



Residents of Finchley Charities homes facing rent changes

By Daphne Chamberlain

From this month there will be a change in the weekly charges paid by residents of The Finchley Charities estates. There are two of these estates in East Finchley: Wilmot Close, Thackrah Close and Homefield Gardens.

The Finchley Charities state that maintenance charges will now distinguish between general service charges and utilities (gas, electricity and water), and that the complex rent system has been standardised to differentiate between studios, one-bedroom and larger one-bedroom accommodation.

They say some people will end up paying less, and that increases are still sub-market level, confirmed by estate agent Martyn Gerrard, and are in line with the Social Housing Regulator.

Chief Executive Susan Faridi has contacted all Barnet councillors to explain the changes, and has sent a detailed newsletter to all residents. East Finchley councillor Arjun Mittra has posted on Twitter and Facebook about these changes. He said a resident invited him to a meeting last month at Homefield Gardens, but he was "thrown out".

Susan Faridi told The Archer that the meeting was not about rent and utility charges, and that no Trustee or staff member knew he was coming. She said: "I informed him the consultation had ended and we would now meet residents on an individual basis, to support them

appropriately as individual circumstances are different and confidential. I asked him courteously to leave and to contact me (as he had already been invited to do) to arrange a meeting." This was being arranged as we went to press.

Cllr Mittra told us: "The new charge for utilities comes right out of their pockets and will hit some residents very hard." He said that there was no good reason not to stage the rise over several years, and that he did not believe there had been any proper consultation.

Susan Faridi said: "We ran a number of communal meetings, and in some cases individual face-to-face ones, to discuss the changes we intended to introduce." She said that the Trustees had discussed but decided against phasing phasing in the increases. They say they will support residents who feel they are in hardship.

Speed humps
Speed humps have been installed along Church Lane, N2, where a 20mph limit and warning signs are already in place for motorists using it as a route between East End Road and the High Road.



Phoenix fans: Reece Shearsmith, left, and Steve Pemberton ahead of their audience Q&A at the cinema. Photo John Lawrence

Sell-out crowd for comedy masters Steve and Reece

By John Lawrence

Fans of hit TV series *Inside No 9*, *The League of Gentlemen* and *Psychoville* packed out the Phoenix Cinema for a warm and funny evening of screenings and behind-the-scenes revelations with their creators Steve Pemberton and Reece Shearsmith.

The award-winning comedy-drama duo were there as part of a special weekend of fundraising events, which also featured a Friday film quiz hosted by Time Out's Mark Salisbury and a Saturday screening of music documentary *Coldplay: A Head Full of Dreams*.

Steve and Reece were there on the Sunday night to answer questions from writer and broadcaster Dr Matthew Sweet and the audience. During the screenings of episodes from 2002, 2009 and 2018, the pair watched from the back of the cinema. "We can see ourselves age right there on the screen," joked Steve.

Memories of the Phoenix
Both long-time residents of East Finchley, they are keen to support the campaign to keep the Phoenix independent. "The Phoenix is our local cinema and it's been a great source of entertainment for us," Reece told *The Archer*. "We need to make people aware that they should come and watch films here."

Steve told us he had fond memories of hiring the cinema one Sunday morning some years ago to screen *Shrek 2* for his son's sixth birthday party. "Every time you come off the tube and see the Phoenix's

wonderful frontage it reminds you how lucky we are to have it," he said.

Bouncing ideas

During the audience Q&A, the pair talked about their writing process (they work in a rented office in Muswell Hill) and their often grotesque cast of characters.

"Writing for the TV is quick. You can write something and it can be on within the year," said Reece. "We always write together. We like

to bounce ideas off each other and get an instant reaction, see if we can make the other one laugh," added Steve.

They have just finished filming the fifth series of twist-in-the-tail *Inside No 9*, including a week of night shoots at a north London cemetery. They told *The Archer* that they had once planned to set an episode in a cinema or projection room just like the Phoenix's. "It could still happen, who knows?" said Reece.

Phoenix looks forward to future as an independent

Continued from page 1.

Phoenix Friends

Members of the Friends annual membership scheme at the Phoenix, costing £35 annually for one person or £60 for two, now get a range of discounts and benefits at many local restaurants and shops on the High Road in East Finchley.

They include the Bald Faced Stag, Meze and Shish, Nahling, Majjo's Restaurant, Josephines, Black Gull Bookshop, Kokos, Dan and DiCarlo, Bike and Run, Aliya J, the New Local Cafe, The Barber Shed,

East Finchley Electrical and La Boucherie.

Free film education

The Phoenix is launching the second of its Making Images courses, designed to introduce 16 to 19-year-olds to the film industry, including production, distribution, exhibition and audience development, with access to industry professionals in each area.

The course runs for nine months from this spring and is fully funded by a charitable grant, meaning there is no cost to students. The Phoenix team say they are keen to offer places to students who may not otherwise have the opportunity to learn about film making. For more information and an application form, email: education@phoenixcinema.co.uk.

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