November 2026 · Free · Please share

Neighbours in the Know

News for friends of Tower Hamlets Friends & Neighbours.
Befriending older people in Tower Hamlets since 1947.

This is the large print edition. It works on paper and on screen. Please pass it on to anyone who might enjoy it.

In this issue

- A few small things, just in case — page 2
- Warm Home Discount: £150 off — page 3
- Scam Watch: screen your calls — page 4
- AI — what's it all about? — page 5
- BRIDGE: a laptop to keep — page 6
- NEW: Monday drop-in at the Muslim Charity — page 7
- The Festive Tea Dance, 3 December — page 8
- Check for Changes, 17 November — page 9
- International Men's Day, 19 November — page 10
- Wellbeing for Over 60s — page 11
- To share with anyone who cares for you — page 12
- Take a break: November word search — page 13

Welcome to our November issue — the nights are drawing in. Inside: money off your heating, a friendly guide to AI, a free laptop through BRIDGE, our new Monday drop-in, and plenty to get out and about for. Put the kettle on.

NEWS FROM THFN

❄ A few small things, just in case

Most winters pass without any trouble at all. But every now and then a storm knocks the power out for a few hours, or the water goes off while a pipe is fixed. Having a few things to hand makes a big difference — not to worry, but so you can put the kettle on, have a proper cup of tea, and wait it out in comfort.

None of this is about rushing out to the shops. It is about picking up **one or two extras** on your next trip, and knowing where everything is. Here are the handful of things we would suggest:

💧 A bit of bottled water

Enough for drinking and a cuppa — a couple of big bottles tucked at the back of a cupboard will do.

🥫 A few tins

Soup, beans, tinned fruit — whatever you like, that you can eat without cooking if you need to.

🔦 A torch that works

And spare batteries. A blanket or two near the sofa for extra warmth.

📻 A way to hear the news

A battery or wind-up radio is lovely for this. A charged power bank is handy for your phone.

💊 Your usual medicines

A few days' supply to hand, and a little note of what you take and when.

💷 A bit of cash

If the card machines are off, a few notes and some change will see you through.

Would you like a tick-list to keep by the kettle? Ask your befriender for the **Be Ready** leaflet — we have it in **English and Bengali**. Or ring us on **0203 007 9120** and we will pop one in the post. Nothing to worry about, just something nice to have.

MONEY MATTERS

£ Warm Home Discount: £150 off

The **Warm Home Discount** is a one-off **£150** taken off your electricity bill over the winter. If you are on a low income and receive certain benefits — including **Pension Credit** — you may qualify.

For most people, you do not need to apply. If you qualify, your energy supplier will put the money straight onto your electricity account, or onto your pre-payment meter. You should get a letter by **January 2027**.

Not had a letter? Ring the Warm Home Discount helpline: 0800 030 9322
(Free. Mon–Fri, 8am–6pm.) Not sure if you are on Pension Credit? Ring us on **0203 007 9120** — we can check with you.

And while you are at it — join the Priority Services Register

A free service from your gas, electricity and water companies. If you are over State Pension age, have a disability, or rely on medical equipment at home, you get **advance warning of outages**, priority calls, help reading your meter, and password protection against scam callers.

Signing up is free. Ring your supplier and say you want to join the Priority Services Register. Your befriender can sit with you — just ask, or call us on **0203 007 9120**.

SCAM WATCH

⚠ Is your phone ringing off the hook? Screen your calls

Scam calls go up over the winter, especially around energy bills and pensions. The consumer group **Which?** has a simple message: **you don't have to answer every call**.

On a landline

- Let unknown numbers go to answerphone. Genuine callers will leave a message.
- Ask BT, Sky or your provider about **free call-blocking**. Most will block nuisance calls for you.

On a mobile phone

- If a number is not in your contacts, let it ring out.
- Both iPhone and Android can **silence unknown callers** automatically — your befriender can set this up for you in a few minutes.

> **If "your bank" rings, hang up and dial 159** — you will reach your real bank, safely. Never give passwords or one-time codes over the phone, however convincing the caller sounds.

Source: Which?, October 2026.

GOOD TO KNOW

AI — what's it all about?

You will have heard the letters **AI** on the news, or family talking about things like **ChatGPT** or **Alexa**. It can feel like one of those subjects everyone else has worked out. You have not missed anything.

So what is it?

AI (artificial intelligence) is computer software that can seem to "think" — it understands questions, spots patterns, and gets better over time. It is not magic, and it has no feelings or opinions, even when it sounds like a person.

Where you might already be using it

- Voice assistants like **Alexa** or **Siri**.
- Your email spam filter.
- Suggestions on BBC iPlayer or your music app.
- Some new NHS services that monitor blood pressure from home.

A word about safety

Scammers are using AI to make fake calls and even voice messages that sound like someone you know. The old advice still works: **if something feels wrong, hang up and ring the person back on a number you trust**. Never give passwords, PINs or bank details to anyone who contacts you.

Age UK has written a lovely, plain-English guide to AI. Ask your befriender for a copy, or ring us on **0203 007 9120** and we will pop one in the post.

GET INVOLVED

A free laptop — through BRIDGE



BRIDGE is a Tower Hamlets partnership tackling digital poverty. If you'd like to get online for the first time, they can help — a refurbished laptop, free of charge, plus coaching and help getting connected.

A TOWER HAMLETS PARTNERSHIP

Community TechAid · East End Community Foundation · TTB CircularIT

Supported by Barings

- We fill in a short referral form with you.
- BRIDGE prepare a laptop within **3 to 4 weeks** and arrange collection.
- You get **1-to-1 coaching** and help getting connected at home.

A tablet to try over Christmas too. Rather start short? We can lend you a tablet over the Christmas period — have a play, see if it's for you. Mention either to your befriender, or ring **0203 007 9120**. For a Christmas tablet, let us know by **Monday 1 December**.

NEWS FROM THFN

☕ New Monday drop-in at the Muslim Charity

We are starting a **new weekly drop-in** on **Monday 23 November**, at the **Muslim Charity** on Hessel Street in Whitechapel. A warm place to come for a cuppa, a chat, and good company. Open to everyone — all ages, all faiths and none.

Chair-based exercise too

As part of each session we will be running **chair-based exercise** — gentle seated movement, good for strength, balance and keeping yourself mobile. No experience needed, just come as you are.

When	**Mondays, from 23 November 2026** 10am to 12 noon
Where	Muslim Charity, 1 Hessel Street, Whitechapel, London E1 2LR
Cost	Free. All welcome.

Ask your befriender for the dates of upcoming sessions — they will have the full list.

Getting there. We are sorry — because of tight funding, we are not able to offer transport to this session. If getting there is a worry, do ring us on **0203 007 9120** and we will help you think it through — a bus route, a buddy to go with, or another option that might work.

WHAT'S ON

The Festive Tea Dance

Tower Hamlets Council is hosting its much-loved **Festive Tea Dance** for residents over 50. Live music and singing from **The Sunshine Kings**, dancing led by **Tony Lane**, and light refreshments.



When	**Thursday 3 December 2026** 1.30pm to 4.30pm
Where	The Art Pavilion, Mile End Park, Clinton Road, Bow E3 5DU
Cost	Free. Over 50s, Tower Hamlets residents only.
Booking	Opens **Tue 17 November at 9am** via Eventbrite. Numbers limited.

Not online? Call **020 7364 7900** (Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm) — places very limited, book early. Or ring us on **0203 007 9120** and we'll help you book, and arrange for you to go with other THFN friends.

WHAT'S ON

♥ Check for Changes: a women-only gathering

A warm, friendly, **women-only** event on breast awareness. Learn what is normal for your breasts, how to spot anything new or unusual, and what to do next.

You will meet **Dr Kathryn Hawkesford**, a breast cancer consultant from Barts; hear **Stef Abrar** from Tower Hamlets Public Health on reducing your risk; and listen to a personal story.



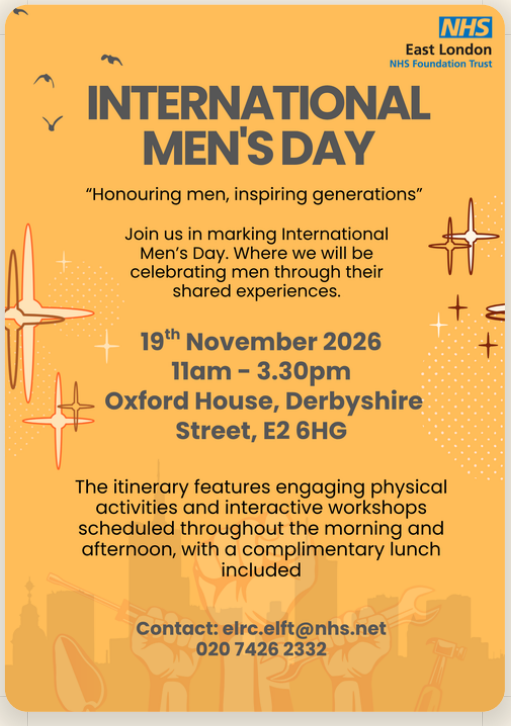
When	**Tuesday 17 November 2026** 10.15am to 12.30pm
Where	Feldy Community Centre, 18 Aberfeldy Village, E14 0XA
Cost	Free. Women only.

Run by **Well One** with **Barts Health NHS Trust** and **Breast Cancer Now**. Bengali and other interpreters on hand. To go with others from THFN, ring **0203 007 9120**.

WHAT'S ON

♂ International Men's Day

A day to celebrate men through their shared experiences, with the **East London Recovery College**. Physical activities, interactive workshops, and a complimentary lunch. Open to men of all ages.



When	**Thursday 19 November 2026** 11am to 3.30pm
Where	Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, Bethnal Green, E2 6HG
Cost	Free. Lunch included.
Contact	elrc.elft@nhs.net · 020 7426 2332

Also for men: Link In runs Saturdays, 12 noon to 3pm — a therapist-led Men's Circle plus trips around London. Email **consortium50@gmail.com**, or ring us on **0203 007 9120**.

WHAT'S ON

✿ Wellbeing for Over 60s: a free 6-week course

A friendly, free six-week course for people over 60, run by the **Globe Community Project** with **Age UK East London**. If you have been feeling alone, undervalued or low in confidence, this course is a gentle way to turn the corner. Meet interesting people, build self-esteem, pick up new skills and focus on the positives.



When	**Tuesdays, from 3 November 2026** Six weeks, 10am to 12.30pm
Where	Age UK Newham, Stratford Advice Arcade, 107–109 The Grove, Stratford, E15 1HP
Cost	Free. Limited spaces.
To book	Ring Ahmed on **07740 54 6966** or email ahmed@globecommunityproject.org

Not sure about going along on your own? Ring us on **0203 007 9120** and we will see if we can go with you.

PASS IT ON

Something to share with anyone who cares for you

If someone looks after you — family, a friend, a kind neighbour who pops in — they are a carer too, even if they would never call themselves one. These ten tips were put together by carers, for carers. Have a read, tear this page out if you like, and pass it on to whoever would benefit.

1 Make time to talk
Someone who will listen without judgement — a friend, family, or your befriender.

2 Meet other carers
People in the same boat have the best advice and know what you're going through.

3 Ask for help
You do not have to do it all alone. Say yes when people offer.

4 Speak up for yourself
Learn what support is out there, and build the confidence to ask.

5 Take a moment to recharge
A cuppa, a bath, some quiet. Even five minutes helps.

6 Find what calms you
Breathing, music, a few minutes of quiet — whatever helps you unwind.

7 Get a bit of fresh air
A short walk, a few minutes in the garden, or just stepping outside.

8 Make small moments of joy
Music you love, a hobby, a laugh — something that lifts your spirits.

9 Know your limits
It is OK to say no. Looking after yourself is not selfish — it is essential.

10 One step at a time
Focus on today. You do not have to deal with everything at once.

Would you like the full leaflet to pass on? Ask your befriender, or ring us on **0203 007 9120**. And if you yourself are looking after someone — we can help you find a little more support too.

Developed with carers, by the NIHR School for Primary Care Research and Queen Mary University of London.

TAKE A BREAK

The November word search

All ten words come from this newsletter. They run across, down or diagonally, never backwards. Pop the kettle on first.

C	O	N	X	F	M	E	C	O	W
D	N	O	G	E	U	A	O	M	I
I	L	R	S	S	U	Q	M	N	N
S	I	T	Z	T	K	O	P	O	T
C	N	A	K	I	D	U	U	V	E
O	E	B	G	V	A	C	T	E	R
U	D	L	W	E	N	H	E	M	X
N	Z	E	A	U	C	E	R	B	W
T	D	T	R	G	E	C	H	E	M
C	J	R	M	Z	K	K	I	R	W

- CHECK
- COMPUTER
- DANCE
- DISCOUNT
- FESTIVE
- NOVEMBER
- ONLINE
- TABLET
- WARM
- WINTER

Stuck on one? Ask your befriender for the answers next time they visit — half the fun is doing it together.

GET IN TOUCH

We would love to hear from you

Whatever you have read in this newsletter, if you would like to talk it through, ask us to book you onto something, or just have a friendly chat — pick up the phone.

Your befriender is always your first port of call, but the office is here for anything they cannot help with.

Tower Hamlets Friends & Neighbours

Phone: 0203 007 9120

Email: admin@thfn.org.uk

Web: www.thfn.org.uk

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Would you like this newsletter in another format — audio, bigger print, or a different language? Just ask.

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