



Plan for greener playground moves to the next stage

By Samantha Haycock

After two and a half years of campaigning, fundraising and community engagement, Friends of Market Place Playground have confirmed that their innovative re-design of the site is now moving towards the construction stage.

In September, Barnet Council will begin the tender process where contractors are invited to quote to deliver the new landscape design which received planning consent in April. After many discussions with the council, the group now has a timetable for procurement.

Unfortunately, inflation in the construction sector means that the £370,000 raised to date will likely need a further £100,000 to deliver landscape designer Aileen Shackell's vision of a green, natural environment for the play space, between Park Road and The Walks, N2.

The group says it is confident of securing these funds and is buoyed by support from the community and East Finchley's local councillors.

The London Marathon Foundation is the latest high-profile charity to show confidence in the project with a grant of £20,000. Friends Chair Kathy Batten said: "This is a unique and different collaboration between the council

and a community group which sometimes means the process isn't always straightforward but we are delighted to be moving ever closer to delivering a wonderful new play space at Market Place."

Earlier this year, acclaimed actor Bill Nighy backed the fundraising campaign by taking part in a Q&A session at the Phoenix Cinema ahead of a



Star backing: Actor Bill Nighy at Market Place Playground.

sell-out showing of his most recent film *Living*, whose plot revolved around a civil servant battling to build a children's playground in the 1950s.



Food in the foyer: Passengers and residents enjoy the informal tea party in the entrance to East Finchley station. Photo Mike Coles

Tea party at the tube station

By Ruth Anders

Did you know that, despite its name, 55% of London's Underground system is actually above ground? This leaves plenty of open-air platforms for Transport For London (TFL) staff to showcase their gardening skills in their annual In Bloom competition, which started in 1910, organised by the District Railway Company.

As reported in our August edition, station manager Nino Santos has pulled out the horticultural stops to ensure that East Finchley tube station is a highly competitive entrant this year.

Santos, as he likes to be known, went one stage further on the competition's judging day at the end of July by inviting the public to a morning tea party in the station to celebrate TFL's work in the community. Using part of his modest TFL budget, a table was spread with delicious buns and cakes, some made by Santos himself. The Brazilian cheese rolls made with cassava flour were a special treat.

Emma's in her element

One of the young managers of the competition, Emma Bartlett, there to coordinate the judging process, told The Archer, "I'm part of a four-year training scheme. TFL are funding my Business Management degree, and I work on the Customer Insight Strategy and Experience team to get an overview of all that TFL does. I move around the organisation every six months, and I love it!" Emma explained that she is coordinating the competition judging across 58



Community-minded: Station manager Nino Santos

bases including Tube, Overland, bus, offices and depots.

Santos and his volunteer helpers were palpably excited as they

dashed around organising coffees and teas. We wish him well and look forward to the judging results on 20 September.

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Enjoy Joyce

A group that meets weekly to read and discuss *Ulysses* by James Joyce is about to start a new cycle working its way through the novel from start to finish.

The free group, run by Joyce expert Russell Raphael, convenes every Wednesday in a pub in the Muswell Hill and East Finchley area. Find out more on the 'North London Ulysses' page of russellraphael.com.

BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

The team at the **North London Hospice** shop on East Finchley High Road is looking for more volunteers. Whether you want to get work experience, help temporarily whilst between jobs or are looking for a long-term role, call in to the shop and talk to the manager Anastasiya. Age is no barrier, ages 14-94 welcome. You will play a vital role in funding the vital work of the hospice and enjoy the camaraderie of a very inclusive team.

Can you spare a couple of hours outdoors every so often to help **Barnwood Community Garden** group? Barnwood, in Tarling Road, N2, is kept as natural as possible so that everyone can enjoy this calm oasis, but every two weeks the volunteer team there gives nature a helping hand. No experience required. Contact: n2barnwood@gmail.com or call Celia on 07940 592755

Finchley Foodbank, based in East Finchley, turns 10 years old this year and to mark the occasion, they are asking for your help! Can you donate your time to volunteer? Get in touch by email at finchley-foodbank@gmail.com and find out how you can give back to your community. The food bank currently regularly supports between 550 and 650 people a week with three days of food, essential toiletries and baby goods and other household items.

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column please send details (max 80 words please) to news@the-archer.co.uk or visit www.ILoveN2.co.uk/be-part-of-it.

