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THE ARCHER




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Tube station: there's good news and bad

By Diana Cormack and John Lawrence

There's good news and bad news for users of East Finchley tube station. First, the bad. Transport for London has put forward plans to cut drastically the opening hours of the ticket office by almost five hours a day in the week and by almost 12 hours a day on weekends.

Current weekday hours of 6.30am to 8.30pm will be cut to 6.45am to 1.30pm and 4.45pm to 7.15pm. On Saturdays, the office will be open only from 12pm to 2.15pm and on Sundays for just one hour from 11.30am to 12.30pm.

The reduced hours may involve job losses, although TfL has been reported as saying these will be achieved through voluntary redundancies or leaving vacancies unfilled. The station will remain staffed at all times when trains are operating.

It's another blow for travellers and commuters, coming as the Northern line begins the first of many closures and part

closures on weekends, and 11.30pm shutdowns during the week, in order to complete maintenance work.

And the good news?

The frontage of East Finchley station is about to become a lot more attractive with a helping hand from the N2 Gardeners, the growing group of 'guerilla' gardeners set up last year to cultivate the neglected corners of our neighbourhood. The voluntary gardeners could receive a £1,000 Capital Growth London Wide grant to cultivate the green bank alongside the entrance to the station car park.

N2 Gardeners told *THE ARCHER* that any work taken

on there would be tough. They are seeking people to plan plant layout for this difficult space; suggestions as to what to plant; and help with the digging and planting work itself.

Fag ends among the flowers

Winter flowering pansies, spring bulbs and green shrubs planted by the group are already brightening up the planters at the front of the station. Unfortunately some people are spoiling them by dropping cigarette butts into the soil.

There is now a notice asking people not to dump their rubbish in the planters. However, the group feels that cigarette butt disposal will remain a problem as there is no alternative provision for it at the station after a small bin on the wall was removed several weeks ago.

A TfL spokesperson said: "To help make the station more pleasant for our customers London Underground will be instructing our contractor Tube Lines to install two new ashtray bins at the entrances of East Finchley station by the end of April. Tube Lines will be responsible for maintaining and emptying the ashtray bins."

If you would like to improve the look of the area around East Finchley tube station please contact: n2gardeners@gmail.com



Goggles on: Archie Price gets ready for the swimathon

Archie splashes out for charity

Six-year-old Archie Price is hoping to raise £1,500 for Marie Curie Cancer Care by taking part in the Swimathon this month. Archie, of Durham Road, is competing in the event at The Oasis, an outdoor pool in Covent Garden, on 17 April.

He will be taking part in the charity event with Finchley friend Ella Coleman and his parents Chris and Wendy Price as part of Team Goggleblog. A pupil at Martin School, Archie is planning to swim at least 10 lengths of the pool (270m) while the team will be swimming 5km between them.

His dad Chris Price says:

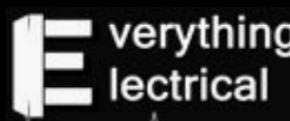
"Archie hasn't been swimming that long and we are really proud that he wants to take on this challenge to help others. At a time when child obesity is becoming more common we are hoping that his and Ella's example will encourage others to take up swimming to keep fit and have fun."

Parents Wendy and Chris Price recently started their own swimming website, Goggleblog.com, specialising in giving swimming advice as well as selling water confidence toys and swimwear for kids and adults. You can sponsor Archie and Team Goggleblog here: <http://my.artezglobal.com/TeamPage.aspx?teamID=34508&langPref=en-CA>.

For details on how to take part in this year's Swimathon go to www.swimathon.org



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