

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Tesco to open store in empty High Road site

By John Lawrence

Tesco has announced that it will be opening one of its Express stores in East Finchley, raising fears among independent traders that they will be pushed out of business. Work is already underway on converting the empty premises at 208-210 High Road formerly occupied by the Zapp home delivery grocery service and before that by HSS building equipment hire.

Tesco has applied for planning permission to install air-conditioning units, a CO2 gas cooler, new doors and a timber fence, along with illuminated signs on the frontage (see Planning Applications on page 2).

Tesco told us: "We're excited to be planning a new store in Finchley which we hope to open in the coming months and we will keep the local community updated with our plans as we get closer to opening."

But when *The Archer* spoke to the owner of Ella Food Centre, just 30m away on the corner of Creighton Avenue, he was unaware of Tesco moving in close to the business he took over just three years ago.

Hasa said he would raise his objections with Barnet Council but acknowledged that it was probably too late to stop the company taking over a premises that had already been used for food retail purposes.

"I'm surprised and didn't know anything about this," said Hasa. "Trade has been up and down since the pandemic and it has been hard for small traders like us. Having Tesco on our doorstep won't make it any easier. I hope our loyal customers will keep coming to us."

More footfall but parking restrictions

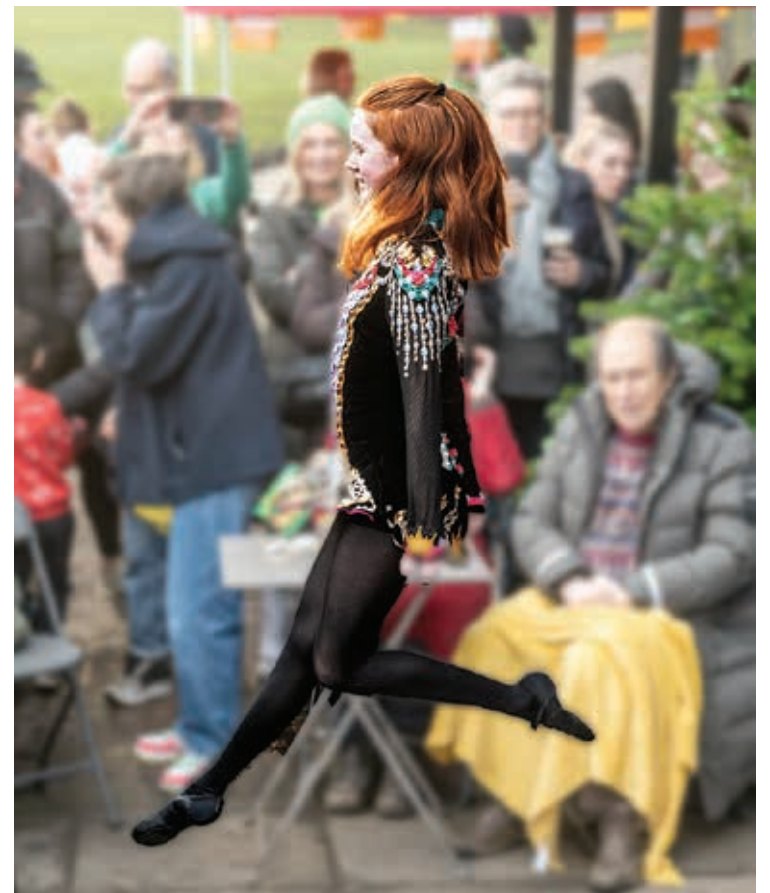
Hasa tried to look on the bright side by saying the arrival of a Tesco Express might increase footfall in his part of the High Road and maybe bring more people into Ella Food Centre too.

However, another trader who asked not to be named, questioned whether it was the right location for a potentially busy store as parking on the High Road was extremely limited, with double yellow lines immediately outside and restricted bays opposite, which are often occupied.

Until now the centres of East Finchley and Muswell Hill have been a black hole for Tesco Express stores. It has its larger supermarkets in Finchley Central and Colney Hatch of course but its nearest small stores are in Highgate and North Finchley.



New store: Tesco is moving into the former Zapp premises, right.



High kicking: One of the Irish dancers outside the Cherry Tree Café. Photo Mike Coles.

Irish dancing in the park

Performers from the Celtic Hearts Irish Dance group, along with servings of Irish stew and soda bread, all brought a true taste of Ireland to the Cherry Tree Café in Cherry Tree Wood on St Patrick's Day last month.

A large crowd was there on Friday 17 March to enjoy the entertainment and maybe a little tippie of Guinness or Irish coffee at the start of a weekend of events celebrating the best food and drink in East Finchley. More photos and reports on page 6&7.

Bill backs playground off screen

Renowned actor Bill Nighy will be at the Phoenix Cinema this month for a special screening of his latest film to support the regeneration of the Market Place Playground in East Finchley.

Nighy will be in conversation with fellow actor Carolyn Pickles before a showing of *Living*, which was released to much acclaim last year.

Appropriately, the film tells the story of a London County Council bureaucrat in 1953 who works tirelessly with a group of women to have a World War II bomb site redeveloped into a children's playground.

Proceeds from the event on Friday 28 April will go to the Friends of Market Place who are working to transform the neglected Market Place Playground in East Finchley into a



In conversation: Bill Nighy

green, playable landscape and community hub, as reported in previous editions of *The Archer*.

So far the group of parents and local residents have raised £276,000 through grants and awards and are now within sight of their final target of £350,000 to get the work under way.

Doors will open at 7pm with a welcome reception followed by the Bill Nighy interview at 8pm and the screening of *Living* at 8.30pm. Tickets cost £25 per person. To book visit phoenixcinema.co.uk. To find out more about the playground project and to donate visit friendsofmarketplace.org.uk

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