Mayor’s pollution 
blast for ministers
End the time-wasting and get a grip, angry Sadiq tells Government

BY LWN REPORTER
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LONDONERS suffering ill health because of the capital’s chronic pollution problems will be welcoming a High Court judge’s decision to order the Government to publish its strategy for improving air quality.

Warning that pollution kills 64 people a day, Mr Justice Garnham rejected an application by Andrea Leadson, the environment secretary, for a ten-week postponement until after the general election.

He told her to publish the draft plan on May 9, five days after local elections, and warned that nitrogen dioxide, produced largely by diesel engines, costs 23,000 lives a year.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) had argued that publication would breach purdah rules that limit government announcements during election campaigns.

The judge said purdah was “not a trump card” to justify failing to comply with a previous court order to publish the plan. He refused to leave it to appeal but No 10 is considering applying to the Court of Appeal to overturn the ruling.

Sadiq Khan, the mayor of London, said ministers had deliberately used the election as an excuse to hold back their plan, which is expected to propose charging older diesels to enter city centres and may include a scrappage scheme.

In response to the court’s verdict, the Mayor said: “I am pleased that the Government will now have to face its responsibilities sooner rather than later.

“Ministers were dragged kicking and screaming to face the huge scale of this health crisis, but rather than take immediate action to protect the public they deliberately used the election as a smokescreen to hold back their plan.

“I share the concerns of every Londoner who has been repeatedly failed by the Government.

“I hope that after this appalling delay, this Government delivers a strong plan to finally get a grip on this issue and urgently introduces a diesel scrappage fund to rid our streets of the dirtiest cars, and provide financial incentives to encourage people to buy the cleanest vehicles.”

The Mayor is lobbying the Government to take urgent action on air quality, including:

• Introducing a national vehicle scrappage fund to help drivers who bought diesel cars in good faith: he has previously written to the Chancellor proposing a targeted, fully-costed, city-led, time-limited approach;

• Following London’s lead and introducing Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)-style schemes where needed in other towns and cities across the UK: in London, the Mayor has launched a consultation on introducing the ULEZ in central London in April 2019 - 17 months earlier than previously planned; he has also set out plans to expand the ULEZ up to the North/South circular roads for all vehicles (except taxis) from 2021 and across the whole of Greater London for buses, coaches and lorries from 2020;

• Taking action to ensure that national policies send the right messages to consumers: vehicle excise duty (VED) and other fiscal incentives continue to encourage purchases of diesel cars – and they need to be amended;

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We have good, energetic and effective champions

ELECTIONS are a serious business and Britain has had lots of them over the past two and a half years. A referendum on Scottish independence, the 2015 General Election, last year’s Mayoral election and EU referendum and now a second election to confirm the Prime Minister’s direction of travel and strengthen her negotiating hand. Next year’s it’s our turn.

As a Conservative, it won’t surprise anyone to know that I believe we need to manage the economy effectively to generate the growth and taxes that fund our public services. We need to create opportunities for everyone, to incentivise success, to build strong defences and alliances with countries all around the world, I am not a little Englander, nor a protectionist. I do not believe that governments can solve all problems but they can create benign conditions and remove obstacles that hinder growth and prosperity.

To do it, they need the support of effective and energetic MPs – which brings me to our Prime Minister. Victoria Borwick was for some years an energetic and influential member of the Council, and my policy with her was always to give in early as it saved time in the long run. Since becoming an MP she has been even more relentless in pursuing the interests of her constituents. Where she gets the energy from is a mystery known only to those that know her. I’m at the AGM of a small residents’ association, she’s there. I go to a consultation session for a regeneration scheme, I see her name in the visitor’s book. I turn up for a Keep Britain Tidy event, her bin bag is always full of roadside detritus. I open my email inbox and there she is again, enquiring about this application, or that housing case. And that’s not all. She is an active member of the Commons, sitting on a select committee and speaking up on matters of importance to the country and to Kensington and Chelsea, such as the housing bill, superfast broadband in Kensington and healthcare in London. When it comes to the Council getting ‘face time’ with decision makers on major issues affecting the borough, things have been transformed since Victoria was elected. I am looking forward to ministers also concluding that it is just easier to say yes.

Greg Hands in Chelsea and Fulham is another powerhouse. He’s an international trade minister of course which is a pretty exacting job in these Brexit days. Half of his constituency is in Hammersmith & Fulham so, inevitably, we see less of him than we do Victoria, but he has campaigned with us against the third runway, against night flights and also campaigned to save con genital heart disease services at the Royal Brompton. He is there when we need him which, given his wider responsibilities, is no small thing.

So for good, energetic, effective MPs we are fortunate to have Greg Hands and Victoria Borwick. Seldom has our world appeared more uncertain, but I have no doubt that both of them make an enormous contribution to building a strong and resilient country that can face the future with confidence.
THE Mayor of London has launched a new skills agenda to ensure that all Londoners have the opportunity to train in the skills that the city’s economy needs.

The Skills for Londoners Capital Fund will invest £114m in high-quality equipment and facilities at London’s further education colleges and other education and training providers. Mayor Sadiq Khan has also established a Skills for Londoners Taskforce comprising business leaders and employers, skills and education experts and London government representatives. The taskforce will develop a city-wide strategic approach so that Londoners and businesses can access the skills they need for future success.

The mayor is also proposing to establish a Construction Skills Academy later in the year, in partnership with the building industry. This will aim to close the gap between the demand for new housing and construction and the need for more skilled construction workers.

The Mayor believes that an effective skills system is also critical to meeting the needs of London’s changing demographics. Employers repeatedly report skills shortages and vacancy rates in the workforce are impacting on growth and productivity. Given the uncertain economic climate and the terms of Britain’s exit from the European Union, ensuring a more responsive skills system – and ensuring access to global talent – is more important than ever, according to the Mayor, in meeting employers’ needs.

The Skills for Londoners Taskforce, working closely with the London Economic Action Partnership (LEAP), will take an inclusive approach to post-16 education and skills, focusing primarily on further education and training but also looking at progression pathways from school and into higher education (HE).

It will also ensure that communities across London have access to training, and that from a young age both girls and boys are encouraged to explore the skills they need to make progress in the future economy. It will have a strong emphasis on gender equality, targeting opportunities for girls to excel in science, technology, engineering and mathematics skills in particular.

Delivering on a key manifesto commitment, the Mayor officially launched Skills for Londoners today at South Thames College, in Merton, where he joined students who are training to repair motorcycles before seeking employment or setting up their own business.

Mr Khan said: “I want all Londoners to have the same opportunities I had growing up. Skills for Londoners is the first step towards making that happen.”

“While London is a great place to learn, there is no doubt that not enough Londoners are getting the skills they need to live up to their potential. This also impacts businesses, hampering their growth and forcing them to look further afield for talent.”

“We need to make sure London’s businesses, employers, investors and employees seize the opportunities offered by the new, agile workforce to support London’s prosperity.”

Further Education colleges and approved training providers can now apply for funding for capital projects that are responsive and adaptable to current and future requirements of employers, improving skills training for those most at risk of falling out of education, employment and training, and creating new apprenticeships.

In addition, the fund will look to invest in schemes that create strong partnerships with employers to support the development of provision and the creation of jobs for Londoners in the construction, creative industries and other sectors.

The Skills for Londoners Taskforce will work closely with LEAP on investments through the Skills for Londoners Capital Fund. It will also support the Mayor to develop a city-wide strategic approach to skills, overseeing the development of a London Skills Strategy and specific initiatives to ensure Londoners can make the most of the opportunities in London.

Chairied by the Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneren and Skills, Jules Pipe, it will look at a range of issues including all-age careers information, advice and guidance, technical and adult education, adult learning and links with higher education. In addition, it will look at how London’s businesses can get the maximum benefit from the new Apprenticeship levy, which is paid by businesses to government.

Taskforce member, Ian Ashman, who is also President of the Association of Colleges said: “I believe Skills for Londoners Taskforce will have a really positive impact on the capital, helping Londoners to improve their lives and helping our employers get the skilled people they need to succeed. I am therefore delighted to have been invited by the Mayor to join the Taskforce, and look forward to bringing the perspective of 25 years of experience in London’s colleges to its work.”

Taskforce member, Seetha Kumar, Chief Executive of Creative Skillset, said: “London’s creative industries are a major part of its workforce and means we need more skilled people as well as people with different skills sets – which is why, due to technological change, I’m looking forward to working with the Mayor and Taskforce members to improve skills development opportunities – for Londoners preparing to join the workforce and those already in employment – and build a more inclusive, highly skilled London that supports economic growth.”

Jasmine Whitbread, chief executive of the London Business School, said: “This is the kind of initiative that on London business that we should all be working to see for some time, and the need is now even more acute as the number of skilled workers’ immigration. With the clock counting down to Brexit, it’s important that we ensure Londoners have every opportunity to get skilled up and ready for the estimated million vacancies in London each year. Business will work closely with the Mayor to address our skills shortages and get the UK into the best possible shape ahead of 2019.”

‘True Blood’ case concludes

BY LWN REPORTER
editor@londonweeklynews.co.uk

A HARROW police officer accused of harassing a female colleague after showing her a clip from TV vampire drama ‘True Blood’ has been found not guilty.

Giaco Marcelin, 21, was accused of intimidating a female officer with role as vampire expert Tabitha Gray from July to September last year while they were both seconded to the north west London property trade unit.

Ms Gray told a trial at Hammersmith Magistrates Court that Mr Marcelin told her that he “wanted to kill everyone” and threatened to slit every one’s throats, including her own.

He was also accused of showing her a picture of a dead fox and video of a woman being beaten to death by with a high heeled shoe.

On another occasion she said he “accidentally stepped on his foot and she, to which he said ‘you walk’.”

She then said ‘are you threatening me?’ and he replied ‘it’s not a threat it’s a promise’.

But Marcelin told the court that the talk about killing everyone was just a joke he made several times to different colleagues.

The talking of the cutting of throats he was said in reference to scene in TV show American Horror Story, which he explained at the time.

He said ‘The picture of a dead fox was one he had sent to another friend and was just among the pictures he had been showing her of his new flat on his phone.

He said the video of a woman being beaten to death with a shoe was a scene from vampire TV series True Blood, which he said he had explained to Ms Gray before he showed it to her.

Finally he said the comment made after she stood on his foot was just said in a jokey way and was not serious.

He said he was friends with her and had told him at any time she was uncomfortable or given him that impression he would have stopped.

Mr Marcelin, of Tottenham, north London, was found not guilty of one charge of harassment following a two hour trial.

London Economic Action Partnership Board member, Dr Celina Caulcott said: “We are delighted to be working alongside the Mayor to invest in learning spaces and equipment to boost skills in the capital. Ensuring more world-class learning environments that reflect the realities of the world of work will help Londoners of all ages and backgrounds to develop the skills they need to access employment and maximise their potential.”

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Jasmine Whitbread, chief executive of the London Business School, said: “This is the kind of initiative that on London business that we should all be working to see for some time, and the need is now even more acute as the number of skilled workers’ immigration. With the clock counting down to Brexit, it’s important that we ensure Londoners have every opportunity to get skilled up and ready for the estimated million vacancies in London each year. Business will work closely with the Mayor to address our skills shortages and get the UK into the best possible shape ahead of 2019.”

‘True Blood’ case concludes

POLICE arrested a young woman on suspicion of terror offences when she was released from hospital on Sunday – where she was being treated after being shot by police.

The 21-year-old woman was shot by officers during a terror raid that was carried out on Thursday evening.

Armed police stormed a home in Wilsedden, north west London, and shot the woman, and arrested five people.

Counter terror police officers also arrested a 43-year-old woman during another raid in Kent.

The woman was discharged from hospital on Sunday and immediately arrested on suspicion of the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism.

A Metropolitan Police spokesperson said that she has been taken into custody at a south London police station.

Six other people were arrested on suspicion of the commission, preparation or instigation of terrorist acts under section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

Males aged 16 and 28 were arrested at the home and a 21-year-old man was also detained near the Harlesden Road address.

There were also women aged 28 and 26 arrested at the north west London property.

Warrants of further detention were granted at Westminster Magistrates’ Court on Saturday, allowing the six suspects to be detained until dates between 2 May and 4 May.

They are currently in custody at a south London Police station.

A Metropolitan Police spokesperson: “The addresses in west London and persons connected with it had been under consideration by counter-terrorism officers as part of an ongoing intelligence-led operation.

“Addresses at the address are ongoing, as well as two further searches at linked addresses elsewhere in London.”

Police explained that this incident is not connected to the arrest in Whitechapel that Thursday.
This time UK based company Bishopsgate Homes Ltd. Signatures had been forged on the contracts, leading to £31,000 in profit from the sale being paid into another of Conner’s accounts. UK business directors had no involvement with their company being used for such a transaction.

Reading Crown Court heard Conner had two previous convictions for fraud in 1992 and 1999, adding that he served a 12-month suspended sentence in 1999. Conner failed to declare any profit or pay any tax to HMRC and used counterfeit ‘proof of funds’ letters to carry out the fraud and was trading while disqualified as a company director.

He pleaded guilty to obtaining goods by false pretences on January 25 last year and sentencing was delayed to allow him to sell his Ascot home to pay any future confiscation order. Last week he was jailed for three years and seven months and also disqualified from being a company director for seven years.

The confiscation order, which was set at £640,709, includes £150,000 to be paid to HMRC for the VAT evaded. Conner was also disqualified as a company director for seven years.

Kensington property fraudster must pay £640,000 to his victims

BY LW N REPORTER
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A PROPERTY developer who cheated the taxpayer out of £150,000 was forced to sell his multi-million pound Ascot mansion to repay his victims. Keith Conner, 55, made £650,000 when he hijacked details of an offshore company in the British Virgin Islands to evade paying VAT and buy and sell mansions in London.

During his period of offending between June 2011 and October 2011 he cheated hard-working taxpayers out of £150,000.

Dad-of-two Conner raked in cash and enjoyed an affluent lifestyle in Ascot but he has now been forced to sell the information on landlords.

Conner, of Romsey, Hampshire, hijacked the details of Pruton Investment Holding Ltd to buy and sell property in leafy Kensington, central London. He forged a Power of Attorney document in the name of a Malaysian businessman to transfer £309,000 in profit into his bank account. Another property deal saw him purchase and sell a business property in Earl’s Court Road, Earl’s Court. Again he hijacked the details of a company to commit fraud,

Bogus bobby cons woman

AN elderly woman was conned out of her life-savings by a fraudster pretending to be a police officer.

The tricker called the 73-year-old victim on her mobile phone from a man who said he was a police officer in the Met.

He said that her debit card had been stopped due to fraudulent use and he needed her help with a sting operation to catch a group of offenders targeting elderly and vulnerable people in the area.

The con man persuaded her to go to a bureau de change in Liverpool Street Station to buy 5,000 Euros, as part of what is known as a courier fraud. He said the cash would be counterfeit and he would use it as evidence in the case by putting it in a ghost account he had set up, adding that his assistant would meet her to collect the money.

She was told to go to a watch shop in Knightsbridge, west London, to purchase a watch that cost £25,050 after getting the call at 6.30pm on March 28.

After buying the watch the next day, the victim was instructed to meet the same assistant as before at Knightsbridge Tube Station to hand it over.

The victim then received a phone call from the fake police officer saying her evidence had been accepted.

After this, the victim, who lives in Dulwich, south London, was then unable to get in touch with him and she became suspicious and contacted the police.

Detectives have released a CCTV image of a man they wish to speak to in connection with the case.

Footage shows the suspect talking on the phone, then chatting to a man in a puffer jacket, before walking off. He is described as Asian, about 5ft 8ins and aged in his 20s.

DC Michael Esangbedo from Southwark CID said: “I am pleading with anyone that recognises the man in the CCTV to get in touch with police.”

“Fraudsters have deliberately deceived the victim out of her life-savings. We are determined to bring those responsible to justice to prevent anyone else falling for the scam.

“We would urge people to remain vigilant at all times and any suspicions should be reported to the police.

“It is also worth noting that the police will never call members of the public and ask them to be part of a ‘sting’ operation.”

Mayor gets tough with rogue agents

CRIMINAL landlords and letting agents who exploit their tenants will be named and shamed on a new online database to protect the two million private renters in the capital, the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has announced.

The new database, to be built in partnership with London boroughs and published on the Mayor’s website, will list the worst criminals including failed landlords and letting agents who have been successfully prosecuted for housing offences. The Mayor believes it will give Londoners greater confidence in renting in the capital, allowing them to check a prospective landlord or letting agent before moving into a property, and acting as a deterrent to the minority of landlords and agents who behave dishonestly.

Due to launch in the autumn, the database will enable councils London-wide easily to share information on landlords, criminal history and provide details of enforcement activity and investigations. Setting out details of this new initiative, Londoners will be able to search the online database and report suspected criminal landlords or letting agents through London.gov.uk.

“The name and shame database will be developed in the coming months with information from six councils – Newham, Brent, Camden, Southwark, Kingston and Sutton – with other boroughs across London set to join following its public launch in the autumn.

The Mayor made the announcement as he joined a criminal landlord enforcement raid in Newham, carried out under the council’s borough-wide licensing scheme for private rented properties. In 2013, Newham Council was the first local authority to be granted borough-wide licensing and has been very successful in tackling criminal landlords, prosecuting 1,100 criminal landlords – more than any other local authority in London - and banning 28 of the very worst from operating.

The council’s five-year licensing scheme is due to expire in December, and Mr Khan has written to the government to support its renewal.

Alongside the Mayor’s efforts to improve conditions in the private rented sector, he also today announced plans for a new Homes for Londoners property portal on City Hall’s website, which aims to bring together in one place affordable homes to buy and rent in the capital.

Mr Khan said: “I refuse to stand by as thousands of Londoners suffer sky-high rents and horrendous living conditions in a city they call home. I have seen first-hand the abysmal conditions that some of London’s private renters are forced to endure as a result of rogue landlords. I want to be clear that the vast majority of landlords treat renters well - but a minority are exploiting their tenants and it’s simply unacceptable. This must stop now. To help renters, I will be working in partnership with London Boroughs to launch my new ‘name and shame’ database of criminal landlords and letting agents to help Londoners before they rent a property, and to deter dishonest landlords and agents from operating.”

Mayor makes the announcement as he joined a criminal landlord enforcement raid in Newham, carried out under the council’s borough-wide licensing scheme for private rented properties.
Capital progress in mission to improve diagnosis of dementia

BY LW N REPORTER
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EXPERTS in London have launched a light-hearted general election menu serving Jeremy Corbynara and Theresa May-pie and carrot soup.

The Tea Terrace will be serving the politics-themed dishes throughout May ahead of the June 8 snap election.

The menu features five dishes – a starter, three main courses and a dessert – all of which have names inspired by the parties competing in the election.

Ehab Shouly, director of The Tea Terrace, which has two Central London branches and one in Guildford, Surrey, says people are “tired of elections”.

He said: “We are aware that many people in the country are tired of elections, and that’s a discussion we’ve heard many of our customers have following Mrs. May’s announcement. So we wanted to lighten the mood a little bit for our customers.”

Ehab hopes people will vote during the general election by keeping track of which of the dishes are ordered the most.

He added: “It’s not scientific but perhaps it will shed some light on the outcome. Since the prime minister announced the snap elections, we’ve seen that a lot of the discussions have happened around the dining tables at our restaurants who have been on the subject of the election.

“People are just tired of voting I guess. So we’re helping them a little by poking a bit of innocent fun.”

The Tea Terrace also had an American presidential election menu, featuring dishes like Trumpkin Soup. According to the menu, the five dishes on the Tea Terrace’s UK General Elections menu are as follows:

- **Starter**: Theresa Maple and Carrot Soup: a delicious and creamy soup made with pureed carrots and maple syrup.
- **Main**: Jeremy Corbynara: not a labour-intensive pasta, made with spaghetti, cream and bacon.
- **U-Kipper Risotto**: a delicious Mediterranean vegetable risotto topped with flakes of smoked kippers.
- **Dessert**: Paul Nuttalla and Banana Crepe: a UKIP favourite and a beloved classic.

The proposed location for the Garden Bridge crossing

LONDON Mayor Sadiq Khan has withdrawn his support for the Garden Bridge project.

In a letter to Lord Mervyn Davies, the Chair of the Garden Bridge Trust, the Mayor outlined his view that the continuation of the project will expose the London taxpayer to additional financial risk, both with regard to the bridge’s construction and its operation and maintenance.

Before making the decision, the Mayor had analysed the findings of Dame Margaret Hodge’s independent review into the Garden Bridge project, and assessed all the information available about the project to date.

During the Mayoral campaign and since his election last year, the Mayor has repeatedly stated that he would not agree to any more of London taxpayers’ money for which he is responsible being spent on the Garden Bridge project. He had also made clear that he would not provide any Mayoral guarantees unless he was convinced that the project would not lead to additional public expenditure down the line.

In outlining the reasons for the Mayor’s decision not to provide any Mayoral guarantees, today’s letter sets out the number of ways in which the project would expose the London taxpayer to additional financial risk. These include:

- Increasing capital costs of the project;
- The risk of the bridge only being partially built;
- Doubts over the establishment of an endowment fund to help meet future maintenance costs.

Mr Khan said: “Under the previous Mayor, a considerable amount of London taxpayers’ money had already been spent on the Garden Bridge. I have always been clear that not a penny more of taxpayers’ money should be allocated to the project.

“Having assessed all the information available to me including the findings of Dame Margaret Hodge’s independent review, my view is that providing Mayoral guarantees will expose the London taxpayer to too much additional financial risk.

“With planning permission due to expire this year, many outstanding issues remain, including spiralling construction costs and doubts around funding the maintenance of the bridge.

“The funding gap is now at over £70 million and it appears unlikely that the Trust will succeed in raising the private funds required for the project. I am simply not prepared to risk a situation where the taxpayer has to step in and contribute significant additional financial amounts to ensure the project is completed.”
Mum’s death after medics ‘gross failure’

BY LWN REPORTER
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A BBC Antiques Roadshow expert describing his wife during the three week inquest, he said: “I will never bring Alice back, but it has given us a basis of understanding the situation we faced.”

Alice Gibson-Watt was a valued employee at the Lakeside Mental Health Unit, and her passing left a void in the lives of many. The inquest revealed that her death was preventable, highlighting systemic failings in the care she received.

Following the inquest, Anthony Gibson-Watt said: “I have lost the woman I loved most, and I will never get over this. Alice’s death was a tragedy, but it has taught us all an important lesson.”

TRUST APOLOGISES TO FAMILY

THE mental health hospital trust has apologised to the family of a BBC Antiques Roadshow expert who died after being in their care.

Carolyn Regan, Chief Executive of West London Mental Health NHS Trust said: “Our thoughts are with Alice’s family at this difficult time. It is clear that on this occasion we did not meet the high expectations we set ourselves and for that we are very sorry.”

Following this sad case in 2012, a multi-agency investigation was commissioned and co-ordinated by the NHS England with the support of Thames Valley Police. The report was published in 2013.

Alice Gibson-Watt died after being restrained while suffering severe panic attack just five days before giving birth to her first child, an infant born with Down’s syndrome. The inquest heard that her death was preventable.

The inquest noted that Alice Gibson-Watt was a valued employee at the Lakeside Mental Health Unit, and her passing left a void in the lives of many. The inquest revealed that her death was preventable, highlighting systemic failings in the care she received.

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Scandal of our empty homes

ENGLAND has 200,000 long-term empty homes which, according to research by property investment marketplace Property Partner, are worth more than £43bn.

In London alone, there were 19,845 homes sitting idle for more than six months in 2016 – that is £9.4bnillion worth of property, taking into account the average price in London of £474,706.

Birmingham was the worst performer outside London with 4,397 properties sitting empty – up 13 per cent in a year – with an estimated value of £201m.

Bradford had the second highest figure at 3,944 (down 5 per cent on last year), followed by Liverpool on 3,449 (up 5 per cent valued at £750m). Manchester has seen the greatest fall over a decade, dropping 88 per cent to 1,365.

The tables have turned in London where one of the most deprived boroughs has dropped places with one of the wealthiest as the capital’s worst performers.

Prime property hotspot Kensington and Chelsea has long-term vacant homes with 1,399 empty, up 8.5 per cent on last year and a rise of 8 per cent in a decade. Taking into account the Royal Borough’s unusually high average property prices, this would give the homes an estimated value of £22bn. Previously, last place in the capital had gone to Newham which during the study period had just 1,229 empty properties.

Property Partner analysed the latest data from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), looking specifically at vacant dwellings in England between 2005 and 2016.

Over the last decade the number of long-term vacant homes in England has dropped by 36.4 per cent from 314,719 in 2006 but has barely moved year-on-year, showing a drop of 35 per cent in the decade to 2015. The estimated value of empty properties in 2016 now stands at £43.5bn.

Harrow saw the biggest rise in England with a 51 per cent climb to 651 from 97 in 2015.

MP’s aide will face rape trial

A TORY MP’s aide accused of raping a woman in the Palace of Westminster will face trial later this year.

Samuel Armstrong, 23, the chief of staff to South Thanet MP Craig Mackinlay, is accused of carrying out the attack on October 14 last year.

He appeared at Southwark Crown Court last week chargsed with two counts of rape, one count of assault by penetration and one count of sexual assault.

Wearing a blazer, white shirt and green spotty tie, he spoke to confirm his name and pleaded not guilty to all the charges.

A previous court heard the attack is alleged to have happened in the Carriage Office at Westminster.

Judge Deborah Taylor set a date for trial, which is expected to last between five and seven days, for December 11. Armstrong is accused of raping a woman outside the Palace of Westminster.

Muslims: our romance was long and wonderful

HUSBAND: our romance was long and wonderful

THE husband of Sotheby’s jeweller Alice Gibson-Watt said the inquest findings will help the family move on.

Speaking after the inquest’s conclusion, Anthony Gibson-Watt said: “I and all of Alice’s family would like to thank the Coroner and all those involved in the inquest for carrying out such a thorough investigation of the circumstances leading up to Alice’s death.”

“It will never bring Alice back, but it has given us a basis of understanding the situation we faced.”

Mrs Gibson-Watt, who is believed to be related to the Duke of Buckingham, met her husband through a mutual friend at a party when she was 18 and he was 21.

Giving evidence and describing his wife during the three week inquest, he said: “Our romance was long and wonderful. We were a lucky couple. Best friends, soulmates with entwined interests. Alice insisted on a drug-free birth to give her daughter the very best start possible. She was enthralled by motherhood.”

“One day I will tell our daughter more about her wonderful mother.”

Claire Fagan of law firm Leigh Day which represented Alice’s family at the inquest said: “Postpartum psychosis is a terrible illness about which much more education is required.”

“However, it was not what killed Alice. Her tragic death was the result of basic failings in the care provided to her at the Lakeside Unit when she suffered a cardiac arrest. But for that, she would still be alive.”

Postpartum psychosis causes severe and sudden onset of mental illness and affects one in 1,000 mums.

In the UK more than 1,400 women are treated for the symptoms, including paranoia and hallucinations, each year.
THE families of British soldiers murdered by the IRA in the 1982 Hyde Park bombing have launched a crowdfunding campaign to bring the main suspect to justice.

They are trying to raise £64,000 to bring a private prosecution against IRA terrorist John Downey after he walked free from the Old Bailey in 2014.

It is accused of planting the bomb and has been wanted for 31 years but it has evaded him and 208 other IRA terrorists were given immunity from prosecution by the British government in a secret deal.

Now families and survivors of the bombing said the funding campaign to bring the main suspect to justice is a “deathtrap” and an “accident waiting to happen”, and several other fire precautions, pleaded guilty on Wednesday 1 March to two offences under the Housing Act 2004, one offence under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and 18 breaches of House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) regulations at the same court.

The property, a 1950s four-storey, mid-teraced building, was let to six tenants. Environmental health officers from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea inspected the flat after being alerted by the fire brigade, which had been called out to a fire at the property.

Officers found a number of safety breaches. While the flat did have a battery-operated smoke detector in the ground floor hallway, there was no automatic fire detection system within the property, meaning there was no proper early warning system to alert occupants of a fire.

There was also an absence of fire safety equipment, fixtures and fittings including smoking area, safe and fire separation between bedst rooms. There was an absence of fire doors to some rooms and damaged fire doors to others, with holes at least one of the doors. This increased the likelihood of a fire spreading through the building rapidly.

All of the bedst rooms were fitted with key-operated locks meaning that, in the event of a fire, there was a risk of the occupant being locked in their room. There were electrical cables with multiple electrical adaptors being used, which could increase the likelihood of a fire occurring due to extra load on electrical circuits.

There was no evidence of a current Gas Safe certificate for the boiler or heating system. One escape route, a staircase leading to the property’s garden, was obstructed by a table, chairs and a gas cylinder.

The court heard that Mr Symonds failed to apply for a HMO licence, which was required as the property had six tenants who were let in two rooms.

In mitigation, the court heard that Symonds accepted he was flagrant disregard for his obligations and he had no flagrant disregard for his responsibilities, rather he had a medical condition and was not capable of managing property. Moreover, it learned that MrSymonds is no longer letting the property.

His fingerprints were also found on a parking ticket from a NCW car park in Portland Square dated July 17-18 and a NCP ticket from the same day. On sentencing, the judge Coleman said the building was an “accident waiting to happen”.

More information about landlords’ HMO responsibilities can be found online at www.hmcic.org.uk/living-healthy-homes/houses-multiple-occupation
A PHOTOGRAPHER has captured London from a normally unseen perspective away from the city’s iconic skyline - experimental housing estates.

Instead of the famous sites of the Shard and the Gherkin Joe Newman has focused on fancy social housing in the capital.

The stunning snaps cover the whole of London from Grade II listed estates built in the sixties in Camden, north London, to the striking design of the intriguingly nick-named the ‘Italian’ hill in Dulwich, south London.

One of those featured is the Alexandra Road Estate in Camden.

Designed in 1968 by architect Neave Brown and built in 1978 the estate went on to be used in films and music videos thanks to its brutalist architecture.

Nicknamed Rowlie Way, the 520-apartment estate features in Danny Boyle’s 28 Weeks Later as well as TV shows Spooks and Silent Witness.

Indie bands Foals and The 1975 also used the estate in their music videos.

The crescent-shaped site was granted Grade II listed status in 1993 and Peter Brooke, then Heritage Secretary, as “one of the most distinguished groups of buildings in England since the Second World War.”

Over in Finsbury Park, north London, is Andover Estate built in 1938 and famed for its pyramid design.

The estate is made of three triangular buildings called Didbin, Noll and Docura Houses, named after local architects.

In Tottenham, north London, resides Broadwater Farm Estate, an experiment in high-density social housing built in the late 1960s.

When it was first built the estate contained 1,063 flats which could house up to 4,000 people.

One of the photos shows the estate’s Tangmere block with its distinctive zigurat structure.

It features a water mural which was painted after huge riots which took place there in 1985.

The mural was part of a regeneration programme there aimed at reducing crime.

Photographer Joe also visited Brownfield Estate in Poplar, east London as part of the project.

The estate also has a Grade II listed status and is one of London’s most famous brutalist structures.

Also in Poplar is Robin Hood Gardens, designed in the sixties and finished in 1972. Its broad aerial walkways are supposed to give the impression of “streets in the sky”.

In south London’s East Dulwich is Dawson Heights, also known as the Italian hill town.

It was designed by architect Kate Macintosh when she was just 26 in the 1960s who wanted the buildings to look like a ship.

Its undulating buildings on its hill-top location have become a prominent feature of the skyline in that part of south-east London.

In the City of London is Golden Lane estate which was built on a site that was heavily bombed in the Second World War.

It is known for its bold use of primary colours and also has grade II listed status.

Also in the brutalist style is Southmere Estate in Thamesmead, south-east London.

Its compelling architecture has attracted film and TV productions such as Clockwork Orange and Misfits.

The last of the housing estate photo series shows Boundary Estate in trendy Shoreditch, east London.

It was opened in 1900 and is the earliest social housing scheme built by a local government authority.
looking at the city

The uniquely designed Alexandra Road Estate in Camden, North London, which is the only one of its kind in the world and is now Grade II* listed.

Robin Hood Gardens in Poplar, East London, was built as a council housing estate described as homes spread across ‘streets in the sky’.

Southwyck House on the Somerleyton Estate in Brixton, South London. The estate’s unique architecture was designed to deflect noise and fumes due to a motorway project being proposed at the time but now abandoned.

Southmere Estate in Thamesmead, South-East London.
Welcome to Ellesmere House care home

Ellesmere House is a modern, comfortable, purpose-built care home with a great location in the heart of Chelsea, west London. We provide personalised residential, nursing and respite care for older people, and our dedicated team are experts in supporting individuals living with Alzheimer’s and other forms of dementia.

Care tailored to your loved one

Our ethos at Ellesmere House is based on person-centred care. When your loved one joins us, we take time to get to know them so that we can develop a care and activity plan that is entirely tailored to their unique needs and interests. We support each resident to stay as independent as possible and to continue making decisions about how to spend their time.

Keep active and have fun

Helping residents stay active and independent is at the heart of everything we do at Ellesmere House. Our compassionate team will support and actively encourage your loved one to take part in activities that will help them to remain physically and mentally active. You name it, we do it: from baking and cake decorating to a variety of arts and crafts. We also organise regular reminiscence sessions, singalongs, games and quizzes.

Why not get in touch to meet members of the care team and take a tour of the home. For more information please call 020 3733 1949 or email lorelei.shepherd@careuk.com

Ellesmere House, 9 Nightingale Place, Chelsea, London SW10 9NG
careuk.com/ellesmere-house
NOSTALGIC commuters have celebrated the end of an era as the last ‘old-style’ Tube train finished its final journey.

The last D-stock District Line train, introduced in 1980, was withdrawn from service on Friday after the classic trains were phased out for new stock.

Just three six-car trains remained in service until Thursday, with the last running its final journey from Upminster, east London, to Ealing Broadway, west London, during the evening rush hour.

Tube buffs clamoured for a space on the 280-seat train, designed with a double set of seats facing one another in the middle of each carriage.

Transport analyst Julian Phatarfod tweeted: ‘Caught the D. Lots of commotion, whistles, announcements and spotters.’

Laura Phelps added: ‘Last D stock train ran on the District Line yesterday. Why do I feel a bit emotional about this?’

One of the trains, number 7007, held the rare honour of carrying the Olympic torch from Wimbledon to Wimbledon Park during London 2012.

A final farewell tour will take place on Sunday May 7, costing £50 for adults and £25 for children.

It will run from High Street Kensington to Ealing Broadway, with a lunch break at the Piccadilly line station of Northfields.

The last D-stock District Line train, left, on its penultimate journey at Upminster where nostalgic commuters celebrated the end of an era as the last ‘old-style’ Tube train finished its final journey.

End of the line for the D train

At Ellesmere House care home we support residents to get the most out of every day. We also believe in sharing our expertise.

Join our next free event:

Parkinson’s awareness

Wednesday 10th May 2017, 2pm - 4pm

Ellesmere House is pleased to welcome Nick Ephgrave from Parkinson’s UK, who will be sharing information and advice to help those affected by Parkinson’s and their loved ones.

The event will also include:
- Expert guidance for improving life for those affected by Parkinson’s
- A chance to meet our friendly team and take a closer look at our home
- Complimentary refreshments

For more information or to book your free place please RSVP on 020 3733 1949 or email lorelei.shepherd@careuk.com

Ellesmere House
9 Nightingale Place, Chelsea,
London SW10 9NG

careuk.com/ellesmere-house
We can make great things happen through small grants

Westway Trust chief executive Angela McConville shares stories of some of the people and projects to receive funds made possible by land under the Westway

WESTWAY Trust has a long history of being a local grant maker – redistributing funds generated through the trust’s property back into local projects, events and initiatives.

The grants are small but over and over we see examples of how small amounts of funding can make a significant impact.

Last year more than 13,000 people attended events supported by our grants. This year, across our grants programmes, we have another £175,000 available to the local community.

Over the last few weeks we’ve allocated a large portion of that funding and I want to talk about some of the groups and individuals doing great work with the help of these funds, high-lighting the diverse projects and hopefully inspire others to apply for funding in future.

Our newest grants are made from the Festivals Fund. We’ve always supported local arts events but this year we wanted to make it easier for newer and less established festivals to apply for funding and to involve local creative people in deciding where that funding goes.

The Festivals Fund is a pot of £60,000 from which a panel of 15 members of the newly established Westway Arts Network, which connects local artists, cultural organisations and venues, make grants of up to £5,000 per festival.

The annual Golborne Road Festival, one of the inaugural 12 grant recipients, celebrates the community of a great North Kensington neighbourhood and features something for the whole family, from street food and live music to walking tours and talks, enjoy delving into London’s diverse history. It’s a must for residents and visitors alike.

Our Community Grants fund is currently £300,000 a year and our ambition is for it to grow in line with any surplus income we receive from rents on the estate.

Through this fund we provide lots of small grants to social enterprises, charitable, voluntary and community organisations to fund projects that improve health, provide economic opportunity, support the local environment, and celebrate local talent.

In April, £42,578 was allocated to support 20 projects that will benefit more than 2,500 people throughout the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

One of the projects chosen for a grant is the 25th anniversary celebration of the London Calypso Tent, an annual platform for singers and performers of calypso music, taking place at the Tabernacle Arts Centre. Speaking to our team about the importance of the tent to the area, Vincent John, chairman of the Association of Calypsomaniacs UK, said: “Calypso is an important part of the heritage of North Kensington and the London Calypso Tent is integral to passing the art form from generation to generation in our diverse community.”

The final round of awards was made to enable local people to be more active, and to support talented young sports people to reach their potential.

Westway Sports Bursaries are grants of up to £500 to people of any age who want to take part in sports and fitness activities but find it hard to cover the costs.

Among those receiving bursaries was Martin, a 45-year-old Irish traveller, who lives on a site adjacent to the sports centre and visits the gym five days a week.

He told us that exercising has dramatically improved his mental health and encouraged him to get out of his home more regularly.

In addition to the bursaries, the Tim Davis Scholarships are a fund of up to £5,000 for young people of outstanding sporting talent who need financial support to reach their potential.

One of this year’s recipients is future tennis star Manray Davis who has already won a number of competitions.

His coaches have put together a strength and conditioning plan to continue his improvement in the coming year which will make use of the new fitness suite added as part of the improvement works currently taking place at Westway Sports Centre.

All 13 people who received a sporting grant will also receive free membership to the fitness suite from Everyone Active, our sports operating partner.

Grant funding is just one of the ways that the Westway estate can support the local community.

But the diversity of groups and individuals we are able to support, scattered throughout the borough, is one way of making sure that the benefits of this wonderful community asset are able to reach beyond the physical site itself. All these funds will reopen for new applications in the coming months.

I encourage anyone who thinks they might benefit to visit our website at westway.org/parliament

PARLIAMENT will take part in the first ever London History Day on Wednesday May 31 with a series of events on the theme “1,000 years of history... where history is still being written.”

On Wednesday May 31, visitors will have the chance to attend a free talk about the Elizabeth Tower by one of the clockmakers. Families visiting with children can take one of the London History themed family guided tours around Parliament.

To mark the launch of the first ever London History Day, Londoners were invited to take part in a YouGov poll about the capital. The Houses of Parliament was voted the place that best sums up London and May 31 was chosen to be the first ever London History Day date as it is the date that Big Ben started keeping time in 1859.

Bookings for the Elizabeth Tower talk are being taken now. Places are limited and the free tickets must be booked in advance by calling 020 7219 4114 (lines open Mondays to Saturdays, 9am to 5pm).

The Elizabeth Tower talk will commence promptly at 10am in the Jubilee Room just off medieval Westminster Hall. Ticket holders are welcome to enter from 9.30am and should allow sufficient time to pass through the airport-style security.

The special London history-themed family guided tours at 10.40am, 1.30pm and 3pm include the Commons Chamber, Lords Chamber, Central Lobby, St Stephen’s Hall and Westminster Hall. Regular audio tours and guided tours are also available throughout the day.

Ticket can be purchased online, by calling 020 7219 4114 or in person from the ticket office at the front of Portcullis House on Victoria Embankment.

A wider audience can have a behind-the-scenes look at rarely seen London-themed objects in Parliament’s Heritage Collections on social media throughout the day. Follow @UKParliArchives on Twitter and UK Parliamentary Archives on Facebook to discover some LondonHistoryDay treasures.

Objects which will be highlighted include the ceremonial silver trowel used to lay the first stone of the Elizabeth Tower and photographs of the damage caused by air raids on the Houses of Parliament during the Blitz.

The Parliamentary Archives provides access to the archives of the House of Lords, the House of Commons and to other records relating to Parliament.

London History Day is a Historic England initiative. It forms part of Historic England’s new campaign Keep It London. The aim of the campaign is to encourage the public to notice, celebrate and speak up for the London’s heritage.

For Historic England’s first ever London History Day on Wednesday 31 May, more than 40 of the city’s museums and galleries will stage special events and rare displays for one day only.

From the treasures of the Thames to the document which granted London its rights and freedoms, family workshops to walking tours and talks, enjoy delving into London’s diverse history.
LONDON WEEKLY NEWS 13 TUESDAY MAY 2 2017

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Orangery basement battle

BY LWN REPORTER
edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

RESIDENTS living near Kensington Palace have slammed proposals to develop a £24m ‘super-basement’ with some claiming the planners have been ‘bedazzled by courtiers’.

Plans have been submitted to a build 50-metre-long, two-storey deep basement next to the Grade I listed Queen Anne’s Orangery of Kensington Palace.

It is to accommodate staff at the palace who will have to make way for the return of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge.

But the plans have caused outrage among some locals because, under RBKC’s planning regulations, applicants aren’t allowed to build double storey basements.

However, it is understood planning officials will consider making an exception on this occasion due to the size and importance of site.

The work is also unlikely to disturb the daily lives of those living in the immediate vicinity.

This has angered residents in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the capital’s wealthiest borough, who consider basement home costs more than £1.4 million.

Donald Cameron has called it a “thoroughly shoddy episode”.

Retired telecoms executive Donald, 65, said: “This is an historic building and should not be disturbed.

“There can be no justification for allowing additional basem ents. The Orangery is a central feature of the park which should be maintained as a peaceful facility for Londoners.

“The consultation is bogus and the planning department seems to have been bedazzled by courtiers when giving pre-application advice.

“Other residents have written to the council to share their concern about plans that the Orangery, which was built between 1704 and 1706, is in the commission of Queen Anne.

Patrick Hope-Falkner said: “In the history of this country, the involvement of a Royal Palace? No one is above the law. And the law in RBKC is subject to E7 and the latest SPD (Supplementary Planning Document) on basements.

“A planning department and local planning authority want to drive a coach and horses through their own regulations and guidelines, should this application be allowed to go any further.

“It would be a traumatic development to a listed building and a blatant defiance of the two storey rule to allow it.

“Marion Gettleson added: “The Orangery has long been a much loved and visited feature of a famous architectural and historical grouping.

“As such, the property should be respected and left alone.

“The disturbance caused by the excavations etc will cause considerable harm to the surrounding area for a long time.

“While somewhat less venerable, the immediate neighbourhood is also of great historical, architectural, cultural and political significance.

“It is very much hoped that other arrangement will be made for the proposed uses for a new basement on this site.”

Residents have also raised issues about potential damage to trees and wildlife which would be removed as part of the proposals.

Official plans for the Orangery’s mega-basement were submitted to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea by Historic Royal Palaces last month.

The proposed development will include one level above ground and two subterranean levels. It will house palace staff, a kitchen to support the orangery restaurant and an area to store ceremonial dresses.

Andrew Langton, chairman of the high-end London estate agency, Aylesford International, estimates the extension cost will around £24 million to build. The council has so far received 14 objection letters from locals and four letters of support.

Support has come from local bodies and organisations made up of The Science Museum, Exhibition Road Cultural Group, Friend of Hyde Park, Kensington Gardens, and the Royal Albert Hall.

Mr Cameron, who has used the park grounds for 35 years, also pointed out it is not the first time controversial plans for the palace get the go-ahead.

He added: “First it was the new cast iron awning for the Palace entrance which was vigorously opposed by architectural expert and Deputy Leader of the Borough, Cllr Daniel Moylan. He was steamrollered.

“The cast iron awning, or loggia, he referred to was designed by John Simpson, a favourite architect of Prince Charles, who was behind the village of Poundbury in Dorset.

“It was described as ‘twee’ by Cllr Moylan who added it was akin to ‘something from a garden furniture catalogue’. The loggia was eventually approved in 2011 by the planning inspectorate following an appeal.

Historic Royal Palaces defended the proposed base- ment, which it says will be funded by donations and not tax-payer.

A statement said: “Our plans have been very carefully considered and developed in consultation with stakeholders including the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea and Historic England.

“As a conservation charity, our priority is to ensure that the new building is sympathetically designed to respect the Grade I Listed Orangery and its historic setting. It will comprise two storeys below ground to provide the facilities required, with just a single storey above ground, thus protecting views of the 18th century Orangery and its surrounding landscape. The Orangery is not in a residential neighbourhood and the completed development will not affect other properties in the area.

“The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea said that it didn’t comment on decided planning applications.

Donald Cameron is one of a number of people who have written to the council to object to plans that have been submitted to build a 50-metre-long, two-storey deep basement next to the Grade I listed Queen Anne’s Orangery of Kensington Palace.

Marathon will help overcome teenage cancer

AFTER event director Hugh Brasher hailed Virgin Money London Marathon as “the greatest ever” in the history of the race, which was named the Teenage Cancer Trust as the Virgin Money London Marathon Charity of the Year for 2018.

The ‘Be A Legend’ themed partnership will see the charity mobilise a team of legendary supporters to raise funds for Teenage Cancer Trust in the 2018 Virgin Money London Marathon, and make contributions of £1.5m for young people with cancer across the UK.

Currently, for every young person aged 13-24 Teenage Cancer Trust supports, there’s another they can’t. But the charity has an ambitious plan for a revolutionary fundraising programme that will ensure specialist nurses can reach young people with cancer no matter where they live, be it in their local hospital or even in their home through technology.

The partnership will play a significant role in helping the charity reach its target of supporting every young person with cancer by 2020.

Russell Brand, comedy legend and long-time Teenage Cancer Trust supporter, is the face of the launch film which satirises the way we think about charity in the social media age. With tongue firmly in cheek, Russell encourages people to take part in the marathon for purely selfish reasons, so they can “look good whilst doing good”.

Kate Collins, Director of Fundraising and Marketing at Teenage Cancer Trust, said: “We’re delighted to be launching our momentous partnership with the Virgin Money London Marathon with a film that has a cheeky tone but a serious message. Huge thanks to Chris, a young man who is currently going through treatment for cancer, and our long-term supporter Russell Brand for teaming up to make the film.

“We need hundreds of people to ‘Be A Legend’ and run for Teenage Cancer Trust in the 2018 Virgin Money London Marathon, so we can make sure that no young person faces cancer alone.

“Every penny raised will make our vital work possible – so we can’t wait to see legends from across the UK gather in support of young people with cancer in the 2018 Virgin Money London Marathon.”

Hugh Brasher, Event Director for Virgin Money London Marathon, said: “Teenage Cancer Trust is an inspiring charity and we’re very excited to partner with them for the 2018 Virgin Money London Marathon.

“Our team of legends will bring the energy and passion to marathon day and help raise much needed funds so that more young people with cancer can access our expert support.

Jo Barnett, Executive Director of Teenage Cancer Trust, added: “We’ve seen the incredible support that the Teenage Cancer Trust offers to young people and their families, and we believe that every young person with cancer deserves this kind of care.

“Virgin Money is proud to partner with this charity and help them take one step closer to reaching every young person with cancer who needs them.”

Queen’s garden to be protected on beloved citrus trees

AT Kensington Palace in 1704, Queen Anne had an elaborate greenhouse in the elegant palace to protect her citrus trees from the harsh frosts of winter.

She also recognised that The Orangery’s beautiful garden was set down and graceful architecture made it a perfect venue for fashionable court entertainment away from the hubbub of Whitehall.

It was at this time that the notion of dining etiquette evolved. In the late 17th century, nobles suffering from ennui in the royal courts of France devised complex social customs to amuse themselves and gradually they made their way to English high society. As the 18th century rolled on, protocol began to rule every action at the dining table.

Table arrangement flourished, with grand candlesticks and grandiose flower arrangements decorating the tables. Tableware became something of an obsession and if a new tool could be invented for a task, it would be commissioned. At dinner, a formal gathering might sit down to as many as nine wine glasses and a dazzling array of silverware including everything from silver spoons to oyster prongs and butter spreaders.

Prior to the introduction of high tea in Britain, the English had two main meals: breakfast and dinner. By the middle of the eighteenth century, dinner for the upper and middle classes had shifted from noon to an evening meal served at a fashionably late hour. This didn’t suit the Duchess of Bedford, Anna Maria Stanhope (1783-1857).

When The Orangery was built, meals for the upper classes were still very carnivorous.
Jet-set foodies prefer plane food

BY LW N REPORTER
edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

THIS is the moment foodies tucked into a fine dining experience – a trendy pop-up restaurant serving only airline food.

The temporary eaterie in London’s Soho opened last week after it was revealed a quarter of Brits think airplane food is worse than school dinners and hospital food.

While a fifth of people believe bad cuisine is the worst thing about flying long-haul and over half don’t like the food served on planes.

The menu on offer at the pop-up, This Is How We Fly, was devised by Kiwi chef and restaurateur Peter Gordon to show off the freshness of Air New Zealand’s on-board fare.

The airline opened the temporary restaurant and also commissioned the research of 1,000 UK adults who have flown long haul.

Peter Gordon said: “When you’re sitting on an airplane you want food with fresh ingredients and great texture that’s going to awaken your taste buds and really excite you.

“The food served on board Air New Zealand uses the finest, fresh ingredients that are simply bursting with flavour.”

Nearly half of British flyers said they would enjoy airline food if it was made from fresh ingredients, while almost a quarter would like to see a range of cuisines offered.

And around a fifth said that a menu put together by a top chef would make airline food more appealing.

Almost half of respondents believe airline food cannot better restaurant quality.

The biggest gripes people have about airplane food are its unappealing look, the freshness of the food and the portion sizes.

Air New Zealand’s This Is How We Fly ran from Tuesday 25th April to Wednesday 26th April at Unit London Gallery, 147 Wardour Street, London, W1F 8WD.

Jo Copestake, Air New Zealand General Manager UK and Europe, said: “At Air New Zealand we make a virtue of flying long-haul so serving great food is just one element of the in-flight experience.

The research findings are interesting but I suspect just haven’t travelled with us – flying should be enjoyed, not endured.

When asked for their views on the food, one member of the public said: “I couldn’t believe it – the food was delicious and probably on par with what I would pay for in a restaurant.

“I had the lamb with minted peas, braised lettuce with bacon lardons and salt roasted new potatoes with mint jelly – it was really good.”

Another said: “I’m always interested in trying new foods and Soho is really good for that. In all honesty I never thought airplane food could be so nice.”

Jo Copestake, Air New Zealand General Manager UK and Europe, said: “People had a chance to sample Air New Zealand cuisine created with the finest, freshest ingredients.

They were also be able to sample some of the best wines from New Zealand courtesy of winey Villa Maria and discover Auckland via LA in an immersive 4D experience.”

Film worker’s tragic death

BY LW N REPORTER
edit@londonweeklynews.co.uk

A RESPECTED film locations manager who worked on the Harry Potter and Pirates of the Caribbean movies took his own life at a five star hotel while battling depression, an inquest heard.

Mr Harm, 51, was found dead in the bath at a suite in the plush Landmark Hotel in Marylebone, central London, the hearing was told.

Mr Harm had posted a suicide note to his partner, Vishal Raghuvanshi, at their home the day before, the inquest was told.

Mr Raghuvanshi called the police who carried out a welfare check at the hotel just after 3pm on January 19 this year, Westminster Coroners Court was told. Mr Harm’s body was found in the bathroom with a ligature around his neck and cuts to his wrists. He was pronounced dead at the scene by paramedics.

Mr Harm, who was born in the Netherlands, came to the UK in the early 90s and worked on several well known films including Elizabeth, Notting Hill and Dirty Pretty Things. He worked as a location manager for the Harry Potter franchise and Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides before working with Brad Pitt on zombie movie World War Z.

Coroner’s Officer Stephen Earl said Mr Harm was described by friends as “the kindest, most considerate, loving and loyal person you could meet.”

Mr Earl added: “On January 19, his partner received a letter from him saying he was at the hotel at the time and that he intended to take his own life.

“His partner notified the police who attended the hotel to conduct a welfare check.

“They entered the room and the police found him in the bath with a ligature round his neck tied to a handle above the bath and he had cuts to his wrist.

“Coroner Dr William Dolman said he had seen medical reports from Mr Harms physicians which “talked about his illness, including depression and suicidal risk”.

The Coroner said in order to reach a conclusion of suicide he must be sure that the deceased undertook the act to himself knowing the consequences and that there was evidence of self harm.

He said: “Firstly there is no evidence there was a third party involved and he understood the act himself.

“Second issue is intent and we have cogent evidence in the letter he wrote to his partner, causing him to raise the alarm and a number of other letters found at the hotel. He gave the cause of death as compression of the neck by ligature in his verdict he said: “I record a conclusion of suicide.”

Following the news of his death earlier this year location manager Sue Quinn, who had worked with Mr Harm, said: “He was the most delightful, handsome, decent, creative person. He had a wicked sense of humour.”

Nicolas Pierre

Suite 726, 28 Old Brompton Road, South Kensington, SW7 3SS

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The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, hosted his first Mayor’s Citizenship Ceremony, where 32 new British citizens took the oath. The ceremony was held at City Hall to help Londoners become more engaged in the life of the city. The event is part of a ground-breaking partnership with independent citizens organisations to help all Londoners feel integrated into London.

Jodie inspires media students

Jodie inspires media students

DEFICITS in novelty processing and a decrease in preference for a rewarding sugar solution.

C H A N N E L 4 presenter, Jodie, worked with students from LDLC College London to help work with them on an ongoing project which will culminate in a live broadcast at the end of the academic year.

The students from the Westminster Bridge-based college are creating an entertaining programme based around music. It will incorporate a music video, studio pieces to camera and interviews, as a way of demonstrating their multi-camera skills. Jodie will also go into college to do a piece to camera for the project and offer any final words of advice before the piece is complete.

During the workshop, Jodie explained her background, having come through the Talent scheme. She has now come full circle and works with the team to hold workshops for future hopefuls.

She gave an insight into inspirations, how she likes to present, what it is like working in a studio and following her recent appearance on ITV’s Good Morning Britain - what it is like working with Piers Morgan.

Jodie focused on the importance of script writing with the students and opened their eyes to the complexity of the skill. They practised with a script she kindly prepared before presenting to camera and the group was then tasked with writing their own.

The practical workshop continued with Jodie teaching the students how to use autocue, she worked with them on interview and presentation techniques as well as offering advice for breaking into the industry in a variety of capacities such as production.

BTEC Media teacher, John Branney, organised the workshop. He commented: “Jodie was incredible and it is great that she wants to continue helping the students with this project. It’s fantastic that the group was given the opportunity to meet an industry professional and learn from her.”

“IT IS WONDERFUL as a teacher to see how the students have grown in the past couple of months and how they got involved in the workshop rather than just watching it. We are so grateful for Jodie’s input and I’m very excited to see the finished product in June.”

In September 2015, LDLC College relocated to brand new, purpose-built premises in the heart of London, on 199 Westminster Bridge Road, overlooking Westminster and the River Thames.

A CHEMOTHERAPY pill for malignant brain tumours may increase the risk of depression because it stops new brain cells from growing, a new study conducted by boffins in London has found.

Brain cancer patients are prescribed Temozolomide sold under the brand name Temodar - an oral chemotherapy drug. It is taken orally and cannot cure a brain tumour, but may extend survival and improve the quality of life of the patient. It works by stopping cancer cells from making new DNA. They cannot replicate and split into two new cancer cells. However, this process can have potential side effects related to cell division, such as hair loss.

A new study by King’s College London researchers found the drug may similarly stop the growth of new brain cells called neurogenesis.

The drug significantly reduced the growth of new brain cells in a hippocampus - a region associated with emotion and memory. And when the drug decreased neurogenesis, the greater the increase in stress hormones when exposed to stress.

The findings were the first to suggest that chemotherapy causes behavioural and biological changes related to depression that are separate from emotional and psychological distress resulting from a cancer diagnosis.
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The making of a monster

SONE Theatre will play host to what's being pitched as a monstrous show constructed by a thoughtful idiot.

John-Luke Roberts Builds A Monster is a critically acclaimed comedy show from the co-creator of fringe hit Alternative Comedy Memorial Society and co-writer of UKTV Gold sitcom Bull (starring Robert Lyndsay and Maureen Lipman).

Following in the fine tradition of comedy horror, this is probably the only show to be hosted by a figment from an anxiety dream that's a mix between John-Luke's father, a sort of vampire thing, and anything else it may use its eerie dream-power to shapeshift into.

This truly innovative, absurdist show uses clowning to put our nightmares live on stage, and make them funny.

John-Luke Roberts is an actor, writer and comedian. He has created four solo shows for the Edinburgh Fringe between 2010 and 2015 which have all been critically acclaimed with transfers to various London venues including two sold out runs at the Soho Theatre.

As an actor he has appeared in Channel 4's Babylon and hit BBC Radio 4 sitcom Welcome to Our Village, Please Invade Carefully.

Roberts has also written for wide range of TV and radio shows including Have I Got News For You, Nevermind the Buzcocks and has co-written his first sitcom, Bull for UKTV Gold, with Gareth Gwynn.

KENNETH Graham’s classic novel *The Wind In The Willows* has been enjoyed by thousands of children all over the world. And now a new stage musical version at the London Palladium is set to bring the riverbank characters to life.

The spectacular stage show received critical acclaim following its pre-West End tour. And with a book by Julian Fellowes and songs by the revered partnership of George Stiles and Anthony Drewe, it promises to be a popular ticket with London theatregoers this summer.

The producers have also gathered an all-star cast to portray the famed woodland creatures with Rufus Hound as Toad, Denise Welch as Mrs Otter, Gary Wilmot as Badger, Simon Lipkin as Rat and former soap opera star Neil McDermott as Chief Weasel.

Neil is best known for playing Ryan Malloy in *EastEnders* – but he is no stranger to the West End and previously appeared at the Palladium in the revival of *The Sound Of Music*.

He also became a favourite with musical theatre fans when he played Lord Farquaad in the musical version of *Shrek* at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane.

This time, the versatile actor is taking on the role the mischievous Chief Weasel, a punk rock star villain who is loosely based on the Sex Pistols frontman Johnny Rotten.

Neil said: “We thought the punk style was most suited to a baddie who’s causing lots of trouble.”

*The Wind In The Willows* tells the story of Mole (played by Craig Mather) on the first day of spring.

The beloved burrowing mammal introduces us to all of his colourful friends including the outrageous Mr Toad, whose need for speed gets the group into an abundance of scrapes.

“Toad’s always looking for the fastest vehicle he can find, from boats to cars and planes, and he gets them all into trouble and then ends up in jail,” Neil tells me.

Whilst the amorphous hero is in the clink, a gang takes over his beloved Toad Hall, led by Neil’s charismatic Chief Weasel, which he describes as “mental”.

Neil said: “When you play an animal the rules are much wider and broader. You can do things you wouldn’t do if you were playing a human, so he can be as erratic as a weasel is.”

Neil extensively studied wild weasels before forming the characterisation.

He said: “I thought their movements were quite schizophrenic; one minute they’re going one way and the next minute they’re going another way.

“They’re always on the move, so I knew I wanted to create something that was quite anarchic in many ways. He’s someone that changes his mind and moves a lot which is great for comedy.”

First published in 1908, *The Wind In The Willows* is known for being alternately slow moving and fast paced.

The novel is notable for its mixture of mysticism and adventure and celebrated for its fairy-tale-like depiction of the nature of the Thames Valley.

In 1908, writer Kenneth Grahame retired from his position as secretary of the Bank of England and moved back to Berkshire where he had lived as a child, and spent his time by the River Thames doing much as the animal characters in his book do – as the book says, “simply messing about in boats” – and expanding the bedtime stories he had earlier told his son Alastair into a manuscript for the book.

The novel was in its 31st printing when playwright AA Milne adapted part of it for the stage as *Toad Of Toad Hall* in 1929.

Now, almost a century later, it has been adapted again by Julian Fellowes, who’s already scored success in the West End with his stage versions of *School Of Rock* – in collaboration with Andrew Lloyd Webber – and *Half A Sixpence* with George Stiles and Anthony Drewe.

*The Wind In The Willows* is quintessentially British, with echoes of the Edwardian era and a simpler existence.

But Neil assured me there is something for everyone.

He said: “It’s a fantastic new musical for all generations. It’s funny, it’s beautiful, the set and the costumes are truly amazing and it’s a lot of fun.”

*The Wind In The Willows* begins previews at the London Palladium on June 16. For more information, visit windinthewillows themusical.com/booking-info.
Talk of the town

PAM Ann is celebrating her 20th year in showbusiness and the queen of the sky is currently enjoying another popular residency at the Leicester Square Theatre, writes Nicky Sweetland.

Caroline Reid’s irreverent airhostess alter ego serves up another huge helping of impudent humour and smut, while her legions of devoted fans cheer and chortle in response.

The latest debacle with United Airlines forcibly removing a passenger has given this filthy femme even more fuel and although the material is unsophisticated, with all of the classic airline stereotypes played upon, the show is performed well enough for the simplicity of the comedy not to matter too much.

There’s even a bit of audience interaction when a gaggle of unsuspecting guests are gathered on stage to reenact one of the Spice Girls’ biggest hits and the quick-witted hostess shows her stand up credentials as she improvises harsh put-downs.

The real highlight however, is the cleverly devised film clip, in which we see Pam Ann taking over from Mary Berry in the Great British Bake Off tent. There’s a lot of talk of soggy bottoms and some great use of baking innuendos to give a gloriously grisly alternative to innocence of the television show.

Bawdy, bold and brash, this is not a show for those who are easily offended, but it is a thoroughly good night out.

Pam Ann Touch Trolley Run to Galley – 20th Anniversary Tour continues at the Leicester Square Theatre until May 27
https://leicestersquaretheatre.ticketsolve.com/shows/873556409

FOLLOWING an acclaimed sold-out UK premiere at Southwark Playhouse the monstrous musical The Toxic Avenger will transfer to the West End. The bizarre love story with an environmental twist by the writers of the West End hit Memphis is to transfer to the Arts Theatre for a limited season.

Prior to the London season, the production will have a month-long run at the Edinburgh Fringe – full details to be announced soon.

Based on Lloyd Kaufman’s cult 1984 comedy schlock-horror, The Toxic Avenger The Musical tells the story of the citizens of Tromaville, who are crying out for a hero... enter nerdy Melvin Ferd the Third, an aspiring earth scientist, determined to clean up the state’s major toxic waste problem.

When a corrupt Mayor and her government goons get wind of his plans Melvin is attacked and tossed into a vat of toxic waste, transforming him instantly into The Toxic Avenger, New Jersey’s first superhero!

Toxie is a seven-foot mutant freak with superhuman strength and a supersized heart to match. He’s out to save heavily polluted New Jersey, end global warming, win the heart of the prettiest (blindest) librarian in town and get home in time for dinner!

Prepare to laugh, scream and sing to songs including Who Will Save New Jersey? Get the Geek Think God She’s Blind, Hot Toxic Love and Choose Me, Oprah as Toxie rocks the house and saves the day!

The Toxic Avenger The Musical will open at the Arts Theatre on September 29
https://artstheatrewestend.co.uk

Glee forever - Matthew Morrison

STARS of the world-wide hit series Glee and Broadway regular, Matthew Morrison, will take to the stage at the Hippodrome Casino next month for what is expected to be a hugely popular two-night residency.

Production company, Club 11 London are fast gaining a reputation for bringing the biggest musical theatre stars to the Leicester Square venue.

A top-flight jazz band will join Morrison, the versatile Tony, Emmy, and Golden-Globe nominated actor/singer, as he performs an evening of standards and favourites.

An artist who The New York Times calls ‘a hard-driving musical frontiersman’, Morrison will take the audience through a career retrospective as he performs selections from his past productions, including Glee, Hairspray, Finding Neverland, South Pacific, Light In The Piazza and more.

Matthew said: ‘London holds a very special place in my heart. It’s a city I love exploring and drawing inspiration from. There’s a sense of nostalgia and longing that this city brings to me, and a lot of the music I’ll be performing holds that same sentiment. To perform at such a place as the Hippodrome, where greats like Sinatra and Judy Garland graced the stage, is truly a career highlight that I look forward to sharing with those in attendance’.

Morrison most recently starred as ‘J.M Barrie’ in the Harvey Weinstein musical ‘Finding Neverland’. In 2015, Morrison wrapped the final season of Fox’s musical comedy series ‘Glee,’ where he starred as the director of the glee club, Mr Schuester.

In June, 2013, Morrison released his latest studio album, “Where It All Began’.

Club 11 London producers, Darren Bell and Marc McBride said: ‘We are thrilled to keep on bringing the biggest and exciting stars from Broadway to perform at the iconic Hippodrome Theatre. When we started our journey producing musical theatre stars from Broadway to transfer to the west End, is to transfer to the Arts Theatre for a limited season.

Matthew Morrison will be at the Hippodrome Casino for three intimate concerts at 8pm and 11pm on Tuesday May 16 and 11pm on Wednesday May 17.

Further details www.club11.london/mattm
Talk of the town

ONLONDON Theatre Company has announced the first productions at its new Bridge Theatre, on the River Thames by Tower Bridge and City Hall. The theatre opens on October 26 – previews from October 18 – with a new comedy, Young Marx, by Richard Bean and Clive Coleman, directed by Nicholas Hytner and with Rory Kinnear in the title role.

This is followed in January by Julius Caesar, staged in promenade by Nicholas Hytner, with Ben Whishaw as Brutus. Then in April comes a new play, Nightfall, by rising playwright and novelist Barney Norris, directed by Laurie Sansom.

Tickets for these three productions are now on sale, priced from £35 to £65 with a limited number of premium seats available.

From summer 2018, productions will include a new play by Lucinda Coxon based on the novel Alys, Always by Harriet Lane; a new play by Nina Raine about JS Bach, played by Simon Russell Beale; Flatpack, a new play by John Hodge; The Black Cloud, a new play by Sam Holcroft from the novel by Fred Hoyle; and Carmen Havana, a version of Bizet's opera by Lucy Prebble with choreography by Miguel Altunaga and directed by Nicholas Hytner.

London Theatre Company, which was founded by Nicholas Hytner and Nick Starr on leaving the National Theatre after 12 years, will focus on the commissioning and production of new shows, as well as staging the occasional classic.

At The Bridge, it will present four or five new productions year-round, playing Tuesday to Sunday, plus a Monday night programme which will include intimate gigs, the live recording of a new podcast series and conversations on food, fashion, politics and science.

Backed by a small group of senior Venture Capital investors, LTC's raison d'être is to create a culture, ethos and economic model that supports writers, directors, designers and actors to work in a space that is complementary to those of the subsidised theatre and West End. In time LTC hopes to open more theatres in London, to be able to host productions from the subsidised theatre, and to transfer its own productions to the West End and beyond.

LTC commissioned the new theatre from architect Steve Tompkins. He and his colleague Roger Watts at Haworth Tompkins have designed a 900-seat adaptable auditorium that can respond to shows with different formats.

The Bridge is the first wholly new theatre of scale to be added to London's commercial theatre sector in 80 years, and the first to be built outside the historic West End. It has a stunning riverside location at the foot of Tower Bridge next to City Hall and is a few minutes' walk from London Bridge station, where the new concourse opens onto Tooley Street in spring next year. The Bridge is situated in Berkeley Homes' One Tower Bridge development amongst ten new restaurants.

Nicholas Hytner said: "We want to make bold popular theatre. We've commissioned ambitious plays that reach out to embrace the audience, and we've built an environment for them that is exciting, welcoming and flexible: a theatre that can be changed to suit the show. We reckon that London needs new theatres, designed for the shows that people make in the 21st century and the expectations that audiences have for a really good night out.'

Nick Starr said: "After the National Theatre, it was time for something new and scary. London is a brilliant city for making and seeing theatre, evidenced by the 25 per cent increase in audiences over the last 15 years. We think there's room for a new independent on the scene, driven by both a mission and a bottom line. We hope that will resonate with artists and audiences, and we are hugely looking forward to welcoming them to The Bridge.'

Further details can be found on the website boxoffice@bridgetheatre.co.uk

The audience must decide

THE Lyric Hammersmith has announced full casting for an intriguing production in which audiences decide the destiny of the leading character.

Entitled Terror, audiences are invited to enter the courtroom, hear the evidence and make their judgment.

A hijacked plane is heading towards a packed football stadium. Ignoring orders to the contrary, a fighter pilot shoots the plane down, killing 164 people to save 70,000. Put on trial and charged with murder, the fate of the pilot is in the audience's hands. Guilty or not guilty? You decide.

Directed by artistic director Sean Holmes and designed by Olivier Award-winner Anna Fleischle the play will feature Emma Fielding as prosecuting counsel, John Lightbody as Christian Lauterbach, Forbes Masson as defence counsel, Tanya Moodie as the presiding judge, Shanaya Rafaat as Franziska Meiser and Ashley Zhangazha as the pilot on trial, Lars Koch.

A worldwide phenomenon, the play has been stirring debate and provoking opposite results in different countries and cultures across the globe. Terror will run at the Lyric Hammersmith from June 14 until July 15.

For more information visit www.lyric.co.uk

Nick Starr, left, and Nicholas Hytner at the site of their new Bridge Theatre by Tower Bridge
Property

Scandal of 31,000 empty council owned homes

THE latest research by hybrid estate agent, eMoov.co.uk, has found that across England, local councils are holding onto over 30,000 vacant residential properties, an average of 116 per council, despite the housing crisis currently gripping the nation.

Recent research by the Telegraph highlighted that there are 200,000+ empty homes across the UK and eMoov have highlighted the quantity owned by the very entities that are tasked with housing people and building new homes to meet expanding demand levels.

eMoov submitted 270 freedom of information requests to London, Metropolitan and District councils asking for the total number of vacant residential properties in their possession including, but not limited to, any council or social housing. So not just those let to council housing tenants, but everything of a residential nature owned by that council.

To provide a transparent analysis of the data, the research not only highlights the worst by the total volume of vacant housing stock but the worst in relation to the local population. More importantly, it also highlights the worst political party and the result is clear cut.

The Worst by Volume
The worst council where stock levels of vacant properties are concerned is the Labour majority Wigan Metropolitan Council, with 3,374 vacant properties in their possession.

When taking into account the population size of each council when looking at the level of vacant properties, the top 10 remains largely the same although there is a reshuffle in the rankings.

Lewish District Council (1.33 per cent), a Conservative majority council, ranks as the worst with a population of 100,700 and 1,335 vacant properties.

The City of London Corporation and Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council are the only new additions to the top 10 worst when accounting for population, but the London Borough of Ealing and Southwark councils both rank as 12th and 13th by population as well as making the previous top ten for volume.

By Political Party
Despite holding a majority in just 82 councils to the Conservatives 156, Labour accounts for just over 75 per cent of the vacant properties across England (23,662) an average of 289 properties per a council area.

When taking population figures into account, they are still the worst offenders by

The Best of the Bunch
It is important to note that of the 270 councils, 167 (40 per cent) do not hold any vacant properties, 73 per cent of which are Conservative majority councils with Labour accounting for just 18 per cent of that number.

Founder and CEO of eMoov.co.uk, Russell Quirk, commented: “It’s quite frankly scandalous that in the current market climate those in charge of addressing the severe housing shortage are actually sitting on a potential solution or at least part of it.

We’ve seen numerous plans and announcements by the Government to tackle the housing crisis and help the average UK homebuyer in previous years, all of which have amounted to little more than regurgitated rhetoric. It would seem that parties across the entire political spectrum need to get their own house in order first and utilize the resources already at their fingertips, rather than investing in another failed housing initiative.

It is certainly a worrying sign for UK buyers when Labour, the party that is supposed to be the one for people, is by far the worst offender in hoarding vacant council-owned properties.”

No Response
Of the 270 councils, we failed to get an adequate response from 24. 15 never confirmed receipt of the FOI and so were given the benefit of the doubt. However, eight confirmed receipt of the original request, failed to reply within the allotted time frame and then failed to provide the information during a second round follow up mid-April.

In these instances, the latest Government data for vacant properties within the ‘Local Authority Housing Statistics’, released in March 2017, was used to ascertain a figure. Blacklist table of councils who confirmed receipt of FOI, but failed to respond within the time frame.


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21 And 23 Girdlers Road London W14 0NH 2017/01524/FUL
Replacement of all single glazed timber windows and doors to all elevations with new double glazed timber windows and doors
6 Girdlers Road London W14 0PU 2017/01537/FUL
Installation of all single glazed windows and doors to all elevations with new double glazed timber windows and doors
328 North End Road London SW6 1NF 2017/01632/ADV
Installation of an illuminated shroud
54 Bridge Road Fulham SW6 5HA 2017/01483/ADV
Installation of three waste conditioning units on the flat roof
45 Rowan Road London W14 0NH 2017/01524/FUL
Extraction of the front and rear garden to form lightwells in connection with the enlargement of the existing basement
Flat 2 First Floor 58 Townhouse Road London SW6 2RU 2017/01466/FUL
Erection of a rear extension at second floor level; erection of a single storey rear extension; installation of insulation and new windows
5 Gledstanes Road, the south-western kerb-line, from its junction with Greyhound Road to No. 79 Gledstanes Road.

(Height) x 10m (Width) for a temporary period of 3 months.

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Sailing from Tilbury on board Magellan, 13 December 2017
This tremendous value two-night ‘taster cruise’ will be the perfect start to the festive season.

Cruise highlights

- Diamond capital Antwerp boasts a celebrated Christmas Market on its vast Grote Markt main square
- Call at historic Lisbon
- Traditional British & International cuisine, stylish entertainment, guest lecturers & on-board leisure facilities
- 2 nights’ full board accommodation on board Magellan

*Book by 31 May 2017. Offer subject to availability & may be withdrawn at any time.

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Christmas & New Year Canaries & Madeira Cruise

16 days from £1479
Sailing from Tilbury on board Columbus, 21 December 2017
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Cruise highlights

- Christmas Day is spent at sea
- Boxing Day visit to Gibraltar
- The Canary Isle of Tenerife
- Calls at Las Palmas & Arrecife
- Spend New Year’s Eve in Funchal
- Call at historic Lisbon
- Traditional British & International cuisine, stylish entertainment, guest lecturers & on-board leisure facilities
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Relief for Rangers after victory ensures survival

SECOND-half goals from Conor Washington and Joel Lynch helped clinch a 2-0 victory that secures Queens Park Rangers' Championship status for another season and puts them just one point closer to the third tier, writes Tony McDonald.

By avoiding what would have been a seventh straight league defeat, QPR will visit Norwich City for their final game on Sunday (1200pm) safe in the knowledge that they are now five points clear of the relegation zone in 18th place.

Hardly cause for bunting and celebration in W12, more a feeling of relief that another frustrating, mediocre season hasn't ended very badly.

"It was a huge game and a game we needed to win, so I'm delighted," said manager Ian Holloway. "That win means the world to me. We showed we can win and keep a clean sheet, which will give us all confidence heading in to next season."

He added: "I couldn't be happier, I'm glad we got over the line. We made hard work of it but I'm glad we're safe heading into the final weekend."

This was only Holloway's 8th win and third clean sheet in 28 games since returning to Lofthouse Road last November. He admitted: "I knew I hadn't won enough games. But no-one wants it more than me and I want this club to move forward."

CONOR WASHINGTON put RS on course for the week that preserved their Championship status Picture: Rob Newell

But Holloway, respected for his heart-on-his-sleeve approach and liked for often saying what the fans want to hear, still has plenty of goodwill credit in the bank. The fans have stuck with him and he acknowledged their support after Saturday's win. I want to thank everyone at the club for the last few months. Yes, it's been hard but that's football. There are no excuses, especially in this league. But we're safe, we're already well into our planning for next season and I'm already looking forward to it. I believe we will get better and better over time."

Washington's goal just after half-time was crucial in calming QPR nerves. The Northern Ireland international hustled Joe Worrall into a mistake before striding on and clipping the ball over the onrushing Forest keeper Jordan Smith for his seventh goal of another unfulfilled season.

"The first goal was key," said Holloway. "Conor took his goal superbly. When he broke through I knew he'd score. It was a lovely finish."

Joel Lynch condemned his former club to a very nervy final game that could see Forest relegated to League One when he found the corner of the net with a downward header - his second goal in a week - from close-range on the hour.

"The second goal was the icing on the cake for us," Holloway added. The manager hailed the QPR supporters at full-time, adding: "I thought the fans were exceptional. There was a real togetherness about today. We needed the fans and they were there for us. That shows the togetherness of this football club and that means so much to me as manager."

County cricket highlights

FOUR matches into the new season and county champions Middlesex are still seeking their elusive first victory. They must have expected to break their duck in 2017 after smashing 343-5 their joint third highest List A score against Sussex in their opening One-Day Cup match against Sussex at Lord's last Thursday.

With John Simpson (81 not out) leading the way, they blasted 119 runs off the last 10 overs. First the visitors' innings had progressed just four overs when rain forced the match to be abandoned, with the teams taking only a point each. On Sunday, the rain stayed away from the Home of Cricket, but Gloucestershire contrived to make Middlesex's ODC total of 256-9 win by five wickets. Left-handed Alistair Cook had light denied Middlesex their first County Championship win of the campaign as Essex held on eight wickets down.

Two interruptions either side of tea had left almost two hours play lost to the conditions at Lord's after Essex resumed on 196-4 chasing 352 to win. A Middlesex win looked a formality at 130-7 when Ravi Bopara (32) had his off stump removed by Steven Finn.

But a valiant 69 from Sam Hain and Simon Harmer held on in fading light for 15 overs to help Essex draw on 169-8. Middlesex have three more ODC matches scheduled for this week, starting tomorrow (Wed) when they visit Hampshire, followed by the London derby against Surrey at the Kia Oval on Friday (5th) and a short trip to Kent on Sunday (7th).

SURREY were shocked by last week's announcement from Zafar Ansari that he has quit cricket with immediate effect at the age of 25.

Surrey and England all-rounder Ansari said he has "other ambitions that I want to fulfil."

Ansari made his Test debut for England in October, against Bangladesh, before playing two Tests against India. The left-arm spinner played 71 first-class games, taking 128 wickets.

"After seven years as a professional cricketer and almost two decades in total playing, I have decided to bring my cricket career to an end," he said.

He added: "While the timing may come as a surprise, I have always maintained that cricket was just one part of my life and that I have other ambitions that I want to fulfil."

"With that in mind, I am now exploring another career, potentially in law, and to achieve this I have to begin the process now."

Ansari, who has a double first in politics, philosophy and sociology from Cambridge University and a Master's degree in history from Royal Holloway, has been at Surrey since the age of eight.

Chelsea

FROM BACK PAGE

work hard, who want to improve no matter how much money they're on. You only have to look at the two top legends at our football club, John Terry and Frank Lampard. It didn't matter how much money they were earning, it was about can they improve, are they the best players in training, are they the best at the weekend and affecting the team they're playing in? They're the kind of levels we're looking at and we are lucky enough now that we've had a first team for the last 10-15 years leading from the front. They're fighting for leagues and cups. It is nice to have that above us.

There is an element of that, I'm not going to lie," said Morris. "One of the things we have tried over the last couple of years at Chelsea, especially the under-18 group, is to make it a little bit more tough, to try and create a tougher environment. That may mean you have to go a bit old school sometimes, put the ball away and tell the boys they have to be in at 7am and run before breakfast or go on an assault course - just change it up a little bit.

"Sometimes we have played games where we haven't been challenged but we still demand the work rate side of things."

"So when we beat teams like Brighton 1-0 and should have been 2-0, it was because we go after the ball when we lose it, even if we're battering teams."

"If the players are not getting enough of a test, you have to try and create it. You have to try something because if you're going out beating teams from Under-9 to Under-18, by the time they get to Under-18s and towards the first team, the competition goes up. As soon as it gets tough, you don't want people to fold."

CH elsea Ladies thrashed Yeovil Town 6-0 at Staines on Sunday to get their Women's Super League Division One season off to the best possible start.

A brace of goals from striker Ji So Yun was followed by efforts from Drew Spence, Erin Cuthbert, Crystal Dunn and substitute Ramona Bachmann.

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CHELSEA are within sniffing distance of the Premier League title and all the players are hoping that departing skipper John Terry will lift the trophy at Wembley on May 21.

Yann Terrier
TURN TO PAGE 27

Azpilicueta knows the importance of ending the season with a win at West Ham on Friday, so Monday night’s home match against relegation-haunted Middlesbrough is a key one.

“W e know we need three more wins to be closer to the title,” he said. “W e finished 2015 eight points clear of Man City. I’m not sure this will be the case with Tottenham. I’m sure they will not give up until the end of the season. At this moment it’s hard but we will see.”

“They have some difficult games, home and away, so everything is open until the end.”

Azpilicueta is unconcerned about where the title win will come from. “It is still my boyhood club. I’m lucky to have played in front of a full stadium and be in the title race against Tottenham,” he said.

The U18s Southern League champions will have the chance to lift the FA Youth Cup at the end of May, so Azpilicueta hopes it will be another proud moment.

The 28-year-old is excited that the title race is on this weekend.

“We have a difficult game on Monday night against Middlesbrough, who drew 2-2 with Manchester City on Sunday.”

Goals from Pedro, Gary Cahill and John Terry helped to earn a 3-2 win at White Hart Lane to restore the four-point gap.

It was a massive win at Goodison Park, he said. “W e knew it would be a difficult game. The first half was tough, we had a good reaction in the second half and were able to win the game.”

“The difference between the halves came after we scored the first goal.”

That was a world-class screamer from fellow countryman Pedro.

“It became a bit easier but even in the first half, we had a few chances to score, but were not able to. W hen we don’t score, we are in a risk situation. But we defended really well and kept a clean sheet for the first time in a long time. That was something we had in our minds, as it was the base for our success. We can’t score three or four goals every time, so stability at the back and not to concede goals is important.”

While goal scorers get the glory, sometimes defenders make the difference. Does he agree? Of course he does. “Obviously we know how football works,” he said. “The goal scorers get more credit but as a defender I know how important it is to give confidence to the team, to defend well. We haven’t kept a clean sheet for many matches, so it was something we had to get back to, recover the solidity, and then to become even better and better.”

After facing Middlesbrough, Antonio Conte’s Blues play their final away fixture against West Bromwich Albion on Saturday, May 21. Chelsea are 11 points clear of Manchester United, who have 10 games left.

The Blues need to win their remaining games to guarantee a top-four finish. But they are not taking anything for granted.

“The FA Cup final is coming up, so it’s important to recover the solidity, and then to be even better,” Conte said. “We have to prepare ourselves, be competitive and try to give our best performance and try and win the game.”

A win against Spurs will be crucial, as Chelsea fans won’t let him forget it. “Yes, it’s not the same. Getting just a draw is not for us, it’s very important to take three points.”

Matic was central to Chelsea’s last title win in 2010, but feels this season is different.

“I think this year it’s more difficult,” he conceded. “We finished 2015 eight points clear of Man City. I’m not sure this will be the case with Tottenham. I’m sure they will not give up until the end of the season. At this moment it’s hard but we will see.”

“They have some difficult games, home and away, so everything is open until the end.”

CHELSEA under-18s hammered Manchester City 5-1 on Wednesday night (6-2 on aggregate) to lift the FA Youth Cup for the fourth year in a row.

While naturally delighted, manager Jody Morris was still keen to ensure his youngsters did not rest on their laurels with three more Elite U18 Premier League games still to play. So he has no complaints when his charges defeated Liverpool 1-0 away on Saturday. Tarus Ukwakwe scored the only goal in a close encounter.

The final two games are against Arsenal and Reading. If the kids win both, then they can add the league title to the U18s Southern League championship they won earlier this season and the FA Youth Cup to their ever growing trophy cabinet.

Of the Youth Cup victory, Morris said: “That win is right up there with the best moments of my career.”

“It is still my boyhood club. I’m lucky and privileged enough to play for the club but to come back and work, to be in charge of such a talented group, is a proud moment.”

Football’s changed but for Morris some things remain the same. He said, “You have to move with the times but not away from the core values. You want people who want to win.”

The Blues are a point closer to Manchester United – still three points behind at the end of the regular Championship campaign is the unlikely uncontrollable scenario which would deprive Whites of a shot at Premier League glory, so the temptation to save legs for the play-off semi-finals will be strong.

Jokanovic wants his team to maintain momentum in that final match at Hillsborough and build on an unbeaten sequence of four wins out of five in the run-in. But he also admits he has half an eye on the battle ahead.

“We must start thinking about what is the best option,” he said after his side extended their unbeaten sequence to seven matches.

“Some players have played so many minutes and we are going to try and find what is the best solution for this game against Sheffield Wednesday.

“I don’t coach only 11 players. We are now a squad and working in the same direction and if I make some changes, I fully expect that they (the ones coming in) are going to do a similar job to the players who started in these last few games.”

“It’s sure we’re going to start thinking about the play-offs now but our job in the regular part of the season is still not done.

“It’s a great chance for us to play in front of a full stadium and with a little less pressure we can try to give our best performance and try and win the game.

“We are in a good moment in our form and we are going to play in a historical place with 3,000 of our supporters there, and we don’t go for points.

“We are going to try and prepare ourselves, be competitive and push hard and find our style.”

Jokanovic added: “I must be proud about the way they are working – how they follow our plan. Our performance can be a little bit more clinical, a little stronger in organisation, but we play with confidence and we know what we must do during the game.

Whites saw out the draw which guaranteed sixth spot without taking unnecessary risks in the latter stages of a decent West London derby in front of 16,000 fans.

Jokanovic said the team is not insatiable not to go all out for a win and risk defeat, because Leeds – Fulham’s only remaining rivals for the play-offs – were defeated 2-1 at Wembley.

“Fulham really ought to have won,” he said. “Something was holding us back, but I have to question ourselves for not going all out for the win.”

Fulham are almost there