



Best dressed: Sharon McGoey models an auction outfit and, right, comedian Alan Carr cuddles a canine guest. Photos Mike Coles

## Stars come out for four-legged fashion fundraiser

By Ruth Anders

Tails were wagging furiously when East Finchley's Engine Rooms opened its doors one night in late November to host a glamorous fundraiser for the charity All Dogs Matter, also supported by Osbornes Law.

Dog-loving celebrities, including Ricky Gervais, Jonathan Ross, Michelle Collins, David Harewood, Vanessa Feltz and others had donated their designer clothes for a fashion show to raise money to help the charity fund its ever-rising vet bills and dog care costs.

Wine and refreshments flowed generously to welcome guests into the brightly lit venue. Dogs large and small, adopted from All Dogs Matter, attended along with their owners with loud enthusiasm. The charity's eye-catching merchandise was on sale whilst a rail of donated designer items attracted much attention. Canine attendees were busy sniffing each other and party bags filled with doggy treats awaited guests on each chair.

Welcomed to the catwalk as a "global animal rights superstar", actor Peter Egan introduced a moving film about

the charity's work before the main event, the Paws for Fashion auction, where he modelled donated outfits with a flourish.

Comedian Alan Carr modelled his own designer jacket and an outfit from *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Actor Michelle Collins (along with her dog Peggy) and our own Sharon McGoey from Cherry Tree Café were also on stage to show off the outfits.

Sadly, largely as the result of a huge increase in dog breeding and ownership across lockdown, All Dogs Matter is completely full of dogs at their kennels and in foster homes. Fundraising is an even more pressing priority than usual.

CEO Ira Moss told The Archer: "We were so excited to host this event and have been blown away by the generosity of our patrons, celebrities, and friends in donating so many wonderful items to the show. It's been a difficult time

for our rescue and rehabilitation activities, with so many dogs needing our help, and we're stretched to capacity. However, we raised just over £6,000 from our Paws for Fashion event which is amazing and was just in time for Christmas." For further information, visit [alldogsmatter.co.uk](http://alldogsmatter.co.uk)

## No drop-off at pharmacy

Please don't take items intended for the Driving Aid to Ukraine charity to C W Andrew Pharmacy in the High Road, East Finchley. We wrongly stated in our December edition that the pharmacy is collecting items for Ukraine. They have donated medical items but are unable to accept donations to pass on. We're sorry for the confusion. Any items to help families facing a harsh winter in Ukraine are still welcomed by Driving Aid to Ukraine and can be donated via their official collector Nicola Cousins, who lives in Springcroft Avenue, N2.

Email her at: [nicolacousins0812@gmail.com](mailto:nicolacousins0812@gmail.com). New toiletries and medical aids are all desperately needed. Find the full list on the charity's website [drivingaidtoulkraine.org](http://drivingaidtoulkraine.org)



One careful owner: Alan Carr shows off his Ru Paul's Drag Race suit

## Strawberry Vale residents win reprieve over heating costs

By John Lawrence

Twelve months ago, residents on the Strawberry Vale estate were facing a potentially massive rise in their heating and hot water costs under plans to introduce meters into every home. But now they are starting 2024 with some good news after the move was shelved for at least four years.

As we reported in December 2022, housing association Peabody wanted to install the meters and take individual readings from the 268 homes and flats on the estate. This would have replaced the current controlled annual charges for all residents using the communal gas heating system.

The Strawberry Vale Residents Association said at the time that this could see some bills soar by as much as 180%, although this figure was disputed by Peabody.

### Pause

The housing association agreed to pause the installation while they examined the likely impacts. Now they have written to all residents to say the meters won't be installed for at least the next four years.

In the letter, Peabody's managing director for North West London Annemarie Fenlon wrote: "We were planning to put heat meters in homes at Straw-

berry Vale because of government rules for organisations with heat networks. We know from speaking to residents that some of you are worried about how this might affect your heating costs. We talked to the OPSS (Office for Product Safety and Standards) about it, and they have agreed that, for now, it doesn't make sense to go ahead with the project."

Laurence Williamson, chair of the residents association, said the four-year delay was "a surprise and very welcome". He hailed it as a major victory for Strawberry Vale and particularly thanked Mike Freer MP for his help in opposing the new meters.

At the same time, Peabody announced that work has been completed on upgrading the pump room and boilers on the estate to ensure heating and hot water can be provided uninterrupted to all homes, following several winters when residents had to endure lengthy break-downs.

David Hillel Optometrist  
BSc(Hons) FCOptom DipCLP MPhil DOptom

Dr David Hillel Burns is an experienced specialist in eyesight.

119 High Road N2  
Tel: 020 8444 2233  
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