



**A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.**



*Sew grateful: Cassie, Zack and Vrajilal hard at work, and their finished bags being delivered to the Spring Lane care home in Fortis Green*

## Neighbours form a network from needles and thread

By Roshi Woodroffe Northover

**Making laundry bags for NHS workers has brought together neighbours who have lived side by side but never met. Nearly 40 volunteers are now involved across East Finchley and Muswell Hill, supplying hospitals and care homes in the area.**

Among them are 11-year-old Cassie, who has just started sewing, and Vrajilal, a retired tailor who learnt his trade to support his family many years ago in Bombay aged 13. Older people in self-isolation and A-level students whose exams have been cancelled have also joined in.

Other neighbours who cannot sew have cut out material or delivered the completed bags. Jessica, one of the organisers, said: "It has been great to feel there is something we can do, however small, to support underpaid care workers."

### Bags of help

It all started in the middle of April when Durham Road resident Claire, a senior nurse currently supporting nurse management across North London, mentioned to her neighbour that laundry bags were needed. The bags would enable nursing

staff to take their dirty scrubs home and put them straight in the machine without infecting their families.

Within a few days a dozen volunteers from Durham Road and Huntingdon Road were sewing. Two months later with the help of friends across East Finchley and Muswell Hill, over 1,200 bags have been made for nurses at North Middlesex and Whittington hospitals and care homes across Barnet and Haringey.

Care homes have been particularly grateful as they have received many fewer donations and less public support than the better-known hospitals. For these care home workers the bags are not just practical, knowing that the community is thinking of them is also a great morale boost. For information on how to get involved, email [eastfinchleynhslaundrybags@gmail.com](mailto:eastfinchleynhslaundrybags@gmail.com)

## Local shopping will save our high street

By Nick Allan

**The ongoing challenge for local traders presented by the coronavirus is widespread and severe, reports N2United, the business network for East Finchley. Dozens of restaurants, dry cleaners, charity shops, hairdressers and health practitioners have been forced to close their doors and are now having to work out how they might be able to get back to business as normal.**

The shops and businesses in N2 that have been able to keep trading through the lockdown, including most of our food stores and supermarkets as well as the Post Office, plus our hard-pressed pharmacies and some cafés, have been working extremely hard to serve us all.

However, for many local businesses large and small, the biggest challenge is still ahead as many look forward to how they can open their doors to customers again, if indeed they can. 'As we went to press, pubs, retailers, dentists and opticians were being told they needed

stringent health measures in place.

### Hope for the future

Many East Finchley traders have been encouraged by comments from customers who have turned to shops close to home during the lockdown and tell them they've been pleased to find they stocked their favourite items and a range of new discoveries.

Habits do seem to be changing. A regular trip to or delivery from stores nearby is becoming a welcome alternative to shopping at larger supermarkets

outside our community.

N2United says there is no doubt that the continued support of local customers will be vital if we all want to see East Finchley's unique mix of independent businesses survive the pandemic and our local economy restart.

The group hopes the changes to our shopping habits will become permanent. That would make all the difference to traders, helping them avoid closure and averting the associated negative impact on our neighbourhood if they were to disappear.

## Clampdown on mass gatherings

By Janet Maitland

**Police took out extra powers over the Bank Holiday weekend of 22-24 May to deal with anti-social behaviour by young people gathering in large groups in East Finchley.**

On the nights of 20 and 21 May, groups of 40 or more young people gathered on a communal area on the Grange Estate, a green space on New Oak Road and in the small park alongside Park Road. Residents living on Park Road complained on social media about noise, intimidating behaviour to passers-by and piles of discarded nitrous oxide containers.

Temporary dispersal orders allow police to tell someone to leave an area and not return for 48 hours.

The weekend was quiet, with no recurrence of the anti-social behaviour and the order was lifted at 4pm on Sunday 24 May.

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