



Calls to improve 'ghost bus' service

By David Melsome

Campaigners are putting pressure on Transport for London to improve the frequency of the 603 bus route, which has often been described as a 'ghost service'.

Running between Muswell Hill and Swiss Cottage, passing along Fortis Green and the High Road in East Finchley on the way, it operates on school days only and is heavily used by school and college students.

But the first bus of the day leaves Muswell Hill Broadway at 7.25am and does not start its return journey from Swiss Cottage Station until 8.30am meaning it arrives back in Highgate and Muswell Hill after 9am, when schools and colleges have already started.

Petition

Campaigners have been organising a petition and have won the support of Camden councillors to lobby Transport for London for an improved service.

Christine McKenzie, of the 603 Watch Group, said other potential users are teachers and

staff as well as general passengers wanting to get to shops and doctors along the route, or to reach Kenwood House and Hampstead Heath.

The campaign group has suggested that there should be regular buses in both directions from Muswell Hill and Swiss Cottage between 6.45am and 8.15am, and between 3.15pm and 6.15pm.

Cllr Mike Hakata, Haringey's cabinet member for transport has now said that his council will arrange a meeting with TfL, Barnet and Camden to "review the proposals and to explore all the options for increasing the frequency of this bus route".

A TfL spokesperson said: "We are happy to discuss the operation of route 603 with Camden Council and other local stakeholders, to ensure we're providing the best bus network possible for Londoners."



Rain or shine: Group leader Louis Victor, right, and his fellow walkers wrap up to enjoy all weathers

A walk to blow away the cobwebs

By David Melsome

New Year's Day is often a good day to get outside and blow away some of the cobwebs of seasonal celebration. Blowing away was very much on the menu for participants in the first East Finchley Wellbeing Walk of 2025 as they were accompanied by 50mph winds! It seems that Wellbeing Walkers

are made of tough stuff though as there was a turnout of 11 despite the unpromising weather. The Wellbeing Walk takes place every Wednesday morning at 10am come rain or shine and everyone is welcome for a free, easy-paced, one-hour sociable stroll in local green spaces.

The meeting point is opposite East Finchley Station (behind Bus Stop H) and all you have to do is show up and look for the walk leader in a green tabard. For more details look for efwellbeingwalk on Instagram, find announcements in local Facebook groups or email efwellbeingwalk@gmail.com

Time for tree planting

By Donald Lyven

Those fortunate to have obtained a Long Lane Pasture Calendar for 2025 will see that February's picture is of Wayne Armsby, the man mainly responsible for saving the Pasture from development, when it was brought under the control of a trust in 2005.

Wayne was one of the volunteers who turned out regularly to help turn the bramble-infested, rubbish-strewn site, opposite the fire station in Long Lane, N3, into the welcoming and award-winning green space it has become. Sadly, Wayne died at this time last year, but his commitment for the environment lives on. Wayne often said: "The best time to have planted a tree was 20 years ago; the next best time is today!" Wayne was

in it for the long haul.

The weeping willow he planted that day is still growing strong, with its double trunk making it very distinctive, and proving that planting a tree at any time is a great way to safeguard the future of our environment.

This year, Wayne's widow Elsie, plans to plant a silver birch on the Pasture in Wayne's memory for future generations to enjoy.



Nature lover: Wayne Armsby planting a young tree on Long Lane Pasture in 2005. Photo Donald Lyven

The calendar photograph shows Wayne in 2005 carrying a tree he was about to plant. Twenty years on, that flat green view of the Pasture has been transformed.

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