



What is the future of our libraries after lockdown?

By Daphne Chamberlain

“Librarians are just like search engines, except they smile and talk to me, and they don’t give me paid-for advertising when they are trying to help.” This tweet from the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) illustrates the social and educational role of libraries in society.

The closure of our library buildings during lockdown struck hardest at people, particularly children, who benefit enormously from personal interaction, and at the many households without dependable internet access.

Online successes

For those who were able to use it, however, technology proved itself. E-book borrowing rocketed during lockdown, sometimes by up to 600%. Barnet offered e-books, e-audiobooks, e-magazines, newspapers and comics, issuing over 123,500 electronic stock. The council also had about 18,000 views of 50 online events.

The School Libraries Resources Service has been supporting schools with digital resources throughout lockdown and resumed collection and delivery of learning materials on request to schools on 18 June.

In the first week of operation in June, a reported 531 customers made use of the Select and Collect service, requesting just over 2,200 items. (See below for details).

Going forward

Barnet Council says: “We will...gradually expand the opening of the core libraries and core plus libraries for wider use over the following months. We will continue with all our

online events.” East Finchley is a Core library.

Safety requirements will obviously include marked-out social distancing, possibly reorganised shelving, quarantining all returned stock for 72 hours, hand sanitiser units, Perspex screens, and a limited number of customers at any time.

What next, though? The pandemic has left many Councils facing bankruptcy. CILIP fears a postcode lottery, with closure of large and busy libraries in areas where they are most needed. The government has pledged extra funding, but will that be enough?

Barnet library services open online

By Emma Magnus

While East Finchley Library remains shut for the time being, here are the free library services you can still use by going online. You’ll need to join the library in order to benefit from these services. You can either fill out a three-minute form at www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries or visit one of the reopened branches at Finchley Church End, Chipping Barnet, Edgware or Colindale.

Alternative means of borrowing books

The good news is it’s still possible to borrow books, CDs and DVDs via the Select and Collect and Home Library services. The Home Library service is for members with limited mobility or living in sheltered or residential housing. Select and Collect is for everyone, with items chosen from a catalogue then available to collect at Chipping Barnet, Edgware, Finchley Church End or Colindale Libraries.

Browsing the shelves may not be possible, but there are still ways to discover new books:

Barnet Libraries can put together a selection of items for you based on your preferences. You can borrow up to 20 items on your library card.

Not just books

You can read ebooks, audiobooks, newspapers (including those with paywalls) and magazines for free online: there are thousands available in over 60 languages, accessible on a range of reading devices.

Online resources

Libraries offer free subscriptions for many handy resources. Oxford English Dictionary, Britannica, Oxford Reference Online,

Ancestry, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography: all free to use. If you’re learning to drive, Theory Test Pro is also available.

Book clubs

If you’re a member of a book club that meets in Barnet, you can borrow sets of popular titles (up to 30 books) for eight weeks. One member just needs to register at a library to get a ‘group reading ticket’.

Coding

Finally, your coding dreams can come true. You can borrow Micro:bits, tiny computers that allow you to create programs and save them onto your computer.

Editor’s note:

Most Haringey libraries, including Muswell Hill and Highgate, have re-opened and you don’t need to be a Haringey resident to join their libraries. Find out more about the many services on offer locally at www.haringey.gov.uk/covid-19/council-services~lib



New ways John Lowrie at the Baptist Church. Photo Mike Coles

How church-going has been changed for the better

By David Gritten

Churches across Britain have been dealt a blow by the social restrictions that coronavirus has made necessary. Most have closed their doors, at least for the time being, and East Finchley Baptist Church is among them.

But John Lowrie, pastor there for the last three years, believes that despite this year’s setbacks, the church’s future is bright. Many members of its congregation are connecting with its services and sermons online, and using Zoom has revolutionised the way they worship.

Friendly buzz

John reports that the experiment has had remarkable results: “We wondered how people would interact. Most of the folks, when you see them, they wave, say hello, and for the first five minutes we just chat, share news, whatever. “That’s turned out to be a very friendly time, as opposed to being in church, where you come in, find a seat and wait quietly until the service starts. This way there’s a buzz, a hubbub of noise. It’s not just about the service, it’s getting people to enjoy each other’s company.”

Before the pandemic, he recalls: “We’d get about 50-60 people on an average Sunday. With Zoom we get over 30 screens. Some might be a single person, but others a couple or a family of four. So our numbers have actually gone up, particularly midweek, because Zoom allows people to join us without having to travel after a long day at work.”

John is convinced of one

thing: “We won’t come back the same people, that’s for sure. Folks have shared their lives and their problems more. There have been offers of help between them and some of them leaving parcels of food on people’s doorsteps. They’re finding new ways to look out for each other.

“People now socialise outside the church, where they wouldn’t have done it before. They’d turn up on a Sunday, then not see each other for a week. But now they’ll go to the park together, maybe go for a meal. They’re enjoying each other’s company. When all this is finally over it won’t be ‘the new normal’. I think it’ll be better in many ways.”

Shared harvest

Plot holders at East Finchley Allotments, off Plane Tree Walk, N2, have been donating surplus fruit and vegetables to be distributed to local charity kitchens and food banks.

The scheme has been operating on weekends and invites growers to leave produce in a shady spot on the site, which is then collected by two volunteers for onward distribution.

All Saints’ Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

We are now open again for public worship and you are welcome to join us for:

Sunday mass at 10.00 a.m. and Weekday masses as advertised on the website

or join our live-streamed services on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/allsaintsef/>

The church is also open for private prayer as advertised on the website.

Prayer requests are gladly accepted.

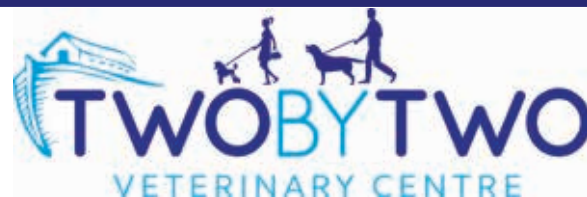
For more information, contact the Vicar, Fr Ian Chandler, on 020 8883 9315

Email: vicar.saintsabounding@gmail.com or check out our website:

<http://www.allsaints-eastfinchley.org.uk>

Open Sundays

Free Parking



Pet Boutique

Covid-secure

Independent veterinary care in modern, spacious facilities
Free vet healthchecks for new puppies, kittens and rabbit kits

Cats - Dogs - Small Mammals - Birds - Reptiles

178-180 Long Lane, Finchley N3 2RA
020 3865 8905 www.twobytwovets.co.uk

