



Road to recovery: Chris Berlingieri hopes to return home after months in hospital

Family appeal to help guitar hero Chris

By John Lawrence

The family of a much-loved local man who was left unable to walk after a serious accident last year have launched an appeal to help him recover from his devastating injuries. Chris Berlingieri, known to many as lead guitarist in rock and rockabilly band Sound of the Suburb, who have been favourites at East Finchley Festival and venues like Maddens, has also lost the use of his left arm, experiences double vision and has difficulty swallowing. Since the accident last April, he has survived several complex operations and has been working hard to overcome his injuries in hospital, showing remarkable progress but still with a long way to go.

Costly recovery

Before Chris can return to his family home in Durham Road, N2, it will need to be made accessible for his mobility equipment. He also faces large bills for other medical items and future rehabilitation sessions, which are not covered by insurance. "It is impossible to know how long this rehab will take and Chris deserves the best chance we can give him," say his family. They have launched a fundraising drive and are appealing for help from anyone who knows Chris from his own work as a chiropractor and from anyone who has enjoyed the music of Sound of the Suburb over the years. "While Chris has made remarkable progress and shown incredible determination in his recovery so far, he still has a long way to go," his family say. To find out more and to make a donation, visit gofundme.com and search 'Chris Berlingieri'.

Urgent call for site visit to tackle park flooding

By John Lawrence

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are calling for a site visit with Barnet Council officers to inspect the extensive flooding that is blighting the grass and tennis court areas of the park. Last month we reported that the council's environment team said there was no funding immediately available to address the problem, although they had promised to inspect the drainage gullies in the area.

The Friends group says it is willing to help where possible and is calling for a council site visit to happen as soon as possible to weigh up the options.

The standing water on the grass area and close to the tennis courts has been ever-present throughout the winter and shows few signs of draining. This is a major concern for general users of the park and for special events like the East Finchley Festival, scheduled for Sunday 19 June.

First things first

Roger Chapman, chair of the Friends, said the group's objective was to work in partnership with the council to ensure the field area is as dry as possible for maximum public use throughout the year. "With that in mind, options looking at creating water storage areas, digging two to three field drains at the site of the worst persistent flooding, could be undertaken," he said, "but surely the first step remains to check that the existing drainage system for the park, including under the field, is working and functioning correctly."

Controlled wetland suggestion

The Friends are also questioning whether, drainage issues aside, the water table under the park is rising and therefore

contributing to the problem. They have asked for help from Thames Water but have yet to receive a response.



Pond life: Geese make themselves at home on the flooded field. Photo Maggie Eiseman

One solution proposed by Barnet Council was to divert rain run-off into a purpose-built wetland area at the Northern line end of the park, where water could accumulate under control and become a wildlife habitat. However, this would require funding that is not currently in the council's budget.

Garden waste collections

Residents can now sign up for Barnet Council's 2022-23 garden waste bin collection.

The cost for the service will be £70 for collections of one bin and £50 for each additional bin. Residents who sign up in time for the start of the service in early May will receive around 23 fortnightly collections. Find out more at www.barnet.gov.uk/gardenwaste

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago:
April 2012

We reported on the birth of the Archer Academy, as the team behind the new free school submitted their plan to the Department of Education and started researching potential premises. The new school opened in September 2013, on the site of the former Herbert Wilmot Centre and Stanley Road playing fields in East Finchley and, as they say, the rest is history!

15 years ago:
April 2007

The sudden closure of the Clissold Arms in Fortis Green caused local concern about what would become of the pub and the Kinks' memorabilia housed there. Ray and Dave Davies, founders of the famous band, lived across the road from the Clissold and gave their first public performance there. Fortunately the Clissold survived and re-opened and is now a thriving gastropub and shrine to the Kinks, whose fans visit from all over the world.

25 years ago:
April 1997

The future of College Farm in Finchley was finally secured when Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Transport, John Bowis, confirmed Chris Owers' right to his agricultural tenancy. This allowed ownership of the farm to be transferred from the Ministry of Transport to a charitable trust. Sadly, the farm has been closed to the public since 2001, when restrictions were introduced to combat an outbreak of foot and mouth disease, although it now houses a successful saddlery and pet supplies shop which is open seven days a week.

Yesterday's news today

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