



# Talk of Thamesmead

The publication for Thamesmead residents

Issue 12  
Winter  
2024



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## Find out what's happening

Do you want to find out more about what Peabody's team in Thamesmead is up to? There are a number of ways you can stay in touch.



### Keep an eye on our website

[www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk](http://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk)



### Connect with our social channels

Twitter, Facebook and TikTok @ThamesmeadLDN and Instagram @ThamesmeadNow



### Sign up to our monthly online newsletter

via the 'Contact us' section at [www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk](http://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk)



### If you have a question

email [thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk](mailto:thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk) or ring us on 020 3828 3671.

### If you'd rather speak to someone in person

We can arrange to meet you at **The Nest Community Building and Library, 3 Cygnet Square, SE2 9FA.** Please email us at [thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk](mailto:thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk) to arrange a date and time.

### If you have a sales enquiry

Register your interest at [peabodynewhomes.co.uk](http://peabodynewhomes.co.uk) and a member of the team will be in touch.

# Hello Thamesmead

**Happy New Year from all of us at Peabody! As 2024 begins, it's great to see there's so much going on across the town.**

In this issue we celebrate local people who have been involved in some exciting projects. These include planting trees to make Thamesmead greener (page 3), revamping The Cage on Wolvercote Road (page 5), and preparing for the Thamesmead Festival 2024. We also tell you about many of the great events and activities coming up over the winter months on pages 8 & 9.

Many of these events are either free or low cost. We appreciate money can be tight at the moment, especially after Christmas, so on pages 16 and 17, there's information about all the support that's available if you are finding things tough financially.

You may have noticed that we've given the Thamesmead Now website a new look (see story on page 7). Go to [www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk](http://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk) to see how the site has been refreshed and stay up to date with what's happening locally.

As ever, we want this publication to reflect what's important to you. You'll see on page 7 we're asking for your feedback on this publication. It would be great if you could take some time to complete the survey.

In the meantime, if there's a story you'd like us to consider for the next issue, then please drop us a line at [thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk](mailto:thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk) and we'll help spread the word.

Here's to a healthy and happy 2024 for everyone.



*John*

**John Lewis**  
Thamesmead  
Executive Director, Peabody



## Thamesmead youngsters branch out

**Local school children have taken a hands-on approach to tackling the climate crisis by helping to plant more than 500 trees in Southmere Park.**

The planting was part of National Tree Week, which ran from 25 November to 3 December.

Children from Willow Bank Primary School, St John Fisher Catholic Primary School and Harris Garrard Academy helped to plant the trees. The activity was led by North West Kent Countryside Partnership and co-ordinated by Peabody.

The children learnt about the benefits of urban trees. This included how trees capture carbon, create habitats for wildlife, reduce the risk of floods and improve our air quality.

"It was a delightful experience for the children as they got their hands dirty and helped improve the local park," said Laura McLaughlin, Deputy Head Teacher at St John Fisher Catholic Primary School.

She added: "By improving a green space in our community, the children not only learnt more about nature but also instilled a sense of responsibility and pride in contributing positively to the environment. It was a fantastic experience that will leave a lasting impression on the children."

Different species planted throughout the week included hawthorn, blackthorn, guelder rose, hardy rubber trees, tulip trees and golden rain trees.

The newly planted trees will sit alongside Southmere Park's 'Tiny Forest'. The first of its kind to be planted in South London, and made up of 600 trees of 18 different species.

The newly planted trees will add to the 53,000 trees (of 99 different species) that Peabody already looks after in Thamesmead.

**You can find out more about how Peabody is working to improve Thamesmead's landscape at [www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk](http://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk)**

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## Get social

- @ThamesmeadLDN
- @ThamesmeadLDN
- @ThamesmeadLDN
- ThamesmeadLDN
- @ThamesmeadNow





Photo courtesy of the Royal Borough of Greenwich

## Thamesmead means business at awards night

### Local businesses enjoyed a prize-filled evening at the annual Greenwich Business Awards.

Many of those nominated have been supported by Peabody in their development, with four of them winning their categories.

**Camouflage Café** ([www.camouflagecafe.co.uk](http://www.camouflagecafe.co.uk)) was named **Best New Business**. The café was founded by husband-and-wife duo, Kemi and Chris Madumere, and is based in the Moorings Sociable Club. It's an offshoot of the couple's Brighter Futures charity, which supports young people and adults with learning disabilities.

"This award belongs to our entire Camouflage family," said Kemi. "It truly takes a village to create an inclusive environment like Camouflage Cafe. Our interns inspire us every day with their dedication, abilities, and accomplishments."

**The Workforce Development Award** was won by **BPTW**, an architectural practice with expertise in residential development and neighbourhood placemaking. As well as being dedicated to supporting and developing its colleagues, the company also works with schools, offering work experience placements to young students.

BPTW co-founder, Alan Wright, said: "I think the main thing for us is the recognition that it gives to what we're doing for the staff team here. It also covers off our involvement with schools and how we help to develop students through work experience."

**Roar Pursuits, the not-for-profit organisation that provides early intervention and training for care leavers, was awarded the Health & Wellbeing Award.** More than 50 experienced mentors work with Roar offering tailored support and advice with things like mental health services, legal advice, housing and homelessness.

**Helix3D won the Made in Greenwich and Business of the Year Awards.** The company is an expert in set design and fabrication for film, television and commercials. It has worked on films like Hot Fuzz and Attack the Block, television shows including Gangs of London and Breeders, as well as commercials for brands like eBay, Adidas and H&M.

Brian Dowling, Helix3D co-founder, said: "I'm so proud to have received these awards on behalf of my co-founder Sanjeev Dowling and our business partner Chloe Fitzgerald.

"I'd like to dedicate the awards to my dad Liam who sadly passed away last year. I'm very excited to announce that in his memory, I'm donating our £3,000 Business of the Year Award money to 'The Indie-30' start-up incubator. This initiative is designed to help people start new businesses, focusing on technology and sustainability in the screen industries."



## Cage captures imagination

### The multi-use games area on Wolvercote Road – known locally as The Cage – has been transformed into a striking work of art. This is thanks to a series of colourful new murals created by local artists.

In 2021, artist Joseph Ijoyemi, who grew up in the area, won a £12,000 art commission, funded by Peabody, to breathe new life into the space by covering the entire floor with an artwork.

Joseph was supported by a series of local graffiti artists, led by Cieron Peel, who reimaged the existing artworks on the brick sidewalls of the space.

Joseph's eye-catching design, 'Believe and Achieve', was chosen by the wider community and The Cage TM group, which is made up of local residents who were involved in the entire commissioning process.

The artwork shows young people as giant silhouettes playing ball games. These are set against a vivid multicolour background that spans the length of the floor, covering 800m<sup>2</sup> of tarmac. New sporting equipment, lighting and seating has also been added.

It took six days to complete with the help of professional painters Gavin McPhail and Gabriel Pitcher from creative consultancy Wood Street Walls.

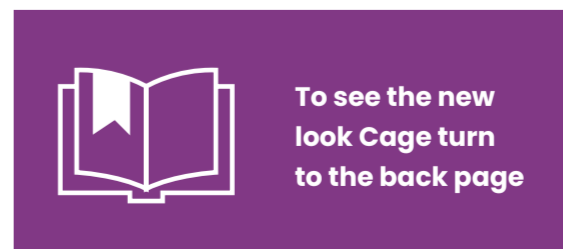
Joseph said: "The Cage is a place where I've been, it's where I grew up. Now after many years I'm back here trying to rebuild something positive for young people and give back to the community, which is very important to me."

Cieron added: "The 'Made In The Manor' mural means a lot to us, especially since it's right here in the heart of Thamesmead, our hometown, the place that shaped us. This piece, crafted by genuine local graffiti artists well-known for their authenticity, is like a living history of Thamesmead's graffiti scene. It's a tribute to the art we live and breathe, representing our community's passion, determination, resilience, and raw talent."

Dominika Kieruzel, one of The Cage TM group members, said: "Based on my conversations with local kids, they're really excited about The Cage. I think that part of the reason is the space feels much safer, all of the colours are really cheerful, and the facilities are better."

The artworks are part of Peabody's £4.48m South Thamesmead Garden Estate project. Its aim is to make the area's open spaces more welcoming, accessible and useful for the community.

The Cage artworks are part of a series of new murals that make up Thamesmead's growing street art trail. This includes works from both local and internationally established artists at different sites across the town.



Peabody's Economic Inclusion Team helped more than 50 Greenwich and Bexley-based enterprises in 2023. If you're a local business owner and would like support or advice, please email [businessready@peabody.org.uk](mailto:businessready@peabody.org.uk)

Local talent



# My Thamesmead

Mat Jenner, TACO! Artist-Director



### How long have you lived in Thamesmead?

I've been working in Thamesmead for six years now. I live in Abbey Wood. I moved to the area with my family seven years ago and began working in the area as an artist and cultural programmer shortly afterwards.

### Where do you work in Thamesmead?

I work at TACO! (Thamesmead Arts and Culture Office). It's an artist-led arts organisation and an arts charity that works with artists, communities and audiences in Thamesmead and the surrounding areas of South East London.

We have a public venue in Cygnet Square, with a gallery, event space, broadcast studio, book shop and a cafe bar. We also run a production studio in Poplar Place.

I founded TACO! as an organisation in 2017 and since then we've grown a lot, supporting artists to realise ambitious projects and exhibitions. We've also developed a community radio station (RTM.FM) and established a regular programme of activity for children and their families called the Hundred Club.

### What's the best thing about Thamesmead?

Thamesmead is such an interesting place. Its architecture and design are really important to the story of the UK and it's clearly one of the things that makes Thamesmead what it is.

However, the main thing that I think you really feel when you spend time here is just how diverse Thamesmead's communities are and how strong a sense of community there is here. I have never lived or worked in a place in London like it before.

### Where's your favourite place to walk in Thamesmead?

Thamesmead has a lot of green spaces and hidden parts. I've always loved how there are these different secret ways to navigate Thamesmead by foot or cycling.

I really like the marshes on the edge of Southmere Park. It feels like the edge of London, an in-between, semi-wild place where the city meets fields, water and reeds.

It's a very special place, but it's also under threat from the encroachment of development. If it goes, we will all miss it, and Thamesmead will be poorer for it.

### What's your favourite fact about Thamesmead?

The fact Thamesmead was the first place in the UK where community radio was trialled. It also has a long relationship with Pirate Radio because of the towers and its position on the edge of London.

### What's your favourite place to eat and drink in Thamesmead?

Back-A-Yard Grill. It's not really a place as such. Rose who runs it used to do pop-up Caribbean grills in her back yard on Poplar Place. Amazing food, lovely person, totally community orientated.

### What's your favourite Thamesmead memory?

They're all summer night related – watching bats on Southmere Lake late at night, making the first RTM Solidarity Sound System by hand with a load of brilliant people from Thamesmead. And then hosting the 'car park party' at the Lakeside Centre in 2020 is another favourite memory.

### What's the best kept secret about Thamesmead more people should know?

Thamesmead is full of secret things isn't it, so it's hard to pick a best. There are loads of artists and young people making great music, making their own culture right here in Thamesmead, people like musician Paul Stephan.

I'm blowing their cover by talking about them here (long may they fly under our radar!). So, if I had to choose something I'd choose The Electronic Audio Club. This is a free local group run by a couple of artists, Jenny and Alex, that is open to all comers who want to learn how to make electronic audio devices like speakers or synths.



## Bus boost

### TfL and the Royal Borough of Greenwich are developing plans to improve bus services in Thamesmead.

This could include a new bus transit scheme, connecting Thamesmead residents to Abbey Wood and Woolwich.

The programme would offer affordable, accessible and frequent connections to the Elizabeth Line and DLR services, supporting development in Thamesmead. The plans follow a successful bid to the government's Brownfield & Infrastructure Land Fund.

TfL, the council, landowners and local partners, including Peabody, are continuing to develop the case for a DLR extension to Beckton Riverside and Thamesmead.

If approved, the proposed extension would enable around 15,000 new homes in Thamesmead, complemented by open space, shops, leisure and cultural facilities.

**TfL aims to open the extension in the early 2030s, subject to further scheme development, public consultation and approval.**

## Tell us what you think about Talk of Thamesmead



Please scan the QR code below or visit <https://bit.ly/3RHuHeq> to complete a short survey or you can visit one of the locations listed below to pick up a paper survey and drop it in the box at reception.

You can enter the draw to win a £50 shopping voucher. The survey will close on Monday 5 February.

**The Nest (Level 1)**  
3 Cygnet Square  
SE2 9FA

**Moorings Sociable Club**  
Arnott Close  
SE28 8BG

**Peabody office**  
Joyce Dawson Way  
(next to clock tower)  
SE28 8RA

**Sporting Club Thamesmead**  
Bayliss Avenue  
SE28 8NJ



'Wendy', Frances Scott and Chu-Li Shewring, 2023

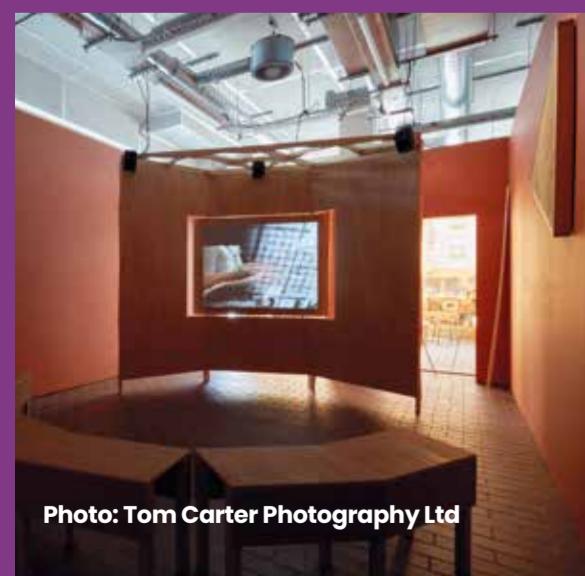


Photo: Tom Carter Photography Ltd

**TACO! is a space led by artists where people can come and experiment with new ideas, contribute to research and feel part of the local community. Amongst other things, it's home to a gallery, bookshop, broadcast studio and even a community radio station.**

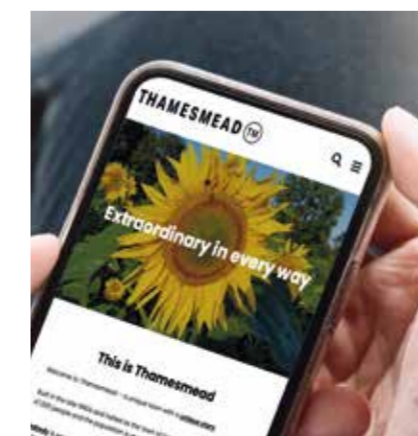
Its free programme includes exhibitions, events, discussions, workshops, screenings, publishing, and projects involving local people and groups.

TACO! hosts free regular clubs which include The Hundred Club, an experimental club for 5-12 year-olds, The Electronic Audio Club, an electronic audio makers group, and Leftovers, a reading and discussion group.

You can find TACO! in Cygnet Square by Southmere Lake.

**For current programme and up-to-date opening hours visit [www.taco.org.uk](http://www.taco.org.uk)**

## Site for your eyes



**You may have noticed the Thamesmead website looks a little different. We've listened to what you said and made improvements based on your feedback. It should now be easier to use and find what you're looking for.**

Local resident Jamie said: "Looks great! Much improved way to find things especially the "what's on" section. I'm reading the history bit with intrigue!"

But don't take our word for it, go online and have a look for yourself – [www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk](http://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk)

# Winter wonder for young people in Thamesmead



**Local student Damilola Oke has lived in Thamesmead all her life. Here she shares what young people can do in the town during the winter months:**

As the winter chill sets in, Thamesmead, with its unique blend of urban and natural landscapes, offers lots of activities for young people to enjoy.

From scenic and serene waterside walks to vibrant community events in Cygnet Square, Thamesmead has something for everyone during the cold winter months.

Our first stop on this journey is The Nest Community Building and Library in Southmere, a vibrant hub that is more than just a place for avid book readers. This lively destination hosts a diverse range of activities for all ages.

Whether you're into fantasy, sci-fi or classic literature, there is a book for everyone here. Immerse yourself in the world of words and let your imagination run wild at this one-of-a-kind library.

Just out of the windows of the library lies the tranquil view of Southmere Lake. The lakeside paths offer excellent opportunities for jogging, providing a refreshing way to stay active during the colder months.

Alternatively, for those who prefer a more leisurely pace, the lake's surroundings are perfect for scenic hiking while keeping warm and toasty inside your jacket. The stunning nature of the area also provides an excellent canvas for young photographers to capture through a lens.

The next stop in our Winter Wonderland is the iconic Thamesmead town centre. The centre is a bustling nexus of activity, offering a range of things to do for locals and visitors alike. Whether you're in the mood for a casual stroll or eager to explore shops, the town centre has you covered.

Grab a quick snack from popular options like Greggs or McDonald's for a satisfying refuel before meandering through the diverse array of shops. From local boutiques to well-known brands, there's something for every shopper's taste.

As the Winter Wonderland journey in Thamesmead comes to an end, there's a comforting return to the heart of it all – home. There's no place like home after all. Home is a cosy haven where winter evenings are spent gathered around, playing board games or sharing laughter over movies.

As the chill of the season lingers outside, the warmth of home becomes a central part of the winter wonder, reminding us that the most cherished moments are often found in the familiar embrace of loved ones.



Photo courtesy of TACO!

## The Hundred Club

The Hundred Club is an experimental creative space that uses arts and play for children to explore social justice issues. It's open to 5 - 12 year-olds and their siblings, parents and carers. The club was initiated by Ruth Beale and is produced by TACO! It's a family club so we ask parents and carers to stay and get involved. Please book your family's place at [www.taco.org.uk/the-hundred-club](http://www.taco.org.uk/the-hundred-club)

These sessions are made possible by Royal Borough of Greenwich.

**Location:** The Moorings Sociable Club, Arnott Close, SE28 8BG

**Date:** Saturday 27 January, Saturday 24 February, Saturday 30 March

**Time:** 10pm - 1pm

**Price:** Free

**More info:** [www.taco.org.uk/the-hundred-club](http://www.taco.org.uk/the-hundred-club)



## Thamesmead Shantay

Come along to the Sporting Club Thamesmead for Shantay, the first in a series of monthly drag nights. There will be two lively drag acts guaranteed to get you movin', shakin' and singin' along! The event is hosted by PoppadomShake, along with special drag and comedy guests. Supported by Peabody, Thamesmead Shantay hopes to bring regular LGBTQIA evening events to the area.

**Location:** Sporting Club Thamesmead, Bayliss Avenue, SE28 8NJ

**Date:** Saturday 2 March

**Time:** Doors open 7pm

**Price:** £6

**More info:** [Thamesmeadlgbtqia@outlook.com](mailto:Thamesmeadlgbtqia@outlook.com)

# What's on at The Nest



## Monday

### Listening ears 50+ senior residents' group

**Time:** 12pm-4pm

**More info:** Call 07798 923 657

### Prestige dance

**Age:** 4-11

**To Book:** Corinna 07989 829 507 [corinnadance@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:corinnadance@hotmail.co.uk)

### Chess Club

**Time:** 5pm-7pm

## Tuesday

### Walking Group

**Time:** 10am -11am

**Meet:** Outside The Nest

### Coffee & Conversation drop in

**Time:** 10am-12pm

### LGBT coffee and chat

**Time:** 1pm-3pm

### Mind in Bexley - Women's Group

**To Book:** Referral only from Mind

### Digital Help

**Time:** 1pm-3pm

**To Book:** Drop in every week

## Wednesday

### Toddler Time

**Time:** 9:45am-10:15am

### Digital Help

**Time:** 1pm-3pm

**To Book:** Drop in every week

### Reading Group

**Time:** 2pm-3.30pm

**Date:** Last Wednesday of the month

## Thursday

### Seated Pilates

**Time:** 11:45am-12:30pm

**Date:** Term time only

**To Book:** Rosanna 07985 086 788 or [rosannecorefitness@gmail.com](mailto:rosannecorefitness@gmail.com)

### Come out of hiding at The Nest

Mental health and Wellbeing sessions which includes creative activities, talks, chill time, mentoring for ages 11-30, including drop ins for families in the community.

**Date:** 4th Thursday of the month:

**To Book:** Please call 0203 828 4920 to find out when the next available session is.

## Friday

### Baby Me Fit

**Time:** 10am-11:30pm

**To Book:** Just turn up and register

## Saturday

### Lego Club

**Time:** 10am-12pm

### Read with Me

**Time:** 11am-12pm

**Are you an older person who is looking to be more active or get out and about?**

Go to [www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk](http://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk) to find the Health and Wellbeing Timetable for Older People.

What's On



# New festival group starts work



**There's a new look to the Festival Production Group (FPG) – the resident-led team who plan the hugely popular summer Thamesmead Festival at Southmere Park.**

**Earlier this year 14 local people responded to an open call to join the FPG, and will now be seeking out local talent, showcasing community groups, and producing a fun event for everyone to enjoy.**

Last year's festival attracted more than 8,000 visitors and featured over 40 incredible local performers across four stages.

The new FPG met for the first time towards the end of last year and spoke about how the festival brings people together, creates a sense of community, and sparks joy, hope and inspiration among residents.

Jamie Zubairi, said: "I feel a real sense of responsibility becoming a member of the FPG. It's a great opportunity to give back to the community that has made me welcome these past 5 years. The festival is much more than just a one-day event – it tells the story of what a proud and creative place Thamesmead is."

Local businesses also play an important part in the festival. From food traders to craft businesses and lots in between, people get to come along and support budding ventures and entrepreneurs from Thamesmead.

The FPG members are: Adedapo Dalley, Amanda Eatwell, Elizabeth Anibaba, Caron Schersmith-Meikle, Christine Mitchell, Deborah Frimpong, Ian Tyson, Jamie Zubairi, Jerusha Ujanga, Joanne Bernard, Julia Hien, Marcus Orlandi, Riordan Tyson and Samuel Asare.

**If you'd like to take part in the Thamesmead Festival on Saturday 10 August 2024, please email [thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk](mailto:thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk). You can also follow us on social media for details about Open Calls for artists and performers, which will go live in February.**



L-R Joanne Bernard, Adedapo Dalley, Julia Hien, Adriana Marques, Elizabeth Anibaba, Riordan Tyson, Ian Tyson, Jerusha Ujanga, Amanda Eatwell, Christine Mitchell, Jamie Zubairi

## Partners in change



**Birchmere Park has been well used by local people and groups but its changing rooms have been shut for years. Now the local community wants to bring them back to life.**

In 2022, a new subgroup within the Moorings Neighbourhood Forum, in partnership with the local community, architects Pitman Tozer and Peabody, developed designs to refurbish the run down facility.

In the current economic climate, where the cost of goods and services continues to rise putting pressure on budgets, Peabody is looking for a partner to help fund the proposed £1m+ renovation.

Bringing in funding from other organisations enables Peabody to continue to deliver its range of essential activities across Thamesmead. In 2022-23 this included:

**Improving and maintaining the homes Peabody owns and manage – £15m**

**Looking after Thamesmead's outdoor spaces day-to-day –£5.4m**

**Running 22 community buildings across Thamesmead – £0.8m**

**Cultural and community projects – more than £1m**

Getting the right partner can take time, especially when there are a lot of organisations looking for support at the moment. Fortunately, Peabody has an established track record in putting together successful bids to back projects like this.

The refurbishment of the Moorings Sociable Club, improvements at Claridge Way, and the design and delivery of the South Thamesmead Garden Estate, are just three examples of co-funded work in recent years.

Kate Batchelor, Peabody's Head of Landscape & Placemaking in Thamesmead, said: "We want to say a big thank you to the Moorings Neighbourhood Forum sub-group for their work and perseverance on this project. With so many demands on our resources across Thamesmead we need to find a partner so we can deliver a high quality facility that will be a great asset for the community for years to come."



To find out more about the story so far, scan the QR code



**Peabody**

## Cosy Corners

Sporting Club Thamesmead: Monday–Friday 9am–5pm  
Moorings Sociable Club: Friday 2pm–4pm\*

Join us for:

- A warm and welcoming space
- Free tea and coffee
- Free Wi-Fi and charging points
- Soup and fresh bread at the Moorings Sociable Club's Camouflage Café (camouflagecafe.co.uk)

*Everyone welcome!*

Sporting Club Thamesmead, Bayliss Avenue, Thamesmead, SE28 8NJ  
Moorings Sociable Club, Arnott Close, Thamesmead, SE28 8BG

*Winter ready*

COUNSELLING MATTERS BEXLEY'S

## Workforce Wellbeing Day

For public and voluntary sector workers and unpaid carers

Thursday 18th January 2024 11am - 3pm

The Nest Cygnet Square, Thamesmead SE29UH

• FREE TASTER TREATMENTS, MASSAGE, REFLEXOLOGY, CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY, REIKI • FREE TASTER YOGA, PILATES AND MINDFULNESS SESSIONS • MEDITATION WITH SOUND BOWLS • STRESS MANAGEMENT MASTERCLASS • MUSIC THERAPY • REFRESHMENTS AND COLD FOOD TO PURCHASE

Please register your interest in attending with:  
Marie Roast: marier.cmb@gmail.com

Charity number: 1182012

**Age UK In the community**

## Befriending Cafes

Come along to one of our Befriending Cafes across the borough for tea, chat, and meeting new people! In each cafe, you can expect games, music and on occasion, guest speakers. All sessions are led by our friendly and welcoming team of volunteers.

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Monday</b>              | <b>Bexleyheath Cafe</b> Time: 11am-1pm<br>Address: Geddes Place Church, Geddes Place, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7DJ                        |
| <b>Tuesday</b>             | <b>Belvedere Cafe</b> Time: 11am-1pm<br>Address: Belvedere Community Centre, Mitchell Close, Belvedere, DA17 6AA                        |
| <b>Wednesday</b>           | <b>Welling Women's Group</b> Time: 10:30am-12:30pm<br>Address: Erith and Belvedere Football Club, Park View Road, Welling, DA16 1SY     |
| <b>Wednesday</b>           | <b>Bexleyheath Men's Group</b> Time: 11am- 1pm<br>Address: Geddes Place Church, Geddes Place, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7DJ                |
| <b>Thursday</b>            | <b>Blackfen Cafe</b> Time: 10:30am-12:30pm<br>Address: Blackfen Community Library, 7-9 Blackfen Parade, Blackfen Road, Sidcup, DA15 9LU |
| <b>Monday and Thursday</b> | <b>Thamesmead Cafe</b> Time: 11:00am-13:00pm<br>Address: Lake View Court, Central Way, London, SE28 8GL                                 |
| <b>Friday</b>              | <b>Crayford Cafe</b> Time: 2pm-4pm<br>Address: Wolsley House, Wolsley Close, Crayford, Kent, DA1 4BE                                    |

**Specialist Befriending Cafes**

**The Rosemary Cafe** This Cafe is for people with living with dementia or memory loss. The session will include activities to stimulate memory and cognitive function. Carers welcome to attend.  
Time: 10:30am-12:30pm  
Address: Belvedere Community Centre, Mitchell Close, Belvedere, DA17 6AA

**Digital Support Cafe** Join our drop-in session for anyone over 50. Bring your own tablet or laptop and our volunteers can help you make bill payments, access information, or just help you with the basics. If you haven't got your own device, we can provide one to use in the session.  
Time: 11:30am-1:30pm  
Address: Geddes Place Church, Geddes Place, Bexleyheath, Kent, DA6 7DJ

Membership Fee: We offer a £10 per month membership by standing order. Within this membership offer you can visit as many Age UK Bexley Befriending Cafes you would like.

Contact our Befriending Team  
Phone Number: 0208 300 0883  
Email: befriendingcafes@ageukbexley.org.uk  
Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/bexley  
Registered charity number 1088399. Company number 4244876.

**Age UK In the community**

## Keeping Fit

Keep fit and active with Age UK Bexley's exercise classes and groups.

|                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>Monday</b><br>10:30am - 12pm | <b>Fit Move</b><br>Delivered by JLinks Physio, our physiotherapy class is fun, accessible and can pave the way to improving your quality of life and independence. The aim of the class is to improve fitness, strength, and balance. This is also a social way to keep fit and meet new people.<br>Address: Belvedere Community Centre, Mitchell Close, Belvedere, DA17 6AA |
| <b>Tuesday</b><br>10am-12pm     | <b>Walking Group-Danson Park</b><br>Join our Danson Park walking group to meet new people and keep active at the same time! Afterwards, the group will go for a tea and coffee break in the park. The sessions are led by volunteers and will go at a pace suitable for the whole group. Free to attend.<br>Danson Stables, Danson Park, Danson Road, Bexleyheath, DA6 8HL   |
| <b>Tuesday</b><br>2.30pm-3:30pm | <b>Tai Chi</b><br>Our Tai Chi classes can help you improve your overall fitness, balance, and strengthen muscles. Practicing Tai Chi can also be relaxing through its use of deep breathing and gentle flowing movements.<br>Address: Belvedere Community Centre, Mitchell Close, Belvedere, DA17 6AA  |
| <b>Friday</b><br>Times vary     | <b>Age UK Bexley Cycling Club</b><br>Led by a team of volunteers, our guided Friday morning rides provide the opportunity to cycle in a group with like-minded people. The group is mixed ability and goes at a speed comfortable for everyone. Routes vary and all riders must be registered before attending. Free to attend.  |

For our current prices, please head to our website.

To Register your space:  
Phone Number: 0208 300 0883  
Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/bexley  
Registered charity number 1088399. Company number 4244876.

# Canal wildlife boost



## Local wildlife is flourishing once again thanks to a new initiative at Butts Canal.

Until recently, the concrete edges of the canal were preventing many species of wildlife from making the waterways their home. So, Peabody worked closely with the London Wildlife Trust and Thames21 to create new habitats.

Now a mix of special coconut fibre rolls, aquatic plants and bundles of hazel brushwood have been installed at the edge the canal, off Bentham Road.

The plants provide excellent shelter for birds, insects, butterflies, fish and mammals. The hazel bundles act as a perfect habitat for small fish. If this trial goes well, similar installations will be introduced along other stretches of the canal.

Chris Coode, CEO at Thames21, said: "We're delighted we have been able to work with our partners to help restore Butts Canal to a more natural state. River restoration work can provide a wide range of benefits, creating better natural habitats for wildlife and reducing flood risk through innovative nature-based solutions."

You can find out what we're doing to improve other areas of Thamesmead's landscape at [www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk/explore/nature](http://www.thamesmeadnow.org.uk/explore/nature)

# Nature





## Forums

### Peabody Business Forum

The Peabody Business Forum is open to business owners, local council representatives and entrepreneurs who are looking for a place where they can discuss opportunities, share information and offer advice.

Sessions take place online on the second Monday of every month (4pm – 5pm), and in person once a quarter (4pm – 6pm).

Email [businessready@peabody.org.uk](mailto:businessready@peabody.org.uk) for more information.

### Thamesmead Culture Forum

The Culture Forum is for all those interested in culture in and around Thamesmead.

The forum is now running every two months with the next meeting on Wednesday 7 February at 6pm.

Email [lisa.drew@peabody.org.uk](mailto:lisa.drew@peabody.org.uk) to be added to the Culture Forum mailing list and to be kept up to date about the latest local opportunities, events and projects.

### Thamesmead Nature Forum

The Thamesmead Nature Forum is for anyone who is passionate about nature and Thamesmead's green and blue spaces.

It usually takes place on the last Thursday of every other month at 5.30pm. The next meeting is on Thursday 29 February.

Email [msfn@peabody.org.uk](mailto:msfn@peabody.org.uk) for details about future sessions.

### Community Group Forum

The Community Group Forum will be holding two workshops on Thursday 25 January. Come along to have your say on supporting groups in Thamesmead.

Hear about the recommendations from the Thamesmead Voluntary & Community Sector research and share which issues that are important to you.

Contact Uzma Ali at [uzma.ali@peabody.org.uk](mailto:uzma.ali@peabody.org.uk) for details.

# More funding for local groups



**More than 20 local groups and organisations are set to benefit from the latest round of financial support from the Thamesmead Community Fund.**

More than £60,000 will be shared among the successful applicants. Their projects range from activities for older people and families through to a dance training programme for childcare practitioners.



The Thamesmead Community Fund will open later in the year. Find out more by visiting [www.londoncf.org.uk/grants/thamesmead-community-fund](http://www.londoncf.org.uk/grants/thamesmead-community-fund)



# More on offer at children's centres

**Thamesmead's children centres are looking to expand their offering to provide more opportunities for children, young people and their families to explore and develop their creativity.**

One idea is adding new activities to the Rainbow Café. This is a place where children can taste food from various countries and learn healthy tips and facts about food and nutrition. It's also a new experience for the parents as they get to learn new recipes in a friendly and relaxed environment.

Local mum Cynthia (pictured) already takes part in a range of activities at the Waterways Children's Centre, one of several such centres across Abbey Wood and Thamesmead.

"I first went for antenatal care and have since moved onto swimming, arts and crafts, singing and other sporting activities," she said. "The centres offer a chance to meet other parents and share the joys and challenges associated with bringing up children."

Cynthia added: "My child has benefitted from the time spent at the centres. It's helped her develop positive relationships by observing and mimicking positive behaviours. It has also helped her learn to share and play along with other kids, as well as develop her language skills."



To find out more information about children's centres in Thamesmead, please email [waterways@gll.org](mailto:waterways@gll.org) or call 020 8311 5491.

Support & opportunities







# Support available this winter

We know many people are struggling to make ends meet due to the increased cost of living with high energy and food prices.

## Helping you save energy this winter

With winter here, it's a good time to think about how you can save on your energy bills and be a little more sustainable too. The government offers various support and initiatives that could help you save money.

### Government initiatives to help you save this winter

#### Cold Weather Payment

You could be entitled to this if you're getting certain benefits or support for mortgage interest.

This government scheme runs until March 31 2024. You'll get a £25 payment if the average temperature in your area is recorded as zero degrees or below over seven consecutive days.

#### Winter Fuel Payment

If you were born before September 25 1957 you could get between £250 - £600 to help you pay your heating bills.

#### Warm Home Discount Scheme

You could get £150 off your electricity bill for winter 2024. This is a one-time discount on your electricity bill paid directly to your energy company between September 2024 and March 2025.

### Help towards the cost of your water bill

Many water companies have introduced social tariffs that offer reduced bills to customers on low incomes. Turn2Us at [www.turn2us.org.uk](http://www.turn2us.org.uk) has lots of information on the different schemes available.

### How we can help

**Pocket Power** and **LEAP** are services that can save you on average more than £200 on bills each year. You can do many things to help you save energy and lower your bills, including making sure your home is ready for the cold weather.

You can find out more about these initiatives at [www.peabody.org.uk/news/residents-stories/helping-you-save-energy-this-winter/](http://www.peabody.org.uk/news/residents-stories/helping-you-save-energy-this-winter/)

## Get cosy



Stay warm this winter at our Cosy Corner hubs. It's where you can find out what support is available in your community.

Enjoy a free hot drink or some soup with fresh bread. And there's even free charging points.

### You'll find Cosy Corners at:

#### Moorings Sociable Club

every Friday from 2pm to 4pm, in collaboration with the Camouflage Café [www.camouflagecafe.co.uk](http://www.camouflagecafe.co.uk)

#### Sporting Club Thamesmead

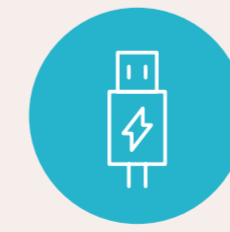
Monday to Friday from 10am to 4pm.



free hot drink or soup



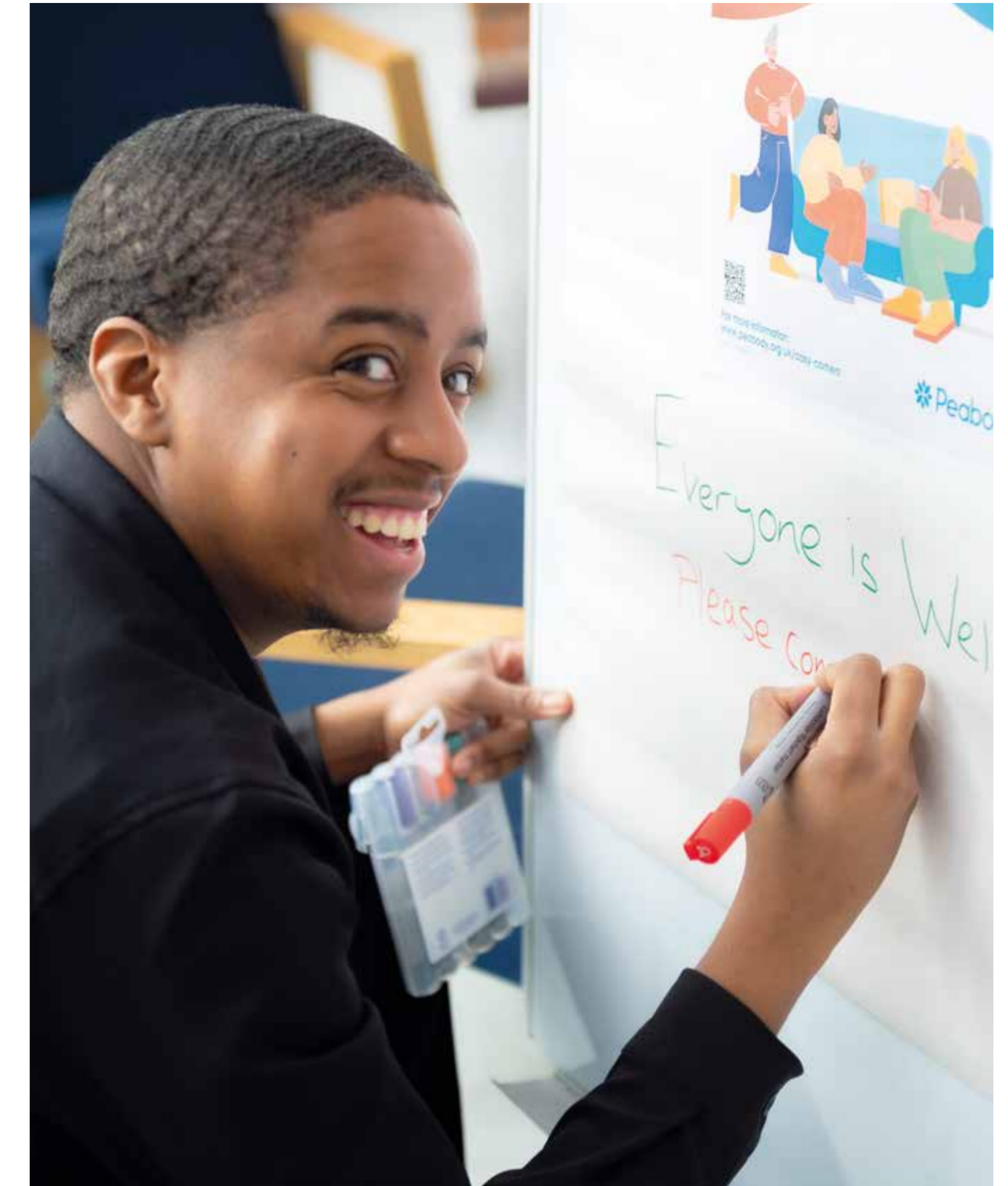
energy saving advice



use of charging points



support and advice about cost of living



## Need more support?

We're here to support you with any financial and wellbeing concerns. Visit the 'supporting you' and 'winter ready' pages at [www.peabody.org.uk](http://www.peabody.org.uk) to find out more.

We've put together a list of organisations and online resources. These offer support and advice to help you with the increasing cost of living, overall health and wellbeing and boost your skills and career opportunities. Our support finder includes national and local

support. It covers everything from energy bills, food costs and debt advice to government funding and assistance, training and education and mental, physical and emotional wellbeing support.

There's also other support available such as:

**Healthy Start Vouchers** – find out more at [www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/)

**Royal Borough of Greenwich emergency support** – [www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk](http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk)

**London Borough of Bexley help with the cost of living** – [www.bexley.gov.uk](http://www.bexley.gov.uk)



Find our support finder at [www.peabody.org.uk/supporting-you/support-finder/](http://www.peabody.org.uk/supporting-you/support-finder/) or scan the QR code with your phone camera





## Hub for help

**Peabody's Advice Hub in the Moorings Sociable Club has supported 230 residents with advice on a range of issues including benefits, housing and debt.**

The service, which started in March 2022, is funded by the Greater London Authority and is run in partnership with the Royal Borough of Greenwich. The support is provided by qualified advisers.

Local community groups were invited to visit the Advice Hub last October. They were able to find out more about the services on offer and how they can signpost their members

to get support. Attendees said it was useful and it gave them an insight into the services available.

Claire Hallinan, from the Moorings Resident Group, said: "I was happy to see the Hub and so many providers support the sessions. I will ensure the community group committee members and residents in the group are made aware of the work it does."

The Advice Hub is open every Wednesday between 9.30am-12.30pm at the Moorings Sociable Club, SE28 8BG. You don't need an appointment, however, spaces are limited and allocated on a first come, first served basis, so please arrive early. Please call Georgia Mann on 07815 734 080 or email [georgia.mann@peabody.org.uk](mailto:georgia.mann@peabody.org.uk) for more details.



Community groups are invited to visit the Advice Hub at 11.45am on Wednesday 31 January, Wednesday 28 February and Wednesday 27 March.



## Christmas cheer

**Last Christmas, more than ever, the festive period represented a challenging time for many families. Not everyone could afford to buy presents or have a big Christmas lunch.**

We supported more than 400 families across all Peabody communities through our annual Peabody Elves Appeal. This even included 17 local Thamesmead schools.

Families received a voucher to buy groceries during the festive season and/or a voucher to buy toys, so children have something to open on Christmas morning.

Peabody would like to say a big thank you to all of our corporate partners and everyone who has supported the appeal and helped to make a difference.

## Getting back to work



**The key to finding a new job is knowing how to put yourself forward in the best possible way. You're effectively selling yourself and your skills to potential employers and this isn't easy. But don't worry, there are specialists who can help.**

For resident Ellen (pictured) the help she received from the Bexley Business & Employment (BBE) service last year was invaluable.

While she qualified as an animator, Ellen wanted a job with the NHS or local government where she could use her whole range of skills and work from home.

Together with Sandra, her employment advisor, she updated her CV to create a profile that highlighted the relevant skills and experience she would need for her ideal role.

And it worked. Ellen's now working as an Autism Activities Executive Officer for Re-Instate, a charity working to improve employment opportunities, quality of life and wellbeing for disadvantaged people. Ellen said: "The role I've got is just perfect for my experience and transferable creative skills. I'm so grateful for the help and guidance I received from the BBE."



If you're a Bexley resident, we can help you find work too. Call 020 3045 3800 or email [contactbbe@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:contactbbe@bexley.gov.uk) to register. You can also visit the website - [www.bexley.gov.uk/bbe](http://www.bexley.gov.uk/bbe) for more information.

## Looking for a job?



**Sign up to our fortnightly jobs bulletin and get new jobs sent straight to your inbox. If you spot something you want to apply for, one of our expert employment case workers can provide one-to-one support to help you apply.**

Sign up here: [www.peabody.org.uk/newsletter](http://www.peabody.org.uk/newsletter)

## Peabody jobs in Thamesmead

Looking for a new job or a career change?

Peabody's Economic Inclusion Team can help you find local jobs and apprenticeship opportunities with Peabody and our partner organisations.

You can sign up to our fortnightly jobs bulletin to get new jobs and training offers sent straight to your inbox!



Volunteering opportunities

Connecting you with different employers and training providers

Help writing CVs, personal statements, cover letters and job applications

Careers guidance and coaching

Preparing you for interviews



Please contact us by emailing [employment.training@peabody.org.uk](mailto:employment.training@peabody.org.uk)

 @ThamesmeadLDN

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 ThamesmeadLDN

 @ThamesmeadNow



## Get in touch

If you want to tell us what you think about 'Talk of Thamesmead', sign up for the monthly digital newsletter or get more involved in the work we're doing, then please drop us a line at [thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk](mailto:thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk)



The new  
look Cage at  
Wolvercote Road