



Your independent community newspaper

WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free
Oct 2020, No. 67

Email WFEcho@socialspider.com
Facebook [/WalthamForestEcho](https://www.facebook.com/WalthamForestEcho)
Instagram [@walthamforestecho](https://www.instagram.com/walthamforestecho)
Tweet [@WFEcho](https://twitter.com/WFEcho)
Visit walthamforestecho.co.uk

News

Merger of primary care groups in East London could see NHS treatments cut

► P. 3

Features

A platform has been set up to help local people find local jobs

► P. 5

News

Walthamstow resident told to travel 562 miles for Covid-19 test

► P. 7

Arts & Culture

How a Walthamstow choir has met the challenge of social-distanced singing

► P. 12

Sport

The cricket club that rebounded from lockdown to play a curtailed season

► P. 18

Fresh air



Mums for Lungs Walthamstow campaigners Ruth Board (left, with son George) and Kay Ali (right, with son Eisa) Credit Patricia Board

Parents concerned about air pollution around local schools last month launched a new 'Ditch Pollution' campaign.

Environmental group Mums for Lungs Walthamstow launched the three-week anti-pollution campaign on Car Free Day, a national day of action when parents are encouraged to leave their cars at home and walk or use public transport for the school run instead.

Kay Ali and Ruth Board (pictured) helped put up 250 posters covering more than 30 primary schools and nurseries in both Walthamstow and Leyton, to encourage parents to ditch their cars. They are also celebrating the creation of five local 'school streets' which ban traffic during peak hours – something made possible by Waltham Forest Council.

Kay said: "Mums for Lungs are a group of parents across London, campaigning for cleaner air and reductions of emissions for everyone, and in particular for children and babies."

Fewer beds in new Whipps Cross plan

Report confirms intention to reduce bed numbers at rebuilt hospital

by Victoria Munro, Local Democracy Reporter, and James Cracknell

Newly-released plans for the proposed Whipps Cross University Hospital rebuild explain why bed numbers could be cut by around 50 – despite a growing local population.

Barts Health NHS Trust, which

manages the hospital, has published its vision for the "once-in-a-lifetime" redevelopment. It forms the first part of the 'business case' which has now been approved by government, with a more detailed submission due to be drawn up next year.

The current Whipps Cross site in Leytonstone had 576 beds available on average in 2018/19, while for the new hospital the

trust says it has now "adopted an assumption of 525 beds". The local population is expected to grow by 10% over the next decade but the trust expects improved care out of hospital and faster treatment will reduce the number of beds needed. It also insists the new hospital will be able to increase capacity when required.

The new hospital will be constructed on the site of Whipps

Cross's disused nursing accommodation, allowing usual service to continue unaffected in the existing building throughout. By reducing the size of the current "sprawling" site – parts of which predate the founding of the NHS itself – the trust will make room for around 1,500 homes, half of which will be 'affordable', to

Continued on Page 9 ►

The Echo is free for everyone. As a not-for-profit, we need your support to stay that way. If you would like to support our publisher WFWellComm with a one-off donation scan this QR code with your PayPal app:



NEWS

'We are absolutely determined to get this right'

► Continued from Page 1

contribute towards the cost of the rebuild.

Work could begin as soon as 2022 and finish in 2026, if all funding is secured and planning permission obtained. Demolition of the old nursing block is set to begin before the end of this year, with permission for the work already granted.

Barts chief executive Alwen Williams said: "I'm delighted the government has endorsed our strategic outline case. This means we have the 'green light' to develop our proposals in more detail. It means we are one step closer to our goal – a brand new state-of-the-art hospital situated within a wider health and wellbeing setting alongside much-needed new homes, bringing real benefits to the local community."

The trust expects that by speeding up treatment and reducing the number of people who become sick enough to be admitted to hospital, it can cope with fewer beds. The new report, 'Building a Brighter Future for Whipps Cross – Moving to the Next Stage', reads: "Our local partners plan to improve care and support outside of hospital, so we expect more people will avoid having to come to A&E than would have been the case, because they will be better supported in or closer to their homes."

"For example, our partners in Waltham Forest and Redbridge are working to improve care for people with long-term conditions such as diabetes, multiple sclerosis or chronic asthma.

"The effect will be less people reaching the stage where they need hospital and those already there will be able to be more quickly discharged safely."

Barts also expects more patients to be seen



A sketch giving an idea of how a redeveloped Whipps Cross Hospital site may look, with a new central 'high street' included

and treated on the same day rather than admitted, thanks to doubling the capacity for tests with more CT (computerised tomography) and MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scanners. The report adds: "We would anticipate the overall amount of days that patients spend in a hospital bed could fall by 10% over the next ten years."

A petition launched earlier this year called for the trust to include more beds in the rebuilt hospital and received more than 5,700 signatures. Waltham Forest Save Our NHS campaigner Mary Burnett said: "There is a mantra that we do not need more beds because everything can be done in the community, which is outrageous actually."

"You can't get an appointment with the GP because we do not have enough. Social services are on their knees and staff in social care are not nursing staff."

"What's really concerning about this is when things go wrong in the hospital it

gets picked up, but if an elderly person dies at home because they did not have the treatment they needed, the responsibility for, it can become much more complex.

"We need a new hospital but if we get one with not enough beds, we will still have people waiting on trolleys to be admitted."

Barts is set to receive around £350million from the government over five years to fund the rebuild of Whipps Cross, one of six hospitals in the country to receive extra funding as part of a package announced before last year's general election. Further government funding will likely be needed, however. Chief executive Alwen Williams said: "We have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a new hospital at Whipps Cross for our patients, our staff and our communities."

"Working with our health and local government partners, we are absolutely determined to get this right and secure the

future for generations to come."

A spokesperson for Barts said that there would be flexibility in the Whipps Cross plans to enable them to "expand and adapt" services in future. They added: "In the hospital we plan to increase access to senior clinicians and nearly double the number of diagnostic tests, meaning more patients will be seen and discharged on the same day."

"We also expect to increase our theatre capacity with longer operating hours, more operations done as day cases and more outpatient appointments undertaken remotely, improving quality and access to services and reducing the amount of time that people spend in hospital beds, which we know is better for patients."

Barts is hosting a series of public events this autumn to gather people's views. The first is on Thursday 15th October, from 6.30pm – sign up at futurewhipps.eventbrite.co.uk

For more information about the Whipps Cross redevelopment in general:
Email futurewhipps.bartshealth@nhs.net
Visit bartshealth.nhs.uk/future-whipps

Tree warnings 'ignored' prior to storm

by Victoria Munro,
Local Democracy Reporter

A Leytonstone man who says he warned the council for years about a "dangerous" tree near his home wants compensation after an enormous branch destroyed his garden.

During a storm in late August, a large tree branch fell into Azmat Khan's garden in John Drinkwater Road, damaging a marble table, a brick wall, benches and a fence, only ten minutes after children had been playing outside.

In May, a branch broke off the same tree and damaged his car. Azmat said he first told Waltham Forest Council the tree seemed unhealthy in 2017 and sent more than 30 emails



The huge tree branch fell down directly on top of a residential garden

about it over the years.

Clyde Loakes, a Leytonstone councillor and cabinet member for environment, admitted the

council intended to prune the tree but "other urgent works were carried out first".

Azmat said: "I have been ask-

ing the council why this has happened. When I emailed they said 'we are doing something about it' but nothing was done at all. Fortunately no-one was harmed. This could have easily killed a family member or, if it toppled over the other way, killed innocent children in Henry Reynolds Park.

"I'm no tree expert but even through the naked eye it's evident that the tree was not in fit condition."

Azmat said he was disappointed Cllr Loakes had seemed "dismissive" of his concerns, and added he expected compensation from the council for the repairs that would be needed on his garden wall and gutters on the second floor of his house.

Cllr Loakes said: "We are sorry

for any distress and inconvenience caused by this incident. The tree lost a branch in May this year, after which it was made safe and inspected fully with some pruning being recommended to reduce the remaining branches in the best interests of the tree.

"This work required road closure permits to be arranged so that it could be carried out safely, and because the inspection showed the tree to be safe other urgent works were carried out first."

"Unfortunately, the unseasonably strong Storm Ellen caused further damage and we arranged immediate action. Officers cleared the damage and re-inspected the tree, pruning the remaining branches."