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THE ARCHER




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Photograph courtesy Helen Drake

Create Theatre

Talented youngsters of East Finchley performing in a production of Annie. See the review in Young Archer on page 8.

Stick with the farmers' market

By Daphne Chamberlain

East Finchley Farmers' Market organiser Wayne Atkinson felt badly let down by his stall-holders last month. Only half a dozen turned up, even though he had been led to believe that a much greater number would be there. He told *THE ARCHER*: "I feel deeply ashamed and embarrassed, and I do apologise to the people of East Finchley, who are showing so much commitment."

Wayne is convinced that the trouble stems from his market at Martin Primary School being a monthly one, whereas most markets are held every week. He is determined to find a way round this problem, and is asking for our continued patience and interest.

He told us: "More and more markets are springing up all over the place, but not all of them are genuine farmers' markets. Some of them are selling produce from outside their area, sometimes even from abroad, and the people on the stalls are not always the ones who have grown the produce. Farmers themselves are now asking for ways to counteract this."

He is determined to make this market a successful genuine article, with a two-way exchange between the people who produce the food and the customers who buy it.

Markets are now always

on the first Sunday of every month, 10am-2pm, in Martin Primary School playground. Wayne is always willing to discuss suggestions for the market. He can be contacted on 07757 980 848.

Don't take away our Post Offices

By Sippy Azizollah

Voices of protest have been heard against plans to shut two Post Offices that serve people in East Finchley. The Post Offices in East End Road and in the High Road, just over the North Circular, near Squires Lane, are scheduled for closure as part of a national cost-cutting plan.

The closures will leave the community with just one Post Office, in Viceroy Parade, High Road, to serve the whole of N2. The nearest alternatives will be in North Finchley and Muswell Hill.

THE ARCHER has talked to a number of residents living in East End Road. All say that the closure of this post office will be a disaster for the area. Residents in Strawberry Vale who use the branch near Squires Lane will be equally affected.

Customers told us that the main branch in the High Road already has extremely long queues and often has only two windows open during busy lunchtimes. Some have spent 30 minutes in the queue there and they fear the waits will get even longer.

Care time will be wasted

Many of the East End Road residents we spoke to rely on carers to do shopping and to deal with pensions and mail. They say travel time to the High Road branch will take carers away from the home and eat into valuable care time.

One young lady told me that there were days when she was unable to go very far: "This office is really convenient for me, the staff behind the counter are really kind and helpful."

If the branches have to close, residents are calling on the Post Office to provide a door-to-door service for people living in retirement homes and sheltered housing.

Finchley Society speaks out

Their concerns were echoed by The Finchley Society, which said the loss of the two branches would be a severe blow to local people, especially the elderly, and would affect trade in other shops nearby.

Chairman David Smith said: "The Society's opposition reflects the strong views of Society members. This issue is not just about Post Offices; it is about defending the quality of life."

Post Office response

Anita Turner, Post Office Ltd's Network Development Manager for London, said: "Taking the decision to close any Post Office branch is always very difficult and we know it will cause concern to many of our customers. Our aim is to continue to provide essential services and support retail businesses and the local economy in as many communities as possible, subject to the minimum access criteria set by the Government."

These access criteria state that 99% of the UK population should be within three miles of their nearest Post Office branch, and 90% within one mile.



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