



Neglected play area awarded £70,000 boost

By John Lawrence

A total of £70,000 has been awarded to improve the play equipment and introduce new features at the popular Market Place Play Area in East Finchley.

The money was granted, £30,000 from Barnet Council and £40,000 from the Grange Big Local project, after a group of parents and local councillor Alison Moore raised their concerns about the Play Area's poor layout and some of its ageing gear.

The Friends of Market Place Playground organised a survey asking parents how they thought it could be improved and the 340 responses will be used to set the goals for the refurbishment project. Top of the wish list are better equipment, more planting and natural features, and more social seating.

Samantha Haycock, from the Friends group, said: We

their sacrifices of the past year."

Next steps: creating a landscaping and design brief in conjunction with Barnet Council and then deciding when the improvement works can be done. Samantha said the project team will be sure to consult with the community as they go.

"We have many sometimes conflicting views to consider and it is important for us that key groups like teenagers, immediate residents and those with disabilities and additional needs have input," she said.

Could you help?

The team would welcome support and skills from anyone with fundraising, landscaping,



Revamp: The Market Place Play Area. Photo Mike Coles

are delighted to have this demonstration of confidence in Market Place Playground and the Friends group from the council and GBL. In doing this they have committed to making Market Place a space to be proud of and to delivering our children the high quality play environment they deserve after

design or project management skills. They are also looking for someone with expertise in the not-for-profit legal and business affairs sector to help them shape a constitution and manage the funds. To get in touch, email friendsofmarketplace@gmail.com or find the group on Facebook and Twitter.



Time to move on: Evelyn Davies in front of tributes from her Coldfall pupils

Head retires after 25 years

By Ewan Marshall

After 25 years of exceptional service to the community, Evelyn Davies is retiring as headteacher from Coldfall Primary School. She describes the school as her life's work and something she has cared for like one of her children.

Under her leadership, Coldfall has been transformed from a small one-form entry school, listed by the Department for Education as one of the 100 worst schools nationally, into a large thriving institution that has achieved three successive 'Outstanding' judgements from Ofsted.

Amongst her most memorable moments are the musical performances that took the children of Coldfall to perform at prestigious venues such as the Barbican, Wigmore Hall and even the O2 Arena.

Of course, running a primary school is not without its challenges too and Mrs Davies notes that the infestations of Canada geese on the school

field and the unwelcome visit of a rat, nicknamed Trevor, to her bathroom were not part of her headteacher's training.

Mrs Davies postponed her retirement for a year to provide stability and guidance through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic but now she has decided that it is finally time to move on and spend more time with her family.

The children of Coldfall Primary celebrated Mrs Davies's contribution by decorating the entire school with portraits, poems and stories inspired by her. Staff presented her with a special silver locket, engraved with the school logo, so that she can always have Coldfall next to her heart.

Pasture re-opens

Long Lane Pasture, close to Finchley Fire Station on Long Lane, N3, is open again on a daily basis for the spring and summer.

Volunteers have mown the paths and generally tidied up after a long, wet winter. Visitors are asked to keep dogs on a short lead and to make sure children stay on the paths while new grasses and spring flowers are establishing themselves. Please also take all rubbish home with you and do not bring barbecues.

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