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## Neighbours get together to form powerful voice

Community volunteers in one part of East Finchley have formed a new grassroots residents' association to give locals a collective voice that works with Barnet Council to solve problems, enhance quality of life for all, improve public spaces and champion the area's future.

The East End Village Residents Association (EEVRA) is starting with a few pilot streets west of the Northern line tracks between Church Lane, Hamilton Road and East End Road but has ambitions to represent a much wider area by the end of 2026.

Joint chairs Nikki Austin and James Masters said the aim of the association was to turn "chat into change" and neighbourliness into real opportunity.

"There's no shortage of brilliant clubs, projects and events in East Finchley, yet there hasn't been an active, formal residents' association for quite some time. EEVRA aims to fill a gap," they said. "What began as a few small WhatsApp groups during lockdown has grown into a strong neighbourhood network, keeping residents informed, connected, and ready to help each another."

They said the network proved its worth last year when plans were put forward by Places for Barnet, a partnership between Barnet Council and developers the Kuropatwa Group, to build private housing on a green space and car park in Manor Park Road, in the heart of the EEVRA area.

Nikki and James said: "The community responded. Questions were raised about how public land, used daily by locals, could be earmarked for development, particularly after planning inspectors had already judged the site's allocation 'not justified' and removed it from the Local Plan.

"A parallel challenge was supported at Park House on the High Road, the site of Monkey Puzzle Nursery. Out of this moment came a consensus: the

neighbourhood needed a formal body to coordinate, communicate and ensure its voice was heard. Creating something more formal felt like the natural next step." As we reported last month, Places for Barnet have put both the Manor Park Road and Park House developments on hold in response to the level of local feedback they received to their plans.

EEVRA's first project in 2026 is to form Friends of Manor Park, a community effort to care for the open space while the Council decides its future. A detailed 60-page proposal is already with councillors and officers, with a meeting due imminently.

The association is finalising its constitution, forming a committee, and preparing for an inaugural meeting this month,



Eye-catching: The EEVRA logo



The small park area in Manor Park Road that was earmarked for a housing development



Self-help: EEVRA neighbours form a tidy-up team to clear their local streets of rubbish

where residents will be invited to join, share ideas and vote in the committee. Residents can get in touch at: [hello@eevra.org.uk](mailto:hello@eevra.org.uk)

The group has taken its name from the East End Village area marked on historical maps from the 1800s after Finchley Common was divided into parcels including: East End, Hog Market (now Market Place) and Dirt House (now Cherry Tree Wood). The extension of the Northern line in 1939 separated East End from what most call the Old Village. Their mascot is Eevie the Elephant, inspired by the famous Lord George Sanger's circus, which wintered in the area at Park Farm. In its heyday in the late 1890s and early 1900s, giraffes, bears, big cats and elephants could be seen parading up East End Road.

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