



# Let a hundred thousand flowers bloom in East Finchley

By Roger Chapman, of East Finchley Community Trust  
A new project to let a hundred thousand more flowers bloom in East Finchley is being launched for 2022 and we would love you to be part of it.

The East Finchley Community Trust is behind the Pollinator project, which aims to create pollinator trails in East Finchley based on a series of nectar cafes, and to raise awareness about the importance of insect pollinators.

## Why are we doing it?

Our bees, butterflies and hoverflies have suffered badly over the last 50 years, due to changes in land use because of modern farming methods, urban spread and new transport links. Over 97% of all flower-rich grasslands (an area the size of Wales) have been lost in England since the 1930s, reducing pollen and nectar sources and leading to a serious decline in the wildlife depending on wildflower-rich habitat.



Chair of the Trust Kate Brown said: "There are many different types of pollinators. People often only mention bees but there are hoverflies and many other beneficial insects. A third of the crops we eat, including fruit, vegetables, chocolate and coffee, rely on pollination. Don't underestimate how much urban environments can benefit pollinators. And the results are beautiful as well."

## What can we do?

It's already happening in East Finchley. Every flower planted in back gardens and hanging baskets, on balconies and window sills, in tree pits on streets, in community gardens, in our parks and open spaces, will help support pollinators. More flower planters are appearing all the time. We aim to bring such small-scale gardeners together and support more who would like to get involved.

## What is happening?

A new wildflower meadow is being planted in Cherry Tree Wood this winter. The butterfly bed at the High Road entrance is being improved all the time. Outside that entrance local

residents are planting up the tree pits. Station Bank, on the way to the Station car park, has its tenth anniversary as a community garden in 2022.

Other initiatives are happening along The Walks, the High Road, along the county roads, in the Grange Estate, at Barnwood off Oak Lane, and at the community garden that started only this year at the Archer Academy.

## How can we help?

You can set up a nectar cafe by planting flowers for pollinating insects like bees and butterflies. Choose a sheltered sunny spot and plant in groups or drifts so colours and scents are easy to detect.

Prolong the flowering season by selecting a range of

plants that flower from early spring to late autumn and choose flowers with a simple (often flat) structure, like old cottage varieties, as they are the easiest for insects to feed from.

Remember to provide a night-time feast for moths by planting some night-scented flowers. Add herbs to the mix as they are highly attractive to insects, or design a dedicated herb garden

## What next?

In late January 2022 we'll hold an online Zoom meeting for people interested in getting involved, with details in the January Archer and on local social media. Join in the discussion and let's talk together about what we can do.

In late March 2022 there'll be a seed swap in Cherry Tree Wood. Come along, swap some seeds, and find out more about how you can help. Talk about the idea with friends. Think what you can plant next year, on a windowsill, in your garden, in the tree pit outside your house or in a community garden.

Keep in touch and email the Trust on [eastfinchleytrust@gmail.com](mailto:eastfinchleytrust@gmail.com) for more details.



Tooled up: The volunteer gardeners clear the shrubby beds outside Budgens. Photo Mike Coles.

## Hit squad gives weeds the heave-ho

By Janet Maitland

Have you ever felt so dispirited by the bindweed and brambles smothering the rose bushes in the Barnet Council flower beds outside Budgens in the High Road that you just longed to get stuck in with your secateurs?

A group of local gardeners did just that, spending Saturday morning on 20 November pruning shrubs and clearing leaves and litter, spurred on by thanks and free hot drinks from appreciative passers-by.

Two of the volunteers dragged their green bins all the way from home and back again, full of twigs and branches. "I really enjoyed it and had a great

time," said one of the gardeners. "It was huge fun," said another.

The date was planned to make sure the flower beds looked their best in time for the Saturday 5 December lighting up of the Christmas tree donated by Paul Gardner, manager of Budgens. The gardeners say they plan to return to keep the weeds away.

## Carol singers on the move around N2

Get in the Christmas spirit by supporting a group of wandering carol singers who will be spreading joy and good tidings at various locations on Thursday 9 December.

The troupe will be singing all the festive favourites, starting outside the Old White Lion pub near the tube station at 6pm, then moving on to entertain commuters at the station itself before finishing outside Budgens further up the High Road.

All money collected on the night will support Finchley Foodbank. The singers themselves will include food bank volunteers and parishioners of St Mary's RC Church in East Finchley.

## Calling all book lovers

A new book club meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 3.30pm to 4.30pm at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2.

"Book clubs are a super way to meet fellow readers around a mug of tea and a good book," says Age UK Barnet volunteer Kato who is running the group. "They offer a comfortable social space where people who love reading can meet to share their ideas and feelings about a book without judgement."

It's also a great opportunity

to read books that you might not normally choose, says Kato. "It's a chance to appreciate different perspectives and points of view – and perhaps even make new friends..."

To register your interest in joining the group, call Helen Nicolaou on 0738 446 6840 or email [helen.nicolaou@ageuk-barnet.org.uk](mailto:helen.nicolaou@ageuk-barnet.org.uk).

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WE WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

OPENING TIMES DURING FESTIVE PERIOD:

WE CLOSE ON FRIDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER AT 2.00 PM AND REOPEN ON TUESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY AT 9.00 AM.