



Perfect fit: The East Finchley Allotments mosaic team with their creation.

## Unveiled: art work created one piece at a time

Many hands made light work for a beautiful mosaic put together by the community of plot holders at East Finchley Allotments.

The colourful scene was designed through the winter and spring and installed in time for summer on the main shed at the site, which has broken free from Barnet Council to become self-managed.

Plot holders brought along photos and ideas to express the spirit of the allotments and these all fed into the final design. The mosaic team was led by local artist Leona, from [www.artistsresource.co.uk](http://www.artistsresource.co.uk)

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The design includes one of the paths leading up to the woods, a row of sheds, a fox with a glove in his mouth, a robin on a spade, vegetables, fruit, a pond with a lily pad and rows of purple cabbages, all set within the undulating landscape of the site.

The tiles used were glass and ceramic stoneware mosaic tiles and all were hand cut in

preparation by Leona. She said: "East Finchley Allotments is a large site with over 200 plots and the people that use it speak many languages and are from many different cultures. We thought it would be a good idea to arrange to make a community mosaic to bring people together who might not necessarily meet otherwise, in an informal, creative and fun way."

## Titchmarsh drops by

Gardening guru Alan Titchmarsh spent time in Summerlee Avenue recently filming at the home of garden designer Ana Sanchez-Martin for his TV series *Love Your Garden*. Cameras filmed him walking up and down the road looking into front gardens before he explored Ana's plants and shrubs in more depth. Programme makers chose Ana's garden to exemplify how to make the best of a long narrow plot. The show was broadcast by ITV on 22 July.

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## Allotments open day

Gordon Road Allotments will be open under the auspices of the National Garden Scheme early in September. Founded in 1940 to promote the interests of gardeners throughout Finchley, Gordon Road comprises a mixture of more than 70 traditional plots and raised beds for those with physical disabilities and for children from local schools. There's also a wildlife area with slow-worms and an area set aside for bee hives.

During the open day, seasonal vegetables, perennial flowers, jams and pickles will be on sale, and prizes will be presented to local children for the tallest sunflower. There will also be a raffle.

Since its foundation, the National Gardens Scheme has donated over £42.5million to nominated beneficiaries, of which nearly £23million has been donated within the last ten years. Amongst the charities supported are Macmillan Cancer Support, Marie Curie Cancer Care and Help the Hospices. The allotments are in Gordon Road, N3, near Dollis Brook, and the open day runs from 1.30pm to 5.30pm on Sunday 7 September. Find out more at [www.finchleyhorticulturalandsociety.org.uk](http://www.finchleyhorticulturalandsociety.org.uk).

## Growing stronger and stronger

By Sheila Armstrong

Strawberry Vale was the last real farm in Finchley, still working into the 1960s and owned by Evan Evans, a horse breeder with an international reputation. It is our local allotments that carry on the tradition of cultivation of the land in N2.

Among them, Vale Farm Allotments were looking their best at their Open Day in June. Amongst the new greenhouses and sheds, raised beds and pergolas, the individual allotments were abundant with vines, fruit trees, banks of flowers, and impressive displays of vegetables.

Many local authorities now encourage allotments to be self managing, with their own organising committees, and Vale Farm has embraced this opportunity to organise themselves.

There is a fairly short waiting list for plots – from 12 to 18 months – and it is not limited to residents of Barnet. Vale Farm wants to create a robust community of allotmenters who attend regularly and cultivate at least 70% of their plots. There is flexibility about plot size.

Within the site there is a community run project, the Vale Farm Food Growing Project, which provides a starter experience for younger, less experienced gardeners. Go to [www.valefarm.org.uk](http://www.valefarm.org.uk) for more information.



Young gardeners at Taring Road allotments. Photo by Mike Coles

### Bee-friendly verges

The land outside Vale Farm Allotments is being "greened" thanks to the planting of lavender and pansies on roadside verges to encourage bees, started by some children including Alice Huntley and Felix Chen.

Michaelmas daisies are in place for autumn flowering. The Community Pay Back project has helped with some of the heavy work including maintenance, mulching, weeding and feeding.



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