

Led by Steve Denford of the Heritage and Interpretation team at the City of London Corporation, the walk will take in locations including Pole Hill, Warren Pond, The View and the Hunting Lodge.

**PHONE FAULT:** A health trust is investigating after all the telephones at Whipps Cross Hospital stopped working for a day. Staff last Tuesday contacted the Guardian concerned that they were having to use their own mobile phones to make work-related calls due to the fault at the Leytonstone site. But Barts Health NHS, the trust which runs the hospital, has insisted no patient care was affected and no operations were cancelled as a result. The phone system was restored at around 4pm.

**TRANSPORT:** Public transport in London is improving, according to an independent monitoring group. A report by TravelWatch found that Overground train services have improved beyond expectation. It also said Tube performance continued to improve and targets are being met on bus waiting times.

**AWARD:** A building equipment supplier has won an award. The Hireman beat 40 other independent companies to claim the top spot at the Executive Hire Show's Passionate Hirer Awards 2013 last week. Its new store in Joseph Ray Road, Leytonstone, was picked as the winner after scoring well for quality of staff, equipment fleet and delivery times. Depot General Manager, Phil Wright, said: "We've worked really hard over the past few months to bring the depot online."

**FESTIVAL:** A Leytonstone pub is to host a mini festival on Sunday showcasing local music talent. It takes place at the Birkbeck Tavern in Langthorne Road from 3pm. Acts playing include Danny and The Champions of the World, The Snakes, Graham Larkbey and the Escape Committee and Benjamin Folke Thomas.

Leyton's SCORE Centre in Oliver Road. It's part of a London Legacy Development Company initiative known as 'Make A Splash' and will be in the borough until March. During the day the pool is being used by schools for free swimming lessons, while local people looking to learn to swim can pop along from 4pm onwards.

To make it even easier for local people to learn how to swim, the Council is waiving the £2 charge so that residents can learn for free. Swimming is such an important skill and once you've mastered the strokes it's the perfect activity to help you get fitter and healthier.

Forest Council leader CHRIS ROBBINS



As well as providing free opportunities to learn new skills, we're investing sure that our borough boasts first rate leisure facilities. We're investing nearly £25 million into improving all of our

# Church hits back as supporter is criticised

By DANIEL BINNS

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A religious group behind controversial proposals to convert a former cinema has defended a supporter who alleged that a councillor insulted his church - despite a council panel concluding his claims were not credible.

Victor Akutu made a formal complaint against Conservative leader Cllr Matt Davis over allegations he insulted the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) after a planning meeting.

The UCKG's bid to convert former EMD building in Hoe Street, Walthamstow, into a place of worship was rejected by councillors, including Cllr Davis, at the meeting back in September.

Mr Akutu accused Cllr Davis of linking the church with the notorious murder of eight-year-old Victoria Climbié, but a council disciplinary panel dismissed the allegation last week.

The full verdict has now been published and described Mr Akutu as inconsistent.

It also questioned his claim that his complaint was personal rather than made on behalf of UCKG.

The panel described how he wrongly referred to Victoria as Anna throughout his testimony and Cllr Davis also claimed the man who turned up to the hearing was a completely different person to the individual he spoke to after the planning meeting.

The panel also noted that Mr Akutu said he was instantly offended but did not recall the relevance of Victoria Climbié until later.

Victoria was tortured and murdered by her great aunt Marie-Thérèse Kouao and her boyfriend, Carl Manning, in 2008.

According to a Charity Commission report, her aunt took her to a UCKG centre three times just before her death, but staff there did not initially realise or report the seriousness of her condition.

On one occasion a UCKG pastor initially offered her spiritual help in prayer, but on the last visit advised she should be taken to a doctor.

Cllr Davis described the complaint as 'bizarre' and claimed the complaint was an attempt to discredit the planning decision.

The UCKG's Paul Hill insisted Victoria's aunt was not a supporter of the church or a member, and said his



UCKG supporters

group had no wrongdoing.

He added a complaint at an individual church in do

"Victor is a long-stay resident and we trust his judgement."

"However, it is my opinion that Vi

## 'Stringer Bell' rolls into Stow

TV crews and acclaimed actor Idris Elba were in Walthamstow to shoot what was believed to be a new episode of BBC crime drama Luther.

Scenes were being filmed in an industrial unit in Vallentin Road and other areas around Wood Street.

Production staff at the scene declined to comment or reveal further information, but actors including Mr Elba were spotted by the Guardian.

He has starred in a string of Hollywood films including Prometheus and Thor, but is arguably best known for his role as Stringer Bell in cult US crime drama The Wire.

The third series of Luther, a

psychological crime drama on BBC1, is expected to be broadcast later this year.

Another upcoming high-profile performance for Mr Elba, who grew up in Canning Town, is his starring role in Nelson Mandela biopic *Mandela: Long Walk to Freedom*, also due out later in 2013.

The actor has also been tipped to take over from Daniel Craig as the first black James Bond.

Other TV shows partly filmed in Walthamstow in recent years include comedy programme *The Inbetweeners*, at the Standard Music Venue, and sci-fi drama *Misfits* at Waltham Forest Town Hall.



Idris Elba filming in Walthamstow