



A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Traders forced to turn away customers as power cuts hit

By John Lawrence

Power cuts struck restaurant owners and traders in East Finchley last month, forcing them to turn away customers on one of their busiest weekends of the year.

Businesses and homes in the High Road between Kitchener Road and Beresford Road found themselves without electricity for nine hours on Friday 13 December and for up to another 10 hours on Saturday 14 December at the height of the pre-Christmas shopping season.

Cancellations and candlelight trading

Optometrist David Hillel had to cancel a full NHS clinic on the Saturday morning, all of the machines at Heck of a Wash launderette were put out of action and East Finchley Electrical could not raise their shop shutters. Casa Pepe and the North London Hospice were unable to open, while Pacey's newsagents did their best to trade by candlelight.



Damage to businesses

Chef Khalid Harichi, pictured above, had to turn away 25 diners from his Table du Marche restaurant on the Friday evening. "We lost a lot of business," he said. "Friday evenings and Saturdays are when we make most of our money and we had to cancel a lot of bookings. Our customers were very understanding but it was frustrating."

Dav Zeinali, who runs Heck of a Wash, lost more than 24 hours of trade and had to disappoint many customers who needed their clothes for the party season. "We are all human and we understand that faults can occur but this is hugely damaging to a small business like ours and it's hard to get through to someone at the power company to get a response," he said.

Several of the traders also told *The Archer* that they held out little hope of receiving compensation from cable owners UK Power Networks as the two outages lasted less than the stipulated minimum of 12 hours each.

A UK Power Networks spokesperson told *The Archer* that the power cut was caused by a local fault on an underground cable which proved difficult to locate as heat is thought to have resealed the cable before the damage could be found.

The spokesperson said: "We apologise to traders and residents in East Finchley High Road affected. We understand the inconvenience caused and our engineers worked to restore electricity supplies as quickly as possible. On the Saturday our engineers were able to trace, excavate and permanently repair the fault."

"Under Ofgem's Guaranteed Standards, payments do not apply in this case, but if customers decide to make a claim from their business insurance our customer care team would be able to provide the customer with written confirmation of the power cut to give to their insurance company."



Conservation plea: Virginia McKenna OBE, with Ihsan at Oak Lodge School

Don't let the sun go down on wildlife

Wildlife campaigner and actress Virginia McKenna OBE met a big fan of her acclaimed film *Born Free* when she spent a morning with the pupils and teachers of Oak Lodge special academy in East Finchley last month.

Student Ihsan presented the school's famous visitor with flowers and a painting of his own, and got the chance to question her about the movie and her conservation work. Teachers said Ihsan, who can have difficulty concentrating for long periods, had been engrossed when he watched the drama of Joy Adamson, played by Virginia, and her husband George saving Elsa the lioness and releasing her into the wild in Kenya. *Full story on page 5.*

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