



# Relive the highs and lows of a tumultuous year

You may want to forget it ever happened but 2020 will always be a year to remember, as our round-up of the highs and lows in East Finchley over the last 12 months goes to show.



Float on: The Fixation Theatre youngsters alongside their carnival vehicle in central London.

## January

The team of volunteers behind **East Finchley Festival** runs a crowdfunding campaign with an £8,000 target to help them start booking essential equipment and services for the planned event in June.

Parents and police resume patrols close to **secondary schools** in East Finchley after a spate of muggings of young people walking home on dark evenings. Hot spots for the robberies had been in the area of Cherry Tree Wood and along The Causeway.

Youngsters from **Fixation Theatre Company**, based at Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road, N2, dress in a riotous rainbow of colours to represent Barnet in the Lord Mayor of London's New Year's Day Parade. The theme of their float is 'Live Your Best Life', focusing on the importance of good mental health.

## February

The **Phoenix Cinema** reports a record loss of £78,000 and admits that its financial crisis is getting worse, not better. Trustees urge film lovers in East Finchley

and beyond to visit the cinema as often as possible to help secure its future.

After more than 30 years standing empty, the **derelict pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood** is finally razed to the ground. Demolition contractors M&L Stevens Ltd move in and take only a few days to knock down the brick structure, originally built in 1926.

A campaign group called Hands Off Finchley Central is formed to oppose a major high-rise development proposed for land around the tube **station car**

**park** in Finchley Central; there are fears that East Finchley's station car park will be in line for redevelopment in the future.

## March

East Finchley is forced to get used to a new way of life as **national lockdown** restrictions are imposed in response to the rapidly spreading Covid-19 pandemic. Cafés, restaurants, pubs and non-food shops close their doors, the Phoenix Cinema stops showing films and students are sent home from schools and colleges.

Residents of Park Hall Road, N2, appear on BBC TV news taking part in the very first **Clap for Carers** from their doorsteps on Thursday 26 March. Across East Finchley, neighbours sound whistles and bang pots and pans in appreciation of the work of everyone in the health services.

Historic **Valona House**, the former GLH mini cab headquarters opposite East Finchley tube station, is listed for sale but the auction is overtaken by the lockdown and the site remains unsold.

## April

East Finchley residents rally to support each other as most people isolate at home and the streets fall quiet. Numerous sets of neighbours organise collections for **Finchley Foodbank**,



The pavilion bites the dust. Photo: Mike Coles

## May

Police take out extra powers over the Bank Holiday weekend to deal with **anti-social behaviour** by people gathering in large groups in Park Road and on the Grange Estate, N2, in contravention of lockdown rules.

Dozens of volunteers respond to an appeal to deliver **The Archer** to homes and businesses, cov-

## July

The East Finchley branch of **KFC** is forced to remove a large metal vent installed only weeks earlier, following complaints that it was pumping foul smells and high levels of noise directly into neighbouring homes in Huntingdon Road.

**Geoffrey Hanson**, founder and director of the East Finchley



The BBC filmed residents of Park Hall Road clapping for the NHS

ering for some of our regular deliverers who are unable to do their rounds as normal.

Professional musicians **Sue Sutherley and Paul Silverthorne** give mini concerts in their front garden in Lincoln Road as their own way of saying thank you to NHS staff and to entertain their neighbours.

## June

People in East Finchley and Muswell Hill come out in their hundreds to show their support for the **Black Lives Matter** movement following the death of George Floyd while being arrested by police in the US. Residents in Bedford Road, N2, take the knee outside their own homes and there is a peaceful demonstration involving more than 500 people at Alexandra Palace.

Much-loved former East Finchley Festival organiser, and chair of East Finchley Community Trust, **Stan Spinks** dies at the age of 82.

Arts Festival and a long-time musical director at All Saints' Church in Durham Road, N2, dies at the age of 80.

**Archie**, the famous statue by Eric Aumonier that watches over arriving and departing trains at East Finchley Station, celebrates eight decades on his perch above the southbound platform. He was originally unveiled in July 1940.

## August

**Cafés and restaurants** around East Finchley are rushed off their feet as hundreds of diners take advantage of the government's Eat Out to Help Out scheme.

Fire hazards are reported in **Coldfall Wood** after careless den-builders leave campfires smouldering overnight. Meanwhile, incidences of anti-social behaviour in Cherry Tree Wood rise as people use it for barbecues and to meet up with friends.

News emerges that **Valona House**, opposite the tube station, has been sold to Deniz Investments, the company developing

## All Saints' Church, Durham Road, East Finchley Church of England

You are welcome to join us for:

**Sunday mass at 10.00 a.m. and Weekday masses as advertised on the website.**  
Face masks must be worn for the time being.

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](mailto:vicar.saintsabounding@gmail.com) or check out our website:

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

based at St Mary's Church Hall in the High Road. Support networks are set up online to assist people who cannot get out to shop. Local food shops work extra hard to keep us supplied, with many starting delivery services.

Most of East Finchley's **social calendar** is cancelled. Organisers of the East Finchley Festival reach their fundraising total but announce that the event will not be going ahead in 2020. The annual Race the Neighbours event between East Finchley and Muswell Hill is called off too. Outdoor venues like Stephens House and Gardens in East End Road scrap their spring and summer programmes.

Homeowners start paying an annual charge of £70 for their **green garden waste bin** to be collected by Barnet Council, which says the money raised will be used to invest in other environmental services.



Steve Carr and Helena Pugh delivering donations to the food bank. Photo Mike Coles

Young people unable to meet as normal at local youth organisations **the Monday Club and the Friday Club** are given care packages of healthy food and treats thanks to a generous benefactor and the hard work of club organiser Maureen Clemetson and a team of volunteers.

the Viceroy Close car park in East Finchley. The developers announce proposals to construct 24 luxury flats and one commercial unit on the Valona House site.

**Swimmers** protest at the introduction of charges to use the men's, women's and mixed bathing ponds on Hampstead Heath.