



Underpass project wins cash and council backing

By John Lawrence

The team bidding to improve the safety and appearance of the pedestrian underpass beneath the Northern line between Manor Park Road and Trinity Road in East Finchley has won the support of Barnet Council for the project.

Grange Big Local (GBL) and their team of volunteers received a commitment from the council to work with them on the regeneration project, along with an allocation of £10,000 to fund a dedicated project manager to oversee the work within the council.

This was a vital step in making the project happen and comes after six years of road-blocks and delays. It also enables GBL to unlock some of its own lottery funds for the work, as part of its plans to improve life for residents in this area of N2.

Looking ahead

Once the council has engaged with GBL on the project, which they now should have the staff-time to do, GBL has been invited to go back to the January East Area Committee with a formal bid for more funding.

Mariella Hill, from the GBL team, said: "This result now means that different stakeholders and parts of the project can be brought together to transform the underpass into a pleasant place to walk through. Grange Big Local then looks forward to engaging residents on artwork

and planting projects.

"We would like to thank Councillors Arjun Mittra and Claire Farrier for their support on the project as well as Danny Rich, Chair of the East Area Committee, who came to visit the underpass and recognised that there clearly needs to be work done on the drainage, lighting and surfacing."

GBL and East Finchley-based Mills Power Architect will be bringing the project to life. If you are interested in helping with artwork in the underpass, email GBL on info@grangebiglocal.org



Good friends: Christina Michael looking after long-term customer Audrey Carrol. Photo Mike Coles

Salon's half century in the chair

By Diana Cormack

There has been a hairdressing business at 36 Aylmer Parade, N2, for more than 60 years and Christina Michael is proud to say that she has been running hers for fifty of them. In 1972, at the suggestion of her husband, she took on the existing salon and named it Christina's Hair and Beauty Salon.

She took on the staff too until they parted company during the 1970s' three-day week. The business survived those tough economic times as well as the recent pandemic.

Over the years, the salon has witnessed many changes, not just in beauty treatments. With different hair styles and fashions, perms and hair rollers have given way to more relaxed, less time consuming styles and colouring has taken on a new dimension.

These days it's natural-looking hair colours that are popular with her regular clientele, many of whom have been with her for a number of years, as has her staff. Audrey Carrol, of East Finchley, has been going there for 31 years.

Clients are friends
"Our clients have become

our friends," Christina told *The Archer*. "We share each other's special occasions and celebrations." There certainly was a friendly, welcoming atmosphere in the salon, perhaps helped by the spread of delicious food and drink provided to celebrate the salon's half century.

Christina sent out a big thank you to those who have supported her over the years. Asked about her plans for the future, she was adamant that she loves her job so much that she is not contemplating retirement and hopes to continue working until she reaches 100!

Christina's is open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm and on Saturday from 8am to 2pm. Telephone the salon on 020 8340 4002.

Tennis on the table

By Diana Cormack

Recent reports on the benefits of table tennis say it helps to keep your brain sharp, improves your reflexes as well as your hand-eye coordination and burns calories whilst being easy on the joints.

East Finchley Table Tennis Club has been running for a number of years and meets twice a week in the Green Man Centre, Strawberry Vale. There are three tables and plenty of bats and balls, provided at a cost of £5 per session or £20 for five sessions. Parking is

available and the Green Man is close to the 263 bus route.

The club is open on Tuesdays from 2.15pm to 3.45pm and on Thursdays from 10.15am to 11.45am. For further details contact Mike on 07815 970 475 or just turn up on the day.

These boots were made for tweeting

By David Melsome

When Chris Stavrou, who runs the KOKOS shoe repair shop in the High Road, N2, opened his laptop one Tuesday morning in early November and found more than 50 new emails waiting for him, he immediately shut it and went to make a cup of coffee. Then he saw his WhatsApp had exploded with countless notifications and soon realised that one of his team's shoe repairs had gone viral on Twitter, with more than 10,500 likes and almost 300 retweets.

The original post was from a customer called Suddi Raval who was so delighted with the way KOKOS had brought his favourite footwear back to life that he shared before and after photos with the world.

Off the back of this tweet, people had found the shop's Instagram, where team member Cristina posts many of their other resoling challenges, and were



Sole survivor: The image from KOKOS customer Suddi Raval that got all the attention

getting in touch in their droves.

Chris said: "Email after email was from someone as passionate as all of us at KOKOS about giving their shoes a new lease of life, rather than throwing them away and buying another pair.

"A gentleman from Wales has already planned his visit during his upcoming trip to London, and is deciding whether to have his favourite brogues resoled with traditional leather or with an eye-catching colourful rubber sole."

Chris said there had been a noticeable shift in society's

awareness of the negative environmental impact of our throw-away culture, and the more that can be fixed, the better in the long run. He added: "We're hoping to play our part, one pair of shoes at a time."

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