



Talk of Thamesmead

The publication for Thamesmead residents

Issue 21
Spring
2026



Town gets UK's
first Zoöp
page 8



Oaks light
night sky
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Take a bike
– it's free!
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**Volunteer Peter devotes
decades to Crossness**

Find out what's happening

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Spring brings signs of renewal

Spring is perhaps the high point of the year for those of us who work outdoors in Thamesmead.

Certainly, it's the time when we see our beautiful green spaces and waterways – and those who use them – begin to re-emerge after the winter slumber.

This will be obvious in the steady growth of the new circle of oak trees in Crossway Park (p10). And the first green shoots are emerging at the revamped Titmuss Avenue Community Garden (p9).

We will see it in the exciting plans for outdoor activities at Tump 39, which has just become the UK's first Zoöp (p8). Swimming, canoeing and other water sports will return to our waterways (p8), and we'll be able to enjoy the sight of horses grazing during our springtime strolls (p9).

It's also a time when my team starts to see the fruits of our hard work through the autumn and winter. Digging holes for the oak trees to be planted, maintaining our lakes so they can be used for water sports, and managing reed beds at Tump 53 so children can get closer to nature (p8) are just a handful of examples.

This spring, our pride is tempered by the fact that a couple of dear friends are not around to see the results of our collective efforts. We recently lost Chris Waite and Craig Homden (p5), who were familiar

faces around Thamesmead and made a huge impact on many of our lives. They played key roles in caring for the town and its people, as well our wildlife, green spaces and waterways. We miss them deeply.

I hope you enjoy both the articles in the issue of Talk of Thamesmead, and the opportunity to explore the town this spring. As ever, if you have any comments or suggestions for future issues, let us know using the details on this page.



Tom Broad
Peabody's Head of Environmental Services in Thamesmead

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Become a contributor

Share your stories and photos with the rest of the community. Email thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk with your ideas.



£60k funding boost for Moorings Sociable Club

The Moorings Sociable Club has been named as one of just 30 new Loved and Wanted community spaces across London.

The community hub was recognised as a place where diverse groups of people can connect, learn and feel at home. It has won a £60,000 grant from the Mayor of London and The National Lottery Community Fund to continue that good work.

The extra funding will be used to add more activities to a free programme shaped by residents and run by Peabody.

This will include supporting the work of the newly formed Moorings Sociable Club Community Action Network (MSC CAN). The group has been created to generate ideas for new community-led events and activities at the venue.

They will meet regularly, gather feedback from their neighbours and provide insights on developing

an activity programme that best meets the needs of the community.

"Our goal is simple," said resident Deborah Frimpong, from MSC CAN. "We want the community centre to feel like it belongs to everyone. That means more voices at the table and more opportunities for residents to shape what happens here."

Several new, free activities and pilot projects will also be funded by the Loved and Wanted grant. These include a new informal space for residents to connect with each other. This will be delivered by Camerados, a social movement that organises public living rooms in communities around the world.

Another initiative will see the introduction of Talkaoko, a pop-up residents' talk show hosted by social enterprise The People Speak, where people can share their views on local issues.

Peabody, who made the successful bid for Loved and Wanted status, and MSC CAN are also planning regular interfaith coffee mornings and other shared table events to bring diverse groups of residents

together. The grant will support more weekend and evening activities at the venue too.

Dan Wells, Peabody's Community Investment Lead in Thamesmead, said: "The Moorings Sociable Club is already a vital community hub for residents from The Moorings and across Thamesmead.

"Becoming a Loved and Wanted community space means we can offer more support to local people as they grow an activities programme. It's all part of our work to encourage more residents to feel at home at the Moorings Sociable Club."

The Moorings Sociable Club reopened in March 2022 following an extensive refurbishment carried out in partnership with the local community. This was funded by Peabody and the Mayor of London.

The space, which had previously been closed for more than 15 years, is now a warm and welcoming hub, hosting everything from boxing classes to crafting clubs.



Residents who want to get involved in shaping the activities programme can apply to join the Moorings Sociable Club Community Action Network. Panel members get training to support their work. They are also paid the London Living Wage for time spent developing the activities programme. Email uzma.ali@peabody.org.uk for more information.



Love Soup Cafe scoops civic award



Volunteers serving free, delicious food to their neighbours in West Thamesmead have picked up an award for their tireless work.

Love Soup Cafe, based at Broadwater Hub in Goosander Way, was crowned as the winner in the community category at the Royal Borough of Greenwich Civic Awards.

The awards recognise unsung heroes who have made an outstanding contribution to the social, economic or physical wellbeing of the local community.

Nana Sapomaa Adjei, from Love Soup Cafe, said: "We always say we have something very special at Love Soup Cafe, so we're delighted to have that recognised by this award."

"Feeding people and building a little community makes them happy – and doing it makes us happy too."

Nana and her fellow volunteers were presented with their award at a ceremony in Woolwich Town Hall on 6 March.

Love Soup Cafe offers free meals and activities to the local community between 12pm and 5pm every Thursday in term time.

Thamesmead kids' potential isn't up for debate



Community contributor Dyuvan Vijjeswarapu, a Year 10 student at Woolwich Polytechnic, reflects on coaching his old primary school's debate team.



I recently returned to my former primary school, Heronsgate Primary, to help the debate team prepare for an inter-school competition.

Having grown up in Thamesmead and experienced success in debating, this experience felt especially meaningful. It was not just about debating, it was about giving back to the community that helped shape who I am today.

What began as a few practice sessions quickly became a powerful lesson in determination, resilience and teamwork. From the moment I walked back into the school, I was welcomed with open arms by both staff and students. Supporting younger pupils from the same community reminded me how important encouragement and opportunity are in helping young voices grow in confidence.

From the very first session, it was clear that the team had strong potential. They were thoughtful, curious and eager to learn. What stood out most was their willingness to challenge themselves. Rather than shying away from difficult questions or opposing viewpoints, they chose to engage with them head-on – a quality that reflects the ambition and spirit of students growing up in Thamesmead.

At the start, some students were hesitant to speak aloud or respond under pressure. However, instead of letting nerves take control, they committed themselves to improvement. They practised their arguments repeatedly, worked on clear structure, and supported one another whenever confidence dipped.

With each session, their progress became increasingly visible. What impressed me most was their resilience. When an argument didn't land as expected, they didn't give up. Instead, they listened carefully to feedback, adapted their responses, and tried again. Mistakes became learning opportunities rather than setbacks.

Opportunities like debating play an important role in shaping young people in Thamesmead, helping them develop confidence, communication skills, and belief in their own abilities.

By the time debate day arrived, the transformation was clear. The team spoke with clarity and conviction, responded calmly to challenges, and worked together as a united group. They were no longer just hoping to win – they truly believed they could. When they were announced as the winners, the celebration was well deserved.

But the real achievement went far beyond the result. These students proved to themselves that effort, courage, and teamwork can lead to success. Supporting them reminded me that leadership is not about standing in front, but about helping others find their voice.

Being part of this journey reinforced my belief that children growing up in Thamesmead should know they can go far, achieve great things, and be heard. I am proud to have played a small part in this success, and even prouder to witness the determination and potential of Thamesmead's young debaters.



Poet Laureate praises The Nest

Poet Laureate Simon Armitage branded The Nest "a great example" following a poetry reading in Thamesmead.

The renowned poet, playwright, songwriter and novelist said it was "heartening" to share a selection of his works with an audience of local residents gathered at one of London's newest libraries.

Speaking after the reading on 28 February, Simon said: "It's incredibly heartening to come to a building like this, not just because it's new and shiny, but because it's right in the middle of the place."

"To me, that says that somebody, somewhere has decided that this kind of resource is absolutely essential to the cultural, spiritual, psychological and social life of a place."

He added: "Having a place where you can gain knowledge, intelligence and education for free in a world where everything is very expensive is essential."

"Also, it's essential to go out there and meet people, and libraries encourage that. They're about human beings getting on together. This seems to be a great example of that."

Simon, who has had more than 20 poetry collections published, followed Carol Ann Duffy to become Poet Laureate in 2019. He will serve in the role until 2029.

During his time as Poet Laureate, he is completing a decade-long A-Z tour of libraries across the UK. He chose to visit The Nest to represent letter N.

Simon was joined at the lakeside library by fellow poet, Rachel Long, who grew up in

Thamesmead. Her debut poetry collection *My Darling* from the Lions was shortlisted for a series of literary awards.

She also read a series of her poems for the 100-strong capacity crowd.

"This space is absolutely gorgeous. It feels hopeful," said Rachel. "I used to do the summer reading challenge at [the old library at] Binsey Walk. Me and my sister would have a competition to see how many books we could read. We would go most Saturdays."

The London Borough of Bexley's Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing, Cllr Brian Bishop said: "I am delighted to see Simon Armitage, the national Poet Laureate, visiting our newest library."

"It's a real honour to be included in his library tour and it was a tremendous opportunity for residents to enjoy."

The £10 million library and community hub was opened by Peabody in 2023, marking the end of the first phase of redevelopment in South Thamesmead. Open six days a week, it is a focal point of learning and creativity for residents of all ages.

"It was wonderful to welcome the Poet Laureate to Thamesmead and for the local community to hear him reading his works," said Lisa Drew, Peabody's Senior Cultural Programme Manager for Thamesmead. "The library is a really popular venue, offering a fantastic space to meet, study and enjoy all kinds of cultural activities."



Remembering Craig Homden and Chris Waite

The Peabody team is deeply saddened by the recent loss of two dear friends and colleagues, who dedicated so much of their lives to looking after Thamesmead.

On 31 December 2025, Craig Homden, a Peabody Neighbourhood Warden, passed away after a long illness. This was followed by the sudden and unexpected loss of our Canals and Waterways Supervisor, Chris Waite, on 18 January.



Craig served the local community as a warden for 13 years. A car enthusiast, he was famed for his eagle-eyed ability to spot abandoned vehicles. Craig was a gentle giant, committed to keeping the town looking its best for residents.

Chris had lived in Thamesmead since he was a youngster. Having worked with us for 32 years, he made a huge impact in the community. We will remember him for his unwavering passion for wildlife and nature, and the care and compassion he showed to others.

Both Chris and Craig are greatly missed by us all at Peabody and we will remember them both fondly. Our thoughts remain with their family and friends.



Have you got a Thamesmead story to share? Email your idea to thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk and become a community contributor.

'Family' connections brewing at The Atrium



The Atrium Tea Room officially starts at 10am, but it's closer to 9am when Carol Knight arrives to switch the radio on, boil the kettle and make the first of the day's many cuppas.

"I can't stay at home. I've got to come down here because there are so many people to talk to," says Carol. "I prefer to be here than at home. If I was on my own, I'd be miserable, but I come down here and I'm happy."

Carol and other tea room regulars are at The Atrium every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. They meet between 10am and 3pm, with people welcome to drop in for as long as they want.

"If people are feeling lonely, they can come down here and we can all have a chat and a laugh," adds Carol. "Old people need companionship. I should know – I'm one of them, and it keeps me happy!"

Carol has lived in Thamesmead for 50 years. Her connection to The Atrium started when her husband was working in the community garden. At around the same time, Terry Gales and other residents were toying with the idea of starting a club that would help neighbours who might be feeling isolated.

That was two years ago, and Terry is pleased to see the tea room now building momentum.

"It's an open door," says Terry. "If you want a cup of tea, come in for a chat. If you've got a problem we can help with, we will."

While the initial idea was for a regular social gathering, it has become much more than that.

"We've all been through illnesses and things. I've lost my son through an illness. And we just cling together. It's like a family," says Carol. "Every time someone's got a birthday, we get them a cake and have a party."

The group recently attended the funeral of The Atrium's former caretaker, George. After the service, they returned to Teeswater Court to hold their own wake in his honour.

"We are like a family," adds Marion Lowden, who holds onto her Scottish accent after 30 years in Thamesmead. "We all have a good laugh and we look after each other. If anybody needs anything or something's happened, we've got each other to talk to."

Amid the procession of teas, coffees, cakes and biscuits, there are plenty of laughs. The family feel extends to a bit of friendly banter.

"We do daft things and put the world to rights," reveals Marion.

"Torment each other, don't we?" adds Terry, who had announced his arrival by plonking a pack of cat food in front of Marion and declaring that

dinner was served. The group has informally adopted a local cat.

Tins – cat food or otherwise – undergo a rigorous quality control process on their arrival at The Atrium. Former engineer Terry spent 33 years making cans for a company on the Old Kent Road.

"If someone brings in a tin of biscuits, he's examining them to make sure the tin is made properly," jokes Carol.

"Force of habit," admits Terry. "If there was a problem, I used to have to iron them out."

When the time comes to wash up at the end of the day, the group is incredibly well-equipped. Marion is a one-woman dishcloth-making machine. She whiles away hours hand-knitting cloths from parcel string.

"I'm forever doing them," she says. "They keep me busy, they're handy and they get used, so that's the main thing."

"They're beautiful to clean your sinks with, and they're machine washable," confirms Carol.

A selection of Marion's recent creations sits in the middle of the table for tea room members, friends and acquaintances to help themselves to. They become a neat visual reminder of the close-knit nature of this growing community group.



The Atrium Tea Room has received a £1,000 grant from the Thamesmead Community Fund to help with running costs and attracting new members to the group. The London Community Foundation manages the fund for Peabody. A panel of people works with Peabody to award funds.

The tea room has also been supported by Peabody through the free use of The Atrium. Residents interested in running an activity for their local community can email communityhubsTM@peabody.org.uk to share their ideas.

Community fund grants pass £450,000

The Thamesmead Community Fund has now awarded more than £450,000 in small grants to support projects that help local people. Along with The Atrium Tea Room, here are some of other organisations and initiatives securing grants in the latest round of funding.



Feel Good – Keep Moving

Chair-based exercise classes to improve mobility, balance, confidence and community connection.

Thamesmead Tastemakers

Monthly Afro-Caribbean cooking workshops teaching healthy, budget-friendly recipes to improve wellbeing and bring residents together.

Art & Film Camp

School-based creative programme using recycled art, storytelling and stop-motion to help children explore local identity.

Walking Thamesmead

Community walks, cyanotype quilt-making and sound recording to celebrate the town's nature, environment and local voices.

Sew-Smart Fashion & Sustainability

Workshops for young people to explore cultural textiles, upcycling and garment-making.

CNF Cookery

Practical cookery sessions teaching nutritious low-cost meals, budgeting and healthy eating for residents.

Hula 4 Fun

Weekly inclusive hula-hooping sessions supporting fitness, confidence and social connection for families and older adults.

Family Fun Variety Activities

Family-focused activities, including arts, sewing, sports, trips and gatherings, to strengthen community ties.

Thamesmead Families Essentials Packs

Distributing essentials and bedtime packs, including nappies, toiletries, pyjamas and books to families in hardship.

Inclusive Crafters

Craft workshops supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities, and their families, to build skills and connect socially.

The Thamesmead Family Fun & Connection Workshops

Monthly family workshops, including cooking, collaborative art and nature activities.

Thamesmead Youth Life Skills & Wellbeing

Half-term confidence, communication, and emotional wellbeing programme for young people.

The Art of Self-Expression

Drawing, painting and journaling workshops for mothers, with childcare support available.

The Thrive Collective

Weekly fitness and monthly wellbeing sessions helping girls to build confidence, resilience and friendships.



Thamesmead Times: Revisited!

Local History Month exhibition and creative workshops using historic Thamesmead newspapers.

Vibes on Vibes

Roll with Confidence roller-skating lessons focused on building confidence, physical skills and social connection.

Local talent



Applications for the next round of Thamesmead Community Fund grants open this month. Scan the QR code for more information.

Get closer to nature at Tump 53



Young people are being invited to swap the classroom for the great outdoors at Tump 53 – a hidden nature reserve just off Water Lily Walk.

Schools and community groups can now book sessions at the beauty spot, giving children the chance to explore habitats, discover wildlife and learn hands-on skills surrounded by nature.

Whether it's pond-dipping to see what's living beneath the surface, building shelters to protect against the elements or safely learning how to light a fire, the activities spark curiosity and build confidence. It's a chance for children to get muddy, ask questions and experience the natural world up close.

Tump 53 offers both two-hour and full-day sessions, making it easy for teachers and group leaders to plan a visit that fits their timetable.

Tucked within Thamesmead's network of green spaces, the reserve provides a calm, outdoor setting where young people can slow down, explore and connect with the environment.

Schools and community groups interested in booking can email tump53@peabody.org.uk for more information.

Go swimming with the Sharks

Watersports club The Sharks are planning to launch an open water swimming programme at Birchmere Lake later this year.

Residents will have the chance to go for a dip in the lake during public swimming sessions. Lessons, coaching and competitive open water swimming opportunities will follow.

Email swimming@thesharks.org.uk for more details on the swimming programme. See What's On for The Sharks' regular paddlesports programme.



Tump 39 becomes UK's first Zoöp

An urban wilderness in North Thamesmead has become the first place in the UK to secure Zoöp status.

Every living thing at Tump 39, a former Royal Arsenal munitions site transformed into a haven for arts and ecology, will now be represented in decisions made about the site.

Community arts organisation Three Rivers, which is supported by Peabody, worked with the voluntary Friends of Tump 39 group to become a Zoöp.

The Zoöp model involves taking non-human life into consideration when making decisions. The Dutch initiative, overseen by the Zoönomie Institute in Rotterdam, requires an independent Speaker for the Living to be appointed. Their role is to represent animals, plants and other living things.

Friends of Tump 39 have appointed JD Swann as their Speaker for the Living. A familiar face around the town, thanks to his regular bird-watching and nature walks, he will now sit as an independent member of the Three Rivers board.

"My role is to be a conduit between the species and people," said JD. "I hope to get people to understand more about what's happening with the living things at Tump 39, as well as continuing to learn myself."

"There are the trees, plants and soil. There are foxes in there. You get the odd squirrel, rats, voles and things like that. There's a heronry nearby, plus all the small birds. And we might discover more species there over time."

JD travelled to the Netherlands for training on his new role, with representatives from the Zoönomie Institute also visiting Thamesmead

to help establish Tump 39 as a Zoöp. As part of his training, JD had to role-play as a tree and other living things to consider some of the things that might impact them.

He explained: "We always take everything from a human perspective. Our empathy can only go so far in understanding what other species see and experience. We can never truly know, but we can at least see if there are things we can do to help."

"I'm not there to police and stop things happening, but to ensure we're considering how other creatures might react to any interventions humans make."

Three Rivers recently secured a £1 million grant from Arts Council England to expand its creative community projects at Tump 39 and across Bexley.

Scott Burrell, Director of Three Rivers, said: "Becoming a Zoöp is another exciting step forward as we continue to grow a community arts movement here. We're delighted to be the first UK organisation to adopt this model and put all living things at the heart of our decision-making."

"As we deliver and commission more projects in the coming months and years, having a Speaker for the Living will help us to consider the environmental impact of everything we do."

Tump 39 was inaccessible to the public until the Friends of Tump 39 was formed by Three Rivers in 2023. A group of 45 volunteers now runs a community arts and ecology space at the site.



Visit threeriversbexley.org to find out how to become a Friend of Tump 39 and get involved.

Moorings community garden set for fresh start



A much-loved community garden in The Moorings is coming back to life this month, with new activities, homegrown food and more chances for neighbours to get involved.

Titmuss Avenue Community Garden is now being run by Brighter Futures College, the team behind Camouflage Cafe at the Moorings Sociable Club, and they have big plans for the space.

Recent improvements by Peabody mean the garden is now more accessible. With new raised beds, a water connection on the site and an asphalt path, it's easier for people try their hands at gardening.

Students from Brighter Futures College, who have special educational needs and disabilities, will work in the revamped garden as part of their vocational courses.

"As with Camouflage Cafe and everything we do, it's all about our students," said Kemi Madumere, Co-Founder of Brighter Futures Group. "Gardening and looking after plants are tasks that many of them really enjoy, so we want them to get their hands dirty, learn new skills and build experience at Titmuss Avenue Community Garden."

The garden will be used to grow food that is culturally relevant to the local community. The produce will be used as ingredients for Camouflage Cafe and will also be distributed to residents.

"We will invite local people to collect produce to use at home," added

Kemi. "We also have plans to use what we grow to cook a community meal that they will be able to enjoy."

Other plans for the rejuvenated outdoor space include a forest school nursery, an open-air cinema and a programme of evening events for the community.

Jack Gower, Peabody's Landscape Activation Manager, said the vision for an inclusive community space had been key to Brighter Futures College being awarded the licence to run the garden.

"Our recent investment in Titmuss Avenue Community Garden means it's a lovely place for Brighter Future College students and other residents to spend time," said Jack. "We're excited to see people outdoors doing gardening and other activities in the space."



To find out more about upcoming events and activities at Titmuss Avenue Community Garden, email info@camouflagecafe.co.uk.



Book celebrates role of town's Gypsy and Traveller communities

Thamesmead's Gypsy and Traveller communities feature in a new book guiding readers through the history of nomadic living across the country.

The Royal Institute of British Architects publication, *Roaming Britain*, explores how architects, planners and landowners can better serve these communities.

Peabody's work with the Gypsy and Traveller community in Thamesmead is included as an example of a successful approach.

The book credits Peabody's paddocks in Southmere Park as an inclusive and effective way of keeping Gypsy and Traveller horses safe and well. The fields – which members of the Gypsy and Traveller community use under a licence agreement – have reduced incidents of 'fly-grazing' in the town. This is when horses graze on public or private land without the landowner's permission.

"It's fantastic to see the work we're doing in Thamesmead recognised in a prestigious RIBA publication," said John Wilson, Peabody's Traveller Liaison and Equine Officer. "The Southmere Park paddocks help local Gypsy and Traveller communities to preserve their customs and traditions, while residents love seeing the horses grazing."

A copy of *Roaming Britain* is now available to read in The Nest Community Building and Library.



Town welcomes new oak circle in spectacular ceremony



Tree Hugging by Poundshop_Philosopher

Why is it people like me,
 Feel the need to hug a tree?
 Lost in awed admiration,
 Of this, nature's great creation,
 A tree will always stand proud,
 Often bent, but never bowed
 A tree don't need to wear a hat,
 No clothes for him. Nah, none of that.
 Come wind or rain, he remains bare,
 While folk like me just stand and stare.
 'But', some may say, 'it's just a tree'
 Not me!



An illuminated oak tree lit up the skies above Thamesmead in January as the community gathered for the dramatic completion of a new artwork.

The seventh and final tree in Crossway Park's new oak circle was lifted high into the air and gradually lowered into the ground for its ceremonial planting.

Thamesmead Community Choir entertained the crowd with a set that included 'This Little Light of Mine', Michael Jackson's 'Earth Song' and 'How Long Will I Love You?' by The Waterboys, while the oak was guided into position.

Residents then took the microphone to share hopes, wishes and affirmations with the trees. This included a performance by Thamesmead poet Poundshop_Philosopher, who gave a reading of his poem Tree Hugging.

Local children sprinkled mycorrhizal root powder around the roots of the freshly planted tree. The powder contains fungi that will help the trees to grow and build strong connections between the seven oaks beneath the soil.

Miles Harper, aged five, said: "We had to throw some of the fungus in the ground to make it grow. The trees look good. I might come back on Sunday to see them."

His brother Rhys, aged four, added: "I liked doing the planting. I like the lights because they are so sparkly."

The ceremony – and the circle of oaks itself – was the work of internationally-acclaimed artists Ackroyd & Harvey. The oaks were grown from acorns the pair collected from 7,000 trees planted by German artist Joseph Beuys in the 1980s.

Heather Ackroyd, one half of the artistic duo, said: "Seeing the tree elevated in the sky and illuminated by the lights felt very warm on a cold January evening. We wanted people to feel connected with the trees, and I think we did that.

"The trees will take root now, and we're excited to see them shoot up. There is great quality soil here, so I think they are going to do very well. I take great pride in the fact that this is here in Thamesmead."

Ackroyd & Harvey created the Thamesmead oak circle in partnership with Peabody.

Adriana Marques, Assistant Director of Cultural Programming and Strategy at Peabody, said: "It's been a real privilege to be able to bring this very special circle of oak trees to Thamesmead, providing a community focal point for many generations to come.

"We hope the children who looked after the tree in their playground at Jubilee Primary School before the planting and those who helped to plant the tree will continue to look after the oaks as both they and the trees grow."

The ceremonial planting was one of the events in the London Borough of Bexley's Night Visions festival.



"The planting was really cool – I didn't realise the tree would go that high up and, when it did, I was like 'wow, it's really tall!'"
Sabrina Khider



"We saw the ceremony was happening and we had to come down. It was really amazing and I think it helps to spread positivity."
Anita Aryal, with son Aarav

The Apprentice says 'you're hired!' to pumping station



Lord Sugar swapped the boardroom for the marshes to film an episode of *The Apprentice* at Crossness Pumping Station.

He was joined at the 'cathedral on the marshes' by rapper and television personality Big Zuu, who was appearing as a guest judge.

The long-running BBC show came to Thamesmead for episode four of the current series, which aired in February.

Lord Sugar gathered the candidates in the Victorian pumping station's iconic Beam Engine House to give the teams their instructions. Their task involved creating an advertising campaign for bottled water.

He told them: "This place was designed by Joseph Bazalgette, a Victorian engineer who introduced the city's first sewerage network, transforming the health of Londoners who had been drinking contaminated water for decades."

By coincidence, the episode aired the day after Peabody hosted the town's first apprenticeship showcase. Young people aged 14–25 gathered at The Nest to explore apprenticeships and hands-on career opportunities.

"As Lord Sugar knows, apprenticeships offer a brilliant way to earn while you learn, gain new skills and industry experience," said Christofi Christou, Peabody's Economic Inclusion Manager. "We were delighted to show young people the kinds of opportunities out there, and to help them feel supported and confident as they take a step towards their futures."



To find out more about apprenticeships and other employment opportunities in Thamesmead, scan the QR code to join the jobs bulletin newsletter.

My Thamesmead

Rob Parara is the head coach of TDA Football Club. The youth football club, which plays its home matches in Crossway Park, is currently celebrating its tenth anniversary.



What's your connection with Thamesmead?

I first moved from central London when I was 15, and I'm now 54. One of my biggest connections is through TDA which started as an academy called Total Development Academy 14 years ago. It's now in its tenth season as a youth football club.

Where do you work?

I work in project management in regeneration. Previously, I worked in education in a pastoral manager role in local schools, including Jubilee Primary School, Willow Bank Primary School and St Paul's Academy.

A lot of work also goes into running TDA. Aside from football coaching, we run a mentoring programme. We also support local charities, including Joy this Christmas, which gives preloved toys, teddy bears and clothing to vulnerable children in the area.

What's the best thing about Thamesmead?

There are a few things, but the one that popped into my head straight away is community. I've seen Thamesmead develop, change and grow during my time here, but it always has a really strong community.

Where's your favourite place to walk in Thamesmead?

We do a lot of walks down the river, along the Thames Path.

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

Food Angels. It's a little takeaway place just opposite Iceland. I get the Singapore chow mein. I've tried it in a lot of places, but theirs is 100% the best I've ever tasted. That's my treat!

What's your favourite Thamesmead memory?

In 2022, TDA hosted an international tournament. We had Paris Saint-Germain, Porto, Sporting Lisbon and some big Polish clubs come to Thamesmead to take part. It was an amazing achievement to bring an event like that to the town.

One of the TDA teams got to the semi-finals. They lost to Porto, who went on to win the tournament. Our team was then invited to go to Poland for a tournament on the strength of their performance. For many of our players, it was their first time abroad, so we had a lot of passport applications to sort out before the trip!

What's the best-kept secret about Thamesmead that people should know?

Tump 53, near Hawksmoor Primary School. It's a great place to experience the outdoors. Not enough people know about it. My three kids were hesitant at first about getting a bit dirty, but they soon came around and really got into the activities.

Another secret is the depth of young football talent here. We've had opportunities to bring in the cream of the crop from elsewhere to TDA. But we pride ourselves on the fact that the majority of our children are local. There is plenty of talent locally, so we focus on developing that.



Planning your own sporting tournament? Sporting Club Thamesmead has a stadium, 3G artificial football pitch, grass pitches, a multi-games area and a fitness studio available to hire. Scan the QR code for more details.

Spring events



Borrow a bike for a month

Location: Thamesmead Cycle Hub, Sporting Club Thamesmead, Bayliss Avenue, SE28 8NJ

Date: Tuesday 7 April, 5 May or 2 June

Time: 5pm–6.30pm

Price: Free

Info: tinyurl.com/thamesmeadbikehire

Residents are being urged to get on their bikes following the launch of a new free cycle hire service in the town.

The initiative gives local people aged 14 and over a chance to borrow a bicycle for a month to try more sustainable travel choices at absolutely no cost.

"We want all residents to have an opportunity to experience the benefits of pedal power for free," said Khadeja Chowdhury, Peabody's Health and Wellbeing Projects Officer in Thamesmead. "Cycling boosts wellbeing, eases traffic congestion and helps to create a healthier future for everyone."

"Whether they're commuting or riding for pleasure, we want everyone to sign up to borrow a bike and give cycling a go. Not owning a bike isn't an excuse anymore," joked Khadeja.

The free service launched at Sporting Club Thamesmead in March.

Free fruit and veg for all

Location: Broadwater Hub, Goosander Way, SE28 0ER

Date: Thursday 9 April, 7 May and 4 June

Time: 1pm–3pm

Price: Free

Info: khadeja.chowdhury@peabody.org.uk

Local people are invited to help themselves to free, delicious food being given out in the town.

Fresh fruit and vegetables will be distributed once a month at Broadwater Hub in West Thamesmead, starting on Thursday 9 April. Residents are urged to bring bags, boxes, trolleys and strong arms to take as much as they can manage.

The food is being distributed by the Felix Project, in partnership with Love Soup Cafe and Peabody.

"It's to help reduce waste, so it's not based on income or need," said Khadeja Chowdhury, Peabody's Health and Wellbeing Projects Officer in Thamesmead. "Everyone is welcome to come along and take fresh food home."



Thamesmead Ride Together

Location: Thamesmead Cycle Hub, Sporting Club Thamesmead, Bayliss Avenue, SE28 8NJ

Date: Every Saturday

Time: Adult Cycle Club (over 16s) 10am–12pm, Family Cycle Club (over 5s), 12pm–2pm

Price: Free

Info: spond.com/invite/GGOKX

Thamesmead Ride Together is back with free community cycling sessions. Following positive feedback on last year's programme, the cycle clubs are returning after the winter break.

Family sessions for riders aged over five and an adult club for over 16s are both available. The clubs are a chance for people of all ages to practice cycling skills, get active and enjoy being on a bike in a safe, friendly and supportive environment.

All sessions are free. Bikes and helmets can also be provided for free to those who need them.



Creative Playscapes

Location: TACO!, Cygnet Square, SE2 9FA

Date: Saturday 18 April

Time: 10.30am–4.30pm

Price: Free

Info: taco.org.uk/Creative-Playscapes

Children and their families are invited to join architects, urban planners, community organisers, artists, educators and others in sharing their thoughts on what make cities playful, happy and healthy places to grow and live.

This event will feature an exhibition, presentations and roundtable discussions as part of a research project by The Hundred Club, TACO! and the University of Greenwich.





Crossness Pumping Station Steaming Days

Relive the Victorian heyday of the magnificent Crossness Pumping Station at its upcoming steaming days.

Hop on a vintage Routemaster bus at Abbey Wood Station, then ride the narrow-gauge railway at Crossness to the Grade I-listed 'cathedral on the marshes'. The historic Prince Consort steam engine will be in action, along with three other Victorian beam engines.

Location: Crossness Pumping Station, Bazalgette Way, SE2 9AQ

Date: Sunday 19 April, 17 May and 28 June

Time: 10am-4pm

Price: £22.50 for adults, £8 for 5-17-year-olds, free for under-5s

Info: crossness.org.uk

Cygnets Square Community Day

A day of local crafts, great food, and family-friendly fun in the heart of Thamesmead.

Location: Cygnets Square, SE2 9FA

Date: Saturday 4 April, 2 May and 6 June

Time: 12pm-4pm

Price: Free

Info: @cygnetsquarecommunityday

"You'll smell the spices and the grill long before you reach the stall," promises Olawale, of Walegrills, one of the stallholders at Cygnets Square Community Day. "We specialise in freshly prepared Nigerian and West African dishes, with our signature live charcoal barbecue at the heart of everything we do."

Sample Olawale's food and visit other local traders and artisans on the first Saturday of every month.

"Market day is our opportunity to bring the full Walegrills energy to Thamesmead, great food, great vibes and real community interaction," adds Olawale.



Repair Cafe

Bring your small electrical appliances and clothing along to be fixed by professionals.

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

Date: 11 April

Time: 12pm-3pm

Price: Free

Info: ravneet.singh@peabody.org.uk or dan.wells@peabody.org.uk

Beyond Sisterhood Sanctuary

A place for women to connect, reflect and rise together.

Location: Unity Lounge and Bar, Sporting Club Thamesmead, Bayliss Avenue, SE28 8NJ

Date: Wednesday 22 April, 20 May and 17 June

Time: 6pm-7.30pm

Price: Free

Info: info@beyondbraidz.org or 07310 340 132

Moorings Neighbourhood Forum

Come along to have your say at a public meeting and join fellow residents in making a difference to life in The Moorings and central Thamesmead. The Metropolitan Police will attend June's meeting.

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

Date: Monday 27 April and 22 June

Time: 6pm-7.30pm

Price: Free

Info: mooringsnf.org.uk or 07308 503480



Introduction to Risograph

Learn how to create prints using a Risograph with help from experienced artists.

Location: TACO! Print Studio, 30 Poplar Place, SE28 8BA

Date: Saturday 25 April and 27 June

Time: 2pm-4.30pm

Price: £40 plus booking fee

Info: taco.org.uk/riso-print-studio



Thamesmead Wildlife Wanders

Intrepid ornithological investigator J D Swann leads seasonal wildlife walks around Thamesmead.

Location: Thamesmead Social, Lakeside Centre, Bazalgette Way, SE2 9AN

Date: Saturday 18 April and 6 June

Time: 11am-1.30pm

Price: Free but booking essential

Info: thamesmeadwildlifewanders.eventbrite.com

Kids Festival Creative Zone

Literacy-focused breakfast and after-school club, including reading, writing and public speaking.

Location: Birchmere Community Hub, Birchmere Park, SE28 8AL

Date: Every school day

Time: 7.30am-8.30am and 3pm-6pm

Price: £5 for breakfast, £10 for after-school (including school drop-off and pick-up)

Info: kidsfestivaluk@gmail.com

Regular events

Monday

Atrium Tea Room

Drop in for a hot drink and a chat with neighbours.

Time: 10am-3pm

Price: Free

Info: communityhubsTM@peabody.org.uk

Storytime

Enjoy stories with your pre-school age little ones, every Monday in term time.

Time: 10.15am-10.45am

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

CraftA

Socialise with others while working on your own crochet, textile and fibre arts and crafts.

Time: 10.45am-12.45pm

Price: Free

Info: 020 3828 4920

Befriending Cafe

Join Age UK for tea, a chat, games and to meet new people.

Time: 11am-1pm

Price: £10 per month

Info: befriendingcafes@ageukbexley.org.uk

Feel Good Mondays

Senior residents' social group for over 50s organised by Listening Ears.

Time: 12pm-4pm

Price: Free

Info: feelgood@listeningears.org or 07798 923 657

IT Buddies

Get support with IT and any other digital issues you're currently facing every Monday (also Wednesday, Thursday and Friday)

Time: Contact library to check availability

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

Prestige Dance

Open dance class for children aged 5-11.

Time: 5pm-7pm

Price: £5

Info: 07989 829507 or corinnadance@hotmail.co.uk

Brownies & Rainbows

Arts, crafts, cooking sports and other activities to help girls aged 4-10 learn new skills.

Time: 5pm-7pm in term time

Price: £4

Info: 5thabbeywoodbrowniesrainbows@gmail.com

Chess Club

Casual games every Monday with Thamesmead Chess Club.

Time: 5pm-7pm

Price: Free

Info: info@07444123550

Rising Phoenix Fight Academy

Muay Thai, K1 and fitness training for children and adults.

Time: 5pm-8.30pm

Price: First session free

Info: risingphoenixfightacademy@outlook.com

Charlton Athletic Community Trust Football Sessions

Develop your football skills under the guidance of FA or UEFA-qualified coaches.

Time: 5pm-6pm (girls 6-11 years), 6pm-7pm (girls 12-16 years), 5.15pm-6.15pm (4-8 years), 6.15pm-7.30pm (9-14 years)

Price: From £5

Info: cact.gives/courses

Abbey Wood Tennis Club

Weekly tennis classes for all age groups.

Time: 5.30pm-7.30pm (Children), 7.30pm-8.30pm (Adults)

Price: £60 per term

Info: abbeywoodtennisclub@gmail.com or 07835 896557

Scouts

A chance for young people to learn valuable life skills and teamwork through fun activities, games and challenges.

Time: 5.30pm-6.30pm (4-6 years), 6.30pm-7.30pm (6-8 years), 7.30pm-8.30pm (8-10 years)

Price: Free for new starters (then £15 per month)

Info: debbie@6rgscouts.uk

Tuesday

Diddi Dance

Fun dance classes for under-5s.

Location: Broadwater Hub, Goosander Way, SE28 0ER

Time: 12pm-4pm

Price: Free

Info: 020 8311 5491

Healthy Walks

Take a two-and-a-half-mile walk around Thamesmead, led by volunteers.

Time: 10am-11am

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

Coffee and Chat

Enjoy a friendly chat with other local residents over a hot drink and a biscuit.

Time: 10am-12pm

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

Seniors in Touch

Gentle exercise, singalongs, games, refreshments and more fun for the over-50s.

Location: Titmuss Avenue Baptist Church Hall, SE28 8DJ

Time: 11am-2pm

Price: £4

Info: 07957 727 955

Seated Exercise

Get active during classes for older adults and others with low mobility or disabilities.

Time: 12.15pm-1pm

Price: Free

Info: 020 3828 4920

LGBTQIA+ Drop-In

An informal get-together for members of the LGBT community.

Time: 1pm-3pm

Price: Free

Info: team@lgbtthamesmead.co.uk

Canoeing Club

Canoeing, kayaking and paddlesports sessions on Southmere Lake.

Location: Southmere Water Sports & Activity Centre, SE2 9AN

Time: 4pm-5pm (7-16 years), 5pm-6pm (all ages and families), 6pm-7pm (adults)

Price: £6

Info: 07951 770241 or thamesmead@thesharks.org.uk

Prestige Dance

Open dance class for children aged 5-11.

Time: 4.15pm-5pm

Price: £5

Info: 07989 829507 or corinnadance@hotmail.co.uk

Gayzelles LGBTQIA+ Running Club

A fun way to both keep fit and socialise with other LGBTQIA people in Thamesmead.

Location: Outside St. Benet's Church, SE2 9EU

Time: 6.30pm

Price: Free

Info: team@lgbtthamesmead.co.uk

Hula Hooping and Line Dancing

Join the Thamesmead Tornados for two fitness classes in one.

Time: 6pm-8.15pm

Price: Free

Info: 020 8191 9622 or info@camouflagecafe.co.uk

Performance Collective

Contemporary dance classes for adults to improve your strength, flexibility and breathing techniques. Every Tuesday in term time.

Time: 6.30pm-8pm

Price: Free (limited places)

Info: mariaghmourrassi@hotmail.com

Toddertime

Songs and rhymes for babies to three-year-olds every Wednesday in term time.

Time: 9.45am-10.15am

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

🎧 Vibes on Vibes Skating Session

Vibrant roller skating club for adults.

Time: 7pm-9pm

Price: From £6

Info: wearevibesonvibes.co.uk or 07484 224983

🏃 Laugh and Workout

High-intensity interval training (HIIT) and cardio exercise classes.

Time: 7pm-8pm

Price: First class free

Info: laughandworkout.com

Wednesday

🏠 Advice Hub

Get guidance on housing, immigration, employment, domestic abuse and other issues.

Time: 9.30am-12.30pm

Price: Free

Info: tmadviceinchs@peabody.org.uk or 07815 734 080

👶 Toddlertime

Songs and rhymes for babies to three-year-olds every Wednesday in term time.

Time: 9.45am-10.15am

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

🏠 Atrium Tea Room

Drop in for a hot drink and a chat with neighbours.

Time: 10am-3pm

Price: Free

Info: communityhubsTM@peabody.org.uk

🎮 Stay and Play

Playtime with toys for under 5s. Stay and chat for the grown-ups every Wednesday in term time.

Time: 10.15am-11.15am

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

👤 Adult Craft and Hobby Hour

A relaxing afternoon of crafting, knitting, sewing and more, with refreshments available.

Time: 2pm-4pm

Price: Free (suggested donation of 50p per refreshment)

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

🌱 Thrive Impact

Youth club for 11 to 17-year-olds to make new friends, learn new skills and take part in exciting activities.

Time: 4pm-7pm

Price: Free

Info: thriveimpact.co.uk

🥋 KBT Academy of Martial Arts

Beginners' martial arts classes for over-5s.

Time: 4.30pm-5.15pm

Price: £40 per month

Info: 020 8303 8549 or kbtacademy@btconnect.com

👤 SEND-ability

Skills development, socialising and outings for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. Term-time only.

Time: 4.30pm-6.30pm

Price: Free

Info: themorningdewfoundation@yahoo.com

🎬 Thamesmead African Film Club

Screenings of the best of African cinema, followed by discussions on culture, history and identity. Last Wednesday of the month.

Time: 6pm-8pm

Price: Free

Info: thamesmeadafricanfilmclub.com

Thursday

☕ Coffee and Chat

Socialise with friends and neighbours and enjoy free refreshments. Free craft sessions every other week.

Time: 10am-12pm

Price: Free

Info: 020 3828 4920

🧘 Tai Chi

Sessions of the slow, free-flowing movements of this Chinese martial art.

Time: 9.30am-12.30pm

Price: Free

Info: ttrusty@netvigator.com

🏠 Thamesmead Shed

Start planning group DIY projects over a cuppa – and build friendships at the same time.

Location: Birchmere Community Hub, Birchmere Park, SE28 8AL

Time: 10am-12pm

Price: Free

Info: thamesmeadshed@gmail.com

🌿 Good Life Garden

Drop in to volunteer while learning new gardening skills.

Location: Birchmere Park, SE28 8AL

Time: 10am-4pm

Price: Free

Info: lockwoodbryan44@yahoo.co.uk

☺ Befriending Cafe

Join Age UK for tea, a chat, games and to meet new people.

Time: 11am-1pm

Price: £10 per month

Info: befriendingcafes@ageukbexley.org.uk

🧘 Gentle Pilates

Gentle pilates workout for people with disabilities or low mobility.

Time: 11.45am-12.30pm

Info: 07985086788 or rosannecorefitness@gmail.com

🍲 Love Soup Cafe

Drop in to enjoy freshly made soup and craft sessions in a warm space.

Location: Broadwater Hub, Goosander Way, SE28 0ER

Time: 12pm-4pm

Price: Free

Info: wtcinfo2025@gmail.com

🚣 Canoeing Club

Canoeing, kayaking and paddlesports sessions on Southmere Lake.

Location: Southmere Water Sports & Activity Centre, SE2 9AN

Time: 4pm-5pm (7-16 years), 5pm-6pm (all ages and families), 6pm-7pm (adults)

Price: £6

Info: 07951 770241 or thamesmead@thesharks.org.uk

👤 FBM Ballet Class

Ballet class for little dancers aged four to six.

Time: 4pm-4.35pm

Price: What you can afford

Info: fbmdanceacademy@gmail.com

👤 After-School Braids Club

Hair prepping, braiding, cornrows and crochet for 8-16 year olds.

Time: 4.15pm-5.45pm

Price: £8 per session or £20 per month

Info: 07310 340 132

👤 FBM Street Dance Class

Enjoyable dance sessions where 7 to 11-year-olds can groove to the beats.

Time: 4.40pm-5.25pm

Price: What you can afford

Info: fbmdanceacademy@gmail.com

🎵 Learning Disability Disco Night

Weekly disco night in a fully accessible space.

Time: 5pm-9pm

Price: Free

Info: 020 8191 9622 or info@camouflagecafe.co.uk

Friday

🏠 Atrium Tea Room

Drop in for a hot drink and a chat with neighbours.

Time: 10am-3pm

Price: Free

Info: communityhubsTM@peabody.org.uk

☕ Coffee and Conversation

Socialise in a relaxed environment, with board games available.

Time: 10am-12pm

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

🧘 Fibromyalgia Group

Get peer support and information on long-term pain management. Every Friday in term time.

Time: 12.30pm-3pm

Price: Free

Info: communityhubsTM@peabody.org.uk

📖 Thamesmead Library Reading Group

Discuss and review a nominated book in a relaxed setting. Last Friday of the month.

Time: 2pm-3.30pm

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

🎨 Colouring Club

An afternoon of colouring for ages four and over.

Date: Every Friday in term time

Time: 4pm-5pm

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

🥊 ASG Boxing Academy

Get fit, build your confidence and learn the art of boxing.

Time: 5pm-5.50pm (11-13 years), 6pm-6.50pm (14-18 years)

Price: £30 per month

Info: bookingsactivesportsgroup.org.uk or 07714 852528

🎵 Bollywood Community Dance Club

Beginner-friendly, inclusive and fun Bollywood-themed dance class for all ages.

Time: 5.30pm-6.30pm

Price: Free

Info: 07999 436701

🥊 Power Mobile Gym Youth Boxing Sessions

Youth boxing sessions for young people aged 13-18.

Time: 6pm-7pm

Price: Free

Info: info@powermobilegym.com or 07506 762 444

🏈 Charlton Athletic Community Trust Premier League Kicks

Free football sessions for boys and girls aged 8-18 of any ability.

Time: 6pm-8pm

Price: Free

Info: Joshua.Eales@cact.org.uk

👤 Dynamix Dance Sessions

Street dance, Afro-beat and more for 5 to 18-year-olds.

Time: 6pm-8pm

Price: £10 (free first session)

Info: dynamix_dancerz@outlook.com or 07958 397083

🎮 LGBTQIA+ Tabletop RPG Night

Regular games night for role-playing games, including Dungeon Crawl Classics, 'Til The Last Gasp and Mausritter. Every other Friday

Time: 6pm

Price: £1 suggested donation

Info: team@lgbtthamesmead.co.uk

🏃 Walking Football

Enjoy the beautiful game without bleep tests and shuttle runs.

Time: 8pm-9pm

Price: £5

Info: walkingfootball@erithtown.com

Saturday

🏈 TDA Football Training

Open football training sessions for boys and girls aged 5 to 12.

Time: 9am-10am

Price: £5

Info: 07931 939999

👤 Acro Dance

Combining dance technique and acrobatics for over 5s.

Time: 9.15am-10.15am

Price: £5

Info: 07989 829507 or corinnadance@hotmail.co.uk

🎧 Vibes on Vibes Skating Session

Vibrant roller skating club for children and adults.

Time: 10am-11am

Price: From £6

Info: wearevibesonvibes.co.uk or 07484 224983

☕ LGBTQIA+ Coffee Brunch

Relaxed coffee brunch to connect with other LGBTQIA+ people in the local area. Every first Saturday of the month

Location: Thamesmead Social, Lakeside Centre SE2 9AN

Time: 11am-2pm

Price: Free

Info: team@lgbtthamesmead.co.uk

📖 Read With Me

One-to-one 10-minute reading sessions for primary school children.

Time: 11am-12pm

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

🧱 Lego Club

Build big, bright and better with your buddies. For 7 to 11-year-olds.

Time: 12pm-2pm

Price: Free

Info: www.bexley.gov.uk/bexley-libraries or talk to a member of the library team

🥊 ASG Boxing Academy

Get fit, build your confidence and learn the art of boxing.

Time: 12.30pm-1.20pm (6-10 years), 1.30pm-2.20pm (11-13 years), 2.30pm-3.20pm (14-18 years)

Price: £30 per month

Info: bookings@activesportsgroup.org.uk

Sunday

👤 Queer Craft Club

Monthly craft session with LGBT+ Thamesmead.

Date: Fourth Sunday of the month

Time: 10.30am-12.30pm

Price: Free

Info: team@lgbtthamesmead.co.uk

Teachers go back to school for first-aid class

Teachers from schools across the town gathered to complete a potentially life-saving first aid course.

Primary and secondary teachers from seven local schools learned how to deal with various medical emergencies that could affect their pupils.

They were trained in delivering CPR, reacting to choking, seizures and anaphylaxis, and managing serious illnesses like asthma and meningitis.

Teachers from Bishop John Robinson Primary School, Heronsgate Primary School, St Margaret Clitherow Primary School, Willow Bank Primary School, Windrush Primary School, Woolwich Polytechnic School for Boys and Woolwich Polytechnic School for Girls all took part in the session.

The level three first aid for children course was held at the Moorings Sociable Club in February. It was funded by Peabody following a request by local schools.

"I regularly take children to sporting events and lead a range of physical activities, so it is important that I feel confident and prepared to deal with any incidents that may arise," said Saira Adeel, PE Lead at Willow Bank Primary. "This training will not only help me respond effectively to situations within school, but also equip me with valuable skills to support children safely both inside and outside of my role as a teacher."

Claire Gamble, a nursery teacher at Windrush Primary School, added: "Over the past few years, there has been an increase in medical needs. This year I have a child with a number of severe food allergies, so having the knowledge and confidence to deal with any emergencies is crucial."

"Schools in Thamesmead can always come to us when they need support," said Gez Kelleghan, Peabody's Community Investment Management in Thamesmead. "If we have resources available, we will help in any way we can."

"In this case, schools approached us with the need to refresh first-aid training among staff. We know how important this is and are really pleased to have funded it."

Community groups gather for funding support



Community organisations from across Thamesmead joined to explore funding opportunities that will help them develop and expand their work in the town.

Representatives from local groups gathered at Sporting Club Thamesmead in January for the Thamesmead Community Group Forum, organised by Peabody. The event gave attendees a chance to speak with funding experts, including METRO GAVS, Bexley Voluntary Service Council, the Royal Borough of Greenwich fundraising team and the National Lottery.

After one-to-one conversations with key organisations, the community groups listened to a presentation from the National Lottery. They learned more about two National Lottery funding programmes, Awards for All and Reaching Communities, and how to apply for them.

The talk also included details of successful applications by local organisations Divine Buzz and Seniors in Touch.

"The work of Thamesmead's community groups is incredibly valuable for hundreds

of local people," said Dan Wells, Peabody's Community Investment Lead in Thamesmead.

"Those who attended the forum told us it was a really helpful event. It was so useful to have the National Lottery in Thamesmead, sharing insights with local groups and guiding them towards the available funding opportunities.

"There was a great atmosphere in the room as all the community groups came together. We hope hearing the local success stories inspires more groups to secure the funding to play an even greater role in the community."

Supporting community groups carrying out work that benefits local people is a key part of Peabody's long-term regeneration plans for Thamesmead.

The event was planned in response to research recently carried out for Peabody, which found that securing funding is one of the key challenges facing local community groups.



The Community Group Forum will meet regularly throughout the year. Their next event is planned for May. To get involved, email thamesmeadcommunityteam@peabody.org.uk.



Peter's Crossness connection spans a lifetime

During Peter Connolly's school days, the sight of Crossness Pumping Station emerging from the marshes meant only one thing: an exciting opportunity to get behind the wheel of a milk float!

Little did he know then that it was the start of a long-term connection with the Victorian sewage treatment plant.

In the late 1940s, Peter earned pocket money by helping his cousin, milkman Alfie Johns, during the school holidays. With Thamesmead still almost two decades from being built, there were very few people around. That meant the route to Crossness was a chance for the teenager to hop into the driver's seat.

"I got two shillings and six pence for helping him," explains Peter, now aged 88. "We used to deliver milk to Crossness, and because the roads were all deserted in those days, he used to let me drive the truck. That was the main attraction!"

Memories of the milk round came flooding back when a friend invited Peter to visit Crossness around 18 years ago. He didn't initially see the appeal of a trip to the old sewage works. But the invitation to revisit the incredible 19th century architecture and engineering of the Grade I-listed building proved to be an important one.

"I was looking for something to do in my retirement, and I've been there ever since," says Peter, who worked locally as a painter, decorator and builder for more than 50 years. "When I first started volunteering, I was helping to clear the sand out from under the engines, then getting the rust off the cast ironwork and painting it."

"We also built the canteen, so I was able to do the plastering, hang doors and things like that. I've also done a lot of the carpentry, including building the counters for the shop and the cafe, and the reception desk."

Peter's enthusiasm for Crossness has stood the test of time as he approaches his third decade at the 'cathedral on the marshes'.

"When I first started, I was doing three days a week, and I was waiting for the gate to be opened in the mornings," says Peter. "Now I'm a bit older, I do Tuesday and Friday mornings."

"If I don't go to Crossness, a week seems like a fortnight. It's therapy, as much as anything."

"I look forward to the open days. I meet a lot of people from Abbey Wood – you can recall the old days more than you can last week! There's also the pleasure of saying to people, 'I did this, I did that.'"



To find out more about volunteering opportunities at Crossness, visit crossness.org.uk/volunteer or scan the QR code.



Creative kids' road signs warn drivers

Road safety signs designed by local children have been unveiled around their South Thamesmead school.

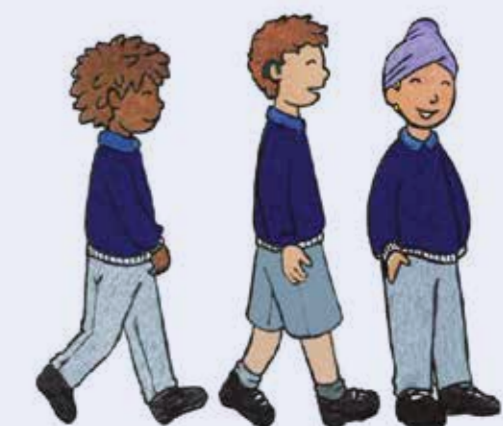
Pupils at Northwood Primary School took part in a competition to draw posters to encourage motorists to slow down and drive safely on the roads near the school.

The top three designs were turned into signs by Peabody graphic designers. Six signs are now displayed in prominent positions around the school as a warning to passing traffic.

Matthew, who is Year 4, designed one of the signs. He said: "I was quite surprised to see my drawing displayed in public. It made me feel happy."

Year 5 pupil Ilaria, one of the school's junior travel ambassadors, said: "We hope people will realise there's a school here. I think they will drive better, more slowly and carefully when they know."

The signs were funded by the London Borough of Bexley as part of the School Superzones initiative. Local schools can set priorities for funding. Northwood Primary asked for support to create safe spaces for children walking or cycling to school.



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Tell us what you think about Talk of Thamesmead, sign up to get our monthly digital newsletter or get involved in the work we're doing. Drop us a line at thamesmeadnow@peabody.org.uk.

Poet Laureate lands at The Nest

An audience of local people gathered to see Poet Laureate Simon Armitage perform at The Nest.

One of Britain's best-known literary figures, Simon chose to visit Thamesmead as part of a tour of selected libraries across the UK. Accomplished local poet, Rachel Long, performed her works alongside him.

[Full story on page 5](#)

