



Playground group swings into action with £150,000 boost

By Samantha Haycock

The parents and residents spearheading the project to redesign the neglected Market Place Playground have been awarded £100,000 funding from Barnet Council. Their successful bid comes soon after they won another £50,000 from Barnet's Greenspaces team over the summer.

With a previous council grant of £30,000 and other contributions already secured, the Friends of Market Place Playground have now raised £220,000 and are over half way towards funding a natural play space on the current tarmac site.

In a tough climate for fundraising, they are hard at work on bids to deliver the balance. They say any support from the talented and resourceful residents of East Finchley is welcome.

Council commitment

Their latest funding bid was backed at an East Area Committee meeting in October by Councillor Arjun Mittra who, along with his East Finchley colleagues Alison Moore and Claire Farrier, has been a strong supporter of improving the playground for the benefit of the whole community.

In a positive sign of council commitment, a project manager from the Greenspaces team has

been appointed to support the development and tender process for the site off Park Road and close to Holy Trinity Primary School.

And Barnet's environment chair Councillor Alan Schneiderman visited the playground in September to learn how the new design will provide much-needed green space and help address environmental challenges with shading, planting and drainage.

The Friends' chair Kathy Batten says: "It's hugely gratifying to see Barnet Council's support for this project accelerate as they realise the benefits of making Market Place a flagship community space."

View the plans

Landscape designer Aileen Shackell has been busy preparing to submit a detailed design for planning permission before the end of the year. You can view the latest version at the website friendsofmarketplace.org.uk



Which one first? Gus Hully and his collection of beers

Week-long protest at McDonald's

Campaigners representing several different activist groups gathered to protest outside McDonald's European headquarters in East Finchley each day for a week from Monday 31 October. They included representatives from Extinction Rebellion, Plastics Rebellion, Amazon Rebellion, Haringey Tree Protectors and Stop the Edmonton Incinerator.

Protesting against the farming and environmental practices of the company, they handed out leaflets to the passing public as well as displaying banners, making speeches and singing songs. However, they were not able to get close to the building next to the tube station as the entrance had been fenced off and security guards were in position, along with a police presence.

It appears that they had intended to hand deliver a letter to the UK Chief Executive Officer of the company. This proved not to be possible, but the protesters were told that the letter would be



Fenced off: Protesters outside the McDonalds headquarters near the tube station.

handed over.

On Saturday 5 Novem-

ber, the protesters moved to McDonald's Green Lanes, Haringay, to demonstrate their feelings about the company's alleged activities. These included a reference back to the felling of 11 mature trees outside the branch and the laying of plastic grass in their place last summer. *The Archer* contacted McDonald's for comment.

Football fan scores beer bingo full house

By John Lawrence

When the World Cup comes around, some football fans collect stickers or flags. Gus Hully has gone his own way by getting his hands on a beer from all 32 nations taking part.

Gus, who lives on Aylmer Road, N2, has had to be pretty inventive to complete the set. Twenty or so countries were easy to get from shops, bars and restaurants around London, like a Ghana beer from Asafo Restaurant in Brixton and a non-alcoholic Iranian beer from one of the many Middle Eastern shops in Finchley Central. But then Gus had to get creative.

"I had to trade with a Belgian to get a bottle from Cameroon and with a German for a bottle from Costa Rica," he said. "I ordered a Tunisian beer from a French online store to via that same guy in Germany as the store wouldn't ship to the UK because of Brexit.

"I needed a friend from

Barcelona to help me out with Ecuador and Uruguay, a friend of a friend living in Doha for a non-alcoholic beer from Qatar and I had to message a Russian guy from Italy who was on holiday in Senegal to see if he would bring me one back from his travels."

Approval world-wide and at home

Gus, who works as a senior analyst for The Official Chart Company compiling the top 40 singles and albums charts, first attempted his beer challenge for the 2014 World Cup but only got 23 out of the 32. He's had more success since and this year his complete collection has won more than 100,000 likes on Twitter and been reported in Spain, Greece, Ghana and Brazil.

Gus happily admits it's a "stupid project" but says his wife Melanie is totally on board with it, luckily, "as she gets to drink a load of beer for free".

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