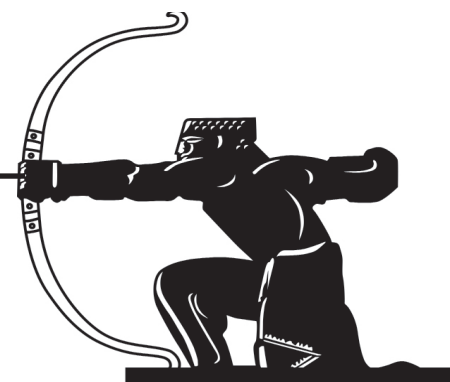




Delivered free to 10,000 homes and businesses across East Finchley
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Senseless

By Maryam Bitege and John Lawrence

Café, restaurant and business owners are trying to recover from a spate of break-ins and criminal damage along the High Road and beyond that has left them feeling dismayed at being targeted and confused about how to protect their premises.

Doner and burger restaurant Brudis, general store Amy's, café Coffee Bank, Mexican restaurant Taco Bros and Hampstead Dental Studio were among those who had their windows smashed and, in some cases, their premises rifled in the early hours.

CCTV at Taco Bros captured one perpetrator in the act. Footage shows him dressed in a grey Nike hooded top and masked with only his eyes visible. Brudis also captured footage of an intruder. It is not known if the same person, or different individuals, are responsible for the various incidents, which occurred over a period of eight days at the end of September and start of October.

Hit twice

Coffee Bank had just reopened with an enthusiastic new team when their windows were targeted not once but on two separate nights. Owners Clyde, Joli and Adel told The Archer: "It puts you in the place where you wonder what you can do. Right now, we don't know. We can't put iron bars on the window and turn the place into a jail."

Nothing was stolen but the plate glass windows were expensive to replace. The Coffee Bank team emphasised that they are trying to get their business off the ground and

don't have "deep pockets".

Over the road at Brudis, the intruder came along at 5.30am on a Saturday morning, found a heavy slab in a nearby garden and used it to smash his way in through a glass pane in the front door. With no cash left on the premises, he left with just an old phone and a few burger buns.

"It's a worry and an expense and nobody needs it," said owner Farzad Fourgh. "We've been in East Finchley for two years and it's a lovely place but this has given us sleepless nights. The police came and said they were going to do their best to catch him but since then I've not seen any officers walking by."

Ruin of business

Khilan Shah, who runs Hampstead Dental Studio in Market Place, NW11, wrote to the Metropolitan Police and Finchley and Golders Green MP Sarah



CCTV image: The perpetrator of the Taco Bros break-in was caught on film.



Criminal damage: One of the smashed windows at Coffee Bank. The café was attacked twice

Sackman to express his frustration. He said: "Like many others, I have built a family-run business from the ground up employing local people, contributing to the economy, and giving back wherever possible.

"The reality is that while businesses like mine do everything we can to strengthen and support our community, petty criminals are left free to to continue causing damage without real consequence.

The result is devastating: financial loss, emotional distress, and in some cases the complete ruin of businesses that have taken years to build."

Continues on Page 2

Nursery move

As we went to press, we learned that Monkey Puzzle Nursery will move from its current home in Park House, opposite East Finchley station, to Langley House, further up the High Road opposite Creighton Avenue.

Park House is in line for demolition if the Cherry Tree Quarter housing development goes ahead.

Up to now, it was thought nursery owner Paula Murphy had reached agreement with developers Places for Barnet to create a safe nursery space onsite during construction. Paula told us she hopes to return to the site once the development is complete but is glad that the impact of the building work on the nursery's 120 children will now be avoided.

The move will happen when the current council lease expires at the end of March 2026 although Sarah Sackman MP says she will ask if that can be extended to summer 2026. More in our next edition.

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In this issue

Dangerous dogs..... p3
Basic income..... p4
Pigeon death trapp5

Station parking.....p7
John's Not Mad p9
NEW: Ask Joy.....p11

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