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THE ARCHER




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Esther Rantzen meets Bill Bodkin at the North London Hospice. Photo by Neil O'Shea.

Esther drops in to hospice

TV personality Esther Rantzen visited the North London Hospice on Saturday 14 January as staff prepared for a special fundraising push in Hospice Week 2012.

The NLH has launched a new Hospice 100 appeal, which is a challenge to old and new supporters to raise £100 each. Fundraising activities can be home-based, school-based, family-based and work-based.

Last year the hospice cared for 900 patients in the community, 300 inpatients at the hospice in Barnet, and 150 patients through day services. This spring will see the opening of the new purpose-built North London Hospice in Enfield, with specialist day services to complement its well-established inpatient services at

Woodside Park.

Esther Rantzen said she was delighted to support the hospice, adding that while people often know how vital the work it does is, there was a need to raise awareness of how vital donations are to help it carry on its caring work.

Grand raffle

Hospice Week 2012 runs from Monday 27 February to Sunday 4 March. There will be the annual grand raffle, with £1,000s in cash prizes, and a 'Free Will Week' with the help of many local solicitors.

NLH Chief Executive, Douglas Bennett, said: "This year is probably the most significant year for us since North London Hospice began 25 years ago. Many people don't realise that North London Hospice is a charity. We rely on the fantastic support of thousands of people and businesses every year to continue providing specialist end of life care. However, these are challenging times and in 2012 we need that support as we expand our work to provide new services and reach even more people in need of specialist care in Haringey, Enfield and Barnet."

For fundraising queries, call the fundraising team on 020 8446 2288. You can also visit www.northlondonhospice.org/how-you-can-help/donate

Free school plan for East Finchley

By Helen Drake and John Lawrence

Parents and campaigners battling for a better choice of secondary schools in East Finchley could take control by setting up their own free school. The Local Schools for Local Children campaign group is currently canvassing parents of primary school children for support for the move.

They propose to open a mixed, non-religious free school, to be called The Archer Academy, taking pupils from N2, N3 and NW11. The school's location would be decided later.

Free schools were introduced by the Government in 2010. They are taxpayer-funded and free to attend, as well as being non-selective and intended to address specific local needs. They can be established by charities, teachers, parent groups and businesses.

Avis Johns, from Local Schools for Local Children, commented: "We know that faith groups in the area are looking for sites for their Free Schools, and therefore, in order to maximise our influence over any decisions regarding local provision, we are submitting an application for a new secondary

school, The Archer Academy, designed to meet the specific needs of our community."

Shortage of school places

The free school is not the only option on the table. The campaign group is still working with Barnet Council and local headteachers to address what a recently published Scrutiny Panel report from Barnet Council identified as a lack of mixed community school places in N2.

The panel reported that Barnet as a whole was facing a shortfall of three forms of entry (90 places) by 2015/16, rising to 24 forms of entry (720 places) by 2020/21 if no action is taken.

The report was approved by the Business Management Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 9 January and passed to Cabinet for action. Cabinet was asked to "recognise the need to meet the demand for non-denominational and co-educational school places in the East Finchley and Garden Suburb areas" and instructed the Children's Service to "develop potential solutions to meet this demand".

Public meeting

As we go to press, the Local Schools campaign group had arranged a public meeting for 19 January with MP Mike Freer and East Finchley Councillor Alison Moore. For more information on the campaign go to www.localschoolsforlocalchildren.org.uk. To read the Scrutiny Committee Report in full go to <http://committeepapers.barnet.gov.uk/democracy/meetings/meetingdetail.asp?meetingid=6821>.

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