



Leisure centre could be moved to town centre

By John Lawrence

The future of the Finchley Lido Leisure Centre has been thrown into question after Barnet Council opened a public consultation inviting users and residents to give their views.

One suggestion is that the swimming pool and gym complex at the Great North Leisure Park could be demolished and relocated closer to the town centre in North Finchley.

Alternatively, a new centre could be built on the existing site, depending on the lease of the leisure park, which is itself on the market as a standing asset or with redevelopment potential.

He said: "At this stage, this is just an exploration of options, which is why we want to speak with residents and local community groups to get their views. No decision has been made yet, and we would like to hear from anyone with an interest in its future"

You can give your views at one of three 'community conversation pop up events' to be hosted at Finchley Lido Leisure



Set to close? The Finchley Lido gym and swimming pool complex

End of life after 26 years
Finchley Lido Leisure Centre was built in 1995-96 and is operated by Better on behalf of the London Borough of Barnet. It took the place of a popular outdoor swimming pool on the same site, which closed in the early 1990s.

Barnet Council says the existing Lido building is nearing its end of life and not fit for purpose long-term. It was closed for an extended period three years ago while repairs were made to the roof and a new ventilation system installed.

Residents' views sought
Barnet's Housing and Growth Committee Chair, Cllr Ross Houston, said it needs replacing with a more modern and more sustainable alternative.

Centre on Monday 9 January from 5pm to 8pm and Tuesday 10 January 2023 from 8am to 10am, and outside Starbucks in North Finchley town centre on Wednesday 11 January from 11.30am to 2.30pm.

You can give your online opinion by going to <https://engage.barnet.gov.uk/all-consultations> and looking for 'Finchley Lido Leisure Centre engagement'. To request a paper questionnaire or another format email sport@barnet.gov.uk or telephone 020 8359 7704. Alternatively you can write to: London Borough of Barnet, 2 Bristol Avenue, Colindale, NW9 4EW.

The closing date for the consultation is Monday 23 January.



Team colours: Fiona Doyle (left) and Giuseppe Sollo (second from right) with the East Finchley men's football squad made up of N2 Food Project volunteers and friends

Food and football are teammates

By David Gritten

Anyone who routinely walks along East Finchley High Road on a Tuesday morning, and passes the Phoenix Cinema, will have noticed the team of volunteers by its entrance, giving out food to local people in need.

Some 200 free meals, cooked by volunteer chefs, are taken to the Phoenix each week, in a scheme organised by the N2 Food Project that has been operating for just over two years. Under the aegis of East Finchley Neighbourhood Support (EFNS), the scheme has gone from strength to strength.

Spotted by the League

It's been a remarkable couple of years for the project, but in the past two months there has been even more good news: a football team put together by N2 Food Project chef Giuseppe Sollo was given the chance to parade its players' talents on the football field.

They were invited to join the Barnet Sunday Football League, ranked as a Division 6 league by the Football Association, after a game against a Clapham-based team who'd been following the activities of the N2 Food Project, and for a charity match. A commissioner for the League swiftly invited the N2 Food Project team to join the league in their own right and EFNS FC was born.

The squad, backed by EFNS, now features players from that Clapham team as well as East Finchley locals. And no game

is merely a game. As EFNS project manager Fiona Doyle points out: "We use each match to promote the N2 Food Project, and encourage people either to donate to the project, or to come along and volunteer."



Local businesses line up

It's a heartening story, and it helps that some businesses in East Finchley have become involved. Fiona names Maurizio, of Amici Deli, who is now EFNS FC's main sponsor, and who watches every game, even taking on the role of lines-

man when necessary. Oakdale Pharmacy has provided first aid supplies, while Emra and Bedran from King Street Food & Wine have come on board as a coach and player respectively. "They've made a massive difference in terms of getting us into shape as a team," Fiona notes.

All this adds up to a thoughtful, unselfish way to enjoy watching and playing soccer. No one gets rich, everyone seems to relish the joy of each game, while the sportsmanship displayed by these small local clubs is an object lesson to professional footballers everywhere. It's another triumph for the N2 Food Project and East Finchley Neighbourhood Support, who have done so much to help local people in need.

Socceroos support from ex-pats

By Daphne Chamberlain

Argentina may have won the World Cup, but they were given a run for their money on their way to the final. One of their most interesting matches was against new footballing nation Australia.

Cheering on the Aussies was Brian Timms, brought up in East Finchley but now living Down Under in Moruya, New South Wales. He told *The Archer*: "At least three ex-East Finchley *Archer* readers in Oz were thrilled by the Socceroos' reaching the World Cup Finals. Pubs and clubs across Oz were packed by supporters watching Australia defeat Denmark 1-0 to reach the last 16."

Once through, they were

knocked out by Argentina, but didn't go down without a fight. "We wanted Australia to win," said Hazel Astley, once of Leopold Road, N2, and now in Melbourne. Hazel's husband Bob agreed.

But, as long-time readers know, these three have never forgotten their roots. Brian, who used to live in Huntingdon Road, has often contributed to *The Archer* with memories of East Finchley and news from Australia, and Bob and Hazel

sent us a very interesting piece to celebrate their big wedding anniversary. Along with June Carruthers and Sylvia Orlando, they are all loyal readers of the copies we send them by post.

Brian sent us all Christmas greetings, saying "Multi thanks for sending our beloved *Archer* to Finchleyites Down Under. It's a lot cheaper than a psychiatrist!" It's a pleasure, Brian and friends, and don't forget to cheer for England in the Euros!



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