



Open air table tennis returns at Tarling Road. Photo Mike Coles

Tarling Road centre is open for bookings

By Janet Maitland

The community centre on Tarling Road, N2, is at last open for bookings after a long run of Covid delays and false starts. Among the first users of the communal garden are the East Finchley Table Tennis Club and there are plans for a youth club to open later this month.

"The hall in the centre is perfect for community meetings, exercise classes, after school activities, and celebrations," said manager Jon Woolfson. "It can only take 20 people at the moment because of Covid, but hopefully it will soon be up to 100." The new building, which replaced the Old Barn centre demolished in 2016, also has office space available for local businesses, start-ups and charities. Co-working space desks can also be rented. There are hopes, too, for a cafe that will be open to everyone.

Gardens

A Barnet Council spokesperson told us: "We have asked the YMCA to explore options for opening the gardens to the public during the hours the YMCA are on site. The tarpaulin on the external fencing was not installed by the council or the YMCA and will be removed as soon as possible."

The Somali Bravanese Welfare Association (SBWA) is finalising its lease of some of the

building with the council, as is the Just Like Home nursery. The gardens around the building are for community use, apart from a small section of playground space directly outside the nursery premises, which is included in their lease.

Keeping hire costs down

London City YMCA, contracted by Barnet Council to manage the centre, is trying to make the cost of hiring space as affordable as possible for local people, so there is one rate for businesses and a reduced one for community use. Mr Woolfson is also confident he can create partnerships with local businesses that will lead to further reductions in costs or even free events.

The community rate for the hall is £35 an hour or £50 for businesses. Office costs range from £260 to £330 per month for community use and £390 to £490 for businesses. A co-working desk is £70 a month or £100 for businesses. The centre can be contacted on 020 7018 6560 or tarlingroad@cityymca.org

An art work you can walk around

East Finchley artist Rosha Nutt has had her project chosen to receive funding from the Mayor of London's Make London campaign. One of 39 projects picked from hundreds of entries, the initiative will run a free arts trail at Alexandra Palace this summer.

You may have seen some of Rosha's work last year on Annington Road, N2, as part of lockdown art project Artists Walk, where artists used their home windows to display art and connect with the local community during their daily walks, or her sunflower mural near the BBC Tower at Alexandra Palace.

Artists Walk 2021 will involve chewing gum man Ben Wilson (*The Archer*, April 2021), local sculptor Julia Clarke and as many other local artists as



Inspired by nature: Artist Rosha Nutt is helping to lead an outdoor art project. Photo @_paula.photography

possible in creating an enjoyable art trail in the grounds of Alexandra Palace. Working with their Young People's Programming Team, the project will provide opportunities for career development and mentoring too.

Rosha says: "I'm thrilled to have been chosen, the competition was incredibly high. All the early morning starts writing the application during lockdown while my children were home-schooling have been worth it and

I can't wait to start showcasing some of our wonderful local artists in this amazing setting."

The project team is continuing to crowdfund to support the artists at www.spacehive.com/alexandrapalace and is also looking for volunteers to help run the marketing and social media accounts as well as technical help developing its website. If you would like to get involved email artistswalk.office@gmail.com

Gym limbers up for re-opening

By Lynn Winton

As a long standing member of The Manor gym on Fortis Green, I was relieved to hear it was not going to be demolished to make way for a block of flats after all, and is now renamed The Muswell Hill Club.

New owner Hussain Lalani took me on a pre-opening tour and I am pleased to report the once shabby premises have been given a much needed facelift, whilst still retaining the non-corporate feel of an independent local business.

On the fitness front he has upgraded the gym equipment, including importing top-of-the-range spin bikes, created a new room for free weights, and another room dedicated to stretch and tone, and refurbished the pool, changing rooms and showers. There is an app to book distanced classes that start on 17 May, but there will also be virtual MyZone classes so those worried about distancing can

book their own personal class in the studio or on the 110" screen in the spin studio.

Exceptional value

I asked Hussain how all this upgrading will affect the fees. "There is a moderate increase in the fees to reflect the investment in the neglected club but I still believe I'm offering exceptional value," he said. If you would like to judge

for yourself, Gail or Natalie on reception will show you round by appointment. And for the many Manor members who were left out of pocket on their annual membership when the old club closed, Hussain will deduct those sums from your new membership. More details from The Muswell Hill Club on 020 8883 0500 or www.muswellhillclub.com

RICKY SAVAGE ...
"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Master of the Barbie

The sun is shining, lockdown is easing and six people can socialise in each other's gardens. And that means one thing: time for Homo Stupido to go inside the garden shed and emerge as the suburban superhero that is the Master of the Barbie.

Batman might have his cape and Superman his phone box, but Homo Stupido has his Cooking Shorts of Destiny. With those on, he is miraculously transformed from a man who can't boil water without reading the instructions on the side of a kettle to a full-blown culinary genius.

But this will not be the same as the last barbie; this will be the all-new, post-lockdown version. Even the meat will be new and improved, and possibly vegan. He knows, he went to Iceland for wombat burgers and wallaby cutlets and discovered veggie burgers. Not that they will fare any better once he lights the flames. There is a method in starting a barbie. It's why Aussies are good at it. Sadly, Homo Stupido is British so instead of method he does madness. While the rest of the family hide and the neighbours stare fearfully at their recently rebuilt shed, our suburban superman wrestles with charcoal and firelighters in a fight to the death. Finally, drenched in sweat and cheap lager, he gets the thing to burst into flame and he's ready to cook.

Soon there will be enough half-cooked burgers to feed the entire local fox population, and next door's cat will have run off with most of a chicken. By this time the neighbourhood is enveloped in acrid smoke and the fire brigade can be heard on their way. Don't worry, Homo Stupido will be happy with his achievement and claim that he has kept alive a great British tradition. Meanwhile, the neighbours will be checking their insurance policy and the family will making their selection from Just Eat.



Do you, or someone you know need a new home?

The Finchley Charities have been providing quality sheltered housing in a supportive community environment, across three sites in East Finchley and Finchley Central.

If you have lived in the Borough of Barnet for at least five years of your life, we can provide homes for individuals and couples aged over 55, in need of sheltered housing and able to live independently.

If this sounds like you or someone you know in need of a new home, please contact us on:
020 8346 9464 or email: info@thefinchleycharities.org to discuss eligibility.

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