



# THE ELEPHANT

MAGAZINE

Issue 22 / Autumn 2021

## THIS ISSUE

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of Guyana to  
Castle Square

### TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

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### BOLD BEGINNINGS

The new theatre space  
just getting started on  
St George's Road



# THIS IS THE ELEPHANT

And this is the Elephant Magazine.

The Elephant Magazine is the publication dedicated to all things Elephant and Castle. We want to celebrate all that is fabulous about our neighbourhood and our community. We want to look back with fondness on the area's past and look forward with optimism to the future. The Elephant is changing and the Elephant Magazine will be following every step of the way.



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ideas, comments  
and contributions,  
so please get  
in touch.

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left to right:**  
Lenin Erazo, Miko's;  
cans at The Cinema  
Museum;  
Sayer Street;  
East Street sign;  
Superarts;  
Sokari, local artist;  
Drawing Room;  
food at Miko's;  
Elephant Springs;  
Dickens' Fields;  
Castle Square;  
Elephant Says Hi;  
Elephant Park;  
elephant statue;  
Michael Faraday;  
Southwark Playhouse,  
Newington;  
Southwark Heritage  
Centre;  
Castle Centre sign



## Keep in touch

Visit us at [elephantandcastle.org.uk](http://elephantandcastle.org.uk)  
and subscribe to our mailing list  
for updates.



# TAKE A TRIP DOWN ASH AVENUE

*If you take a walk along New Kent Road, cut down one of the side streets and head towards the green, leafy skyline. You might be surprised by what you find.*

Ash Avenue stretches the full length of the brand-new park at Elephant Park, and alongside the two new rental communities from Living by Lendlease; Park Central East and Park Central West.

This new street provides ample opportunity to eat out, work out, or just to relax and enjoy the

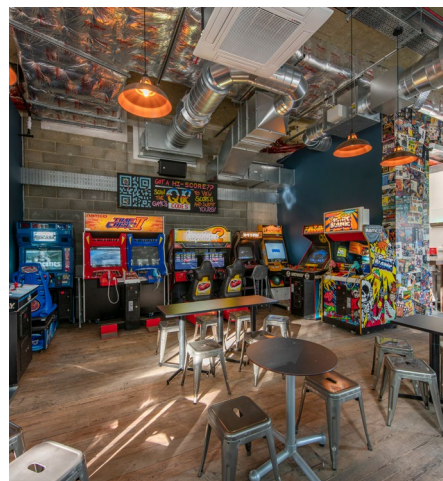
greenery of Elephant Park.

When fully occupied it will be chock full of new bars, restaurants and wellness practices, many of which are already local Elephant and Castle or south London businesses.

In fact, a lot of places are already up and running and ready to give you a warm welcome.

From catching up with friends over a couple of games of Pac-Man to finding a new spot in which to perfect your downward dog or a great venue to host your Christmas party, Ash Avenue has what you're looking for.

So take a stroll down the avenue and see what you can find...



## FOUR QUARTERS

Starting at the top end of Ash Avenue, closest to Rodney Place, you'll find Four Quarters, the UK's original arcade bar operator.

Four Quarters brings together original, lovingly restored retro arcade machines and top-notch craft beer, cocktails and food. Their ethos is to be a good bar first and foremost. They have a diner-style menu that consists of 100 per cent British organic beef burgers; high-quality imported German sausages and gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches.

Take a peek at the cocktail list and you'll find game-inspired house creations such as Donkey Kong's Tropical Punch and the Princess Peach.

The bar also has a 70-person space for private hire, which comes with two private console booths, five arcades and a big screen gaming set up. It's perfect for birthday celebrations, work gatherings or Christmas parties.

## ELEPHANT STORES

On the corner of Ash Avenue and New Lion Way, you'll find the newly-opened Elephant Stores, a very special hybrid of three different local businesses all under one roof.

Little Louie (the younger brother of Walworth Road's Louie Louie) offers a café experience during the day and aperitivo, cold-cuts and hi-fi sounds in the evening. SoLo Craft Fair champions small businesses with a focus on all things natural, handmade and ethically-sourced; while local bike specialists, Fix Your Cycle, cater to all your cycling needs. What's more, Camberwell's Vintage Matters, the beloved online vintage shop, has provided all the furniture throughout the space and, best of all, it's all available to take home with you!



## TEMPO PILATES AND MORE YOGA

A little further down the path, you'll find Tempo Pilates and More Yoga, both with a range of classes to suit all levels of ability.

Each venue has some very competitive introductory offers to celebrate their arrival on Ash Avenue. And what could be more inspiring than starting your day with a workout looking out across the green and leafy expanse of Elephant Park?

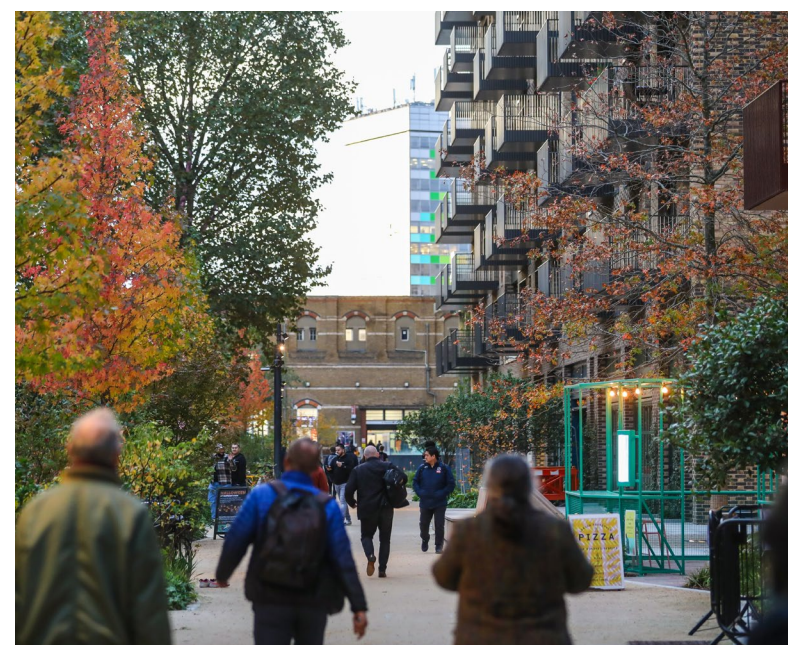


## FOUR HUNDRED RABBITS

Just next door to Four Quarters, you'll find Four Hundred Rabbits. This south London favourite tempts passers-by with their signature sourdough pizzas, hutch-made gelato, and negronis on tap.

They pride themselves on delivering delicious and unexpected flavour combinations on their pizzas and quirky creations. The Rhubarb (mozzarella, chipotle rolled goats cheese, piquillo pepper, rhubarb, basil) and The Feta (mozzarella, feta, courgette, toasted pine nuts, salsa verde) look set to become modern classics.

Drop-in on Tenner Tuesdays and get one of their core pizzas and a schooner of core craft beer for only £10.



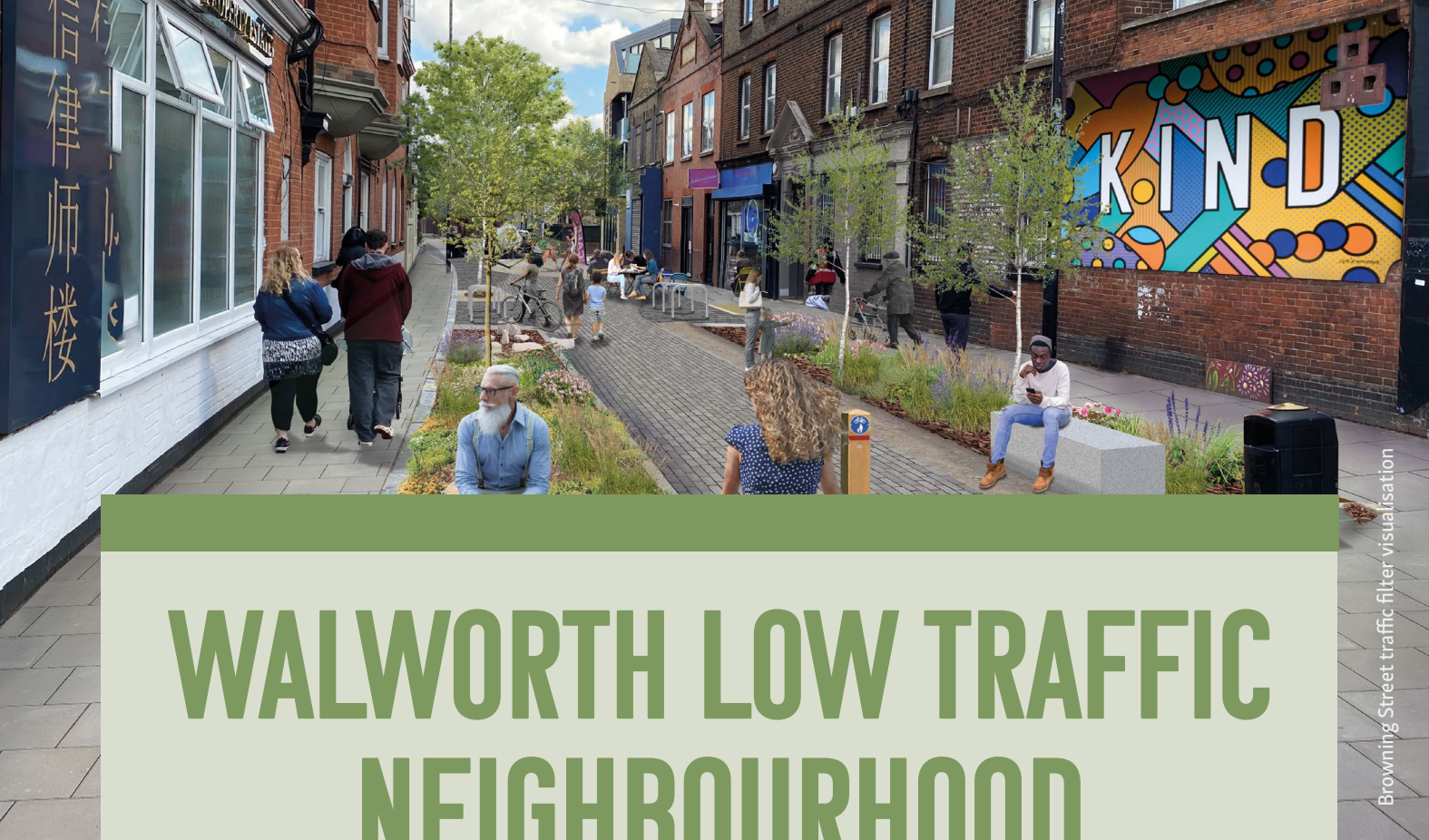
## COMING SOON

Over the next few months, Ash Avenue will see many more businesses opening up along the fringes of the park, including local favourite DistriAndina.

DistriAndina is widely considered London's premier Latin food destination. It offers a huge variety of authentic South American street food, including arepas and empanadas, and an array of groceries and snack items that are imported from all across Latin America.

Find out more at [www.elephantpark.co.uk/eat-drink-and-shop](http://www.elephantpark.co.uk/eat-drink-and-shop)





# WALWORTH LOW TRAFFIC NEIGHBOURHOOD

*Reducing motor traffic is making our neighbourhood a healthier and safer place to live, work and play.*

Over the past 18 months, Southwark Council has undertaken a lot of work, throughout the borough, to reclaim the streets for local people and to create a cleaner, greener and safer environment. This has included the rollout of Streetspace schemes.

The Walworth Streetspace scheme was introduced in the summer of 2020.

The idea is to reduce motor traffic in favour of healthier and less polluting ways of getting around such as walking and cycling. This has involved adding planters, benches and cycle storage to local streets as well as road closures.

The scheme was originally introduced via experimental traffic management orders. This was partly in response to the urgent need to create more space for pedestrians and cycling during the pandemic while public transport services were reduced or restricted.

Since then, Southwark has conducted a review to determine how effective the measures have been and

to find out what local residents and businesses thought of the scheme.

Although a portion of the community were unhappy with the changes to the roads, there is also a lot of local support for the measures based on feedback from the review.

The data shows that there was a 34 per cent increase in cycling and a 16 per cent decrease in motor traffic since the Streetspace measures were introduced. And 42 per cent of residents said they would walk and cycle if better and safer routes were in place, which the council is working on.

The scheme has created new space for recreation, greenery and cycle storage on roads such as Alberta Street and Browning Street and, this summer, the council held events on Cooks Road and Amelia Street to celebrate Car-Free Day. These included a bike surgery from Dr Bike, information stalls and the unveiling of new street art created in collaboration with local residents and the environmental charity, Sustrans.

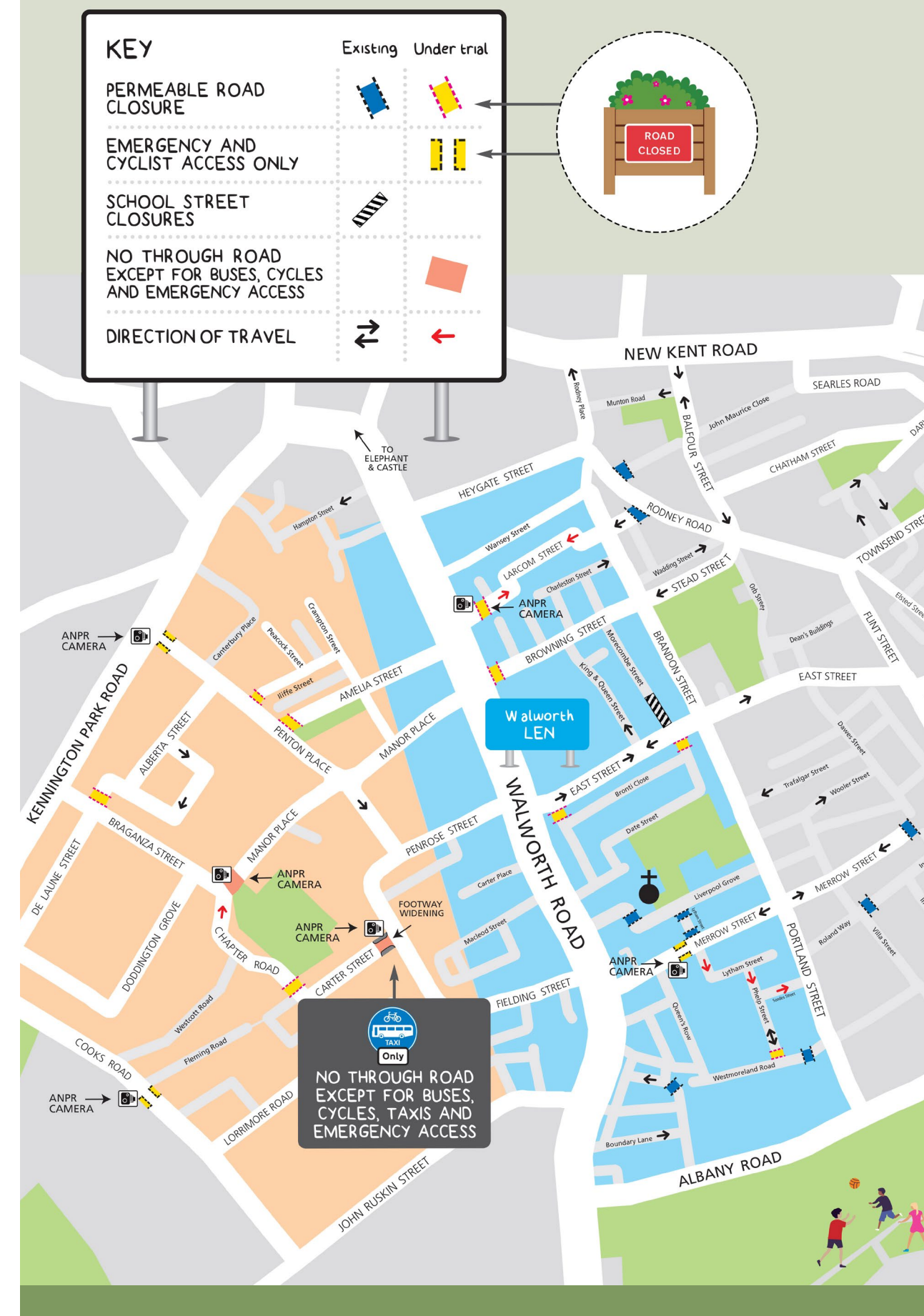
Southwark Council is also working

with local people to transform the space outside St Peter's Church, in Liverpool Grove. This work is set to begin next spring and will help to enhance the heritage of the area; improve the space for pedestrians and make it a more enjoyable place in which to spend time.

Southwark council is committed to creating healthier streets and safer spaces for everyone and, as walking and cycling steadily increases in Walworth, the council will continue to engage with the community on safer routes for active travel to support this progress with balanced solutions. Conversations will continue with local stakeholders and businesses about how best to support everyone's needs while still achieving the main objective of a cleaner, greener and safer neighbourhood.

Find out more at [www.southwark.gov.uk/ohwalworthreview](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/ohwalworthreview)

## WALWORTH STREETSACE MEASURES





# PEVERIL GARDENS STUDIOS



*Just beyond the traffic roaring over the Bricklayers Arms flyover there's a quiet art revolution taking place.*

Peveril Gardens Studios is a new arts space comprising a headquarters for Forma Arts and Media, artists studios, community space and a new, public, roof garden.

Between 2019 and 2020, this 1960s building (once used for garages) was gradually converted into a creative, artistic haven and garden oasis. It was funded and supported by Southwark Council, the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund and Arts Council England.

Located in front of Peveril House, on Great Dover Street, it includes five studios for use by local artists and one international artist's residency. It also boasts a cafe, events space and a beautifully landscaped roof garden which is open to the public.

"What was a small, regeneration side-project turned into an ambitious scheme rooted in arts and culture" says Chris Rawcliffe,

Forma's artistic director.

"When a council is working on multi-million pound regeneration programmes, it takes a lot of drive to think on a micro-level like this; to think culturally, artistically, and to really care about the voices of creatives as well as doing it all in consultation with the local residents."

The council's project to convert the garages into an arts space began in 2019. This came just at the right time for Forma, as the contemporary arts company, which had been going since 2002, was looking for a permanent home.

"We work nationally on arts commissions" Chris says "but we needed somewhere permanent to host meetings etc. instead of just using cafes. When you invite people into your space, they make a judgement. If they see there's an office here and a team working, it creates

confidence in what we're doing."

Chris heard that Southwark was approaching cultural organisations that might be interested in taking a tenancy as well as running the proposed new space.

"I managed to get through and explained what our ambition was" he says. "There was a lot of luck and good timing involved. Southwark said 'we've got this project, we're looking for an operator, we're about to put a tender out...' so I applied and we got it."

When I first visited the building I could immediately see what it could be. However, my trustees were a bit surprised that I was so enthusiastic about it."

Chris's enthusiasm paid off. Forma opened its HQ in October last year with a film by Frieze Artist Award winner, Alberta Whittle. But then lockdown returned and it wasn't until April that Chris and



the team could get started again.

The Studios had an official relaunch in July this year with an event hosted by the chair of Arts Council England, Sir Nicholas Serota.

Bricklayers Arms sits between two major regeneration areas, Elephant and Castle and Old Kent Road and Chris says "The project is born out of Southwark's long-term regeneration" adding "the council has done a great job and has had the foresight to put culture at the heart of its plans. They put their money where their mouth is."

The council hired Sanchez Benton Architects and international artist, Gabriel Kuri to lead the project. Working with public realm curator, Aldo Rinaldi, they brought the vision and creativity needed to make it happen.

Chris says "They had the sensitivity to think environmentally, rather than just using grey steel or doing the cheapest thing."

"We fundraised £140k, ourselves, to do the fit-out; buy furniture, put doors in and heating etc. But the architects stretched their budget much further than most would have. And they tried to be as sustainable as possible. They reused everything they possibly could in the structure. They certainly didn't knock-down and rebuild."

The total cost of the refurbishment was under £500k.

Forma has been given a ten-year

lease to operate the studios and will use the rental income to create a two-year Fellowship for an emerging curator to develop a meaningful, cultural engagement programme for local residents and young people.

« **When I first visited the building I could immediately see what it could be** »

To give a sense of the building's transformation, Chris points to the dead-end road outside the window. Then he slides his finger to point down to the smooth concrete floor inside the main office. "This used to be part of Rephidim Street" he says. "There was no frontage and cars would have driven straight through here. Look – the yellow lines carry right on through."

Up on the roof, things get even more surprising.

This once barren, concrete roof has been given a bright orange colour scheme and it now brims with flowers, leaves and grasses. There are planters and seats and even a large tree which reaches out towards the Southwark skyline.

The garden was designed – in

consultation with the residents of nearby Peveril House – by celebrated horticulturist, Nigel Dunnett, who had previously worked on the Olympic Park and the Barbican.

Chris says that having a public garden and a place of respite in a busy urban environment is important.

"This isn't just an attractive green space, it's a statement of intent" he says. "It shows there's an alternative to cheap, concrete spaces, which are less welcoming and less environmentally friendly. By pooling our resources, we've managed to create something that will soon be recognised as a significant focal point for the neighbourhood."



Peveril Gardens Studios  
140 Great Dover Street  
SE1 4GW

Find out more at: [tinyurl.com/8dpmijcr](https://tinyurl.com/8dpmijcr)  
and [forma.org.uk](https://forma.org.uk)



# THE ELEPHANT MEANS BUSINESS

*A new business forum has been established in Elephant and Castle. It will hold an official launch with the Urban Elephant festival next year.*

Diana Barranco, Community Director for Elephant and Castle Town Centre

More than fifty local businesses, including shops, theatres, cafes and colleges have already signed-up to the new Elephant and Castle Business Forum which was set-up in the summer.

Now the forum wants many more to get involved.

The forum, which is free to join, is aimed at both new and existing businesses. The purpose is to promote local traders, help them to support one another and create a strong collective voice for the business community.

It is part of a wider strategic vision for Elephant and Castle to ensure that the new town centre is reconnected to Walworth Road so that businesses throughout the neighbourhood can share in the benefits of regeneration and the increase in passing trade.

It was started by Diana Barranco, Community Director for Elephant and Castle Town Centre, who is passionate about our neighbourhood and all it has to offer.

“Elephant and Castle is so central and so unique. It’s rapidly becoming the place to be” says Diana, enthusiastically.

“Now is the perfect time for local businesses to come together and make the most of it. The pandemic has shown us how important it is, in every community, to help each other survive and grow.”

Diana sees the forum as a means to share ideas and work collaboratively to increase the success of local firms. The forum will also enable businesses to team-up to take advantage of opportunities, such as government funding, training and business support.

Diana works closely with many of the retailers in Castle Square but is keen to emphasise that the business forum is for every type of business, throughout Elephant and Castle. “Whether you’re in Walworth Road, London Road, East Street or anywhere else in the neighbourhood, we want to hear from you” says Diana.

Diana has enlisted the support of Susie Barlow, Senior Programme Manager at The Means, a consultancy that specialises in developing inspiring places for people to live and work.

The pair got started in June by sending a survey to dozens of local

businesses asking what help they needed and what kind of forum would work for them. They followed up with a series of one-to-one visits to get more in-depth feedback.

“Lots of people told us they are very short of time. So, rather than get together in person, we began by meeting online, which has worked really well” explains Diana.

“It feels like there’s a real buzz in the air now”

Some of the businesses which have signed-up so far include Paladar, the restaurant and wine shop on London Road, Black Cowboy Coffee at Elephant Arcade, Louie Louie on Walworth Road, Kaieteur Kitchen Original in Castle Square and Latin American supermarket, La Chatica on Elephant Road.

The forum is now creating a steering group and Diana and Susie are keen to hear from anyone who wants to take part.

Diana envisages that the forum will also give local businesses a collective voice when engaging with Southwark Council.

“If local businesses have any issues, the forum will be a great point of contact” she says.

As well as enabling Elephant and Castle businesses to meet up and connect with each other, the forum will also develop projects to help the business community to promote themselves. For example, the forum is currently working with local cultural institutions to apply for funding from the High Street Recovery Fund to put on events and help with training.

Plans also include a three-day Urban Elephant festival next July with John Whelan, founder of local theatre group, The People’s Company.

“The idea is to connect all the old and new retail and business areas in Elephant and Castle with things that are happening across the neighbourhood” says Diana.

“It’s a great way of showcasing everything we have to offer.”

The forum is also working with

local university, London College of Communication to create a project that will help businesses to engage with new audiences via digital and online marketing.

“We’re incredibly lucky to have all these great educational institutions such as London College of Communication and London South Bank University on our doorstep with their amazing creativity, resources and knowledge. Social media can be a challenge for small businesses and sole traders especially. This project will enable them to learn how to get the most out of it.”

Diana is optimistic about the future for business in Elephant and Castle. “It has been tough for everyone in lockdown but it feels like there’s a real buzz in the air now and our businesses have so much to offer customers, not just in London but from around the UK too.”



Kaieteur Kitchen Original, Castle Square



Black Cowboy Coffee, Elephant Arcade



Louie Louie, Walworth Road

To find out more or to get involved with the Business Forum contact [susie.barlow@themeans.co.uk](mailto:susie.barlow@themeans.co.uk) or [info@elephantandcastletowncentre.co.uk](mailto:info@elephantandcastletowncentre.co.uk)



# A BOLD

## new venue

*BOLD has opened a new theatre in Elephant and Castle.*

A 1950s office block may not seem like the ideal location for a theatre company, but Sarah Davey-Hull, founder and artistic director of BOLD, is excited by the theatre's new home on St George's Road.

"Our aim is to repurpose empty buildings into creative, performing arts spaces" explains Sarah. "We looked at a number of other places but none of them felt right until we found this one."

"We have taken over a not-very-nice office and made it into somewhere that's cool and has a great energy about it" she enthuses. "We've done things to make it a bit more theatrical but it's still not like a traditional theatre" she adds.

Sarah started BOLD, previously known as the Bold and Saucy Theatre Company, 25 years ago.

"The quote 'bold and saucy' comes from *Othello* and means vibrant and cheeky rather than salacious" she explains.

"We've always specialised in site-specific and immersive theatre and have a small base in Forest Hill but we needed somewhere larger. We simplified the name to BOLD when we came here as it represents a new beginning for us."

The theatre has rented three floors of the building. A number of plywood walls have been removed to make open-plan areas and railings installed to create a balcony that overlooks the large office reception.

"It works really well as we now have a great mixture of small and large spaces" says Sarah. "We mainly do promenade performances for small audiences of 30-40 people, so they get to explore all the nooks and crannies."

As well as using the building for shows, BOLD is renting out rehearsal space to other theatre makers along with a writing room and a self-tape room.



"Actors are increasingly asked to record themselves rather than audition which can be hard to do at home, so this gives them somewhere quiet to record" explains Sarah.

They also run BOLD Tuesdays; regular evening masterclasses for actors who pay what they can.

For many years, Sarah ran the MA in Contemporary Acting at The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and she is passionate about supporting those in the industry. She

says "Once you leave college it can be difficult to develop your skills as an actor or a director or a designer, so we're here to support them."

The theatre operates a sliding scale of charges for classes, depending on finances, and also offers skills-swaps. "One actor has used our self-tape room in return for helping us with graphic design services and others have run masterclasses" Sarah explains.

Sarah says she was concerned that the office workers (who still occupy one floor of the building) might be disturbed by their activities, but they actually seem to like working in a revitalised, creative space.

"The middle floor is the admin office for a high street optician. One day we were tap dancing and the noise level was quite high, so I went to apologise but they just said 'No, we love it!'"

Like many new ventures, the launch of BOLD Elephant was delayed by the pandemic.

"We moved here early in March, only a fortnight before lockdown. So we were just about to get going when everything had to stop" says Sarah.

"It was hard as we had rehearsal rooms booked out for months and we lost all that income. On the plus-side – it gave us time to think about how we would make the most of this space and it allowed me to gather seven, brilliant, associate artists who are helping me make everything happen."



“ We worked with a lot of different creatives locally and it was a great way of making connections ”

During lockdown, the theatre created BOLD Beginnings, a series of seven short films, which they released online. These included *Kid of the Castle* – a piece about growing up on the Heygate estate – by local dancer and choreographer, Chris Fonseca and director, Hannah Quigley and *Aliens on the Estate* – a monologue about regeneration written by Sarah Grochala.

"We worked with a lot of different creatives locally and it was a great way of making connections" Sarah says.

BOLD has only leased the premises until next summer, as there are plans to redevelop the building, but Sarah is hopeful that they can stay longer.

"There is a great theatre community here in Elephant and Castle, including Southwark Playhouse, Blue Elephant and others. It's lovely to be part of that" she explains. "The landlord has been really supportive and it looks like

things won't happen for a while."

She adds that, when they do have to move, they will stay in Elephant and Castle if they can. "My dad had a driving school in the Old Kent Road for 30 years, so the area is full of cousins and uncles and aunts and it feels like coming home."

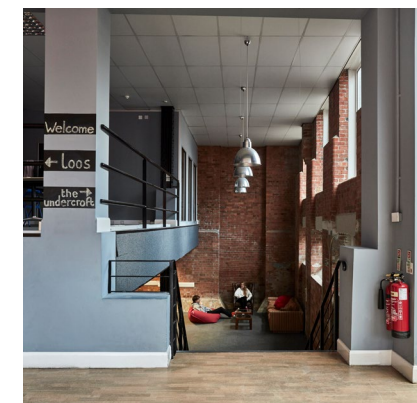
BOLD's first show in the building, *What They Forgot to Tell Us* (and other stories) was an immersive, promenade theatre experience about the power of stories.

"We had five brilliant performers playing multiple roles. These were stories about people who you don't usually hear from or who don't usually take centre-stage" says Sarah.

The next production is *Seven Scenes from the End of the World*, which opens next spring. Written by Chris Bush, Sarah describes the new show as a "dark and irreverent play about how we might behave if the world was coming to an end."

The irony isn't lost on Sarah, as things are only just beginning at BOLD Elephant.

"A lot of people will have walked past this building over the last year and seen our big, BOLD lettering on the window and wondered what it's all about. I'm delighted that they can finally come inside and see for themselves!"



BOLD Elephant  
21 St George's Road  
SE1 6ES

[www.boldtheatre.com](http://www.boldtheatre.com)  
[www.ticketsource.co.uk/boldtheatre](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/boldtheatre)



# DICKENS' FIELDS REFURBISHED

*Dickens' Fields officially reopened this autumn following a major revamp.*

The transformation combines what was once three sites – Dickens Square Park, the old adventure playground and Butterfly Walk – into one, stunning, new, public green space. It has been renamed Dickens' Fields, re-establishing the traditional, historic name by which it has long been known to locals.

The transformation includes new entrances, new pathways, better

design and new signage. There is also a brand new children's playground, outdoor gym equipment and new park furniture.

The new layout has greatly improved visibility and sight-lines across the park and helps to make it a more open and welcoming environment.

The new design was created after much consultation with local residents and other stakeholders

and the centrepiece of the revamped park – the new children's playground – has been named after Anne Keane, a local parks champion who lived on the nearby Rockingham Estate.

The park is one of several in Elephant and Castle to have benefitted from a major investment by Southwark Council and partners as part of the ongoing regeneration of the neighbourhood.



## £6m investment in local parks

The regeneration of Elephant and Castle is creating a greener neighbourhood and a better place to walk.

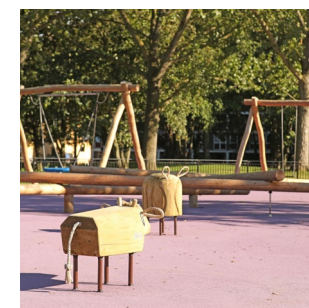
As well the fantastic new park created by Lendlease at Elephant Park, a further £6m is being invested in improving existing green spaces.

### Upgraded so far:

- Pullens Gardens
- Geraldine Mary Harmsworth Park
- St Mary's Churchyard
- Dickens' Fields

### Still to come:

- Victory Square
- Nursery Row Park
- Newington Gardens



Find out more at  
[elephantandcastle.org.uk/walk](http://elephantandcastle.org.uk/walk)



# KAIETEUR KITCHEN ORIGINAL

Faye Gomes brings a taste of  
Guyana to Castle Square

Asked if she likes her new premises in Castle Square, the owner of Kaieteur Kitchen Original, Faye Gomes breaks into a huge grin.

“Like’ is not the word, this is much more than ‘like’, this place is a home away from home.” Faye declares, enthusiastically.

Just over a year ago, Faye moved from a stall in the Elephant and Castle shopping centre to a new, larger unit on the first floor of Castle Square.

It is Wednesday lunchtime and the place is bustling. All the tables, and the window seats overlooking Elephant Road, are taken and Faye and her staff are busy flitting between the dining area and the kitchen; taking phone calls and orders at their takeaway counter; carrying plates piled high with food, and chatting and laughing with customers.

Many are regulars (who call Faye ‘Aunty’) but some are visiting for the first time (and chances are they’ll return).

“People say the service is nice, the food is wonderful and the price is really, really good. They say that we make them feel happy so they’ll be back” beams Faye, who describes her cooking as “Guyanese food with a twist.”

“Some dishes come from when I attended catering school in Guyana, but others are recipes I’ve created, myself” she explains.

Faye came to London in 1992 and worked in kitchens around the capital as well as cooking for clients from home. A decade later, someone mentioned that there was a Guyanese stall for sale in Elephant and Castle shopping centre. Faye jumped at the chance to open her own place and word soon spread about her delicious food. Kaieteur Kitchen has since acquired a reputation as something of a hidden gem and has regularly featured in guidebooks and foodie websites.

However, more recently, Faye says that uncertainty about what was happening with the shopping centre took its toll, especially in the months before it finally closed.

“When Tesco and the bingo and the bowling went, there were no customers coming in and that was

hard. My health suffered and I thought about giving up but I’m so glad that I didn’t. I just love what I’ve got now” she says with another huge smile.

Castle Square’s designers, Prosper, have decorated the food counter with the colours of the Guyanese flag and created stunning black and white photographs for the walls.

The placemats feature Kaieteur Falls, after which the restaurant takes its name. “It’s the world’s largest single-drop waterfall and people love seeing the pictures when they come in” says Faye. “It has all been so beautifully done.”



On arrival, everyone is offered a complimentary homemade fruit punch. Then they take their pick from dozens of dishes ranging from patties and tarts to vegetarian pumpkin stew, curried chicken and fish. Most are served with fried plantain, roti or rice.

On Fridays and Saturdays, Faye does specials, including homemade black pudding. And, once a month, they have pepper pot, which has become a firm favourite with regular customers.

“Guyana is very multicultural, so there is a huge variety of food” Faye explains. “Pepper pot is a traditional, Amerindian dish from the interior which uses four different meats and cinnamon and cloves. It also includes cassareep, which is a brown, spiced sauce. People love it!”

Another popular dish is coconut lamb. Faye created the dish for a charity event for Baroness Amos. Amos was born in Guyana and is a big fan of Faye’s food. Everyone enjoyed it so much that Faye added it to the menu as a permanent fixture.

The restaurant regularly receives five-star reviews online and this

summer it was featured in the *Financial Times* when a journalist interviewed Sir Simon Stevens, the outgoing boss of NHS England there.

Many participants in the *Lunch with the FT* series choose city restaurants or Michelin starred establishments but Sir Simon opted for mutton curry and homemade punch in Elephant and Castle. He had spent a year in Guyana after university and has been one of Faye’s customers for many years.

The article takes pride of place on the wall with a note to Faye that reads “Thank you for all the wonderful times.”

The restaurant also appeared, recently, in Virgin’s inflight magazine, after a food blogger tipped them off. “They were keen to feature small businesses, so we chatted on the phone and then they came and took pictures. A few weeks ago, a customer was on a flight home from Jamaica and saw us. So I’m trying to get hold of a copy” says Faye.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Kaieteur Kitchen Original attracts customers from far and wide. “People come here from Enfield and Croydon and we have someone who regularly comes from Luton just for our black pudding” says Faye.

Not long ago, they had a party of customers from Birmingham.

“They decided they just wanted a day out in London, with something interesting for lunch. They were Trinidadian and told us they’d found us online” explains Faye, adding “lots of people from Trinidad like our food.”

“They came here for lunch and then spent the day locally. One of them went to have her hair done and they went and did some shopping in the Chinese supermarket and then they came back again for more food before they headed home!” Faye laughs.

“They came to visit London and ended-up having a beautiful day in Elephant and Castle.”

## Kaieteur Kitchen Original

Castle Square  
Elephant Road  
SE17 1EU

Open Mon–Fri 11am–8pm, Sat 12–8pm  
[kaieteurkitchen.business.site](http://kaieteurkitchen.business.site)





Elephant and Castle, Thomas Rowlandson c1805

# Joanna Southcott and the House of God

*Dedicated to the evangelist, Joanna Southcott, the House of God stood in Newington Butts for more than a decade.*

Southwark's great novelist, Charles Dickens famously began *A Tale of Two Cities* with the line "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

He went on to write "Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birthday."

Published in 1859, the book is set many years earlier. It begins in 1775 and covers the turbulent years of the French revolution. Nonetheless, Dickens had no doubt that his contemporary readers would still recognise this nod to the long-since deceased Joanna Southcott such was her fame.

The reference chimes neatly with the novel's themes of resurrection and rebirth, for Joanna Southcott was a self-proclaimed prophet who foretold the return of the Messiah.

Born in Devon in 1750, Southcott

grew-up during the peak of the Enlightenment. It was the age of reason and a time of political and scientific revolution. Indeed, two world-changing scientists – Michael Faraday and Charles Babbage – emerged from Elephant and Castle, alone, during this period.

However, it was also a time of devout religious faith; upheaval in the Church of England; spiritual fervour and Millennialism (a belief that the end of the world is imminent).

Southcott, had an unremarkable, rural childhood and had worked as a domestic servant as a young woman in Devon. However, by the time she arrived in London, in 1802, she was a famous preacher with thousands of followers hanging on her every word.

In her early forties, Southcott had moved from a small village to the town of Exeter where she joined the Wesleyan church. This was a branch of the modest but rapidly growing

Methodist movement, which would soon split from the Church of England.

According to Southcott, it was in Exeter that the 'divine Spirit' first visited her. The Spirit imparted prophecies to Joanna and told her to write them down and share for the good of all humanity.

Around this time she began to identify herself with the "woman clothed with the sun" as described in the Book of Revelation and devoted her time to interpreting what the Bible foretold about the End of Days.

The visits and visions continued and Joanna continued to transcribe the prophecies; publishing these divine messages alongside her own writing and proselytising to anyone who would listen.

Some of her predictions (such as the death of the Bishop of Exeter and local crop failures) seemed to come true and she soon acquired a small but faithful band of followers.

However, many of her other prophecies were sealed unread and held in secret. Her intention was that they should only be revealed near or after the date of the events foretold.

By 1801, several influential men from the church and from industry, including the engraver, William Sharp, visited Southcott in Exeter. These men would become her inner circle of supporters and patrons, dubbed 'the Seven Stars' in what would become known as the Southcottian movement.

These supporters would help to spread her message throughout the country, and William Sharp would help to publish and distribute pamphlets and books on Southcott's behalf.

It was Sharp who first brought Southcott to London and it was here that she met Elias Carpenter. Carpenter was a non-conformist, lay preacher with a meeting-house in Kennington Road who was already an avid admirer of Southcott.

By trade, Carpenter was a paper-maker and ran the Neckinger Mills in Bermondsey. The mill was one of the largest of its kind in Britain and the first to recycle paper. The site would later become a tannery and eventually, Bevington's Leather.

Southcott may have worked with Carpenter at the mill for a time. In any case the pair established a good relationship and, in 1804, he invited her to use his Neckinger house for a public "trial" to vindicate her writings. The idea was to examine and test her theology and demonstrate that it could withstand public scrutiny.

The following year, he gave Southcott her own chapel, in which she could preach to the community. The chapel was in Elephant and Castle and Carpenter named it the House of God.

By this time, Southcott had already undertaken missionary tours around the country and was attracting ever-larger crowds at public appearances. She was widely published and she was also making money by selling 'Seals of the Lord', sealed paper notes that she claimed would guarantee the purchasers eternal life in heaven.

In total, Southcott is believed to have published at least 65 books and sold around 14,000 seals.

In the early 1800s, it was unusual for

an uneducated and unmarried woman to be able to support herself financially and to live independently, and there was something of a feminist seam that ran throughout her teachings.

Southcott's independence and resourcefulness only added to her mystique amongst her followers but her unconventional way of life, her prophecies and her unorthodox ideas, also made her a target for satirical cartoons and ridicule.

Carpenter established the House of God chapel for Southcott at Newington Butts in 1805. It was next-door to the Elephant and Castle inn (the pub which has since given the area its name) in what was probably an old warehouse or workshop.



However, soon after he'd presented his heroine with her own church, the pair fell out and another of Southcott's disciples, William Tozer arranged an alternative nearby at Duke Street (close to the where the obelisk stands at St George's Circus).

Carpenter continued to run the House of God at the Elephant junction for several more years, before moving it half a mile down Walworth Road to Amelia Street.

Perhaps the most famous moment in Southcott's life came towards the end.

At the age of 64, she announced she was pregnant and that she would give birth to the new Messiah at her home in Marylebone.

Although the claim was greeted with incredulity in many quarters, at least one physician (among several who examined her) confirmed the pregnancy.

The birth was waited upon, excitedly, by her multitude of followers and gifts poured in to provide the holy child with every

possible comfort. These included a gilt crib said to have cost £200 (more than £14k in today's money).

The baby was due in October 1814 but the anointed day came and went without any birth and Southcott died in December that same year.

Whether the pregnancy had been a deliberate deception or not isn't clear. It may have been fraudulent or she may genuinely have experienced some kind of phantom pregnancy which, given her theology, she construed as heralding the second coming of Christ.

Southcott's legacy was to live on long after her death, as generations of Southcottians continued to honour her memory, publicise her beliefs and study her work.

This continued well into the twentieth century, most famously through an organisation called the Panacea Society.

One aspect, in particular, continues to intrigue the public to this day. It concerns a sealed box of prophecies that Southcott stipulated was only to be opened in a time of national crisis and only in the presence of 24 bishops (albeit ahead of Judgement Day which Southcottians had slated for 2004).

Whatever happened to the box and whatever it might contain has been subject to endless speculation ever since. The 'psychic researcher', Harry Price claimed to have x-rayed it in 1927; some people swear it was opened long ago but contained nothing of interest while others say it has long since been lost.

Lost or not, it still turns-up occasionally in popular culture, alluded to in *Monty Python* and more recently in the novel and TV series *Good Omens*. However, according to the Panacea Society, at least, the box remains intact and is held at its former headquarters, now a museum, in Bedford.

For more local history, visit the Southwark Heritage Centre and Walworth Library at 147 Walworth Road.

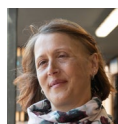
[www.southwark.gov.uk/shc&wl](http://www.southwark.gov.uk/shc&wl)

Illustration: Southcott as depicted by Charles Williams, 1814 © British Museum



# MY ELEPHANT AND CASTLE

*Locals tell us what they love about the Elephant*



## **Georgina**

I love Baldwin's herbalist on the Walworth Road. It's such a beautiful old-fashioned shop and they always have what I need. Usually I order online but today I decided to visit with a friend, so we've made a day of it. We've stocked up with things at the Oriental supermarket Kiki & Miumiu and we are about to have lunch. The food choices are so good around here with all the Latin American places.



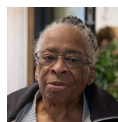
## **Janet**

I've lived here for 40 years and I love the community spirit we have here and the character of the area and the character of the people. I like all the different food businesses and cultures and the diversity especially. There is obviously a good side to the changes, but my concern is the affordability. It feels a bit too gentrified.



## **Gloria Maria**

I like Castle Square and what they have done with the park. It has been so lovely this summer and the area feels so much better than it was. I always go to the Latin shops like Chatica and DistriAndina on Elephant Road. Before I would come and buy my groceries and then go, but now it's so nice around here I always stay longer.



## **Lynda-Anne**

I love Kaieteur Kitchen. I'm from Trinidad and I'm not a bad cook, but I can't touch the owner, Faye's Caribbean cooking. It's better than my mum's home cooking! I used to go there when they were in the shopping centre and I've taken all my friends. The new place in Castle Square is lovely.



## **Isabel**

Elephant and Castle is so important for the Latin American Community. I'm from Colombia and all my friends (from all over London) like to come to meet up here. I like going to Leños & Carbón as the food reminds me of home. This area has changed so much and feels much safer than before. I like that there are so many places where you can sit outside now.



## **Helen**

I got a job in Elephant and Castle and liked the area so much that I moved here about a year and a bit ago. It's a lovely community and very welcoming and there are so many independent places to go to eat and drink. I like The Tap In sports bar as they show all the football games and they have Cuban sandwiches which are really good. Beza, the Ethiopian restaurant is great and the owner is really friendly.



## **Godfrey**

I've lived in Elephant and Castle for 20 years. I've seen a lot of changes and it's all good. I like the effort that's been put into keeping things green – it's really important as you don't want to live in a concrete jungle. I run in Burgess Park, and they have done a good job there. We've got all the facilities people need, with lots of gyms and the swimming pool, the only downside is the price of houses.



## **Derwain**

Over the last ten years there have been lots of good changes and new buildings and the area feels safer. I work in London Bridge but always come to Elephant and Castle for lunch as the food is better. I'm Guyanese and I love Kaieteur Kitchen. They are always so friendly. I used to visit when they were in the shopping centre and their new place in Castle Square is lovely.



## **Adrien**

My four-year-old son loves the water park, sand pit and play equipment in Elephant Park. A friend told me about it a while ago and we've been coming back, once a week, ever since. It's such a great place for kids. We love the new sourdough pizza place, Four Hundred Rabbits too. I've lived in Surrey Quays for over 15 years and had no real interest in coming to Elephant and Castle before, but now it's so much nicer.

The Elephant Magazine is produced by Southwark Council. We would love to hear your feedback and welcome suggestions for future features. Drop us a line at [councilnews@southwark.gov.uk](mailto:councilnews@southwark.gov.uk)

Read more about the regeneration programme at [www.elephantandcastle.org.uk](http://www.elephantandcastle.org.uk) and remember to subscribe to our mailing list for updates.

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