



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.

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Welcome to our autumn issue. It is packed: an update on the Beacon incident, news from our Southend day out, how to keep your phone safe, and plenty of free things to do across London this autumn. Put the kettle on and enjoy.



NEWS FROM THFN

An update on the Beacon data incident

In our last newsletter we told you about a cyber attack on **Beacon**, the company whose system we used to keep people's details. The attack affected more than 1,000 charities across the UK, not just us. We know it was worrying news, and we are sorry.

Where things stand now

- We reported what happened to the **Information Commissioner's Office** (the ICO), which looks after data protection. The ICO reviewed it and closed its case. It needs nothing more from us.
- We are writing to, and speaking with, everyone whose details were affected.
- Beacon did not hold anyone's **bank or card details**.
- In early September, Beacon published its final report on what went wrong and the steps it has taken to stop it happening again.
- Beacon has said it is not aware of the stolen information being published anywhere.

We are keeping a close eye on developments. If anything changes that affects you, we will tell you straight away.

THFN will never ask you for:

- your bank details or PIN
- a one-time passcode sent to your phone
- money over the phone, or to move money to a “safe account”

If someone says they are from THFN and something feels wrong, **hang up and ring us on 0203 007 9120**. We would always rather you checked.



NEWS FROM THFN

Beside the seaside: our Southend day out

On Tuesday 29 September, friends, befrienders and staff swapped Tower Hamlets for the seafront at **Southend-on-Sea**. A change of scene, fresh sea air and good company: days out like this are one of the simplest ways we know to beat loneliness.

Thank you to everyone who came along, and to the volunteers who helped make the day happen. We will share photos on our website soon.

Missed out this time? Call us on **0203 007 9120** and we will add your name to the list for future trips.

SCAM WATCH



Is your phone playing up? It could be a dodgy app

The consumer group **Which?** says that when people think their phone has been hacked, the cause is usually an app they downloaded. Often it is one pretending to be a handy tool, such as a QR code scanner or a PDF reader. Most cases involve Android phones, but iPhone users can be caught out too.

Warning signs

- Pop-ups and adverts that keep appearing, even after you switch the phone off and on
- Messages telling you to “clean” or “boost” your phone, call a number, or install another app
- Apps you don’t remember installing
- Your home screen or settings suddenly look different

What to do

- 1. Don’t do what the pop-up says.** Don’t ring the number and don’t install anything.
- 2. Look at your recent apps.** Remove anything you don’t recognise, especially if it arrived around the time the trouble started.
- 3. Stop website pop-ups.** In your web browser’s settings, block notifications from any websites you don’t know.
- 4. If you typed in bank details,** ring your bank on a number you trust and change your passwords.

Five ways to stay safe

- Only download apps from the official app store on your phone, and check the reviews first.
- Don't download apps you don't need. Your phone's camera can already read QR codes.
- Be wary if an app asks for things it shouldn't need, like a torch app wanting your contacts or text messages.
- Install updates when your phone offers them.
- Don't tap links in unexpected texts, emails or social media messages.

Not confident with your phone? Ask your befriender or someone you trust to go through these checks with you. Nobody should feel silly for asking.

Source: Which?, August 2026. More at [which.co.uk](https://www.which.co.uk)

Report a scam

- Forward scam texts free to **7726**.
- If "your bank" rings, hang up and dial **159** to reach your real bank.
- Report scams at **reportfraud.police.uk** or call **101**.
- If money has been taken, ring your bank straight away.



MONEY MATTERS

Do you know your State Pension age?

Pension Awareness Week, held earlier this month, asked everyone to take one simple step: check their State Pension age.

Most of our readers already get their State Pension. But the age is changing. It is **rising from 66 to 67 between 2026 and 2028**, so younger family members, carers and neighbours may reach it later than they expect. Please pass this on.

Check it in two minutes

gov.uk/state-pension-age

For free, impartial help with pensions, visit
moneyhelper.org.uk

Remember

Cold calling about pensions is **banned**. Anyone who rings out of the blue offering a “free pension review” is a scammer. Hang up.



WHAT'S ON

Let's Discuss Death

Let's Discuss Death and Bethnal Green Library are hosting **two days of free events** about dying, death and grief, in a welcoming community space.

There will be creative workshops, a **Grief Café**, conversations about organ donation, and practical sessions on how to support the people you love at the end of their life. There is also space to sit quietly, and a chance to meet local organisations and find out what support is out there.

All are welcome. No experience needed, just curiosity and an open mind.



When

Wednesday 28 and Thursday 29 October

Where

Bethnal Green Library

Cost

Free, but please book

Book

eventbrite.com/cc/lets-discuss-death-oct-2026-4878058

Not online? Call us on **0203 007 9120** and we will help you book. And if these are hard things to think about, your befriender is always there to talk.



WHAT'S ON

Link In: a Saturday meet-up for men

Link In is looking for new members. It meets on Saturday afternoons and offers:

- **Men's Circle:** a safe space for conversation and support, led by a therapist. Includes a hot lunch. Monthly, at The Cabin, E14 3QY.
- **Meet-ups:** trips around London to museums, parks, cafés and more. Monthly, with the odd midweek outing.
- **One-to-one support** and help finding other services.



When

Saturdays, 12 noon to 3pm

Cost

Free. A small donation towards refreshments is welcome but optional.

Contact

consortium50@gmail.com
@consortium50 on Facebook and Instagram



WHAT'S ON

Rock Against Ageism with Toyah

Age UK London is launching its new **Rock Against Ageism** series with an intimate fireside chat with **Toyah Willcox**, part of its London Against Ageism campaign.

Punk star, actress, broadcaster and author, Toyah has spent more than 50 years doing things her own way. Now 68, she will talk about her career, whether ageism has touched her working life, and why growing older is something to celebrate, not fear.

When

18 November, 2.30pm to 4.30pm

Where

Cecil Sharp House, Camden. Step-free access to all floors.

Tickets

Book through Age UK London. Places are limited, and money raised supports its campaign against ageism.

Free seats for people on a low income

Age UK London is offering a limited number of free places. To ask about one, or to nominate someone, email supportercare@ageuklondon.org.uk. Everything is treated confidentially.

Not online? Call us on **0203 007 9120** and we can ask on your behalf.



GET INVOLVED

Become a GamCare Community Champion

Gambling harm can mean debt, family breakdown, poor mental health and isolation. It affects people of every age, including older people. **GamCare**, the leading national provider of free advice and support, is looking for Community Champions to help people in their own communities.

No experience is needed. It is a flexible role, and you would:

- learn about gambling harms and how to spot them
- share information about the free support that is available
- help GamCare reach people, including older adults, disabled people and communities who are often missed
- tell GamCare about local events and give your views through surveys and workshops

In return, you get training and support, and your expenses are covered. People with lived experience of gambling harms are especially welcome.

Interested?

Contact **Judith Daniels**, Outreach and Training Team Leader at GamCare, on **07947 922358**.

Worried about gambling, yours or someone else's? The National Gambling Helpline is free, confidential and open 24 hours a day: **0808 8020 133**.



TAKE A BREAK

The autumn word search

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

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

CHAMPION

GRIEF

LIBRARY

MOVEMENT

PENSION

PHONE

SEASIDE

SOUTHEND

TOYAH

UPDATE



WHAT'S ON

Moving Recovery

Outside Edge runs **Moving Recovery**, a relaxed and welcoming creative movement group for adults affected by addiction. Move at your own pace, meet others, build confidence and look after your body and mind. No experience needed, and everyone is welcome, whatever their ability.

When

Every Thursday, 6.30pm to 8.30pm, from
1 October to 17 December

Where

Fitzrovia Community Centre, 2 Foley
Street, London W1W 6DL

Register

tfaforms.com/4915195

Get in touch



Phone: 0203 007 9120

Email: admin@thfn.org.uk

Web: www.thfn.org.uk

Tower Hamlets Friends & Neighbours, St Margaret's House,
21 Old Ford Road, London E2 9PL

Would you like this newsletter in another format? Just ask.

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