



Letters



Fox-walk collection

Dear Editor,

I kindly ask your readers living on Long Lane near New Oak Road to peruse this latest collection of items left overnight in my garden by the fox or foxes who patrol this area. Please contact *The Archer* and I will arrange for them to be reunited with their human owners.

On the matter of foxes, can someone tell me if using very long cut-down blackberry stems to fashion natural barbed wire would work as an effective deterrent in and around their path? Or any other suggestions would be welcome.

Loving our community,
Mrs S Magnusson
Long Lane, N2.

Friends for older members of society

By Gillian Jordan, Age UK Trustee

Age UK Barnet staff and volunteers have been extremely busy this past year, adapting services since the first lockdown began. Older people in East Finchley and all over Barnet, many of whom were not able to leave their homes, were missing their usual support, activities and companionship.

Befrienders, used to visiting in person, changed to making regular telephone contact, prescriptions were collected, hot meals delivered, shopping done, as were many other tasks, ably supported by Age UK Barnet's willing band of volunteers. Even cookery classes carried on and Zoom proved indispensable.

Doorstep workouts were started, flowers delivered and letters written by local school-children were sent. A new publication called Pigeon Post was distributed both electronically and by hand to over 1,200 people each month. Importantly, new contacts with some of our most lonely and frail people were initiated and are set to continue.

"We couldn't have done all this without our volunteers," says Lisa Robbins, volunteer manager. "We were exceptionally lucky to be swamped by offers of help from local people, in particular young people who wanted to support our older population."

New volunteers needed

But now, as many of our younger volunteers return to their work or studies or have moved on, Age UK Barnet really needs more volunteers to



Special delivery: Volunteer Darren drops off flowers at an Age UK client's home

keep reaching out to our older people.

"We are particularly looking for volunteers to befriend, by telephone support or visits and to help older people get to grips with their smart phones, laptops or computers," says Lisa. "We also need shopping volunteers, walking group leaders and walking buddies to help give older people the confidence to get out and about again."

There is a suitable slot for everyone. All volunteers are given relevant training and ongoing support. So, if you could spare a few hours a week to help, please get in touch. Contact Lisa on 020 8432 1422 or email Lisa.Robbins@ageukbarnet.org.uk

There's neigh doubt that horses can help

By David Melsome

Ponies have been brought onto the school grounds at the Archer Academy in East Finchley to help students whose mental health may have taken a knock during the pandemic.

The sessions provided by Lotte Carlebach, a qualified equine therapist, have proved popular with pupils and teachers alike and the school is appealing for financial support to run more in the future.

Senior assistant headteacher Jo Mahoney is responsible for the pastoral care of the school's more than 800 students. She explains: "Covid-19 has been hard for everyone, but it's fair to say that some of our students have struggled more than others. We are determined to do everything we possibly can to help them settle back into school life, and overcome the trauma of the last 18 months, and equine therapy is a brilliant solution."

Lotte works with small groups of students who interact with the ponies in a mindful way, helping develop their self-awareness, communication skills and empathy and boosting their self-esteem.

Jo added: "It's wonderful to watch the students interacting with the ponies; it has a truly calming effect on them, which is just what they need after the upheaval of the last year or so. But it's more than that; Lotte is also teaching them about the ponies' herd dynamics, which supports them to navigate the group dynamics they encounter at school."



Connection: A therapy horse with a student at the Archer Academy

Support

Now, with the original grant having covered the initial three sessions, Jo and her team are seeking donations from like-minded people or organisations to

allow the programme to continue. To find out more about the programme, or to offer financial support so that the school can continue to run it, email Angela Hay: Ahay@Thearcheracademy.org.uk.

Hospice needs help out of hours

North London Hospice is urgently appealing for support for its out-of-hours service, which helps patients and families round the clock.

Demand for this rapid response overnight service has risen by more than 300% over the last 12 months but it costs £74 an hour each night and the hospice said it could run out of

the funds it needs by November. The out-of-hours team will travel to people's homes across Barnet, Haringey and Enfield to respond to calls for support, often from those who don't need

to call an ambulance and face a lengthy hospital admission process. To give donations to the service, visit <https://northlondonhospice.org/support-us/sos/>

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