



What is going on with crime in East Finchley?

Does East Finchley feel less safe to you in recent months? Are crime levels getting worse or are we just hearing about more incidents because people post their experiences on social media? **The Archer** has spoken to concerned traders and businesses and to East Finchley's neighbourhood policing team to get a picture of street and household crime in 2024.



Vulnerable: This was the moment a burglar, in black, stole £12,000 worth of cigarettes from Pacey's newsagent last August in a week when four other High Road businesses were also targeted

Traders: Something needs to be done

By Lynn Winton

Harsha has run the newsagent shop inside East Finchley tube station for 24 years and never used to have any fear working there on her own all hours of the day. In her words "it's a good neighbourhood". In recent years, however, something has changed. Her business has been broken into overnight and she has been targeted several times by daytime gangs who walk into her shop, intimidate her and her customers, and then run off with whatever items they like from her shelves. Harsha told us: "I myself have chased after two and one picked up a stick to attack me just six months ago. In the last two weeks we have had many similar incidents, sometimes twice a day. We need to protect ourselves and need police presence to prevail in the station for everyone's safety."

Phone muggings

All the shop owners I spoke to on the High Road agree there has been an increase in incidents of crime, with many witnessing phone muggings and bag snatchings.

Maurizio Businaro, owner of Amici Italian Deli, said: "We had a customer who left his electric bike outside. In the five minutes it took for us to make him a coffee, it had been stolen. We felt so bad for him, he told us it cost £3,000."

East Finchley resident Natalie Blanks, receptionist at The Muswell Hill Club, is uniquely placed to see what's going on with a clear vantage point along Fortis Green. She

said: "I see the same masked bikers continuously riding up and down, scouting for a mugging opportunity. One of our female personal trainers had a knife pulled out on her right outside, they snatched her bag, a terrifying incident that has left her in total shock."

"I have told all our members not to get out their phones on the street. I feel I have a responsibility to keep informing people, and I think they target this area because they know there are no police around here."

Where are the police?

One Facebook user commenting on the number of mobile phone thefts along the High Road said: "Personally I rarely see any sort of police presence in the area other than when they're responding to another incident. Would it not make sense to have more visible policing at particular hot spots within the area - the station being one? I'm not sure how to escalate this but surely something needs to be done."

Police: Be our eyes and ears

By John Lawrence

Burglaries in East Finchley are up, incidents of criminal damage are up and robberies are up, according to figures from the Met Police. At the same time, thefts are slightly down and violence-related incidents have dropped.

East Finchley's Safer Neighbourhood policing team, made up of three police officers and one community support officer, is urging people to report all incidents, however small, so they can identify criminal patterns and deploy their limited patrol and investigation resources in the most appropriate ways. At a crime and community meeting at Martin Primary School on Friday 14 June, Chief Inspector Paul Condren told *The Archer*: "We have to make decisions because we don't have enough resources to be everywhere. Each area has a small team but I can draw on 21 neighbourhood teams across Barnet to coordinate our response." Sgt Manny Asare-Bekoe told residents: "The first port of call should always be the police on 999 or 101 and immediacy helps. If a crime is reported several hours later or the next day it significantly reduces our chances of identifying suspects."

Crime figures

The team revealed the most recent crime figures for East Finchley ward, comparing January to March 2024 with the same period in 2023. They were as follows: **Burglaries:** 20 (Jan-Mar 2023), 33 (Jan-Mar 2024) **Criminal damage:** 20 (2023), 28 (2024) **Robberies:** 9 (2023), 15 (2024) **Thefts:** 114 (2023), 112 (2024) **Violence-related:** 114 (2023), 101 (2024) East Finchley can be vulnerable to individual criminals and gangs arriving from outside N2 and then being able to make a quick and easy getaway by

tube along the Northern line or by road along the A1, A1000 and North Circular, police say. They suggested some phone muggings could be linked to criminals coming across from the Camden Town area.

Police presence

Residents at the meeting raised their own concerns about school students being mugged along The Causeway, anti-social behaviour from neighbours, dangerous cycling on pavements and drug dealing on the streets among other issues.

When asked directly what police are doing on the ground, Sgt Asare-Bekoe said: "We cannot police every single road but if people give us a heads-up we can make plans and take actions. The more people call us the more chance we have to deal with it."

Grange Big Local grants

The Grange Big Local project has thanked everyone who applied for one of its community grants, saying there are so many amazing projects taking place right on our doorstep in East Finchley.

Applications closed on 31 May and all funds will be distributed by mid-July. It urged anyone who missed the deadline to get in touch on info@grangebiglocal.org as there may be other opportunities. You can subscribe to the project's newsletter and keep updated via www.grangebiglocal.org



How to report a crime

- Call **999** in an emergency when there is a danger to life or a crime is in progress
- Call **101** for non-emergencies, if your property has been stolen or damaged, you wish to report drug dealing or a minor traffic accident, and for general police enquiries
- Report crime to East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team by phone on **020 7161 9014**, by email to eastfinchley.snt@met.police.uk and on X/Twitter @MPSEastFinchley
- Stay anonymous and report information to Crimestoppers on **0800 555111**
- In the case of violence against women and girls, and domestic abuse, call **999** in an emergency and **101** in a non-emergency

Boot sale bargains

This month's Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale takes place on Saturday 27 July from 10am to 1pm at the usual venue of Hornsey Parish Church Hall, on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Road, N10 3AH. Buses W7, W3 and 144 stop nearby. Admission is 50p and refreshments are available. For information, contact 020 8368 8180.

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