



# Major milestone for Market Place playground

By John Lawrence

The ambitious plans to refurbish the neglected Market Place Play Area in East Finchley reached a major milestone last month when the new design went live on Barnet Council's website and was opened to public comments.

A group of parents and local residents have been campaigning hard for more than two years to win support and raise funds to install new play equipment and completely re-landscape the playground close to Holy Trinity Primary School and The Archer Academy.

In December, we reported that the Friends of Market Place Playground had been awarded a total of £180,000 in funding from Barnet Council and had raised a further £40,000 from other sources,



Aerial view (below): Curving paths will link the various play equipment, pictured above and right, with relaxation zones and new planting areas in the revamped Market Place playground.



taking them more than halfway towards covering the cost of the project.

There are around eight weeks to see and comment on the full plans on the council's planning website. The Friends hope to receive approval in March and will then press ahead with the regeneration

work. "This is very exciting news to kick off 2023, the year, we hope, of a new natural playground for Market Place," said the group.

### A closer look

Their plans include the removal of all the existing play equipment to be replaced with new items like a table tennis table, climbing frames, swings, balance bars and a roundabout



A chief aim of the project is to rid the play area of its barren appearance and make it look more natural and green. The refurbishment will encompass the grassed area currently outside the playground fence, with new trees and shrubs and new play surfaces and paths, plus a drinking fountain.

To see the plans in full and to leave your comments visit Barnet Council's planning portal at <https://publicaccess.barnet.gov.uk/online-applications> and search for application '22/5903/FUL'



and slide. There will also be a small timber-decked performance area and various kinds of seating for adults.



Growth spurt: Archer Academy staff sport their natty moustaches as part of the school's fundraising success

## Moustaches make masses of money for men's mental health

Ten teachers and one Year 11 student at The Archer Academy in East Finchley helped make it the biggest state school fundraiser in the country for Movember, which supports mental health and cancer services for men.

By growing moustaches and through special events like sponsored runs, bake sales and a staff vs students football match, the school community almost tripled its original target by raising £5,619.

Year 11 student Harith Akhtar raised over £2,100 alone and helped to build awareness of men's health amongst the

students. He said: "Too many men are 'toughing it out', keeping their feelings to themselves and struggling in silence. It has been incredible to see all the donations and support for our campaign, people have really got behind it."

Polly Banks, Community Fundraising Executive at Movember, said: "We honestly

can't thank the Archer Academy enough. That is a huge amount and will help men live happier, healthier and longer lives. To be the highest state school fundraiser in the country is a really incredible achievement, especially as this is the first time Archer Academy has taken part."



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