



A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



EAST FINCHLEY FESTIVAL LINE UP - PAGE 6



Setting off: Walkers take the first steps through Cherry Tree Wood at the start of the near nine-mile Big Fun Walk. Photo North London Hospice.

Biggest Fun Walk ever snakes through London's parklands

By David Melsome

It was a record-breaking year for the annual Big Fun Walk with 1,635 people trekking the 8.5-mile route through north London's parklands from Cherry Tree Wood in East Finchley to Westminster Abbey.

The long string of walkers stretched out through Highgate Wood, Hampstead Heath, Primrose Hill, Regents Park, Hyde Park and St James's Park. Supporters walking in memory of someone special or just in support of the North London Hospice (NLH) raised in the region of £140,000 for patient care.

At the Westminster finish line each participant

received a medal and was entertained by music from New River Dixielanders and the Finchley Steel Orchestra.

Boy dies in collision
A three-year-old boy died after being in collision with a car at the crossing close to the Five Bells pub on East End Road, N2. Despite the best efforts of paramedics and the London Air Ambulance, the youngster was pronounced dead shortly after arriving at hospital.

Police interviewed the driver

of the car, a Toyota Rav4, who stopped at the scene. No arrests were made after the accident at about 7pm on Wednesday 22 May.

Police are appealing for information. Anyone who witnessed the accident first-hand or has dashcam footage is asked to contact the Met's Serious Collision Investigation Unit on 020 8246 9820 or tweet @MetCC, quoting CAD 7373 or May 22.

Local residents responding to the death on social media are calling for the speed limit on East End Road to be cut from 30mph to 20mph. A petition has been started at www.thepetitionsite.com (search 'East End Road') and local councilors have asked for a briefing with the police Borough Commander.

New centre stands empty as opening is delayed again

By Janet Maitland

The long-awaited opening of East Finchley's new community centre has been delayed until the summer. Originally scheduled to open late last year, it was postponed until this spring; now it has emerged that no prospective tenants of the building in Tarling Road have yet signed leases.

Nor does the centre yet have anyone to manage it. City YMCA were selected to run it last September, but their contract, which will include leasing office space at the centre, is still being negotiated.

Frustration

East Finchley councillor Alison Moore said: "It's really frustrating for everyone to see a fantastic new building on their doorsteps standing more or less empty. As local councillors we're as frustrated as everyone else. We're pressing the council hard to get the issues sorted out and the centre fully open. Let's hope our much needed new centre will be starting to thrive by the autumn, but it's proving to be a slow start."

Barnet Council says the delays are because it has taken them "longer than expected to draw up leases". The Somali Bravanese Welfare Association was able to use the building during Ramadan but this was only a temporary hire.

Difficult balance

The key issue is the level of rent and service charges. The council has made it clear that they will not be making any profit from the centre, but cannot pay for the cost of running it. If the level of rents and service charges is set too high, they will not be affordable; too low, and the running costs will not be met.

"While some community groups would get a subsidy in their rents, the level of service charges has meant it's simply unaffordable for many local groups," noted Alison Moore.

This dilemma may affect the availability of low-cost and free activities to local people. Community groups will struggle to be flexible about what their activities will cost, if what they pay to provide them is too high.

The cafe space is still empty. "It will be advertised once the building is fully open and the daily footfall is better understood," said a council spokesperson.

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