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Fly-tipping: how it can be stopped?

By Julia Lawrence

Bookcases are definite repeat offenders, along with sofas, mattresses, fridges and bags of building rubble. There's been the odd toilet bowl too. We are talking here about items 'fly-tipped' in East Finchley.

Large domestic and commercial items of rubbish can frequently be seen dumped on grass verges, or in communal bin areas, with a literal 'pile-on' ensuing as others follow suit. These are not just eyesores, they can also be major health hazards.

Notorious fly tipping hot spots in the area include areas of the Grange Estate, Prospect Ring, Brompton Grove alongside Cherry Tree Wood, the path between King Street and Claybrook Close, and under the North Circular flyover in Long Lane.



Rubbish dump: Mattresses, drawers, bookcases and children's play equipment are piled high next to the community bins in Prospect Ring, despite Barnet Council's warning poster, inset. Photo Mike Coles



Warning: No notice taken

Six weeks to clear
 And the number of these unsightly heaps seems to be growing. One resident of the Grange told us of his frustration at a pile that developed for nearly six weeks, despite him reporting it almost daily through Barnet Council's dedicated website.

"It's really difficult to get through to the council and speak to a human being," he said, "and

when you do they are very nice, but all they do is direct you to the website, where you upload an image and description of the rubbish.

"I was doing this for six weeks, and the pile was getting bigger, before it was eventually cleared on 4 December. Then the morning after it was cleaned up, someone came along and dumped some shelving in the same place."

Downward spiral
 East Finchley councillor

Alison Moore told us that fly-tipping has always been an issue but is getting worse. "It's annoying and we can understand why people get angry about it," she said.

"We need to create an atmosphere where there is zero tolerance for fly tipping. It can make an area feel much more down at heel which encourages negative behaviour. But we need to be told about it.

"People are not being ignored. The trouble is, as

soon as a site is cleared, it's often the case that new rubbish immediately appears, which is frustrating for both local residents and the council."

Penalty notices

In September, Barnet Council launched its 'Caring for Our Places' campaign to crack down on fly-tipping which, it says, costs the authority £500,000 a year, collecting enough waste to fill seven Olympic-size swimming pools.

Continued on page 3

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Funding shortfall puts future of arts charity in jeopardy



Under threat: Despite doing work that benefits hundreds of people, the Community Focus team is facing a funding shortfall

By David Melsome
A long-established arts charity is facing a funding crisis and is launching a public appeal to help it continue its work in 2025.

Barnet-based Community Focus Inclusive Arts has been running for 47 years, providing arts and wellbeing workshops for hundreds of people with disabilities, autism and additional needs. But a regular source of funding has not materialised this year, meaning the charity is asking for donations, volunteers and expertise, particularly in fundraising, PR and marketing, to stay in operation.

Community Focus CEO John McCafferty said: "Our students gain more than just skills. They find confidence, friendships, and a sense of purpose. Losing this space would be a devastating blow to the community.

"Through creative programs and diverse arts and wellbeing workshops, Community Focus

inspires personal growth, builds confidence, and fosters lasting friendships. Its students describe it as a lifeline."

Make a donation

The charity's accessible studios are based in Friary Park, N20, where it runs short breaks, art workshops and in-house programmes for everyone above 10 years old. It also organises outreach programmes in schools, hospitals, nursing homes, colleges and a wide range of community groups.

To offer fundraising expertise and advice, you can visit their team at Friary House, Friary Road, N20 0NR. You can also contact them by email at jmccafferty@communityfocus.co.uk. To make a donation, scan the QR code below or visit www.communityfocus.co.uk/donate.



SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

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 - 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 your local Safer Neighbourhood Team by email: eastfinchley.snt@met.police.uk gardensuburb.snt@met.police.uk or fortisgreen.snt@met.police.uk
- Find full details for the local SNTs at www.iloven2.co.uk/local-government-and-policing
- Stay anonymous and report information to Crimestoppers on **0800 555111**

BE PART OF IT Volunteers wanted

Compiled by Lynn Winton

Help run a 'Warm Space'. Until March 2025, **Grange Big Local** is running a Warm Space at Tarling Road Community Centre in East Finchley with free hot drinks, biscuits and toys for children. There is a range of additional activities including arts and crafts, talks and gardening (weather permitting), and it's free and open to all. If you're looking to gain some work experience, build your confidence and meet new people, enthusiastic volunteers are essential to support the day-to-day running. Interested? Please email info@grangebiglocal.org or call 07719 105247.

Become a Proms volunteer! Could you give a few hours a month to help make next year's **Proms at St Jude's Festival** a success? The skills or experience they need include admin, IT, organisation and logistics, fundraising, and education. It's also a great opportunity to get involved in a local community project, gain experience and meet new people. For more information and to apply please look at www.promsatstjudes.org.uk/volunteering.

Could you spare an hour or so a week to chat to an older isolated person? **Age UK Barnet** is looking for befrienders to offer friendly chats, support and companionship. The charity also needs walking buddies to help older people to get out and about again after losing the confidence to leave their homes. Just a couple of hours a week of your time could make a big difference to an older person in East Finchley. Please contact Lisa on 020 8432 1422.

Reengage host monthly Sunday tea parties in and around Finchley for people aged 75 and over who are lonely, isolated or in need of companionship. Volunteer drivers are needed to collect older guests from their homes and take them to a tea party where between 10 and 15 older guests and volunteers share tea, cake, and companionship, and enjoy a change of scenery for an afternoon. At the end of the tea party the volunteer drivers take the older guests safely back home. If you would like to get involved as a driver or a coordinator please contact ruth.carter@reengage.org.uk. Find out more at <https://www.reengage.org.uk>

If you'd like your organisation to be included in this column please email news@the-archer.co.uk



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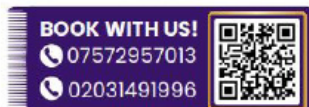
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- Full Daycare (7/9 hours)



PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Barnet
143 Abbots Gardens, N2
Roof extension involving hip to gable, rear dormer window with Juliet balcony and three front-facing roof lights
38 Sedgemere Avenue, N2
Erection of timber-framed garden room
30 Lincoln Road, N2
Single-storey side and rear extension and lowering of existing floor
11 - 59 High Road, N2
Submission of details of condition 4 (Demolition and Construction Management and Logistics Plan) pursuant to planning permission 24/1519/FUL dated 07/08/24
59 Chandos Road, N2
Single-storey rear extension with a proposed depth of 3.5m, maximum

height of 3.2m and eaves height of 3m. Following demolition of existing outrigger.
18 Deansway, N2
Roof extension involving hip to gable, rear dormer window with Juliet balcony and four front-facing roof lights
17 Bedford Road, N2
Roof extension involving rear dormer window and two front-facing roof lights
231 Creighton Avenue, N2
Single-storey front, side and rear extension with three roof lights following demolition of the existing side extension and garage. Insertion of new garage doors and window to rear elevation. Roof extension involving hip to gable, rear dormer windows with two Juliet balconies and three

front-facing roof lights, following demolition of existing side dormer, rear dormer and chimney.
Prospect Ring, N2
Installation of one rooftop telecommunications base station, six antennas to be installed fixed to steelwork supports, one 300mm and one 600mm transmission dishes, and two cabinets and ancillary development
Haringey
1 Springcroft Avenue, N2
Rear dormer conversion
18 Lauradale Road, N2
Ground floor and loft extensions
85 Fortis Green, N2
Changes to drainage or sewerage



What a waste: Furniture, bags of rubbish and more mattresses and bookcases are left out in public areas around East Finchley, including on the Grange Estate, Prospect Ring and a path off King Street

Continued from page 1

Councillor Alan Scheiderman, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, said: "Since 1 April 2024 over 100 Fixed Penalty Notices relating to fly tipping have been issued. And more than 1,200 letters providing details of alternatives and raising awareness about potential actions such as fines and prosecutions have been issued.

"A recent education and awareness campaign and enhanced enforcement has also resulted in 10 out of 20 areas known for dumping no longer being fly tip hotspots.

If anyone sees a fly tip I would encourage them to please report it by searching for 'Report It Now' on our website barnet.gov.uk."

Let us know

Do you know of any fly-tipping hot spots in and around East Finchley? Tell us and send photos to: news@the-archer.co.uk or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748.

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Waste items: how to dispose of them



Under review: Barnet Council's skip service will resume this month

Fly-tipping may be a deliberate anti-social act or it may happen because people feel they have no other way of getting rid of their large household items. So what are the options?

Council collection

Barnet Council will collect large items like cookers, chairs, bed bases, mattresses and sofas, but the service comes with a charge.

It will cost you £38 if you want Barnet to take away one to three items, rising to £108 for 10 items. Commercial waste is subject to higher, individual charges.

Recycling centre

The household recycling centre in Summers Lane, North Finchley, will take large items but you have to be a driver and be able to fit them in your car

or van to get them there.

Commercial and trade vehicles are not admitted.

Community skips

Barnet Council has tried to increase options for non-drivers by providing a free community skip service but there have been complaints that it is not conveniently located, not regular enough and not sufficiently advertised. The last three skips in East Finchley were in Park Road on 19 September, Trinity Avenue on 11 October and Tarling Road on 25 October. They usually appear for three hours at a time and users are restricted to bringing three items or less. They also have to carry them to the skips themselves. Barnet Council has since paused the community skip service but says it will resume this month. Anyone visiting their website

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finds a message reading: "The Community Skip service is now approaching its second-year anniversary. We want to take this time to consider your feedback about the current service, to help shape how we will offer this service going forward to make it easier for you."

Recycle and reuse

Items that are in good condition and fully working can

sometimes be passed on to a good home through sites like Freecycle, Freegle, Preloved and the 'East Finchley share-swap-reuse-recycle' group on Facebook. What do you think of Barnet Council's collection or community skip services? Tell us at: news@the-archer.co.uk or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748.



Green corridor grows with new garden project

By John Lawrence

Inspired by the award-winning community garden on Leopold Road, N2, local residents have secured £50,000 funding to improve the two run-down communal areas on neighbouring Church Lane.

The money from Barnet Council's East Area Committee will pay for repair to the planters, new benches for people to relax on, bee and butterfly-friendly planting plus the installation of bee and insect hotels at the junctions with Long Lane and The Walks.

The project will add to East Finchley's growing green corridor, made up of pockets of nature-friendly land stretching north from Cherry Tree Wood through the centre of N2, including the new playground in Market Place.

Repairs of the broken brick planters in Church Lane have already started after which local enthusiasts will be clearing the vegetation ready for new planting in the spring.

The nearby Leopold Road Neighbourhood Garden, also spearheaded by volunteers with the support of local councillors, has thrived since it was created two years ago and last year was given an environmental award by The Finchley Society. Church Lane co-organisers Mary Robertson and Judith Salomon said: "We wished to transform the neglected areas on Church Lane into a similar

green haven for the benefit of residents and wildlife.

"We are delighted that funding has been granted for the project and the response from the local community has been extremely positive. We are very excited to see work progressing in readiness for planting in spring."

Mary and Judith have been in touch with the residents who delivered the Leopold Road gardens, and they have provided very helpful advice and are happy to continue to help us. They are calling on anyone living in Church Lane, Long Lane and Trinity Road to help with the restoration and gardening work where they can. If you would like to get involved, contact them at: ChurchLaneGardens@gmail.com.



Untidy: Planted beds at the junction with Long Lane



Room for improvement: The seating area on Church Lane will be made more nature-friendly

'Pointless' damage at High Road office

By John Lawrence

The owners of Tax Assist accountants in the High Road, N2, had a nasty shock when they arrived to open up on Thursday 19 December and found their glass front door had been smashed in overnight with six bricks.

Drazen and Alex Coric were relieved to find there were no signs of anyone entering their office and nothing had been stolen, but it took them time and expense to clear up the criminal damage at what is their busiest time of year in the run-up to the January tax deadline.

"We've been in business in East Finchley for nearly 15 years and we've had no problems until this year," said Alex.

"Why would anyone walk around destroying property? It's upsetting and pointless."

Their main plate glass window was also smashed back in the summer at the same time as a number of other shops and businesses on the High Road



Criminal damage: The Tax Assist office

From The Archer archives ...

By Jane Marsh

10 years ago: January 2015

The water leak in Cherry Tree Wood that we reported on in 2024 is not the first. In 2015 Thames Water had confirmed a leak from a broken pipe close to the pavilion (now demolished) on the main path between the High Road and Summerlee Avenue entrances. The water company informed Barnet Council, who arranged for its repair. Around the same time, the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood group was invigorated by an influx of new members at their AGM, and it became a strong advocate for the park.

15 years ago: January 2010

We marked the passing of Lincoln Parade, demolished to make way for a housing development. The Parade on the north side of the entrance to Lincoln Road was, for many years, home to shops including the much-loved Finchley Pet Stores and a gents' hairdresser. There is now a terrace of four houses where the Parade stood.

23 years ago: January 2002

High Road crime is by no means a new phenomenon. A 2002 spate of robberies and attacks on businesses and individuals resulted in the development of a new initiative between police and traders, the Business Watch scheme. In the days before smart phones and apps, this was to involve the establishment of a network of pagers, enabling alerts about local incidents to be circulated within 30 seconds.

scam. Fortunately, no money was lost, but the scammer was very good indeed. They had quite a lot of information and a friendly smooth manner which led me to believe it was genuine. So, note to self and a cautionary tale, always put the phone down on an incoming caller, no matter how convincing they may sound, and then contact your bank directly. If there is a genuine problem, they will have it on their records.

Residential burglary

Our burglary figures in East Finchley are low, so let's keep it like this. It's a good time to check out home security and make any changes no matter how small as the weather gets cold and dark. If any family would like a home security visit or have any concerns or questions about home safety issues, please do contact me.

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Jan Lovell, of the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team, updates us on the latest crime news. Jan and the team can be contacted by email at: EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk, or by phone on 020 7161 9014. Follow the team on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley.

As the days get much shorter, I'd like to make you aware of current crime concerns in East Finchley and some measures you can take to be ready security-wise over the winter.

Phone snatches

Several folk have told me of phone snatches, but not all of these have matching crime reports so this crime may be under-reported. It is important to report all crime so that we can best utilise resources. Reporting online at www.met.police.uk is quick and easy.

If you are listening to music or talking on the phone, please use earphones and keep your phone hidden away securely in an inside pocket or in your bag. If you need your phone out in the street do be aware of your surroundings before using it. Daily I see folk walking along and chatting on their phone with their phone in their hand, often distracted with children in pushchairs, luggage etc.

Parcel thefts

We do have some good leads on parcel thefts in the area, but with the gift season approaching there will be those who will take advantage of the extra parcels on doorsteps and porches. There are a number of options to keeping your parcels safe.

They can be delivered to a local collection point. The Post Office and many shops are listed as delivery options for most companies, especially for items of value. A neighbour could be asked to take a parcel in. There are secure delivery boxes available from £75.

At the very least, arrange for parcels to be left somewhere hidden from the road and not left in communal areas in blocks of flats.

Scams

As I have sat here typing this, I have been a victim of a banking

Two-screen Phoenix opens to filmgoers



It's a wrap: New seating is fitted in the main auditorium on the day it arrives, left, and the new second screen ready to welcome its first filmgoers. Photos Mike Coles

By John Lawrence

The Phoenix Cinema in East Finchley reopened its doors to film fans last month with a fully refurbished main auditorium and a whole new second screen. The return of screenings in mid-December was the culmination of a £500,000 eight-week rebuilding project designed to give the 113-year-old venue the best possible future at a time when all cinemas are facing tough challenges.

Audiences poured back into the main screen on Wednesday 18 December to watch the Oscar-tipped film *Conclave*, starring Ralph Fiennes and Stanley Tucci. They had all-new seating with extra legroom and a much-improved 7.1 surround sound system to enjoy.

At the same time, the second screen was showing *Van Gogh: Poets and Lovers* in the upstairs space that used to be occupied by the café but that is now a plush mini-auditorium housing 22 high-back seats with excellent sight lines to the 2 metre screen.

Team work

Alison Gold, outgoing chair

of the Phoenix Cinema Trust, praised the work of everyone involved in the transformation project, saying it was teamwork at its best. "East Finchley is a great place and the Phoenix is now an even greater part of it," she said.

First reactions to the 174 new red and yellow seats in the main auditorium were positive. They were shipped over from a Malaysian manufacturer and fitted in a single day by contractors Maeve, who were responsible for all the work on both screens.

"We have premium seating and 11 sofa seats plus accessible seating. The rows are more

spaced out so there is more room for everyone. This will bring a whole new level of comfort to the Phoenix experience," said executive director Rob Kenny.

Ticket prices

Much of the cost of the project has been funded by the sale of the little-used car park at the rear of the cinema in Fairlawn Avenue. Nevertheless, standard ticket prices will rise by a pound from £13 to £14, with premium seats at £16, to make sure the cinema can continue to cover its costs.

Coffers were boosted by the sale of 152 of the old seats in November. Supporters came along to collect them in return for a £20 donation per seat. Among them was Phoenix fan Reece Shearsmith, co-creator with Steve Pemberton of the acclaimed BBC TV series *Inside No 9*, who appropriately took away nine. The Phoenix trustees and staff also hope that the new second screen will be popular for private hires. People will be able to reserve the auditorium for themselves and a group of family or friends to show the film of their choice, and with a dedicated food and drink service while they are in their seats.



Team work: Outgoing Phoenix Cinema Trust chair Alison Gold with executive director Rob Kenny in the second screen. Photo Mike Coles

Town Team wants ideas

East Finchley Town Team are getting the New Year off to a sociable start with an open meeting at East Finchley Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2, on Thursday 9 January from 7pm.

Everyone is welcome to the informal event, where there will be nibbles and low-priced drinks, and a chance to let the team know what are the key issues in East Finchley that they should be tackling in 2025. East Finchley Town Team is a collective of representatives from East Finchley Community Trust, East Finchley Open Artists, *The Archer* newspaper and the Phoenix Cinema, supported by East Finchley's local councillors and established to promote and support the N2 High Road. Find out more or send your suggestions to eftownteam@gmail.com

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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."

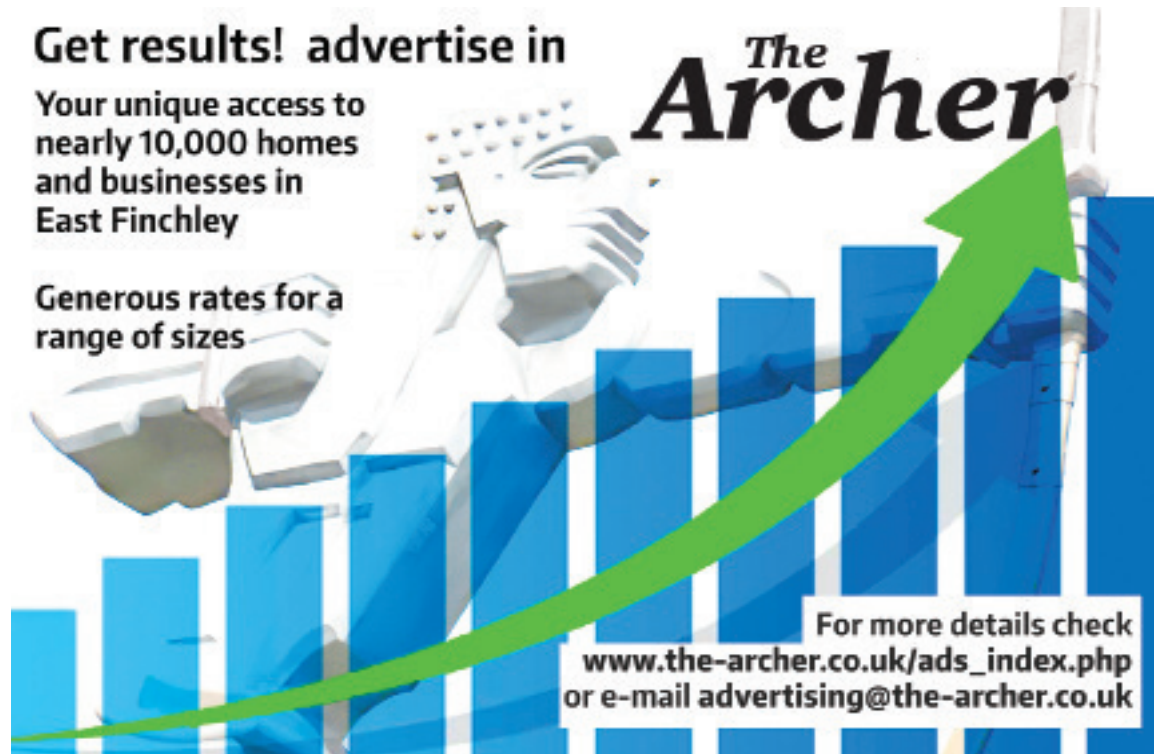
The group usually meets on Tuesday evenings throughout the year. Find out more at www.goodgym.org

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20mph limit could come to county roads

By Ruth Anders

In September 2023, following the installation of new 30mph speed signs on the junctions of each of East Finchley's county roads with the High Road, we reported on the concerns of residents that the 20mph speed restriction on the High Road ceased the moment drivers turned into the residential side roads.

At the time, our local councillor Arjun Mitra and Councillor Alan Schneiderman, Barnet Council's cabinet member for the environment, expressed their strong support for 20mph restrictions to be applied to the side roads too.

Now, 15 months later, we have the beginning of a process that could lead to that result. Residents of Durham Road and all adjoining roads to the High Road, N2, have received a consultation letter and colour coded maps illustrating new proposals by Barnet's Highways team.

These include the introduction of a 20mph speed limit on the county roads (Bedford,

Durham, Hertford, Huntingdon, Leicester and Lincoln), the installation of speed 'cushions', and the conversion of single yellow lines to double yellow lines on strategic junctions. The council states that the proposals aim to improve safety for all road users, and in particular pedestrians.

Opposing opinions

The consultation has prompted a flood of opposing opinions with some residents suggesting that these roads should be made one-way. Others disagree, making the point that one-way streets become rat runs and encourage

speeding.

Some residents feel that the prohibition of parking resulting from the proposed new double yellow lines near street corners could be dangerous in that the liberated space invites less caution at junctions.

So, moves are afoot, and whatever the outcome you can bet that the new arrangements will not please everyone. "We want to hear from you" states the letter. Those interested should make their views known by 9 January 2025 to ensure that their comments can be considered in time by writing to HighwaysCorrespondence@Barnet.gov.uk, quoting reference RSE045.



Slow down: A 20mph limit could be on the cards

Many call to oppose 'poor positioning' of EV chargers

By Diana Cormack

Barnet Council is committed to improving air quality throughout the borough with the aim of it being net zero by 2042. To this end, in order to reduce the impact of transport emissions, it is encouraging the use of electric vehicles (EVs) by installing various electric charging points across the borough.



Pinch point: The proposed site of an EV charging unit

The latest of these to arrive in East Finchley have been the JOLT charge points. Through a deal with an Australian company, Barnet was the first to launch this combined charging unit and digital advertising display in its town centres.

Each can 'provide drivers with 7kWh of free, fast, roadside EV charging a day with as little as 15 minutes charge time', according to JOLT. All well and good, except for each unit's large advertising panels, which some see as an unwelcome addition to the

obstruction and clutter of 'street furniture'.

Interrupt flow

Just looking at the size of the one outside the William Hill betting shop at 81 High Road, N2, will show that they need to be carefully positioned in order not to interrupt flow along the pavement.

Also, with the illuminated advertising so close to the highway, there are concerns that they could distract road users, cause visual obstruction and light pollution. In addition they could have an adverse impact on local traders loading and unloading frequent deliveries to and from their premises.

At the time of writing, the plan is to place a JOLT charge point outside Finchley Youth Theatre, very close to Tony's Continental greengrocery, on a stretch of pavement which is

often heavily used.

Badly sited

Having objected successfully to previous installations last year, East Finchley Town Team has encouraged people to object to this one. They do not oppose EV chargers but think they should be provided without the obstructive advertising panels.

Finchley Youth Theatre is regularly frequented by disabled youngsters, groups of children from toddlers to teenagers, and people pushing buggies, many of whom arrive by car and many of whom may be in need of a clear pavement.

The Town Team suggests there are other more suitable sites on the High Road for the JOLT installation. Now objectors await the date of Barnet's next Planning Meeting and its subsequent decision.

Bowlers bond with biodiversity volunteers

Members of a bowling club in Hampstead Garden Suburb joined biodiversity volunteers to plant 3,000 bulbs and fruit trees in Lyttelton Fields late last year.

The daffodils, tulips and honeyberry trees will begin blooming in the park outside the Bishopswood Bowling Club, off Norrice Lea, N2, next spring and summer.

"Lyttelton Fields is another project to establish Hampstead Garden Suburb as the most biodiverse urban area in the UK," explained Dominic Rose, founder of the Britain's Biggest Living Garden project. He approached Bishopswood for help and the use of its facilities and gardening tools.

"Seventy bowlers and gardeners beavered away," said club president Keith Cole. "Children raked, dug and planted alongside parents and grandparents. The community spirit was overwhelming."

"Bishopswood has its own lovely garden surrounding the green. Come the spring we want more women and children to join the club. And bowling is not just for the elderly. The bowling champs are in their 30s and a 15-year-old, who started aged seven, is in the national championship."



Game on: Bowlers plant bulbs


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Standing tall: Nia Hearn in training for her debut alongside professional dancers

Behind the scenes at the ballet

Over the past few months, East Finchley student **Nia Hearn** was lucky to be a part of the cast for English Youth Ballet's production of 'Cinderella in Hollywood'. Here she reports on her experience.

The whole journey started when a few friends and I auditioned and we were lucky enough to be invited to be a part of the English Youth Ballet cast. I remember being very nervous but it was all worth it because I ended up loving it so much.

After the audition we moved on to the casting, which was a great chance to meet the professional principal dancers and show them what I was capable of. Not long after that, the intensive rehearsals began. These rehearsals were really engaging and I learnt so much from being taught by amazing dancers who I looked up to.

Before I knew it, the rehears-

als were finished and the shows were about to begin at the New Wimbledon Theatre. Despite the show days being long and busy, they were probably my favourite parts.

I woke up buzzing, got ready and did my hair and makeup. Once we got to the theatre it was time to warm up and then straight into the shows. I loved being on stage and I felt so proud as we took our final bows of how much I had accomplished in a few months. I am so grateful to the English Youth Ballet for making this experience possible and I can't wait for it to come around again next year.

Coming soon

In the meantime, I am now busy getting ready to perform in *The Tales of Beatrix Potter* with my dance school, Little London Ballet, which we will be performing at the Artsdepot North Finchley on 25 and 26 January. Tickets are on sale at www.artsdepot.co.uk

The Archer online

Did you know you can catch up with past issues of *The Archer* online? Every edition since the start of 2000 is available on our website at www.the-archer.co.uk. The site also gives information on advertising in our pages and how you can contribute to the paper.

Selected shaving for men's causes

Ten teachers at the Archer Academy in East Finchley joined forces last term by cultivating moustaches to raise funds for Movember, a cause that focuses on men's mental health, suicide prevention and cancer research.

Team Archer was proud to raise £3,800 through a range of initiatives including bake sales, staff vs student football matches, quizzes, and the generosity of friends, family and the wider school community.



Face furniture: Teachers from the Archer Academy show off their Movember moustaches

Nursery celebrates Ofsted rating

East Finchley nursery The Learning Experience has been rated Good in all areas following an inspection by Ofsted in October. Staff at the nursery on East End Road were praised for creating "a bright and happy environment where every child is greeted by their name and a big smile."

Additionally, inspectors found the nursery team were dedicated to building strong partnerships with parents. The report stated parents at the



Good stuff: Staff and children at The Learning Experience celebrate their Ofsted rating

nursery "value the positive contribution the staff make to their children's lives and the progress their children have made in their development."

Elaine Dann, Centre Director of TLE East Finchley, said she was incredibly proud of the centre's Good rating. She said: "This outcome fully reflects all

the hard work and dedication of the team to ensure children are nurtured in a fun and happy atmosphere."

The Learning Experience runs more than 400 early education centres for children aged six weeks to six years in the US. It began its expansion into the UK in 2020, where three nurseries now operate.

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Fleur Adcock: A personal memory



Love of nature: Fleur Adcock walks among the bluebells... the English variety were her favourites

We reported last month that Fleur Adcock, internationally acclaimed poet and an East Finchley resident for 61 years, died in October aged 90. Here, Fleur's neighbours Sandy and John Barker remember their close friend.

When we arrived in England from New Zealand in 1973, we came to stay in East Finchley because John's cousin in Lincoln Road, Jenny Gould, thought her friend, the poet Fleur Adcock two doors away, might let us rent two rooms, which she did.

Later we moved opposite and Fleur remained a much-loved close friend. Fifty years later in August 2023, we took

Fleur out in the High Road to celebrate. Afterwards she sent us this poem as "a little souvenir of our lunch".

*Meze and Shish
Busy, busy: what with a working day
and Andrew home from school for the summer
after his dazzling O-level results,
and an EFNA meeting in the evening
(East Finchley Neighbourhood Association),
it was 9:30 PM before I*

*met my prospective tenants: Jenny Gould's cousin John, a teacher from New Zealand,
and his new young wife, Sandy-with-a-Y
'They seem very pleasant', I wrote later
in my packed-to-overflowing journal;
as a result of which the three of us are now beaming at a Turkish waitress
who's photographing our celebration
in the restaurant on my street corner,
built on the site of Jay's furniture store,
where fifty years ago this week I bought
a chest of drawers for their bed-sitter.*

We wonder what she wrote in her journal six months after we first arrived. So many of our New Zealand friends came to stay and not all of them kept to the rules, the most important of which was not using the bathroom before 11am (we were allowed to use the toilet next door, and there was a basin downstairs).

Fleur celebrated her 40th birthday in February 1974 and

the house was packed with literary friends from NZ, UK and around the world. John got talking to someone called Alan Sillitoe and asked him what he did and could he make a living out of writing?

Fleur had spent much of her childhood with her sister in the English countryside during the war before the family returned to NZ and her garden had a very rural feeling. She nurtured her birds and when she was away would ask friends to make sure the birds had food and water.

Walks in the woods around East Finchley were an important part of her day. She loved bluebells but they really had to be English bluebells, not Spanish. Sometimes in May we would take her to Maulden in Bedfordshire where she had discovered glades of English bluebells when researching her ancestors, another great passion

of hers.

She was very fond of East Finchley, regularly buying cos lettuce, olive oil and Cyprus potatoes from Tony's Continental, and she felt Budgens had been transformed, although its rules were not followed by our dog Henry.

*...think of Henry, who at the faintest sniff
Of freedom through a not quite latched front gate
Is in at Budgen's automatic doors
To snaffle up another chocolate bar
From the impulse buys at the nearest checkout.*

She wrote a poem for Jenny Gould's funeral about Jenny and Tony fixing up 10 Lincoln Rd and making a special garden.

It finished:

*All things pass, dear Jenny. Rest in peace
I shall think of you in a Paradise Garden.*

And you too, dear Fleur.



Lunch with friends: Fleur enjoying a meal at Meze and Shish in the High Road with Sandy and John Barker

Hornet threat to our native bees: what's the latest?



Look out: Warning poster for the Asian Hornet

Local beekeeper Lucie Chaumeton warned us last January about the imminent arrival in Britain of the Asian Hornet which poses a threat to our native species. With her own bees ready for winter, we asked her for an update on what is now being named the Yellow Legged Hornet:

The Archer: Why the new name Yellow Legged Hornet?

Lucie: As new species of hornets from Asia make incursions into Southern Europe, the more descriptive name of Yellow Legged Hornet (YLH) will prove invaluable if other species cross the Channel.

How many hornets were found and where?

With 68 credible UK sightings and 23 nests destroyed, mostly in Kent and Sussex, last year's hotspots, the nearest sighting to us was in Croydon. These numbers are almost 70% below 2023. The wet spring kept all species of wasps back, but government and community action also made a positive impact.

What action was taken?

In 2024, systematic spring

trapping of queens was organised around the sites of 2023 nest destructions, involving both communities and government agencies. All credible sightings were followed up and nests destroyed, thanks to continued government funding with additional 'bee inspectors' recruited to help battle the invaders. Twelve dedicated volunteers kept watch in East Finchley but, thankfully, did not catch any Yellow Legged Hornets.

What next?

I am pleased that the very effective National Bee Unit's 'eradication' mandate continues to be funded. This is particularly important, given that one nest destroyed this year was the genetic offspring of a nest destroyed in Rye, East Sussex, in 2023, the first recorded home-grown Yellow Asian Hornet. Following this year's Croydon sighting, the unit is asking everyone to look out for YLH, and for their nests as the trees drop their leaves. YLH can fly until the frosts arrive.



Beekeeper: Lucie Chaumeton

RICKY SAVAGE... THE VOICE OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

Midas touch

It's January and the papers are packed with the lists of all those artists who didn't make it through to the end of last year. 2024 was not a bumper year, not like 2016 that claimed David Bowie, Prince and George Michael, but sadly Quincy Jones and Steve Harley did go off to find out if there is life after Later with Jools Holland. In the land of thespians Maggie Smith had her last curtain call and won't be around for another series of Downton Abbey.

But one celebrity death that sticks in my memory, and I'm not too sure why it should be, is Liam Payne's. I mean, I didn't even like One Direction, but then I wasn't a teenager when they were around. Ever since rock'n'roll was invented there were kids happy to change their name in search of fame and to find that Midas touch. Some made it, but others must have wished that they'd never got what they wished for.

Back in the 1950s, pop music manager Larry Parnes had a roster of pretty boys who he gave new names and marketed to teenage girls. Who, apart from his family, remembers Vince Eager today? OK, sometimes it worked and persuading young Harry Webb to change his name has given the lad over 65 years of fame, even if only true fans know that there was a time before he was Cliff Richard. But the ones who always stood the best chance of surviving were the bands, the gang who got together, made music, made records people bought and mostly did it their way. You know, bands like Oasis, The Who, and The Rolling Stones. They lasted whereas the manufactured pop stars had their moment and then got forgotten because they were just product.

One Direction were manufactured for a teen market, just like Take That, Boyzone and today's entire K-pop industry. They were never meant to last for ever, only for long enough to break another generation of teenagers' hearts. And then what? The luckiest ones, like Harry Styles or Robbie Williams get another chance. The rest are left standing next to a deserted motorway trying to hitch a ride, but not realising that the circus has left town. I guess Liam Payne was one of them and, like so many others who dreamed that dream, they never read the small print.

Back in the early 1970s Ian Hunter got it right when he wrote that rock'n'roll is a loser's game; it takes control and you can't explain the reason for the sights or for the sounds. But the grease paint will still stick to your face and nothing can erase that rock'n'roll dreaming from your mind.

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Relax into the long stretch of winter

By Sunnah Rose

The festive days are gone, the days are short, cold and dark and we are heading into what some might think of as the 'January blues'.

It is common to feel low at this time of year and there can be a lot of pressure on us to set new goals, start something new, get on that diet, change!

Here are some simple tips to support and keep you feeling positive over this time.

1. Accept that it might feel

a bit tough and allow yourself to be okay feeling that.

2. Take rest when you need it. The lead-up to the holidays is very busy, so use this time to help reset your brains and body.

3. Explore your creative side; start that knitting project, cook some healthy food, read a book.

4. Do some exercise, join a new class, go for a swim or get on your mat and do some breath work.

5. Money may be tight but there are still plenty of free

things you can do: walks in the woods, getting together with friends and loved ones, board games....

6. Get outside and find something that you find beautiful about this time of year.

Remember that we have already had the shortest day of the year so things are only going to get brighter. And finally, a little mindful movement for you to add to your daily lives

1. Sit or stand with your spine nice and long, arms by your side.

2. Notice the rhythm of your breath.

3. Inhale and sweep your arms up to either side of your head and lift your gaze to the space between them.

4. Exhale and sweep your arms down and lower your head to its natural placement.

5. Repeat three to five times.

This will encourage your breath to draw deeper into your lungs, help open your chest & heart centre and will assist you in being present in the here and now. Find out more at <https://stretchingpeople.co.uk/>



Stretch to the light: Yoga for winter days

Take on a literary classic

Ulysses by James Joyce has a reputation of being one of the most challenging novels ever written... but here in East Finchley there is an expert reading group on hand to help.

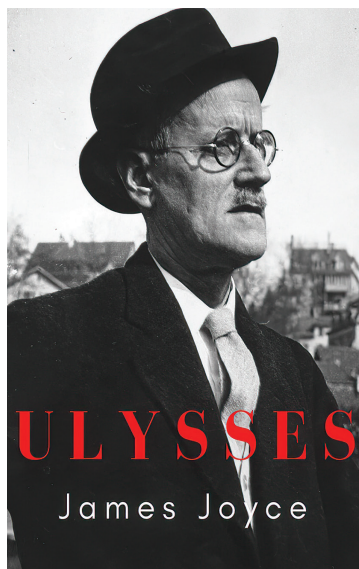
Local resident Russell Raphael created North London *Ulysses* in 2019, since when he has been publicly reading *Ulysses* in pubs around the area and guiding eager readers through.

He loves reading it out loud to an audience. He enjoys the noise it makes, the accents, the commotion, the shock at its naughty bits, the hilarity of its funny bits and the pin-dropping silence at its tender parts.

It takes 50 to 60 weekly readings to finish and then he starts again with another group of eager listeners who invariably add a new twist to his own understanding.

The current group is the third full cycle, plus during lockdown Russell delivered a series of 22 online lectures on the novel. The fourth full reading will start on 13 January at 8pm and is likely to be at The Clissold Arms, 105 Fortis Green N2. It will then be each Monday evening throughout the year, finishing in early December 2025.

This year, the live readings will be complemented with weekly online videos so readers can keep up even if they can't get to the pub (either sometimes



Classic: James Joyce's *Ulysses*

or at all) and they will still get to hear some of the reading plus commentary and analysis.

Russell is the author of two *Ulysses*-related books. *An Understanding of Ulysses* and *The*

Fine Trousers of Almidano Artifoni. If interested in joining the next reading, please email russell@northlondonulysses.org.

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Original works: The Fresh Art Fair is coming to Alexandra Palace

Ally Pally gets taken over by art

An art fair offering visitors the chance to buy original works priced from £50 to £30,000 is coming to Alexandra Palace later this month, showing 7,500 pieces by 750 artists.

Fresh: Art Fair will be providing a platform for many of north London's galleries and artists. Amongst the exhibiting galleries will be Galleri Aurelia, Highgate Contemporary Art, Fine Art Consultancy, C-A-K-E Art, North London Printmakers and Pap Art.

The Hampstead School of Art, the oldest, non-profit, contemporary art-making and learning centre in north London,

will be running free 'making clay heads workshops' at the fair on the Saturday and Sunday.

Fresh: Art Fair opens at 5.30pm on Thursday 30 January with a Private View and is then open 11am to 6pm from Friday 31 January to Sunday 2 February, closing at 5pm on the Sunday. Tickets are on sale at <https://bit.ly/BookFreshTickets>

Somewhere to take the little ones

By Diana Cormack

Since becoming a grandparent, I am much more aware of activities available for babies and toddlers. Looking after little ones takes up a lot of time and energy, so how nice to find a place not too far away where they can play whilst adults can relax with a coffee.

Balloon, at 593 High Road, just past Summers Lane in North Finchley, opened last October. Aimed at children of six and under, there is a separate ball pool section for babies and toddlers adjoining a two-tier area comprising a trampoline, rollers, slides and a secret tunnel.

It is open every day of the week from 9.15am to 6pm. Booking is essential at weekends, with walk-ins for the two-hour time slots during the more flexible weekdays. Space is available for 20 children and 20 adults. Private parties can be catered for where food, drink and ice cream are provided as well as party bags containing five items. For more informa-

tion visit <https://balloon.uk>

Yesim Muyan, who runs the family business, having studied for a business degree in Turkey and a Masters here, told *The Archer* that there are no parking restrictions in the streets nearby. Plus she offers a Mediterranean-inspired menu offering a good choice of food and drink for all ages.



Indoor play: The new soft play centre on the High Road in North Finchley

Did you know?

The Archer is printed each month on paper made from 100% recycled fibre, mostly retrieved from old newspapers collected by local authorities around the country. It is made here in the UK in King's Lynn in Norfolk, some 50km from our printers Sharman and Co in Peterborough.



Letters

Rethink bus lane

Dear Editor,

Roger Ford's letter in the December edition of *The Archer* is correct in pointing out the bad consequences of the bus and cycle lane leading north from East Finchley Tube station. Barnet Council appears indifferent to the problem, although it has been pointed out to them since the scheme started nearly two years ago. Their only response was to change some of the plan north of the Fortis Green traffic lights but do nothing for the problems closer to the station. I collect a newspaper each morning, and so I see the queues that regularly develop which sometimes even reach back to the Archway Road. It is very rarely that I see more than one cyclist using the lane. Surely it is time to scrap the whole scheme.

Barry H White,
Fordington Road, N6.



Red lights: Traffic tails back alongside the bus and cycle lane. Photo Barry H White

Leisure park homes

Dear Editor,

You would think that the 2,303 households forced to live in grim temporary housing because Barnet Council has nowhere else to put them would have got a mention somewhere in the consultation material from developers Regal about the transformation of the Great North Leisure Park into a development of 1,500 new homes (*The Archer*, November 2024). After all, isn't building new housing about meeting housing needs?

Yes, Regal does plan to make some of the homes 'affordable' but that doesn't mean they will be. All it means is that rents or purchase prices will be no more than 80% of local commercial rents/costs, so still completely out of reach for most people.

But there is no law stating that some, or even many, of the new homes can't be social rents, which are set at no more than 50% of commercial rents.

I don't know what complicated funding arrangements are needed

to make social housing part of the new development, but it must be do-able. Regal is not a registered social housing provider, but Barnet Council is. And Barnet owns the land. And they are responsible for giving or not giving Regal permission to build.

It can't make economic sense to deny access to the new homes in the leisure park to the people who need them the most, especially as the temporary homes Barnet's homeless families are living in must be costing the council, and us, a small fortune. Or does it?

Rani Dickson,
Address supplied.

Fallen tree was stressed

Dear Editor,

I have just seen in *The Archer* about the fallen tree in Cherry Tree Wood (*The Archer*, December 2024). The cause will almost certainly be the stress caused to it, and many of our local trees, by the excessive footfall, which is always worse on clay, which compacts so that the roots receive minimal oxygen and dissolved minerals.

Then as the hornbeams are overstood coppice, the topknot of foliage compared to the weight of etiolated trunk is struggling to keep the living wood in good health, as the proportion of heavy non-living heartwood rises. These stresses are compounded by our increasingly 'unusual' weather patterns.

Recoppicing is one solution. At Kew Gardens, since the storm of 1987, arboricultural practices have changed drastically. Airspades are used to create spaces around the roots, so oxygen is able to penetrate the clay to reach the roothair cells. Fungal mycelia and compost surround each tree.

Obviously such practices are limited in a local park like Cherry Tree Wood, but maybe soil disturbance around trees and the addition of mycorrhiza would be possible.

Linda Dolata,
Leopold Road, N2.

Make this the year you keep your resolutions

Having New Year's resolutions is all very well but avoiding anxiety and keeping the confidence to carry them through is another thing. Here, East Finchley-based cognitive therapist Lucas Bouvier offers some tips for success.

Where does confidence come from? Often, we tell ourselves, I want to feel confident enough to take this step. However, this belief about confidence can be misleading. Confidence doesn't magically appear beforehand; it grows after you've done something. It's a result of action, not a prerequisite for it.

As we step into 2025, many of us have goals or resolutions in mind. You might feel unsure about pursuing them because you don't feel confident yet. This is perfectly normal.

Confidence will develop as you engage with your goals.

Until then, focus on other emotions like curiosity about the pleasures this activity might bring or the excitement of overcoming its

inevitable challenges.

Anxiety might be the issue

If you still feel unable to act, anxiety could be the root cause. In this case, the issue isn't about confidence but rather managing feelings of worry or apprehension. Here's a practical way to address anxiety:

1. Focus on the feeling:

Notice where the anxiety manifests in your body, perhaps at tightness in the chest or shoulders.

2. Stay present:

Direct your attention solely to the sensation of anxiety itself, not the source of it, for example a new activity like starting tennis.

3. Observe its nature:

As you focus, you'll realise anxiety is temporary. It's a sensation that comes and goes, not an intrinsic part of who you are.

Try this now. Bring to mind something that usually causes



Confidence: Lucas Bouvier

you anxiety, and focus on the physical sensations rather than the activity itself. This practice can help diminish the power anxiety holds over you, allowing you to take action.

Armed with this new perspective, you can pursue your resolutions with courage, knowing confidence will come with experience. And if anxiety persists, working with a qualified therapist can help you overcome deeper obstacles.

Learn more at LucasBouvier.com, or contact him at Lucas@LucasBouvier.com or 07884 369560.

Park meeting

Everyone has a chance to hear about plans for the year ahead when the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood hold their AGM at 7.30pm on Thursday 23 January, at the Monkey Puzzle Day Nursery, Park House, High Road, N2.

There will be a major update on the feasibility study and its proposed solutions for dealing with flooding in the wood, along with information on all the activities of the Friends group, including how to get involved and events for the year ahead. If you require further information in advance or would like to attend, email the Friends at friendsofctw@gmail.com



Helping hands: Volunteers young and old get together to assemble food aid packages at Hammerson House

Age no barrier to being useful

When local care home Hammerson House teamed up with Food Bank Aid, the grassroots charity that supplies 32 north London food banks with a large proportion of their items, it proved that older people can still do something for their community.

"We had a brilliantly organised day," said East Finchley resident and retired GP Helen Halpern, "with residents, their families, staff and local people like myself sorting and packing tea bags. There was a real buzz and many people dropped in food bank donations too. There are lots of sedentary jobs like this to be done at the hub too. And Food Bank Aid always needs volunteers so why not

give it a go?"

The day of volunteering at the home in The Bishops Avenue was part of Mitzvah Day, an annual day of social action when community groups and individuals take on a project for those in need. Originally created by the Jewish Community, with Mitzvah being the biblical word for 'good deed', it has expanded to people of all faiths and none to become Britain's biggest day of social action, with 30,000 taking part.

You can register your interest in taking part in Mitzvah Day next year at mitzvahday.org.uk. Food Bank Aid volunteer information is at foodbankaid.org.uk. Hammerson House also welcomes hearing from potential volunteers. Find out more at nightingalehammerson.org



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We offer 5 weeks paid holiday per year, an occupational pension scheme and staff discount schemes after completion of the probation period. For further details and an application form visit our website at <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/barnet/about-us/work-for-us/> or email jenny.coomey@ageukbarnet.org.uk or telephone 0208 432 1418

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Review: The Fir Tree

Artsdepot, North Finchley
 By Ciara Doyle,
 aged 11

I was so lucky to be invited to see the first show of *The Fir Tree* at the Artsdepot. It's based on a story by Hans Christian Andersen, who also wrote *The Little Mermaid* and *The Ugly Duckling*, so I already knew it was going to be a good story.

As I took my seat the first thing I noticed was how interesting the set looked. There were lots of musical instruments on the stage, so it gave the audience a clue about what the play was going to be like.

The three actors came out and it was such a unique experience from the start! The character of the Fir Tree was a



Unique experience: The hard-working cast of *The Fir Tree* perform with puppets and instruments to bring their interactive and inclusive story to life

little tree with one of the actors voicing and moving it. It was so brilliant to see how they made the tree come to life.

Sound effects

I absolutely loved the sound effects; the actors crunched dry leaves and tinsel when a hare jumped on the tree and

plopped their hands in water when a stork came along. Also, the amount of instruments that were played live by the actors was amazing. They played harmonicas, violins, guitars, flutes, accordions... name an instrument and they played it!

The fact that there were only

three actors throughout the play but they played so many parts and did so many different things was really impressive.

I also absolutely loved the songs, especially the Fir Tree singing about how it wants to be big. A particularly funny part in the play was when the Fir Tree

finally got picked to play a part in 'Chrinchmas'. The actors played the characters of young children during that part of the play and they were so funny.

Overall, *The Fir Tree* was an amazing play with a really lovely message and I would definitely recommend seeing it.

How we make theatre for everyone

Here, Eva Sampson, director of *The Fir Tree*, explains her inclusive approach to the theatre experience in her *How It Ended* company.

We know that going to the theatre can sometimes feel like a stressful experience and we're passionate about making work that feels as inclusive and accessible as possible.

This show has been designed for *everyone* to enjoy, and we've approached the storytelling in the exact same way we would any production. But when setting levels particularly technically with Lighting and Sound, we're programming these sensitively with neurodiverse audiences in mind. So there are no sudden,

flashing lights or sudden loud sound effects. During the show the lights will never go completely out, and the audience can leave the auditorium at any time. We want our audiences to feel relaxed and they're free to move around the auditorium if they'd like to, and make noise! We believe all producers of family theatre should consider creating a relaxed environment for their audiences, and with only a few adjustments and considerations, we can share the magic of theatre in a safe space.



Relaxed audiences: Director Eva Sampson

Winter warmer

A reminder that the Grange Big Local team are hosting a Warm Space at the Tarling Road Community Centre, Fallows Close, N2, every week until the end of March. Free and open to all, there will be coffee and activities like arts and crafts, talks and gardening. Parents and carers are encouraged to drop in after the school run to make new friends. The sessions run from 9.30am to 12pm every Thursday morning from 9 January to 27 March. Find out more by emailing info@grangebiglocal.org

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