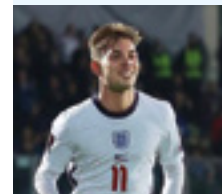


Pop up gallery showcases local art
Page 3



Chronicle campaign gets action
Page 8 and 9



England star recalls jumping Norbury Brook
Page 16

THE CHRONICLE

Issue 42
Dec 2021

FREE

The superhero role models giving young people the belief to succeed



Cricket coaches receive highest honour



Footballer Wilf Zaha joins Pamper Indulge Give kids in Zumba



Giving back: Stormzy and the Celeste school choir @NorburyHigh Twitter

IN THIS edition of The Chronicle we highlight the amazing projects and volunteers who are providing local young people with role models to build their self esteem and help them succeed in the future.

- Thornton Heath Cricket Club where coaches speak six languages and each week provide hundreds of local children with a safe place to play cricket, The club has won a much deserved national award with praise for coaches Asad Butt and Harshil Trivedi.

- Charlene Charles whose charity Pamper Indulge Give is preparing young people for adulthood teaching them how to grow their own food in Thornton Heath won lottery funding and is being backed by celebrity chef Levi Roots.

- And finally local boy made good rapper Stormzy who has used his celebrity status and wealth to give back to the community he loves providing a party for Croydon residents and a platform for the Norbury High School for Girls school

>P4 - 7

New law brings justice for Seni



>P10

Disabled tenant's rat housing hell

A HOUSING association who allowed a terrified disabled woman to live with a rat infestation for months which has seen rodents gnaw their way through her kitchen floor, only took action after The Chronicle took up her pleas for help.

For months Stella Weston who has a spinal cord injury, has endured a living hell fearing that she would wake up with a rat on her head.

Pleas for help to her Housing Association Wandle went unanswered and six months later she is still without the use of her washing machine and dishwasher at her home of 22 years in Reservoir Close, Thornton Heath.

While the rat situation is now being addressed the destructive rodents first chewed their way through the cavity walls of her house, eating pipes and electrical wires making her kitchen a no go zone back in July. They burrowed their way in to her oven leaving her kitchen smelling like a sewer and stinking of rat urine.

Instead of tackling the source of the problem, which was identified as being caused by the drains, pest control repeatedly set traps returning only to remove the dead rodents and to poorly patch up holes caused by the vermin who had eaten their way up through the kitchen floor.

When The Chronicle contacted Wandle in

>P12

Thornton Heath to get priority action on crime

THORNTON Heath has been identified as a priority area for action in the borough's community safety strategy because it is high in crime and the cause of crime.

The plan sets out the objectives for tackling violence, domestic abuse and anti social behaviour over the coming three years.

But it also focuses on what it calls nine high priority neighbourhoods with the wards of Thornton Heath, West Thornton, Selhurst, Broad Green and Norbury cited as priority targets.

The 2020 to 2024 draft strategy, which was delayed by over a year, highlights that in these particularly wards repeat offenders represent 20 per cent of all suspects but commit more than 40 per cent of the crime in Croydon.

Violence represents around a third of all crime in the borough which this year has seen the devastating impact of knife crime

on young people with the murders of three teenagers, the youngest just 14.

As we went to press a business on the High Street became the latest victim of violent crime with the front door smashed.

The draft strategy sets out how Croydon adopted a public health approach to violence reduction in 2019 with the council securing significant external funding and committing resources to implementing a public health approach to reducing violence but in 2020, there was an 11 per cent increase in the number of violent offences in Croydon, the highest total in the capital. This



significant rise, says the report is largely attributable to an increase in domestic abuse, fuelled by lockdowns.

Conservative Cllr Andy Stranack Shadow Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon, speaking at the council cabinet meeting last month was critical of the delays to the report and its findings: "I think the officers have been very good at giving

>P10

Gorillas in d'Heath

THORNTON Heath shoppers are part of a pilot which sees groceries delivered to their doorstep from the supermarket within ten minutes.

Brigstock Road Tesco is being used as a trial site after the supermarket chain partnered with rapid delivery start up Gorillas, providing customers with instant last minute needs, from forgotten items such as nappies or milk, to dinner for that evening.

Tesco products are available for customers to purchase from the Gorillas app and picked, packed and delivered via bike to customers in the time it takes to pre-heat the oven.

Church services

CHRISTMAS services in Thornton Heath.

- St Paul's Church is holding a nativity service on Sunday (Dec 19), 10.30am
- Candelit Christmas Communion on Friday December 24, 11.30pm with a traditional Christmas Eve Service to welcome the Christ Child
- Saturday December 25 10.30am a short service for Christmas Day.
- St Alban's Church has a children's nativity play at 10am and carols by candlelight at 4pm on Sunday (Dec 19).
- Christmas Eve children's crib service at 4pm and midnight mass 11pm.
- Christmas Day, mass of the dawn 8am and parish mass with carols 10am. New Year's Eve watch-night service 11pm.

Meal for homeless

A CARIBBEAN restaurant is serving Christmas dinner for the homeless and those in need on Christmas Day from 11 to 5pm.

Jam Rock on Woodville Road is offering a hearty meal and glass of Christmas bubbles.

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✉

editor@thorntonheathchronicle.co.uk

f

co.uk

🐦

@ThorntonHeathChronicle

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@THChronicle

EDITOR:

Andrea Perry

DESIGNER:

Jo Dawson

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Hefty fines for party organisers who broke Covid rules

THORNTON Heath residents have been among thousands facing more than £1 million in fines for Covid-19 rule breakers by magistrates.

Kemo Gardner, 37, from Thornton Heath, was fined £10,00 for a house party at a rented property in touching distance of the Royal Albert Hall.

While Sabrina Jackson, 23, was given a £12,000 fine when police broke up a house party in Thornton Heath.

Officers reported a strong smell of cannabis from the address where at least 50 people were in attendance with a DJ and red lights. They observed no social distancing or face masks. Sabrina Jackson originally gave her name as Marina

Franklin and claimed the party was a gathering for someone she knew had died.

In the case against Kemo Gardner officers managed to gain entry to the property via an open window to the rear at 3.41am. Once inside they found at least 100 people over three floors with a sound system and DJ in the basement.

He was heard mentioning about getting his deposit back and getting the apartment cleaned. Officers said he clearly had influence over people in the property and when he asked them to leave they complied.

Almost 2,000 people have been prosecuted at Westminster magistrates

court for allegations of ignoring the pandemic lockdowns. Offenders are given just 28 days to pay their fines, or face bailiffs, arrest, more fines, and even prison.

Three quarters of people charged with a Covid-19 offence in London failed to enter a plea, figures show.

Prosecutions under laws rapidly introduced during the pandemic have been dogged by concerns of defendants being wrongly charged and people being unaware that they are being prosecuted

Meanwhile, the Met has said it will not investigate an alleged Christmas party at Downing Street where staff and aides are said to have ignored Covid restrictions.

Shocking hygiene in Thornton Heath food outlets

A SHOCKING number of food outlets including those selling meat, takeaways and supermarkets in Thornton Heath have received thee lowest possible hygiene ratings according to the Food Standards Agency.

Five have received food zero ratings, a further nine scraped a one and five scored just two stars after being inspected during the last year.

Croydon's food safety team carries out a risk-based programme of food-hygiene inspections to ensure that food sold to the public is safe to consume.

Croydon Council officers, on behalf of the Food Standards Agency, looked at the restaurant's hygienic food handling, management of food safety, and the cleanliness and condition of the building during the inspection.

The scheme gives businesses a rating from 0 to 5 after being judged on the handling of food, how food is stored and prepared, cleanliness of facilities and how food safety is managed. When going out to eat, it's important to know that the food you're eating is cooked safely and hygienically.

All information is courtesy of the Food Standards Agency, who run the ratings scheme.

| ZERO RATING | ONE STAR | TWO STARS |
|---|---|---|
| Ayat Halal Meat & Grocers 826 London Road 19 August 2021 | Kebabi 6 Brigstock Parade London Road 15 September 2021 | Newroz 115 Parchmore Road 09 October 2021 |
| Dallas Chicken And Pizza 820 London Road 18 August 2021 | Azizi Halal Meat 119 High Street 28 October 2021 | Perfect Jerk Proud & Precious 68 Beulah Road 30 September 2021 |
| Desi Chaska 748 London Road 07 September 2021 | Bukalicious 15 High Street 02 November 2021 | Sugar & Spice 5A Woodville Road 16 March 2021 |
| Matooke Supermarket 33 High Street 03 November 2021 | Jus Foods 17 High Street 09 October 2021 | Justmark 50 Thornton Road 17 May 2021 |
| Taj Mahal 66 Brigstock Road 26 May 2021 | M & M Afro Caribbean Supermarket 72 Brngstock Road 28 May 2021 | Kabul Supermarket 916 London Road 17 May 2021 |
| | | Nino Mirch Masala 89 High Street 21 July 2021 |
| | | Presidential Foods 14 Green Lane 18 May 2021 |
| | | Tandoori Curry Corner 770 London Road 24 August 2021 |
| | | Wong Kei 49 High Street 20 October 2021 |



A NATIONAL bakery chain has launched an investigation after a customer found a stone in one of their £1.80 cheese and onion bakes.

Jane Crockett, a volunteer's manager at mental health charity Safe Space Movement purchased an order from Greggs at 758 London Road via Just Eat on December 9 and when the food order arrived and she bit in to the bake she found a stone (pictured)

Jane who suffers from a number of medical conditions said the discovery made her physically sick.

The store manager offered no apology and the customer care team apologised but offered no refund. Just Eat offered a credit which she refused. She also reported the incident to Croydon Council.

The mum was told twice that they were sending a courier to collect the offending item but it is still sat in her freezer.

She posted on Twitter: "This is terrible customer service and they are still selling them in Thornton Heath."

A spokeswoman for Greggs said:"We take food safety very seriously and are fully investigating this matter. Our Customer Care team has been in contact with the customer and is keeping them updated whilst our thorough investigations are underway."

Val Shawcross likely frontrunner for Mayor?

POLITICAL heavy weight Val Shawcross will be the likely front runner in the bid to become Croydon's first Directly Elected Mayor in next May's election if she wins the Labour ballot on Monday.

The former deputy mayor of London for Transport is facing competitor from cabinet member and Thornton Heath ward councillor Callton Young.

ClIr Young was selected ahaed of mayoral wannabee Jamie Audsley, a Bensham Manor ward councillor who while he won the popularity contest with local party members he had already been blocked from standing as a candidate ironically because of his support for having a directly elected mayor.

The Conservative party has already announced it will be fielding the current Croydon Conservative leader Jason Perry and the Green choice is Peter Underwood.

There's no doubt of the contenders, if she becomes the Labour candidate Val Shawcross, is heads above in terms of political pedigree and job experience but there is still time for a stalking horse to enter the race.

A massive 80 per cent of those that took part in the referendum voted in favour of the mayoral model but turnout amongst Croydon's voters was only 21 per cent.

Voters were given a choice between the directly elected mayor model or the council's current system of governance, the leader and cabinet model which was blamed for creating the culture which led the borough in to bankruptcy.

Meanwhile in the three Thornton Heath ward its all change with long standing Labour councillors Pat Clouder in Thornton Heath and Bensham Manor ward councillor and former deputy leader Alison Butler not seeking re-election in May.



We are Thornton Heath



A FILM showing the best of Thornton Heath has premiered ahead of the launch of a new community app.

The short film features some of what we love best about our hometown; the diversity, community, eclectic food and how while we live in an urban environment we are never far away from nature our green spaces.

It is accompanied to a poem written and spoken by Croydon's poet laureate Shaniqua Benjamin, who is herself a Thornton Heath resident

Featured in the footage are local businesses showing off the delights of Caribbean and Mediterranean cuisine.

The We are Thornton Heath app offers local businesses the opportunity to showcase and

promote their businesses for FREE.

If you run a business all you need to do to get on the platform is simply sign up by visiting: www.waarethorntonheath.app

The point of the app is to generate economic growth for Thornton Heath and help local communities take greater ownership over the kind of information that's essential for healthy town centres.

The app also provides vital data to better understand customer footfall and assist local businesses in tailoring their offering to customer need resulting in improved sales.

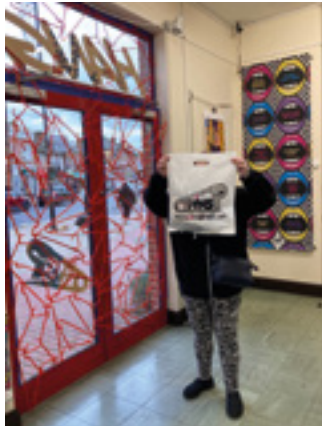
A select number of local businesses will be offered state of the art sensor devices to help measure customer traffic.

The app has been developed by tech company Loqiva based in Crystal Palace and is part of the wider South London Partnership's InnOvaFe Project.

Working in partnership with Croydon Council, local businesses and organisations Loqiva has already developed two apps as part of a pilot scheme for High Streets In South Norwood and Purley.

Residents will be able to download the free app which provides a wide range of features including local news and offers. Community groups will also be invited to join too.

If you are a business and want more information about signing up to the app contact: Local Community Manager Ian Anantharajah lananantharajah@loqiva.com



High Street Pop up gallery showcases homegrown artists

HOMEGROWN artists have been able to display and sell their arty merchandise on Thornton Heath High Street after a charity shop was transformed in to a pop up gallery.

Over the last month the Salvation Army's empty shop has been taken over by three artists who have each remodelled the space to reflect their unique creativity.

Samantha Warren, PiNS and Wesley Baker are Thornton Heath natives and were keen to have a shopfront where they could display and share their art with local people.

During his two weeks PiNS, a well known sketch artist who has earned an international reputation for his original comical and cheeky art concepts, decorated all the windows with coat hangers with the words 'Hang in There' above the door.

The initiative proved such a success that both PiNS and Wesley each extended their initial one week take over by an extra week.

Major Paul and Louise Wood of the Salvation Army made the artists dream become a reality when they decided to offer the former charity shop for use as a pop up after deciding to close it.

Paul said: "We do feel that the pop up shops have gone really well and we've had a lot of positive feedback for using the space in that way to support local artists - all credit to Samantha, PiNS and Wes for that. Samantha and PiNS were going to reflect on whether to continue with this in the New Year. Should this not be possible, we will look at ways of how the space can be a resource for the community."

Samantha's whose series of prints including of Thornton Heath, celebrate Croydon debunking many of the negative messages said: "Visitors were 50/50 passers-by and people who had seen it advertised. Most people left having bought something and I received such lovely comments about seeing something new and different on the High Street and customers were really happy to see artwork of the area. Quite a few

people bought Christmas gifts for their family members who grew up in the area who have since left and some customers purchased for their own home. I only received a couple of comments around the lines of why are you doing this here, Crystal Palace would be better etc...but it just goes to show that although that might be the perception of few, people were spending in the area and there's definitely an appetite for supporting local crafts. It was match day on Saturday and it was great to have some of the lads pop in and enjoy looking at artwork of the area. Some grew up in the area and have since left and bought a souvenir."

In his art installation PiNS, explored the art of healing through self-expression and good vibes selling a range of original art, clothing, tote bags and mobile phone cases.

PiNS said: "A huge thank you to Paul and Louise who run the Salvation Army space, for allowing myself and Samantha to run the pop up - they're hospitality and kindness goes beyond most, and engaging with the peeps of Thornton Heath provided valuable insight into the importance of having such active places available for people to connect and support local creatives."

While in the pop up he used his creative time to write this mood enhancing poem (pictured above).

Thornton Heath artist and photographer Wesley Baker, of CDN who has created a popular clothing line which he sold at the pop up said: "When it comes to Croydon people will tell you so much negativity but they .rarely talk about how strong and supportive the community is. Having this opportunity was thanks to Scene in Croydon, shout out to Bareface for being my first visitor and a long time support and source of advice. There's so many fellow creatives trying to make ..it in the same space in this town but still the love is there so I thank you all."

What goes into making CR7 burst with flavour?
A place where you'll eat and eat 'til your belly fully
get your hair did, touch up and trim
be splashed with colour from murals or pretty pastels
happily adorning walls
take in a pond that is no longer a pond but home to shrubbery
and proud planters.

Dashes of green from Trumble Gardens and the Rec
settings for squealing children and friends on walks,
heaps of magenta and tangerine giving life to Ambassador
House
where urban and nature make friends,
streaks of Blue and Orange
brightening taste buds with Mediterranean delights,
comfort of lightened turquoise from Mula Cake's community Hub
an avenue to find your creative voice.

Art in every slice
culture in every drop
Thornton Heath is where many get their start,
fed by the library
poured into by schools
learning to swim at a leisure centre on the same road as a
yearly festival.

A sprinkle of almost everything lined up on same streets
chances to taste what is beyond the seas -
spice from Café Chai
seasoning from Yah-So
freshness refreshing at Rich 4 Life Juices
Friday night tradition continuing at Melfort Fish Bar.

All crossing tracks at that bustling centre point where you
catch trains
linking face after passing face
all the diversity icing on the cake.



A VITAL sporting project which provides confidence boasting sessions for hundreds of local children and where the coaches speak six different languages has won a national award.

Thornton Heath Cricket Club picked up the Project of Year in the national award run by Chance to Shine last month at Lord's Cricket Ground.

The project brings together 140 young people, aged six to 18, each week at Thornton Heath Leisure Centre helping them to learn new skills and make friends while enjoying cricket.

The accounts of children and parents in a video made to celebrate the award are testament to the coaches who run the club.

Maryam, aged nine, sums up the feelings of most when she says she often doesn't want to leave at the end of the Saturday session, explaining how being involved has helped her boost her confidence: "I like basically never have conflicts but when it comes to cricket I'm okay."

Diverse cricket project where coaches speak six languages picks up national award

The club was formed in 2016 by Asad Butt and Harshil Trivedi and the pair had to buy MDF sheets from B&Q to level the pitch they were using as it was not fit for purpose.

They started working with Chevy Green at Surrey Cricket Foundation in late 2016 who helped launch the club and with Chance to Shine in 2017.

Asad said about the award: "It is a very proud moment for us and everyone involved in this project."

Hartshil added: "This is the highest honour we could receive as a group and we thank everyone for their unwavering support."

National charity Chance to Shine has been working since 2005 to deliver cricket coaching sessions in state schools and disadvantaged communities and over the years it has reached more than 4 million young people, 46 per cent of who are girls.

Hartshil: "Every Saturday we get about 140 kids. Croydon is such a diverse borough and our coaches speak about five to six languages."

The pair are both recipients of Surrey Cricket Foundation awards for outstanding services to cricket in 2021 and 2019.

Coach Asad said: "I see children



enjoying themselves and learning new skills here. It fills my heart with pleasure.

"Many children who wouldn't have played cricket otherwise have taken up this sport as their main sport."

It's not just the children that love the Saturday cricket club parents are also in awe of the work done by the coaches.

Dad Jimmy said: "I think the work they do here is touching on vital. They are inclusive in the way they allow them to learn by doing and they are inclusive in the way they encourage them and the way they build their confidence and their energy for it."

Pivotal to the club winning the award was

its partnership with the charity which helped 21 children attend a cricket development residential retreat at Arundel Castle, in partnership with the Arundel Cricket Club.

This provided a fantastic chance for team building.

Jake, aged nine added: "At the start, I didn't know a single person and then it's just been absolutely amazing and I get to get new friends."

The club also worked with the International Cricket Council taking 40 Afghan refugees to Cardiff during the Cricket World Cup to watch their team play.

There has also been cricketing success at competitive level with both the under 12 and 15 teams collecting awards in the Chance to Shine tape ball - finishing 3rd nationally in 2019 and more recently both teams became South London champions.

The future looks bright for young players like Noorzaheen, aged nine, who who spoke of his ambition to one day become an "England professional player."

The green project growing role models of the future

A GREEN project teaching young children about food growing has landed National Lottery funding and a celebrity patron - chef Levi Roots.

Pamper Indulge Give which provides children with life skills focussing on health, wellbeing and fitness, has been awarded £63,270 over the next three years from The National Lottery Community Fund.

The money will be used to run its Green Project working with children aged 5-11 years old from primary schools Winterbourne, St Cyprians and Howard, teaching new skills about preparing and growing and how to make meals with their produce.

The project is also about empowering young people and providing them with positive role models so they have the self confidence and esteem to succeed.

British-Jamaican reggae musician and businessman Levi Roots who gained widespread fame after appearing Dragons' Den and getting funding for his Reggae Reggae Sauce is one of a series of patrons giving his support with more to be announced shortly.

The Green Project which will be launched in February at a turning over ceremony at the plot the charity has, at the Bensham Manor allotments, where children will have the opportunity to be involved from scratch see how plants grow and work together to create a place where they can come together to grow food that they can take home, cook with and eat.

Charlene Charles, Director/Founder of Pamper Indulge and Give, said: "The world has changed from when I was a child. We had more opportunities in certain aspects. There was youth clubs and other things to do after school but now with social media children aren't going outside as much."

"When we ask the children 'where does food come from?', they're telling me a 'fridge or a shop'."

"So basically, this is just going back to basics and giving the children the skills and opportunities that they can have and take with them in to adulthood because when you plant something from a little seed, and then it becomes something you can eat on your plate and you're gonna cook with, it's a different kind of experience."

"If you know how to grow your own food you'll never starve. I want these children to get that from early on, so they can have a different mindset when they get older. You know what it's like in Croydon, we have a lot of knife crime and a lot of families are disadvantaged."

"If we can give these children, while they are still young, the confidence and the self esteem to basically just be great and to think outside the box and to give them something they can take for them for the rest of their life, then we can change lives."

"They become healthier, and more knowledgeable, they're positive and it gives them a different outlook on life which is the whole reason for doing it."

The project will work with 110 children and 40 volunteers in the first year. The not for profit charity began in 2014 and specifically targets younger children giving them the skills that will widen their vision and opportunities as they grow into adulthood and provide them with the opportunity to become role models in the community.



Months of Thames Water disruption causes chaos

Mr Mahmoud said: "Some days they only worked couple of hours work and there was no sense of urgency to fix what appeared to be a serious leak."

"There was also concern about the lights system and traffic management took pictures and said it was not safe for the public."

"It caused considerable inconvenience and loss of business which has been difficult when we have already been hard hit as a business by Covid restrictions."

Thames Water says sporadic work is because engineers may need to move to other parts of the network, to turn valves on or off, or wait for parts to be delivered, so while it may appear at times that not much work is going on, it says it doesn't simply abandon work sites.

Thames Water says it does 'everything it can' to minimise disruption when emergency work takes place but realises that sometimes businesses may be unavoidably affected.

The latest incident happened because BT engineers unexpectedly hit the mains. The Chronicle understands that the pipe was inches rather than feet below

Over 1,000 new homes to be built in Thornton Heath

CROYDON plans to build 42,000 new homes by 2040 including over a thousand more in Thornton Heath.

Thornton Heath is taking a greater burden than neighbouring Broad Green, Selhurst, South Norwood and Norbury but the majority of the tens of thousands of new housing has been earmarked for Purley, Purley Way and around East Croydon station.

The homes are set to be built in the borough by 2039, the authority's updated draft local plan has revealed. It was first published in 2018.

In recent years Thornton Heath has seen a surge in new builds and homes transformed to houses of multiple occupancy, which has only recently been limited by the introduction of Article 4 which requires planning permission is now needed for HMO conversions..

The plan which is expected to be submitted to the planning inspectorate for examination in the spring, breaks down the target of how many homes are set to be built in 16 different areas across the borough.

However, it offers little in the way of improvements to infrastructure or investment in existing facilities or improving green spaces.



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Eco pop up hub to offer 'swaps and repairs'

A LOCAL sustainable group has been awarded National Lottery funding to set up an eco pop up providing residents with their own swap and repair hub.

Once a month Sustainable Thornton Heath will offer a range of free services to encourage people to reuse, repair or learn new recycling skills.

Details of the pop up hub which offers an alternative to the throwaway society are still being finalised but some of the things that are expected to be provided are refills of body care and cleaning products alone with free electrical goods repairs, free clothing repairs, swaps on clothes, toys and maybe more.

The Sustainable Living Hub starts in the Spring and is expected to take place on the last Saturday afternoon of every month for a whole year at The Salvation Army.

The group put in a successful bid for £3,300 to the National Lottery's Together for our Planet fund which supports communities across the UK to take action on climate change.

Ian Morris, from Sustainable Thornton Heath said: "It's incredibly exciting, but there's so much to do, and we need volunteers from the community to step forward and help make this a reality. There

are various things we need people to do, and the more people that step forward, the less each of those volunteers is going to need to do."

The hub will also act as a Terracycle point for numerous hard-to-recycle items, with workshops and talks on a different topic each month.

There will be free plants-based milk tasting, free children's activities, refreshments, as well as lots of information, advice and encouragement from local groups and organisations across key topics such as energy, transport, food and finance.

Sustainable Thornton Heath was set up in late 2019 by a handful of residents with ambition of helping residents live more sustainably, and the town become more sustainable.

It has been holding regular meetings ever since and these moved on-line since the pandemic and also has a monthly stall outside Tesco on a Saturday morning



Coffee shop helps local growers

• After seeing a small coffee shop in East Dulwich give away all its coffee ground waste to residents for their gardens, Ian Morris was inspired to do the same.

Other members of Sustainable Thornton Heath shared Ian's inspiration and approached Thornton Heath Rec, Grangewood Park Edible Gardens and Spa Hill Allotments, to see if they would be interested in receiving regular coffee ground waste for transforming it in to compost.

The members then approached Coffee Zone next to Thornton Heath station to share the idea and ask if they might be interested in giving away their waste.

Manageress Renata Wawrzyniecka actually uses some of the coffee ground waste in her own garden so instantly saw the value in the idea and agreed.

Graham Mitchell from the Thornton Heath Rec Community Garden got together with Coffee Zone to work out the logistics. A system was agreed, and Graham was the first to collect waste for the Rec's multiple compost bins. There is now WhatsApp group where Renata can alert the groups when the waste level is getting high for collection.

The group plans to review the demand for the waste in the New Year and will decide whether to approach other coffee outlets to ask if they are interested in expanding the scheme further. If you're a coffee shop and interested e-mail sustainablethorntonheath@gmail.com.

where it hands out leaflets on eco-tips and talks to passers-by about sustainability and the group.

Ian added: "We wanted to establish something in the town that allowed people to not only be able to find out more about sustainable living choices, but to also be able to access some of these on their doorstep".

To find out more about Sustainable Thornton Heath and its monthly meetings and other activities visit its website www.sustaintheath.wordpress.com or join its Facebook page.

Anyone who is willing to help with the hub should contact Ian on: sustainablethorntonheath@gmail.com

Carols, lights and Christmas tree bring festive cheer



CAROLS in the park, light displays and a Christmas tree are bringing a bit of sparkle to Thornton Heath this festive period.

After a two year absence due to Covid, carols in Grangewood Park will return on Saturday December 18.

Join the lantern processions from the gates Wharncliffe Road or Heath Lodge at either end of Grange Road to the sunken garden starting at 6-8pm.

This year's carols are being organised by The Friends of Grangewood Park in conjunction with St Albans Church and St Paul's Church.

From 5pm there will be carols around the crib and singing in front of St Albans church with participants processing to the park to join celebrations.



The park and churches are jointly celebrating anniversaries totalling 300 years serving the community in Thornton Heath.

This year's Christmas tree on Ambassador House forecourt which Thornton Heath Action Team has organised and decorated for the last seven years, was provided for free by Jim and Michael at Wilsons Garage on Parchmore Road where you can still pick up a tree starting at £15. Volunteers also decorated the sign at the Whitehorse round about with fairy lights.

The lights decorating the lamp posts on the High Street were switched on last month and were purchased last year by Thornton Heath councillors using their combined Community Ward Budgets.

Stormzy throws Christmas party for Croydon



IN A BLACK Santa hat with flashing reindeer ears, Thornton Heath's own superhero Stormzy threw a Christmas party for his home town.

The MOBO award-winning grime artist laid on unlimited hot chocolate, mandatory chicken nuggets, sweet treats, a bouncy castle, raffle and some extra special guests for the free party at Croydon's Fairfield Halls.



500 copies of their first children's book Superheroes: Inspiring Stories Of Secret Strength as part of the event.

The comic strip-style book is a celebratory collection of modern-day heroes curated by Stormzy, including athlete Dina Asher-Smith, comedian Mo Gilligan, writer Candice Carty-Williams, Great British Bake Off star Liam Charles and former footballer turned pundit Ian Wright who attended the party with Stormzy's other celebrity friends including rappers AJ Tracey and Wretch32.

One mum said: "Stormzy is the kindest guy. He is so down to earth and inspiring. He took time to meet everyone and was genuinely pleased to talk to all. He did a prayer at the end for all which brought a tear to my eye.

A Very Merky Christmas, was the first ever Christmas party held by Stormzy's charity, Merky Foundation, with free tickets available for people from Croydon.

Attendees were treated to games, workshops, a tombola and a performance from the Norbury High School for Girls Celeste choir who sang: Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.

Stormzy told The Big Issue: "I used to come to Fairfield Halls when I was in primary school, we'd sit on this stage and do performances. So I said every year, I want to do a day with all the families and all the kids where everyone can leave with good memories."



Christmas lights spectacular

FOR 21 years The Dellaway family have been bringing a smile to the faces of hundreds of local children with their Christmas lights display at their Whitehall Road house. The decorations feature over 10,000 bulbs, 52 Christmas trees, an eight foot inflatable Santa and inflatable reindeers.

The display is lit up from 4.30pm to 10.30pm until January 1 but if it is raining there are no inflatables outside.

There is also a map of all the local Christmas displays to take your children to which David Dellaway has compiled and can be viewed via the Thornton Heath Local Facebook page.

Pick up unique festive gifts while supporting local creatives



THE CRONX Boutique has returned on a post-pandemic mission to champion local creative talent and bring an alternative festive experience to Croydon shoppers.

If you are looking for a unique gift which showcases the best of Croydon then head to the pop up store on Caithness Walk.

The brainchild of a collective of three Croydon based brands: The Croydon Photographer, East Croydon Cool and Johnny Howl Club, all passionate about Croydon, the pop up hopes to introduce local sellers to new customers in the wake of the devastating effects of the pandemic.

Items are priced from £3 and include art prints, candles, mugs, t-shirts, tote bags, magnets, notebooks, cards, coasters and more.

Covid put paid to last year's Cronx Boutique but it is back this year with a strong focus on supporting local creatives.

Co-Founder Glenn Foster aka The Croydon Photographer said: "High Streets across the UK have felt the impact of online shopping, business rates and lockdown. The Cronx Boutique aims to show how retail can be re-imagined to better suit today's consumer."

Each weekend a different Croydon creative, in the run up to Christmas, has had the opportunity to sell their products directly to customers selling vintage clothing and vinyl, jewellery floral bouquets, handmade dresses, candles and teas without the high costs a normal retail space would entail.

During the week, the Cronx Boutique has provided the Pick-Up Point for several local bakers who have been able to use the space to meet customers in a central location and hand over their baked treats.

The decline of Croydon High Street, like many others, has continued throughout lockdown and the announcement that plans to build a Westfield shopping centre in Croydon had been shelved made this worse.

Maddy from East Croydon Cool said: "We believe local creatives can play a vital role in the re-generation of the town centre, and hope that the Cronx Boutique can become a case study for the type of initiative that could be invested in".

The Cronx Boutique is open until Friday December 24th: 12pm to 8pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays 10am to 6pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

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CONSULTATION STARTS new playground for Grangewood Park to open in spring 2022

THE long wait for a new playground for Grangewood Park is finally over.

The council earmarked £99,000 to replace the playground which is over 40-years-old over 18 months ago but said they didn't have the staff to roll out the project.

However, following our report of a protest by local children the project was accelerated and on Saturday (Dec 18) the first of two consultation sessions will take place in the park with parents and children over the proposed designs (pictured).

The Friends of Grangewood Park have been lobbying for years for the playground to be replaced as more and more bits of equipment were removed or boarded up because they were dangerous and the state of the playground has been regularly featured in The Chronicle.

The council has appointed Kompan who have over 50 years experience to deliver the playground project. The woodland themed design includes 35 play features with a separate toddler and junior zones for children aged one to 14. The plan offers slides, a hut and bridge, swings, seesaw, a carousel, rope swing and also includes picnic benches.

The design also features thermographic markings on the floor of the new playground which will reflect the wildlife of the park.

Kompan are asking children to bring illustrations of what they might like to see, or draw a design on the day at either consultation days on December 18 or 21 from 10am to 1pm in the playground.

The best designs will be included on the playground floor. Kompan will also

be providing goodie bags for children attending on a first come first serve basis.

Grangewood is the first of a series of run down playgrounds in Croydon to benefit from £275,000 set aside from S106, contributions paid by developers as part of the Playground Investment programme to regenerate initially three playgrounds including Northwood Road.

The parks department has been savaged by council cuts and previously said it would deliver the playground in spring and then summer 2020.

Parent Dan Green, had been complaining to the council about the state of the playground for some time but it was only when his three-year-old daughter was injured that the council responded to his emails.

Sky hit her face when she slipped and fell while walking up the slide because there are no longer steps to climb up it.

He organised a protest in October which saw dozens of children and their parents turn out in support of the action. In the last couple of months a rope climbing frame was also removed but only after multiple complaints because two of the runs were broken and exposed sharp pieces of metal.

The Friends of Grangewood Park who have been campaigning for many years for a new playground wrote to Chief Executive of the Council Katherine Kerslake in December last year offering to take on rolling out the project which could be delivered within months.

The council said it was "committed to delivering" the improvements but this was dependent on recruiting an officer to do the consultation and procurement process but the pressure from the public and The Chronicle has paid off.



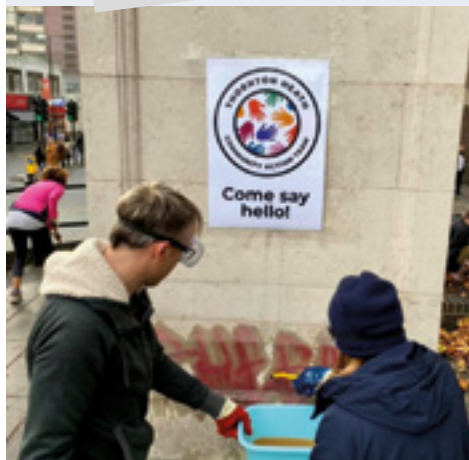
THE POWER OF THE CHRONICLE

THE POWER OF THE CHRONICLE



A CHRONICLE campaign to 'Save Our Services' after council facilities were branded not fit to use has resulted in a series of victories.

We reported on the front page of October's edition how children had staged a protest to 'Save Our Playground' after a toddler was injured on one of the last remaining piece of equipment in Grangewood Park.



Volunteers tackle vandalism



WHEN Thornton Heath's historic Clock Tower was vandalised it was the last straw for residents who organised a clean up day.

In the council's latest draft local plan the Clock Tower is described as a 'landmark' and that 'its setting will be protected'.

However, this protection didn't extend to removing graffiti from the historic Clock Tower because the words 'Sheemz' written in red daubed over the 121 year old masonry weren't considered offensive.

Since the anti graffiti team was axed in the wake of the council's self inflicted financial troubles graffiti has become almost accepted by the authority.

Trees, walls, a large rock which was placed at the Clock Tower by the council was also targeted with the words 'Shan' and benches installed as part of the regeneration tagged with "SAS Clocktower".

Thornton Heath Community Action Team paid for a special graffiti removal solution and a mobile pressure washer to remove the majority of the graffiti from the landmark.

The other tags were also removed and volunteers bagged up litter and weeded overgrown raised beds.

As the council prepares to make even more cuts including axing further Neighbourhood Safety Officer jobs it is unlikely that the graffiti problem will be addressed any time soon.

However, Croydon mayoral candidates Labour's Val Shawcross and Cllr Jason

>> **ACTION:** This weekend the council's playground contractor will start consulting on a state-of-the art design for Grangewood which could be in place in time for spring.

>> **ACTION:** After our report leisure provider Better replaced the mesh fencing in Trumble Gardens.

>> **ACTION:** Finally, when the council failed to remove graffiti from Thornton Heath's historic Clocktower following our front page the community stepped in and cleaned it.



Perry, the current leader of Croydon Conservatives have both separately pledged to reinstate the anti graffiti removal team axed by the current Labour administration if they are elected in May.

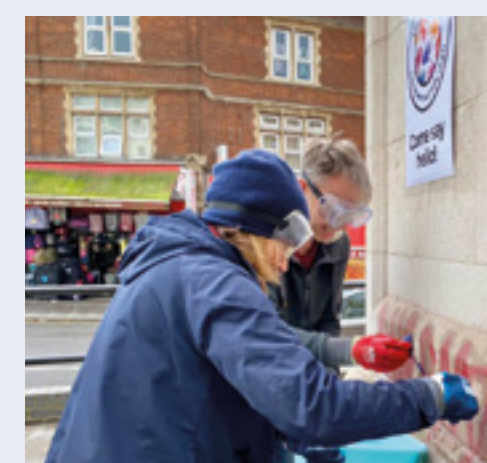
Local resident Cheryl Samuels said: "Well done everyone - the collective effort can be seen it looks so much better. Let's hope the area is respected now."

Over the past few years the Clock Tower has become a magnet for anti social behaviour with drinking, shouting and fights breaking out. Last May, during one all day session the Clocktower door was set fire.

THCAT vice chair Mohammed Mir, pictured removing graffiti said: "The team worked hard and we didn't have to depend on council to make it happen."

THCAT Committee member Barbara Benjamin said that more people need to get involved. Adding: "Even if they can only spare half an hour, it still makes a difference and shows the strength of the community"

To get involved email action@thorntonheath.net



AFTER



Trumble Gardens: action over fencing

FOR months councillors and residents complained about the state of the tennis courts in Trumble Gardens.

While neighbouring Bromley's investment in tennis spawned star Emma Raducanu, Croydon's tennis players were negotiating this Health and Safety nightmare (pictured).

Bensham Manor ward councillors raised serious concerns about the condition of Trumble Gardens but repeated requests calling for action about the state of the mangled perimeter fence surrounding the tennis courts were ignored.

It had become so bad that local councillors Jamie Audsley, Alison Butler and Humayun Kabir questioned whether the historic green space was even 'fit for use' by residents.

Finally, last month the council's leisure provider Better replaced the worst affected of the mesh fencing but the courts are still in a poor condition which is surprising given that The Chronicle understands the council employed a consultant to work on a project to get investment to improve the borough's public tennis offering.

Recently the LTA announced it had invested £8.5million into Local Authorities to help improve 40 percent of courts that were in a "poor or unplayable condition."

However, none of that money seems to have come to Croydon even though in 2017 the council announced it was developing a plan for improving tennis court facilities.

The Croydon Council Sports and Physical Activity Facilities strategy 2018-23 presented by the then cabinet lead for culture, parks and open spaces Cllr Oliver Lewis set out a vision to make Croydon a place where everyone 'lives a healthy lifestyle'.

It outlines plans to apply for external funding to support improvements to Grangewood Park and Trumble Gardens courts, with the latter potentially becoming a multi sports 'system'.

It also says it will work with the LTA to develop at least one, but potentially two, community hub facilities that would include feasibility work on either



a canopy or dome cover and work along with increasing the number of floodlit courts.

In a dated post Xander Beck who ran a consultancy firm revealed on the firm's web site that he is "working with the London Borough of Croydon and managing a number of Croydon projects including assessing a potential partnership with the LTA as a number of Croydon's 17 park based tennis courts were in need of urgent investment."

Mr Beck now works for Lambeth and previously worked in regeneration on Croydon's vision for parks project.

In 2017 Cllr Alison Butler said that it was hoped that 'we can diversify the sporting offer at Trumble Gardens to something that is more appropriate to local needs'.

Cllr Karen Jewitt, Thornton Heath ward councillor also confirmed at the time that she had met with officers to discuss Grangewood and the tennis courts, and they were 'awaiting confirmation of the funding'.

In 2018, Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) took over the running of the council's leisure centres including sports facilities in parks under its 'Better' brand and according to cabinet papers the contract included the supporting and managing of a comprehensive tennis programme in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association.

The report also states over the life of the contract £3million would be invested in refurbishments to leisure facilities, outdoor hardcourt facilities and open space activity.

Mum calls council out over graffiti on High St

ONE local mum Irene Danso was so fed up with the state of the area that she took to social media to challenge the council over its graffiti record.

On Tik Tok and Tweeting as queenreenthe1st she posted 'Look at the state of Thornton Heath High Street' showing footage of shopfronts covered in graffiti.

In the post which has been viewed 2,500 times she describes the rows of shops from Whitehorse Road to the High Street as 'graffiti city' and says it is a 'disgrace' showing shutter after shutter vandalised. "They do nothing about the mess of this area. Every shop... its a disgrace.

"Every evening someone goes around the whole of Thornton Heath and graffitits it.

"The area is dirty they treat us like scum the floor doesn't even get cleaned.. it doesn't get swept.

She added: "They (Croydon) do zero about it because they couldn't give a damn about us and they wonder why there's so much crime in the area.

"You can't even clean the streets. There is graffiti everywhere and you refuse to remove it. Thank you very much Croydon Council"

In other posts she has taken the council to task over flytipping.

Thornton Heath was revealed to have the worst flytipping of the whole borough according to stats provided by Veolia to the council's scrutiny committee.

Hotspots included streets around the High Street.



Station mosaic gets spotlight

THORNTON Heath station has a new glow about in with new lighting and a refurbished roof.

The phase of improvements at the station were promised after engaging with Thornton Heath Community Action Team.

The Roundel, which is a symbol of London Transport designed for Platform 1 by artist Maud Milton has also been lit up with a spotlight. All the tiles for the project were made by the community in Lockdown One in their own homes.

Maud said: "It looks wonderful against the brick backdrop and the lighting works really well. So nice to see a new piece of public art"



Seni's legacy: tragic death leads to new law on restraining patients

STUDENT Seni Lewis tragically died as result of being forcibly restrained as a volunteer inpatient in a south London mental health unit, now a new law will act as his legacy protecting others facing similar circumstances.

The new guidance which comes as a result of a 11 year campaign by the 23-year-old's family and mother Aji who said: "What I want is for no one else to die in this way."

George Floyd's death in May last year, when an American police officer knelt on his neck, brought Seni's tragedy back to national attention.

Around 63,000 people signed the petition calling for Seni's Law, which also had the backing of more than 25 mental health charities and campaigners.

North Croydon MP Steve Reed drove the campaign for the legislation and is only the second Labour MP in opposition in 22 years to get a private member's bill through Parliament.

It sets out clear advice to ensure NHS trusts ensuring better accountability and transparency over the use of force.

The Act, known as Seni's Law, is named after the PhD student from Thornton Heath who he died as a result of being forcibly restrained in 2010 by 11 police officers as he suffered an acute psychotic episode .

The tragedy exposed poor training in the use of force, racism within mental health services and other serious failings.

An inquest concluded that Seni was the victim of "excessive, unreasonable and disproportionate" restraint.

Six of the officers faced disciplinary proceedings for alleged gross misconduct. They were all subsequently cleared.



Police were called to the Bethlem Royal Hospital, Beckenham, after Seni damaged a door.

Placed in a padded room, he had on two sets of handcuffs, was placed in leg restraints and was hit three times with a baton.

He was forcibly restrained on two occasions - the first for 10 minutes and the second for 20 minutes. After he lost consciousness, officers were convinced Seni was "faking it" and left him on his own. He died later after suffering a drastic loss of oxygen to the brain.

Aji said: "This is my son's legacy, and I hope it will mean what happened to Seni will not happen to anyone else.

"I look forward to continuing to work with the government and mental health providers to make sure the act is properly implemented and real change is achieved."

Patients in mental health settings will be better protected from inappropriate

use of force following the commencement of landmark regulations and publication of guidance of the Mental Health Units (Use of Force) Act 2018 .

The important legislation will protect patients and workforce by providing a much-needed drive for improved record keeping and reporting of data on the use of force, the quality of staff training and the way in which investigations are carried out.

The Act sets out the measures needed to both prevent the inappropriate use of force and ensure accountability and transparency in mental health units, ensuring patients are treated with dignity and respect at all times.

The guidance has been developed following extensive engagement with the mental health sector and a wide range of stakeholders including those with lived experience, the NHS, regulators and Aji Lewis and Seni's family.



Steve Reed said: "I'm delighted the guidance for Seni's Law has now been published and a date is in sight for the Act to come into force.

"Seni Lewis died in tragic and avoidable circumstances. His legacy is this Act and the changes it makes to ensure people with mental ill health are treated with care, compassion and respect.

Seni's Law forms part of the government's wider commitment to transform mental health services for those with severe mental illness and follows publication of the Mental Health Act White Paper earlier this year which set out proposals for once in a generation reform."

The new guidance will make sure trusts will have a clearer understanding on how to comply with the duties under the Act.

Minister for Mental health Gillian Keegan said: "It is vital anyone receiving care in a mental health setting - a time which can be incredibly distressing - is treated with dignity and respect.

"We must ensure what happened to Seni does not happen to anyone else. I want to thank Seni's family, particularly his mother Aji, and Steve Reed MP for driving this work forward."

Crime soars as council finally put in place safety plan

>P1 us specific statistics at the beginning of the report, but it doesn't really cover up Labour's failures in tackling crime since they took control of the council in 2014. Overall crime is up 37 per cent, sexual offences are up 142 per cent violence against the person up 89 per cent."

Even though there has been a decrease in crime volume in 2020 compared to 2019, by comparing 2020 to 2017 the overall crime rate in Croydon rose by five per cent and violent crime rate increased by 19 pc and the domestic abuse 26 per cent

Anti social behaviour related calls to the police in Croydon increased by five per cent between 2017 and 2019 and during 2020 rocketed by 85 per cent which is mostly attributed to Covid-19.

Two surveys targeting younger residents and women and girls with the purpose of identifying safety issues revealed that the two areas they chose to avoid because they felt most unsafe was West Croydon and Thornton Heath.

Superintendent Andy Britain Superintendent for Partnership and Neighbourhood Policing in Croydon said knife crime still remains 'our number one priority'; but added: "Rather than just

going through the enforcement route, though, we've be working really hard to do the community engagement route and build the trust and confidence. So the work we've been doing in West Croydon in the CVA we're now taken to New Addington, and then we'll be looking to do the same in Thornton Heath to bring together those smaller community groups and to get them in a room and start talking about solutions and how we move forward."

Meanwhile the council is under fire over speculation that it will pull funding from a vital youth service.

Legacy Youth Zone costs £1.8 million a year to run and in turn provides thousands of the borough's young people with activities and support.

In March, Legacy may lose the £300,000 a funding it has been receiving from the cash strapped council since it opened its doors in 2019.

Last month legacy launched a major fundraising drive with a mystery donor pledging to match all community monthly donations over the next year.

Since opening the charity has recruited over 100 youth workers and volunteers offering activities such as music production, sports, performing arts,

climbing and cooking.

Alongside the activities it offers support to young people and their families facing challenges such as food poverty, physical and mental health, youth crime and employment.

Croydon has the largest population of young people in London and this year has seen the horrific murders of three teenage boys.

Jermaine Cools 14-year-old died after he was attacked on London Road a month ago with his killers still at large.

Damarie Omare Roye, 16, (pictured) was murdered on Bensham Manor Road and Camron Smith on his doorstep in Shrublands over the summer

Last Wednesday (Dec 8), the main entrance to Legacy was closed due to a stabbing in neighbouring Whitehorse Road Recreation Ground with young people being asked to meet youth workers outside Halfords for directions for an alternate walk to the youth zone.

Officers found a 25-year-old man suffering from stab injuries on Windmill Road and immediately provided first aid and he was taken ambulance to hospital for treatment with non life-threatening injuries. He had been assaulted in the Rec.



A spokeswoman for Legacy said: "We are saddened by the recent number of crimes in our area.

"We recognise that this is a community wide issue which we all play a part in, and our team are trying to be more prominent throughout Selhurst, Thornton Heath and Croydon."

The youth facility says it is 'still in negotiations' with the council and 'haven't yet formalised an agreement on their continued funding support'.

To donate visit: <https://www.legacyyouthzone.org/double-your-donations/>

Armed police and helicopter hunt suspects



SUSPECTS who were being hunted by armed police escaped on foot discarding their clothes as they fled over back gardens in Thornton Heath.

The drama unfolded at 4.10pm on Wednesday (Nov 3) after police attempted to stop a red Ford, which officers believed to be linked with weapons.

The car crashed in to a parked van on Norbury Road and two men wearing hoodies escaped on foot along Luna Road before disappearing through back gardens.

Items of clothing, believed to have belonged to the two men, were found on the doorstep of a house and were taken by police for forensics.

The police helicopter circled overhead as dozens of police swarmed the area, with a police dog unit dispatched to help locate the suspects who evaded capture.

Police were on foot and in cars searching neighbouring streets with witnesses seeing armed police in at least two unmarked vehicles involved in the hunt.



One eyewitness said they heard police say a weapon had been discarded and police confirmed a knife was recovered.

A man was also detained in a nearby road by police.

Meanwhile several police were witnessed carrying out a full search of the abandoned vehicle, bagging up a number of items found inside.

The side of the vehicle, which was later removed, had visible damage to the driver's door and wing mirror as though it had been rammed.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: "Officers attempted to stop a vehicle – that was believed to be linked with weapons – in the Thornton Heath area.

"The vehicle failed to stop and a pursuit was authorised with the support of the National Police Air Service.

"The vehicle came to a stop on Norbury Road and the occupants fled on foot.

"One man was arrested nearby and taken to a south London police station. A knife was recovered. Enquiries continue."

Woman left with facial injuries after High Street attack

A WOMAN was left with facial injuries after a bottle attack on Thornton Heath High street.

Police cordoned off a section of the High Street while forensics and detectives investigated. Tape stopped pedestrian access between Mirch Masala and Boots Opticians with a pool of blood outside the Admiral Casino Slots.

Police said they were called at 12.10am on Saturday (Nov 9), to the High Street to reports of a woman being attacked.

Officers attended but there was no trace of any victims or suspects. The incident happened within the direct line of sight of the council's CCTV.

A Scotland Yard spokesman said: "We were notified that the woman had attended a south London hospital for treatment to facial injuries. It is believed she had been struck with a bottle.

"There have been no arrests at this time; enquiries are ongoing"

If you have any information about the incident ring 101 and quote CAD 74 of 9 Oct.



Fire safety warning after e-bike causes house blaze

FIREFIGHTERS issued an e-bike safety warning after a child was taken to hospital following a house fire in Thornton Heath

Part of the ground floor of a mid-terraced house was damaged in the blaze in Beechwood Avenue around 7pm on (Nov 24).

County lines dealers jailed

A Thornton Heath man has been jailed for dealing crack cocaine and heroin in Dorset as part of a county lines operation.

Aaron Smith, 25, of Thornton Heath, who pleaded guilty to possessing crack cocaine and heroin with intent to supply in Boscombe, in July this year, said he was selling to pay off a debt incurred for losing drugs in Croydon.

Prosecuting, Robert Welling told the court plain-clothed officers saw Smith in Boscombe, and that it was clear he was dealing drugs. He was then arrested by searched and 14 wraps of crack cocaine and 28 wraps of heroin with potential value of £500 were found.

Mr Welling said: "A phone and £175 cash was found, the phone was being used to receive orders and for him to receive instructions and where and how to sell the drugs.

"He did express he was concerned now he has lost more drugs, was anxious about his own safety and preferred to be remanded in custody

"He was in control of the drug line, he had understanding of the operation."

Mitigating, Kevin Hill said the defendant had a lesser role, was suffering from PTSD, depression and anxiety and he had no influence on the people above him.

Simon Byamakuma, 30, of Parchmore Road, appeared at Bournemouth Crown Court on October 8 to be sentenced after admitting two charges of possessing a class A drug with intent to supply at an earlier hearing at the same court. He was sentenced to 27 months in prison.

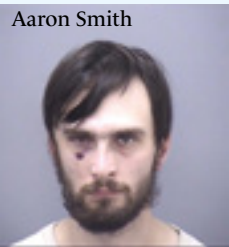
At around 11.30am on Thursday July 15 the defendant was seen by officers sitting on a wall where drug users were congregating nearby.

Byamakuma was subsequently stopped by officers in Bournemouth and a search was carried out.

During the search, he spat a package out of his mouth that was found to contain 22 wraps of heroin and crack cocaine.

In 2018 at Ipswich Crown Court Byamakuma admitted being concerned in the supply of heroin and cocaine after being arrested at an address in Ipswich in Norfolk.

He was jailed for 20 months but was released almost immediately because of the time he has already served in custody.

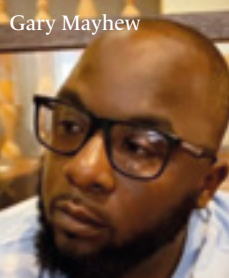


Murder charge over shooting

A THORNTON Heath man has appeared in court charged with murder following a fatal shooting in Brixton.

Trevin Campbell, 31, of Kingswood Avenue, Thornton Heath appeared in custody charged with the murder of 32-year-old Gary Mayhew.

Campbell was arrested by officers on Monday, 25 October following an investigation into a shooting in Belinda Road, on the morning of Thursday, 21 October.



Thief caputred on video door bell jailed

A THIEF has been jailed for three years and seven months after being found guilty of stealing a Jaguar which he then used in a burglary in Surrey.

Luke Young, 31 of Kingswood Avenue, was sentenced on November 5 having been found guilty of burglary and theft.

He stole the car from a driveway Epsom in February last year and used it in a burglary in Chessington where footage showed him leaving with jewellery belonging to the victim's late mum.

PC Joseph Brown, said: "...we managed to obtain some high-quality footage, captured on the victim's video doorbell so we would encourage the public to implement measures such as these and CCTV where they can, as video and audio footage of a crime in action can act as vital evidence in any case."

Disabled tenant’s rat infestation hell as rodents gnaw through floor

>P1 November they finally conducted a drain survey and found the drain to Stella's house had collapsed which had caused the rat infestation but still they are refusing to replace white goods damaged by the vermin or recompense Stella, who can only get about through the use of a wheelchair, and is still having wash her clothes at a laundrette.

Pest control have now put a rat blocker in the pipe but Stella is facing months of disruption with the house needing rewiring because the rats have chewed through the electrics and outside decking removed to make repairs.

She said: "It's meant to happen before Christmas and I'm dreading all the mess. In addition the whole house has to be rewired where the rats have caused damage and that will happen after Christmas. I still have no washing machine or dishwasher. Wandle have also rejected my request for compensation or reimbursement so I've had to escalate my complaint to the next stage. They did not address any of the points I raised and said all procedures had been followed!"

"In addition, the rats have eaten the back of my dishwasher and I was told yesterday Wandle wouldn't replace it because they didn't put it in. Also they won't do any decorating after the re-wiring. It's such a fiasco I think I will have to get the Ombudsman involved and let them decide.

"They have taken responsibility for fixing the issue and to be fair they are moving pretty quickly now but no one is prepared to discuss why it took FOUR months and a call from you to



get anyone to come and visit me nor any compensation or reimbursement. The repairs manager said he is only interested in rectifying the problem and everything else has to be discussed with 'the office'. That's why I've gone down the formal complaint route. It's almost as if they are hoping I'll give up but they are actually making themselves look even worse!"

Stella's son Marcus 26, who is autistic with a severe learning disability and is in supported living also stays for weekends at the house and when The Chronicle visited Stella at her house our reporter was shocked that a housing provider would have left a disabled women in this position for free months



Stella told us on our visit: "At night I'm so scared. My nightmare is that I'm going to wake up with a rat on my head. I lock the door of the kitchen but every morning I come downstairs I have to psych myself up to open the door – not knowing what I am going to find.

"On the last visit by pest control I started to cry because I sit here and I can hear them in the walls and the smell is horrendous."

Wandle also took two months to reply to Stella's occupational therapist who had also written her concerns about the 'dangerous' state of the kitchen.

Stella who is paralysed from the waist down caused by a tumour in her spinal cord in 2014 added: "I am disabled and have very limited mobility and therefore I am a vulnerable tenant and my kitchen is dangerous.

"I live on my own and sit here night after night hearing rats in the walls. On two occasions I have had to live with the smell of a dead rat under my fridge for a number of days until pest control could come and remove it. I have also experienced an infestation of bluebottles. All in an area where I prepare meals."

Stella has now made a formal complaint to Wandle about the way she



has been treated and says the housing association is in contravention of its own tenants charter.

She said: "In addition, I am having to use the laundrette to do my washing, not only is this very difficult physically but I am on limited income. I am on Universal Credit, so I am getting £80 less a month and this unexpected cost has had a serious effect on my finances, which in turn has impacted on my mental health."

"I did ask for financial assistance with the ongoing costs but they said all they can do is send me some Argos and Sainsburys vouchers which I have to apply for."

A spokeswoman for Wandle Housing confirmed that Ms Weston is currently progressing through its complaint process, adding: "We apologise that our response to the problems at Ms Weston's home have previously fallen below our expectations.

"We are in touch with Ms Weston on a regular basis, and our team are carrying out works to make sure we are resolving issues raised.

"The issues have been complex, and we will be reviewing the case in full to learn where we could have done better, and put in place any process improvements identified."

Great grandmother wrestles to save beloved Chihuahua

A GREAT grandmother who wrestled to save the life of her Chihuahua from the jaws of dog she has likened to a white wolf has set up a petition calling for new laws to tackle irresponsible dog ownership.

Tina Hussien, 64 who suffers with ill health including arthritis jumped on the dog's back and even tried to bite it to get it to release her 'baby' who was attacked in Grangewood Park on Friday November 5 at around 11.30am.

The large white dog only released her beloved dog Diesel when she punched it in the face.

Tina says she feared Diesel was dead but he had fainted because his lead had become tightly wrapped around his body as the attacking dog turned him over and over in its mouth.

The poor little dog was 'lucky to be alive' said vets who treated a series of puncture wounds around his neck.

Hundreds of people have now backed Tina's petition on change.org calling for dog licences to be reintroduced and mandatory insurance for dogs.

Tina said: "When will dog on dog attacks be taken seriously. Not only has this left me with a huge vet bill but a traumatised dog.

"Will we have to wait for these dogs to kill or maim a human child before police action is taken on these horrific dog on dog attacks?



"There seems to be nothing the local police can do, then the wounded animals owners are faced with huge vet bills and the owner of the attacking dogs get off scot-free to offend again."

Diesel has just turned seven and was recovering from cruciate ligament surgery, which meant he had been on cage rest when he was attacked.

Tina had taken him to the park in a pram as he was only allowed to have short lead walks and he had just been taken out to do a wee when he was attacked. The dog that attacked him was unleashed and the owner was carrying a muzzle.

Diesel escaped internal injuries believes Tina because he was wearing a winter coat but was given antibiotics and pain killers which landed Tina with a vet's

Catastrophic failings

CROYDON Council's efforts to improve its under-fire housing services have been branded "at best embryonic and at worst weak"

The report, which is part of a wider independent review of the council's progress following well-publicised financial difficulties, said that the poor housing conditions discovered within one of the council's blocks "was a catastrophic customer services failure, which displayed an absence of listening and customer empathy".

At last weeks cabinet meeting Chris Wood who was appointed by the government to lead a review into Croydon Council after its financial collapse last November speaking about Regina Road said: "At the core the problem at Regina Road was a leaky pipe, that is easy to fix but somehow this turned into a catastrophe of customer service."

In his report he writes: "The Regina Road episode is a very disturbing insight into the workings and culture of the service." He said the situation at the block of flats in South Norwood, exposed in March, is an example of the "malaise" of the council at the time.

He added: "I think the checks and balances of dealing with a customer in distress failed, complaints were made, ward councillors were involved, letters were written repeatedly."

Avenue of cherry trees are a fitting legacy to Cedric

AN AVENUE of cherry trees have been planted in Brook Road as a lasting memorial to much loved member of the local community Cédric Monvoisin.

Cédric who was a long-time resident and a member of Thornton Heath Community Action Team, sadly passed peacefully after a sudden and short illness on November 6 last year, at the age of 45.

As Covid restrictions necessitated a small memorial service in France, a fundraiser was created to allow Cedric's friends, neighbours and colleagues to contribute to a lasting legacy in his name in the community which he called home.

Cédric was well known in the community, his sociable nature meant that once met he was never forgotten, said his partner Craig and donations were received from across the borough

and around the world.

Funds raised totalled £8,825, far in excess of the original target which was a 'testament to the much-loved, and unforgettable Cédric.'

Craig added: "Thanks to the generosity of the community, 19 cherry trees have now been planted in Brook Road. Not only will these be a lasting memorial to a much-loved resident, but each year their annual blossom will remind Cédric's friends and family of his ready smile, and his love of life."

Resident in Thornton Heath, Cédric spent a part of each year in Miami. With capacity for 19 trees in Brook Road, his neighbours in Florida have completed the set by planting his 20th tree a Gumbo-Limbo tree, which is more suited to the South Florida climate, bridging the two

communities which Cédric called home.

Craig, Cédric's parents Catherine and Jean François, and his sister Delphine would like to express their gratitude to the THCAT team, particularly Gaëtane Jones who spearheaded the project; Helen Lomasney and the team at Croydon Council; the residents of Brook Road for their enthusiastic support of the project, and their patience while the works were completed; and everyone in the community for their contributions to this lasting memorial to the much-loved Cédric.

A memorial event is being planned for May, to coincide with the first spring blossoms of the Brook Road trees.



Appeal for donations

ROWLAND Brothers Funeral Directors are running a campaign to help the homeless in Croydon this Christmas.

The business is linking up with Crisis Skylight Centre in Surrey Street and are collecting donations of warm clothing, washing items including: toothpaste, brushes, deodorant, shower gel, and soap, as well as vouchers for food and drink from places like Greggs or Costa..

Locally items can be handed in up until December 23 at Rowland Brother's branch at 299-303 Whitehorse Road, Croydon.

Grangewood park lodge withdrawn from auction after being squatted

THE shambolic sale of Heath Lodge in Grangewood Park has taken another embarrassing turn after the historic park building was withdrawn from auction because it was being squatted.

Despite over 4,500 objections and several u-turns the Labour cabinet voted in October to give delegated powers to officers to dispose of the historic building.

Thornton Heath ward Cllr Callton Young, cabinet lead for resources and financial governance had led the council's proposals to sell the lodge along with other assets, including Croydon Park Hotel and the College Green, but abstained from

voting explaining it was a 'conflict of interest' in his ward as there had been a 'large petition' about the lodge and felt it was only right to respect that and send a signal to 'them that I do represent their wishes here' even though he said he fully agreed with the disposals and that you 'have to act collectively sometimes and make decisions...in the best interest of the borough overall.'

The sale of the assets is set to raise £30million towards paying off the council's debts and interest payments

Within a few weeks of the meeting the lodge was on the Savills auction site

at a guide price of £310k but was swiftly removed because it was not considered 'safe' to undertake viewings.

In February last year the council said it would NOT sell the lodge and then reneged on that promise.

In papers presented to the cabinet one objector said it was yet another example of 'inept and incompetent management of our assets' while another describing themselves as a Labour supporter said:"If Labour is in any way serious about supporting working class and ethically diverse communities, I am from both, then this is certainly not the way to show it"



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COMMUNITY



STAFF transformed a school library in to a museum of 'wonder and wisdom' as they celebrated Black History month putting together artefacts, instruments, music, games, clothing, food and facts from around the black diaspora.

Pupils at Whitehorse Manor Junior School marked the October celebration with a myriad of exciting and creative ways.

Multi-award winning African story teller Alim Kamara (pictured above) captivated the pupils of Whitehorse with his energetic delivery incorporating amazing life stories with facts from Black British history.

School transform library in to museum of 'wonder and wisdom' to celebrate Black History month



The British-Sierra Leonean rapper had children in fits of laughter when he shared his favourite catch phrase: 'Cheese and Bread!' which is still echoing throughout the school corridors - a title he earned from media reviews of his work who said he was the best thing since... Cheese and Bread!

Children from Year 3 were treated to a Caribbean cooking session, with the school's very own midday meal supervisor, Delores Reid. Delores, a valued member of staff, who has been part of the school community for numerous years, couldn't wait to share her love of Caribbean food

Mural depicts pride in 'what makes us different'



Why I Love Thornton Heath

Here Carolynne Skinner writes from the Blue Mountains of Australia about Why She Loves Thornton Heath

BEING black and British can be challenging. Can you imagine being told "go back to where you came from" when it is, in fact, this very island that you were born? Or to feel that you don't have the same opportunities as people from other cultures, despite having all the proper credentials?

These are the thoughts and words of Nick Daley aka artist Bareface and inspired his latest mural in Centrale Shopping Centre in Croydon in partnership with Croydon BME Forum celebrating Black History Month's theme "Proud to be".

The Thornton Heath artist said: "It's necessary to highlight the struggles of being black and

British. Still, it is also important to celebrate our contribution to this country over the last seven decades. This piece intends to remind us to be proud of what makes us different because embracing our differences makes us British."

Using his trademark vinyl this is the second mural Bareface has created at Centrale. His first featured Samuel Taylor Coleridge who fought against racial prejudice with his musical compositions and was selected to appear in the Centrale and Whitgift shopping centres Croydon Music City art trail.

Bareface also created the Dare to Dream mural on the Ambassador House forecourt.

I was working for the BBC at Bush House in London in 1969 when I spotted a tiny ad in the pages of 'Ariel', our staff magazine.

It was for a terrace house in Thornton Heath, opposite Grangewood Park, for £5,000.

It was the only house my friend, a broadcaster in the Burmese Service, and I even looked at. We visited once, fell in love and bought it.

I lived there for 20 years before moving back to Australia. Early morning on Sundays I would buy the papers at the newsagents in the High Street and read them for a couple of hours before going on my favourite weekend pastime - walking up through the park and over to Crystal



Palace, taking different streets but always the favourites with the grand old houses perhaps looking a bit down at heel, imagining the lives that had been led there.

In Spring front gardens of the houses running up Grange Road were filled with flowers - first daffodils and tulips then wallflowers and roses - such a sight.

Too many would later go to concrete for car-parking. From our windows we looked across and into the oak trees, watching squirrels and dog walkers and commuters running down to the railway station - especially the man who walked down Grange Road reading a book he held in front of him.

- Black Influences on British Culture (1948-2016). She regaled them with information from the book about migrants to Britain and their impact on the NHS.

The week closed with a parade of vibrant, traditional attire bursting with colour, as children donned outfits to celebrate their cultures, before a delicious lunch of jerk chicken, coconut rice and peas and a spicy vegetable patty, with a gingery treat to tantalise their taste buds for desert.

Finally, the most popular spectacle of the week was the launch of the Whitehorse Manor Junior Emporium of Black History.

Nicole Tye, Melanie Sewell and Zachi Madukah-Gordon transformed the library into a museum of 'wonder and wisdom' with the gallery adorned with items kindly loaned by staff across the school.

Festooned with fabrics and flags, it became a favourite place of learning and celebration during the week.

Nina-Natasha Achenbach, Head of School, said: "The week was a triumph and demonstrates how the staff and pupils at Whitehorse Manor Junior School come together to celebrate the rich and diverse history of Great Britain and the many contributions by Black people to this nation."

"I'm hugely proud of my staff for all their hard work in putting this together. We've learned a lot, we've celebrated a lot and a fantastic week has been had by all!"

Festive fun camp

A FESTIVE fun camp is being held at Thornton Heath library offering singing, acting and dancing activities.

The camp focuses on confidence building, social skills, role play, arts, crafts, games and physical exercise.

Children aged five to 11 will have the opportunity to perform a festive play and song for parents on the last day.

There are two sessions per day from Monday to Wednesday (Dec 20 to 22); 9am to 1pm and 1.30pm to 5.30pm.

Children in receipt of free-school meals will be provided with lunch at 12.30pm or 1.30pm depending on what session they book.

To book a ticket: www.tickettailor.com/events/uppernorwoodlibraryhub/618248 or contact: info@unlt.org

COMMUNITY

St Cyprians wins visit from nation's favourite personal trainer: Joe Wicks



LOCAL pupils got to work out with the nation's favourite personal trainer after he dropped in at their school assembly as part of his school tour promoting his new children's picture book.

St Cyprian's Primary Academy was just one of 10 schools to win a visit from Joe Wicks who every weekday during lockdown delivered remote 'PE' sessions to children and adults alike - cementing his position as a national treasure.

The excited Thornton Heath primary age children joined Joe, known as The Body Coach, in a workout routine followed by a book reading from his new book The Burpee Bears which encourages youngsters to get active.

The children were also interviewed by CBBC Newsround and got to ask Joe questions hearing from him about the importance of mental wellbeing for children and how exercise can help with this.

Joe's arrival caused much excitement especially when he did one of his famous handstands.

He said: "This is me doing what I love the most. I love doing PE with Joe but it's me in front of a camera on a tripod. When I come to the schools and I meet kids and I see their faces light up and sharing the message about fitness and movement and how it changes our mental health. This is all about giving the kids

something to focus on, to make them laugh and smile."

The winning schools also received five signed copies of The Burpee Bears which follows the day in the life of a bear family whose young cubs would rather laze around at home than go out but the dad persuades them all to go on an adventure and get fit.

The children said: "I think that Joe Wicks is a really amazing person. He really makes fun videos and he encourages people to never give up. When we were doing the exercise everyone was screaming and shouting and it was really fun."

Through his daily live workouts, Joe raised more than £550,000 for the NHS as well as breaking a Guinness World Record after one of his 'PE' classes was watched live by 955,000 people on YouTube. Joe was awarded an MBE in October 2020 for his work during the pandemic.

Joe added: "I've really combined my mission and my passions in a children's book so around food and nutrition, around family time and adventure like getting outside and movement. It's really like a picture book of what I believe in and I've turned it in to this story around a family of bears who go on an adventure who get active and they feel fantastic. At the end of the day I think these are positive messages that you can really teach kids from a very young age that's going to have an impact."

Funding boost for youth charity

MUSIC relief has received £15,000 in funding from the Croydon Almshouse Charities to develop their work with young people.

Last month the charity based at Thornton Heath Leisure Centre launched a range of activities including a music school with instruments and vocal lessons for ages six to 100.

Music Relief is also offering after school support in maths, English science and mentoring for key stage 1 to 4, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays 4 - 5.30pm along with holiday activities, coffee mornings and a parental forum. If you will like to volunteer or get involved email: info@music-relief.org

Meet up Monday's at the George

A PUB is inviting residents to come along and enjoy a free cuppa and some friendly chat.

The Meet up Monday is part of a national movement aimed at helping people who need some company, are feeling a bit fed up or are new to the area and would just like to make friends.

The weekly event was launched at the Prince George pub, on the High Street earlier this month.

Each Monday the meet up will take place from 10am to 12pm. All ages are welcome.

For more information: meetupmondays.org.uk

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**Joe Wicks visits
Thornton Heath school**
Page 15

SPORT

The England star who jumped Norbury Brook



AS a boy Emile Smith Rowe jumped Norbury Brook from his back garden to play football in Thornton Heath Rec now he is netting goals for England.

The up and coming footballer was born in Thornton Heath and lived on Richmond Road with mum Fiona, dad Les and older brother Jamal, until the family relocated to north London so he could play for his beloved Arsenal.

The 21-year-old attacking Arsenal midfielder, got his first England call up in the recent international spell and netted a goal in the national sides 10-0 win over San Marino.

In an interview with The Standard Smith Rowe recalls how before he was honing his skills at the Gunners he would spend his time playing football in the cage behind his house.

Emile whose name is still on the achievement board for 'Excellence in Sports' at his Thornton Heath primary school told The Standard: "It was literally right behind my house. I could jump over my garden and straight into the cage.

"There was a little river in between and I just had to jump over that. It was easy because I could just jump straight back over when my mum called me back in. It was good.

"I used to go there all the time with my friends, dad and brother. They were good memories."

At 15 he was courted by Tottenham, Chelsea and Barcelona but his love for Arsenal grew as he looked up to his older brother.

"My big brother, being an Arsenal fan as well, always used to show me videos," he said. "My dad was a Tottenham fan...which didn't go down quite so well in the house!

"[I support Arsenal] just because I always looked up to my brother. I was always close with him and he taught me football from a young age.

"Obviously my dad did as well, but it was my brother that I mainly looked up to when we would be in the garden, playing around."

One neighbour said: "I knew the family on chatting terms when we saw them and always asked how Emile was getting on. They travelled far and wide before moving to get Emile to games hence the move to be nearer the Arsenal Academy.

"My dog was football mad and could see the boys playing football a few gardens away and would run up and down our garden and the boys used to jump the fencing and come and make a fuss of her which she loved."

Thriller at Mayfield as Rams score wonder goal in stoppage time to draw

AFC Croydon Athletic are approaching a crucial set of fixtures over the festive period and with a good run of form at home they are hoping to take points from promotion challengers Beckenham Town.

In a six goal thriller on Saturday The Rams came back in stoppage time with Nahum Green scoring a 'peach' of a strike.

The Rams had been 2-0 up but Horley Town came back and were 3-2 up when Green got the equaliser. Luwayne Greenwood got man of the match after a super finish close to half time that doubled the lead after an earlier own goal.

The fixture also marked the club's second 'Ladies Day' at the club – celebrating the role of women volunteers play in non-league football.

The club would like to thank the many local businesses that donated prizes for their Christmas Raffle which resulted in 750 tickets sold, a crucial fundraiser for the club.

First team manager, Kevin Rayner said: "We've



picked up five points over the past three games and are playing well. We have competition for places and we look a threat going forward all the time. Our back four have not lost a game when playing together so we hope to keep them in tact for a while to come.

"I'm really looking forward to the forthcoming fixtures – we will compete in these with six or seven players who we didn't have earlier in the season. We're looking like a stronger outfit. We're looking forward to the home fixture against Beckenham Town and will certainly be aiming to put a dent in their promotion challenge.

Rayner added: "Our home form in particular is really promising, as evident by the spirit that saw us get a draw against Horley deep into stoppage time."

The next home match takes place on Monday December 27 kick off 11.30am.

Croydon Women's FC lead league and cup revival

that the club, which was one of the country's best teams, winning League and FA Cup Doubles in 1996 and 2000 as well as completing a hugely impressive unbeaten campaign in 1999 - would return to its heyday.

Victories for the revived team featuring Thornton Heath based player Kacie Nadison Singh, who has been with club since the club started three years ago, include a 7-0 win away at Reigate in Capital Cup.

Thanks to sponsors the club was able to procure this huge banner to help promote activities and also make it easier on match days to locate the club's officials on multiple playing fields.

The Trams were away at Hounslow over the weekend and are home on Sunday (Dec 19) to Regents Park in the cup. Then they have a break until January 9 when they will be away at Acton Ladies, with several other matches to arrange including Sporting Duet and Hammersmith.



IT'S BEEN a meteoric rise for Croydon Women's Football Club who have finished the year unbeaten, top of their league and in run of cup competitions.

As the team celebrate a Merry Christmas in this card they rest at the top of Greater London Women's Football League Division 2 South, five points clear of Sutton United U23, and in three cup competitions.

Earlier this year we featured an interview with the Trams new chair Emma Bowell. She shared her hope

Winning spirit returns to SC-RFC men's team

A NEW coach has brought a winning spirit to Streatham-Croydon Rugby Football Club in its anniversary year.

The club which is one of the oldest in the country celebrated its 150th birthday in 2021.

With new coach Jesse Mackewn joining the Men's 1st XV as head coach in the summer objectives were set as promotion from Surrey 4.

They are currently in-line with this target after a strong unbeaten start, having passed through the halfway point of the season a couple of weeks ago.

The club recruited well during the COVID break and have made efforts to shift the negative mentality following two difficult years for the men's team, writes Millie Ross.

Winning has bred confidence and the boys are excited to take on the second half of the season in the new year. The first game back is January 23 against Reigate at home.

The ladies team have had a mixed first half of



the season, performing very well at home but less strongly on the road. They have put in three excellent performances at their Frant Road Fortress, beating Guernsey, Tonbridge Juddians and most recently Cranbrook at home, but narrow away losses against Canterbury and Blackheath IIs will be games that they will target a win in, in the New Year.

Given the long Christmas break, they will be playing a mid-season friendly against London Welsh women on January 9 before being back in the season on the 16th at home against Heathfield.