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Robbers won't stop jewellery shop boss

By Cormac Connelly-Smith & Stephanie Harris

THE owner of the Wimbledon Village jewellery shop raided in a dramatic heist on Wednesday has vowed to keep to business as usual.

Two men rammed a moped through the doors of Michael Platts on Church Road while two accomplices blocked passers-by with knives and suspected bottles of acid.

Wayne Myers, 63, who has owned Michael Platts for 17 years, said: “Very simply I don’t want to be defeated by these people. It would be very easy to roll over and die, but life carries on and I’m not going to be defeated by these scum. That’s why we reopened the next day.”

Mr Myers said it was a miracle nobody was hurt, and commended staff for quickly securing themselves in the shop’s safety room.

“Their first reaction was that somebody had had a terrible accident, and it wasn’t until two guys ran in and started smashing cabinets that the staff realised it was a



VOW: Wayne Myers

robbery,” he said. “They drove the moped right through the door into the shop. If someone had been there they would have been killed.”

The thieves are thought to have absconded with £100,000 worth of jewellery, including 18 carat and platinum pieces and some bespoke items Mr Myers made himself.

“It’s like losing works of art,” he said. “It’s not easily replaceable and that’s what makes it so upsetting.”

Since the robbery, customers and the local community have inundated Mr Myers

with gifts and words of condolences.

And his neighbours are putting up a united front.

“The local shopkeepers have been popping in to give their support, and our customers have been incredibly supportive. Our phone hasn’t stopped,” he said.

Mr Myers has been making jewellery since he was 16, and is one of fewer than 80 people who have attained the level of fellow at the Institute of Professional Goldsmiths.

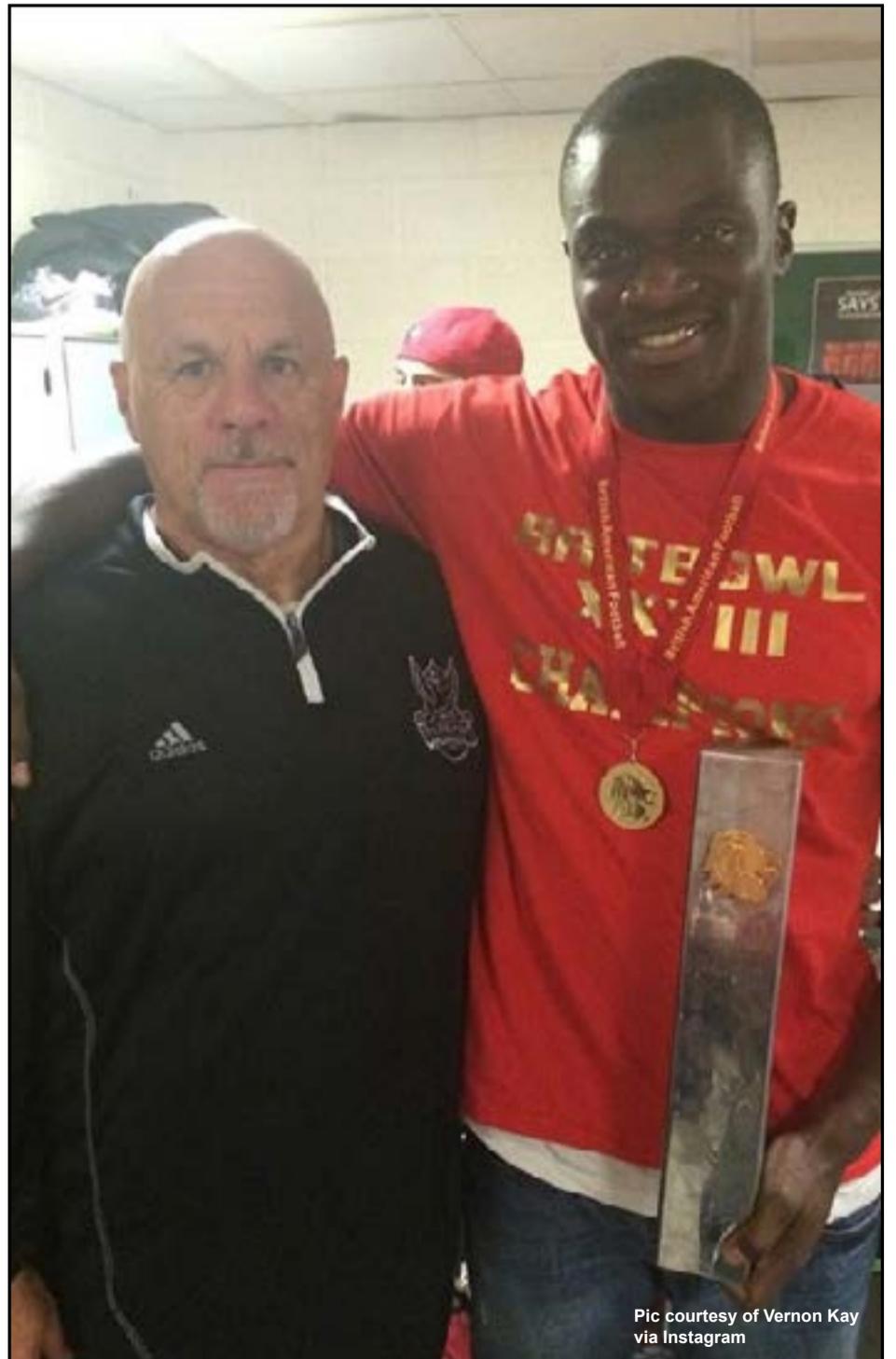
This is not the first time he has been the victim of crime.

A similar incident occurred involving two men ramming a vehicle through the doors during the shop’s first year of business.

On that occasion Mr Myers fought back against the robbers until they threatened him with a stun gun.

Seven years later, a gang attempted to rob the store on four occasions over a period of five months, using decoys posing as customers.

The perpetrators were arrested and jailed for three and a half years each.



Pic courtesy of Vernon Kay via Instagram

NFL DREAMS COME TRUE FOR EX-CHILD REFUGEE

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Bikers United to tackle moped thefts

By Josh Milton

A WANDSWORTH resident has launched a website to tackle the problem of moped thefts.

Bikers United allows bike owners to report their vehicles as stolen in real time.

Founder Ben Cope said: "I trust the police to know what to do, but they are massively under-resourced while tackling a massive issue."

Between October 2017 and August 2018 an average of 53 mopeds were stolen per month.

The Met Police launched its 'Be Safe' campaign in June 2017 which saw the number of PTW-thefts in London fall by half, from 1,512 in April 2017 to 756 in March 2018.

But in October 2017 the Met reported that more than 60 mopeds were stolen per month in Wandsworth, making it the largest reported crime in the area and accounting for 70 per cent of all vehicle thefts.

Moped security as recommended by the Met does not come cheap.

Chain locks can cost upwards of £200, while disc-locks cost up to £90.

BHM invite revoked over 'transphobia'

By Tim McNulty

A PROMINENT black feminist has had her invitation to speak at a Black History Month event in Lambeth revoked following allegations of transphobia.

Former leader of Lambeth Council, Linda Bellos OBE, 68, was the first black lesbian to be elected as a Local Government Council Leader.

Ms Bellos claims to be one of the politicians who helped organise the first Black History Month in the UK in 1987.

The veteran campaigner explained: "As part of Black History Month, the invitation was withdrawn following a view expressed by a Lambeth Unison member to the Black Workers Group Coordinator, who felt under pressure to withdraw her invitation to me."

Ms Bellos has been critical of what she calls the "new politics of Trans" and believes transactivists are "anti-woman".

She also faces a private prosecution brought by a transgender campaigner, Giuliana Kendall, 52, after Ms Bellos spoke of her willingness to 'threaten violence' while addressing a feminist event in York last year.

She will appear at Westminster Magistrates' Court later this month.



ACTION: Cyclists take part in a 'die-in' protest outside the council offices in Kensington (Pic: Peter Marshall)

Campaigners call for extra safety for cyclists

By Jack Evans

KENSINGTON and Chelsea is still putting cyclists' lives at risk after two riders died in the borough in the last year, campaigners say.

The co-founder of Stop Killing Cyclists said the council's response has been inadequate after a bike rider was killed near Earl's Court in June. Another woman died on Chelsea Bridge in September 2017.

Although RBKC Council announced plans for a 20mph

pilot scheme on certain roads in February, this has yet to be launched.

Donnachadh McCarthy of Stop Killing Cyclists said: "We regard RBKC as the most 'cyclophobic' borough in London. This is a problem for their own cyclists and pollution, but also for cyclists passing through into central London."

In March the council introduced 8km of Quietways, signed cycle routes on quieter roads. However these do not separate cyclists from traffic

on main roads, so cyclists must take a less direct journey.

The council has been accused before of failing to consider cyclists. In 2014, it opposed the construction of a cycle superhighway, a segregated lane for bicycles, crossing the borough to connect Hounslow with Hyde Park.

Transport for London were forced to revise plans for Cycle Superhighway 9, and subject to consultation a shorter route will run from Hounslow to Kensington Olympia.

Simon Monk, infrastructure campaigner for London Cycling Campaign, said: "Kensington and Chelsea is lagging far behind other councils. It has used its veto to avoid superhighways in the past."

"Central London boroughs are the biggest barriers to cycling and walking. These boroughs see lots of people going through on bike and on foot; they're not being served well."

He thinks small groups of "well-resourced residents" are pushing back against

the schemes. "Political bravery is needed to get projects through," he added.

Steven, a 53-year-old museum worker, cycles frequently in the borough, and crashed on a Quietway after his bike hit a burst drain cover.

"I'm very unimpressed by the council. They won't have cycle superhighways", he said.

Cllr Will Pascall, Kensington and Chelsea Council's Lead Member for Streets, Planning and Transport, said that plans were being put in place to introduce more routes.

Greening could lose seat in boundary changes

By Jess Glass & Amelia Wynne

SOME South West London MPs including former education secretary Justine Greening could lose their parliamentary seats as a result of plans to change constituency boundaries.

The proposals include cutting the number of London MPs from 73 to 68, and the total number of MPs from 650 to 600.

Prime Minister Theresa May said on Monday that the proposal would help deliver more equal boundaries, however the scheme, which was

announced by the independent Boundary Commission, may change majority statistics for both Labour and Conservative holds.

In Putney, former cabinet minister Justine Greening faces the fiercest challenge to her slim 1,554 Conservative seat majority. By creating the new constituency of Putney and Wandsworth Town, the district will gain nearly 20,000 voters from the Labour seats of Battersea and Tooting whilst losing about 8,000 voters to the neighbouring Conservative-leaning Wimbledon.

This shift suggests a potential 7.6% swing towards

Labour, indicating the slender

Conservative majority of

3.3% would be challenged, with the former education secretary facing potential defeat.

Labour's Cat Smith, shadow minister for Voter Engagement, said: "With the workload of MPs set to rise after Brexit, with thousands of pieces of important legislation expected to come through parliament, it would be utterly ludicrous to go ahead with these boundary changes."

The changes must be approved by parliament before coming into effect in time for the next scheduled general election in 2022.



Catch of the day!



IMPACT: Gavin Ellis of environmental charity Hubbub with locally-sourced litter fished from Putney Embankment to show the cost of plastic pollution

Newts trouble Thai Buddhist monks

By Wesley Hudson

MONKS at the Wat Buddhapadipa Thai Buddhist temple in Wimbledon fear they are under the curse of the great crested newt.

It is thought that protected newts are living in the temple's lake, which is in desperate need of a clean-up.

Bhatsakon Piyobhaso, 44, a temple monk, said: "We want to clean the lake. The condition of the water is getting worse and worse. It must be bad for anything living in there."

"The council are afraid if we clean the lake it will make the newts go away."

Due to the timid nature of these animals, a favourite of former mayor of London Ken Livingstone, they are seldom seen by the monks which means they are hard



FILTHY: The lake needs work

to identify.

Mr Piyobhaso said: "We need to find out if they are great crested newts or not. We need a specialist to identify them."

Even celebrities cannot escape these endangered species. Pop star Ed Sheeran's plans to build a chapel in his garden were put on hold earlier this year because it was suspected it could be a breeding ground for newts.

Former president of the British Herpetology Society and Kent University professor, Richard Griffiths, who specialises in reptile and amphibian conservation, said: "Pond management is best to do in December and January when most of the newts are out of the water and hibernating on land."

Mr Piyobhaso said: "We need a licence if there are great crested newts. Without that we can't do anything."

"We just want to follow the law," he added. "Crested newts and other amphibians are good for the garden because they eat a lot of pests so a little bit of untidiness can be quite good."

From Nigeria to the NFL via London streets

By Alec Fullerton

A CHILD victim of human-trafficking who was left homeless on the streets of London was picked to play for a professional American football team in the U.S. earlier this month.

Nigerian-born Efe Obada was trafficked to the UK from The Netherlands at the age of 10 and was abandoned with his 11-year-old sister.

While studying at Lambeth College, Obada joined The South London Renegades junior team but was soon scouted by the Croydon-based London Warriors, five-time national champions, and later played for their senior team.

He finally achieved his dream this month when he was selected by The Carolina Panthers for their final 53-man squad for the 2018/19

season.

Head Coach Tony Allen, 60, has been involved with The London Warriors since they started in 2005 with one junior boys side. Now they have seven teams, including a women's team, and 38 volunteer staff.

He said: "We originally

started with a bunch of London kids. We gave them a place to go and another family. It brings discipline in your life. There's routine.

"We want to get them to see sport as an avenue for exploring life skills and working alongside people they would never normally involve them-

selves with."

The club wants to inspire young people to better themselves. Mr Allen said. "It's all about perspective. We've had kids who were in gangs. They might not be in the NFL now but they've got their lives straight. They've got jobs."

Obada has become a role model for the team's younger players. Allen said: "He was humble but driven. He'd be working in a warehouse at all hours of the night and then turn up at training in the morning before he went back home to sleep. I can't say enough good things about him. Kids like that, with tough backgrounds, they know what hard work is."

Steve Verrall, 55, is the Head Coach of Obada's first team, The South London Renegades, who now play on Clapham Common.

He said: "These inner-city Kids need an outlet for aggres-



DREAM: Efe Obada in action for the Carolina Panthers

NHS in spotlight at heritage festival

LAMBETH Heritage Festival is this month marking the 70th anniversaries of both the NHS and the Empire Windrush voyage.

Events focus on the people and places that make up the borough's history and include a cycle ride celebrating 250 years of Lambeth Circus and tours around the newly restored Lambeth town hall.

Councillor Sonia Winifred, Lambeth Council's cabinet member for equalities and culture, has helped organise the festival, which runs until the end of the month.

She said: "There are talks, music, exhibitions, cinema and walks as well as children's theatre and film workshops, together covering a whole spread of interests and from just about every geographical and historical perspective - everything from the bicentenary of the Old Vic through to a walk around the key sites for the history of black music in Brixton."

Brixton Windmill is holding a one-off artistic experience as part of Brixton Design Trail this weekend.

Jean Kerrigan, chair of the Friends of Windmill Group, is pleased with its increased footfall.

She said: "The windmill was in a derelict state so we were keen to do it up for the public to be able to view it."

Labour win by-election

By Christopher Carey

LABOUR'S Scarlett O'Hara took 58 per cent of the vote to win the Coldharbour ward by-election in Lambeth yesterday.

Michael Groce of the Green Party, predicted to give Labour a close run, finished second with 31 per cent of the vote.

Voter turnout dropped from 53 per cent in 2010 to 25 per cent.

Cllr O'Hara promised to be 'a passionate voice for Coldharbour, working to protect the NHS, kick out the Tories and prevent a hard Brexit'.

She joins Labour councillors Donatus Anyanwu and Emma Nye in representing the ward, which has traditionally been a Labour stronghold.

The by-election was called following the death in July of long-term Labour councillor Matt Parr, who had held the seat since 2010 and died from cancer.

In total six candidates contested the election.

Mum's fight against disabled 'tax' on son

By Hannah Dawson

A LAMBETH mother is raising money for her five-year-old disabled son to challenge what she labels a "tax" on the disabled.

Emma Pugh's son Vigo was diagnosed at six months with dystonic cerebral palsy, which causes constant, painful spasms in all four limbs, and he requires round the clock care.

But as Vigo grows, Ms Pugh is struggling with the costs of adapting her house for his disabilities.

"I spend a huge amount of my income on therapies," Ms Pugh said. "He can't hold anything, he can't feed himself, he can't stand up. He can't sit up properly because the muscles go into spasm."

Ms Pugh, a marketing professional, had her son Vigo prematurely at 27 weeks following five years of IVF in the UK, USA and Spain.

In the first few months of his life Vigo suffered from apnea, which meant he frequently stopped breathing and had to be resuscitated.

After four months in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at Evelina Children's Hospital, Lambeth, three operations, Ms Pugh finally got to take Vigo home. Shortly after, a physiotherapist recommended that Vigo undergo tests for cerebral palsy.

Since his diagnosis, Vigo

has had a further seven operations, including having electrodes inserted into his brain in an attempt to improve his "fuzzy" brain signals.

Vigo, who is top of some of his school classes, loves numbers, windmills and making friends - though Ms Pugh admits this is more difficult for him because of his spasms and being in a wheelchair.

But the equipment needed to help Vigo and his mother in their day to day life is "crazily expensive" and equates to "a disabled tax" she says.

And as Vigo grows bigger - he is now nearly 22kg - it is more of a struggle for Ms Pugh, a single mother, to lift him on her own.

Their home must now be adapted to create a bedroom and wet-room for Vigo on the ground floor.

"I don't want to rebuild my home. I have to suit his needs," she said, adding this was a necessity, not a choice.

Ms Pugh estimates the most basic costs will still be £70,000, to cover physical therapy, specialist hoisting equipment and refurbishment of their house to suit his needs.

Charity Just4Children has a campaign called "Victory for Vigo", as well as a JustGiving page to give him the help he needs to eventually to try and stand on his own two feet.

A spokesperson said: "The medical costs of supporting a sick or disabled child can be very high."



BATTLER: Vigo Pugh with his little brother Laszlo

Firms call for clean-up as fly-tippers spoil view



CLEAN-UP: The area around the arches have attracted fly-tipping

By Emily Webber & Hannah Dawson

LOUGHBOROUGH Junction businesses are bemoaning the sight of dumped fridges and laughing gas canisters as they say fly-tipping is reaching crisis point.

The arches, home to new start ups, were sold by National Rail for £1.5bn to American investors Blackstone Property Partners on Tuesday.

But they will not take ownership for a few months and many of the 252 Loughborough Junction arches stand vacant. Across the UK, 900 of the 3700 arches sold are empty.

Pomfret Road residents reported mattresses, wardrobes and kitchen units dumped in the past week.

Lucy Grimshaw, co-founder of Clarkshaws Brewery, feared the problem could escalate.

She said: "Once it has built up to a certain amount, people are just going to keep

doing it."

Ridgway Road and Belinda Road have also become hotspots with trolleys, tyres and mattresses covering their pavements.

And the issue is worsened by a shortage of bins, especially in Wyck Gardens.

Anthea Masey, Chair of Loughborough Junction Action Group, who ran a Twitter campaign on the rubbish said: "Fly tipping is just a terrible problem in the whole area."

A Lambeth Council spokesperson said: "Fly-tipping frustrates the council just as much as residents and costs us money to deal with - around £1m a year."

"We are determined to catch those responsible for dumping rubbish illegally."

Anthea Masey, chair of Loughborough Junction Action Group, said: "Sometimes it takes a long time even if you report it for Lambeth to take the rubbish away. They can refuse to move it which can be a bit of a problem."

Drivers plugged in to new initiative



HE'S ELECTRIC: Resident Matthew Patterson is the first user of Wandsworth's on-street EV charger

By Anna Sagar

WANDSWORTH is electrifying London with plans to build one of the most extensive electric car charging networks in the city.

The council revealed proposals to install 300 lamppost charging sockets in Wandsworth with the private network Source London building 120 charging points, which bringing the borough's total to more than 500.

This is part of a £3 million investment into electric vehicle (EV) technology by the council, which was announced in February.

It comes after a successful pilot scheme in Putney and Battersea, where 380 charging stations were installed.

The use of lamppost charging points is aimed at making EVs more practical for residents without off-street parking, which has been cited as a major accessibility issue.

The council has also established an e-car club, which allows individuals to hire electric cars for a few

hours or even several weeks, providing an alternative to electric car ownership.

This club has one of the highest rates of subscribers, with more than 15,000 people registered.

It is hoped this will encourage more people to adopt EVs, reducing air pollution and consequently improving air quality.

Shaftesbury Councillor Jonathan Cook said: "It's now undeniable that the future of motoring is electric.

"By creating such an extensive network of charging points our aim is to remove

one of the biggest hurdles facing people when they begin to think about the feasibility of changing from petrol and diesel to electric."

Electric cars have soared in popularity in the last few years, with Wandsworth reporting almost a 300 per cent increase in electric car registration since 2015.

This demand is expected to rise as Prime Minister Theresa May has said that the government are creating a £400 million fund to invest in the provision of further charging point infrastructure.

They are also set to invest

£1.5 billion in ultra-low-emission vehicles by 2020.

There are still concerns over the suitability of electric cars as a green alternative with the National Grid saying electricity demand could increase by 8 per cent.

As a result, new nuclear power stations and fracking may have to be authorised in order to keep up with added demand, potentially creating long-term unforeseen environmental consequences.

The use of electric cars is seen as a crucial part of plans to reduce air pollution and improve residents' health.

Fears for food bank reliance

By Joshua Parfitt

UNIVERSAL credit (UC) was rolled out in Wandsworth last week, sparking fears it could increase food bank usage in the borough.

Hammersmith and Fulham food bank recorded a 94 per cent surge in users in the first half of 2017 compared with same period the previous year, after UC was introduced there in December 2016.

Wandsworth food bank manager Dan Frith said: "People are vulnerable, people are scared. The whole system is riddled with anxiety."

UC has been criticised for its six-week waiting period before claimants receive their first payment. 70 per cent of respondents fell into debt during the period, according to a survey by the Trussell Trust, which runs 420 food banks nationwide.

One UC claimant wrote on Twitter: "UC made me anxious. I've learned the hard way, been pushed into debt, gone without food."

Wandsworth Labour councillor Andy Gibbons said: "The government needs to pause the roll-out of UC."

A Department for Work and Pensions spokesperson said it had listened to feedback from claimants and made improvements.

Duck over Finnish ine

By Anna Sagar

A LONE Wandsworth duck has flown 1,250 miles to Finland.

The female Northern Shoveler migrated to wetlands near Helsinki, where she was later identified.

The bird was tagged in Wandsworth Common in July last year as part of efforts to monitor bird populations.

Tim Webb from the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) said: "The birds will go where the climate is convenient and there is food."

According to the RSPB, the UK is home to more than a fifth of western Europe's Northern Shoveler population. This makes urban spaces like Wandsworth Common vital as they provide key habitats for many species.

Mr Webb added: "Urban parks, commons, private gardens, London's waterways and trees are all important natural elements of our landscape but are somehow perceived as being of 'less' value than rural spaces."

Prison staff stage walkout over violence

By Amelia Wynne and Josh Milton

MORE than 60 Wandsworth Prison staff walked out over health and safety concerns today as part of a nationwide protest.

The Prison Officers Association (POA), the trade union for prison staff, called for union members to demonstrate outside their workplace at 7am.

Questions were raised about the level of security and safety as 65 Wandsworth staff protested alongside colleagues from Wormwood Scrubs.

Blessing Uwede, chair

of the POA for HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs said the concerns for safety were for 'staff and prisoners alike'.

He added: "Introducing PAVA, a natural version of pepper spray, more rigid handcuffs, and mobile phone blockers could curb prison violence."

Local branch secretary Stewart McLaughlin said: "I don't think anyone in the country can claim that they haven't read about prison health and safety in the last six months."

POA general secretary Steve Gillan said: "We will now be demanding the Government provide safe prisons, meet our

demands to improve Personal Protective Equipment, reduce levels of violence and overcrowding as set out by Lord Justice Woolf in his report into the riots of 1990."

Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said: "It's irresponsible for the POA to encourage their members to take this illegal action.

Mr McLaughlin dismissed concerns about safety.

He said: "We have radios to hear what's going on inside the prison and we are not stopping anyone who wishes to go into work."

Staff returned to their posts from 1pm when the protests were called off.



PROTEST: Staff gather outside HM Prison Wandsworth

Freud to exhibit at arts festival

By Jen Tombs

LUCIAN Freud's daughter Lucy Freud is taking part in a Kingston arts festival which aims to raise awareness of ADHD, autism and other neurological conditions this weekend.

The Fastminds Neurodiversity Arts Festival hopes to raise the profile of mental health and neurological conditions by showcasing fine art, film, poetry and music.

Ms Freud, 57, who has dyslexia, is displaying four pieces at the festival.

She said: "I'm trying to portray the unconscious mind. That's always big in my work."

"I suppose it's a link with Sigmund Freud, my great-grandfather; there's always a connection with what lies beneath."

Her mother was also an artist, and she thought following her parent's path was "inevitable."

The festival is hosted by Kingston ADHD support group Fastminds.

Festival project manager Isabelle Haythorne, 29, said: "I want to raise the profile of neurodiversity, of difference, of disability."

"I hope people get inspired and realise that it doesn't matter how disabled you are, you can still make something amazing happen."

Council gender win

By Kumail Jaffer

A NEW Fawcett Society report has declared Kingston Council one of the best local governments in England for gender representation.

While the proportion of female councillors increased by just one percentage point in England, Kingston returned a 16.7 per cent rise.

Eight newly elected councillors took the number of elected women to 25, 52.1 per cent of the council.

Council Leader Liz Green, the first female leader of Kingston Council, said: "We have a new policy to encourage more women to run, but anyone who wants to make a change in their local community."

She added that both Councillor Christine Stuart and former Mayor Mary Heathcote were endorsed in this manner.

Louise Blood, 20, treasurer of Kingston University Feminist Society, said: "Women can now be fairly represented in important decisions being made within Kingston."

North & South Korea unite at culture fair

By Kumail Jaffer

NORTH and South will come together as one community in the Kingston Korean Festival next week.

Kingston's Korean population will congregate at the Harvest Festival in Ancient Market Place for a day celebrating Korean culture.

New Malden is home to more than 10,000 South Koreans and over 700 North Koreans, often refugees from the DPRK, making up the largest Korean population in Europe.

Among those attending will be Lee Chul-Young, who defected from the DPRK via China in 2007. He told South West Londoner: "In North Korea, there is no freedom, only a dictator. I wanted to live in a capitalist system, so I moved to the UK."

As the leader of the North Korean community for the festival, he encourages 'defectors to come as one and show their success' in the face of the regime they fled. 11 years later, he is still rejoicing his community's newfound freedom and happiness.

Mr Lee, 50, said: "The festival is to show people that we are one and cannot part. Through this festival I want to show that peace is important, not war."

He added that he wants to 'show North and South unity

to the UK people'.

Early Korean immigrants followed the original South Korean embassy and Samsung Headquarters to New Malden in the 1970s.

Justina Jang, festival director and trustee of the Korean British Cultural Exchange (KBCE), echoed this message, saying: "We can have a unified Korea here [in Kingston]."

She also called for further Korean integration, saying: "It's not just a Korean festival, but a Kingston Korea festival. It's a local festival."

Ms Jang said children are taught to mix as Koreans; the words North and South are avoided.

The festival, now in its third year, presents a hub of cultural, culinary and musical activity from both regions and celebrates 'Chuseok', or Thanksgiving Day.

It promises a range of unique cultural activities, including the traditional folk game Jaegi

Jaesung Ha, a Korean-born councillor, said: "I am proud of this festival introducing Korean culture to Kingston residents."

Councillor Jon Tolley, who chairs the Community Engagement Committee in Kingston, said: "The festival provides a natural place for people to congregate" and celebrate the multicultural essence of the borough.



Vinny and Gizmo have a hoot at hospital visit



FLYING VISIT: Vinny Coleman, 6, meets Gizmo the owl with nurse Susan Stilwel at Kingston hospital on Tuesday morning, thanks to Momentum Children's Charity. Vinny's mother, Clare, said: "Vinny has to visit the hospital every day for a month to receive treatment for cancer. It's incredibly unpleasant and the owls were a great distraction."

Beer to stay now

By Jack Richardson

A KINGSTON brewery is expanding its operation by moving into larger premises, following concern they may be forced out of the borough by a lack of affordable premises.

Husband and wife founders Josh and Frankie Kearns, both in their 40s, will move The Park Brewery from their previous small premises to a two-floor industrial unit.

Their inspiration for the beer range comes from locations in nearby Richmond Park.

Frankie, who previously worked in PR said: "We're all about making flavour-packed beers with the best hops from around the world, cramming in as many gorgeous flavours as possible and aroma."

"My husband bought a small home brew kit which he started fiddling about with at home, that was in late 2012, he just got the bug and the pots got bigger and we got more and more into it."

The scarcity of affordable premises meant they almost had to leave Kingston.

Richard Russell, 42, Chairman of the Kingston and Leatherhead branch of CAMRA said: "The key question for us was where they would end up and we are delighted with the fact that they're staying in KT1."

"There is lots of brewing history in Kingston, so the fact that we've still got a brewery here is fantastic news."

Susie Statham, 26, co-owner of Kingston craft beer shop, 7000 Jars of Beer, said: "I love being able to tell people who come into the shop where the beer comes from. Especially when it's only a 15 minute walk away."

"Hopefully now they'll have more time to focus on special or smaller batch beers."

The larger space provides more opportunities for the husband and wife team. Frankie said: "There will be brewery tours and a proper tap room which we couldn't have before. People will be able to pop in for a pint."

Not just jam and Jerusalem for WI



THRIVING: Members of the Wimbledon branch of the Women's Institute are celebrating their tenth anniversary next month

By Helena Kelly

WIMBLEDON'S Women's Institute celebrates its tenth anniversary next month.

The branch, one of the largest in England with 112 members, is so popular it has had a waiting list of Wimbledon women eager to join.

Forget the classic 'jam and Jerusalem' image - this branch has some members as young as their 30s, with the team completing joint triathlons and learning about

car maintenance.

Branch president Fiona Gerdes-Hanson, 60, said: "The sky's the limit for us. The WI is ultimately designed to educate and empower women of all ages.

"We have lawyers and accountants we even have one woman who has set up her own plumbing and DIY business since becoming a member."

Mrs Gerdes-Hanson joined the Wimbledon WI in its second year after her four sons left home.

"What's amazing about our organisation is that it gives women a sense of belonging,"

she said.

"We want to combat loneliness and it's comforting to know that wherever you go in the country there's always a group of women willing to embrace you."

The WI institution has been controversial historically, with members being unafraid to stand up for women's rights.

In 1983, they campaigned against the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM), which was outlawed two years later.

Wimbledon WI treasurer Wendy Kilgour, 72, said the 103-year old organisation was

more relevant than ever.

She said: "We live in a technological age where you can talk to someone and not actually see them. It's nice to be able to sit and drink a coffee with somebody and actually connect.

"Because I worked full-time and had a family, I didn't have much of a social life so, once I retired, I joined the WI for the instant companionship. It's given me a lot of confidence."

She said the WI also provided older women with an opportunity to continue learning.

"We're all different people

and we've all had different experiences," she said. "Some have been to university, others haven't.

"It's great to experience what other people have been through and learn from them. We live in an ever-changing society and I think it's important that we keep learning, we've got to keep moving forward."

How does the branch plan to celebrate its 10th birthday? In true WI fashion -with homemade cake, washed down with prosecco.

Merton streets 'filthy' under new waste contract

By Jemma Carr

MERTON'S streets are dirtier since a private waste management company took over street cleaning, according to council statistics released last week.

More than a fifth of sites surveyed in the borough were found to be sub-standard for litter in July this year, compared with 11 per cent when Veolia's contract started in April last year.

Merton Liberal Democrats have condemned the Labour council for a "lack of transparency" regarding

contractual deductions they made from Veolia for poor performance.

Councillor Carl Quilliam, deputy leader of Merton Liberal Democrat Councillors, said: "We have written to Labour council bosses and the council's chief executive asking them to make the figures public, and importantly to reveal how much money they've managed to claw back from Veolia because of poor performance."

Conservative councillor David Dean said: "We couldn't see the contract but what we did see is suddenly the streets were filthy and we could hand count the number of street cleaners and there were significantly less."

£1.6 million was saved in

the first year of the contract with Veolia, Merton Council's cabinet member for the environment, Councillor Mike Brunt, said.

He added: "With Veolia, the standard of service delivered was, at times, significantly below the level expected."

A spokesperson for South London Waste Partnership, the organisation responsible for procuring the Veolia contract, said: "To suggest that the South London Waste Partnership has been used in any way to hide information from residents and local councillors is a very serious accusation, and one which is entirely refuted."

Veolia did not respond to requests for comment.



PROTEST: Council leader Stephen Alambritis in March

School plan for smog zone

By Nora Selina Helal

A NEW South Wimbledon school is set to be built in one of London's most polluted areas.

Harris Wimbledon Academy will move its more than 1,000 students when its High Path building is completed in 2020.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan and Merton's environment and health pollution team have identified the site's pollution levels as among the highest in the borough.

Merton campaigner and mum-of-two Sara Sharp said: "I am horrified. This is definitely going to impact our kids.

"I can't sleep at night thinking about the school - those kids will spend their school day sitting, breathing and playing in cramped spaces on a polluted site."

The legal limits for nitrogen dioxide are 40 micrograms per m² - Harris Wimbledon Academy surpasses that with a reading of NO₂ 41.

Students have been filling up temporary classrooms in Whatley Avenue since the school opened last week, an area described by the High Path Community Association as 'a narrow strip of industrial land by one of the busiest roads in South Wimbledon'.

A Sustainable Merton spokesperson said: "Air quality should always be taken into consideration when assessing planning applications."

Woman in bus attack

A NURSERY worker had her glasses ripped from her face and stamped on by three teenage boys on a bus in Wimbledon.

The 25-year-old woman was assaulted on the top deck of the Tooting Broadway to Kingston bus outside Wimbledon railway station at around 6pm on Tuesday.

She described three black males, aged about 16 or 17, throwing balls of newspaper at her.

When she asked them to stop she said they swore at her, smashed her glasses and threatened her with a belt.

When one shoved her she punched him and she was then punched in the face and chest by all three.

"Now I feel angry and I want to see them again," she said.

The woman's friend tried to help and had her hair pulled by one of the boys.

Witnesses said the bus driver received a minor injury after intervening.

The victim asked to remain anonymous

A police spokesman said: "A female victim told officers that she had been assaulted by three males who ran off the bus before officers arrived."

Stabbing suspect arrested

By Andy Gregory

A 17-YEAR-OLD boy was arrested following a rush-hour stabbing near Whitton Station last Wednesday.

The 16-year-old victim suffered a wound to the neck, which police said was not life-changing.

The alleged attack came before trading standards revealed 14% of London shops are selling knives to children, some as young as 13.

A Met Police spokesperson said: "The suspect was reported to have run into the station and gone onto the railway tracks after the incident."

"Officers including the Met's Dog Unit, assisted by the British Transport Police, searched the area."

The victim has been discharged from hospital while the alleged attacker was released on bail.

Liz Jaeger, council cabinet member for community safety, said: "The Whitton community was shocked by this incident."

"Thankfully such things are very rare in this part of London and we know now this was an isolated incident."

The stabbing is thought to have happened in Britannia Lane, a short distance from Whitton Youth Zone, which was closed for the school holidays and is engaged in anti-knife crime initiatives.

Fraud and scams cut

By Shardell Joseph

A POLICEMAN'S campaign to reduce scams against the elderly in Richmond received a commendation last week.

Sergeant Les Jackson, 64, was recognised for his "outstanding professionalism, organisation and dedication" by Borough Command Unit Commissioner Sally Benatar, at Imber Court, East Molesey, last Thursday.

Scammers posing as police had been stealing sums of £3,000 to £7,000 from vulnerable and older people. This incentivised Sergeant Jackson to raise awareness of how to defend against such crimes in 2015.

His online demonstrations have since garnered more than 9.6 million views.

Sergeant Jackson said: "I've seen the crime figures for Richmond. At one point they were probably the worst in the metropolitan area, if not the country. Now we aren't a figure on those stats."

Courier fraud has fallen from 84 incidents in 2017 to just 12 in the last 12 months.

Sergeant Jackson plans to proceed with the campaign after he retires next month.

Cake shop thieves taking the biscuit

By James Heale

ONE of London's oldest teahouses suffered a fifth burglary in twelve months when three men broke in and attempted to steal a store safe last month.

The Original Maids of Honour shop has been serving customers on Kew Road since 1860 but has been recently hit by several criminal gangs targeting the area.

Co-owner Dean Martin, 48, said: "They broke into the front door, smashing it in. Then they searched round, tried to pull off the small safes that we have for till change, but they didn't get them."

Having been thwarted in their bid to prise open the safe, the thieves grabbed a charity box and fled.

Despite speculation on Twitter that the trio enjoyed a midnight snack, there is no evidence to suggest the robbers indulged themselves on the various culinary goods in the shop.

Mr Martin said: "There was probably about £600-700 worth of damage on the building. There was a break in through the door, damage to the locks and stuff like that. They really damaged the door."

"Ironically the door survived the war but couldn't survive a crowbar from a thief."

Newens is believed to be the oldest on-site bakery in the country and boasts the Maid of Honours tart recipe favoured by Henry VIII. According to legend, the Tudor king first encountered Anne Boleyn and her Maids of Honour, eating the tarts from a silver dish.

Henry loved the treat so much the recipe was locked in an iron box at Richmond Palace. Mr Martin and his business partner have run the store for the past nine years.

The store was established in Richmond as AN Newens confectioners in 1850 and moved to its present location next to Kew Gardens ten years later.

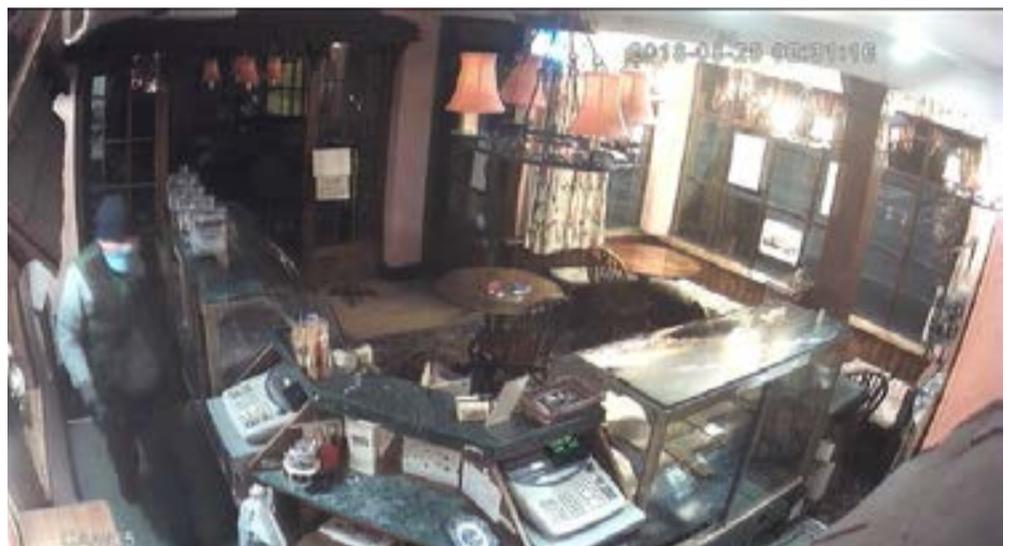
Mr Martin added: "It's our 150th year for trading, it's a great little place, very historic and people love us. Everyone gets cross when people break into business - it's not a nice thing to do is it?"

Mr Martin said no staff had been affected by the break in.

A Metropolitan Police spokesman said: "Police were called at 0900hrs on Saturday 25 August to reports of a burglary on Kew Road."

Other local restaurants appear to have been targeted by the same gang on the same night.

Anyone with information is asked to contact police on 101 quoting CAD 2061/25Aug or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.



MONEY'S SCORE: Kew cake shop suffers fifth burglary in twelve months

Council considers buffer zones at abortion clinic

By Hollie Geraghty and James Heale

RICHMOND Council will consider this autumn whether to introduce a buffer zone outside the Rosslyn Road abortion clinic in Twickenham.

Such a move would see public space protection orders deployed to prevent protesters harassing staff and service users outside clinics.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid yesterday ruled out introducing such exclusion zones around clinics across the UK.

Councils do have the power to introduce them in their areas, and Richmond Council leader Gareth Roberts said there was broad cross-party interest in doing so.

Matthew Richards, treatment unit manager at the BPAS Rosslyn Road clinic, said: "We get a lot of young clients here, about 50 under-18s a month and sometimes they come in on their own, they have no family who are aware of the pregnancy."

"So if they're coming in for a consultation and see the protesters, some of them turn away and don't attend because they get really upset."

"Hopefully not having them there will allow women of all ages to access our services more easily."

Richmond would be following the lead of Ealing Council, who last month banned protesters from standing within 100m of the Marie Stopes clinic.

Mr Richards, 26, said: "We're trying to mirror what evidence they provided. I believe it's helped a lot with the women accessing the services and the staff."

"They say it's made a big impact in terms of clients not coming in, feeling like they've been judged straight away before even coming into the clinic and less anxious and upset about attending."

One protestor outside the clinic, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "We're just offering free alternatives to people. We're not breaking any laws."



PROTESTS: Pro-life signs outside the abortion clinic

Clare scores perfect 10 for London eatery

WIN: Chef Clare Smyth is celebrating after scoring an unprecedented 10/10 in the Good Food Guide 2018. Her debut restaurant Core, in Notting Hill, is the highest-ranked new restaurant in the guide's 10-year history.



MP urges changes over Grenfell rights

By Shahryar Irvani

KENSINGTON MP Emma Dent Coad has criticised Home Secretary Sajid Javid over government immigration policy for families of Grenfell Tower fire victims.

In an open letter, Ms Dent Coad urged the Home Secretary to grant 30 months Leave to Remain in the United Kingdom to applications by her constituents bereaved by the fire on 14th July 2017, which led to the deaths of 72 people.

Ms Dent Coad noted in the letter that the Home Office's Grenfell Relatives' policy only offers six months Leave to Remain, which is the same length of leave granted to criminals who the government cannot legally remove.

In her letter, Ms Dent Coad said she was "sickened by the possibility that the Government would purposely make relatives of the victims of the Grenfell Tower fire feel unwelcome", referring to their "constant position of uncertainty and insecurity".

In a statement yesterday, Ms Dent Coad, who was elected as the Labour MP for Grenfell's constituency just six days before the fire, said: "We have seen this government make innumerable U-turns over past months, but this one is simply unconscionable.

"People whose lives have been turned upside down by the horrific death of family members have had to give up everything to come to the UK to sort out their affairs, and sometimes to care for surviving family members.

"The government made a "lasting commitment to support the families affected, long after the television cameras have gone. Instead, they are treated like criminals."

Moyra Samuels, an activist with the Justice 4 Grenfell campaign group, said: "The inquiry is taking a much extended time, and core participants have yet to give evidence.

"Leave to Remain must be extended to take into account the length of the inquiry. If you do not give families time to

find out what happened to their loved ones, you are telling them the inquiry is not about them.

A Home Office spokesperson said: "The Grenfell Tower fire was a tragedy that should never have happened. Our highest priority has been to ensure the survivors of the Grenfell Tower tragedy receive the support they need.

"We have always been clear that we will do everything we can to support the Grenfell Tower Public Inquiry and enable Core Participants to give evidence."

New charity fund aims to spread joy in K&C

By Hattie Brewis

A KENSINGTON charity has launched a fund to spread joy in the Grenfell community, at their tenth birthday party last night.

The Kensington and Chelsea Foundation launched Green Shoots last Tuesday as part of its £1.6 million Grenfell Community Development Fund.

Green Shoots will fund small-scale projects that will benefit the Grenfell community, from community barbecues to new green spaces.

Richard Briance, the Kensington and Chelsea

Foundation's newly appointed chairman, said: "We've listened, we've learned and we've gained a deep understanding and, importantly, the trust of the community we seek to serve."

Green Shoots is open to schools, faith groups, residents' associations and other locally recognised groups.

"The idea behind the fund is to bring some joy and hope back to the community," said Susan Dolton, the foundation's director.

The Grenfell Community Development Fund has set aside £150,000 for Green Shoots - £50,000 a year for the next three years to ensure ongoing benefits to the community.

Green Shoots is the brainchild of 100 volunteers from across North Kensington, who came together in the wake of the tragedy to discuss how best to rebuild the community.

One plan is to nominate "Grenfell Organisation Champions", businesses that have provided invaluable support to victims over the past 15 months.

The foundation will work with donors and sponsors to financially support organisations so that they can continue their good work.

It invited charity partners and donors to toast its 10th birthday last night.



LAUNCH: The charity kicked off the new fund at a party

Fight over living wage continues

By Maighna Nanu

CLEANERS in Chelsea are continuing to fight to be paid a London Living Wage.

United Voices of the World union representatives met with councillors to demand workers receive the London Living Wage of £10.20 an hour. They're currently paid £7.83 an hour.

Union organiser Shiri Shalmy was delighted with promises made to pay the London Living Wage and offer sick pay, and hopes the reforms will be introduced by January.

A Kensington and Chelsea spokesperson said: "We had positive talks and we hope the dialogue continues"

The cleaners, employed by Amey, are largely migrant workers and struggle to survive on their current salary.

Labour MP for Kensington Emma Dent Coad said it is the council's responsibility to ensure contractors pay their workers a fair wage, despite outsourcing to a third party.

"I have been fighting this battle with the Council for many years, and have added a sum to our alternative Budget every year to cover what...it would cost to pay all outsourced workers the London Living Wage," she said.

Scheme saves cash

By Gillian Fisher

A NEW social prescribing directory launched last month places emotional wellbeing at the centre of the district's health.

Run by the Kensington Chelsea Social Council, a local charity, the directory connects residents with local social activities such as free art classes, lunch groups and massage.

A similar pilot scheme run in West London saved the NHS £208,000 in a year, by targeting problems such as isolation and depression.

"Doing things that make us feel good is really important. We've ignored that for too long when trying to treat people," said Amelia Mustapha, Director of St Mary Abbots Rehabilitation and Training, a charity who offer residents 6 free sessions of massage or reflexology.

Users of social prescription say expanding treatment beyond the doctor's surgery has been positive.

Yorkshire artist and charity worker, Debs Taylor, 50, said: "I wouldn't be here without social prescription."