



Sainsbury's Local WILL set up shop

By Nick Allan

Planning consent has now been granted for a Sainsbury's Local to be opened on the High Road at the corner with Leicester Road. No date has been set for its opening but it's expected to start trading in the next few months.

As we first reported last November, the new store will replace Bike & Run at number 134 and the short-lived Mama Jack's burger restaurant at number 132.

Steve McKenzie, of Bike & Run, wanted to make it clear that they'd had no choice about the development. He said: "We only leased our shop and had nothing to do with this decision and will now move all our business into our other shop a few doors down at number 128."

Mixed reactions

At the planning meeting,

where consent was granted, it was reported that many were in favour of a new "high street supermarket" and the benefit of perhaps 20-25 new jobs.

Opinions about the store's impending arrival among correspondents to our letters page have been mixed. Some residents have written to us to say they are concerned about the effect it will have on independent shops in East Finchley. Others say they welcome more competition to long-established stores like Budgens and Iceland.

Community involvement

Sainsbury's told THE ARCHER they understand there may be some concerns but wanted to stress that where they have opened stores, other traders have tended to benefit from the extra shoppers who come to the area.

They said they would seek to fill the job vacancies from the local area, where possible, and they also intended to play an active role in the community, including supporting a nominated local charity every year, as their larger store in Muswell Hill already does.

The new store is expected to trade from 7am to 11pm daily and to have a cash machine. A Sainsbury's spokesman said: "Our Locals provide the same quality as our larger supermarkets but on a smaller scale and are designed to cater for local people living and working within walking distance of the shop."

Zak's try-out turns to triumph

When young Muay Thai fighter Zak Chabira was entered into an open European amateur tournament in Lithuania, he was simply expecting to take part. In fact he surprised himself and his coach by taking the gold medal.

Shabba Uddin, head Muay Thai Boxing coach at mixed martial arts club East Finchley Combat Academy, entered Zak into the tournament so that he could gain experience of fighting European fighters on a larger amateur stage.

"Zak was totally unfazed by the occasion and won two fights by head kick stoppages," said Shabba. "He's trained here since we opened four years ago. He also helps teach the younger kids at the club who already look up to him as a role model."

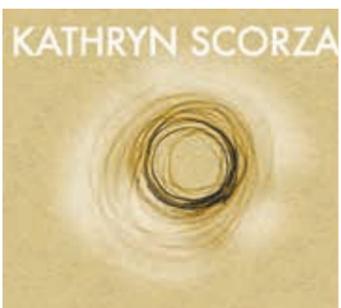
The 15-year-old's father Mohamed and younger brother



Title fight: Zak Chabira is proclaimed the winner

Ayman also train at the club in Church Lane. Mohamed credits Zak's good grades at school to the focus Zak gains from his Muay Thai training and says it helps him stay out of the wrong crowd.

Zak's next fight is on Saturday 28 May at the Watford Coliseum and it's a grudge match against another young fighter from a north London Thai boxing club whom he has beaten once already.



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'Save our library: Young readers and parents demonstrate at East Finchley. Photo Mike Coles

Young readers in character for protest

World Book Day couldn't have been more appropriate for a demonstration against proposed cuts to the service at East Finchley Library. After school on Thursday 3 March, children dressed as characters from books voiced their protest, supported by adults and the hooting of passing cars on the High Road.

The decision on the future of Barnet's libraries, including proposed reductions in staffing and opening hours, was expected to be taken by Barnet Council at a meeting on Monday 4 April.

The Save Barnet Libraries Group has been advised by lawyers that if the council votes through its cuts without addressing alleged flaws in their second public consultation they will be open to legal challenge.

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