



# Libraries return to pre-pandemic opening hours

By Daphne Chamberlain

**From 25 October, core and core plus libraries in Barnet will be back to their pre-pandemic opening hours for weekdays and Saturdays.**

For East Finchley, this means: **Monday** 8am-8pm -Staffed 9am -12.30, Self service 8-9am and 12.30 -8pm. **Tuesday** 8am-8pm. Self-service all day. **Wednesday** 8am-8pm. Staffed 2-8pm. Self-service 8am-2pm. **Thursday** 8am-8pm. Staffed 2-5pm. Self-service 8am-2pm and 5-8pm. **Friday** 8am-8pm. Self-service all day. **Saturday** 8am-5pm. Staffed 9am-12.30. Self service 8-9am and 12,30-5pm.

Barnet says it may take slightly longer to reinstate all the Sunday opening hours, but we will be informed as it happens. Some baby and toddler groups have been restarting since early October. Study space should be reinstated from 1 November.

### Safety measures

Wipes and hand sanitisers are retained throughout Barnet library buildings and at all computers. Perspex All screens, NHS test and trace QR codes and face covering requirements are also still in

place. All face-to-face activities will have slightly reduced numbers and study tables have been spaced out.

The Mobile Library is being reinstated, and the Home Library Service will continue to visit housebound individuals. Visits to care homes will be reinstated in liaison with each organisation.

### Looking healthy

Barnet Council reports that use of the digital library is very high. Many of the new digital services will be retained, including email and telephone IT helplines. E-audio books and electronic magazines and newspapers will continue. Online reading and cultural activities will continue via YouTube and Microsoft Teams.

### Alternative provision

Hampstead Garden Suburb community library has already reinstated its standard opening hours, as have Haringey's libraries in Highgate and Muswell Hill, all of which are open to East Finchley residents.

# Five years on and N2United is thriving

By Chris Stavrou

**After more than a year of virtual meetings on Zoom, N2United finally met again in person at the East Finchley Constitutional Club, with the October meeting being a lively mix of new faces, pre-lockdown faces and faces until now only seen on-screen.**

The meeting also marked the fifth anniversary of the local community network, which has been dedicated to bringing all types of people in the N2 area together, from businesses to local community groups as well as residents who are passionate about all things East Finchley.

We were lucky to have top retail consultant Sara Gatoff as guest speaker talk passionately about her journey through retail's changing landscape and how local businesses and groups can work towards their goals.

A lot of the discussion revolved around community matters, with Julia Hines and Ashley Grossman speaking from Better Streets for Barnet and their hope for more active travel around the borough, and Councillor Alison Moore speaking on some concerns local residents contact her about.

Another topic that garnered a lot of interest among the

members is the planning application to develop the site of the substation, south of the bridge on the High Road, into a retail, commercial and residential building.

### Get involved

The next meeting, on Thursday 11 November, will feature an autumn budget roundup from resident tax advisor Drazen Coric of Tax Assist, news of the East Finchley Pollination Programme from Roger Chapman of Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, plus Gail Coles will share plans for a seasonal gathering and tree lighting.

### Free and open to all

Meetings are free and open to all residents, traders and community groups in N2. Visit [N2United.co.uk](http://N2United.co.uk) to find out more and share your suggestions and ideas. Or even better, join the next meeting on Thursday 11 November at 8pm.



Raw ingredient: Author Michael Leventhal with a cacao pod containing the seeds used to make chocolate.

# Chocolate recipes hope to earn a chunk of change for caring charity

By John Lawrence

**Assembling a book of delicious chocolate recipes from around the world, and trying them out, sounds like most people's idea of heaven but publisher Michael Leventhal hadn't realised quite what he was letting himself in for.**

On one weekend he had around 100 friends and assistants testing the recipes and more than 20 of them brought samples to his home in Bedford Road, N2, to taste. "I eat a lot of chocolate," said Michael, "but that was quite a challenge."

His new book *Babka, Boulou & Blintzes* is a collection of chocolate recipes from 50 of the world's best-known Jewish writers and cooks, including a Spanish hot chocolate, a chocolate almond cake and a dark chocolate and roasted beetroot ice-cream. Contributors include local chefs Rachel Davies and Fabienne Viner-Luzzato, as well as Michelle Eshkeri, who runs the Margot Bakery on East End Road, N2. All profits from sales will be going to the Chai Cancer Care charity, which has a base in Hendon and is currently caring for Michael's mother while she has treatment for cancer.

### Sweet and savoury

Michael, whose publishing company has majored in military history up to now, said he wanted the collection to stand out by having recipes with a story behind them. "For instance, there's American writer Joan Nathan's chocolate



Mouthwatering: Michael's book

almond cake, which is actually 400 years old," he said. "It comes from Bayonne in France where Spanish and Portuguese

Jews fled to escape the Spanish Inquisition and where they pretty much set up the chocolate industry in France. So you can learn a bit about the history of chocolate too."

As well as recipes for sweet-toothed readers, savoury dishes include a chocolate chilli and a Sicilian caponata, traditionally made with aubergines and vegetables. There are also gluten-free and vegan recipes.

You can buy *Babka, Boulou & Blintzes* at Tony's Continental in the High Road or direct from [www.chaicancercare.org/chocolate](http://www.chaicancercare.org/chocolate). It is also available in Waterstones and on Amazon, although the charity will get a slightly lower return via those sellers.

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