



It's a yes for free school plan

East Finchley is to get a new secondary school after campaign group Local Schools for Local Children got the go-ahead for its proposal for a free school offering non-denominational secondary education for girls and boys in N2, N3 and NW11.

The Archer Academy will have an initial intake of five forms when it opens in 2013. Parents of children entering Year 6 are being invited to include it in their choice of secondary schools from this autumn.

The government approval comes at the end of an 18-month campaign, during which the group discovered that Barnet Council's ability to address the problem of secondary school choice was limited to expanding existing schools. The group then decided to apply for funding to open a brand new school under the government's Free Schools initiative.

Community support

Group spokesperson Avis Johns said: "I'm delighted at the news from the DfE. It's a fantastic result, which is the culmination of a great deal of hard work, not just from the core members of our team but also from the wider community who have supported us all the way.

"When we set out on this process we knew there was a real need for a new school for our area, but we were nonetheless surprised by the strength of feeling amongst local parents,

of whom over 1,000 have said they would be happy to send their children to The Archer Academy. We're so pleased to have good news for them today."

East Finchley councillor Alison Moore also reacted positively to the news, saying there had been a longstanding and increasingly acute shortage of secondary school places in and around N2.

Location question

The group have already started working on more detailed plans for the pre-opening phase, including arrangements for confirming premises, appointing a headteacher and structuring the governing body. The prime question of where the new school will be located is still subject to negotiation.

Avis added: "There were certain issues like premises that we couldn't address formally until we had been approved. Now we've got the thumbs up, we'll crack on with our plans and will keep our supporters posted every step of the way."

To find out more, or register for email updates, send an email to info@thearcheracademy.org, uk or visit www.thearcheracademy.org.uk

Close shave for hairdresser Kimberley

By John Lawrence

Kimberley Strelley had a miraculous escape when a car crashed into her hair salon in Fortis Green just as she was shutting up shop. She was pulling down the shutters at Kimberley's at 8.50pm when a car ploughed into the front of the premises, missing her by inches.

Six police cars, four fire engines and two ambulances turned up to the scene of the accident on Thursday 12 July. Kimberley was trapped behind the damaged shop front for 45 minutes and the emergency services had to take great care in freeing her in case the front wall collapsed completely.

"I was about to pull the shutter down when a car just came across the road," she recalled. "It hit the shop about a foot away from where I was and destroyed the door of the woman who lives upstairs. I didn't know what was happening. The noise was like a bomb."

Amazingly, Kimberley was totally uninjured and was back in business by Saturday morning. "I went into shock but I wasn't hurt," said Kimberley. "We were just lucky no one was walking past at the time. We patched up what we could and I had customers back in as soon as possible afterwards to keep their appointments. I'll stay open whatever happens."

Police are investigating the cause of the crash. It is believed the driver, who was unharmed, was picking up a relative from a wedding party at the Clissold Arms opposite the salon.



Kimberley Strelley was standing behind her shop door when a car struck just inches away. Photo by John Lawrence.

Kimberley has run her hair salon for two years. At the time of going to press, she was hoping insurance will cover the cost of rebuilding her shop front.



TreeHouse School at Sally's café. Jake Chodosh gaining work experience. Photo by Diana Cormack.

Hands-on experience for autistic pupils

Sally-Anne Wigfield, who runs the kiosk in Cherry Tree Wood, told The Archer that she is thrilled to be able to provide "real" work experience for pupils from the Tree-House School in Woodside Avenue, as first reported in the June ARCHER. Here Jake Chodosh is pictured learning to prepare tea for a customer.

She said: "It certainly gives you a feel-good factor being able to offer such an opportunity for autistic pupils in a world where such opportunities are virtually non-existent. The fact that the kiosk is just a stone's throw away from the school is what makes this learning programme possible, so I urge other local businesses to consider doing the same. The potential outcomes couldn't be more positive."

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