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Newham Recorder Weather



Boris evasive over time scale for cable car spanning river

Link may not be up and running in time for the Olympics

by Matt Nicholls
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Boris Johnson has refused to set out a timetable for the planned cable car linking the Royal Docks with North Greenwich.

The London Mayor was grilled on the issue by assembly members during his monthly question time session at City Hall.

Opposition leaders urged him to get a grip on the flag-

ship project.

He said he could not guarantee the £57million link - which will be funded by taxpayers after Transport for London failed to secure private investment - would be ready in time for next year's Olympic Games.

Mr Johnson said: "The cable car will be delivered when it's good and ready and ready to carry passengers across the Thames.

"There's no delay. It may

be ready for the 2012 Games, but it's not tied to that.

"We are doing things that are much more important than the cable car. It will be ready in the fullness of time."

He remained evasive when pressed on the matter by Liberal Democrat assembly leader Caroline Pidgeon.

"You are trying to get me to set a deadline," he said, "but I won't. "There's very complicated work being

done, with piling into the Thames. If we commit to a deadline that proves impossible you would correct me for failing to keep to that."

The Mayor, who has said he hopes to recoup the multi-million pound cost, added that the cable car would provide a boost to the fledgling Royal Docks enterprise zone and insisted the business case was sound.

"It's valuable in its own right," he said.

EastEnders' Barbara packs a punch for the homeless

EastEnders actress Barbara Windsor has joined former boxer Barry McGuigan to help Anchor House raise vital cash.

The pair have joined a growing list of celebrity patrons supporting the east London charity, including BBC's Jeremy Paxman, former MP Ann Widdecombe and ITV News at Ten presenter Julie Etchingham.

Canning Town charity Anchor House provides accommodation for up to 180 single homeless people each year. It addresses the root causes of homelessness through training, education and personal rehabilitation.

As patrons, Barbara and Barry will be raising awareness for the charity's £9million Home and Hope Appeal

which is aiming to fund a new 21st century training and education facility with move-on transitional accommodation.

Barbara, MBE, said: "I applaud Anchor House for the work that they are doing and look forward to working with them.

"They are innovative and are empowering the homeless to help themselves through a programme that's designed by the homeless and for the homeless."

Irish born champion boxer, Barry McGuigan MBE aims to support the growth of the charity's health and wellbeing programmes.

He said: "Residents have the chance to turn their lives around and I believe fitness and education has played a big part in that."



■ Barbara Windsor MBE with some of the residents and staff



■ Boxer Barry McGuigan with resident Thomas Downes

BA staff swap flying for pedal power in charity marathon

British Airways staff will be swapping planes for pedal power next month as they cycle across the UK to raise money for charity.

The 10 riders will be cy-

cling from Edinburgh Airport to London City Airport from June 19 to help raise thousands of pounds for Flying Start - British Airways' global charity partnership

with Comic Relief.

Instead of the usual 90 minute flight between the two airports, BA CityFlyer staff will take six days to make the 500-mile marathon

journey.

■ The group hopes to raise £10,000. Visit: www.donate.ba-flyingstart.com/fundraiser/BACFBikeRide

MP becomes Home-Start patron

East Ham MP Stephen Timms is backing Home-Start Newham by becoming a patron of the charity that works with some of the most needy families in the borough.

The MP has supported the work done by the charity for many years but has now agreed to become its patron.

Home-Start Newham, which is based in Hartley Avenue, East Ham, offers a unique service, re-

cruiting and training volunteers, usually parents themselves from the local community, to visit families at home who have at least one child under five to offer practical, emotional, befriending and confidential support.

To help give children the best start in life, the charity supports parents as they grow in confidence, helping them to strengthen relationships with their children.

Mayor unveils 'boot camps' for budding entrepreneurs

Boris Johnson has set up 'boot camps' for wannabe entrepreneurs in east London who have business ideas but just don't know how to get things marching forward.

He launched the project at the British Library's business centre where he met some of the leaders of industry who will be running the 27 'camps' over the next months, covering diverse fields such as fashion, technology or even running a pub.

Two entrepreneurs from Shoreditch, Ron Festejo and Jonathan Alpine, turned up at the launch to show the Mayor the enterprising 'Stoopid Sandwich' iPhone app they developed at the Noodl Froot business in Old Street.

"We both worked for a big company developing iPhone games - but it was time to start on our own," Ron said afterwards.

Vision

"Boot camp would have been useful - we made mistakes, focusing too much on the 'big vision' and not the day-to-day stuff. You have to start small and build up."

Both are keen to pass their hard-won knowledge on to one of Boris's boot campees which will show newcomers how to get over barriers like where to raise capital, how to make contacts, getting insider knowledge and tips to avoid pitfalls of starting up.

The Mayor told the launch: "These boot camps will help budding entrepreneurs get on the inside track to start a successful company."

The scheme, paid for with a £275,000 cheque from the Royal Bank of Scotland and £135,000 from the EU, has a website for wannabe entrepreneurs: www.thebusinessbootcamp.co.uk.

HSBC reopen after scare

HSBC's Stratford branch has reopened, six weeks after it was closed due to an asbestos scare.

Traces of the hazardous substance were discovered during a routine inspection at the Stratford Centre in last month.

Contractors have now begun the site the all-clear and a celebration event to mark the reopening will take place on June 8.

An HSBC spokesman apologised for any inconvenience. "Clearly, we can't take risks with the safety of our customers or staff," he added.

