

» Letters

Send your letters to islingtongazette.letters@archant.co.uk by 12noon on Monday for inclusion in that week's paper

» Charity appeal

Working to break cycle of hunger

World Vision, a charity I support, has recently launched a report stating that millions of people in West Africa are now living through a permanent food crisis, putting a generation of children at risk of death and disability from malnutrition.

Drought and hunger can be slow, silent destroyers of childhoods and trap communities in a seemingly everlasting hunger cycle. But it is clear there are no quick fixes. World Vision is trying to break the hunger cycle by working with local governments and communities to put in place long-term plans to help families prepare for the future and running appeals to raise money and awareness.

The money raised by World Vision's West Africa appeal will help families today, tomorrow and the day after. I encourage everyone to support its work, find out more and get involved in an attempt to break this deadly hunger cycle.

Doing this before August 31 will also mean that every pound donated will be matched by the UK

» Letter of the week

Council must face investigation for scandal of contractor overpayments

Channel 4's *Dispatches* documentary featuring Islington Council has put in place the final piece of the jigsaw as to why the council employed contractors that had been fined millions of pounds by the Office of Fair Trading for price rigging.

The answer seems to suggest that it would receive 30 pieces of silver in the form of profit sharing made off the backs of tenants and leaseholders through their rents and service charges.

Therefore, Islington Council had a vested interest in the overcharging by contractors. The more they charged, the bigger the profit, which

reached £24million – 50 per cent going to Islington Council and none returned to the contributors who feel betrayed and let down by our elected councillors.

The present Labour-controlled council has tried to distance itself from such practices, but it still supports contractors who have been found to have overcharged tenants and leaseholders by the independent Leasehold Valuation Tribunal and the Land Registry Office.

Islington employed top lawyers to try to justify the council turning a blind eye to what is taking place on a regular basis, placing people

into financial hardship in these times of recession.

The message being sent out to contractors by Islington Council is: "If you get caught overcharging, don't worry, we will pay the legal cost with public money to defend your actions."

Islington councillors should hang their heads in shame and these practices should be investigated by central government's Public Accounts Committee.

No more internal whitewashes and spin.

Patrick Leamy
Cowdenbeath Path
N1



■ The council featured in a Channel 4 *Dispatches* programme

government, making every gift go twice as far.

Stavroulla Andreou
Riversdale Road, N5

» Law and order

Shocked by blasé response to theft

I suffered an appalling theft in an Upper Street bar at the beginning of August, but even more appalling has been the reaction of the bar

in question and the police.

I had my handbag stolen while sitting in the nearly deserted family section of the Wetherspoon-owned bar by thieves using hooks to drag it from under my feet at the table.

When I reported the theft to bar staff on the night, their reaction was "it happens in here all the time".

The manager said he could ring the police for me but said it would be easier if I did it myself, even though I

had informed him that my bag and its contents had been stolen.

There was no interest from him or the staff in checking how I might get home or what help I might need.

I reported it to Wetherspoon's head office a fortnight ago but I have not heard what they plan to do, other than investigate.

I contacted the police, who I thought might at least be concerned by the bar staff's claims about the number of

thefts occurring there; and they did at least tell me that a woman had been filmed on the bar's CCTV approaching my table.

But the police at Islington informed me that unless there was CCTV footage of someone actually picking up my bag and taking it away, they would not investigate further. They do not have the resources to investigate and instead expect bars and individuals to take responsibility for their own security.

I am not a careless or naive person. I have lived in London for 20 years and have never suffered such a theft previously. But it has cost at least £500 to replace door locks and contents and I am shocked at the response of a major chain that makes good regular profits, and the Met Police.

At this rate thieves have a licence to operate in Upper Street's bars.

Rhian Beynon
Address supplied

Barts Health **NHS**
NHS Trust

Come to the first
Barts Health
Annual Public Meeting
Thursday 13 September
at 6pm

Mason Lecture Theatre, Bancroft Building, Queen Mary University, Mile End Road, London E1 4NS

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- » Ask Trust Board members questions
- » Hear about our priorities for the coming year
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All Welcome

Light refreshments served after the event

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www.bartshealth.nhs.uk

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If you have an item that is in need of repair or restoration, bring it along (or photo's, if it is big) and discuss how to bring it back to a great condition or working order.

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Don't Forget

Harrow Town Antiques Market - 22nd & 23rd September
Old Spitalfields Book & Art Markets - 29th September