – just because I wanted to give something back to the community that had given me so much," explained Craig.

He hopes his example inspires some of the children to follow their own dreams. And also, that his story might encourage someone reading it to go into teaching themselves – like some of his former pupils are already starting to do.

'Best job ever'

"My year 6 teacher, Mr Kelly, made me want to learn and be the best I

could be," said Craig. "I then found myself wanting to do that for others.

"The best thing has been the bonds you make with other teachers and headteachers. I would definitely recommend becoming a teacher in the borough.

"It's been quite flattering having quite a few of my ex-pupils come back to visit, or even start their teaching practice and do some volunteering here or do some work experience. When I was teaching, I sold it as the best job ever. It's just the greatest to see some of them joining the profession."

'Like a family here'

In 2022, the school was rated



'good' by Ofsted, and inspectors highlighted that it was a happy place with a family atmosphere where all pupils get a good education.

"It's like a family here and everyone has their part to play," he said. "You can feel confident here, make friends – not just learn.

"I want to offer opportunities to do something and succeed, it is about making them believe they can do it."

Read the previous story at aroundealing.com/news/headteacher



Beavering away

It is now a year since beavers returned to the borough for the first time in centuries as part of a special rewilding project. Greenford's new residents have been very busy.

"They got to work straight away, modifying the environment and improving it," said Sean McCormack of Ealing Beaver Project, a group of organisations that teamed-up with Ealing Council on the project, and now manages the site at Paradise Fields.

"It's remarkable how much difference they have already made in a year," said council leader Peter Mason.

As well as building 5 dams, pollarding trees, and making themselves generally feel at home, the beaver couple have had babies too. They came with some young and, only a couple of months ago, some more tiny beaver kits were born. The babies are growing up fast, being taught by their parents how to help with dam building, and more.

But that's not all...

Sean said: "We've been monitoring water quality, which has improved by over 50%. They've clarified the water because their dams act as a giant filtration system."

This work has not gone unnoticed, with new species of birds –

including kingfishers – being attracted to the site, along with new species of bats, drawn to Paradise Fields by an explosion of insect life hatching out too.

'A magic pill'

Sean added: "So, already, we're seeing the beavers having a big impact, and very quickly, and we think that's only going to improve with time. They're described as a biodiversity 'magic pill' that you can drop into a system, and they create life for lots of other things. And the proof is already there."

Emily Bowen of the Beaver Trust said: "Beavers are a native species, and they're often referred to as 'ecosystem engineers' and a keystone species. And that's because they have such a huge impact on the landscape.

"Lots of people ask about what their diet is. They're purely plant based. They eat anything from herbs to the cambium layer of the tree just under the bark. They then use the rest of the wood for building their dams and lodges."

Good neighbours

The heavy rainfall in October led to flooding in various parts of the borough, including Greenford – but not the area of Greenford downstream from Paradise Fields, which was not affected at all.

Councillor Mason said: "The beaver project is a great example of how the council is working

with community groups and local volunteers to help with nature recovery. By being here, the beavers should invigorate nature and biodiversity across the whole area. But that's not all. They should also help to prevent flooding and drought. Meaning, local communities benefit too."

London leading the way

Who would have expected that north-west London would become a hotbed of beaver rewilding?

The beavers were introduced to Paradise Fields last year as a monitored 5-year trial. You can pop down for visits and, in the warmer months, for guided tours with the Ealing Beaver Project.

Meanwhile, in Enfield, the Beaver Trust has worked with Enfield Council and Capel Manor College on a similar, but separate, project. The college, which has a campus in the borough next to Gunnersbury Park, involves some of its students in helping to maintain and monitor the site.



Paradise Fields signage



Read more and watch video at
aroundealing.com/around-ealing

One of the beavers at Paradise Fields



Winning entry

Autumn glory

Our latest winner marks a year since the photography competition Seasons of Ealing made a fantastic comeback.

It's been a big success, thanks to a combination of the exceptional photos sent in by readers and then lots of you voting to choose our winners each time. Thank you.

We loved receiving the latest autumnal photos that were taken all across the borough – from landmarks to wildlife, pets and family days out – and, once again, the standard was very high.

And the winners were...

After receiving more than 100 entries, our panel had the task of trimming them down into a shortlist of 10 photos. It was not an easy task. These were then put to a

public vote to choose the winner, during November.

The winner was Inna Ryskal, of Ealing, and her picture of a misty day at Ealing Common.

As well as the photo appearing here and on Around Ealing website, they will receive the top prize of 4 tickets to watch a film at the new Ealing Picturehouse cinema.

In second place was Hanwell resident Nicola Goddard, with a photo of mushrooms in Perivale Wood.

And, in third place was Eszter Bán, of Acton, with a photo of her friend and one of the local cats.

Well done to everyone who was shortlisted and thank you so much to everyone who took part.

Could you be a winter winner?

The winter 2024/25 Seasons of Ealing competition is now open and will close on 5 January 2025 at 11.59pm. At that point, a shortlist will be selected and the winner will again be selected by the public and published in Around Ealing magazine. And they will also win cinema tickets. Our aim is to run the competition every season, giving you multiple opportunities to enter throughout the year.

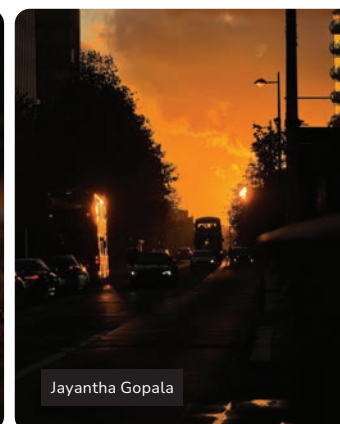
The idea is for you to enter your own snaps of anything wintry in your local park or back garden or even in your street; whatever captures your attention. The key is that it has to have been taken in the borough – and, must have been taken by you.

**Picture
house**

Runners up and other shortlisted entries



Kelly Chow



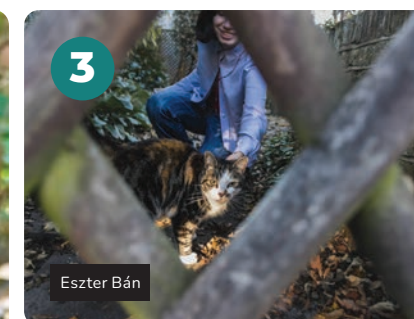
Jayantha Gopala



Liz Scarff



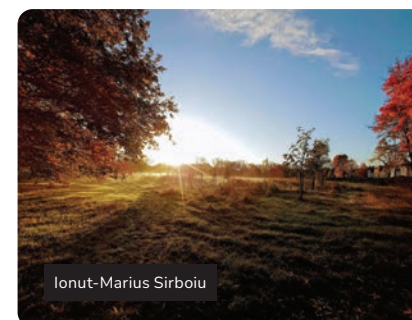
Nicola Goddard



Eszter Bán



Malgorzata Cichocka



Ionut-Marius Sirboiu



Dena Lees



Diggory Bailey



For full details of how to enter the winter contest (and the rules), visit aroundealing.com/news/winter-ealing-seasons



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January 2024



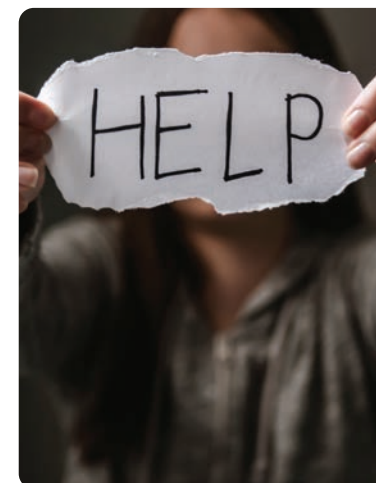
Book competition – win

Local author Rohith S. Katbamna is giving away 3 copies of his new book, *Gulab*, in this exclusive Around Ealing competition. This is the Hanwell author's second novel and is an urban noir set in the borough.

Readers will discover a man from across the world who arrives on the doorstep of a struggling young family. He tells them that his name is Manu. But in the quieter circles, he is infamously known as Gulab.

Gulab was released on 9 December. You could be in with a chance of winning your own copy for free by answering a simple question.

Find out how to enter in the digital version of Around Ealing at aroundealing.com/around-ealing



Support is available 24/7

Stress levels can soar at this time of year, which can all lead to changes in behaviour – and domestic abuse. If you're experiencing domestic violence, support is available 24/7.

You can call 999 in an emergency. If you cannot speak, you can cough or if prompted by the call operator you can answer questions by coughing or pressing buttons, you can press 55 to alert the call handler that it is an emergency.

Councillor Jasbir Anand, the council's cabinet member for tackling crime and anti-social behaviour, said: “No-one should have to suffer any type of abuse and there is a great deal of expert support available, please use it if you are affected.”

For information on local domestic abuse help and support services, go to www.saferealing.co.uk



Support for foster carers

Fostering households will receive a new package of support and rewards, to help recruit, and retain, more of the foster carers who do so much to improve the lives of children in care.

Go to: aroundealing.com/news/new-financial-support-for-foster-carers



Ealing needs foster carers

Ealing needs foster carers to provide loving homes for the children we care for.

We're excited to announce some fantastic new benefits to support our foster carers. Foster carers with Ealing Council will receive:

- full council tax exemption for Ealing residents and reimbursement for out of borough carers
- highly competitive fees and allowances – recent payment uplift of 18.5 %
- free parking in resident-controlled parking zones (CPZs) borough-wide
- free garden waste collection
- dedicated therapeutic support from our clinical psychologists
- discounts at council leisure centres
- excellent support including dedicated out of hours support, peer support and Mockingbird scheme
- bespoke training and other incentives



Contact us

Phone: 020 8753 1075

Make an enquiry: ealingfostering.co.uk

(*Fee uplift from Jan 2025, Council Tax exemption for band 2 carers and above whilst child is in placement, parking and garden waste incentives from April 2025, for band 1 carers and above)



HOMES

Tackling empty homes

Homeowners whose properties have been standing empty for more than a year will be charged double their usual council tax rate.

Ealing Council implemented this new charging system from 1 April, in line with government legislation, to help tackle the affordable housing crisis and bring empty homes back into use.

The council has been charging a premium for a number of years, on homes that had been empty for 2 years or more. It helps to encourage the owner to rent it out, carry out essential repairs, or sell it sooner.

Properties that have been standing empty for more than 5 or 10 years are charged an even higher rate.

Councillor Louise Brett, the council's deputy leader and cabinet member for safe and genuinely affordable homes, said: "The shortage of good homes is a huge challenge in the borough. This scheme aims to reduce the number of properties left empty for long periods, and bring them back into use."

"Supply of affordable housing is a huge issue across London, and schemes like this are key to ensuring that families in our borough can have access to safe, and genuinely affordable homes," added Councillor Shital Manro, cabinet member for good growth and new homes.

Any affected homeowners will have received an amended council tax bill.

More to come...

Second homes and unoccupied furnished properties will have a similar premium introduced to their council tax charges from April 2025.

There are some exclusions to these charges, for example if the home is under probate.

And, from next April, the council will also start charging extra for second homes, where the property is not occupied as someone's sole or main residence. Affected

households will be notified so they can make any necessary changes to their living arrangements before this new rule is introduced.

How can I reduce my council tax?

If you own an empty or second home, you may be able to reduce your council tax bill by:

- renting out your property to a tenant or a lodger
- applying for a discount of 100% which will expire after the first 14 days of your property becoming empty
- carrying out renovation works or structural alterations to bring your property back into use. While the works are carried out, you may apply to the Valuation Office Agency with a proposal to remove your property from the valuation listing. No council tax would be payable if your property is removed from the valuation list.



For more information go to:
ealing.gov.uk



Shakuntla Gittins with her MBE medal



Watch video at
[aroundealing.com/around-ealing](https://www.aroundealing.com/around-ealing)

Changing lives

“I always wanted to foster, I love children, and I have the patience to listen. I was often a mother figure to my younger siblings. Family has always been important to us, and we were very close to each other growing up - we still are.”

Shakuntla Gittins, 72, has been a foster carer for the council since 2008 and has looked after more than 30 children in that time – from babies to teenagers.

She was encouraged to go into foster caring by her own mother, Pushpa, who herself was a foster carer in the borough for 20 years.

Shakuntla, who has 2 grown-up children of her own, is currently fostering a 14-year-old girl, who moved in with her in February 2023, and the pair have plans to make this a long-term arrangement.

Ealing Council's Foster Carer of the Year in 2017, Shakuntla was then awarded an MBE for services to children in 2020. She was presented her medal by Prince Charles, now King, at St James's Palace in 2021, after COVID-19 restrictions had been lifted.

Shakuntla's first placement was 3 siblings, aged 10 and 12 years old and a 5-month old baby. They stayed with her and her son, who was 13 at the time, for nearly 2 years. Years later, when the eldest

turned 18, they got back in touch with Shakuntla, after connecting with her son on Facebook.

She said: “It made me feel so good that they remembered me and appreciated what I did.”

Indeed, during the course of her foster caring career to date, there has been plenty of proud moments for Shakuntla.

Creating connections

“Some of the children who have stayed with me over the years have faced real hardship and difficult times,” she said. “I have had to work hard to break down barriers and to encourage them to open up and communicate with me. It isn't an easy job, but it is very rewarding to know that you can have a positive influence on a young person's life.”

Recalling a particular special moment, she added: “My young person came down out of blue with open arms for a hug, for the very first time, and I was taken aback. I said, ‘wow what's happening here?’ and she said, ‘I just wanted to do that’. I hugged her back and said ‘lovely, I like that.’”

Support

To enable foster carers to best support children, Ealing Council provides an in-house therapeutic service offering targeted support, as well as facilitating support groups.

“The psychology service provides someone you can talk to and voice



Shakuntla Gittins

your fears and worries to and find support and answers – not judgement,” said Shakuntla. She added: “And I've always been allocated a great social worker who offers support to myself and the children.

“I have a buddy too, a fellow carer, to share experiences with and meet for coffee. And we often get to meet other carers at events that the council holds.

“And my family has been wonderful, my daughter is even considering becoming a foster carer too. I'm very proud of my children, they are great.”

Interested in fostering?

For more information, email contact@fosteratwestlondon.org.uk, call freephone 0800 731 6550 or visit www.ealingfosteradopt.co.uk – where you can also take part in information sessions at www.ealingfosteradopt.co.uk/events



The right way to recycle

Recycling right

Thanks to your efforts, Ealing has one of the best recycling rates in London. But, with more elaborate packaging designed to get our attention, particularly around the festive period, it can be tricky to know what can and cannot be recycled.

If the wrong items are put into the recycling bins it means that large amounts of good quality recycling can be thrown away as rubbish because it gets mixed with the items that should not be put in the blue bins.

So, as a reminder, here are a few things to remember to get recycling right. If in doubt, leave it out.

On your recycling collection day put your blue bin out at the edge of your property where it can clearly be seen.

If you aren't sure if an item can be recycled, you can check online. Go to www.recyclenow.com

✓ Yes please	✗ No thanks
Loose recycling. If you have extra, use clear bags so the collection crews can see the recycling	Black bags of rubbish
Clean paper	Dirty pizza boxes, paper plates, coffee cups, glittery cards/paper
Food tins and drinks cans (rinsed out)	Food scraps (use your weekly food recycling bin) Crockery and Pyrex
Glass bottles and jars (rinsed out)	Crisp packets, cling film, bread bags
Plastic bottles	Nappies
Clean cardboard	Polystyrene
Clean foil	Toys
Plastic pots and tubs	Electrical items and batteries
Plastic trays	Clothing



Putting items in the recycling bins that you think should be recycled, but actually can't be recycled, is wish-cycling. If you aren't sure, visit www.ealing.gov.uk/recycling

Reduce and reuse

It's much more beneficial for the environment to throw less away. This means reusing and repairing items, borrowing and renting, and if you need to buy something, buy it second-hand.

With ever increasing ways to reduce and reuse, it's never been easier to do your bit to help the environment.

Library of Things

If you're looking for an item you're only going to use once or twice - why not hire something instead of buying it? You'll get better value for money, and it won't take up valuable cupboard space either.

Check out more than 30 items available from the borough's Library of Things - from a wet and dry vacuum and carpet cleaner to clean up those little accidents, to a projector and screen so you can spend the dark evenings lost in a great film or binge watching your favourite series.

Go to: www.libraryofthings.co.uk

Hire a party kit

Local social network group, Ealing 135 has an exciting new offer for local families. You can avoid the



RECYCLING

Acton market

need to throw away hundreds of paper plates and cups at children's parties by hiring a reusable party kit from them.

From small parties to a whole class, you can now borrow everything you need in one bag and support the local community too.

Go to www.ealing135.org.uk

Ealing Repair Café

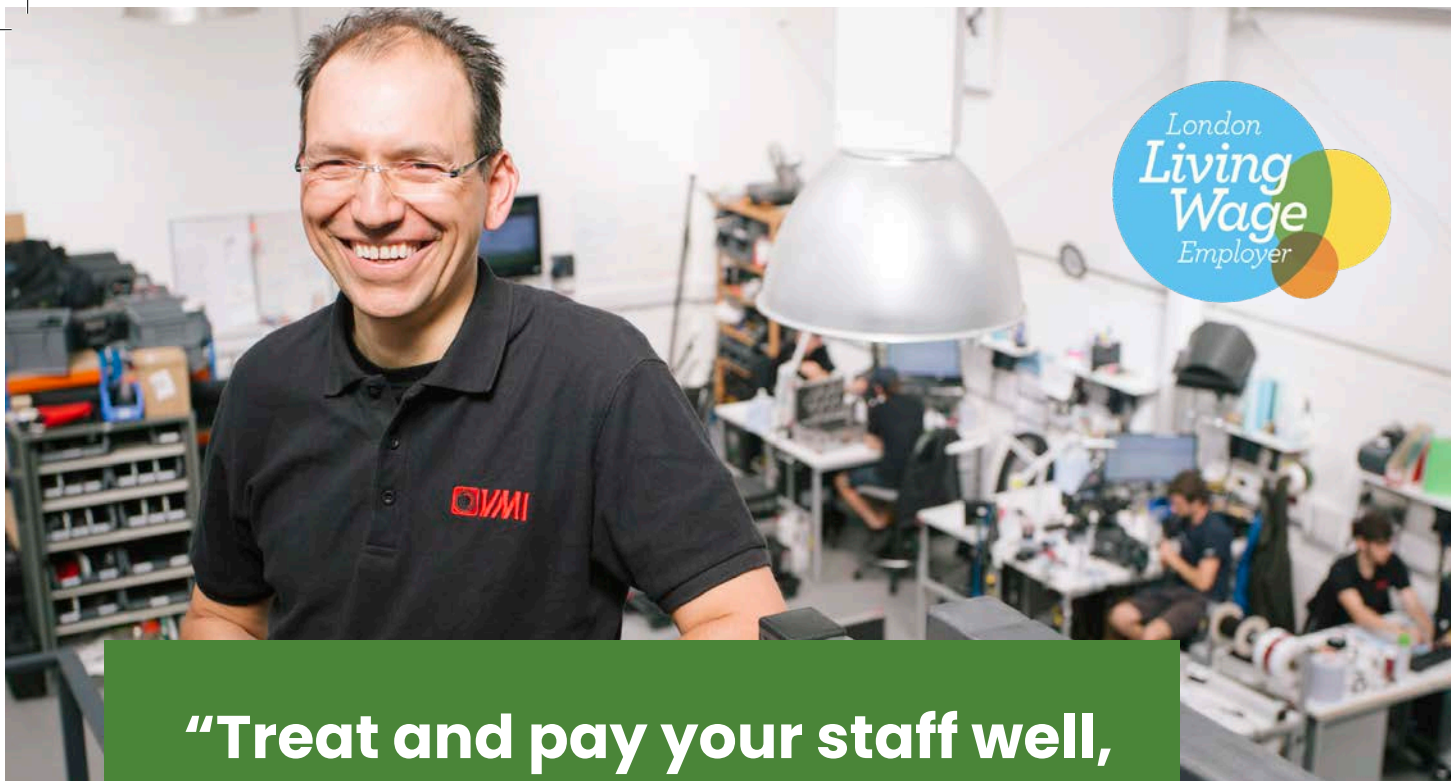
Learn how to repair your clothes with Ealing Repair Café. From sewing on a button to shortening a hem they have lots of useful guides on their website, or you can go along to one of their regular events. Visit www.ealingrepaircafe.org

Acton Reduce and Recycle Hub

Acton Market takes place on the first Saturday of the month (except in January and August). Come along to buy a second-hand bike or get yours serviced, swap books, get knives and scissors sharpened and take part in uniform and costume swap events. For the full list of events visit www.marketw3.co.uk/the-reduce-and-recycle-hub

Washable nappy library

You can now try washable nappies before buying them with a new initiative run by local network, Ealing135. Go to www.ealing135.org.uk



“Treat and pay your staff well, and they will stay”

More than 70 local employers – like Barry Bassett from Acton-based VMI.TV – already pay the London Living Wage, which gives workers enough to support themselves and save.

As well as helping your team, it could help your bottom line too. 94% of accredited businesses say it helps attract customers and leads to better staff recruitment and retention.

And with a new package of incentives from Ealing Council, it’s a great time to get involved.

The London Living Wage – good for business, good for Ealing.



Find out more



Wages: food for thought

“Being paid the London Living Wage allows me to maintain my day-to-day expenses and I can save a bit of money. I think that’s what every employee expects,” said Yamini Panneerselvam.

Yamini is the people and payroll administrator at Belazu, a company making and distributing chef-grade Mediterranean ingredients.

Based in Greenford, Belazu has been making its oils, pastes, and pesto since 1991.

It pays its staff the London Living Wage – an hourly rate of pay calculated to give workers in the capital enough to afford the essentials and help them to save money.

‘Increased productivity’

Yamini told us that being paid the London Living Wage, among other benefits, makes her want to stay with Belazu for a long time.

She said: “Paying the London Living Wage is a key value for us. The company wants to make sure employees are happy working here. By being accredited, good and

diverse staff are retained, equality is maintained, and there is increased productivity.

“If other companies paid the London Living Wage, employees might stay longer in the business and give more input.

“This could be the reason why a business is successful.”

Unlock incentives and support

Being accredited is good for business. Employers who sign up to become accredited by 31 March 2025 will be able to access a range of great benefits from Ealing Council, such as recruitment services, and training for employees.

JOB



‘Plenty of benefits’

Councillor Kamaljit Nagpal, the council’s cabinet member for decent living incomes, said: “I’m happy to hear that businesses in the borough, such as Belazu, base their values around ensuring employees are happy and productive by paying the London Living Wage.

“There are plenty of benefits of being an accredited business. Remember to take advantage of our incentive scheme by becoming accredited by 31 March.”

Speak to a member of the team by emailing invest@ealing.gov.uk or you can find out more at goodforealing.com



**Watch video at
aroundealing.com/around-ealing**

CONTACT YOUR COUNCILLORS

Details of all councillor surgeries are available at www.ealing.gov.uk/councillors

Key: ● Acton ● Ealing ● Greenford ● Hanwell ● Northolt ● Perivale ● Southall

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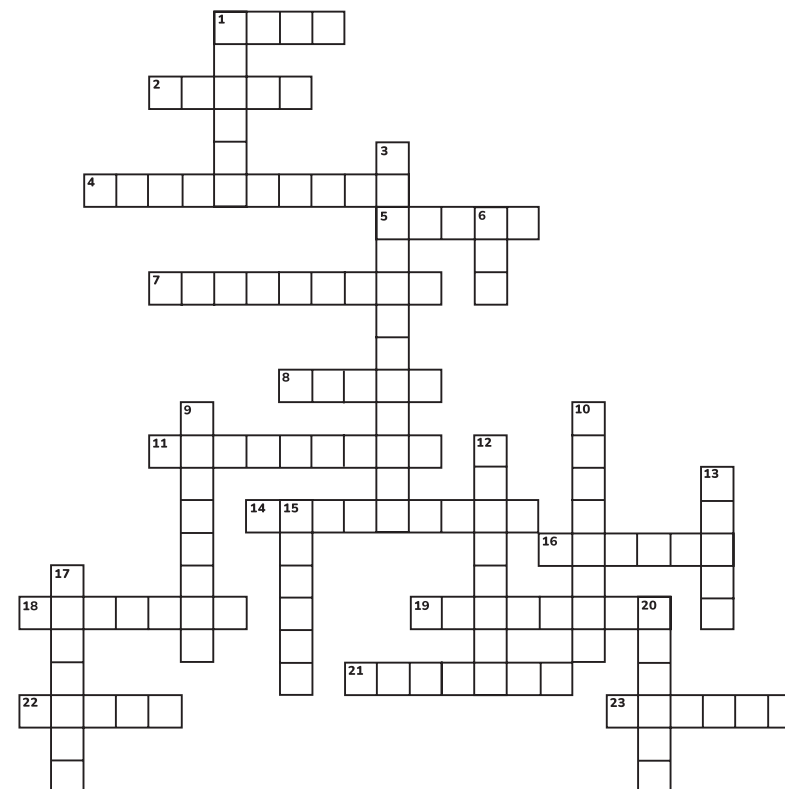
Berkeley
Designed for life

Prices and details are correct at time of print. Computer generated image is indicative only. November 2024.

BEFORE YOU GO

Crossword

Have a go at our crossword. Stuck? The answers can be found in the digital edition of the winter magazine at aroundealing.com/around-ealing - where you can also leave ideas for future crosswords.



Across

- [1] Footballer awarded freedom of the borough
- [2] Name of local river
- [4] A manor house where Sir John Soane lived
- [5] Town where only fools and horses was filmed
- [7] Big annual event. Ealing Summer ____
- [8] Hanwell Zoo's old nickname '____ park'
- [11] A large hill in the north of the borough
- [14] There are 12 days of ____
- [16] William ____ School in Greenford
- [18] Reduce, reuse, ____
- [19] Sikh temple
- [21] There are plans to replace this leisure centre
- [22] Sits on top of a tower in Hanwell
- [23] Music festival held in Hanwell

Down

- [1] Santa rides on one of these
- [3] Rugby club in Ealing
- [6] Type of tree. Linked to the name of Acton
- [9] 'Let's Go ____' group in a local town
- [10] Former Prime Minister and name of a building
- [12] Name of new park in Perivale
- [13] The Grand Union is one
- [15] Ex-president of USA and name on a Perivale building
- [17] Stadium knocked down and rubble used to create the 4 mounds of Northala
- [20] This cinema opened a second screen recently (see autumn magazine)

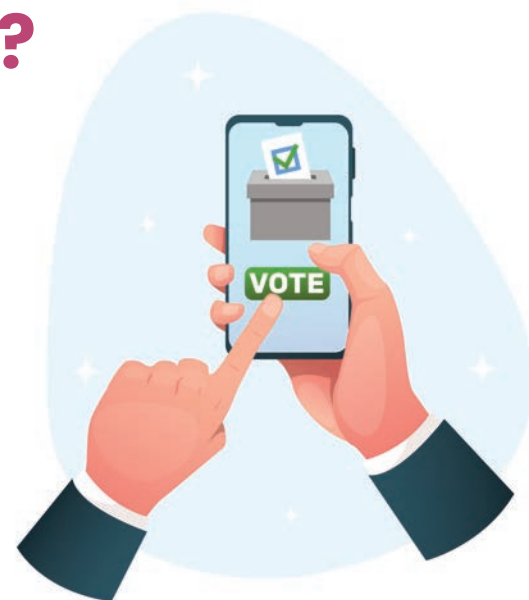
Have you voted for your town priority?

Help decide what's important to where you live, work or study.

Voting ends 5 January 2025



dosomethinggood.org.uk/your-voice-your-town/



What's on?

Jack and the Beanstalk

Until 31 December
The Questors Theatre, Mattock Lane, Ealing
Cost: £10-£26

Join Jack on his quest up into the clouds to defeat the giant and save the princess aided (or should that be hindered?) by his mother and brother.

Visit ealingculture.org/event/jack-and-the-beanstalk/

Ealing Christmas Market

Until 24 December
Ealing Broadway Shopping Centre, Town Square, Ealing

Market stalls throughout the week selling gifts and hot food, a regular Santa's grotto, live Christmas music every Saturday (until 21 December) and even daily snow flurries (4pm, 23-31 December).

Visit www.ealingbroadwayshopping.co.uk/christmas-day-out



For more, visit ealingculture.org/whats-on

Recycling and rubbish

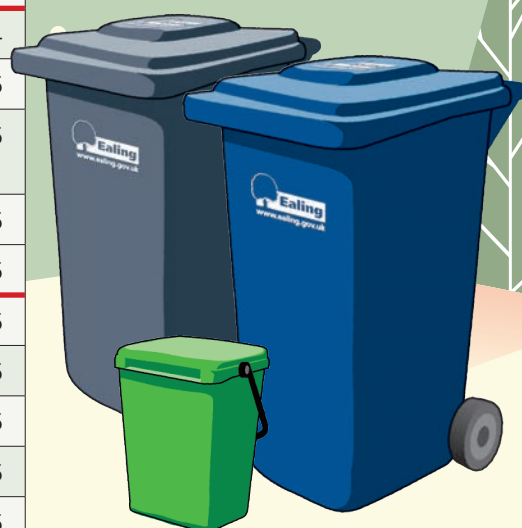
Christmas and new year collections

- Rubbish and recycling wheelie bin collections may change over Christmas and new year for homes and businesses.

Normal collection day	Date	Revised collection day	Date
Monday	23/12/2024	No change	23/12/2024
Tuesday	24/12/2024	No change	24/12/2024
Wednesday (Christmas Day)	25/12/2024	Friday	27/12/2024
Thursday (Boxing Day)	26/12/2024	Saturday	28/12/2024
Friday	27/12/2024	Monday	30/12/2024
Monday	30/12/2024	Tuesday	31/12/2024
Tuesday	31/12/2024	Thursday	02/01/2025
Wednesday (New Year's Day)	01/01/2025	Friday	03/01/2025
Thursday	02/01/2025	Saturday	04/01/2025
Friday	03/01/2025	Monday	06/01/2025
Monday	06/01/2025	Tuesday	07/01/2025
Tuesday	07/01/2025	Wednesday	08/01/2025
Wednesday	08/01/2025	Thursday	09/01/2025
Thursday	09/01/2025	Friday	10/01/2025
Friday	10/01/2025	Saturday	11/01/2025



Collections from flats with communal collections will differ further. Please check at www.ealing.gov.uk/recycling



Collections return to normal on Monday, 13 January 2025.

For more information, visit www.ealing.gov.uk/recycling

Christmas tree recycling

Get the new year off to a green start by recycling your Christmas tree. Visit aroundealing.com/news/christmas-trees-2025 for more details.

