



Farewell to Arjun and Claire as East Finchley councillors

By Gail Norcliffe

Recently retired East Finchley councillor Arjun Mitra is not putting his feet up just yet. Apart from giving a detailed handover to his successors, Arjun's advice is being sought by new councillors across London on the matters arriving in their in-boxes.

First elected in 2012 aged 25, Arjun served as our councillor for 14 years. His first years were spent in opposition and he developed expertise in scrutinising contracts. When Barnet became a Labour Council, Arjun acquired new responsibilities and took forward various initiatives in East Finchley. He stresses that his "main focus was on things people could see".

The Archer has previously covered Arjun's obsession with pothole repairs, and resurfacing of the High Road and East End Road happened partly thanks to his campaigning.

Better road safety was another personal passion and Arjun is proud of the crossing constructed near the Market Place junction with East End Road. Arjun especially valued working with community groups on projects including improving outdoor spaces and gardens, such as the Leopold Road Community Garden and planters on Church Lane. He also helped the Phoenix Cinema's fundraising for its redevelopment project. A well-known figure in East Finchley, Arjun's colleagues complained that walking with him along the High Road could be a nightmare because he was frequently asked by passers-by for help with problems and casework. As a lifelong council tenant himself, Arjun was particularly keen to champion the northern end of East Finchley and to ensure all constituents had a voice.

In stepping down as councillor,



Years of service: Former councillors Claire Farrier and Arjun Mitra. Photo Steve Carr

Arjun is left with positive feelings about his period in office, expressing "A huge thank you to all constituents. It's been a wonderful honour to represent the place I've lived my whole life and I've loved serving the borough. I have worked with lots of fantastic people and I have so many great memories."

Also retiring is Claire Farrier, an East Finchley councillor since 2018, who previously represented Burnt Oak. Long-standing East Finchley councillor Alison Moore paid tribute to Claire's fantastic contribution, ranging from planning and licensing to being an Oak Lodge School governor, and efforts to kickstart the Market Place playground development.

Joining Alison to replace Arjun and Claire as our other two councillors, are newcomers Ajith Menon and Katy Minshall. We hope to talk to Ajith and Katy and introduce them in more detail in future editions.

Music for humanity's place beyond

Finchley Symphony Orchestra and Finchley Chamber Choir come together again with conductor Christopher Stark for the final concert of their seasons this month. The programme explores humanity's place in the world – its beauty, its uncertainty and its longing for something beyond.

Dvorak's Symphony No.8, Brahms' Song of Destiny, sometimes called the 'Little Requiem', two short pieces by Mendelssohn for unaccompanied choir, and Vaughan Williams' first major choral work make up the programme.

All of this music can be enjoyed at Trinity Church, Nether Street, North Finchley, on Saturday 4 July starting at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £18, £15 for under 26 and over 60, £2 for under 18. You can save £1 per ticket by booking online in advance at www.finchleysymphony.org



Future foyer: Middlesex University design students display some of their ideas for revamping the box office area of the Phoenix Cinema. Photo Mike Coles

Phoenix design competition has show of early concepts

By Ruth Anders

Following the preview report in our last edition, on Tuesday 9 June design students from Middlesex University gathered in the Phoenix Cinema main auditorium once again to present their proposals for a redesign of the venue's foyer.

Members of four separate groups had collaborated to develop very different concepts which they explained to an audience of Phoenix staff, Trustees and representatives from East Finchley Town Team.

The cinema's Executive Director Kathryn Smith introduced the event, announcing that 'Phoenix Rising' would be

the name of the new fundraising campaign that is aiming to make the redesign project a reality.

Images from the four concepts will be displayed in the Phoenix foyer and the winning ideas will be revealed as soon as possible.

Phoenix Trustee Steve Smith told The Archer: "We are thrilled that this project is starting to bear fruit and it's

wonderful to see the results of these students' hard work and creativity. Now we have some concrete visual ideas to inform our refurbishment mission and all we need to do is raise the money to get the work done."

Further updates will be reported in The Archer in due course. For more information visit www.phoenixcinema.co.uk

Seating and trees planned for town square

By Kate Brown, East Finchley Town Team



The new town square hosted its first community event in May. Photo Mike Coles

As reported in last month's Archer, East Finchley Town Team were pleased that an impressive number of people turned out for an event in the new town square performance space outside Budgens and Amy's on the High Road. However, the spell of extremely hot weather in May underlined the need to press on with other elements that local people want to see in the space.

Town Team are pleased to report that sponsorship for two more street trees has been submitted via the Trees for Streets scheme with a request to the tree officer for two trees which would be suitable for offering some shade

and reducing the 'heat island' effect in built-up areas. These trees would be part of the autumn-winter tree planting in N2. Plans are also underway to return the temporary wide bench which featured on the

High Road during the London Festival of Architecture event two years ago. Its permanent position is now at Martins School further up the High Road, but it could return to the main shopping area for the summer.

Funding is being sought to have more permanent seating in the square as part of the initiative to work with the council. The petition to Barnet Council calling on it to work with the community to deliver a greener, better town square can still be signed at <https://c.org/2QbctgnDPd>

The next planned event for the town square will be a Finchley Pollinators stall on Saturday 4th July from 11am until 3pm which will provide all sorts of advice and tips about improving local biodiversity. Meanwhile Town Team are planning August Bank holiday entertainment in the square for Saturday 29 August.