



Hospice families shine a light for their loved ones



Moving ceremony: Guests at the North London Hospice's Light Up a Life event share their stories of love and loss. Photo Mike Coles

By David Melsome

On Sunday 24 November, much of London was brought to a standstill by Storm Bert. As the winds howled and the rain lashed, all of London's Royal parks locked their gates and even Hyde Park's Winter Wonderland became very quiet and still.

But a 1,000-strong group of families, friends and VIP guests closer to home were determined that the adverse conditions would not ruin the North London Hospice's annual evening ceremony of remembrance, Light Up a Life.

Taking place at the end of

every November, Light Up a Life is a chance for the community to come together in memory of someone they have loved. Dedications are written and a short service of reflection is held with music and readings.

A respectful one-minute silence is observed as every-

one holds their candle and the hospice's giant tree comes to life with hundreds of lights, each one dedicated to someone special.

In memory

The guest speakers were Gillian Naylor, who bravely recalled her brother's experience of the hospice, Bibi Khan

MBE and Rabbi Tanya Sakhnovich, who provided words of comfort. Music was provided by the London Youth Concert Band and the R Voices choir.

The event raised more than £30,000 for the hospice's end-of-life services. Chief executive Declan Carroll said: "Our care

is free of charge, but it does not come for free. It now costs nearly £16million a year to fund our services. Most of our funding comes from donations, this is something that we never take for granted." Find out more about the hospice's work at: northlondonhospice.org

Young voices on a cold winter night

The lights that shone out from the wigwam tree outside Budgens in the High Road over the festive season were switched on at the start of December with the help of some choral entertainment from the children of Brookland School.

A stormy weekend had forced organisers to cancel the

music and singing they had planned but the Brookland choir missed the email and turned up anyway. For those who braved the threatening weather, it was a lovely moment as the children's voices rang out and the lights came on to bring some cheer to the winter night.



Season starter: Brookland School children at the High Road lights switch-on. Photo Mike Coles

Run and help out

A running and volunteering group is aiming to help out more in Cherry Tree Wood this year. The GoodGym team meet regularly for a short run before taking part in an activity that needs manpower and womanpower.

Late last year, the group met at the Old White Lion pub in the High Road and crossed the road into the wood to spend an hour or two removing turf and creating space for raspberries

and other fruit bushes to be planted.

Organiser Paul Saloman said: "As always, GoodGym is about the unexpected joys of helping out. If you're reading this, maybe it's time to ditch the screen and dive into something real. Discover the satisfaction of helping your neighborhood while keeping fit and making friends."

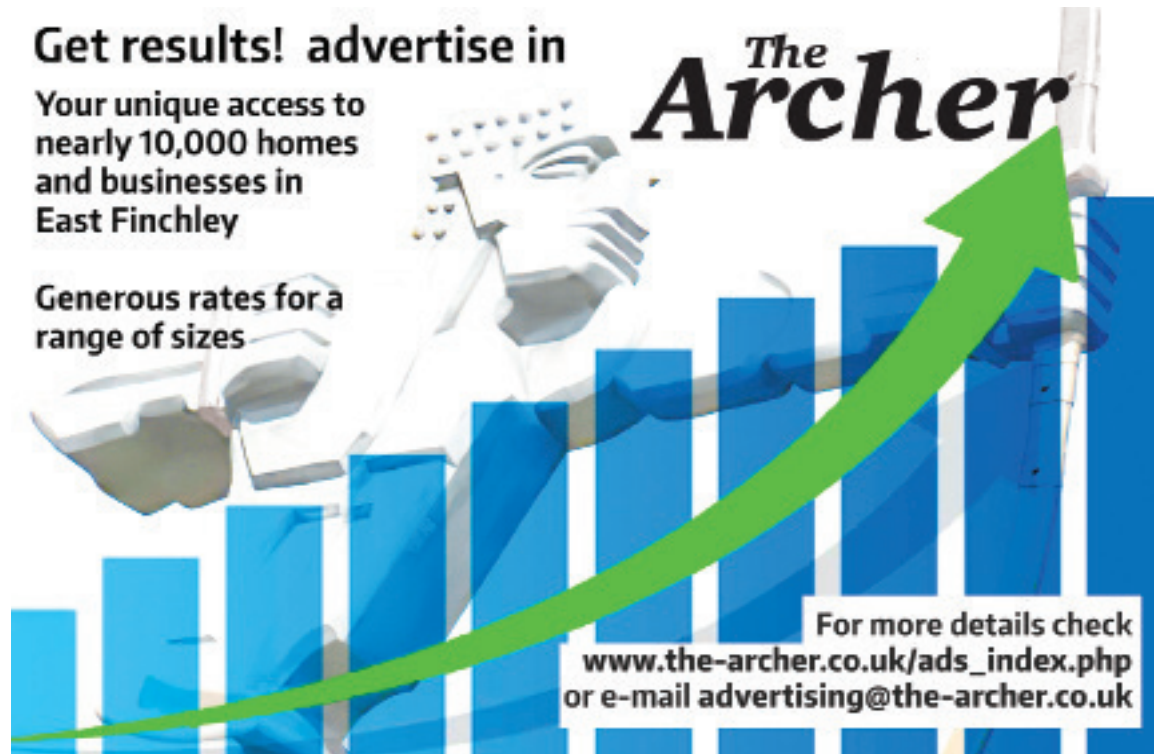
The group usually meets on Tuesday evenings throughout the year. Find out more at www.goodgym.org

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