



Do the locomotion for Festival 2017

By Roger Chapman

Plans are well under way for the 2017 Summer Festival in Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 25 June from 12 noon till 6pm. This year it will be celebrating a special anniversary.

This year is the 150th anniversary of the railway coming to East Finchley. Although no police resources are available to steward a parade along the High Road, there will be a short parade on a locomotive theme, with volunteer stewards, assembling at the station at 11.30am.

There'll be a big group photograph outside the station at 11.45am and then the parade will process the short distance along Baronsmere Road to enter the park at 12 noon. So find that Thomas the tank or Ivor the Engine costume, make your own or join with others to make a human train and "do the locomotion"!

Full steam ahead

The festival committee are on the lookout for volunteers able to assist before and on the big day. In particular, they are looking for people to assist with stalls administration, IT technology, website design (using WordPress) and marketing and social media.

We need volunteers to staff the festival focus tent where a historic map of East Finchley before the arrival of the railway will be on view. We're also looking for people who can give a short amount of time to assist with the raffle or the tidy-up at the end of the day.

For more information or to offer your services email us at: eastfinchleyfestival@gmail.com or come to a festival committee meeting. At the last one, two members of N2United Business Network pitched new exciting ideas to the committee which were enthusiastically embraced. All ideas are welcome and all help gratefully received. The next

meetings are on Monday 13 March and Monday 3 April at Martin Primary School, Plane Tree Walk, N2, at 7.30pm.

Deadline

If you want to advertise in the festival programme (10,000 hand-delivered in the local area) the 1 April deadline is fast approaching. Interested in taking a stall at the festival? Please contact: Stallseastfinchley@gmail.com. For the programme and all other enquiries please contact: eastfinchleyfestival@gmail.com.

Short and to the point

A short film festival is coming to the Phoenix Cinema at the start of April with the avowed aim of proving that short films can be as entertaining as full-length features.

The Discover.film festival will show the best examples of the format from more than 40 countries around the world. Voted one of the top 100 film festivals by filmmakers on the filmfreeway website, it's among the fastest growing short film festivals anywhere.

Organiser James Furness said: "We understand there is a stigma surrounding the format and we plan to change this, as we know short films can be just as, and more, entertaining than features." Four screening sessions will run across the two days of the festival and tickets will be available through the Phoenix Cinema's website and box-office. Find out more at <https://discover.film/film-festival/>

Spring in their step for Big Fun Walkers

One of the biggest and best charity events of the year has taken a step further into the spring. Organisers of the Big Fun Walk are hoping for warmer weather as they shift the walk this year from March to Sunday 30 April.

Organisers promise more entertainment and more fun than ever on the eight-mile walk from East Finchley tube station to Westminster, taking in Cherry Tree Wood, Highgate Woods, Hampstead Heath, Primrose Hill, Regent's Park, Hyde Park, Green Park and St James' Park along the way.

Every penny raised from the event supports the work of the North London Hospice, which provides care for patients and their families at its base in Whetstone and in people's homes across Barnet, Haringey and Enfield.

Walkers pay a small fee to take part and undertake to raise money from friends and family. In return they get to enjoy some of London's best parks, stunning views of the city, a free lunch in Hyde Park and refreshments at the finishing line. To register as a walker, visit www.bigfunwalk.co.uk or call the hospice fundraising team on 020 8446 2288.

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Table tennis at the Green Man Community Centre. Photo Mike Coles

Face-off across the table

Table tennis is becoming so popular at the Green Man community centre in Strawberry Vale, N2, that extra sessions have been added each week.

Play sessions running on Tuesdays from 2.15pm to 3.45pm, costing £5, have been joined by an additional slot on Thursday mornings from 10.15am to 11.45am, costing £4.

There are three tables with the middle one reserved for singles games. All equipment is provided, and the centre is modern and well heated with free on-street parking outside.

Organiser Mike Jobling noted that the renowned physi-

cian and brain imaging expert, Dr Daniel Amen, called table tennis 'the world's best brain sport'. He added: "It is entertaining and fun, with great health benefits too. Regular play improves reflexes, hand-eye coordination and balance."

For more information about the East Finchley Altogether Better (EFAB) supported table tennis club, ring Mike on 020 8444 3084 or Stephen on 020 8920 0988.

Free advice service is going strong

An independent advice service has been running at St Mary's Parish Centre in the High Road, N2, since last summer, thanks to a partnership between Grange Big Local and Citizens Advice Barnet. So what does it offer exactly?

Well, it's a free, confidential, impartial and independent service giving advice on issues such as benefits, tax credits and debt.

About one in ten enquiries in the opening months have related to utilities and about one in 20 have been to do with housing. In the run-up to Christmas, debt was the issue amongst more than a quarter of clients.

The service has so far recorded savings for local people of more than £14,000. A significant majority of clients are disabled or suffering from a long-term health condition.

One achievement by the

service was a successful challenge of the Department for Work and Pensions in incorrectly stopping Employment and Support Allowance to a resident. Another was getting the local authority to assess a person with housing needs and helping him to navigate all the red tape involved.

The advice service is currently available for East Finchley residents by appointment only, which can be arranged by calling 0300 456 8365. More details can be found at www.grangebiglocal.org.



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