

Our park is not for rent

Keep Tower Gardens park and its pavilion public, open and for all

From Tower Gardens Community Corner CIC and the residents of the Tower Gardens estate

27 September 2026



IN SHORT

Just one month after local residents reopened the Tower Gardens Park pavilion as a community space, Haringey Council put it on the market. It is going through a commercial estate agent, at **£45,000 a year**, advertised as an *"Excellent F1 Opportunity... with Ample Outside Space and Parking."*

The "outside space" is our public park. The "parking" is our residential streets.

We knew the pavilion would be marketed at some point, but not one month in, and not like this. We're asking the council to take it off the market and honour our one-year lease, so the community has time to build a joint plan to keep the pavilion open for everyone and serving the park.

[Sign the petition](#)

What we're asking from the council

- 1 Pause the marketing of the pavilion.**
- 2 Give the community the full year of our lease** to put together a joint plan, with a coalition of local groups ready to run the space long term.
- 3 Protect the park and its pavilion for everyone.** No commercial let as the building's main use. No fencing off parts of a small public park for anyone's sole use.
- 4 Involve residents in decisions on public spaces and buildings.** That means no surprise rentals, no surprise decisions, and no gaps where the estate is left with no community space.

And while we're at it: install the play area residents were promised. £80,000 has been allocated, but nearly two years on our children still have no swings and no adventure play.

A neighbourhood that looks out for itself

Tower Gardens has always been a place where residents look after their own neighbourhood. The park exists because of a gift. In 1903 Sir Samuel Montagu gave money for a public garden on the new estate, for families rehoused from the East End. In 1914 residents asked the London County Council for a "public hall" on the estate, and they have kept asking ever since. In the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, they campaigned for the park to be improved and for the pavilion to be built, and helped plan the works.

That tradition is alive today:

- **Friends of Tower Gardens** meet fortnightly to garden, litter-pick and care for the park. They raise money from CPRE and crowdfunders for plants and bulbs, and work with The Conservation Volunteers and the park team to manage the park.
- **More than 250 neighbours** came to our Mayor's Community Weekend event at 100 Tower Gardens Road in September 2025. Many more have joined workshops, public meetings and surveys to shape the plans for that building.
- **This summer**, neighbours gave up evenings and weekends to clean, paint and repair the pavilion. Then **over 100 people** came to the opening fiesta, and many have been using the space since.

We are residents of Tower Gardens estate, of White Hart Lane ward and of Haringey. We care about our neighbourhood: its homes, its streets, its park and the people who live here – our neighbours.

What we've done since August

This summer the council unexpectedly offered us a one-year lease on the pavilion, with a one-month break clause, so we could run activities over the summer. The offer came

because the paperwork for 100 Tower Gardens Road wasn't ready, and because the pavilion had just been vacated. We signed on **3 August 2026**, as part of a joint summer programme with Wards Corner and Tottenham Family Fightback.

It is a **full repairing and insuring lease**. That means a volunteer-run community group took on the cost of repairing and insuring a council building. When we signed, we told officers what we would do with the year: get the building working; open it up to everyone; and start building a coalition of local groups that could together run activities for all ages, long term. We also told them this would take time.

Since then we have:

- **Repaired the building:** new toilet seats, fixed doors and sinks, new carpets, fresh paint, filled holes and cracks, and a deep clean from top to bottom.
- **Opened the doors:** every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, 4–7pm, the pavilion is open for play and as a *"public living room"* (officially part of the [Camerados](#) movement) where anyone can drop in for a cuppa. We also open for other activities and events, including ones run by other groups.
- **Opened the toilets to everyone in the park** whenever we're open.
- **Supported the park:** Friends of Tower Gardens Park store their tools and litter-pickers here, and can finally water new plants.
- **Started planning for a greener building.** The pavilion is all-electric, and we are looking at grants for solar panels and secondary glazing. Together these would cut the bills, make the building easier to heat and keep cool, and decarbonise it.

What we're building, together

We don't want a building run by one group for one group, and we don't want one that sits shut in the evenings and at weekends. We want a **shared, multi-use space for all ages**, run by a coalition of local groups and serving both the park and the community. The conversations are early, but they include:

- **Byte Hub Group CIC / Dalmage Active:** a Christmas holiday activity scheme for children, affordable wraparound care, breakfast and after-school clubs, and more.
- **CL Reach CIC:** an open-access nature-focused play scheme in the park, open to everyone.
- **Haringey Fixers:** a monthly repair café where people can bring things to be fixed, and learn how to fix them themselves.
- **A shared public living room**, and stronger connections between Tower Gardens and **Peabody cottages residents:** somewhere anyone can come and just be, without needing to buy anything or have a reason.
- **An exhibition space:** local art, small events such as poetry nights and folk music, and more.

- **Community defence classes.**
- **Residents' own ideas:** craft clubs, a reading group, yoga, coffee mornings, an ADHD support group, and more.

This is not about us. Our aim is a pavilion that is open to all, serves the park, and is run by the community. We happen to be local residents who are willing to put in the work, and to form the necessary coalition.

Then, one month in...

In September the council listed the pavilion with a commercial estate agent. The listing was headlined *"Excellent F1 Opportunity Located in Prime London Location With Ample Outside Space and Parking."* The title has since been changed, but the web address still carries the original wording.

- **The "outside space" is our public park.** Prospective tenants are being told that the council may be willing to section off parts of the park for a tenant's sole use. We strongly oppose any part of the park being set aside for a tenant's sole use, and we're asking the council to rule it out. The park must stay open to everyone.
- **The "parking" is our residential streets.** Those streets are already busy, with too few parking spaces and bike hangars. A commercial tenant would likely also mean vans and cars coming through the park gates.
- **The rent is £45,000 a year.** That is too high even for an established national charity. The previous occupier found it cheaper to move, which is why the building became vacant.

We knew the building would be marketed at some point. We did not expect it: one month in, through a commercial estate agent, at full market rent, aimed at commercial tenants, with our park as a selling point. This gives local groups no real chance to show what a community-run space can do. We're asking the council to pause, and give the community the time we asked for when we signed.

Why a park pavilion is different

It's a building in a small public park, on a historic council estate. What happens inside it shapes the park. It decides whether people feel welcome, whether there's a toilet, whether there are people around in the evening, and whether vans come through the gates.

A good pavilion looks after its park. It gives park users toilets, water, a tool store and somewhere to shelter. It hosts events and brings in volunteers. A park that is well used and cared for costs the council less to maintain.

We've learned from the last 16 years. IntoUniversity did a lot of good here and helped many local young people. But over time, having a single occupier made it easier to say no to the residents' group and the Friends of the park when they asked to hold meetings there or use it for events in the park. The building was shut every evening and every weekend, and it played little part in looking after the park. For most neighbours, it was a building they only ever saw shuttered. We don't want that again, whoever the tenant is.

Questions we're often asked

Talking points for conversations with neighbours, councillors, our MP and the press.

"It's only fair to market every council property openly."

We're all for transparency. But we don't think it's fair to ask volunteer groups to compete with commercial tenants, at full market rent, through a commercial estate agent, one month after moving in. That ignores the hours of unpaid work it takes to run a community space, and the time it takes to build real partnerships between groups. Fairness means a building shared by many groups and open to everyone, not one that goes to the highest bidder. The council's own Community Assets Social Value Policy is currently under review, which will have implications for all community spaces.

"Community groups can become unaccountable, or one group takes over."

That's a real risk. It's exactly why we're building a coalition of local groups and organisations. We are happy to engage with the council about how the space is run, covering: transparency and open booking; inclusive governance; social value accounting; and reporting. The Haringey Community Centres Network has been having these conversations with the council for years. But they should be constructive, rather than through a process that treats community groups like commercial tenants and puts them in competition with each other.

"The council needs the income."

We understand the pressure the council is under. But a commercial let of a park building has costs of its own: pressure on the park and the streets, and the loss of community activity that helps the council meet its own goals on health, young people, climate and parks. Under our lease we already pay for repairs and insurance. A well-used park and a repaired, low-energy building save money over time.

"You signed a lease with a break clause. You knew this could happen."

Yes, and we signed in good faith, telling officers from the start that building a coalition would take time. We knew marketing would come, just not one month in, aimed at commercial tenants, with our park as a selling point. We're asking the council to honour the spirit of the lease and let the community have the year.

“So this is about TGCC wanting a building?”

No. If another organisation, or a coalition led by another organisation, can run the pavilion as an open, multi-use space for the park and the community, we'll back them – and thank them for taking over and doing the hard work!

“Isn't this the same as your campaign for 100 Tower Gardens Road?”

No, they are different buildings and different cases.

- **100 Tower Gardens Road** is the old estate office and the only historic public building on the estate. We see it as a community asset, but we have engaged with the council on its terms, which means a disposal. Our proposal is due at Cabinet soon. We're keen to work with the new administration on how it fits the council's plans and the Public Assets Commission proposal.
- **The pavilion** is a building in a public park. It should serve the park and everyone who uses it, whoever runs it. Whatever happens at 100 Tower Gardens Road, the pavilion should stay public.

“Couldn't a café or business be good for the park?”

A café or small social enterprise that serves park users could be part of a shared mix. What we oppose is: a main use that has nothing to do with the park; a rent that shuts out community use; and parts of the park being fenced off for private use.

What you can do

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- **Sign and share the petition:** [Petition link](#)
 - **Write to your councillors and MP:** Use [WriteToThem](#), keep it short, say why the park and pavilion matter to you, and copy us in.
 - **Come to the pavilion** on Tuesday, Wednesday or Friday, 4–7pm, or check the [calendar](#) for other sessions. Every person who walks through the door shows this is a living community space.
 - **Run a group or activity:** Tell us if you'd like to use the pavilion, or talk to us about your ideas.
 - **Lend a hand:** we need volunteers to help open up and run sessions.
 - **Tell us your story:** what the park or the pavilion means to you, in a sentence or a photo. We'll share them (with permission).
 - **Chip in:** our [crowdfunder](#) covers running costs while we apply for grants, and get set up with hires.

The bigger picture

Every park, ward and estate is different, and this case for a community pavilion is about ours. For the wider Haringey context, which has a number of similar worrying situations, see:

- **Protecting Haringey's parks**, including legal protection through [Fields in Trust](#) and managing parks together with Friends groups and residents: the [Haringey Friends of Parks Forum](#).
- **Leases and rents for community buildings across Haringey**, including the social value lease framework now under review: the [Haringey Community Centres Network](#).

**OUR PARK IS NOT FOR RENT.
OUR PAVILION IS FOR THE COMMUNITY.**