



Borough's outstanding women celebrated at the annual Women's Empowerment Awards

Last week we celebrated the exceptional achievements of women and girls across the borough at our annual Women's Empowerment Awards.

The finalists were selected by a panel of judges who faced the challenging task of determining the ultimate winners across nine categories.

This year's winners are:

- Community Project of the Year: Elevate Together
- Community Impact Award: Roding Rubbish
- Entrepreneur of the Year: Marina Sanduleac
- Educator of the Year: Natalie Smith
- Health and Wellbeing Champion of the Year: Dr Sharmin Ria
- Woman of Courage: Suzanne Hedges
- Jodie Chesney Young Community Champion of the Year: Chloe Hougavou
- Anne Estlea Lifetime Achievement Award: Pip Salvador Jones
- Barking and Dagenham Woman of the Year 2024: Suzanne Hedges

You can [find out more here](#) and look out for a video with highlights from the awards ceremony which we'll be sharing on our social media channels soon.



Bangladeshi flag raised to mark the country's 53rd Independence Day

Local councillors, residents and staff joined a flag raising event to mark the 53rd Independence of Bangladesh at a flag raising ceremony outside Barking Town Hall last Tuesday, 26 March.

The event was a commemoration of the country's declaration of independence from Pakistan in the early hours of 26 March 1971. It was also an opportunity to acknowledge members of the borough's Bangladeshi community and their many contributions to the borough.



124 affordable, net zero carbon homes completed in Barking

Last Tuesday, Be First and their contractor, Willmott Dixon celebrated the completion of 124 affordable homes in the Gascoigne neighbourhood. The new block is another step in the council's battle against climate change as it is the first net zero carbon building to be delivered by Be First, which is managing the redevelopment on behalf of the council.

The housing block in the redeveloping Gascoigne neighbourhood, is part of the over 900 homes due to be completed in the first six months of this year by Be First.

Joining the handover event were Council Leader, Councillor Darren Rodwell, Steve Kitchen from Willmott Dixon, and Tim Porter and Geoff Raw from Be First.



First tenants welcomed at Industria

Be First has completed three deals at Industria – the innovative and sustainable industrial scheme launched in 2023. The scheme has been built to provide employment space for local businesses and help the growth of SMEs in the borough. Last Wednesday, Be First staff, Darren Rodwell and the building contractor McLaren, visited these first three tenants in residence at Industria.

CC Dist UK Limited, an electric mobility products business selling goods like electric wheelchairs and electric scooters, has taken 3,024 sq. ft. of space on a 5-year lease, Samosa Haus, a South Asian commercial baking business selling staples like samosas, parathas, curries, and biryani, has taken 1,258 sq. ft. of space on a 5-year lease and Card Galaxy, a trading card distribution business selling rare cards from collectors game like Pokémon, has taken 882 sq. ft. of

space on a 5-year lease. The occupiers so far, are all local SME businesses and show how valuable this kind of space is to local jobs and businesses.



Residents asked to have their say on library services

Residents are being asked to have their say on our borough's libraries, including the improvements they'd like to see, and to share ideas on ways to innovate our services.

Their feedback will help us to improve and further shape our libraries to ensure they remain vibrant community hubs that cater for the needs of everyone.

[Residents can have their say online.](#)

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.

Borough News



You HAF got to see this year's Easter Programme

Our Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) Easter programme is here, and we're telling parents they HAF to get involved!

There's plenty of food, footy and fun activities to keep the kids entertained.

Free spaces are available for those eligible for free school meals as well as paid places - everyone is welcome to join the fun!

Residents can check out the HAF Easter Programme schedule [here](#).

Measles: Are you protected?

You need **2 doses** of the **MMR vaccine** for lifelong protection.

If you haven't had **both doses**, you could be at risk.

Contact your GP practice and book an appointment if you're not up to date.

Residents urged to make sure their children get the MMR vaccine

Residents may have seen in the news recently that there have been outbreaks of measles in the West Midlands and areas of London.

Sadly, the current outbreak of measles is not surprising given the low take up of the MMR vaccine over recent years and it spreads easily between people who have not been vaccinated.

Measles can be extremely serious, even life-threatening - the best way for residents to protect their children is the MMR vaccine and it is free of charge.

Any resident whose child, regardless of their age, has missed one or both doses of the MMR vaccine, needs to make sure they have the vaccine as soon as possible.

They can find out how to get their child vaccinated [here](#).



**53% OF RESIDENTS SKIP
OR HAVE SMALLER
MEALS BECAUSE OF COSTS**



**IT'S NOT OKAY.
BUT IT IS OKAY TO REACH OUT FOR SUPPORT**

WWW.LBBD.GOV.UK/COST-LIVING-SUPPORT

**Cost of Living
Support**
Helping you through tough times

We are still supporting residents with the cost of living

Now more than ever, some residents will be feeling the pinch with sky high energy prices and the cost of food and shopping.

That's why we're sharing easy ways for residents to access help if they need it - from benefits and low-cost loans, through to income maximisation and signposting them to food banks, warm spaces, and wellbeing support.

There's lots of help available and it's really important that we can all talk about it.

Residents can take a look at the latest cost of living support guides which bring together the support we offer, alongside our partners in one place.

[View the Cost of Living Information Support Guides here.](#)

Residents can also drop into [Community Hubs](#) across the borough to access support face to face.



Floor-ed plan - carpet dumped on latest Wall of Shame

[The Wall of Shame](#) is back with [more shameless dumpers](#) spotted on camera – but do you know or recognise any of them?

If you do, then let our Enforcement Team know by emailing grimecrime@lbbd.gov.uk. Let's put an end to fly-tipping in B&D.

Around the council



Residents interested in a career in construction invited to get in touch

Residents interested in a career in the construction industry are being invited to get in touch with the Barking Riverside Innovation in Construction Centre (BRIC).

The BRIC training centre in Barking Riverside is offering construction training and qualifications plus brand-new test centre facilities where interested residents can book for their CITB Health, Safety and Environment tests. They will also be able to gain a Level 1 Health and Safety in Construction qualification.

On successful completion of the course, participants will gain the green CSCS labourer card which will allow them to work safely in the construction industry. Staff at the BRIC will also assist participants in gaining other industry related construction cards.

To find out more please contact bric@lbbd.gov.uk or telephone 020 8227 2777/07977 017133.

You can also visit the website at: www.lbbd.gov.uk/BRIC



Over £250,000 in loans handed out to residents through BD Money partnership

Over £250,000 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.

Households across the borough have saved an estimated £62,500 in interest since the partnership launched in October 2022.

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



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.

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
- 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

- 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
- 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
- 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
- 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. 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
- 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.



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.

Local Government News

50 years of local government

Today, 1 April 2024 marks the 50th anniversary for hundreds of councils across the country created under the Local Government Act 1972. The act brought major changes to the local government system and reduced the number of councils from 1,245 to 412 from April 1974.

The anniversary is an opportunity to celebrate those councils, recognise and highlight the important contribution they make to their communities, and showcase the value of local government. It's also an opportunity to focus on the people – leaders, councillors and officers – who have served their local residents over the last half century.

Latest residents' satisfaction polling

The LGA's latest national polling into resident perceptions of local government, conducted in February 2024, is [now available](#). The latest results show a drop in overall levels of satisfaction and there has also been a fall in the percentage of people who agree their council provides value for money to its lowest recorded level.

However, the proportion of respondents who trust their local council and feel it keeps them informed has remained broadly consistent with the last round of polling in June.

There has been an increase in the proportion of people who trust their local council to take decisions in their over central government and an overall increase in those who agree it's important to treat local politicians with respect and courtesy. Although they have noticed a decline in levels of satisfaction

across key indicators in recent years, this is in the context of research showing similar trends in other parts of government and the public sector.

The survey also asked how people how they access information about their council and the services it provides and in the last three rounds of polling, the top three responses have been word of mouth, the council website and printed information.

This week's coverage in the national and regional media

Evening Standard, 28 March – [London houses still selling for £19, 500 below asking price but market is springing back.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

First Time Buyer, 27 March – [Location Regeneration for first time buyers: A comprehensive guide.](#) Mentions Barking Riverside.

The Guardian, 26 March – [Councils now sell of more houses than they build. Thatcher's legacy right to buy, is a failure.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham and Be First.

The New Statesman, 26 March – [Two thirds of councils are on course to miss climate targets.](#) Mentions Cllr Darren Rodwell.

Evening Standard, 26 March – [London travel news LIVE: Tube and train update delays hit Hammersmith & City Line, Central Line and DLR.](#) Mentions Barking.

Housing Digital, 25 March – [Historic Dagenham car plant embarks on new life as homes.](#)

Today's Conveyancer, 25 March – [Profession warned to gear up for a surge in market activity.](#) Mentions Barking Riverside.

Time Out Magazine, 22 March – [London's soaring council taxes have crossed the £2,000-a-year mark in almost half of boroughs.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Evening Standard, 22 March – [Rapist jailed for 10 years for Barking attack after DNA breakthrough.](#)

Local Government Lawyer, 21 March – [Ombudsman reveals varying impact of complaint handling orders in latest report ahead of Code becoming statutory.](#) Mentions Barking and Dagenham.

Media Releases

[Barking and Dagenham Council's ninth Women's Empowerment Awards honour borough's outstanding women.](#)

[School and community mourn the loss of long serving Governor.](#)

[Global Recycling Day stars: Meet the Dagenham pupils taking charge of battery recycling in their community.](#)

[Persistence pays off – Landlord ordered to pay almost £100,000 for illegally converted property.](#)

And finally...

The Members' Briefing is intended to keep you up to date with what is going on in the council, across the borough and in the world of local government. Please email yon.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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