

# NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2015

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All the events below are held in St. Peter's Church Crypt, at the junction of De Beauvoir Road and Northchurch Terrace

## Autumn Nature Day

Saturday 17 October, 10.30am-4.30pm

### Street trees, birds and foxes in De Beauvoir

10.30-1.00: guided walk with Hackney Council's tree expert to look at street planting and autumn colour, £5 (meet outside St. Peter's Church and pay on arrival)

1.00-2.00 simple soup lunch, tea and coffee available in the Cafe

2.00-4.30 talks on feeding and housing birds through the winter and on the management of urban foxes, in the Main Hall, and children's activities and tea and cakes in the Cafe.

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## AGM/Refugees in De Beauvoir

Tuesday 27 October, 7.30pm, Admission free

There will be a short De Beauvoir Association AGM at which the draft amended constitution and our activities and future plans can be discussed, and a committee will be elected. We will then hear from Tom Carter of the DBWR group (see back page), and discuss the group's aims, approach, and progress so far, and the practical challenges of bringing refugees into local homes. Bar available.

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## The DBA Christmas Fair

Saturday 28 November, 11am-5pm, admission £1

The ever-popular De Beauvoir Christmas Fair is back again so don't buy your Christmas presents until you've paid us a visit. This year's stallholders will be selling delectable eats, Christmas cards, housewares, pet treats, garden must-haves, children's toys and games, "made in De Beauvoir" items and a host of other lovely things. And as usual, there will be refreshments on sale to sustain you.

All DBA profit will be donated to charity.

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## Around the town

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### THE ROSEMARY BRANCH

2 Shepperton Road, N1 3DT  
**until 17 October - Empty Vessels**  
**13,14 November-Into the Breach**  
**8 December to 10 January-**  
**Clementine's Seasonal Spectacular**  
[www.rosemarybranch.co.uk](http://www.rosemarybranch.co.uk)  
Tel: 020 7704 6665 24 – hour box office.

### DE BEAUVOIR GARDENERS

St. Peter's Crypt, Northchurch Terrace  
**First Tuesday of each month 8pm.**  
**3 November - Endangered Plant**  
**Species**, Catherine Rutherford,  
Biodiversity Projects Officer at Kew  
**1 December-Freedom from Torture**  
**Natural growth project**, plus mulled  
wine etc  
[www.debeauvoirgardeners.org.uk](http://www.debeauvoirgardeners.org.uk)

### THE SCOLT HEAD

107A Culford Road  
**Pub Quiz: every Monday 8 pm**  
**Jazz with Peter Werth:**  
**22 October 8 pm**  
**26 November 8 pm**

### THE PROUD ARCHIVIST

2-10 Hertford Road  
[www.theproudarchivist.co.uk/whats-on](http://www.theproudarchivist.co.uk/whats-on)

### DE BEAUVOIR WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

St Peter's Crypt, Northchurch Terrace  
**First Thursday of each month 7.30 pm**  
[www.debeauvoirwi.com](http://www.debeauvoirwi.com)  
(see coming events on p3)

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## Ephson

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An African Evening at the Rosemary Branch Theatre on Sept 6th and an earlier cocktail party in the garden of residents Cec and Jules Darker raised money for our dear friend Ephson Ngadye who is desperately in need of a bone marrow transplant.

The benefit included actors Janet Suzman, Janet Henfrey and Peter Searles reading Zimbabwean poetry. Funds raised contributed to the £20,000 Ephson needs for treatment for cancer.

I met Ephson Ngadye, director of the Grassroots Performing Arts Group, after my son, Zek Hoeben, spent time teaching in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. He was impressed by Ephson's dedication to teaching performing arts, dance and music to disenfranchised young people. Zek helped Ephson come to the UK for an MA in Theatre for Development and

during this time Ephson spent much of his time with our family and in our home, and we came to regard him as our "African son" - his description.

Since then we have seen Ephson make the best imaginable use of his MA both in the UK and in Zimbabwe.

Then just when Ephson had decided he must spend more time in his own country, he was diagnosed with life-threatening myeloma. He has been having chemotherapy in Zimbabwe but his chances of any sustained survival depend on the bone marrow treatment which we hope to get for him at the end of the year.

### Angela Neustatter

*To donate go to <http://www.gofundme.com/qxawsw>*

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## WI's social pressure

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The Women's Institute (WI) celebrates its centenary in 2015, marking 100 years in which jam has been made and cakes have been baked while at the same time hundreds of thousands of bold, brilliant women have been quietly campaigning to change all parts of society. From campaigns about venereal disease in the 1920s, to gender equality in the workplace in 1943; from Fair Trade to breast cancer screening to climate change; the WI has campaigned on issues way ahead of public awareness.

Every year each individual WI has the opportunity, through the resolutions process, to turn a concern into a national campaign, backed by the weight of the whole WI movement.

This year De Beauvoir WI put forward a resolution seeking to make Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) compulsory in all schools and to include issues around consent, healthy and respectful relationships, gender stereotyping and online pornography. Although many believe that SRE is compulsory in all schools, at present they are only required to teach the biological basics of sexual reproduction by the age of 15; anything beyond this is voluntary.

Young people are growing up bom-

barded with negative and conflicting messages about sex, relationships and gender roles. It is in this climate that a recent Freedom of Information request revealed more than 5,500 sexual assaults in schools in the past three years.

Our De Beauvoir resolution may not make it through the democratic process (you can check out the progress at [www.debeauvoirwi.com](http://www.debeauvoirwi.com)) but no matter which resolution is adopted, it will have the voices of more than 200,000 women campaigning for change.

The De Beauvoir WI is open to all women and guests are very welcome at a charge of £5 per meeting. We meet on the first Thursday of every month at The Crypt at St Peter's Church.

### Events

Oct 1<sup>st</sup>: Bee keeping & honey in De Beauvoir  
Nov 5<sup>th</sup>: Meg Hillier MP  
Dec 3<sup>rd</sup>: Christmas craft making, cards, jewellery & more  
Jan 7<sup>th</sup>: 2016 Hula Hoop Workshop  
We also run a monthly book group, knit-and-natter group and a jewellery-making group as well as evening social events outside our monthly meetings. For further information see the website or contact [debeauvoirwi@hotmail.com](mailto:debeauvoirwi@hotmail.com)



Amanda Lovegrove of the DBWI (left) with friend at a recent Buckingham Palace garden party for WI members

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## From the Archives

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Hackney and Kingsland Gazette  
November 25 1871

The newspaper reports that 40 gentlemen sat down “to a most sumptuous dinner” at the Sussex Arms (today the Scolt Head) to mark the second anniversary of the De Beauvoir Town Philanthropic Society. The secretary reported that “during the late inclement weather it had relieved with coals, bread and in some cases with money, not less than 400 of the most deserving poor.”

Chairman  
Mr Taylor  
reported that  
“care was  
exercised  
to see that

funds were distributed to those only whose conduct entitled them”. He said the group had £50 available (more than £4,000 in today’s money) to spend on coal and bread during the coming Christmas period. Between toasts, the impressive sum of £10 10s was collected in the room.



Singers and musicians entertained the diners. “The dinner was served in excellent style, and the dishes were most abundant and various, reflecting much credit on (landlords) Mr and Mrs Mann, to whose liberality a warm tribute was paid by the chairman and the whole assembly.”

“It was not until the ‘Act of Parliament’ (ie closing time) admonished them, that this cheerful party of the true friends of the poor, sought their respective homes.”

The report  
did not say  
how the  
funds were  
raised but  
Victorian

London had a growing need for philanthropy. The national charity Family Action, which has an office in De Beauvoir at 501-505 Kingsland Road, has its origins in the Charity Organisation Society, formed in the same year as the De Beauvoir Town Philanthropic Society.

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## The best party in town?

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The 11<sup>th</sup> (yes, 11<sup>th</sup>!) great annual Party in the Park took place in De Beauvoir Square on Saturday July 11th. Loads of people came, fun was had, and the weather was good, so buckets of Pimm’s were drunk and the Shoreditch fire crew hosed excited children and dogs. Every part of the gardens had some activity or other squeezed into it, especially for children. (One day we really should

count how many faces get painted by four face painters in three hours, working flat out...) We introduced a barbecue for the first time, and the combination of the sound of the steel band (also new this year) and the smell of barbecuing food made 2015’s Party feel particularly summery.

**Kirsty Norman**

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## Interim head at DB school

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Sophie Blume took up the position of Interim Head at De Beauvoir School in September. Having lived and worked in Hackney for many years, she was already well acquainted with the local area.

“I had hoped to come and live here a couple of years ago,” laughs Sophie, who trained as an architect before moving into teaching. “But I’ve ended up living in the north of the borough instead.”

Coming back to lead one of De Beauvoir’s biggest schools, which has a two-form entry, for the next 12 months has been a real coup. Along with loving the area, working with large, inner-city schools is where her passion lies.

“I’ve spent my whole teaching career in London, because I love how the children are so bright and inquisitive and eager to learn about the world. That’s exactly what I’ve found here at De Beauvoir School. The parents have been so welcoming and the children are full of confidence and enthusiasm, coming up to me in the playground to introduce themselves,” she said.

Much will be happening over the next 12 months, which mostly continues

the good work started last year by former head, Ed Coogan. The school’s Suzuki violin project continues apace, a steel band is currently being set up, and a Hackney artist will be joining the children and teachers shortly

to encourage more creativity in the classroom.

Meanwhile, focus continues on phonics and reading, along with the introduction of a standardised homework book, which will bring a consistent format to homework completion right across the school. “Teachers love it, and we think families will love it too,” smiles Sophie.

Outside the classroom, plans are being drawn up to inject more colour into the playground, while the parents are working on relaunching

the PTA. Come this time next year, the plan is for standards to have risen further, and a new permanent head to be in place. Sophie Blume will then return to her role as Leadership & Management Advisor at the Learning Trust, Hackney Council’s education department.

*De Beauvoir School is running tours for the parents of children starting school in September 2016. Call 020 7254 2317 or visit [www.debeauvoir.hackney.sch.uk](http://www.debeauvoir.hackney.sch.uk) to book into one.*

**Barbara Walshe**



Sophie Blume

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# Focus on cycling

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A new kind of bike shop opened in Southgate Road last year and it's already making a name for itself.

Micycle East, the third branch in a chain (no pun intended), is co-owned by Sam Jacob, 31, who gave up his job as a corporate tax accountant to turn his love of bikes into a business. It now employs four full-time and two part-time staff.

It started with Sam working at the original Micycle in Islington, founded by Matthew Hilton. "I got a proper Saturday job in the bike shop and really enjoyed it and asked Matthew if he would like to set up a third Micycle." Finsbury Park is the location of another branch.

The shop in Southgate Road, the site of a former spring factory, had been rebuilt by the Benyon Estate and was vacant. "The Benyon Estate approached Matthew because they had heard good things about Micycle in Islington," said Sam.

"Five years ago, all of the bike shops were run by very bikey people and they were geared up towards young men, like the people staffing the shops, and Matthew realised most people are not that bikey. They are just people who have a bike and when they go to get their bike fixed they just want to receive good service and be treated nicely

and go into a nice welcoming friendly place," said Sam. "So that was the idea behind Micycle and it proved to be very popular."

The shop specialises in two bike brands – Bobbin and Bianchi. The Bobbins are conventional bikes, often in bright colours, designed by Shoreditch-based Tom Morris and Sian Emmison and ranging from £350 to £550. Bianchis are high-spec Italian-designed racing bikes that start at £750.



Sam Jacob

For the demanding road cyclist, Micycle has also started working with a De Beauvoir based engineer, James O'Sullivan, who is making steel bike frames in a workshop behind his house in Englefield Road. One of his customers was recently pedalling up one of the challenging Tour de France hills at Alpe d'Huez in France. "Recent advances make steel a good material – light and durable," said James. Micycle will sell the frame or build a bike onto it; the frames start at about £800 so they are not really for popping along to the shops on.

Sam, who cycles to De Beauvoir from Muswell Hill every day, has "at least six bikes" of his own. He isn't sure of the

number.

One of the things that makes Micycle different is that customers can sign up for membership that offers regular servicing and cleaning as well as the use of the workshop and tools on the premises. They also offer decent coffee.

"Sales have been quite strong but our

Residents of Northchurch Terrace have signed a petition asking TfL and Hackney Council to look again at the route of the north-south Cycle Superhighway 1 through the area. Hackney Mayor Jules Pipe defended the proposals and TfL shows no sign of bending; the residents are worried that work has started before their concerns are properly addressed. They say none of their concerns were reflected in the results of the consultation that came out in March.

They have now contacted the two Hackney councillors and Andrew Gilligan, the Mayor's "cycling tsar", in the hope that they might help get the attention of Transport for London.

The proposed route of CS1 northbound runs along De Beauvoir Road, left into Northchurch Terrace, right into Culford Road as far as Balls Pond Road. The junction of Ardleigh Road at Culford Road is due to be closed off but TfL says it is rethinking that. A separate closure is planned where Tottenham Road meets Kingsland Road.

main focus is the servicing because that's not something you can get online and it's something that's recurring," said Sam.

Customers include local residents but also those who want their bike serviced while at work nearby in places like the Briggs building.

The residents say there has been no proper plan for traffic management in the area. "If you close a street to traffic, it goes somewhere else. It doesn't just disappear," said Nancy Korman, one of the signatories. "They should give us a map of where the traffic will go."

There is also concern for safety of both cyclists and pedestrians in the area because of the points where their routes cross in De Beauvoir Road and at the corner of Culford Road and Northchurch Terrace. An existing busy east-west cycle route uses Northchurch Terrace. All the homes in the section of Northchurch Terrace affected have signed the petition.



TfL has not explained why CS1 does not either use Lawford Road/Culford Road at its full length, taking advantage of the existing traffic lights in Downham Road to ensure safety when the cyclists join De Beauvoir Road; or use De Beauvoir Road from end to end, using the much quieter Tottenham Road to get to Culford Road and Balls Pond Road.

Sam Jacob, co-owner of Micycle East in Southgate Road, was also doubtful

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## De Beauvoir's forgotten community centre

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The first edition of the 'Hackney People's Press' newspaper in 1973 bore the front page headline 'THE PEOPLE TAKE THE LAND'. The story concerned a neglected, council-owned area at the very bottom of Ufton Road, where it meets Downham Road. Residents were reportedly exasperated over council inaction and had decided "to take matters into their own hands". Over several weekends, they cleared the site by hand, and transformed it into a children's adventure playground.

Over the next decade, this open space, together with a neighbouring factory building, was redeveloped as The Ufton Community Centre. State-funded but entirely locally organised, it included a youth club, community space and outdoor play spaces.

The event celebrated by the People's Press makes a convenient point of origin for the Ufton Centre, but it's better understood in the context of several other events, earlier or further afield.

The area was one of several in De Beauvoir that were bombed in the Blitz and by the early 1970s derelict 'pre-fab' housing remained as the site became an unofficial dump. The newly

built De Beauvoir Estate had brought an estimated 1500 extra children in to the area, but provided only two, small outdoor play spaces to complement the one other in De Beauvoir, in the Square.

This was all against a UK backdrop of ever-more independently established and organised play spaces. The 1960s saw the rise in the UK of the playgroup movement, and by the early 1970s the 'junk playgrounds' that began in Denmark during World War Two had been replicated across dozens of sites similarly vacant from wartime bombing.



Children play in the Ufton Road playground in this picture from the 1970s (Photo: Michael Ward)

De Beauvoir residents wrote to the council in late 1972 and again in early 1973 to demand the same happen on Ufton Road, as a temporary measure. With no response, the date

was set for a 'DIY' solution. Resident-organisers secured funding from the ILEA (Inner London Education Authority) and staff from the charity Community Service Volunteers.

The completed adventure playground was open on weekday evenings, weekends and school holidays. An estimated 200 children visited regularly,

predominantly aged between eight and twelve, and mostly from De Beauvoir Estate. The summer holiday saw day-trips for local children around and beyond London.

By the end of the year, with only "a tacit agreement not to evict" from the council, the idea was hatched to convert and incorporate the adjacent factory building abandoned by the WRVS (Women's Royal Voluntary Service) after the war. The council received a formal proposal from three De Beauvoir community groups with enthusiasm, but three years of inaction followed, not least because of the economic downturn.

By 1978, funding from local and central government paid for renovation works to begin, as the adventure playground was finally closed. On 2 March 1981, the Ufton Centre opened, soon followed by an official opening event on 12 June. By the end of that year, a weekly events programme was firmly established that included keep-fit classes, yoga, tai chi, dressmaking, screenprinting, 'mums and toddlers' sessions, dressmaking and lunches for older people.

It was to be short-lived. Documents from 1986 suggest a still-vibrant programme that included Introduction to Black Studies classes and productions by the Inner City Theatre Company (by then a tenant within the factory building) but volunteers say the centre's former dynamism was then waning.

None can remember exactly how it ended. The reopening of the Metropolitan Hospital as artists' workspace in 1982 eventually drew the ICTC away. Other suggestions are that with Margaret Thatcher's abolition of the Greater London Council, the ILEA would have deprived the centre of crucial funds, or simply that local authority budget cuts after her 1987 re-election could have made the difference. Equally, the centre was reportedly broken into several times and suffered at least one fire. By the close of the 1980s, the site had been redeveloped as the homes that stand today.

Alan Rayner, who lived opposite the Ufton Centre throughout its life and was involved for much of that time, has a view on most likely cause of its decline: "It was on the basis of people contributing what they could, and what they felt comfortable with doing. We muddled along on that basis, until suddenly, we found we couldn't do as much as we could in the past and people just dropped by the wayside and things faded."

*The research for this article was compiled as part of the project Own De Beauvoir!, with the support of Open School East, the arts organisation upstairs in the Rose Lipman Centre. A book will be published in January 2016 with accompanying public events: see [www.openschooleast.org](http://www.openschooleast.org) ('Other Projects') for details*

**Jonathan Hoskins**

**JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST.** We send emails about De Beauvoir news and events once or twice a week to 600 local addresses. They are brief and available in plain text only. If you are not on the list, you could be missing out on something important.

Check out our website too on [www.debeauvoir.org.uk](http://www.debeauvoir.org.uk); email [info@debeauvoir.org.uk](mailto:info@debeauvoir.org.uk)

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## Flowering nicely

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Like so many good stories, it all started over a pint. Except that Anna Day and Ellie Jauncey were not the ones drinking. Both were working behind the bar at the Scolt Head when they discovered their shared love of flowers.

Anna had a degree in illustration and was studying midwifery. Ellie's background was in fashion textiles. Yet the idea of doing something together grew and grew.

Fast forward five years, and The Flower Appreciation Society is now a fully-fledged successful business with a studio on Southgate Road, a book published, and a list of clients that includes Harvey Nichols, Simone Rocha, Topshop, Asos, and Molton Brown.

"We didn't have much money at the start, so we put a lot of energy into getting going," admits Ellie. "We were also really lucky with word of mouth, friends starting to get married, and the fact people seemed to like our approach."

It was different from anything else on the market back then.

Both did floristry courses and work experience at different companies, but Anna remembers: "While they were doing quite beautiful flowers, everything else like the cards they sent out and their website was so unconsidered. I

thought 'Wouldn't it be amazing to do it all and care about everything?'"

That's what people get with The Flower Appreciation Society. From the hand illustrated cards to the quirky jars they use for wedding arrangements and parties, everything has their unique stamp.

And they love their location. They used to take over kitchen tables, borrow rooms and even work out of pub car parks to fulfil orders. Nowadays everything is run from their colourful studio, including a variety of courses such as wreath making.

Delivering flowers weekly to The Scolt Head, Sweet Thursday, the De Beauvoir Arms, and Judith Hale's Café in the Crypt on Fridays, De Beauvoir is special to both of them – but it's also where Anna grew up.

Hailing from Ocken-don Road, she says: "I love having my family, friends and business right here. There's an amazing community in De Beauvoir, we feel really lucky to be here."



Ellie (left) and Anna

*'The Flower Appreciation Society' is published by Sphere and is available at Waterstone's and on Amazon. Theflowerappreciationsociety.co.uk*

**Barbara Walshe**

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## The Dalston Plaza cinema

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In an earlier issue we wrote about the long demolished Odeon Dalston in Stamford Road, but in fact De Beauvoir was served by a second cinema, now also lost, which stood at 570-572 Kingsland Rd on what is now the entrance/exit for buses below Dalston Towers.

One of the area's early cinemas, it opened as the Kingsland Imperial Picture Theatre in 1912, showing silent movies, and with seating for 500. In 1930, sound equipment was installed, and early in 1933 it was expanded. It reopened as the Dalston Plaza with 1,250 seats, 150 of them in the newly added circle.

The Plaza was not one of Hackney's grandest cinemas, but even here, the interior décor was fairly lavish. An article at the time describes its "colour scheme of gold and venetian red, with shell pink lighting and a relieving contrast of green for seating and carpeting ... The proscenium is plain and nearly square with a black base and a top finish of futuristic design in gold brightly relieved with reds and blues".

The Plaza was an independent cinema, unlike the nearby Odeon, and is fondly remembered on Charles Jenkins' "East End memories" website: "Two films were shown together with trailers and advertisements. I don't believe that the Plaza screened a newsreel since it was not associated with a major chain. Like

most of the cinema-going public of that era, we went into the cinema at a time that was convenient to us and rarely, if ever, at the start of a film. For some reason, this never seemed to bother patrons and certainly did not spoil their pleasure."

"When seated comfortably in such a cinema where there were few patrons in the vicinity, (my mother) was not adverse to the occasional nosh as long as the rules were kept. I remember that I would be given a bag to hold my bagel, which also served to catch my crumbs."

The cinema, which was built well

forward of the line of Victorian buildings, (see the photo) had to close because London County Council planned to widen the Kingsland Road. It ended its history of entertaining the neighbourhood with appropriate



drama on 19 December 1959, with "The Curse of the Undead" and "Terror in the Midnight Sun".

The façade was demolished and the remains of the building became the Dalston Snooker Centre, with a large Oxfam shop in front of it. The buildings were finally cleared in spring 2009 as part of the Dalston Junction redevelopment. The independent Rio remains our only local cinema.

**Kirsty Norman**

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# DBA Annual General Meeting

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The DBA Committee has worked on updating the constitution to remove redundant material and expand on the organisation's aims and objects and the changes will be put to the AGM on 27 October. The draft constitution can be found on our website at [http://www.](http://www.debeauvoir.org.uk/draftconstitution.html)

[debeauvoir.org.uk/draftconstitution.html](http://www.debeauvoir.org.uk/draftconstitution.html)  
The meeting will also elect the committee, to which we would like to attract new members. Please get in touch if you are interested.

The main part of the evening will be a discussion about refugees. (see below)

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## De Beauvoir to welcome refugees?

Four local residents asked themselves one evening recently what practical support the local community might offer to refugees. Their thought was that some households might be willing to offer temporary accommodation; it could also include other appropriate support, e.g. English conversation groups, play activities for children, art classes, help with cultural integration etc.

The group, provisionally calling the initiative De Beauvoir Welcomes Refugees, then met on 11 September, and invited representatives of the DBA, the local churches and various other local networks: the intention being to harness the collective resources of the community, and to liaise with relevant agencies/authorities.

The first meeting aimed simply to explore objectives and practicalities, and to identify next steps, before any wider engagement with the local community. A central principle, reaffirmed at the meeting, is that whatever emerges should complement and not compete with other initiatives.

It was agreed as a first step to make contact with Hackney Council through local Councillor James Peters with a view to seeking a meeting with the relevant Council officials handling the Borough's refugee programme. The AGM will provide a chance for us to report on progress, and answer questions. Further information will then be sent out via local email networks.

**Tom Carter** [tom.carter44@icloud.com](mailto:tom.carter44@icloud.com)

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## Cycling - continued from page seven

about the plans. He said: "I love the idea of providing routes for cyclists but am sceptical if it will be of any benefit. I have only found them useful in South London when I don't know the way and follow the blue paint. Cycle lanes are so terribly implemented over here. It needs to be very good to impress me."

There may be other residents who

are also concerned about the route, and about the speed with which work is going ahead to implement it, and if so, Nancy would like to hear from you as soon as possible ([nancylkorman@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:nancylkorman@hotmail.co.uk)).

**Paul Bolding**