



Brickworks Weekenders meet members of the French dance company Machine de Cirque at Sadler's Wells in January

WE CAN ALL JOIN IN

If you want to know more about Brickworks and what we do, why not come along to our AGM on Thursday 19th March at 7pm.

It'll be a good chance to meet our staff, trustees and people from the local community and to discover new ways of getting involved locally.

We'll be giving presentations about our work in health, wellbeing, childcare and the arts, and discussing ideas for the future.

Volunteers play a crucial role at Brickworks, and we're looking for people to help out in administration, the nursery, the garden and Centre 404, which provides a valuable day service for people with special needs. Or you might like to come up with a project of your own. Anyone interested should talk to Caroline in the office.

Talking of getting involved, we'd like to say a big thank-you to the volunteers from Big Alliance who've been helping us with digging and planting in the roof garden. If you'd like to join in, please get in touch.

And for news of our forthcoming activities, from Tranquil Workshops to a special Mother's Day pampering event and Easter play schemes, make sure to check our website.

MEETING UP

The Big Building Foundation, a social enterprise that works with young people, is now running weekly sessions at Brickworks.

The Women's Hub provides a drop-in service for women who have survived gender-based violence – a space where they can talk and get advice and support. It is open on Wednesdays from 11am-2pm and 5pm - 7pm.

The Community Juice Bar (open Wednesdays, 5pm - 7pm) aims to recruit and train young people aged 16-24 who are not in education or employment.

The foundation is run by two women who live locally: Ronke Coote, a lawyer, and Vanessa Freeman, a singer and domestic violence advocate.

For more information contact: bigbuildingfoundation.com

INSIDE: Going hungry in Islington • Stop and Search: have your say • Music in the air • Home from home at Brickworks

GOING HUNGRY IN ISLINGTON: WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT

Stroud Green is overflowing with food. Two minutes down the road from Brickworks you could be eating Thai, Italian, Caribbean, British, Turkish or Nepalese. You could put away a hot sandwich at a hip cafe, three types of pub grub and an Eritrean banquet - and that's before you even get to the traffic lights.

This is great if you've got the money. Not so great if you haven't. According to the Islington Food Poverty Alliance, more than 45 per cent of Islington children live in poverty, while one in five London parents report skipping meals so that their children can eat.

The Alliance, backed by the London Mayor and Islington Council, has launched a Food Poverty Action Plan which aims to ensure that over the next three years, everyone in Islington eats at least one healthy meal a day. The plan is ambitious - but what's happening at ground level?

Quite a lot, it seems. Among its many recommendations, the Alliance calls on local retailers to donate surplus food to local projects, to feed people in need. Not

a bad idea, given that 1.9 million tons of surplus food are thrown away each year in the UK.

One of the leaders in this field is FoodCycle, which in 10 years has set up 39 local projects - one of them at Finsbury Park - and served 1 million meals made from donated food. The organisation is supported by big names, such as Tesco, Morrison's and M&S.

But that's only part of the story. 'There are lots of exciting initiatives at local level,' says Hilary Taylor of the Octopus community network in Archway. 'It's so important the way local community groups of have stepped up.'

As examples, she cites the Whittington café, which uses locally grown food, and the Juice Bar at Brickworks (see page 1), which uses fruit and veg from allotments in Tottenham. Highbury Roundhouse runs a food bank; St Luke's has a community fridge; while the Finsbury Park Community Group distributes food donated by major stores.

Training and education play an important role at Caxton House, which has built a new kitchen to teach cookery skills; while Eliza-

beth House and Mildmay encourage people to cook and share food with each other.

Brickworks collects and distributes food donated by Tesco and the Co-op, but, frustratingly, there is no fixed time for collecting the food.

Hilary sees food collection as a major problem. Local shops are happy to donate, but regular and reliable collections are essential - perhaps organised by a combined group of local organisations.

Getting enough food is another problem. The larger food banks provide a valuable service - but users at local ones may be limited to 12 visits a year. Some people have used up their allocation by June.

There are other frustrations, too: endless adverts for fatty foods and fizzy drinks; the glut of cheap food outlets; the lack of food education. Nutritious food can be as cheap as the cheapest chicken and chips.

So what can we do? Donations and volunteers are needed, plus drivers to collect the food. If you have a van, you'll be especially welcome...

FREE MEALS AND FOOD

St John the Evangelist 12.30-1.30pm (Tue-Fri); 12.15-1.30pm (Sat); 3-5pm (Sun); 39 Duncan Terrace, N1, 0207 226 3277.

The Cabin, St Gabriel's Community Centre 10:30-11:30am (M-Sun); 12-1pm (The); 21 Hatchard Rd, N19; 020 7272 8195.

Archway Drop-In 10am-12 (entry 50p) 11 Tollington Way, N7, 0207 272 2104 (M)

North London Action for the Homeless St Paul's Church, N16, 12 to 1.30pm (M), 7-8.30pm (W)

St Mary Magdalene 12-3.30pm, Holloway Road, N7, 0207 607 2203 (M)

Union Chapel 11-2pm, Compton Terrace, N1, 020 7704 6636 (M, W)

All Saints Church Food 10-12pm, Carnegie St, N1, 0207 729 2775 (T, Th)

St Pancras Refugee Centre 12pm-3pm, 8 Fairhazel Gardens, NW6 3SG (T, Th)

St Stephen's Church 17 Canonbury Rd, N1 2DF (Tues 7-9pm, W 1-3)

FoodCycle 1pm New River Baptist Church, 80 Arran Walk, N1 (W); 1pm Finsbury Park Community Hub, Corker Walk, N7, 0207 729 2775 (Sat)

Finsbury Park Mosque 6-8pm 7-11 St Thomas Road, N4 (Th, winter only)

For more information visit www.islington.gov.uk/food-poverty

Home from home

Feeling isolated? Why not drop into Brickworks for a free tea or coffee and a chance to meet the neighbours?

One person who does just that is 76-year-old Shakuntala Kerswell, who has made a daily trip to Brickworks part of her daily routine.

Shakuntala, whose background is in admin and accounts, came to London from India in 1985, and worked as a machinist, then a school dinner lady, in Hounslow. Her daughter lives in Manchester – and Shakuntala spends time at Brickworks contacting her via Whats App or email – along with other family members and friends in Mumbai, South America and Italy.

When not at Brickworks, she visits local libraries and keeps fit with yoga and exercise classes.

‘I love it at Brickworks,’ she says. ‘The staff are very friendly and help me with any problems.’

What about the background music? ‘It’s fine. Not too loud.’

Stop and search: have your say

Islington’s Stop and Search Monitoring Group, which was set up to provide a voice for local people on this controversial tactic, is looking for volunteers. Maybe you’ve been subject to stop and search yourself; or want to become involved more closely in local issues. Either way, do get in touch.

The group, which is independent of Islington Council and the Metropolitan Police, has three main functions: to give local people a say; to look at arrest rates and outcomes; and to hold the local police to account. A large part of the work involves checking police lists of arrested people to make sure arrests have been carried out lawfully.

‘The work is very important,’ says Sheri Lawal, the group chair. ‘It helps instil confidence in the community that we’re actually monitoring the police on their use of Stop and Search. If people have problems going to the police, they can always come to us instead. We also raise matters of more general concern with them.’

For further information, contact Sheri Lawal at ichairsscmg@gmail.com

The sound of music

Brickworks will be hosting its very own music day on March 28. This major family event is part of Music Education Islington, which aims to give every child in the borough access to a musical instrument and the opportunity to create and perform music.

The programme starts at 10.30am and there’ll be a range of drop-in activities, from baby and toddler sessions (11am-noon) to musical storytelling (1-2pm) and a musical mash-up (3-5.30pm) featuring sampling and looping with vocal and instrumental work.

Music Education Islington wants to encourage us to participate in music-making and to develop our own ideas through that collective experience. So if you have a tuba, a ukulele or indeed any other instrument, please do bring it along! All musical abilities are welcome.

Further details from musiceducation.islington@gsmid.ac.uk

Out and about

There’s a lot going on at Islington’s libraries — everything from story telling sessions with Islington Firefighters (under-fives, Finsbury branch, March 17) to performance poetry (Five Years, March 15) and writing your own biography or memoir (Central, March 28). Leading this session will be Lloyd Bradley, author of a history of black music in Britain.

For more details about library events, go to www.islington.gov.uk/libraries or ring 0207 527 2000.

Trying to get more active? The Islington Chinese Association runs a number of sessions, from yoga to martial arts, social dance and the Lion Dance Troupe. The organisation is based at 21 Hatchard Road, N19; email: info@islingtonchinese.com; 0207 263 5986.

Brickworks & Me



Marcia Emmanuel, aged 54, is the manager of Blythwood Community Nursery, based at Brickworks.

I've been working at the nursery for 26 years ; we moved here two years ago, and kept the name. It's been great. There are so many groups here, it's like a big family.

The nursery has 60 families on its books – 28 children at any one time. We provide care and education from 8am to 6pm every day, and offer community and private places.

Every day is a challenge. A good day is when the nursery is full and everyone is in, and we get good feedback from the parents.

If we weren't here, the children would be at home. Some live in high rises; they don't have a garden or maybe the parents aren't well, and can't take them to the park. And once a year we take the families on an outing – to the seaside or a farm.

The children are in a safe environment, which gives the parents time to themselves. We are flexible, so the parents can get two full days off, say, which allows them to do courses and so on.

I enjoy supporting the families and 'signposting' for them: particularly young mothers who may be facing difficulties or depression.

Regular activities and upcoming events

Fitness Activities

- Boxcercise: Thursdays, 6.30pm - 7:30pm
- Zumba Gold: Fridays, 11:30am - 12:30pm
- Wiggle Beats: Thursdays, 11:30am - 12pm
- Post—Natal Pilates: Tuesdays 11am—12pm
- Salsa: Mondays 12:15pm—1:15pm

Over 50s

- Lunch Group: Fridays, 1pm - 2:30pm

Children's Services

- Stay & Play: Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday, 10am –12pm
- After School Club & Holiday Play Scheme 3pm– 6pm
- Limberdoodle: Mondays 9am—10am

Other services

- Blythwood Community Nursery: Mondays to Fridays, 8am-6pm. Day-care for children aged 18 months to four years. 020 7263 5070; info@blythwoodcommunitynursery.co.uk
- Palace for All: Mondays to Thursdays, 12.30pm-6pm. Drop-in, play and therapies for children with special needs. 020 7561 1689; www.palaceforall.org.uk
- Special People: working with adults and children with special needs. 020 7686 0253; www.specialpeople.org.uk



The Lion Dance at our Fun Day in February. It was performed by the Islington Chinese Association

Brickworks Newsletter: please send us your contributions, ideas and suggestions. The deadline for the next issue is May 15. Email chrisxhowe@gmail.com