

NEWS

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The creation of London's largest wetland nature reserve is making progress ► P. 4

Petition calls for crossing to 'reunite the forest'

Hundreds of residents demand safe route across 40mph road



Matt Conway (far left) and other concerned local residents hand the petition to councillors Peter Barnett and Angie Bean, at the location in Woodford New Road where they want a pedestrian crossing installed

A petition has been signed by more than 250 people calling for a pedestrian crossing on a busy road through Epping Forest.

There is currently no crossing of any type for a half-mile stretch of Woodford New Road, despite many parents and children using it on their route to school.

Because the road divides the lower part of Epping Forest it is also often crossed by dog walkers and ramblers.

Walthamstow resident Matt

Conway launched an online petition in November demanding Waltham Forest Council fund the construction of a pedestrian crossing that would "reunite the forest". It has since been signed by 257 people.

Speaking to the *Echo* on the day he handed the petition to two local councillors, Matt said: "I walk along the road with my two-year-old son and we don't even bother trying to cross because it is too dangerous.

"It is a shame, on the other

side of the road there is a beautiful glade, but you are put off from going there because of the road. It is 40mph and very difficult to cross."

Woodford New Road, part of the A104, connects the North Circular with Lea Bridge Road and is used heavily by lorry drivers.

One of the main walking routes to Forest School, a private school in College Place with 1,300 pupils, crosses the road outside St Peter's In The Forest Church. There is also a bus stop there.

Matt first suggested building a pedestrian crossing at this location two years ago but was told there was no money available. Now, with £30million being spent by the council on the Mini Holland cycling project, the freelance cameraman believes there is an opportunity to finally get something installed.

He said: "The council highways team has done tests already, they know it would be a good thing to have a crossing here.

We are asking for a 'toucan' crossing, which is also designed for bicycles."

"Hopefully this will mean it can be funded using the cash from Mini Holland.

"The footpath that runs along here and continues through the forest is an ancient path, but you take your life into your hands when you cross this road."

Peter Barnett and Angie Bean, councillors representing Wood Street ward, both accepted Matt's petition on behalf of the council and said they would do their best to get the crossing funded.

"I am confident we can persuade the powers that be to fund it," said Cllr Barnett.

The petition is still available to sign online:

Visit <https://goo.gl/Cu4NLh>

School's lucky breakfast

Kelmscott School in Walthamstow came second in a competition to find the nation's best breakfast club for pupils

The secondary school in Markhouse Road won the runner-up prize in the Kellogg's Breakfast Club awards after judges said they were impressed by how the school builds strong relationships between students to improve their self-confidence.

Kelmscott School won £500, as well as other prizes including boxes of cereal, board games, and school uniforms. Its breakfast club has been running for twelve years and is assisted by peer mentors who offer guidance and support to pupils. Many are bilingual, which helps those with limited English skills integrate with the school.

The club offers a free nutritious breakfast which has helped increase the number of students arriving to school on time.

Headteacher Lynnette Parvez said: "We are very pleased that our breakfast club has been given this award.

"Many of our pupils do not have the opportunity for a healthy breakfast at home before they start school, so our club is vitally important in ensuring those pupils eat healthily and are ready for learning at the beginning of the day.

"This club would not be the success that it is without the hard work and dedication of our staff, particularly Ms Pringle and Mr Rolfe who form part of our pupil support team."

One of the competition judges, Alison Last, said: "This breakfast club really cares for the students. It's great to hear that it has helped not only with attendance, but with the self-confidence of the children, which helps to develop the social skills."

The £500 prize money will pay for a school teambuilding trip for pupils who attend the breakfast club.

Lindsay Graham, Kelmscott's food and health advisor, added: "The contribution of breakfast clubs to children's education is tremendous.

"They support working parents, feed hungry children and offer opportunities to extend learning."

May's time to shine

A "landmark" conference presenting new insights into arts and crafts designer May Morris will be held in Walthamstow later this year.

The achievements of the youngest daughter of William and Jane Morris have long been overshadowed by her father's work, but curators at the William Morris Gallery in Forest Road hope to highlight her talents.

May Morris was a professional designer, embroiderer, teacher and writer. She founded the Women's Guild of Arts and designed some of Morris & Co's most iconic tex-

tiles. May is said to have also been instrumental in preserving her father's legacy.

The conference in May will bring together new research on May's life and work from curators, academics and independent scholars, as well as shaping an upcoming exhibition in 2017.

Included in the two-day study event is a visit to the William Morris Gallery's collection store to view rare May Morris textiles. A keynote lecture will be delivered by Jan Marsh, who wrote the biography *Jane and May Morris - A Biographical Story*.

Jan, who is also president of

the William Morris Society, said: "Always overshadowed by her illustrious father, May Morris has never received the attention her own achievements deserve.

"This conference will explore many facets of her career, bringing a wealth of recent research into view."

Anna Mason, manager of the William Morris Gallery, added: "May Morris was a talented designer and maker and made a unique contribution to the international development of art embroidery.

"We hope this conference will bring even more new material to light in advance of the exhibition planned in 2017."



Arts and crafts designer May Morris, daughter of William Morris. Credit: William Morris Gallery