



Your independent community newspaper

WALTHAM FOREST ECHO

Free
Dec 2021, No. 81

Email WFEcho@socialspider.com
Facebook [/WalthamForestEcho](https://www.facebook.com/WalthamForestEcho)
Instagram [@walthamforestecho](https://www.instagram.com/walthamforestecho)
Tweet [@WFEcho](https://twitter.com/WFEcho)
Visit walthamforestecho.co.uk

Arts & Culture

Walthamstow poet's collection on lesbian culture up for huge prize

► P. 3

Feature

Highams Park pub among UK's best despite lockdown launch

► P. 7

News

International uproar after disputed flag raised at town hall

► P. 9

Crime

Chingford brother and sister jailed for pimping women online

► P. 17

Sport

How non-league team Walthamstow FC stole a jaded fan's heart

► P. 19



The E17 Street Harassment Photo Project and accompanying film was created by three local women to provide an "honest and visceral" account of how harassment makes women feel, interviewing them about their experiences in the same spots they were harassed Credit Hannah Starkey

Outline of new Whipps Cross agreed

by Victoria Munro

Plans to rebuild Whipps Cross on a smaller area and sell more than half its current land for housing were agreed last month.

After the planning committee unanimously approved the "outline" for the new hospital and up to 1,500 homes, campaigners said they were "disappointed, saddened and concerned".

At a rally before the meeting

on 24th November, they argued selling off the bulk of the land was a decision that could not be taken back and was why some services in the current hospital may move elsewhere.

Waltham Forest Council's principal planner Matt Duigan said in the meeting that, because the hospital was "developed in a piece-meal fashion", its current layout is "inefficient" – one of many issues the rebuild hopes to fix.

Barts Health NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, also insist improving out-of-hospital community care will mean fewer people need to be treated in the new Whipps Cross in the first place.

Those opposed to the plans regularly erupted with outrage as councillors discussed the plans, resulting in one campaigner dramatically leaving after shouting over the debate.

While most meetings have at most three public speakers, in

this instance chairwoman Jenny Gray allowed 12 people to give their thoughts.

The first, Robert Gay from the Waltham Forest Civic Society, told councillors that if they agreed to sell off NHS land for housing "then in 30 years time, your successors will be cursing you".

He added: "The design is vastly too dense and too out-of-keeping with the area. It will provide an awful setting for the historic buildings being retained, which

will be overshadowed.

"We urge you to ask Barts Health to come back with a better application with different land use, they should still have time before they start building."

Most concerning to health campaigners who spoke was the potential loss of five services: the Margaret Centre, Connaught Day Hospital, Tomswood Unit, Woodlands Day Unit and Pine Lodge.

Continued on Page-2

NEWS



FELLOWSHIP IS LIFE

DECEMBER 2021

No. 81

Publisher

David Floyd

Editor

Victoria Munro

Designer

Jonathan Duncan

Head of Advertising

Klaudia Kiss

Local Democracy Reporter

Josh Mellor

Engagement Manager

Penny Dampier

Sales Representative

Xavier Duchon

Contributors

Roman Manfredi, James Robertshaw, Franky Misku, Aiden Lonergan, Naomi Elfred-Ross, Maeve McCaffrey, Robert Woodland, Waltham Forest Anti Raids Network, Allen Windsor, Ruth Board, Liz Biggs, Hannah Starkey, Jack Barnes, Penny Dampier, Moneera Girshab, Mary Burnett, Liz Abbott, Walthamstow and Chingford Almshouse Charity, David O'Driscoll, Chris Evans and Andrew Shields

The member organisations of WWellComm CIC are:

Community Transport Waltham Forest, Social Spider CIC, HEET.

WWellComm CIC Board:

David Floyd, *Social Spider CIC*
Tom Ruxton, *HEET*
Helen Tredoux,
Community Transport WF

Contact

Call 020 8521 7956

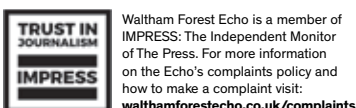
Email WFEcho@socialspider.com

Post The Mill, 7-11 Coppermill Lane, Walthamstow E17 7HA

Advertising

Call 07732 000 430

Email klaudia@socialspider.com



Waltham Forest Echo is a member of IMPRESS: The Independent Monitor of the Press. For more information on the Echo's complaints policy and how to make a complaint visit: walthamforestecho.co.uk/complaints

Continued from Page 1

These respectively provide end-of-life care, care for elderly and frail patients, rehabilitation, treatment for blood-related diseases and a psychiatric liaison for patients with mental health needs.

Current plans suggest these services could either move elsewhere in east London or be dotted around the new hospital, rather than located in a discrete unit.

Concerned speaker Adrian Stannard told councillors: "These five services are integral to and supportive of the clinical function of the hospital.

"If there's no space for them in the new hospital, it will not be a replacement, it will represent a reduction in services.

"More land should be kept for health services until the new hospital is up and running and the NHS have a better idea of how much land they actually need."

Councillors also heard from Dr Ken Aswani, a Leytonstone GP of more than 25 years and the chair of Waltham Forest's clinical commissioning group, which decides how NHS funds are spent in the borough.

He insisted community care was "the care that patients really want, at the end of the day" and "was always going to be preferable", where possible.

He said: "One of the things about hospital care is that not all of that needs to be provided within the hospital itself.

"Clearly a hospital just standing alone is not sustainable without the support and infrastructure in the community."

The hospital's redevelopment director, Alastair Finney, said



Campaigners at a rally outside the town hall before the meeting Credit Victoria Munro

that, regardless of disagreements about how to proceed, he hoped the "case for a new hospital is agreed and understood by all".

He told the meeting: "We have facilities that are not fit for the 21st century. Our patients and communities deserve better, as do our staff.

"We have 3,500 staff who do their best, day in and day out, in the face of crumbling infrastructure and badly laid-out departments.

"Consolidating the building onto a much smaller footprint gives the opportunity... of locating the new hospital at the heart of a new neighbourhood. The plans envisage a hospital site that is greener and better connected."

Principal planner Matt Duigan added that "good quality housing" is a "key component of good health" and that there was "good logic for wanting to build housing

on the remainder of the site".

Ultimately, however, many of the finer details of the new hospital have yet to be decided and a more detailed application will come before councillors again at a later date.

Committee member and Conservative councillor Alan Siggers reminded those opposed that councillors "need to remove the emotional aspect" and "can't comment on clinical care that will or will not be delivered".

He said: "The clinicians driving this application are saying the space we have here is sufficient, it's more than sufficient.

"I understand why people want to know what's going to happen but that's not what's going to be [decided] at this committee. I have absolutely no objection to this plan whatsoever."

He also insisted he was "going

to leave the politics to one side", before launching into a criticism of the council's 'Whipps Won't Wait' campaign, which calls on the government to speed up allocating funding for the project.

Calling the campaign "the most bizarre thing [he has] ever seen", he asked: "Why start a campaign like that before the planning application is approved?"

"We will get the money once we have got the scheme, you can't go into a bank and say 'give me £2million to build a housing estate' – they will want to see the scheme."

The first step in the project will see a new six-storey car park built on-site, allowing existing parking to be relocated to free up space to build.

Work on the new hospital is due to start next year and finish in 2026, with the new hospital finally becoming operational the following year.

Work to build up to 1,500 new homes, some of which will be located in the iconic red-brick buildings most associated with the hospital, is expected to start in 2027 and end in 2038.

The "panhandle", a stretch of public land that runs from the hospital almost to Lea Bridge Road, will be opened up and used as a pedestrian and cycle route for the new hospital.

However, according to Matt, "no decision has been made" yet about neighbours' concern that the land will be used as an access route for construction vehicles while the hospital is built.

Campaigners who spoke at the meeting all insisted that their fight over the new hospital is far from over.

Editor's letter

by Victoria Munro

What is a newspaper? The answer seems obvious – a written report of recent events, possibly with some commentary and a Sudoku thrown in – but in practice it is more complicated. There are numerous blogs, websites and Facebook groups dedicated to Waltham Forest, many of which write about recent or upcoming events. None of them claim to be newspapers.

What does claim to be a news-

paper – "the largest local newspaper" in the borough, in fact – is *Waltham Forest News*, a propaganda pamphlet of around 30 pages published by Waltham Forest Council. It is pushed through the letterbox of every household in the borough and allows the council to publicise its own good work and campaigns, which I'm sure is very helpful to however many residents read it before tipping it straight into their recycling bin. Calling it Waltham Forest's largest newspaper is an insult to both Waltham Forest and news.

Years ago, the government told local councils to stop printing these publications more than four times a year – and for good reason. *Waltham Forest News* sucks up money from advertising and public notices that would otherwise support real local journalism. In defiance of government guidelines – and both the High Court and the Court of Appeal slapping down attempts to overturn the decision – the council has printed *Waltham Forest News* seven times so far this year and has more issues planned for December and January.

The council's decision to do this threatens the future of legit-

imate newspapers and the scrutiny, balance and nuance they offer readers. In this month's edition alone, we have printed stories that hold to account not only the council but also the Home Office, the police and a local GP. These are the kinds of stories you will never find in *Waltham Forest News*.

Clearly the council thought no one would notice them do this but, unfortunately for them, this borough still has an independent local press paying close attention to what they do. If you'd like to support our work, please consider becoming a member by visiting walthamforestecho.co.uk/membership