



North Beckton Primary School pupils with some of the 150 inflated balloons

CLEANING OUR AIR, STEP BY STEP

Newham Council recently declared a Climate Emergency, and unveiled the first part of an Air Quality and Climate Change action plan. Mayor Rokhsana Fiaz has also established an Air Quality Climate Change Task Force to tackle the problem and appointed a Commissioner to ensure progress on this key issue.

Tackling climate change has become increasingly urgent, given evidence that the borough has some of the unhealthiest air in London, leading to an alarming number of premature deaths due to poor air quality. Addressing this huge challenge can appear insurmountable, but there are steps we can all take to reduce our personal impact on pollution.

Shorter journeys, such as the school run, could be made by leaving the car and walking or cycling instead, to improve fitness and wellbeing, and improve air quality.

If you can't ditch the car altogether, other changes

can reduce the environmental impact. One simple way is to reduce the amount of fuel burned when the car is stationary. Leaving the engine running wastes money and adds to pollution. Idling cars outside schools, where children are being dropped off or collected, and congested high streets are particular causes for concern.

Newham will sign anti-idling regulations by the end of 2019 as part of a pan-London anti-idling project.

Children at North Beckton Primary School in Beckton inflated 150 balloons to show the extent of noxious air produced by a single car idling for just one minute. They also met with councillors Mas Patel, Commissioner for air quality and climate change, Jane Lofthouse, deputy Cabinet member for education, Firoza Nekiwala, deputy Cabinet member for health and social care, and James Asser, Cabinet member for environment, to discuss the issue of climate change and tackling air pollution.

Councillor Mas Patel said: "Poor air and pollution are severely affecting the health of our residents and we must take our responsibility seriously by cutting our carbon footprint to leave a legacy for future generations."

Councillor Firoza Nekiwala said: "Toxic air is destroying our health. The effects of air pollution from vehicles are really serious, with deaths from strokes, lung cancer, asthma and heart diseases, all contributed to by dirty air."

"In Newham in 2017, some seven in 100 deaths of people aged over 30 were linked to long term exposure to air pollution - the highest rates in England. The true cost of climate change is felt in our lungs, by our children, pregnant women and elderly residents. Pollution is all around, but we can help to reduce it by making healthy, cleaner and sustainable choices. The cure for air pollution is really you."

For more details on what Newham Council is doing to help improve air quality, visit www.newham.gov.uk/AirQualityClimateChange or www.newham.gov.uk/AirQualityActionPlan



Councillors Patel, Asser, Lofthouse, Nekiwala with head teacher Alison Helm, centre, and pupils