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Colindale man jailed after kidnapping woman outside her home

BY DAVID FLOYD

A Colindale man has been jailed for nine years after taking part in the kidnapping of a pregnant woman outside her home last year.

The woman was grabbed from the street and bundled into a Ford Transit van as she waited for a cab on 10th May 2024.

Her three attackers bound her hands with cable ties and questioned her about her partner – with one demanding: “If you lie to me I’m gonna kick the baby out your stomach.”

They then telephoned her partner and threatened to cut off her fingers if he did not give them money and valuable jewellery.

However, despite being blindfolded and bound at the wrist, when the woman was left alone in

the van she managed to escape and flagged down a cab before travelling to her mother’s house.

Nicholas Mitchell, 55, of Mannoek Close in Colindale was one of the three kidnappers subsequently tracked down by the Metropolitan Police. He was sentenced to nine years for conspiracy to kidnap on 14th August at Kingston Crown Court. Audi Johnson, 35, from Northholt was sentenced to five years and four months, and Ahmed Ghiasi, 26, from Luton, was sentenced to seven years for the same offence.

They were members of a gang, contracted to carry out the kidnapping in Enfield. Police tracked the van using CCTV and were able to locate it on the night that the woman escaped. They

were able to identify the suspects using DNA evidence, fingerprint impressions and mobile phone data.

Johnson had pleaded guilty, while Mitchell and Ghiasi were found guilty of conspiracy to kidnap on Tuesday, 3rd June following a six-week trial at the same court.

In her victim impact statement, the woman explained that she had not been able to go home since the ordeal and had been sleeping on her sister’s couch.

She said: “The incident ruined my life. I will never be the same person again. I am having to start my life all over again.

“I will forever have fear and paranoia as part of my life now. I didn’t deserve to be a victim of what happened to me. And to top it off,

it was all made so much worse by being pregnant.

“This will always be something that will be part of my pregnancy, which is meant to be a happy experience, and will always be something that is a part of my daughter.”

Detective Inspector Ari Yoganathan, who led the Met’s investigation, said: “The victim was leaving her home to see her personal trainer on a morning that should have been like any other. That a pregnant mother should be bundled into a van and kidnapped from outside her home, bound and subjected to horrific threats is a disgusting and terrifying crime.

“This verdict shows how we are taking the fight to criminal gangs and committed to supporting the local communities they intimidate and threaten.”

*“The incident
ruined my life”*



ABOUT

Barnet Post is the borough’s free community newspaper: written by and for local people, giving you the chance to learn more about what is going on in your area and to read (and write) stories about what matters to you.

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Published on 29/08/2025

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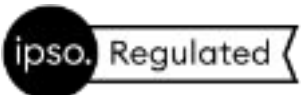

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Full list of police front desk closures confirmed – but Colindale set to stay open

BY KUMAIL JAFFER, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Sir Sadiq Khan has been accused of failing to honour a manifesto promise to maintain a police front office counter in all 32 London boroughs.

In his manifesto prior to last year’s election, London mayor pledged to “ensure the Met is able to effectively respond to the public, including maintaining a 24-hour police front office counter in every borough”.

However, the Metropolitan Police confirmed last month that 18 out of 37 counters will be closed, including Edmonton and Tottenham, while Wood Green will reopen as a replacement to serve both Enfield and Haringey boroughs. Colindale is set to stay open.

After the closures go ahead, just 20 front desks will be open across the capital for Londoners to report a crime in person.



Colindale Police Station

Assistant Commissioner Matt Twist told the London Assembly the move will save the Met £7million, as part of its bid to fill a £260-million funding gap.

He justified the closures by suggesting crime reporting at station counters has significantly reduced to just 5% “as people have shifted to the use of phones and online means”.

Twist added: “At some front counters, we see less than two-and-a-half crimes a day reported. At the busiest, in Charing Cross, we see 15 crimes.

“The average is four crimes a day reported across three shifts, which are often staffed by two people.

“We’ve made deliberate choices to protect neighbourhood policing and services that matter most to Londoners.

“Whilst we are shrinking overall, we are changing the shape of our organisation to better serve the public and meet increasing demands for policing.

“This is about making the Met more accessible and visible in neighbourhoods at a time when the organisation is shrinking – and to do so, we need to cut the pie a bit differently.

“We are making the decision to reduce an underused resource to allow us to continue to strengthen neighbourhood policing teams.”

Khan was not present for an extraordinary plenary session at City Hall, instead sending Kaya Comer-Schwartz, the deputy mayor

for policing and crime, to face questions alongside Twist.

Conservative assembly member Thomas Turrell asked if it was “irresponsible” for the mayor to have made the commitment in last year’s manifesto. Comer-Schwartz said: “The mayor’s manifesto is clear about the importance of restoring visible neighbourhood policing and building safer, more confident communities in London.

“The mayor has shown a dedication to keeping Londoners safe.”

The 14 full-time counter closures include Harrow, Kensington and Chingford, while four which were already operating on reduced hours will also be shut.

Twist said the move will also save 3,752 hours of police officer time per month. Non-specialist staff currently have to backfill front counter shifts that can’t be resourced by public access officers.

The Met took into account front counter demand, accessibility and geographic spread, and operational alignment to custody suites and investigative teams when deciding which ones to close.

Twist confirmed that Khan’s front counter pledge, which was also included in the ‘New Met for London’ plan, was broken due to a lack of funding.

“We are changing the shape of our organisation to better serve the public and meet increasing demands”

“We could not have foreseen that two years ago, when New Met for London was written, the scale of the gap was going to be as big as it was at the end of 2024,” he said.

“Savings have to be made somewhere – this is the least worst option. Looking at the overall financial picture, which is really challenging – if we can save £7m by reducing a service for which demand has reduced significantly over the last decade, that seems like the right thing to do.”

He said Londoners will still have the option of using stations which have their front counters closed to make a phone call.

Conservative leader Susan Hall accused Khan of being a “coward” by sending his deputy mayor to face the London Assembly, adding: “He made a promise that he would have a 24/7 police station in every BCU [borough command unit], he has always said he will keep them open.”

Later, Comer-Schwartz, who admitted she found out about the scale of the cuts “in June or July”, could not give a guarantee every borough will retain at least one police station.

Liberal Democrat Assembly Member Hina Bokhari responded: “It begs the question really, what is

the point of having a deputy mayor for policing and crime if you are not going to intervene on behalf of Londoners when these massive changes are being proposed.”

Reform UK assembly member Alex Wilson told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: “Having a visible and accessible counter in each borough was a manifesto pledge – it’s a sorry situation to do this for the amount of money this will save.

“London is lawless – yet Sadiq Khan’s response is to close half of London’s Met Police front desks.

“He says he hasn’t got the money to keep them open. That’s not true. He spends £1.4billion a year on net zero and just £1.11bn a year on crime.

“Saving these front desks would cost just 0.36% of his climate budget each year.”

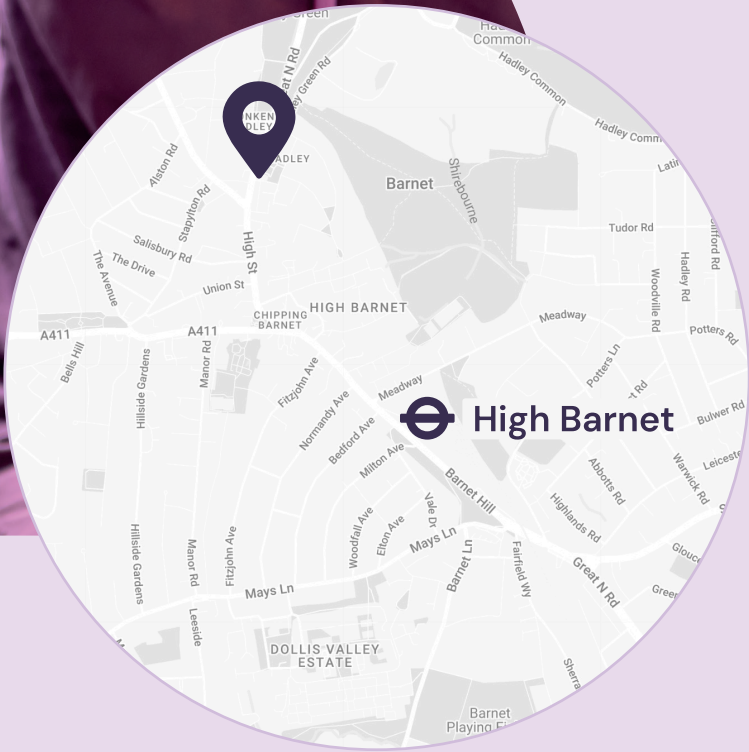
A Met spokesperson said: “Just 5% of crimes were reported using front counters last year, with only 1% of these being made during the night. At the busiest front counter in London on average 15 crimes are reported a day – less than one an hour – and in the least busy, only 2.5 crimes are reported a day.

“Londoners tell us they want to see more officers on our streets. The decision to reduce and close some front counters will save £7m and 3,752 hours of police officer time per month allowing us to focus resources relentlessly on tackling crime and putting more officers into neighbourhoods across London.”

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NEWS



Anesta Edge receives a Barnet Civic Award from then mayor, Cllr Tony Vourou
Credit Rephael House

North Finchley mental health charity’s call for support

BY DAVID FLOYD

North Finchley mental health charity is calling for local support after a series of failed funding applications left its services under threat.

Rephael House, based in Woodhouse Road, has been providing therapy for both children and adults for 28 years. While it has NHS funding for some of its children’s services, it relies on grants to keep the costs of adult services affordable.

CEO Anesta Edge told *Barnet Post* that, after funding initially received the Covid-19 pandemic had come to an end, new funding has been hard to come by. She said: “Without community support it is going to be very difficult for us.”

There is high demand for what the charity offers, with 237 people using its services in June and a waiting list of over 100. However, Anesta says

it is becoming increasingly difficult to get grant funders to support organisations that have been providing the same services for a long time. She explains: “People want something that’s new and innovative. But what we provide is what we’ve provided for 28 years and it works.”

Anesta also worries that some people are now less interested in mental health generally, as it’s not seen as a new and exciting problem. She adds: “People are over hearing about anxiety and depression but it hasn’t gone away.”

Rephael House is focused on making services accessible both practically and financially. Therapy sessions are available outside office hours to ensure people in work or education are able to attend. Anesta says: “People can’t always access a nine-to-five service, which is why we’ve made ourselves a seven day a week, evening and daytime service.”

Alongside this flexibility, a key element of the charity’s approach is to keep fees low, so that the “squeezed middle” who would be unable to afford more expensive private therapy are able to use the service. Anesta says: “For us, therapy needs to not be elitist.” She adds: “We don’t want to put our fees up anymore but, if we don’t get funding, then we have to.”

Following failed grant funding bids to National Lottery Community Fund and Children in Need, Rephael House is asking local people to help in any way that they can.

Anesta is planning a sponsored walk and is keen to hear from others who would be interested in doing similar activities to support the charity. She is also keen to hear from local organisations who might be able to sponsor therapy sessions.

To support Rephael House go to: www.rephaelhouse.org.uk/SupportingUs

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Barnet students celebrate A Level success

BY DAVID FLOYD

Barnet students celebrated their A Level results last month with a big increase in the percentage achieving an A* to C grade.

Based on the results available, 85.7% achieved an A* to C compared to 81.7% in 2024.

The overall figures for this year show 97.4% of A Level examinations were awarded an A* to E grade in line with the national average, with 85.7% of students achieving an A* to C grade (above the national average of 77.7%).

At the top end of the grades, 66.9% achieved an A* to B and 39.9% A* to A. This means the percentage awarded an A* to A is over eleven percentage points higher than the national average (28.2%) and is over eight percentage points above the London average (31.3%).

Reacting to news of their results on 14th August, some students from The Compton School talked about how they felt and the implications for their future.

Luca Reddi, who got three As in A Level physics, product design and maths, and will now go on to study aerospace engineering at Sheffield University, said: “I feel great – I feel a bit tired; I didn’t get much sleep.”

Luke Collins, who will go to Cardiff University after getting three As in A Level chemistry, biology and geography, said: “It was a dark time, waiting for my results, but now everything seems to have got brighter. I’m optimistic! It just feels unreal, but it feels right at the same time.”

Xhoana Spacho received a Distinction* in BTEC business and an A* in A Level sociology. Her friend Chiara Rapia got a Distinction* in BTEC business and an A in A Level sociology.

They are both going to City University to study Law. Xhoana said: “I am happy I got the results. I can’t wait to go there, explore, get more experience and hopefully we will become good lawyers. That’s the goal.”

Chiara said: “I am just relieved.”

Louise Ismail and Andrew Hammond, co-headteachers at the school, said: “We couldn’t be prouder of all our students who we know worked so hard, with the support of their teachers and families, to achieve these results.”

Students across the borough have also been receiving results from vocational courses (applied generals and technical levels), with some schools today reporting their highest number of Distinctions* and Distinctions.

Pauline Coakley Webb, Barnet’s cabinet member for education said: “Congratulations to everyone who picked up their results today whether it be A Levels, T Levels, applied generals or technical levels. You have put in a lot of hard work and deserve a successful future. Your next steps in further education or work will enable you to fulfil a valuable purpose in life.

“We thank you all and also say thank you to all your teachers and the whole school community who have helped make your achievement possible.”



Barnet students celebrating their results
Credit Barnet Council

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MDX SUPPORTS BARNET STUDENTS FROM THE CLASSROOM TO FUTURE CAREERS

With the new academic year around the corner many Barnet students will be starting at Middlesex University. The University works closely with schools and colleges in the borough and Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) to ensure outstanding outcomes for pupils.

Jack du Pille, Middlesex University's Education Liaison and Outreach Manager, said: "We want every student in the Borough to understand options around further study, apprenticeships and support them on their journey to university if that's the route they want to follow.

"In February this year, together with BELS, we had a meeting with 10 schools and colleges across the borough to launch the Barnet Lifelong Learning Agreement. The aim is to ensure students are more aware of opportunities within the borough and to develop skills and knowledge for the jobs market. It not only supports students' futures but also the needs for skills within Barnet.

"If your child is a student in Barnet they will have the opportunity of a guaranteed interview or offer, and activities that build skills for life and work. They will gain confidence and be supported from the classroom to their future careers."

The agreement supports Barnet's Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy. Middlesex University and BELS are working together to help local students on their journey from school to career and the agreement offers Barnet students a guaranteed interview or offer to study at Middlesex.



It also provides schools with employability workshops, access to annual events such as STEM Festival and visits on campus focused on specific subjects.

Last year Middlesex delivered 60 activities with over 4,000 Barnet school and college students. More than 1,200 of these students visited the Hendon campus, exploring facilities such as the laboratories and nursing wards.

Primary school children from years 3 to 5 loved being 'scientists for the day' on campus when they took part in our Chemistry outreach programme. They enjoyed completing their own practical potion experiment which used liquids featuring names such as 'vampire blood', 'dragon whiskers', 'spider eggs' and 'monster serum'.

For the past two years, pupils from Saracens High School have completed four days of nursing and midwifery training sessions at Middlesex University on their journey to a potential career in healthcare. These sessions have been developed together by Middlesex, schools and BELS to support pupils studying a T Level

in Health and better prepare them for their industry placement. This year, four of these students will progress onto nursing and midwifery degree programmes.

The training sessions gave the students a real taste of what it would be like to be at university and also a window into a career in healthcare. The feedback was really positive with one participant saying "Doing all the practical sessions at Middlesex University brought everything I learned in the classroom to life so that it all made sense. I hope to go to university with this qualification and I'd like to go into children's nursing."

Commenting on the collaboration between BELS and the University, Professor Shân Wareing, Middlesex University's Vice-Chancellor, said: "The evidence is clear, going to university is still the most powerful thing you can do to boost your lifetime earnings, progress more quickly in your career and improve your health outcomes and we are committed to making university more accessible to our local community

"We want to ensure students are prepared for lifelong learning and leadership and that their talents help employers across Barnet and North London thrive.

For more information about how MDX can support your school please email: educationliaison@mdx.ac.uk



INTERVIEWS

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Local action and the quest for growth

David Floyd talks to Dan Tomlinson about his first year as an MP

When Dan Tomlinson was elected in Chipping Barnet in July last year, he became the first ever Labour MP for the constituency.

We meet in a cafe in Whetstone in July to discuss a first year in parliament that has seen him take part in a range of local campaigns, while also being appointed as 'growth mission champion', a role which sees him standing up for pro-growth policies across government departments.

I ask Tomlinson about the highlights of his first year as an MP. After talking about getting to know the constituency "even better" and backing local organisations and events, he says he is most proud of Smartphone Free Schools, which saw him work with campaigners to get state schools across the borough to ban smartphones from September.

He explains: "It came up, genuinely, on the doorstep – with parents of kids in primary school saying, essentially, we need help. We can't hold back the tide of smartphones."

As he looked into the issue it was clear teachers were equally worried: "Early on in the process, I emailed all the headteachers of schools in Chipping Barnet and asked them to meet me.

"I asked them all to rate on a scale of one to ten how worried they were about smartphones in their schools. And every single



one said ten out of ten."

The key problem the campaign solved was that it was hard for any one school to take action on their own but they could if they all acted together.

Despite local successes, it's been a difficult year for the incoming Labour government. We met shortly after the government had been forced to reverse controversial reforms to disability benefits after opposition from its own MPs.

Tomlinson outlines the challenge of

responding to this kind of issue at a local level. He says: "When the government first announced its intention to reform disability benefits, we got lots of emails in, and I replied to everyone who thought they'd be affected and said if you want a phone call, I'll have one with you.

"Since then I've had around 20 phone calls with individual constituents, which has been really helpful for me to understand the nitty-gritty of how people's lives are affected by the big policy decisions that are made in Westminster.

"I think that the government is right not to rush this, I really do."

But, he adds: "I definitely support the need to reform the system. We've got 1,000 people every day moving on to personal independence payments."

The challenge that the government, and MPs like Tomlinson who are not inclined to rebel against its agenda, face is that they want to spend money but are held back by the fact that they don't have enough of it.

For Tomlinson, the best response to the challenge is to find ways to increase growth. The government, he says, needs to "put the pedal to the floor" to "get the economy back on its feet".

When I ask what this means in practice, he responds with the combination of specific pro-growth policies and a passionate plea for a change in our national mindset.

He says: "After the war they built new towns within the space of a few years. They were up, people were living in them, people were able to live near good jobs, have nice new homes and new gardens and good infrastructure. Why can't our country do that quickly anymore?"

He adds: "In the 1950s in the UK, the Queen couldn't stop opening nuclear power

stations because we were really good at it. We started work on one, then five years later we finished it, and then over and over again we were building more, building that resilience into the future."

More recently, he explains, British governments have faced situations where "the decision is do you upset some people and get some growth, or do you upset no-one and stay stagnant?"

The result has been: "We've chosen to upset no-one and stay stagnant for decades – and this government is trying to do something different. It's a strong positive message."

Returning to the local level, I ask Tomlinson what key changes he'd like to see locally during this parliamentary term. This produces a mixture of nuts and bolts issues, convening of partners to deliver change and bigger national challenges.

Firstly, "I want to see more police on the streets locally in Barnet. The number of police was slashed in the last 14 years by more than half... We've made progress. There's 16 more police officers in Barnet now than at the time of the last election."

Secondly, "I want to see our high streets improved. Whetstone High Street's pretty good, but it could be better. Up in High Barnet, there's too many vacant shops, too many vacant properties, and I want to bash some heads together and get some of these vacant units let again... use the convening power I've got as an MP."

Tomlinson's final key challenge is improving special education needs (Send) provision for local young people. He explains: "The current system just is set up for confrontation, for disagreement, rather than for helping children who need help. So much of the casework and the conversations that I have has been about that issue over the last year, so I hope we can make improvements... I hear from so many parents just how bureaucratic and slow the system is."

While many support these sentiments, the wider context is that the cost of Send support is already pushing many councils to the point of bankruptcy. Is Tomlinson really confident this problem can be solved other than with more money? He says the problems are rooted in "the design of the system set by central government" and is optimistic about the outlook for change.

He adds: "I know parents sometimes have to fight for their kids and I support them when they do that but wouldn't it be better if, rather than having to go through three years to get a diagnosis to then get your child the support they need, we could trust parents and teachers more and get the right money to the right people sooner?"

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FEATURES

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Little Simz at Øyafestivalen 2022
Credit Kim Erlandsen, NRK P3 on Flickr.
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Little Simz: rising loud from North London

Anjola Fashawe celebrates Little Simz and local youth communications charity Exposure’s role in empowering young people

Sometimes the people who inspire us most come from places that the world overlooks, from postcodes and communities written off before their stories can be told. Exposure offers a voice and platform to those who might not normally have one, opening doors for young people to share their experiences and shape culture on their own terms.

The recent release of Little Simz’s new album *Lotus*, a stripped-back, raw and potent project, had me reflecting on her journey, her voice and the ways her story intersects with mine. I’ve always felt drawn to Simbi Ajikawo, her real name, for oddly specific reasons. We share the same birthday, 23rd February, though she’s twelve years older. Her nickname ‘Simz’ reminds me of my older sister Simi. And of course there’s the Nigerian connection; like me, she’s Yoruba.

Beyond this, I feel proud knowing we both got our creative start through Exposure, who’ve been shaping futures for decades. Working across journalism, music, film, photography, graphic design and podcasts, Exposure offers a

hands-on creative space where young people can bring their bold ideas to life.

Little Simz’s first pop promo was made through one of Exposure’s video production projects for young creatives. Reflecting on those beginnings, she says, “Exposure sparked my dreams and gave me the support to bring my first pop promo to life. I’m grateful for the chance to turn my passion into purpose.”

That early video might look like a snapshot of the early 2000s with neon colours and homemade confidence, but it’s timeless in its raw energy and teenage promise. You can already see Simz as an artist who knows exactly who she is and what she stands for. You can hear it too in her lyrical flow and tenacious attitude. Her voice isn’t just heard, it punches through with an authenticity that demands attention.

What makes Exposure so special is that it didn’t try to fit her into a mould. Simz says: “They didn’t try to shape me. They gave me

space and encouragement to be myself. That’s powerful. That’s what Exposure does.”

Exposure gave Simz the support and space not just to perform but to learn the creative skills behind the scenes, helping her tell her story visually. It’s a place where young people turn their lived experience of society, community and culture into creative content that speaks to their generation.

Little Simz’s video with Exposure, ‘Fall to the Floor’, which you can find on YouTube, stands as a lasting reminder of how crucial this support was in launching a formidable artist. Her anthemic lyric, “Let me show you what I can do,” feels like the perfect message for this stage of her journey.

Simz went to Highbury Fields School and was always dedicated to her craft. As a kid, she performed at St Mary’s Youth Club in Islington, the same place where musical talents like Leona Lewis and Alexandra Burke began. Talk-

ing about her upbringing to *The Guardian*, especially in the context of *Top Boy*, she said: “Growing up here we felt like this place was worth nothing. It was essentially a shithole, there’s no opportunity here and nothing to do.”

Little Simz doesn’t just push back against this stigma. She shatters it, using the broken shards to reflect possibility for everyone watching. This certainly chimes with me as I grew up in a council house in north west London, not far from where Simz was raised in a council estate in Islington.

Her persistence in making a name for herself is so inspiring. In *Venom*, one of her most iconic tracks, she raps: “Never givin’ credit where it’s due ‘cause you don’t like pussy in power.”

It’s not just a punchline but a reality check. In a music scene where male rappers are often seen as the blueprint, Little Simz doesn’t ask for space. She doesn’t shrink herself into the ‘female rapper’ box, she moves beyond it. Simz is a multifaceted artist, full stop.

What makes her stand out is that balance of drive and depth. One of my favourite songs is *Woman*

from her 2021 album *Sometimes I Might Be Introvert*. When Simz raps: “Yoruba girl tougher than imperial leather”, I feel all of it. Her heritage, her humour and her pride.

As a fellow Nigerian, growing up around your aunties and uncles, you learn to toughen up early and take any backhanded compliments with a pinch of salt. But in that chaos, there’s love. That’s why I appreciate Little Simz for being unapologetic about her upbringing and how it has shaped her today.

Her collaborations with Nigerian singer Obongjayar exist in their own sonic universe; warm, grounded and buzzing with west African grooves that cut straight to the soul. Beyond the music, her range is wild. She’s starred in E4’s show *Youngers*, in the film *Venom: Let There Be Carnage* as herself and most famously as Shelly in *Top Boy*. With her bright smile, endearing sense of humour and distinctive locs, it’s no surprise she’s sought after across the creative scene.

Little Simz isn’t just representing but also building space for young Black creatives like me. For women. For anyone who has ever felt like they were only invited to the table to tick a box. Her journey is proof you can come from an underestimated postcode and still end up with a Jay Z cosign, supporting Lauryn Hill on tour and albums that sound like manifestos.

With the release of *Lotus* in June, Simz has reached a powerful new chapter. Built around intimate, soulful beats, confessional storytelling and cinematic strings, the album cements her as one of the UK’s most fearless and innovative voices. By turning real life struggles into sharp, soul-baring art, Little Simz proves once again that strength lies in speaking the truth, even when it hurts.

If you haven’t heard it yet, don’t wait, dive into this sick and seriously potent new album, *Lotus*! To me, Little Simz is a reminder that you don’t have to shout to be heard. You just have to know who you are and say it clearly.

Watch Little Simz video with Exposure ‘Fall To The Floor’ here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51DwKPx3LT0>

For more information about Exposure and its work go to: <https://exposure.org.uk>



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To provide a responsive housing related support service for the residents of the Finchley Charities that enables them to sustain independent living within their local community. This role will require the individual to be the first point of contact for The Finchley Charities and work proactively with residents, family members, colleagues, key partners and stakeholders to deliver effective support services. Also, the purpose of the role is to manage the day to day running of the scheme, overseeing the maintenance of the buildings ensuring a high standard of cleanliness, safety and security.

1 x Non-resident SHO salary £25,050 – £28,8077 p.a. (depending on experience) pro rata to 15 hours per week)

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Interviews will be scheduled to take place on 17th September.
For further information or queries, please contact info@thefinchleycharities.org

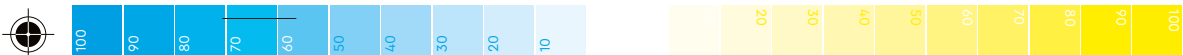
SKILLS & EXPERIENCE REQUIRED:

- Minimum of 2 years’ experience working with vulnerable adults gained either from working in a property-based service or with homeless people, alcohol and drug misuse, mental health and physical disability or other support services.
- Experience of carrying out needs & risk assessments and support planning.
- Experience of working with voluntary and statutory agencies to support customers to maintain their independence and to access housing and other benefits to which they may be entitled.
- Knowledge of housing and related benefits that support independent living, with knowledge of intensive housing management services.
- Knowledge of safeguarding and reporting procedures.
- Broad understanding of housing and regulatory frameworks and other relevant legislation
- Proficient in the use of Microsoft Office packages e.g. Word, Excel and Outlook, and ability to use a database.



If you would like to talk further about this role then contact our Sheltered Housing Manager, Derya Kamo, also via the enclosed email.

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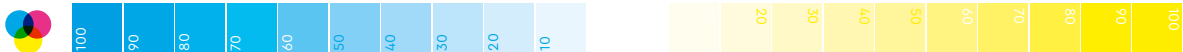


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BRENT CROSS

New waste transfer station plan



Barnet's bin lorries are on their way to Brent Cross

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

WORK ON A NEW WASTE transfer station in Brent Cross is expected to begin in autumn.

Councillors backed plans at a cabinet meeting last month to search for a project manager, technical expertise, and to increase the overall budget for the replacement waste transfer station project in Brent Cross, which is due to be delivered in 2027.

Waste transfer stations are facilities where waste is collected and tempo-

rarily stored and sorted before being further transported to a final disposal point, usually a landfill or recycling facility.

The new facility is replacing a nearly 40-year-old waste station in Hendon.

A cabinet report prepared for the meeting on 14th August said operations at the Hendon site ceased in 2021 and the replacement station "must be handed over" by November 2027 in a "fully operational" state to the North London Waste Authority (NLWA) and London Energy Ltd

(LEL) who will run it.

A temporary facility in Wembley is in operation as an interim site.

The Hendon site will be replaced by residential and commercial properties as part of later phases of the Brent Cross Town redevelopment. The new waste station, located at Geron Way, will be able to manage up to 195,000 tonnes of black bag, mixed recycling, food and street cleaning waste each year.

The council says sustainability will be at "the heart of the design" of the new waste facility with plans including a 'brown roof', roofs with a layer or soil or other material to provide a habitat for growing wildlife, as well as a "state of the art odour control" technology.

The cabinet was advised to approve a budget increase of £9.1million to prolong "design development to allow for site selection", to take into account "inflationary pressures" and fire safety compliance, and to meet "planning and operation requirements".

This means the total funding required for the project is £51m. The cabinet also approved a £13.6m increase in July to support the delivery of the waste transfer facility.

EAST BARNET

Council urged to cut weeds posing a health hazard for dogs



A dog steers clear of dangerous weeds
Credit: Richard Freedman

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

AN EAST BARNET DOG owner has urged Barnet Council to clear more street weeds following a nearly £300 vet visit.

Richard Freedman said grass seeds from overgrown pavement weeds got embedded in his dog's ear during a routine walk and he consequently had to take the pet for emergency treatment.

Richard, who lives in Haslemere Avenue, claimed three other local dog owners had also experienced "identical problems" with seeds causing "painful injuries" to their dogs' "ears, eyes, and paws".

Richard said: "Pet owners are now avoiding certain routes entirely and the problem will only worsen as more grass goes to seed over the summer months. The council has a responsibility to maintain streets safely for all residents, including their pets."

Richard's dog had to have four "bits of seeds" removed from its ear and was sedated during the procedure.

When leaving the vet Richard said he spoke to another dog owner who told him their dog had had the "same thing" happen.

Richard said: "Dogs sniff the ground, that's what they do and the council for some reason has decided not to clear the street of weeds. I walk two miles [during dog walks] and every ten metres or so there are weeds popping up either by the road or all the way through the pavement and I have to struggle to keep my dog from sniffing where the grass seeds are.

"The state of the streets are atrocious."

A council spokesperson said: "We have a programme to cut grass and remove weeds across the borough. Some areas are left longer to enhance biodiversity, however we are happy to work with dog owners to ensure our environment is safe for all to enjoy."

FRIERN BARNET



Bin lorry sludge
Credit: Lee Byron

Bin lorry 'sludge' causing a stink

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A FRIERN BARNET RESIDENT has complained about "sludge" leaking from a bin lorry outside his home.

Lee Byron, a resident of Halton Close, where the issue happens, said he complained in September 2024 to Barnet Council about "sludge" leaking from a black bin lorry.

Lee, who is 75, said it was mostly elderly people who lived on this stretch of the close, part of which is private, and himself or a neighbour were usually left to clean the "mess".

In response to enquiries a Barnet Council spokesperson said the council was sorry for the inconvenience caused and collections would be monitored.

Following the initial complaint last year, the bin collector for the area agreed to pick up bins further away from the homes affected.

However, last month Lee said, despite the bins being left in the new spot ready for pick-up, the bin collector drove down near to the houses again and "smelling sludge" was deposited outside.

"I cannot believe this has caused so many problems," Lee said.

"We dragged the bins to the border last winter

starting from September. I think what happened this time is a new driver, who didn't know the restriction imposed on us, reversed down probably with the same leaky truck and covered our area with sludge again."

Lee added that the problem didn't happen when the blue bins were collected and urged the council to get the problem lorry repaired.

The council spokesperson added: "While we thought we had resolved this issue previously, we will now be sending a supervisor to monitor collections there for the next six weeks. We will ensure that our crews follow the correct procedures in future.

"The leakage was caused by a mechanical problem, which is now being rectified. Upon being notified of the issue, we sent a crew to thoroughly clean the affected area.

"We will ensure that the practice of reversing into the private road is stopped and will ensure supervisors monitor future collections to make sure of it.

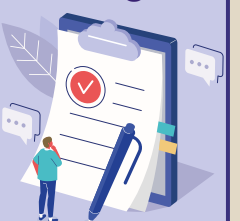
"We have also launched an internal investigation to determine the root cause of this issue and prevent future occurrences."

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Aircraft museum hosts new food festival

BY DAVID FLOYD

There’s a big new local event in the calendar this month as the RAF Museum hosts its first ever food festival.

The museum in Colindale is well known for its hangars packed with historical aircraft but Barnet Food Festival, which takes place on 13th and 14th September, offers a new mix of food, live music and children’s activities which the museum describes as “the tastiest weekend in town”.

Barnet Post talked to Robert Wood, public events manager at the museum, to find out more.

Robert explained: “It’s going to be a fun family day out” with a range to celebrate the diversity of Barnet as an area.

He added: “We’re going to have about 40 food vendor stalls of all different backgrounds, providing all different foods... there’s pizza, there’s kebabs, there’s ice cream, there’s jollof.”

Local groups with stalls will include Friern Barnet-based Caribbean restaurant Allotments N11.

As well as food, the festival will feature live music on the ‘Spitfire Stage’ from artists including Sound of Soul, Jimmy B, Lucy Alexandra, Aruna, The Barn-Ettes, and Lara.

Robert says: “It’s really nice to use the airfield because that’s a space that we don’t normally get to use but we’re going to fill it with all this wonderful stuff.”

Activities for children include a bouncy castle assault course, face painting and the chance to design their own biscuit, while adults can enjoy drinks from the Barnet Beach Bar.

Attending the festival also gives local people who may not have visited before a chance to explore the museum’s collection of historical aircraft.

Robert adds: “It just provides an opportunity for the museum to reach out to those people that may have never

even considered coming to the RAF Museum.

“To come along and have a great day out and taste some tasty food. But then they’re going to go into the hangars and go like, oh, well, I didn’t know this about this aircraft.”

With tickets £10 for adults and children free, the museum team are hoping that Barnet Food Festival will become a popular annual event for both the museum and the borough.

The RAF Museum is well known for its aircraft
Credit RAF Museum



Robert says: “Hopefully it will become a flagship event for the museum. September rolls around, where are we going to go? We’re going to go to the RAF Museum because they’ve got this wonderful food festival on.”

To buy tickets for the Barnet Food Festival at RAF Museum London go to: www.rafmuseum.org.uk/london/whats-going-on/barnet-food-festival-2025

Back to school with Barnet libraries

BY CATHERINE LUSTED

The new school year is here and libraries are available to support children starting and returning to school. All of Barnet’s libraries provide a range of books to help with homework. Covering every subject, your local library will help you find reliable and accurate information for study. You can visit any library and choose books from the shelves or use the select and collect service to order titles through the online catalogue to collect from your local library.

Find out about thousands of subjects on *Encyclopaedia Britannica* or discover famous people of *Who’s Who*. All online resources are free to use with your library card and PIN. Libraries can help students find information too. Ask library staff for help during staffed opening times or contact LibrariesOnlineHelp@barnet.gov.uk with homework queries for suggested resources to help.

It’s free to join the library and borrow from the huge range of books, ebooks and eaudiobooks for children. There’s no better time to start or reignite the reading habit than a new school term. Research shows that children who read are happier, more resilient and have better life chances. With a Barnet library card, you can discover the best books for your child for free.

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For the premises known as: COVE 1306
Sited at: 1306 High Road London N20 9HJ

A register of licensing applications can be inspected at 8th Floor, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, London, NW9 4EW. Appointments to inspect the register can be made by telephoning 020 8359 7443 during office hours. Any person wishing to submit relevant representations concerning this application must give notice in writing to the London Borough of Barnet, Licensing Team at the address above, giving in detail the grounds of the representation no later than:

23rd SEPTEMBER 2025

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SPORT



Hadley taking on Maldon & Tiptree in the FA Cup
Credit Chris Forster

Record breaking
Hadley aiming high

BY OLIVER DEED

How do you follow up a record breaking season? That’s the question Hadley fans will be asking themselves, as the Bricks seek to top their 2024/25 efforts.

Those efforts culminated in a play-off place, constituting the club’s highest ever finish in league football, a superb run in the FA Trophy, and silverware in the form of the Herts Charity Cup. Much of the credit goes to Hadley manager Anthony Clark, who continues to work miracles with a budget far smaller than most league competitors.

Following this season of success, there has been some change in the Bricks squad over the summer.

Top scorer Isaac Stones and wing wizard Caoilan McGettigan have both departed for Wingate and Finchley, both with the blessing of the club. Between them they scored 40 goals, and the latter deservedly won the supporters player of the season award – those goals, and their combined talents will be hard to replace. But they will be replaced, much in the same way the goalscoring ma-

chine Solomon Ofori was four seasons ago.

A clutch of exciting new players have been brought into the squad. Young striker Lenny Asamoah looks very promising, as does the skillful midfielder Tommy Roberts and both have an opportunity to develop their game, in a highly competitive league environment. Several others have also joined, bolstering a core group of players that has been together for a number of years now. Captain Luke Alfano, Cameron Ferguson and Billy Hayes will continue in midfield, while Finley Aldridge looks sharp in attack again and the ever popular Peter “Captain Chaos” Rosemin helps provide some solidity at the back, alongside his centre back partner Luke Massingham.

At the time of writing, the Bricks have played three times this season, with a mixed set of results. They lost the opening game to Hitchin Town: the Canaries were relegated last season, and they are favoured to go straight back up, so the 2-0 scoreline should be read in that context. That was followed up with a convincing 2-0 win away at Northwood, with Lenny Asamoah and Richard Ennin netting on a

sunny evening in north west London. The Bricks then exited the FA Cup, losing 2-1 to a Maldon & Tiptree side that featured former West Ham United striker Freddie Sears, and others with Football League experience. Hadley went 1-0 down midway through the first half when Sears converted a penalty, but equalised two minutes into the second half when Alfano did similarly. A last minute Matt Price goal sealed Hadley’s exit, at the first time of asking, for the second season in a row.

It’s onwards and upwards now, as the fixtures come thick and fast. In September the Bricks will travel to Ware in the FA Trophy Preliminary Round, seeking to repeat the exploits of last season, when they made it to the FA Trophy Third Round, beating AFC Telford and Hastings United along the way. Upcoming league games against AFC Dunstable, Stotfold, Thame United and Marlow will provide fans with a real insight as to how the season might shape up.

So, how do you follow up a record breaking season? By breaking more records, of course! The Bricks will have to wait to see if that can be done.

Hard to predict for
relegated Hendon

BY DAVID BALLHEIMER

Hendon enter the 2025–26 season in their lowest pyramid position since 1912, having been relegated to the second tier of the Isthmian League in the spring.

All the hope and positivity of the start of 2024–25 disappeared in December when manager Lee Allinson departed for Hemel Hempstead Town. Almost all of Allinson’s squad departed for pastures new, leaving only Dave Diedhiou and Niko Muir from those at Silver Jubilee Park in August.

Diedhiou was injured on Boxing Day and missed the remainder of the season as the Greens failed to win 21 consecutive league fixtures. Even so, relegation was confirmed only with three games remaining and the distance from safety was a mere four points.

Manager Ben Bukowski, who took over from Marc Charles-Smith in mid-January, remains in charge, but with a new assistant in former central defender Ryan Wharton. Keagan Cole, another former player, who had been Bukowski’s assistant last season, remains as a player as do Diedhiou, Rohdell Gordon, Nikolai Krokhin, Stephan Langley, Shaun Lucien, Muir, Paulie Schuster and J’Ardell Stirling.

Wide man Lucien, who missed almost all of last season, has star quality if he can regain full fitness, and if he, Cole – who made 100 Hendon appearances before his 20th birthday in the 2010s – and Rohdell Gordon, who a decade ago was leading the line in the National League with Bromley – will create a strong trio at the heart of the pitch.

Young centre-back Nikolai Krokhin impressed in his few

months at Silver Jubilee Park and he should anchor the defence, especially if he and Diedhiou can form a dominant partnership. The likely choices for full-back are Javon Marquis, from Spelthorne Sports, and Tariq Straker formerly with Rayners Lane and Bowers & Pitsea. Between the posts will be goalkeeper Josh Strizovic, a much-travelled 25-year-old released by Dagenham & Redbridge, who has played on loan at, among others, Harrow Borough, Hashtag United, Whitehawk and Chertsey Town, all step three teams at the time.

Many of Hendon’s league opponents will be new to the Greens, certainly when it comes to battles for points. Among August opponents Hendon previously have played Bedfont Sports, Hanworth Villa and Fareham Town in cup competitions, but there will be a number of old friends renewing league rivalry during 2025–26, including Harrow Borough, Kingstonian, Hayes & Yeading United, Metropolitan Police and oldest of all Southall – this one dates back to January 1919, when Hendon were Hampstead Town.

In the FA Cup and FA Trophy, Hendon are entering earlier than previously: in the FA Cup Preliminary Round and FA Trophy first round qualifying. Hendon’s last FA Cup preliminary round appearance was in 1981 – and the Greens won five matches on their way to the first round proper.

Predicting a league finish is almost impossible as this is very much a leap into the unknown. Some of last season’s performances deserved better outcomes and if those are repeated this time around, there is no reason to think the playoffs would be attainable. If the bad shows recur in 2025–26, then it will be a season of struggle.

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SPORT



Wingate & Finchley in action against Dulwich Hamlet
Credit Martin Addison

Challenges ahead for Wingate & Finchley after roller coaster season

BY LIAM BLANEY

Last season was a textbook Isthmian Premier League rollercoaster for Wingate & Finchley. At one point, flying high in second place and looking at a second consecutive season in the play-off places. Then a bleak spell without a win in ten league games between mid-November and mid-January ensured it wasn't a Happy Christmas and saw the Blues tumbling down the league table and looking over their shoulder. In the end a positive end to the season meant that it was a mid-table finish with plenty of positives to take.

If that was a textbook rollercoaster season, then the off-season was straight from a different page of the non-league textbook. Player of the season Toby Byron was snapped up by National League South side Worthing for an undisclosed fee, top goalscorer Ogo Obi moved to Farnham Town and reliable centre back Ben Frempah, who was approaching 100 games for the Blues, moved

to Dartford. On top of this a number of others departed for pastures new, leaving a small but strong core of players for manager Ahmet Rifat to build around. That core includes the spine of the team with the likes of skipper Billy Cracknell, talented midfielder Ryan Lowe and goalkeeper Charlie Grainger all committing for 2025/26.

In recent weeks, the squad-building process has come to a conclusion, with the recruitment focused on motivated and high-performing individuals from the level below. Two of those being Hadley's star players of recent years in Isaac Stones and Caoilan McGettigan who have made the move from EN5 to N12, while we have also seen the return of Blues players from recent years in Alkeo Bani and 2022/23 player of the year Sam Cornish who rejoins after a spell at Welling United last season.

Looking ahead the new season is, as ever, a difficult one to predict. Coming down into this league are some big names including St Albans City and Welling United,

neither of whom have been at this level in a long time, while promoted sides include Ramsgate, the Kent coast side who had an excellent FA Cup run in 2023/24 which took them to AFC Wimbledon in the Second Round live on the BBC.

The season started with a tough trip to the early season favourites Billericay, where Wingate lost 2-1. This was followed by a home clash against Dulwich Hamlet, a side who will be looking to improve on last season's disappointing campaign, and won 1-0 at Summers Lane. These results won't define the season ahead, but certainly show the strength of the division and the challenges which will be faced.

The club itself continues to go from strength to strength. Attendances are growing, with nearly 400 through the gate against Dulwich. There's an ever-strengthening partnership with London Brewing Company at the Bohemia, and now a food tie-up with Rack City Ribs. There's never been a better time to come down and see what non-league football is about. Come on you Blues!

Promoted Bees seeking points

BY NICK SANDAMAS

After a mixed pre-season for the Bees it was time to get buzzing for their first Football League campaign in seven years after winning the National League title last season.

However, before the opening league game was played, the Bees hosted Newport County in the Carabao Cup preliminary round.

An exciting game ensued, Ryan Galvin and Rhys Browne scoring injury time goals to take the game to a penalty shoot out, but the Welsh side kept their nerve to win.

Then it was all excitement on the first weekend as Barnet welcomed Fleetwood Town to The Hive for their first EFL game. After a positive start, the Bees were undone by a goal in each half to lose 2-0, a defeat which also ended the Bees' unbeaten home record stretching back to April 2024, a run of 26 games.

Next, it was a trip across London to face Bromley and, despite six changes from the Fleetwood defeat, the Bees left Hayes Lane deflated following another 2-0 loss with former Bee Nicke Kabamba grabbing the second goal in time

added on.

With the Bees bottom after the opening two games, last season's play-off finalists Walsall were intimidating visitors to The Hive and it was another tough afternoon as the Saddlers left with all the points thanks to a 2-1 win.

As we went to press, further trips to Swindon and Cheltenham were due to be made with a home game against Colchester to round off August. Hopefully, by the time you read this, we will have some points on the board.

September sees the Bees start with the short trip up the M1 to face League 1 Luton Town in the Vertu (Football League) Trophy before hosting Shrewsbury Town the following Saturday.

Long trips up north to Crewe and Oldham are sandwiched in between a home game against Grimsby.

The month ends with Brighton U21s visiting The Hive for another Vertu Trophy tie.

After a difficult opening first few games for the Bees, the hope is that they will soon find the right response to the rigours of League 2 football.



The Bees in pre-season action against Crystal Palace
Credit Nick Sandamas



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