



A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Festival is cancelled for second year

By John Lawrence

East Finchley's massively popular mid-summer festival, which usually brings thousands of people flocking to Cherry Tree Wood in June, has been called off for the second year in a row.

The team of volunteers behind the festival said they had come to the decision "with regret", having been forced to cancel last year's event too as the pandemic took hold.

Early conversations had taken place last year about whether it was feasible to go ahead in June 2021, but the long lockdown over the winter and the emergence of the new strain of the virus were knockbacks.

festival team was celebrating after months of hard work and generous donations from the public helped them reach their £8,000 fundraising target for staging last year's event. Just days later, the nationwide lockdown was imposed, and East Finchley's Festival became one of thousands of summer gatherings to be scrapped.

This will be the first time in the festival's almost 50-year



Highlight of the summer: East Finchley Festival

Timing and health risks

The festival takes several months to organise and, as the East Finchley Festival CIC team reached the end of January, with Barnet Council still not in a position to make a decision about booking Cherry Tree Wood in time to allow them to plan the event properly, they decided to call it off before starting to incur any expenses

Organiser Mike Hughes said: "We cannot in good conscience risk the health of our friends, neighbours, supporters and wider community. Whilst it provides no comfort, we note that we are not alone in postponing events planned for summer 2021."

Twice bitten

Twelve months ago, the

history that it has not taken place two years running. Before 2020, the last time it had been cancelled was in the Olympic year of 2012, when a wet May and June left the field in Cherry Tree Wood saturated with water.



Just a prank: John Cormack kayaking on the lake in Cherry Tree Wood. Photos Roger Chapman

Whatever floats your boat

By Diana Cormack

The flooding in Cherry Tree Wood this year must rank amongst the worst in living memory. With the grassland becoming a haven for flocks of seagulls and the saturated woodland dotted with soggy pools, the sunny, hot months of 2020 seem a long way off.

In those days people poured into the park to practise their favourite activities: ballet, boxing, juggling, yoga and even tightrope walking. Now after a wet winter one man has proved that East Finchley folk are nothing if not adaptable.

One Sunday afternoon at the end of January, keen kayaker John Cormack (no relation), of Leicester Road, N2, took to the extensive flood water and attempted a few circuits, much to the amusement of passers-by.

John, his wife and family have been kayakers for many years, travelling all over the world on exciting expeditions. A favourite memory is kayaking down the Thames, enjoying the fantastic sights on either side.

Now, having to stay closer to home, the temporary lake in Cherry Tree Wood was too good a chance to miss. John told *The Archer* he is a member

of The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood and had discussed the kayaking with Roger Chapman, chair of The Friends, who took photos of the prank.

Former teacher John also speaks enthusiastically of The Phoenix Canoe Club at Welsh Harp (more prosaically known as Brent Reservoir), which runs a variety of courses for youngsters and adults. Find out more at www.phoenixcanoeclub.co.uk

Got the T-shirt?

And in no time, John's escapade had inspired a new line of merchandise in the online store at ILoveN2.co.uk. Local designer Mike Hughes



has created some brilliant T-shirts, sweatshirts, hoodies, cooking aprons and mugs, all bearing the logo of the fictional Cherry Tree Wood Kayaking Club. Shop now for yourself or a loved one!

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