Get moving
Volunteers take up challenge p16 & fitness funding p7

Budget update:
Council finances p4

Big spring clean:
Join an event p10

Finding Solace:
Mental health p20

Save our hospitals p12
We all remember what it’s like to be a teenager. Now imagine your family was having difficulties and all you wanted was somewhere safe and stable to stay. Fostering a teenager can be challenging, but it’s a hard time for them too. We need you to understand the needs of our young people and be there for them through the highs and lows, to support them on their journey. When you need us, we’ll be there with 24/7 support, a buddy scheme and all the training you need. We also pay teenage fostering allowances of between £325 to £453 per week for each young person you look after, depending on their age and your experience.

Together we can do this at ealingfosteradopt.co.uk

Freephone: 0800 731 6550   Email: fosteradopt@ealing.gov.uk

CHANGE THE FUTURE

Ealing

www.ealing.gov.uk
**EDITORIAL**

Happy new year. We consider various aspects of personal health in this edition – three volunteers have taken on our Get Moving challenge to improve aspects of their physical wellbeing (p16-17); we paid a visit to the Solace Centre which provides all-year-round support for those with mental health problems (p20); and we have news of Southall sharing in a Sport England fund to help people who are currently inactive (p7), we look at a new Better Lives care programme (p6) and also catch up with the latest on the new sporting hub at Gunnersbury Park (p9).

There is a lot more in here, too. The local elections are around the corner so you need to make sure you are registered to vote (see p19); and you have a last chance to sign the hospitals campaign petition (p12-13).

Richard Nadal
**EDITOR**

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Bridging gap while building future

Ealing Council has to close a budget gap of more than £73million over the next four years, which has led the council to take on this challenge in innovative ways.

There is a national, and local, background of rising costs and increasing demand for services, especially in social care, and dramatic cuts in councils’ funding from central government.

**THE BUDGET GAP**

The accumulated effect of public funding austerity measures, introduced since 2010, will mean the council will have £143million less government funding to spend on local services in 2021 than it did at the start of this decade. This is the equivalent of a 64% drop in government funding, which is a greater cut than both the London and national average.

This bleak picture will not go away in the coming years; and the council eventually expects to have made a staggering £265million of savings between 2010 and 2021.

Councillor Yvonne Johnson, the council’s cabinet member for finance, performance and customer services, said: “This cut, along with a series of other factors including an ageing population, rising costs and increasing demand for social care services, means that the council has no choice but to rethink the way that it pays for and delivers local services. But our response to this challenge is a positive one.

‘POSITIVE CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE’

“The council has embarked on an ambitious programme to transform the way it works. Future Ealing seeks to improve the lives of local people by prioritising the council’s limited resources against nine key aims [see October’s Around Ealing at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/around-ealing]. Protecting the borough’s most vulnerable residents is central to this programme.

£73m budget gap

64% drop in funding
In February councils across the country will be setting their budgets for the coming year – including making a decision on council tax rates.

Seven years of austerity cuts are causing the UK real pain and mean further cuts here in Ealing are unavoidable. Yet demand for services, especially for social care, is increasing year-on-year and we cannot turn our backs on the most vulnerable members of our community.

So, as well as making difficult decisions on where the council can make savings, we have set ourselves an ambitious challenge to review services and find ways to improve them with less money; be creative and innovate – including harnessing digital technology.

We have also been working to grow our way out of austerity. Our regeneration projects have helped secure transport improvements and more decent and affordable homes; and, by encouraging new businesses to locate to the borough, new jobs have been created and more income has been generated from business rates.

Through careful financial management, we have tried to avoid placing too much of a burden on residents’ pockets and there has been a freeze on core council tax rates in Ealing for 10 years.

I will be writing to you all in the coming weeks once a decision has been made by the council on whether that freeze can continue in 2018/19 or whether the pressures on our borough’s finances are too immense this year.

I can tell you now, though, that councillors have agreed to increase council tax support for our poorest residents.

Nine key aims for borough’s future

Leader’s Notes

“Future Ealing has already started to bear fruit and begun to improve peoples’ lives as well as saving money. For example, the council has significantly reduced the number of children who are looked after by the council by carrying out intensive work with families to help them stay together – this improves children’s lives while saving millions of pounds. You can read about another example on page six of this magazine, about a scheme called Better Lives which personalises adult social care.

“This is the type of smarter working that will help us find our best path through these intensely difficult times; we will increasingly be working ever more closely with residents, community groups and other organisations to get things done and make sure our borough remains a great place to live and work.

PROJECTS TO IMPROVE BOROUGH

“In addition, we will continue to secure investment in much-needed housing; and for other projects like the impressive new sports facilities being built at Gunnersbury Park and the restoration of its heritage features – which you can read more about on page 13. Likewise, there are ongoing heritage projects at Pitzhanger Manor in Ealing and Southall Manor House, the latter of which will transform the building into a training hub for local people and also a top dining destination; and there is also a football centre being developed at Rectory Park in Northolt with the Football Association and others.”

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If you are quick you can still sign the Save Our Hospitals campaign petition at www.sohpetition.co.uk before we take it to NHS decision-makers in February. I urge you to turn to pages 12-13 to find out why you should do, if you have not already done so. We will also be holding a public event on 15 February at The Dominion Centre in Southall to state our case further – see www.ealing.gov.uk/soh
More than 7,000 adults receive some form of ongoing support or care from Ealing Council, Deborah Dickey reports, with many more in touch from time to time when they need a bit of advice, information, equipment or support.

As part of its Future Ealing programme, the council has developed a new approach to adult social care called Better Lives, with a focus on keeping residents physically and mentally healthy, active and independent. It is being implemented over a three-year period and will also involve the NHS, social care providers and community groups.

‘I CAN STILL LIVE INDEPENDENTLY’

Francis, 62, had a range of health issues and had fallen at home several times. When his social worker Joana found him the last time, he was seriously unwell and diagnosed with anaemia. A new Better Lives assessment was used to review Francis’s circumstances. It focused on what was most important to him, which was living in his own home and having the freedom to live independently. He found the prospect of a nursing home too restrictive and ‘controlled’ but his illnesses meant he could no longer remain in his house.

So, after a spell of rehabilitation in a nursing home, Francis was helped by social services to move into sheltered accommodation where he has his own self-contained flat with an on-site warden.

Francis continued: “I can come and go any time that I like and there’s a warden in case I need any help quickly. It’s nice to know that even though I have all these things wrong with me, I can still live independently.”

*I CAN STILL LIVE INDEPENDENTLY’

“I would have died if my social worker hadn’t found me the last time,” said Francis O’Reilly*, who lived alone until a year ago when undiagnosed anaemia caught him out. Thanks to the council he now lives in a sheltered home with support on-site if he needs it.

‘RIGHT SERVICES AT THE RIGHT TIME’

Councillor Hitesh Tailor, cabinet member for health and adult services, said: “The idea of Better Lives is to make sure people get the right services at the right time, and build personalised services around the needs of the cared-for and the carers. A key aim is to help make community groups and services better connected, including with council departments, to help people to stay healthy, active and independent. This early intervention also helps reduce the need for more costly care later on, which is good for all council tax payers.”

*Picture is of a model
Southall picked for pilot

Southall is just one of 12 areas nationally to be selected by Sport England to pilot a trail-blazing new approach to targeting inactivity and encouraging people to take more exercise.

Ealing Council worked with the NHS, Southall Community Alliance, charities, voluntary groups and a variety of other service providers to bid for a share of £100million worth of National Lottery funding.

Sport England will work closely with the 12 pilot areas to devise a specific approach for each one, based on the needs of their local communities.

There is a strong link between physical activity and health – and there is also known to be a strong link between poverty and inactivity. In Southall there are higher levels of unemployment and lower incomes than surrounding areas, plus bigger households and more homes with dependent children. A sixth of the town’s residents also has a disability, and many more people act as unpaid carers, which also has an impact on how much time people have to exercise.

Council leader Julian Bell said: “We were delighted to have been selected. Helping residents to be physically active is a huge priority for us because it makes such an enormous difference to people’s health, independence and quality of life. Empowering communities and supporting people to change their own lifestyles is at the very heart of this project.”

Read more at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/getmoving

Resurfacing planned

£3.5million is to be spent on improving roads and footpaths across the borough in the next year.

Each year, independent, accredited surveyors walk the entire length of all of the borough’s roads checking them for defects such as potholes, cracking, and other signs of deterioration and damage. Each road is then given a condition rating on a scale of 1-100 and those with a high rating, which are in the poorest condition, are targeted for resurfacing.

Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, cabinet member for transport, environment and leisure, said: “Year after year we continue to invest significantly to ensure that local people benefit, whether they are pedestrians, cyclists or motorists.”
This snowy avenue of trees near Scotch Common in Ealing was the picture you voted for as the winner of our second Seasons of Ealing photograph competition.

It was taken by Imran Malik, of Ealing, and he won the winter contest with just over 29% of the public vote.

Readers voted for their favourite on our EalingLondon Facebook page. The runner-up was a picture of a sparrow on a snowy garden fence by Harpreet Gehdu, closely followed by Gavin Glean’s image of Hanwell Community Centre in the snow. These two garnered 21% and 20.4% respectively. You can still view all nine shortlisted entries at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/gallery.

Councillor Ranjit Dheer, the council’s deputy leader, has been awarded an OBE in the Queen’s New Year’s Honours for services to local government and to charity. Councillor Dheer is also the council’s portfolio holder for community services and safety. The council’s assistant director of children’s services Marcella Phelan will get an MBE for services to young people. Visit ealingnewsextra.co.uk.

West Ealing is to see £8million funding for projects that will aim to reduce traffic and encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport. This will include links to the new Elizabeth (Crossrail) line station. Most of the money, £6.5 million, has come from a Liveable Neighbourhoods scheme run by the Mayor of London and Transport for London, after our borough was one of seven areas chosen. Read more at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/features/liveable-neighbourhoods.

A smart move

Thanks to the council’s smart business grants, an Acton-based business has improved its energy efficiency and slashed its lighting bills. Other businesses can now find out if they can save money too.

With help from the council, Freeform Design and Constructions Ltd installed new LED lighting in its warehouse, where it constructs sets and scenery for TV and film.

“Reviewing efficiency is a constant business necessity, and to have external help and funding to achieve it is a real bonus,” said owner Matt Cribb.

Register an interest and find out more about the smart business grants by visiting www.ealing.gov.uk/sbg or by emailing businessenergy@ealing.gov.uk.

Read the full story at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/features/smart-energy.

Honours

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Travel funds

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**Past meets future**

Gunnersbury Park is entering a new era as a project to painstakingly restore its heritage nears fruition and work begins soon to create a large ‘hub’ for sport, Dan Stephens reports.

Work is due to start in February on the new sports facilities; and local people will eventually be able to take their pick from a huge range of activities.

It will boast a multi-use sports centre with a gym; two outdoor floodlit artificial grass pitches; new tennis courts; and natural grass cricket and football pitches.

When it opens to the public in spring 2019, it will be one of the largest outdoor sporting facilities in London.

**THAT IS NOT ALL**

Joint owners Ealing and Hounslow councils have been working to bring the park’s grounds and historical buildings to life over the last year, with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Big Lottery Fund and Historic England.

This spring, the park’s museum is due to reopen in the Grade II listed large mansion house; a new café will also open, in which you will be able to view the Rothschild’s horse-drawn carriages.

Restoration of the other heritage structures dotted across the parkland has also taken place, including the Orangery; the temple; Princess Amelia’s Bathhouse; the gothic ruins; the Round Pond; and the Horseshoe Pond.

Council leader Julian Bell said: “This ambitious project is bringing Gunnersbury Park’s past and future together with state-of-the-art sports facilities alongside renovation of the park’s beautiful and historically significant buildings and landscape.”

Read the full story at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/features/gunnersbury-park

Artists’ impression of the new sports centre
In January, we asked residents to vote for which locations we should hold clean-up events at during the GBSC. We asked you to pick three of the borough’s worst hotspots: one along our canalways, one of our roads and one of our parks. Following your vote on Facebook, the council will hold a clear-up event at these chosen locations: The Smiths Farm section of the Grand Union Canal; Seaford Road in West Ealing; and Brent Lodge Park in Hanwell.

The clean-ups will take place on Friday, 2 March. Local people are urged to come along and take part or, alternatively, for community members to come together to organise activities in their own neighbourhoods.

HUGE COST OF DUMPED RUBBISH
This follows an announcement by Keep Britain Tidy that the task of cleaning up litter and fly-tipping has reached an average of £3million a year. Keep Britain Tidy estimates that more than 30 million tonnes of litter and fly-tipped waste is collected from the streets in England every year, with Ealing Council cleaning up 18,000 tonnes across the borough each year.

Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, cabinet member for transport, environment and leisure said: “The Great British Spring Clean is a great reminder that it is not costs councils around £1billion a year nationally. In Ealing, the cost of cleaning up litter and fly-tipping has reached an average of £3million a year.

‘Chucking litter is like throwing away council tax payers’ money’
WASTE

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY
It is your legal responsibility to make sure your household waste is disposed of in the correct way – either by yourself or by a licensed and reputable company. If it ends up being fly-tipped by a rogue company, you could face court action and a large fine or prison. Illegally dumped waste is more easily traced back to your property than you might think.

To report fly-tipping visit www.ealing.gov.uk/reportit or call 020 8825 8825.

For more information, visit ealingnewsextra.co.uk and search for ‘fly-tipping’.

RUNNING YOUR OWN EVENT?
For businesses, residents or community groups who have organised their own clear-up, let us know by registering your event on Bubble – a website dedicated to helping people organise an activity, project or volunteer. Visit www.dosomethinggood.co.uk to find out more.

Pride in my neighbourhood Love Ealing

just the council’s responsibility to keep the streets, parks and open spaces clean and tidy. And chucking litter or fly-tipping is like throwing away council tax payers’ money; and it is anti-social too – creating dangers and eyesores. Coming together to help keep our borough clean is a good way to set an example and display the pride that the majority of us take in where we live.”

For more information or to take part in the Great British Spring Clean visit www.ealing.gov.uk/springclean
In February, the leaders of Ealing Council and Hammersmith and Fulham Council will take the petition to NHS decision makers, demanding they stop and think again about the plans to close local hospital services, including our A&Es.

Council leader Julian Bell said: “We have huge respect for NHS staff and the care they provide. We all want to see improved out-of-hospital and preventative care. However, these plans will have a devastating impact for our residents.

“People will have to travel further to get to A&Es, which will be straining under increasing demand. We don’t believe these plans are safe, there isn’t the capacity elsewhere in the system. The speed and scale of change is unrealistic.

“We already know from the NHS’s own evidence that these proposals will unfairly impact on our most vulnerable residents and an independent survey shows 90% of residents don’t agree with the plans.

“We want to see an immediate halt of the plans so people can be assured that they and their loved ones will get the care they need in an emergency.”

Read the full story at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/features/hospitals

Sign the petition at sohpetition.co.uk – the petition closes 12 February.
SAVE OUR HOSPITALS

The future of Ealing and Charing Cross?

CLOSED: A&Es replaced with the equivalent of urgent care centres at both sites

GONE: Surgery, critical and acute care

CLOSED: Maternity unit and children’s ward at Ealing already closed

SCRAPPED: 500 hospital beds

TIME: Longer travel and wait times for some patients

Attend a public meeting on Thursday, 15 February at The Dominion Centre, Southall.
This way for a career

Ealing Council offers two apprenticeship schemes: One working within the council itself, and one working at local businesses.

The next round of vacancies at the council will be advertised in April, so you can start to find out more now. And there are 129 vacancies waiting right away with local businesses, thanks to the council’s Ealing Apprenticeship Network.

‘I DEFINITELY MADE THE RIGHT DECISION’

Musawar Khan, 19, began his apprenticeship at Ealing Council over a year ago, working at the Copley Close estate regeneration project. Each council apprentice works within a council team as well as studying for vocational qualifications. It involves a one-year training agreement with the option of a second year, and an allowance starting from £210 per week.

“An apprenticeship appealed to me because I wanted to gain experience early on,” said Musawar. “I wasn’t too keen on going to university and having to pay student debt in the long term. With an apprenticeship you get your qualification and a salary alongside all the other benefits that come with it. I definitely made the right decision. It’s a great opportunity to get your foot in the door early on.”

In September Musawar was awarded 2017 Ealing apprentice of the year at the council’s annual awards. He is working towards a level 3 qualification and would then like to continue his career in the housing sector.

He added: “I’ve learnt a lot of things on the job and I’ve got to network with a lot of interesting people from different backgrounds, all while gaining new skills and getting paid. So I think apprenticeships are not just good for the professional aspects but also from a social perspective. It’s a really good scheme.”

‘THE PERFECT CHOICE FOR ME’

Ellis Donaldson, 18, started an apprenticeship at the council in its safer communities team last year.

She said: “My apprenticeship has allowed me to gain experience across a wide range of activities. I’ve really enjoyed the variety, especially when every day is different.
“I think there are a lot of pressures on young people to go to university or follow certain career paths. I thought about university, but realised it wasn’t the right choice for me.

“The council’s apprenticeship programme was the perfect choice for me. It gave me a step-up into the world of full-time employment while still receiving lots of support and training. It has been a really positive experience and I would encourage anyone leaving school who is unsure of what they want to do next to consider an apprenticeship.”

Ellis was awarded a significant achievement award at the council’s annual awards and is to work for a level 4 qualification.

‘WE HEAR COUNTLESS TESTIMONIALS’
Councillor Peter Mason, cabinet member for prosperity, skills, employment and transformation, said:
“Apprenticeships work for everyone. They provide apprentices with unrivalled, on-the-job training and a route into a career while also making a huge contribution to the companies they are placed with – or, indeed, to the council.

“We hear countless testimonials about the positive impact they make.

“More than 650 apprenticeship vacancies have been created in five years through our work with local businesses, with more than 200 additional placements being created at the council itself in the past 10 years.

“We have a wide variety of opportunities available again this year and I’d encourage anyone reading this who is interested to find out more immediately.”

Interested? Here is what to do next
The first thing to do is visit www.ealing.gov.uk/apprenticeships – and from here you can:
1. Find out more about the Ealing Council apprenticeship scheme, eligibility criteria and to sign up to receive apprenticeship vacancies updates
2. Or, if you think you have what it takes to fill one of the 129 placements with our local businesses, fill in an online questionnaire. You could be invited to a workshop or to meet with an advisor.
That is why Around Ealing’s website Ealing News Extra set out to find three volunteers who wanted to step up to a Get Moving challenge, reports Claire Parker. The idea was to be helped to become fitter and live a healthier lifestyle while sharing their stories with everyone to show how it can be done. People from all over the borough came forward, all with great reasons for wanting to take part.

After careful consideration, three people were chosen: Andrea, a mum from Acton; Sunny, a professional baker from Southall; and Ann Marie, a retired surveyor from Ealing. The three volunteers had a meeting with a health trainer from NHS One You to talk about their routine and agree some

For many of us, fitting exercise into our daily lives can feel like an uphill struggle. We know that we really ought to be a bit more active, but find it hard to make the time, do not think of ourselves as naturally sporty or just do not find it enjoyable.
goals to work towards in 2018.

To find out how the volunteers are getting on you can follow their journey on our EalingLondon Facebook page and look out for regular updates about this, and the Get Moving campaign in general, at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/getmoving

‘NOT JUST A FAD’
Mother-of-one Andrea Mensah, 29, who lives in Acton, said: “When I had my daughter I gained 20 kilos and, even though I have lost most of the weight, I would love to get back to my pre-baby shape and tone up. I don’t want this to just be a ‘new year’ exercise fad. I’m committed to becoming more active so that I can feel like myself again and get my confidence back.”

FACING UP TO HEART RISK
Ann Marie Tighe, 66, said: “The challenge came at just the right time for me. I have a family history of cardiovascular disease and my doctor recently told me that I’m at risk of suffering a stroke or heart attack in the next decade. My younger cousin had a heart attack in 2016 and that was a real shock for me. I know I need to make some permanent changes to my lifestyle and I hope the challenge will spur me on to make those changes to help reduce my chances of having a heart attack.”

‘HOPE IT SPURS ME ON’
Sunny Bal, 33, from Southall, said: “I work in marketing and also run my own business making cupcakes so I’m really busy. I like to work out, but with all my work commitments I’m finding it increasingly hard to fit it in. I really hope that the challenge pushes me on to get fitter and helps me to find better ways of fitting exercise into my routine.”
Spring Open Day
Saturday 17th March 2018
11am to 1pm

Nursery places available

“The care and attention the children receive is excellent. Being introduced to different teachers at a young age is a wonderful experience to have. Very patient and friendly staff.” (Current Parent)
You are not automatically registered to vote, even if you pay council tax. Unless you are registered, you cannot vote and you will miss a critical opportunity to have your say on what happens where you live and the services on offer in your community. Not being registered could also affect your credit rating.

COUNCIL ELECTIONS
There are 69 councillors serving on Ealing Council, with three councillors representing each of the borough’s 23 wards.

When you vote on 3 May 2018, you will be able to choose up to three people to represent the ward you live in. Once the votes have been counted, the top three candidates for each ward will be elected to serve on the council. Ealing Council provides hundreds of services to local residents and businesses – everything from maintaining the roads to recycling, from schools to food hygiene inspections, and from sports centres to libraries. The council’s priorities, and budgets, are set by its councillors, and most big decisions are made by them. Your vote is the best way you can influence who those councillors are and the decisions they make on your behalf.

HOW TO REGISTER
Being registered to vote does not mean you have to vote, it just means you can. The deadline for you to register for the local elections is 17 April 2018. Even if you will not be around on 3 May 2018 to vote in person, you may still be able to vote if you register and apply for a postal vote. For more information on this option, see the ‘more info’ box on this page.

HOP TO IT
Register to vote

The local elections will be held on 3 May, and Ealing Council is reminding residents who have moved address in the last year or changed their details to make sure they are registered to vote. Rachael Coutinho reports.
‘A second home and safety net’

“Solace is not just about having a laugh and a cup of tea; it is much more than that,” insisted a user of the recently reopened mental health resource centre.

For 23 years, The Solace Centre in West Ealing has been a place where people with mental illness can meet in a relaxed environment, build confidence, join in activities and make new friends. It plays an integral role in helping people to cope with mental health crises or combat loneliness and depression.

The centre’s staff also helps its 87 members and many other visitors to resolve various day-to-day problems. It is an ‘out-of-hours’ service that runs all year round, opening weekday evenings and all afternoon at weekends for members.

Senior recovery worker Catherine Bingham said: “A great majority of our service users come from the community, where loneliness and day-to-day life can become unbearable. Others are referred by their GPs, the hospital or via supported housing. Solace is a welcoming and safe environment.”

THE BIG REOPENING

Since April 2016, the council has leased the Solace Centre, in Bowmans Close, to Equinoxcare, part of the Social Interest Group charity. Solace officially reopened on World Mental Health Day in new premises, the lay-out of which was partially shaped by service users’ views. After an uncertain couple of years when its future was under threat, the opening of
the new centre was well received by a sea of 140 smiling faces.

Councillor Hitesh Tailor, Ealing Council’s cabinet member for health and adults’ services, said: “The new purpose-built building will give current and future users much needed support.”

‘LONELINESS IS A KILLER’
Natasha Wing has been going to Solace for 15 years. She has been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder – a condition that she believes was first triggered by personal traumas as a child.

“Solace has become my second home and very much become my safety net,” she said. “It has done so much for me in dealing with day-to-day living and the stresses and strains of life.

“We help each other. Peer support is so important. And it gives you social contact you might not otherwise have. Loneliness is a killer.”

‘THIS IS A FAMILY TO ME’
Another member of Solace who has been going there for 15 years is Dymphna Bolger, who lives with bi-polar.

“Solace is not just about having a laugh and a cup of tea; it is much more than that,” she said. “A lot of us don’t work and do not have that kind of daily routine that brings you together with other people. And if you don’t have a routine or a reason to be somewhere, it is not good for your mental health. The staff also know me really well now and can pick up on signs if I am getting manic or a little too high. If I feel wobbly, I can use them as a touchstone and then do something about it.”

Tyron Barnett has been attending Solace for 16 years. He said: “This is a family to me – a big family of people from different places. We share each others’ problems and look out for each other. And you can knock on the door and talk to staff any time.”

Read the full story at ealingnewextra.co.uk/features/solace
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Too close for comfort

The Metropolitan Police is continuing to run a cycling safety operation to highlight the dangers faced by cyclists as a result of motorists driving too closely to them, reports Philip Brent.

Operation ‘Close Pass’ has been taking place in the borough since last summer and involves plain clothes police officers out on patrol on bicycles to spot dangerous driving.

The officers on bikes will target random locations at any time to identify drivers who do not allow enough room when overtaking cyclists, or follow too closely behind, or carry out unsafe turning by overtaking and then turning left or right across a cyclist’s path. The recommended safe clearance is one-and-a-half metres.

If the officers spot an offence they report it to uniformed officers on motorbikes. These will then find the driver and give them the opportunity to have an on-the-spot awareness session. If they turn this down, they will be issued with a Traffic Offence Report.

Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, cabinet member for transport, environment and leisure, said: “As a cyclist myself, I know how important it is to feel safe when on the roads and I hope it will be reassuring for all cyclists and road users that police are actively looking for drivers who drive dangerously and recklessly. The council is to undertake a cycle safety review of the borough and is pushing for more operations like this across the borough to tackle dangerous driving.”

The council wants to help more residents to take up cycling because it is great exercise and reduces pollution and congestion. For information about the support available, including free lessons and free Dr Bike cycle maintenance sessions, visit www.ealing.gov.uk/cycling

Read the full story at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/features/close-pass
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**Public consultation on safe zone**

Ealing Council is seeking the views of residents and interested parties on a possible public spaces protection order (PSPO) proposed for Mattock Lane, Ealing, around the Marie Stopes clinic.

The consultation will run for eight weeks.

Any decision on a PSPO will only be made once the consultation process has been completed.

For more information, and to view the proposed PSPO, visit [www.ealing.gov.uk/safezone](http://www.ealing.gov.uk/safezone)
Signing up for the council’s fortnightly garden waste collection service is a good way for residents to get rid of unwanted cuttings, leaves, twigs and grass.

It would mean you no longer need to take your garden waste to the recycling centre, saving you time that you can spend in the garden instead; but it is every bit as environmentally friendly because the collected plant matter is recycled into high-quality compost.

Prices have been frozen for annual subscriptions, which start from April and run until March 2019. New subscribers can join more than 10,000 other households in the borough currently benefiting from the collection by signing up from £75 – with concessionary rates of £57.50 available for those aged over 65 and those on means-tested benefits.

Subscribers can choose between using green bags or a green wheelie bin, depending on how big their garden is and how much waste they produce.

Councillor Bassam Mahfouz, the council’s cabinet member for transport, environment and leisure, said: “For the thousands of people across the borough who use it, our garden waste collection service is more convenient than making a trip to one of our local recycling and reuse centres.

“Gardeners can decide to share a bin and split the cost with their neighbours for even better value on the service.”

Current subscribers will be sent renewal notices advising on how to make payments via post and email, and should renew before April 1 2018 to avoid disruption to their collections.

You can pay for the council’s garden waste service up-front or spread the cost by direct debit. To sign up and for further information, visit www.ealing.gov.uk/gardenwaste

If you want an alternative, why not try your own compost bin? Read more at ealingnewsextra.co.uk/features/composting-natural-feast

With the end of winter on the horizon many people will be itching to get back out into their gardens and get on with the business of preparing for spring, writes Dan Stephens.
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**Councillor Ranjit Dheer**
Deputy leader, and community services and safety

**Councillor Yoel Gordon**
Chief whip

**Councillor Ramesh Tailor**
Health and adult services

**Councillor Binda Rai**
Children and young people

**Councillor Jasbir Anand**
Housing

**Councillor Bassam Mahfouz**
Transport, environment and leisure

**Councillor Yvonne Johnson**
Finance, performance and customer services

**Councillor Peter Mason**
Prosperity, skills, employment and transformation

**Mayor of Ealing**
Councillor Simon Woodroofe

**Deputy mayor**
Councillor Tejinder Dhami

**Public meetings**

**FEBRUARY**

**Thu 1** Perivale ward forum

**Tue 6** Northolt West End ward forum.
Ealing Broadway ward forum

**Wed 7** South Acton ward forum.
Scrutiny review panel 1 (violence against women and girls)

**Thu 8** Overview and scrutiny committee.
Norwood Green ward forum

**Tue 13** Cabinet

**Wed 14** General purposes committee

**Thu 15** Scrutiny review panel 2 (licensing policy)

**Tue 20** Full council

**Wed 21** Planning committee

**Thu 22** Scrutiny review panel 3 (Future Ealing)

**Mon 26** Walpole ward forum. Dormers Wells ward forum

**Tue 27** Cleveland ward forum

**Wed 28** Standing advisory council. Lady Margaret ward forum. Acton Central ward forum

Details correct at time of publishing.

Meetings due to be held at Ealing Town Hall at 7pm but visit www.ealing.gov.uk/committees to check dates and times.

Ward forums: For more details, visit www.ealing.gov.uk/wardforums

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Send letters to: Ealing Council, Town Hall, New Broadway, Ealing W5 2BY.

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There will be plenty of family fun to be had with a cracking Easter egg trail taking place from Saturday, 31 March to Sunday, 14 April. It will be free to take part in the trail after you have paid your entrance fee for the zoo and, what is more, you could even win the chance to join the zookeepers for a day and help them look after the wide variety of creatures they care for at Hanwell.

This spring is a perfect opportunity to meet the 30 species of bird that call Hanwell Zoo their home, resplendent again after the cold of winter. Six-foot red crowned cranes, amazing Caribbean flamingos and a flock of black cheeked lovebirds are just some of the many feathered friends assembled from across the world as part of the zoo’s impressive conservation work.

There are also plenty of other animals to grab your attention, including a mob of meerkats, the lovable lemur group (which Around Ealing readers helped to name) and the popular Emperor Tamarin monkeys. Once you have seen the animals there do not forget to leave time for children to enjoy the newly built water play area.

Hanwell Zoo is in Brent Lodge Park, Church Road, Hanwell, W7 3BP. Follow @HanwellZoo on Twitter and search Hanwell Zoo on Facebook; or visit its website at hanwellzoo.co.uk
Open Day is on Saturday 10th March 2018
Please visit our website www.sapriory.com to register

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