

# Big Issue 2

Rishi and oil 02/10/23

The essential fight for  
the future of libraries

Short, back  
and not inside

Could Britain's palaces  
help fix the housing crisis?

Your autumn  
must-reads

ISSUE 1684 | 02 OCTOBER 2023

# BIG

£4

## Rishi Sunak and the big oil gamble

Truth, reality and what comes next

Analysis Page 10



A HAND UP, NOT A HANDOUT

NEW EVERY WEEK

# ISSUE

Colours?



Rishi Sunak

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rishi\\_Sunak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rishi_Sunak)



# Oil Gamble?

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/jul/31/dismay-as-rishi-sunak-vows-to-max-out-uk-fossil-fuel-reserves>

<https://news.sky.com/story/rishi-sunak-heads-to-scotland-for-net-zero-energy-policy-push-12930459>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-66354478>

# Garage attendant?



# HS2

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High\\_Speed\\_2](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/High_Speed_2)



Source: hs2.org.uk

# Dumpster fire meme...





# Climate change's effect on London?



# Other Stories:

# Justice

By Brontë Schiltz

## REHABILITATION

### A fresh start begins with a haircut

● Britain's criminal justice system is not working. Around 80% of convictions and cautions are of people with a prior history of offending, costing £18 billion per year in public funds. In the year to March 2022, this included 33,000 offences committed by children.

But although this may sound high, it marks a 14% reduction on the previous year, including reductions of burglary, theft and robbery by 32%, 24% and 22% respectively. This is due in part to the Ministry of Justice's Reducing Reoffending campaign, which seeks to rehabilitate people with a history of criminal activity.

Now, a new programme in Leeds led by the Youth Custody Service (YCS) is helping young people in the criminal justice system to change their lives – through hairdressing.

In April, HMYOI Wetherby and prison education enterprise Novus joined forces with St George's Crypt, a charity providing emergency accommodation and support to people experiencing homelessness in the city.

Young people eligible for Release On Temporary Licence (ROTL) who have taken part in the programme visit St George's Crypt to provide free haircuts to residents, drop-in service users and volunteers, many of whom have experience of the criminal justice system themselves.

When The Big Issue visits, we meet Mark, a chef and volunteer at the Crypt whose recovery from addiction was disrupted when both of his parents died within a few weeks and he found himself homeless. "If it's going to give somebody an opportunity at changing and bettering themselves, I'll do it," he says of accepting the offer of a haircut. "And it's free!"

He was joined by Carl, 39, who spent 38 years in nearby Huddersfield – and in and out of prison – before moving to Leeds to turn his life around. "I was known for all the wrong reasons in Huddersfield," he says. "The Crypt and Narcotics Anonymous changed my life.

"If it wasn't for the Crypt, I'd probably still be in prison – or dead. I thought I'd always be an addict; I thought I'd die an addict. The Crypt took me from chaos to citizenship."

This emphasis on transformation is at the heart of the hairdressing project.

The collaboration began with a conversation between Lisa, the Crypt's health and wellbeing coordinator, and her brother, a prison officer at HMYOI Wetherby. "We'd been struggling since Covid with a lack of hairdressers," she explains, "and he was telling me about the project and how the lads were really thriving, but obviously they were only cutting each other's hair. And I was telling him about our need for barbers, and we said, there must be a way we can link this in and make something happen."

Lisa spoke with Ryan Savery, business engagement manager at HMYOI Wetherby.

"I manage the working out parties for ROTL, so part of my work is to look

Without projects like this, we'll never break the cycle

RYAN SAVERY  
Business engagement manager,  
HMYOI Wetherby

at different opportunities, projects and clients to work with," he says. "We want young people who are learning a skill to have the chance to go out on ROTL and practise that skill, so I contacted Lisa and asked if she was interested in us bringing people down, and she said yes.

"The planning took a year – it began just after Covid – we wanted to give them an opportunity to work with a different demographic, to do a good thing for the community and to hone their skills out of their comfort zone."

The young people are trained by Amy Stephenson, who worked as a barber for eight years before she began teaching with Novus. When she and Savery first began work on the project, they were initially met with resistance – "you're not taking young people out with scissors" – but her tutes succeeded in earning approval to come to the Crypt.

"At the end of every unit I teach, the students do a test, which includes a lot of practical elements on certain haircuts and health and safety procedures," Stephenson says, emphasising the importance of gaining practical experience. "After about six months, they can get their Level 2 Diploma in Barbering."

Without projects like this, "we'd never break the cycle," Savery adds. "We might not break the cycle for everyone, but there are young people who will learn from this course and the people they're working with that actually, it will be a benefit in their future."

"They could go out and get employment in their local barbershop or become self-employed."

"I want to become a barber when I come out," agrees one of the participants, who recently turned 18. "I really enjoy it."

"I just wish I'd taken opportunities when I was 18," says Mark, who became an addict at 14 and has also spent time in prison. "Maybe I wouldn't be in the situation I'm in now. If I could get that message to people in Young Offenders, maybe their lives wouldn't keep going downhill."

Gareth, who has lived at the Crypt since he was released from prison last winter and came for a haircut, agrees. "You need to get into schools," he urges Stephenson. "That's where it starts."

"If young kids who've been put in prison are given a chance to do something they want to do, it gives them a chance, and even if it just stops one person reoffending, it's worth it," Lisa says. For the clients, meanwhile, "what a difference a haircut can make. People come here with nothing, and a haircut can make all the difference to how they feel and their confidence."

@BronteSchiltz

A punter takes advantage of the new programme





# 'LIBRARIES

# THE



*Libraries change lives, as Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho knows. So, he got*

By *Laura Kelly*  
Big Issue  
Culture Editor



● Growing up in a single-parent household on an estate in South London, for Joseph Coelho the local library "was hugely important in so many ways". It was within the wood-panelled walls of West Hill Library in Wandsworth that a summer reading challenge ignited his love of books, setting him on the path to become a poet and author and, ultimately, the current Children's Laureate.

"We had books at home, but it wasn't an academic household," Coelho remembers. "So having that access to

books was important. It definitely made me a reader. We'd go there every night after school to revise. We didn't really have room within our homes to go to each other's houses and study together. But we could all go to the library and get all our coursework done."

Coelho's story will resonate with many, particularly working-class people whose lives have been changed by their local library. But as we enter 2023's Libraries Week – the annual celebration of these everyday temples to learning – the future of libraries is uncertain.

# ARE



# HEARTS OF



# COMMUNITIES'

*on his bamboo bike to join one in every local authority in the UK. Here's why*

#### Cuts that run deep

Since the Conservatives came to power in 2010, local authorities' budgets have been increasingly stretched, as successive central governments have cut their grant funding.

Birmingham recently joined a growing list of councils that have declared effective bankruptcy, issuing a section 114 notice last month in an admission that it did not have enough money to cover its liabilities. It is the sixth council to do so in the last five years.

At least 26 more are at risk, according to the Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities, a leading local government group.

Faced with conflicting priorities, from social services and schooling to collecting the bins, councils have frequently viewed the library service as an easy place to find savings. Spending on libraries has fallen by almost half (47.9%) since 2010.

The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 places a legal duty on councils to "provide a comprehensive and

efficient library service" but does not define what that means in practice, leading Andrew Green, formerly of the National Library of Wales to brand it "toothless".

"For the last 10 years libraries have had to do more with less," adds James Gray, marketing and advocacy manager for Libraries Connected, the charity that represents every library service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

"There comes a point where there's no fat left to trim." ▶

Often travelling on his homemade bamboo bicycle (bottom left), Coelho joined libraries in every local authority including Edinburgh, Derry, Shetland, Stevenage and Wrexham (all pictured above)

# So...

How does this Big Issue cover represent the ideology and values of the Big Issue as a political/entertainment magazine?

Why has it chosen this story as the lead story?

What about the other features of the front cover?