


# Members' Briefing



**Barking &  
Dagenham**

 [click to watch video](#)



## Leader's borough update

This week's Leader's video is the latest in his series looking at the fantastic growth and regeneration that's being spearheaded by the council for our residents.

He talks about homes and how our ambitious house building programme benefits both our residents as well as people looking to call Barking and Dagenham home.

Visiting the newly redeveloped Gascoigne Neighbourhood, he mentions how

we've transformed the area into a light, clean and welcoming place fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century - complete with a brand new play park for families.

The video ends at Barking Riverside, with the Leader talking about how we're not just building homes but ensuring we have the infrastructure and jobs to match.

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### **Party in the Park at the Gascoigne**

Residents were treated to a party in the park to celebrate the completion of the play park in the Gascoigne Neighbourhood.

Residents enjoyed an afternoon of family fun and entertainment including live music, face painting, food and drinks with art provided by Studio 3 Arts.

The event was hosted by Be First and Wilmott Dixon and saw over 250 Gascoigne Neighbourhood residents attend.



## **Windrush 75 celebrations continue with free screening of "Back in Time for Brixton", Broadway Theatre**

Continuing the celebrations of Windrush 75, Caribbean Mixx is holding a free screening of "Back in Time for Brixton" at the Broadway Theatre on Friday 18th August.

"Back in Time for Brixton" follows the Irwin family as they give up their modern lives to experience what life was like for people from the Caribbean who immigrated to Britain in the postwar period. They discover the food, work and entertainment of first-generation immigrants making their lives in Brixton.

The screening will be followed by a Q&A session with the stars of the show – local residents Janice and Weininger Irwin.

Doors open at 6.30pm and the screening will start at 7.30pm.

Please reserve a ticket here: [Back in Time for Brixton free screening \(thebroadwaybarking.com\)](https://thebroadwaybarking.com)

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### **Free parking to be extended for residents and visitors**

In its effort to support residents through the cost-of-living crisis, the council has announced that residents will soon be able to park in council-owned car parks for free for up to two hours - an increase from the current one hour stay.

Drivers will also be able to park at secondary shopping parades (on street) at existing and future pay-by-phone locations for free for one hour - this is an increase from the current 30-minute offer.



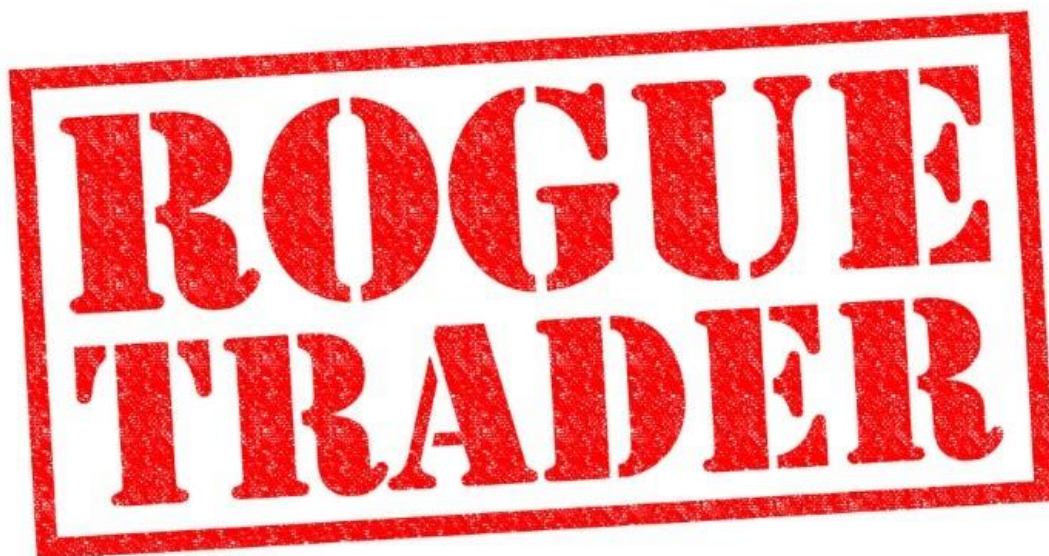
The decision was confirmed at last month's Cabinet meeting.

To benefit from the free parking sessions, drivers must be registered via PayByPhone and this can be done on the PayByPhone App or by calling 020 7005 0055.

In addition, households within future Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) will be given 10 free visitor parking sessions in the first year which will mean family and friends can catch up without having to pay.

The improved free parking offers will begin later this year and the date will be announced by the council in coming weeks.

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**Council urges residents to be wary of doorstep traders**

Residents are being warned about doorstep traders and to not be caught by something that sounds too good to be true (because it probably is!).

Trading Standards Officers from Barking and Dagenham Council have seen a slight increase in doorstep crime when it comes to dodgy traders, especially roofers.

An officer from the Trading Standards team has warned; "It starts with a knock at the door and a cheaper than normal quote for small works like guttering or loose tiles, but then escalates to bigger works and threats to get money out of people to do work that does not need doing in the first place."

To avoid being caught out by these chancer 'traders', residents are being reminded of the following:

- Don't engage with doorstep callers and don't answer the door to anybody you are not expecting.
- Don't deal on the doorstep, if stopped while out, simply say "NO thank you" and carry on walking, if the traders are persistent, call the police.
- Seek help from Trading Standards, they have specialist officers trained to deal with doorstep callers
- Get a door chain if you are vulnerable
- Work with Trading Standards, the Police and your local community by reporting suspicious activity or vehicles in the area.

Residents can report rogue traders to [tradingstandards@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@lbbd.gov.uk)

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## **Residents encouraged to pay Council Tax by Direct Debit and be in with a chance to win £1,000**

The council is encouraging residents to pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit to save time, help manage their personal budgets and be in with a chance to win £1,000.

By setting up a Direct Debit, residents don't have to worry about missed payments or deal with any additional costs for late payments.

When residents set up a Direct Debit, their Council Tax is automatically deducted from their bank account on agreed dates.

The council has announced that everyone who pays their Council Tax by direct debit in the borough will be automatically entered into a prize draw for a chance to win £1,000.

To be eligible, residents must be registered to pay their Council Tax via Direct

Debit by midnight, 30 November and the lucky winner will then be randomly selected.

Council tenants are also being encouraged to pay their council rent by Direct Debit each month to save time and help manage their finances.

You can find out more [here](#).

Residents can get advice, help and support with the cost of living, including money, energy, food and wellbeing support [here](#).

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## **Training updates for councillors**

This week we have included details of a number of LGiU and LGA courses and events. For details on how to access the courses, please see the Members' Training section below.

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## **Borough News**

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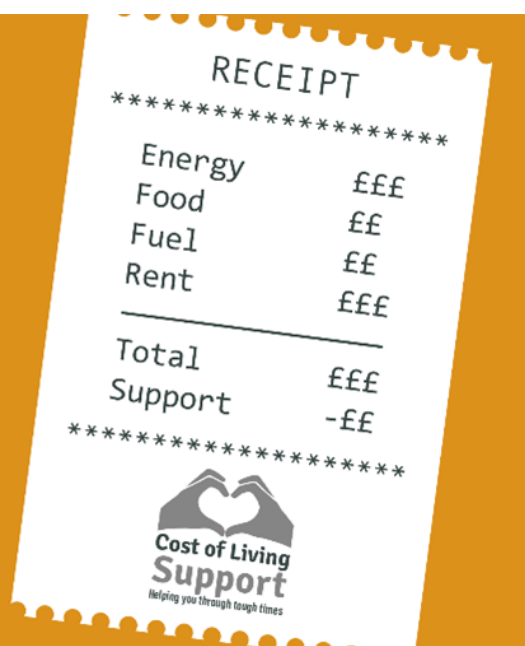
### **Barking Folk Festival returns for its eighth year**

Over three thousand people braved the rain and enjoyed the Barking Folk Festival at Abbey Green on Saturday 5 August. The festival featured fantastic live music and dance from around the world, delicious food, rides and more.

The main stage was headlined by Skinny Lister with an electrifying performance, and despite the weather there were plenty of amazing acts to brighten the day!

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# Cost of Living Support



## Cost of living survey

We're asking residents how the cost of living is affecting them so that we can improve the support on offer in Barking and Dagenham.

The survey takes just three minutes and residents who take part could be in for a chance to win £500.

Please help us spread the word – [the survey can be found here.](#)

Residents are also reminded there's a range of cost of living support available online and through our Community Hubs.

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## **Our HAF Summer programme returns**

Arts, crafts, sports and much more are just a few of the exciting things that children across the borough can take part in our HAF Summer programme.

Children aged between 5 – 16 who are eligible for free school meals can take part in the Holiday Activities and Food Programme (HAF) for free.

For children who are not eligible for free school meals, there may be paid places available.

Booking is essential on all activities, so residents are advised to book early to avoid disappointment.

Residents can find out what's on the programme [here](#).

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## Around the council

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### **Local people invited to train for a career in construction**

Local residents are being offered the chance to train and get industry accredited qualifications in the construction industry.

The Barking Riverside Innovation in Construction Centre is offering residents the opportunity to train for CSCS courses. On completion, participants will be able to safely work in the construction industry.

Courses include a three-day Level 1 in Health and Safety in a Construction Environment; CSCS test and preparation ultimately leading to the award of a CSCS card. In addition, the service can also assist participants to acquire other construction industry related cards.

Interested residents can find out more by email at [bric@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:bric@lbbd.gov.uk) or by telephone on 020 8227 2777 or 07977 017 133.

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## **Residents invited to open a savings account today through Barking and Dagenham Money**

Over £100,000 in affordable loans have so far been handed out to borough residents through our partnership with Leeds Credit Union.

The partnership aims to bring more affordable loans options and saving accounts to residents through Barking and Dagenham Money (BD Money).

The aim is to help local people become more financially resilient, keep more money in their pockets and access appropriate services to meet their financial needs and ambitions. This is not-for-profit, with all benefits staying in the community.

For residents considering opening a savings account through BD Money, it's straight-forward, hassle-free and there's also a wide range of trusted, low-interest loans available.

More information can be found at [www.BDMoney.co.uk](http://www.BDMoney.co.uk)

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## Help and support available for residents through the Household Support Scheme

Residents who may be struggling with their finances or to make ends meet are being encouraged to get in touch.

Funding is available to vulnerable residents to support them with essentials over the coming months.

Residents can [apply online](#) or email [benefits@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:benefits@lbbd.gov.uk).

There are also [a number of other support services](#) including:

- Our Community Food Clubs which are free of charge and can provide £20 worth of food per week for a period of either three or six months at [www.lbbd.gov.uk/community-food-clubs](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/community-food-clubs)
- Our money and debt webpages provide an income and expenditure calculator and budgeting tools that will help people understand how much money they have coming in and how much is going out, helping

them look at areas where they can make savings at

[www.lbbd.gov.uk/money-and-debt](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/money-and-debt)

- Residents who are worried about their finances and need help to tackle debt can now get advice and support from our local Barking and Dagenham Money website at: [www.bdmoney.co.uk](http://www.bdmoney.co.uk)
- People struggling with increasing energy costs should contact their energy supplier about possible funds they may be entitled to, to help them through difficult periods. They can also access the Warm Homes Grant at [www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme](http://www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme)
- People with disabilities who aren't claiming specific disability benefits may be able to take advantage of a number of benefits available, including Personal Independence Payments, Disability Living Allowance (for children), and Universal Credit. For those caring for someone with disabilities they may be able to claim Carer's Allowance although this is means tested, at [www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/disability-and-sickness-benefits](http://www.gov.uk/financial-help-disabled/disability-and-sickness-benefits)
- People with a water meter who are experiencing financial difficulties may want to look into the Watersure scheme at [www.ofwat.gov.uk/households/customer-assistance](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk/households/customer-assistance). Most water companies also have a fund to help those who are struggling, and it might be worth contacting their water provider.
- People who are out of work and looking to get into employment can get help and support from our Job Shops at [www.lbbd.gov.uk/help-finding-work](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/help-finding-work)
- Anyone worried about a lack of skills can find courses and support on the Adult College website at <https://adultcollege.lbbd.gov.uk/>
- Residents who need help with emergency living expenses for food, fuel (gas and electric for customers who pay via a key meter), travel expenses and household appliances and/or clothing in exceptional circumstances can apply for help from our Hardship Fund (Individual Assistance Payment) at <https://www.lbbd.gov.uk/benefits-and-support/discretionary-hardship-support/discretionary-financial-support-schemes>.

Residents can also contact our Homes and Money Hubs which are open for a drop in at Barking Learning Centre Community Hub and Dagenham Library

Community Hub from 9am to 4pm, Monday to Friday or via email at:  
[homesandmoneyhub@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:homesandmoneyhub@lbbd.gov.uk).

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### **Jobs and training opportunities available from our Job Shops**

Residents who need help and support to get into work can visit our Job Shops.

Jobs and training opportunities are advertised on the website every Monday, and residents can register with the service by completing the [online form](#). They will then be contacted by a member of staff.

Alternatively, residents can contact the shops by telephone: Dagenham Job Shop – 020 8724 8877; Barking Job Shop – 020 8724 8870.

For details of jobs available every week, residents can visit [www.lbbd.gov.uk/help-finding-work](http://www.lbbd.gov.uk/help-finding-work).

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## Local Government News

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### Latest figures show around one in fifty Londoners are now homeless

London Councils' latest survey of boroughs' homelessness data estimates the number of homeless residents in temporary accommodation arranged by their local authority has risen to almost 170,000, equivalent to around one in fifty of all Londoners. That figure includes 83,500 children – meaning on average at least one child in every London classroom is homeless.

London Councils' survey provides a more up-to-date overview of the situation across the capital than the government's homelessness data, for which there is a six-month lag in publication timeframes.

Due to the lack of alternative housing, boroughs are becoming more reliant on the last resort option of placing homeless families in B&B accommodation. The number of families placed in B&Bs doubled between April 2022 and April 2023.

[London Councils' Executive Member for Regeneration, Housing & Planning, Cllr Darren Rodwell](#), said: "Homelessness pressures across the capital are fast becoming unmanageable. Ministers need to treat this as the emergency it clearly is. Much more action is needed to help low-income households avoid homelessness and to reverse the rising numbers relying on temporary accommodation."

London Councils is urging the government to take a number of steps to address the capital's worsening homelessness crisis, including: Raising the Local Housing Allowance (LHA); Supporting councils to buy accommodation sold by private landlords; Boosting the Homelessness Prevention Grant funding; Increasing Discretionary Housing Payments; and bringing forward a cross-departmental strategy to reduce homelessness.

## Digital Inclusion

The [London Office of Innovation and Technology \(LOTI\)](#) is supporting boroughs to tackle digital exclusion in London through its [Digital Inclusion Innovation Programme](#).

Originally launched as part of the London Recovery Board's goal for "Every Londoner to have access to good connectivity, basic digital skills and the device or support they need to be online by 2025", the programme is delivering a number of projects, including addressing the specific needs of digitally excluded individuals and families living in temporary accommodation.

The focus for the programme now is to design and launch London's first digital inclusion service [Get Online London](#), supported by LOTI and the GLA and delivered by Good Things Foundation.

## Parking and Traffic Enforcement Penalty Charges Consultation

London Councils is reviewing the London Parking and Traffic Enforcement Penalty Charges. The consultation can be found [here](#), along with additional information to support you in responding to it.

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## This week's coverage in the national and regional media

**Yahoo News UK, 8 August** - [Poorest children in Barking and Dagenham less likely to progress to higher education](#)

**My London, 7 August** – [Dozens of campaigners protest against London council to stop 'lifesaver' community centre from closing down.](#)

**Queen Mary University of London, 7 August** – [East Londoners to receive questionnaire via text message from their GP.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.



**Good e-Reader , 5 August** – [TfL introduces countdown signs and displays for London citizens](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham

**Children & Young People Now, 4 August** – [Dozens of youth organisations win share of Youth Investment Fund](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**Essex TV, 4 August** – [L&Q launches new private rental homes at Barking Riverside, following a sell-out first phase](#). Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

**BBC, 3 August** – [One in 50 Londoners homeless, London Councils finds](#). Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

**Change.org, 3 August** – [Barking Riverside Fielders Crescent residential parking crisis](#).

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## Media Releases

[Barking and Dagenham Council to extend free parking for residents and visitors](#)  
[East London council urges residents to be wary of doorstep traders](#)  
[Council welcomes £2m funding boost for new youth centre](#)

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## Members' Training

### Training from the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU)

The LGiU are offering the following sessions:

**[Strategic Thinking](#)**: Wednesday 6 September, 10am to 3pm (Online)

Creative, strategic thinking is massively important to a politically led and fast-changing organisation. That's why we're taking you beyond the buzzwords and confusing jargon to focus on how to think strategically and apply that mindset to a coherent vision for your organisation's future. Get the tools you need to

influence your team and implement your plans in this highly interactive training session.

**Make a difference as a Councillor**: Tuesday 12 September, 9.30am to 12.30pm (Online)

This interactive workshop will give you some of the tricks of the trade from an experienced councillor and democratic services officer and leave you with actions to make a difference for your community. This workshop will also help you keep hold of the bigger picture and achieve your goals for your community.

**Scrutiny**: Wednesday 27 September, 9.30am to 11.30am (Online)

Asking questions and actively listening is, of course, a crucial skill for elected members. But this is most intensely highlighted when it comes to scrutiny, probing, and questioning in a local authority. This engaging training will keep you on the edge of your seat in anticipation while providing comprehensive tools and frameworks to implement moving forward.

**Managing casework**: Thursday 28 September, 9.30am to 12.30pm (Online)

Sustainably carrying out multiple roles and working with a variety of people requires resilience and a healthy work-life balance.

Personal resilience is about maintaining a sense of well-being, being mentally strong, effectively meeting different demands and performing at one's best on behalf of individuals, and communities as well as being an effective leader. This is a very practical seminar that will provide each participant with methods and helpful ideas to manage the pressures they face and enable them to be able to maximise the positive aspects of being an elected member.

### **Training from Local Government Association (LGA)**

The LGA are offering the following sessions:

**Recycling fit for the future**: Monday 18 September, 2.30pm to 4pm

Local flexibility is key to effective waste and recycling services. Catering for people in urban areas with many flats will require a different approach to rural, less populated communities. With this in mind, this session will look ahead to the implementation of government's reform of recycling services (the consistent collection framework for households and businesses), the new extended producer responsibility scheme for packaging, and the deposit return scheme for drinks containers. It will look at practical ways to increase participation in recycling schemes and consider what needs to be done to tackle the "hard to recycle" items in household waste. This will require viable end markets for materials that are not currently recycled at scale, such as flexible plastics.

### **One to One Development Sessions**

The LGA are offering councillors the opportunity to have one-to-one development conversations with one of the Leadership Academy Facilitators. This will be available to councillors in leadership positions for the next three months. These sessions are not political and will be provided by tutors from the LGA's Leadership Academy programme who a number of councillors might have met from participation on the programmes. They will be focussed on helping councillors adapt their personal leadership style through three structured coaching calls.

For more information, please contact Leanna McPherson at:

[leanna.mcpherson@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:leanna.mcpherson@lbbd.gov.uk)

If you are interested in joining any or all of these courses, please email:

[leanna.mcpherson@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:leanna.mcpherson@lbbd.gov.uk) or [lois.taylor@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:lois.taylor@lbbd.gov.uk)

The LGA also offers help for new Councillors via the New Councillor Hub, which can be found [here](#).

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## **And finally...**

The Members' Briefing is intended to keep you up to date with what is going on in the council, in the borough and in the world of local government. Please email [von.edomi@lbbd.gov.uk](mailto:von.edomi@lbbd.gov.uk) if you have any suggestions on items for inclusion in future bulletins and any feedback you may have on how it can be improved.

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