

Barking and Dagenham leads the way in celebrating 50 years as a London Borough

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Aliens town show in Barking and Dagenham

Barking and Dagenham is the first London Borough to be awarded an HLF grant for a project to mark the 50th anniversary of the creation of Greater London – called 50 years a London Borough.

The wide ranging project will celebrate the borough, its people and places from 1965 - 2015. A key aspect will be looking at local life as portrayed through the lens of former borough photographer Egbert E Smart whose 6,500 images will reveal the face of Barking and Dagenham and its people from 1965 to 1974. This treasure trove of images will now be digitised making it widely available online for the first time.

A programme of local talks and film screenings will be organised and a community photographic project is planned with budding photographers from the 11 council estates taking contemporary images that can be matched with archive pictures taken in 1965.

The project will involve exciting opportunities for two dozen local volunteers whose tasks will also involve creating prints of an online exhibition, a publication for schools. A community exhibition at a 50th anniversary celebration is also planned for Saturday 29 August and a touring exhibition will visit the borough's housing estates.

Councillor Darren Rodwell, Leader of Barking and Dagenham Council and Cabinet Member for Heritage, said: "We have a very rich cultural heritage in Barking and Dagenham, which we are proud to celebrate. I love it when projects such as this help us reach a wider audience whilst telling our story and therefore encouraging civic pride. Working with residents and local businesses we have over 50 events planned throughout 2015 to celebrate our 50th anniversary, and this project like so many other events will be a great opportunity for our residents to come together and celebrate not only our past, but also our future. We are no longer two Essex Towns, but rather one London borough with a huge amount of potential and opportunity – we plan to make this year count!"

Sue Bowers, Head of HLF London, said: "The past 50 years has witnessed extraordinary change in all aspects of Londoners' lives and this anniversary provides many opportunities for communities to reflect on this, using a variety of means for tapping into people's memories. The Barking and Dagenham project will provide a vivid visual comparison of how things have altered as well as which locations are still recognisable half a century later."

The 32 London boroughs came into being on 1 April 1965 and HLF is encouraging councils and other bodies to apply for grants to commemorate this important anniversary in the life of the capital, its local government and its people, so they can explore the way they have shaped our life today.

HLF is working with London Councils to raise awareness of the funding available. Grants of up to £100,000 are available for projects exploring any aspect of a borough's history – including places, buildings, events, people and communities, memories and cultural traditions.

For more information about the 50th Anniversary of the London boroughs visit the Happy Birthday London Boroughs blog written by Cathy Ross from the Museum of London, or get involved on Twitter using [#boroughs50](https://twitter.com/boroughs50)

Notes to editors

London Councils is a cross-party organisation representing London's 32 borough councils and the City of London. For more information visit the [London Councils website](http://londoncouncils.gov.uk).

Further information

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Map of London boroughs

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Celebrating 50 years of London boroughs