25 years: from church to grime, Waltham Forest



To celebrate The National Lottery's 25th Birthday, three very different groups in Waltham Forest share their stories of how its investment has transformed a place they love.

> "Thank you Lottery, I feel like a winner!"
>
> *- Rory Sky*

What links a church, a dry cleaners and grime music? A difficult question but in this London borough at least, it's clear – it's National Lottery investment and a growing sense of pride.

A place of heritage

In Lloyd Park, just outside the William Morris Gallery (both National Lottery funded!) we meet hip-hop artist Lemzi and rapper Kitch. Both are local to the area and both are involved in **Grime Waltham Forest**.

The National Lottery-funded project connected established and up-and-coming artists, gave opportunities to young film-makers, and explored the origins of grime music in East London.

Lemzi explains: “It’s all about looking at where grime’s come from and Waltham Forest is one of the main areas that grime originated from. There’s loads of history here, loads of artists as well from the borough whether it’s Lethal B, Jammer or D Power. Grime Waltham Forest was essentially a celebration of that.”



Lemzi

Later, we meet Rory Sky. The Afrobeats artist, songwriter and producer agreed that exploring the history of music was key to celebrating its future.

“It’s allowed me to grow as a person, as an artist. I’m quite excited to see what happens next in my career. So thank you Lottery, I feel like a winner!”

A place to live and work

“We’ve been here 16, 17 years now.” Apollo Dry Cleaners is a family business and one which owner Jameela Mehmood is very proud of.

> “If your shopfront looks nice, the area looks nice, you get more custom. We wouldn’t have been able to do it without the funding. It helped a lot.”
>
> *Jameela Mehmood, business owner*



Jameela Mehmood

Just around the corner we drop into Jerk Fusion Caribbean which, we discover from owner Jonathan Bryan, is the home of the UK's first jerk sausage. Jonathan says: "Down this end of the market it really really did need fixing up."

On St James Street and the High Street, their businesses were one of a number which benefited from Waltham Forest Council's National Lottery -funded scheme to restore the **historic features of the street and improve shopfronts**.



Jonathan Bryan

It’s had a fantastic impact.

Jameela says: “If your shopfront looks nice, the area looks nice, you get more custom. We wouldn’t have been able to do it without the funding. It helped a lot.”

A place for communities

“What makes me proud to live in Waltham Forest is this energy that comes from having lots of people interacting, from lots of different backgrounds.”

On the very edge of Epping Forest, Father Paul Trathen is showing us around **St Peter’s-in-the-Forest**. It’s certainly not looking its best, with major cracks threatening the very structure of the historic building.

In fact, the church would have closed its doors completely this year if it hadn’t been awarded National Lottery funding. Now it has a future which looks very bright for the local community.

“We want to see people praying here, people chatting over coffee there, people strolling in from the forest to learn about natural history, people dancing, doing theatre or doing film.”

Before we leave, Father Paul gestures to a rainbow painted under one of the most serious cracks – "it’s a sign of hope”.

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- Father Paul Trathen

National Lottery impact



Kitch

Thanks to National Lottery players, more than £20million has been invested in Waltham Forest's heritage. It has:

- restored and shared the natural heritage of Epping Forest
- created a wildlife haven and visitor treasure at Walthamstow Wetlands
- completely refurbished the William Morris Gallery and transformed the surrounding Lloyd Park
- supported Waltham Forest's year as the first London Borough of Culture

25 years of funding for heritage

Over the past 25 years, The National Lottery Heritage Fund has been the largest dedicated grant funder of the UK's heritage. We've awarded £8bn to more than 44,000 projects across the UK.

Efallai y bydd gennych chi ddiddordeb hefyd mewn ...





[d connecting communities in Waltham Forest]



[of Blaenavon]

[25 years: Derry Girls star takes us on a tour of her home city]