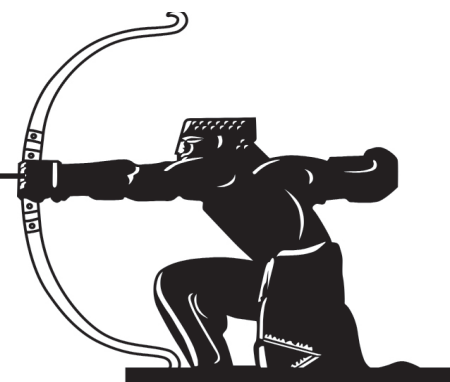




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Changes on way for supermarket

By Lynn Winton

Customers will soon start to notice major changes at Budgens, East Finchley's largest independent supermarket, which is currently reviewing its main supplier. The wholesale arms of Waitrose, Marks and Spencer and Morrisons are all being considered to supply products.

The East Finchley store is looking to break away from Budgens' main wholesale partner Booker, acquired by Tesco in 2018. Booker's prices have been rising and local management say they need to stay competitive with the High Road's chain supermarkets Tesco and Sainsbury's.

Budgens stores are run by independent retailers under a franchise arrangement, where the trading agreement is that Booker are the main suppliers. If this ceases to be the case in East Finchley there will be a name change away from Budgens, but to what is still an unknown as it depends on the current negotiations with the potential new big-name suppliers. However, supermarket insiders think that whilst

goods from Waitrose, Marks and Spencer or Morrisons might be stocked, it is unlikely that any of these will be the sole name above the store.

The Archer has been told that the store will continue to be owned by franchisee Paul Gardner and all the staff jobs are secure. Also secure is the very popular independent Forelegs, the sole East Finchley butcher, who rent a section inside the store. The ice cream counter and the falafel kiosk will also stay.

Any changes to the main supplier will also not affect the more upmarket quality items, such as the wines, beers, in-store bakery, continental cheeses and artisan charcuterie. Long-serving manager Ripon Shaha especially wanted to allay any fears about job

security. He said: "We are unique on The High Road when it comes to job retention and many staff have literally grown up with us. One valued member of staff has been with us for 26 years. We rarely lose a member of staff for any reason other than they move away or have a change of circumstances. And they recognise 80% of our customers, which is very special."

East Finchley Town Team member Peter Hale said his group enjoyed a long-standing partnership with the current Budgens store, such as through its support for the annual Christmas carol and tree-lighting ceremony. Additionally, Ripon has just agreed to donate all the new planting for the raised beds on the pavement outside the shop entrance.



Staying put: Some of the Budgens staff team outside the High Road store, which is looking for new suppliers. Photo Mike Coles

Tell us the news

Have you got a news story or an interesting photo for us? Our readers are our eyes and ears, and we are always pleased to hear what is going on in East Finchley.

Tips, ideas and stories, large or small, are very welcome. Please email news@the-archer.co.uk or leave a message on our free phone line 0800 612 0748. Thank you

Cloudwatching

The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood are inviting local families and residents to spend an afternoon looking up at the skies on Sunday 6 September, with two free events celebrating clouds and the natural world.

From 2-3pm, their monthly Children's Nature Club will meet at the Nature Circle, next to the playground. This month's theme is clouds, with simple activities for children aged eight and under.

Then, from 3.30-4.30pm, it's the Cherry Tree Wood Cloud Appreciation Hour. Bring something comfortable to lie on for an hour simply watching the clouds drift by. No need to book.

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