



Bike riders ramp up damage to Coldfall Wood

By Ann Bronkhorst

Digging your garden or allotment is great outdoor exercise, but it's not a good idea to dig up soil in a protected ancient wood to build ramps for bike riders. Coldfall Wood, where people have made a heavy impact in various ways over the last year, has seen more ramp-building recently and the Friends of Coldfall Wood and Haringey, the wood's owners, say it's not acceptable.

Back in August, ramps appeared in different parts of the wood. Sometimes branches were pulled out from dead-hedges, good species habitats made by the Trust for Conservation Volunteers for their woodland work. Often soil was excavated quite deeply, exposing tree roots, and was even gouged out from the mediaeval earthwork along the western side.

In another part of the wood several long ramps were constructed by adults using power tools and digging openly, on an unstable slope near a gas pipe and below an oak that shed a massive branch days later. Asked to stop, those men refused. Some parents on social media claimed their children needed to cycle just like this, and in this particular wood.

Playground or protected space

Haringey Council put up notices making it clear that

damaging the trees, plants or surfaces of Coldfall Wood is an offence and advised reporting it to the police. Most were pulled down. Local police did make occasional patrols and individual Friends and Haringey Parks employees spoke to children and parents, to small effect. Through the winter, arguments continued about the rights and wrongs of ramp-building but the cold wet weather was a natural deterrent.

In early February, however, a dog walker came across a man systematically removing the council's warning notices and saying he wanted his children to build and use bike ramps. Nature reserve? Ancient wood? Not interested.

Ray of hope

It's rumoured that Haringey Council might consider creating a biking area for children on a patch of land near Shepherd's Hill. If so, would this solve the problem? A dedicated place for adventurous bike riding sounds great but would take some time to set up. The parents who allow their children to misuse Coldfall Wood now, ignoring requests, explanations and warnings, will probably continue until a tree collapses or a prosecution occurs.

Improve your improv

A theatre company is running free online improv workshops in East Finchley to help people meet others and build their confidence. Funded by Grange Big Local's Community Grants Programme, the workshops will be run by Akana Theatre, a small group of actors and improvisers.

There will be three different 12-week courses for teens, young adults, and adults. You don't need any previous experience in improv, comedy, or theatre at all, just an openness to learn, play and be yourself. Sign up for any of the courses using these links: Improv for Teens (12-16 years old), every Monday from 5pm-6pm until 24 May, <https://bit.ly/3jxRl6u>

Improv for Young Adults (17-21 years old), every Sunday from 4pm-5pm until 23 May, <https://bit.ly/3p1iBLx>

Improv for Adults (aged 22+), every Sunday from 5.30pm-6.30pm until 23 May, <https://bit.ly/37bGKcv>



Jeepers peepers: Objects around East Finchley came to life with two staring eyes.

Look into our eyes

A pillar box with personality and a bench that looks back at you! Anyone out for a lockdown walk one day last month may have spotted these googly eyes after they suddenly appeared on objects all over East Finchley. "They cheered me up on a grey February day," said reader Samo, who sent us the photos. We don't know for sure who put them there but our best guess is Karen Landi, known as @pebblefairy on Instagram, who has form for this kind of fun.

The great outdoors classroom

The Archer Academy is looking for people to help them develop a community garden and outdoor classroom on their site in Eagans Close, N2.

The school has secured funding for this project from the Grange Big Local project through its Community Grants programme.

It says being outdoors has numerous mental health benefits and will support wellbeing for all. The garden will provide a space for students to develop new skills and for the community as a whole to enjoy.

There are plans to install bug hotels, bird boxes, a chicken run, planting, seating areas and



space for school dog Rufus to have a run around.

The Archer Academy is looking for green fingered volunteers

and people with carpentry skills. If you are keen to get involved please register your interest by emailing: volunteer@the-archer-academy.org.uk. You can follow the progress of the outdoor classroom on the school's Facebook and Instagram accounts.

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Grants still up for grabs

Applications are still open for Grange Big Local's Covid Recovery Grants, which offer up to £500 to residents to help them and their families recover from the effects of the pandemic.

Funds can be used for training to get into work, buying laptops and tech for home schooling, getting school uniforms or clothes for work, transport costs, job licence fees or driving lessons.

Grants are open to anyone living in the Big Local's area bounded by the Church Lane, the High Road, the North Cir-

cular and East End Road, N2. This is a rolling funding pot, with applications effectively considered on a first come first served basis, until the allocated funding runs out.

Find information and a link to the application form at www.grangebiglocal.org/gbl-covid-grants or email info@grangebiglocal.org

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