

# Social dances with a twist



Chingford Tea Dance, held each month at Chingford Assembly Hall

**D**ance can be a wonderful opportunity to make new friends, try out a new skill or just spend an afternoon in the company of friends and music - so dust off your dancing shoes and get ready to twirl!

At the start of this year the UK's leading South Asian Dance

charity, Akademi, were invited by Waltham Forest Council to run two monthly tea dances in Chingford and Leyton. The ever-popular tea dance at Chingford Assembly Hall has drawn in people from across Waltham Forest and beyond, offering them a chance to enjoy traditional dances such as waltz, foxtrot and quicksteps.

Keen to encourage those who are not familiar with these dances, Akademi has introduced a professional dance couple who attend the sessions every three months. This offers the participants a chance to learn the steps one-to-one with an experienced dance partner and build up their confidence. The dances are also a wonderful opportunity for the local community to socialise, whether dancing together, or enjoying a cup of tea and listening to the music.

In Leyton, Akademi has redesigned the social dance, putting the local community at the forefront of the format. These dances incorporate a different dance style each month including Charleston, Bollywood and Quadrille.

Judi Samuels, who attended the Chingford dance with her dad, said: "Thanks to Claire and Giulia for organising the wonderful tea dance yesterday with Jerome teaching - we absolutely loved learning the Charleston."

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by Claire Farmer

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Judi travels to Chingford from far away, because she feels that having a whole afternoon of dancing, teaching, refreshments, and socialising, is a real bargain for the price. The whole atmosphere is very welcoming and relaxed.

Akademi regularly works in a community setting, offering dance workshops to all ages and are committed to ensuring dance is accessible to all abilities. We hope that through further such events, particularly in the summer, more local residents will find the joy of dancing and meeting new friends.

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Chingford Tea Dance is held on the last Wednesday of every month (apart from April when it is held on Wednesday 19th) from 1-4pm, at Chingford Assembly Hall.

Leyton Dance is held on the first Tuesday of every month, from 1-4pm, at the Score Centre.

For information on Akademi:  
Call 0207 691 3210

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rganised by the Best Before Project, Local People's Food Forum, and social network Plan Zheros. In addition to delicious free food, there will also be stalls by OrganicLea, Best Before Project, Eat or Heat, Transition Leytonstone, and more community groups. Entertainment will be provided by the brilliant Cirque de Surplus, at what will be a family-friendly event.

The Local People's Food Forum is a network of Waltham Forest-based groups and individuals committed to improving our food system through practical initiatives. It is launching at the Disco Soup because the problem of food waste is perhaps the most obvious sign that something is deeply wrong with our food system and in itself makes the case for radical change. The Local People's Food Forum demands a food system that puts people first, and is ecologically just.

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Disco Soup is being held on Sunday 30th April, 2-6pm at the Scout Hut, 205 Wood Street.

For more information about the Local People's Food Forum:

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