

THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Martin School Does It Again!

For the second time this year a group of children from Martin Junior School, High Road, has been chosen to perform at the Millennium Dome.

The Year 5 and 6 pupils took part in Barnet's C2K Cast of 2000 Millennium Celebration of performance, visual and expressive arts at the Brent Cross Superstructure in October. Young and old alike from all over the borough displayed their talents in the show. From this their piece Changing Places, based on growing up and identity in East Finchley, was the only one from a Barnet junior school selected to go on to The Dome!

The fourteen children will be part of the London Borough of Barnet's Our Town Story. This is part of a nation wide programme sponsored by McDonald's, which enables people to tell the past, present and future story of their communities. Their teachers and

The Forbidden Theatre Company helped the group in their physical theatre piece.

This success in the field of performing arts follows on from that of the school choir. Last year they were one of only eleven London primary schools chosen to sing a song, which they had written themselves, for the Voices of Promise concert at The Dome.

Delighted headteacher Maggie Driscoll is justifiably proud of these two successes and congratulations are due to all the children and to their teachers.

Positive Image

"Crime statistics on Strawberry Vale are the same as in the rest of Finchley," the estate's new Community Centre Manager told The Archer. "A difficulty we have here is that we are cut off geographically. People only come through the estate if they are visitors. I see it as part of my role to attract others from the wider community to join in our activities."

Martin O'Donnell, who used to live in Strawberry Vale himself, was formerly the Housing Manager. Now, after a short spell in Fulham, he has returned to be in charge of the new Green Man Centre.

Martin, who is employed by the Peabody Trust, the owner of the estate, will manage the Centre in conjunction with a group of Strawberry Vale volunteers.

There is a growing programme of activities, many suggested by residents and tenants themselves.

Already running are dance groups, a Taekwondo martial arts class, a children's homework club and after-school activities, Bangladeshi community groups, and classes in English, Bengali, Arabic and Dinka (a Sudanese language).

An English as a foreign language class (with a creche) at Monday lunch-time is run by Barnet College, who are also going to set up an IT centre.

The East Finchley Neighbourhood Centre have a drop-in advice session every Wednesday, and on Tuesdays there is a housing benefit surgery, including Council tax queries. These services are intended for anyone in East Finchley.

Among other things planned are a minibus for shopping and youth club trips, a pensioners' lunch club and bingo sessions, and a boxing club (with a grant from Sport England). The Peabody Trust already sponsors the football competition in the East Finchley Festival. Other suggestions include art and sewing classes, and reminiscence and local history work.

Martin is keen to liaise with the Old Barn in Tarling Road and the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane. "I don't want

to re-invent the wheel," he said. "Our activities should complement each other, and we can work together to provide activities which local people want."

As Janice Kerr, one of our

Centre users, has said, a lot of adverse publicity has resulted in a bad image for Strawberry Vale. We want to reverse that negative image."

Martin O'Donnell can be contacted on 8883 4916.



Community Centre Manager, Martin O'Donnell. Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

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