



Sisters Ella and Leona Lewis at the We Grieve coronavirus 'memori-wall' set up by community group Clapton Commons. Photographer Fran Hales documented the group's weekly, non-faith ceremonies (see page 14)

Thank you

The *Citizen* team is grateful that the newspaper is finally back in print after halting production three months ago.

During this time, we've been appealing for support from our readers, and we've been truly humbled by the response.

Generous donations from readers and supporters, as well as contributions from friends and writers, have kept the paper from disappearing completely at a distressing time for residents, and one in which community news was badly needed. A huge thank you to everyone who has contributed their time and money to help see us through this crisis. It is far from over of course, and we're grateful to everyone who continues to support us. We hope we've gone some way to repaying your goodwill with our online reporting.

We're also very pleased to be able to congratulate our Local Democracy Reporter Ed Sheridan, who was recently awarded a fellowship by the Royal Society of Arts for "quality, responsible, and creative local news", and in particular, his "coverage of how the neighbourhood and wider community are addressing Covid-19". This would not have been possible without the support we've received during this crisis. Congratulations Ed, and thank you once again to everyone who has kept us going and continues to do so.

Local police's stance on race disparity in stop and search 'astounds' equalities boss

Cllr Carole Williams criticises presentation given by officers, accusing them of policing 'based on feelings and beliefs'

ED SHERIDAN,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Hackney police's response last month to questioning on racial disproportionality in stop and search in the borough "astounded" listening councillors.

Borough Commander Marcus Barnett and Detective Chief Inspector Dan Rutland were challenged on statistics that Cllr Sharon Patrick, chair of the Living in Hackney scrutiny commission, said "do not show Hackney police in a very good light".

These include Black people being four times more likely to be stopped and searched than white people in Hackney - nine times more likely under Section 60 powers - as well as a 158 per cent increase in the use of handcuffs in the borough over the past three years, according to Metropolitan Police data.

The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) found that the borough has the second lowest level of agreement with the statement that 'the police can be relied upon to be there when needed' in London, at 59 per cent of respondents,

and that confidence in the police to treat everyone fairly, regardless of who they are, has plummeted locally in the past three years, from 80 per cent agreeing in 2017 to 48 per cent in 2020.

Barnett admitted that trust in police in Hackney is "low and lower than where I want it to be", promising to make every effort to build faith in his force.

Addressing the disproportionality figures, Barnett said: "When we talk about violence and when we talk about drugs in Hackney, there are a large number of African-Caribbean young

men between the ages of 15 and 24 that are predominantly and tragically involved in violent crimes like robberies and involved in gangs. If you are seeing a disproportionately high number of African-Caribbean young men being stopped for weapons, overwhelmingly it's because the young African-Caribbean men that we are stopping, we believe to be involved in violence, linked to gangs, have weapons on them and/or are involved in drugs."

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Young Black locals open up in new podcast

Six young Black men talk about growing up in Hackney for a new podcast conceived by local arts venue Hoxton Hall as a counter to media coverage that often casts them as perpetrators or victims of crime.

Raised in Hackney sees the teenagers, aged between 13 and 18, discuss topics including mental health, the media's portrayal of black men, and whether it is ever appropriate to use the 'N-word'.

The project is funded by council youth service Young Hackney, and Deputy Mayor Anntoinette Bramble describes it an "extremely important piece of work".

Listen now at bit.ly/2AELoCw

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Members of the Clapton Commons community group and local residents in front of the We Grieve 'memori-wall'



Father William Taylor leads the weekly non-religious ceremony



Community supporters Carmen Anderson and Sharon Grant watch on



Hackney Mayor Philip Glanville at the final ceremony



Locals come together for the last evening ceremony



Local residents Cian (left), a parishioner, and Jake, who is working on a community history project



Ann-Marie Burnett Charles remembers a lost relative, Genevieve Burnett, whose name is pasted on the wall (right)

We Grieve

Every Thursday for much of the lockdown, before the clap for key workers, people would gather for a ceremony at the coronavirus memorial wall on Clapton Common. Photographer Fran Hales documented these moments of collective mourning...

FRAN HALES

I first found out about the We Grieve 'memori-wall' through a local community Whatsapp group. As a freelance photographer with no work during lockdown, I had been on the lookout for interesting stories to document and this sparked some interest. Set in Clapton Common and surrounded by huge old trees, the We Grieve mural is easily recognisable from the street.

The first time I went to the weekly, non-religious ceremony, I was taken aback at how lovely the setting was. I observed how this very simple but poignant collective grieving was so needed in the community, with funerals delayed and people unable to mourn or pay respects to loved ones. Over the weeks, I have seen such a diverse group of people gather every Thursday evening. We have been fortunate that most evenings were bathed in sunlight, which added to the atmosphere.

There has been storytelling, singing, musicians and silent vigils to help coincide with the pasting of

the names on the wall to commemorate those who have passed.

In times like these, this very simple weekly event has provided a safety net and given support to the people who make up the fabric of this community.

My normal day to day used to be hectic, but lockdown has provided me with space to slow down and observe what is happening around me.

It was a really nice experience documenting We Grieve and getting to know members of the local community.

The We Grieve 'memori-wall' was created by community group Clapton Commons. The circle will be holding community meetings outside Liberty Hall on the last Thursday of every month at 7.30pm. For more information, visit claptoncommons.org

The full series of photographs will soon be available online at franhales.com