

OUR Bromley

LONDON'S BEST BOROUGH

DECEMBER 2024 | ISSUE 5



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We are moving...

From **Tuesday 17 December 2024** Bromley Council will move to:

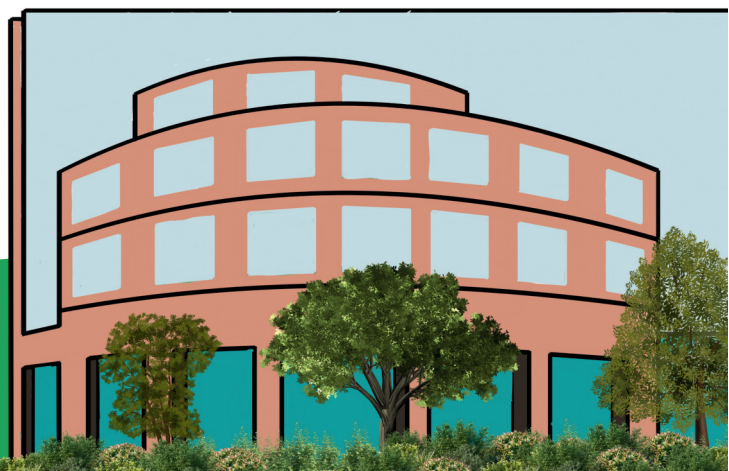


**Civic Centre
Churchill Court
Westmoreland Road
Bromley
BR1 1DP**

The Civic Centre main reception can be found on the High Street opposite the Police Station and near Bromley South train station

For more about this cost saving move, visit
bromley.gov.uk/CivicCentre

or scan



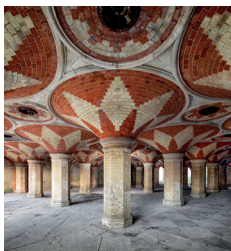
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Dear Resident,

It's difficult to believe it's late November isn't it? Another year has been and gone in a flash.

A year to look back on with some satisfaction locally given the Council's successful completion of its multi-million pound saving move from Civic Centre to Churchill Court at Bromley South, finally managing to secure a location for a brand new state of the art Health and Wellbeing Centre for Bromley with our Health partners and, fingers crossed, imminently being able to announce final confirmation of an exciting new future for our Borough's much-loved Churchill Theatre as well.

I hope that you find this edition of interest, in particular, the article on Council Tax which I have been warning on for some time, but which is now bubbling to the top of the national news agenda given the extremely serious problems faced across Local Government and beyond due to the spiralling cost of Housing, SEN packages and the cost of Adult Care.

On behalf of everyone at Bromley Council, may I wish every single one of you the happiest Christmas ever, but please don't forget those without friends and family to share it with.

A simple hello and a five-minute chat can make the world of difference.

Happy Christmas.

Clr Colin P. Smith
 Bromley Council Leader

Follow us at: /lbbromley @LBofBromley /LBBromley

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Bromley has a range of jobs available so why not apply and take your next exciting career step?

Join our Outstanding Children's Services Team

Being a Social Worker is more than a vocation. We encourage and support colleagues to grow their professional expertise and their career with Bromley.

Our Outstanding Team love working for Bromley, but don't take our word for it – see and listen to what they have to say from their own personal experience.



"It has not only looked at my strengths but also is using my strengths and putting a space for my strengths to develop."



"There is a real commitment to the social services workforce to make sure the environment is conducive to and supportive to staff and enables them to thrive."



"It's a place I know that I will be supported."



"It feels like a family that respects me and that's reciprocated."



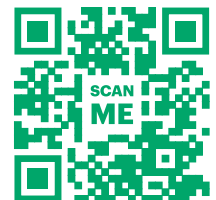
"You get offered tailored personal development in terms of your career."



"We are ambitious for our children and families and we care about them. If you want to grow, develop, learn and be somewhere safe, here is where you come and do it."

If you don't immediately see something that's right for you, please do register your interest online by joining our Talent Pool.

Go online to see the team talking about what they like about Bromley



For more information visit:
www.bromley.gov.uk/JobsforSocialWorkers

Respect - Empower - Ambition - Learn

News Round-up

The latest on our Borough - find out more at www.bromley.gov.uk/news
 You can sign up for the Our Bromley newsletter - straight to your email inbox

Shop Local

The lights are on and the action is in the Borough's shopping streets. Nothing beats the drama of shopping 'live' and visiting your nearby friendly high street which also supports the local economy. There are plenty of cosy cafes and restaurants for a welcome rest between the last-minute festive shopping.

Books and More

There's always a warm welcome at your local library. Find an amazing array of books as well activities ranging from Baby Rhyme Time for younger residents to Knit and Natter for the grown-ups. Check before you travel as Chislehurst, Beckenham, Burnt Ash and West Wickham libraries are closed for refurbishment,

opening next year. Chislehurst temporary library will be at Hornbrook House from mid-December. www.bromley.gov.uk/libraries



HAPPY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR READERS

Opening Hours and Parking

Civic Centre – the Council is moving to Churchill Court with the new reception opening Tue 17 December, after a one-day closure the day before, Mon 16 December *More on page 12.*

Reuse and Recycling Centres – Waldo Road will close at the end of the day on 2 February for a major upgrade. Churchfields Road site will remain open with a booking only system in place to manage extra demand. *See page 17.*

DATE	PARKING RESTRICTIONS	BUS LANE/ MOVING TRAFFIC RESTRICTIONS	ON-STREET PAID FOR PARKING BAYS /PERMIT BAYS	ALL COUNCIL OPERATED CAR PARKS
Christmas Day Wed 25 Dec 2024	Please park considerately	Please drive safely	Free	Free
Boxing Day Thurs 26 Dec 2024	Normal Thursday restrictions apply	Normal Thursday restrictions apply	Free	Charges apply
New Year's Day Wed 1 Jan 2025	Normal Wednesday restrictions apply	Normal Wednesday restrictions apply	Free	Charges apply

Bromley Council's website provides information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, even when we are closed.
 Report, apply and pay online www.bromley.gov.uk



Winner of the Diane Smith Award for Outstanding Contribution to Adult Care in Bromley

SEND Stars

November was dedicated to celebrating the achievements of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), their parents, carers, siblings, and professionals who support them in Bromley. More than 100 'SEND Stars' were nominated for their contributions including children and young people for their own personal achievements.

www.bromley.gov.uk/localoffer

Care that counts

Adult Social Care Awards 2024 recognised staff across Bromley's Adult Care sector for their contributions and crucial daily care to support residents. The Awards shine a light on and say thanks for the vital support to help residents live their best possible life.

www.bromley.gov.uk/CareAwards

LBB turns 60

The 60th anniversary next year of the London Borough of Bromley coming into being is cause for celebration, so look out for more information soon on events across the Borough to mark this historic year.



Waldo Road closing for upgrade

A major infrastructure upgrade of Waldo Road depot, which includes the Reuse and Recycling Centre will take place in 2025, necessitating a one-year closure of the site from closing time on 2 February. Essential works will improve drainage, add a new roof, wall cladding and a fire suppression system. Churchfields Road site will remain open to residents with a booking only system in place. More information: see Environment Matters page 17.

Churchill Theatre

An offer has been accepted, which could enable the future of Bromley town's much-loved theatre to be secured. Subject to a legal agreement, this will give long term security to the theatre which was constructed in the 1970s and is now approaching the end of its design life. The relocation of Bromley's Central Library has been agreed to the former Top Shop premises on the high street.





Leisure gets some love

Substantial £36 million refurbishments are taking place at two leisure centres in the Borough. West Wickham is closed with work under way and the Walnuts will close from 5 January for its refurbishment. Both are expected to re-open in 2026 when residents will be able to enjoy vastly improved facilities, including the pools, changing rooms and showers and new studios providing power assisted equipment. My time Active, the Borough's leisure provider, has a programme of alternative leisure services in place during the closures. Follow progress at www.bromley.gov.uk/LeisureCentresRefurbishment

Keeping in trim

Garden hedges, shrubs, tree branches and even plants can grow beyond garden boundaries making it difficult for people to walk past on the pavement. This can be particularly dangerous for those who are partially sighted as well as for drivers whose sightlines are obscured. When reported, the Council will contact the householder and ask them to cut back their vegetation within 28 days or an Enforcement Notice will be issued. If still no action is taken, a contractor will be asked to do the work with the cost charged back to the householder. Some residents, particularly if older, may have difficulty cutting back overhanging vegetation themselves. Family members, neighbours or Age Concern may be able to help, though anyone experiencing particular difficulties can contact the Council for advice. www.bromley.gov.uk/trees



Park's progress

Beckenham's much-loved Kelsey Park is undergoing multi-million-pound improvements including vital desilting to be completed in summer 2025. Also, preparation work has been done for installation of a new bridge, with completion of this expected next autumn.

Health Centre at new Civic Centre

A state-of-the-art health and wellbeing centre is coming to Bromley Council's new Civic Centre building bringing a GP surgery and healthcare services to the heart of the town centre, another example of the Council's 'One Bromley' vision with health partners. It will also provide rental income to the Council to reinvest into key services. Works should begin in 2025 with further details to come.



Council Leader Cllr Colin Smith and Dr Angela Bhan, South East London Integrated Care System Bromley Place Executive Director outside the new Civic Centre



establishments in the Borough over periods of 6 months to 3 years, depending on type of business and the risk to the public, and issues Food Standard Agency hygiene ratings from a top 5 to zero which indicates improvements in food hygiene are needed. Businesses with low scores are left in no doubt as to what needs to be done. “Most businesses respond well,” Richard confides, “if not we can use a number of formal measures including, in extreme cases, closure and prosecution through the courts. Thankfully, such measures are rare in Bromley.

“The majority of food outlets in Bromley have a food hygiene rating of 5,”

says Richard, “It’s good business sense, but also, we have a very discerning clientele locally and our team is very experienced and extremely dedicated to protecting our residents.”



Food for Thought

Hotel stay, restaurant meal, supermarket, market stall food or your child’s school lunch – how can you be sure it’s stored and served safely?

Richard is one of a team of inspectors who work invisibly to the public visiting food premises in the Borough so you and I can buy and eat food that’s safely stored, prepared and served.

“It’s about relationships really,”

says Richard, whose unassuming charm makes

him perfect for the role, “We want the same thing as the businesses, and that’s to abide by the law and ensure that food is safe to eat. If we find anything during an inspection that requires attention, it’s better for everyone if we offer advice to support businesses to reach that goal.”

The Council’s environmental health team inspects all 2773 food



Well-schooled in hygiene

At St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy, Orpington, adjacent to Scadbury Nature Reserve, Richard makes his way to the kitchen. Everyone is calm and at ease as a delicious aroma of ‘home’ cooked food pervades the dining hall. The staff are welcoming as Richard’s trained eye peers into fridges, checks incoming fresh produce and observes the cleaning regime – everything



is spotless! Time to take the temperature of the hot food. All is in order, but despite the calmness there’s now a frisson of tension in the air: the nail-biting moment arrives as Richard announces his decision – it’s a 5 rating again!

Hotel hygiene

Arriving at Bickley Manor Hotel’s kitchen, the torch is out, and Richard is looking behind appliances - no stone is unturned checking for potential signs of pest infestation. There were one or two specific things to check, as well as the familiar fridge checks, this time enormous chiller rooms revealing tidy rows of groceries awaiting use. A close inspection of documentation shows that appliances are maintaining correct temperatures throughout the day and among the many shiny clean utensils hanging from the ceiling, Richard reaches his verdict. He’s happy the business is compliant and it’s another 5 rating – a good day.



The food hygiene rating scheme, run by the Food Standards Agency, doesn’t tell you about the quality of the food but does give you categorical information on a businesses’ hygiene standards, crucial to ensuring the food is safe to eat and won’t make you ill. So, when you’re buying food and eating out, look on the doors, check the Food Standards Agency website, and be reassured that food hygiene is well observed. www.bromley.gov.uk/foodsafety



Turkey Tips

Expert advice to eat safe at home

Cristina Keemer, Head Chef at 5-star hygiene rated restaurant Dorothy and Marshall located at the beautiful historical and newly renovated Old Town Hall demonstrates taking the temperature of a turkey to ensure it is cooked through. You can use a meat thermometer at home, placing it in the innermost part of the thigh and the thickest part of the breast. Look for a temperature of 75 degrees C in both for a safe, moist turkey. Or if you don't have a special thermometer, stick a



skewer into the thickest parts of the breast and leg and if the juices run clear with no traces of pink, it's ready.

Chill out and waste less

You can freeze most food, including raw and cooked meats, fruit, potatoes boiled for five minutes, grated cheese, and eggs. You can freeze cooked turkey, other cooked meat and meals made from previously cooked and frozen meat. It will be safe to eat for a long time, but you may see a deterioration in quality (freezer burn) after 3-6 months. Meats are best eaten within 2 to 3 months. Baked goods, fruit and veg are best up to 3 to 4 months. Find out more at www.lovefoodhatewaste.com Bromley Council's website is packed with advice for businesses and the public to use at home to keep everyone safe. www.bromley.gov.uk/foodsafety

Avoiding an unwanted 'gift'

The festive season is a time for feasting with more of us cooking from scratch for family and friends. Follow these tips to help avoid an unwanted gift of food poisoning:

- Check your fridge is set at 5 degrees C or below. Note that the coldest setting on your fridge dial is usually the highest number.
- Keep raw meat and fish covered on the bottom shelf.
- A large turkey could take as much as 4 days to fully defrost in the fridge.
- Do not wash raw turkey or raw meat as this spreads germs.
- A cooked turkey should have no pink meat remaining and its juices should run clear.
- If you freeze leftovers, eat within 24 hours of defrosting, do not refreeze.
- Top priority: wash your hands before preparing food and after handling raw meat and poultry.



Glory returned to Subway

© Historic England Archive

The historic Crystal Palace Subway has been lovingly restored for the enjoyment of generations to come

“Imagine a train arriving and passengers in their Victorian finery are walking through this splendid Moorish style subway which opens up into a fabulous entrance hall,” says Simon Buteux from Historic England as he transports us back to the time when people travelled by first class train to visit the magnificent Crystal Palace. “Above you is the Crystal Palace and you would walk up the steps where the Palace awaits.”

The Palace was tragically burned down in 1936, but the subway survived and has now been restored to create a stunning multi-use public space with new flooring and brickwork and a spectacular glass roof. “Trying to restore an old building is so different from building a new one,” Simon continues, “especially one as complicated as this.”

It is the energy and enthusiasm of the Friends of Crystal Palace Subway that moved things forward for Bromley Council and Historic England to work

together and recreate Charles Barry’s design with its Byzantine style mosaics constructed by Italian cathedral builders.

Victoria Pinnington, Chief Executive of Crystal Palace Park Trust adds: “Completion of the Subway restoration project couldn’t be a better way to mark the one-year anniversary of the Trust’s custodianship of this historic landscape.”

The next phase of the regeneration will see restoration of the world-famous 170-year old Dinosaur sculptures, a new Visitor Centre, a new dinosaur themed children’s playground and rejuvenation of the Grand Centre Walk with new planting, reinstated historic views and enhanced biodiversity, made possible with the help of the custodians of the park, the Crystal Palace Park Trust. Visitors can look forward to a park fit for the 21st century bringing concerts and arts events with much improved accessibility.



Future Plans

The next £17.75m phase of the Park’s regeneration will see wide-ranging improvements from the spring. A £5m National Lottery Heritage Fund grant will support restoration of the iconic dinosaurs and Centre Walk. Match funding has come from a number of sources including the Wolfson Foundation, the London Marathon Foundation and the Pilgrim Trust. www.bromley.gov.uk/CrystalPalacePark



“Our vision for Crystal Palace Park is coming to fruition and the restoration of the remarkable subway shows what we can achieve through partnership working.”

Councillor Yvonne Bear, Executive Councillor for Renewal, Recreation & Housing



Civic Centre Move

Bromley Council's cost-saving Civic Centre move to Churchill Court

The historic move to a new Civic Centre site, after more than forty years at the current site, will provide a modern fit for purpose setting for valued Council services well into the future.

The Council bought the building at Churchill Court from Direct Line in a cost saving move that brings services together in a modern office setting with futureproofing works to set

it up for Council purposes. The modern facilities are in a prime location and will improve working environment, so boost efficiency and morale for Council staff, while realising savings for taxpayers. Surplus space within the building will generate regular rental income for the Council and bring partner services together with a new health and wellbeing centre for residents planned for the site.

New future for the Old Palace

The old Civic Centre site was no longer fit for purpose and subject to high maintenance costs. The site has now been sold, generating much needed revenue for the Council, with further details to come. The new future for the site will include the beautiful Old Palace which is Grade II Listed making it subject to strict planning restrictions and regulations. Bromley Palace Park to the rear will remain a public park for residents to enjoy.



Convenient new location

The new, modern Civic Centre at Churchill Court is in the heart of the town centre, opposite Bromley South Station, so very conveniently placed for public transport, both trains and buses. Visitors to the site will be greeted at a modern reception area in the High Street with a new Council Chamber welcoming those attending Council meetings from the Westmorland Road entrance. There is also a suite of committee rooms for face-to-face and hybrid online meetings as needed. Housing also has new spaces to meet clients. The location may have changed but the drive for quality services for all residents remains intact.

Contacting the Council

It may be that your request to pay, apply or report is best served online at a time convenient to you, but if you do need to get in touch for other reasons, you can still telephone the contact centre in the normal way – our service numbers have not changed and are available on our website.

www.bromley.gov.uk

If you are writing to the Council, remember that our address is changing. From Tuesday 17 December, all letters to the Council should be addressed to: Civic Centre, Churchill Court, Westmoreland Road, Bromley, BR1 1DP

Visiting the Council

Most residents now engage with the Council digitally. If you do need to visit the Council in person, the Old Civic Centre will close on Friday 13 December. The new reception will open at Churchill Court on Tuesday 17 December where residents should go from then on. The reception will unavoidably be closed for one day on Monday 16 December. Thank you for your understanding. Please continue to book an appointment if you need to see us in person by calling 020 8464 3333.



The New Council Chamber

A new era for Bromley's democracy was marked by the first Council Meeting at Churchill Court. Mayor Councillor Dr David Jefferys declared the Council Chamber open ahead of the first Full Council Meeting by cutting a ceremonial ribbon with all councillors and interested residents in attendance. Residents, councillors and officers attending meetings in the Chamber will now be able to take advantage of features such as temperature control, a digital hearing loop, and a wireless microphone system. All council committee meetings are now being held at Churchill Court.

Ceremonies continue!

Wedding and Civil Partnership ceremonies have now concluded at the Old Civic Centre, the last group citizenship ceremony is taking place on Tuesday 17 December. Bookings for Wedding and Civil Partnership ceremonies will open soon for our fresh new ceremony room at Churchill Court with a capacity of around 50 people. Group citizenship ceremonies continue in Churchill Court from 14 January 2025. There is good availability for individual citizenship ceremonies throughout December and January. For details contact the team on 0300 303 8667 or visit www.bromley.gov.uk/registeroffice



“Whilst it’s obviously very sad indeed to be leaving our old Civic Centre home, making the move to Churchill Court was an easy decision to make and was clearly the right thing to do for so many reasons. Added to the huge financial savings we have now banked by the move and the elimination of previous maintenance liabilities, our new home will generate over a million pounds a year in rent from our tenants when the fit out is complete. This move will significantly reduce the Council’s energy costs and improve our eco credentials too, all of which will help us in our fight to maintain crucial local services during these critical times for Local Government funding.”

Councillor Colin Smith, Leader of Bromley Council



Leaf Fall

Deciduous trees lose their leaves in autumn as sure as night follows day, but it's not an exact science. This year, Mother Nature did not produce the right conditions for an early leaf fall.

"There wasn't a cold snap and so the leaves stayed put for longer," says Liam. "We'll be 'leafing' for longer into the winter." And he should know, for Liam is into his third season clearing leaves across the Borough – 2000 tonnes of



them to be fairly precise. Not all on his own of course, but as part of the Veolia team of sweepers – or is it blowers nowadays?

"It's actually better if the leaves are a little damp so they stay put as I blow them," he continues. Once into the road, the mechanical sweeper finishes the job. Simple really but quite a feat given the borough has more than 100,000 trees and growing!"



Tremendous planting under way

This is the final year of the Council's programme to plant 5,000 extra street trees over four years. Trees bring health benefits to those who live, work and study in the Borough and the planting has been in carefully selected locations to complement existing trees or improve and diversify the species. www.bromley.gov.uk/tremendous

LEAF KNOWHOW

Liam and his Veolia colleagues work hard to keep pavements clear but inevitably leaves fall over several weeks. If you're tempted to clear up, please remember not to leave swept leaves in the road gullies as this can lead to blockages and can cause flooding.

You could put them into your green garden wheelie bin – annual fee £70 – take them to a reuse and recycling centre or create a compost heap. Layer up with other organic matter such as grass clippings and vegetable trimmings and with patience you'll get wonderfully rich money-saving compost for your plants.

www.bromley.gov.uk/gardencollections