



Summer sporting highlight cancelled after seven years

By John Lawrence

Amateur athletes from East Finchley, Muswell Hill and Highgate could have run their last race together after organisers of the annual Race the Neighbours event announced that the event is cancelled for the foreseeable future.

Around 450 runners have come together in Cherry Tree Wood in June for seven years to compete in the friendly 10k race to Alexandra Palace and back. The fastest collective postcode claims the coveted Cherry Tree Cup.

But the volunteer organisers have told the hundreds who have already signed up for this year's race that they've run out of time to organise it and are sadly pulling out of future years too.

Clash of dates

We reported in December that the Race had been forced to move its planned 2024 date after inadvertently clashing with the 50th anniversary of the East Finchley Festival on Sunday 23 June thanks to a mix-up by Barnet Council's events coordinators The Event Umbrella.

It would have been impossible for both events to be held in Cherry Tree Wood on the same day so Race the Neighbours agreed to seek another date but it now seems that will not happen. Local resident Avi Freeman, one of the founding organis-



Last legs: Runners set off in the most recent Race the Neighbours event in June 2023. Photo Mike Coles

ers, said it was a sad decision to have to make. He said: "It looks like 2023 will have been our last race, at least for the time being. The time pressures involved for all of us have led us to the reluctant conclusion that we need to hang up our organising shoes for now. There will be no Race the Neighbours 2024.

Adventure

"Way back in the summer of 2015 we began an adventure, establishing a new 10k in our own corner of north London. In the nine years since then we've held seven summer 10k races, welcomed hundreds of runners, learned a lot about staging

events, and put a smile on lots of faces including our own.

"We've raised and donated more than £8,000 to local charities. And we've just loved taking over Cherry Tree Wood for the day and turning it into the headquarters of London's friendliest 10k."

Avi added that they weren't completely ruling out a return in the future. "In the meantime we'd be very happy to talk to anyone that is interested in the idea of perhaps taking on the mantle of organising a local 10k in this area that uses the same route. If that's you, then please do get in touch."



Cherry Tree Wood. Photo by Alison Roberts

Changes in the Wood

By Debbie Linton

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are planning a busy year ahead with a number of new and existing projects that are already making a big difference to the park and its facilities.

Although no solution has been found yet for the flooding that blights the grass area in the winter months, the Friends group are continuing to work with Barnet Council to find ways to improve the drainage.

Two new forest gardens that came to life in 2023 will continue to be developed along with a project to collect data on the park's woodland fauna and flora. There are also plans to replace the broken trampoline in the play area.

The next litter pick is on Sunday 10 March from 2pm to 3pm. The next Gardening and Conservation groups are on Sunday 10 March from 10am to 12pm and on Tuesday 19 March from 10am to 11am.

Busy year

The forthcoming events were all announced at the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood AGM attended by 20 supporters in January, where it was agreed that 2023 had been another busy year of activity.

Monthly litter picks had continued (with the welcome support of Duke of Edinburgh volunteers). A new hedge had been introduced by the High Road gate along with two dropped kerbs to improve accessibility. The High Road gates had also been repainted as had the Summerlee Road entrance gate. There had been five bat monitoring evenings, identifying four species.

A Barnet Council proposal to locate a circus in the wood over the winter had been vigorously fought off, not least because of the flooded state of the ground.

Popular events

There had been numerous popular events including the East Finchley Festival, a Cloud Appreciation Day, guided history tours, a Festival of Architecture talk, a Seed Swap day (East Finchley Pollinators Project), a beautiful mosaic unveiling, an Easter egg hunt, a Halloween skeleton hunting event and a Christmas wreath making workshop.

To find out more, or to get involved with the Friends charity, get in touch via email at friendsofcherrytreewood@gmail.com

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago: March 2014

Managers at the Phoenix Cinema were shocked to find out, after the event, that a film crew who hired the auditorium were making a porn movie. Embarrassed Phoenix trustees promised to review their hiring guidelines in light of the event, but amused trustee Maureen Lipman predicted that East Finchley was unlikely to become the porn capital of Europe!

15 years ago: March 2009

Sales of the 2009 Archer calendar raised an amazing £2,088 for East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact. The money was to be used to help the charity in its vital work with elderly, disabled and isolated people in our community. The calendar was printed free of charge by photobox.co.uk and several High Road shops and other outlets had volunteered to sell it.

23 years ago: March 2001

We highlighted that it wasn't just local pubs that were disappearing as a result of the building frenzy in East Finchley. Building sites were springing up all over the area, all involving high-density housing. Current or proposed projects involved the loss of Park Lodge in East End Road, garages behind 114 High Road, at the junction with Lincoln Road, the Texaco Garage and Currie Motors in the High Road, Lincoln Parade shops, Viceroy Close car park and the detached bungalow in Park Road. All have since been replaced by flats or houses.

Make memories that last a lifetime and join our iconic walk.

BIG FUN WALK 2024

Sunday 2 June

- 8.5 mile walk East Finchley to Westminster
- London's most beautiful parks and iconic views
- Free lunch, refreshments and a goody bag

Pricing for adults £20, under 16 £15, and under 5s go free.

Register at www.bigfunwalk.co.uk

Scan me



Registered with
FR
FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR
Charity No. 285300.
Reg Address: 47 Woodside Avenue,
London, N12 8TT.
Company Reg No: 01654807

North London Hospice

Sign up today

