



Jake chalks one up

The path in front of the kiosk in Cherry Tree Wood has been the site of many chalk drawings. Archer contributor Jake Eiseman-Renyard went one better by creating an elaborate chalk mural on the side of the kiosk itself, capturing all the icons of East Finchley. The verdict from kiosk owner Sally-Anne? "I love it!"

Art show for anyone online

By Jane Dorner

A number of East Finchley Open artists are exhibiting art photography online for the first time, throughout May, June and July at NoSpaceNeeded.weebly.com.

What's different about this exhibition is that although it is time-limited, just like a gallery show, the group will enjoy freedom from physical restraints: walls, hanging paraphernalia, painting plinths, invigilating, promo posters and so on.

The 'no space needed' theme is at the heart of the creative process as well, starting with the disposable film cameras that every participating artist received. All produced a set of images that were converted into digital files and then given to a different artist. The idea was to treat fellow artists' work as one's inspiration, to manipulate, cut and paste, colourise or distort at will. The online exhibition includes comment boxes for visitors to post their remarks.

Pasture comes up roses

Long Lane Pasture has been granted almost £10,000 from the Big Lottery's Awards for All. The money will enable volunteers to complete most of the capital works outlined in their management plan for the nature site.

These include erecting a noticeboard and a panoramic sign interpreting the extensive view over Finchley at the new pedestrian gate by the railway bridge; removing an area polluted by dumped oil which is seeping down a main path and killing the grass; installing visitor counters; and buying more wildlife plants for the butterfly border and embankment.

The pasture, opposite the Fire Station, is open to visitors every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday from 10am to 5pm. The next event there is a Wildflower Day on 28 May when the pasture will be looking at its best.

Safeguard your tools

Small businesses and householders are being warned to take extra care of their tools after garden designer Giovanni Romagnoli had his stolen from the back of his van. Giovanni's van was parked at the corner of Fortis Green and Springcroft Avenue when it was broken into at around 2.30pm on Friday 8 April. The thieves made off with his power tools.

Giovanni said: "Everyone should make sure their equipment is secure at all times and stay vigilant. Whilst working in East Finchley I often see a panelled white Ford Transit driving around with two or three people inside looking around and always ask myself what the intentions of those individuals are."

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Allotment holders challenge rent increases

Allotment holders have started a legal challenge to rent increases agreed by Barnet Council. These will raise the rent for a standard 250sqm plot from £59 per year to £170 for Barnet residents and £340 for non-residents. Allotment holders had lobbied hard against the increases and submitted a petition, but the council backed the rises in February.

Allotment holders say the increases are unjustified. The legal challenge will be based on their claims that the council failed to consult them about the proposed increases; presented no evidence that they were needed, for example to cover costs; did not base the increases on proper criteria or legislation, and failed to justify why allotment holders living outside the borough should pay twice as much as Barnet residents.

Pressure to self-manage

The council has said that the increases will only apply to allotment sites that stay in council management after April 2012. Allotment holders would have the opportunity to take over the management of their sites before then and could set their own rents.

Allotment holders believe, however, that the huge rent increases (far greater than for other recreational facilities in Barnet) are designed to induce allotment holders to go for self-management regardless of the terms of any deal yet to be put forward by the council.

Commenting on the challenge, Richard King, the secretary of the Barnet Federation of Allotment and Horticultural

Societies, said: "We told the council from the start that these rent increases were unjustified and unjustifiable but they took no notice. To increase allotment rents by such huge amounts when other charges for recreational facilities are going up only in line with inflation is completely unreasonable. And to do it in this way, to try and make us agree to manage our own sites, is unfair. Discussions about this have hardly started and there aren't even proposals on the table yet."

Vacant allotments

Do you want to grow your own fruit and vegetables? Does digging in the fresh air and harvesting your own food appeal to you?

Vacant plots are now available at Vale Farm allotments at the end of Tarling Road, East Finchley. Both full and half-size allotments can be rented.

Anyone interested should contact the secretary at lilyehr@rocketmail.com. Priority will be given to local and Barnet residents.

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