

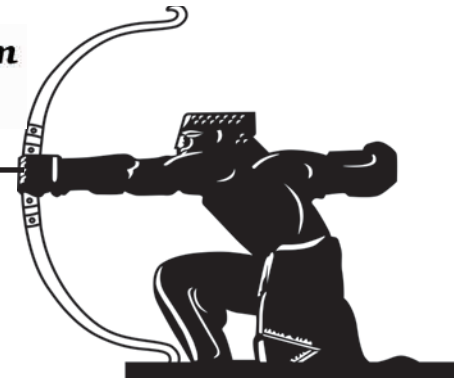


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30 Local News is our Aim
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The Archer



November 2023 No. 355

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Phoenix comes out fighting in finance squeeze

By Ruth Anders

The Phoenix Cinema is celebrating some good news this month at the same time as telling customers that the challenges it faces from the film industry mean it may have to reduce its opening hours.

Our highly valued independent local gem has been awarded a grant of £18,000 from Barnet Council's Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Fund. This will be used for a much-needed overhaul of the auditorium's sound system, adding state-of-the-art surround sound via a Dolby 7.1 system with an increased number of top-quality speakers, all hopefully to be installed before Christmas.

This comes after other major improvements to the cinema's operations, including a redesigned website, a new projector, a new booking system and, perhaps most visibly, the changing neon lighting outside the building that adds to the venue's prestige.

tribution. All these headwinds have aligned to place the Phoenix under financial pressure.

Executive Director Olly Meek told *The Archer*: "This message is a deliberate rallying cry to our supporters. We're not in crisis but things are challenging owing to circumstances beyond our control."

Buy a cup of tea

The Phoenix, a registered charity, prides itself on keeping its costs competitive. This includes the cost of tickets and refreshments. Olly explained that for each £12 ticket, £2 disappears in tax and £5 goes to the distributor, leaving a balance of £5 for the Phoenix.

Chair of Phoenix Trustees



Courtside homes: Architect's drawing of how the tennis club grounds could look. Image www.fortisgreen.net

Housing plan for hidden tennis club site

Residents living in and close to Southern Road, N2, were surprised to receive a hand-delivered leaflet last month from a property company outlining plans for redevelopment of the nearby Fortis Green Tennis Club. Read the full story on page 2.



Tough times: The Phoenix needs support

Fewer screenings

Meanwhile, the Phoenix has been forced to warn its members of possible shorter opening hours. This is the result of a combination of negative effects, including fewer filmgoers since Covid, rising overhead costs, and the writers' and actors' strikes in Hollywood.

These strikes, whilst understandable, have resulted in a supply chain problem with a good many completed films gathering dust on shelves, awaiting dis-

tribution. Alison Gold told *The Archer*: "Unfortunately, many UK towns have seen their independent cinemas close this year due to these pressures. The Phoenix trustees, most of whom live locally, are determined to keep the Phoenix open but we need people's support. The Phoenix keeps food and drink prices low and customers buying even a cup of tea along with their ticket makes a big difference, so please do that if you can."

Continued on page 2

It's tree time!

By Hilary Townley

The festive season is just round the corner but here in East Finchley, Christmas will be ON the corner. Yes, we like to launch the start of the season on the corner outside Budgens in the High Road, and 2023 will maintain this popular tradition.

This year's tree-lighting event takes place on Saturday 2 December at 5pm and everyone is welcome. There will be a joyous atmosphere to thrill you to swingle, the brass band to tingle, the choirs to jingle, the join-in-with-the-singing as you mingle.

Archer on top

There will be mulled wine and mince pies courtesy of Budgens and with yet more Budgens' generosity we will light up the Christmas Tree itself. The only tree with an archer... THE ARCHER on the top!

And if that's not enough festivity for one weekend... Cherry Tree Wood is hosting a wreath-making workshop the following day, Sunday 3 December, 11am-1pm, where again all are welcome.

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