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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Flooded-out festival will be back

By John Lawrence

It was the festival that never happened but organisers of the 2012 East Finchley Community Festival have vowed that the event will be back next year, bigger and better than ever.

Despite months of hard work and preparation, the organising committee had no choice but to call off this year's festival for the first time in more than 30 years, after weeks of rain left Cherry Tree Wood more like a pond than a park.

They took the tough decision ten days before the event was due to take place on Sunday 24 June. At that point, the weather forecast promised some drier days but also more rain and therefore gave little prospect of the field drying out in time.

Reaction from disappointed festival-goers came swiftly on Facebook and Twitter. "That is the saddest thing I've heard all year," said Emily George. "Can't remember when it was last (ever?) cancelled, and it's a real shame as it's the highlight of the community year for us. Good call by the organisers, though: too much like Glastonbury, mud-wise," commented the East Finchley Open artists group. "We didn't realise how much we'd miss it until it was

gone. Roll on next year!" wrote Clare Goodman.

We'll be back

Event organiser Colin Rogers said the festival committee wanted to thank all the volunteers, advertisers, stall holders, entertainers and equipment suppliers for their support and hard work in 2012.

"We did not want to cancel this year's event at all, but the field conditions were impossible," he said. "We felt it was only fair to address the problem urgently, so everyone involved would know about its cancellation in a timely way.

"Trying to have the festival on a later date has proved to be impossible this summer, as most of our equipment suppliers have other commitments. Disappointed as we are at the cancellation, the committee is already planning next year's event for Sunday 23 June, 2013. We fully intend that next year's festival will be better than ever!"

Wet, wet, wet

Cherry Tree Wood is low-lying and notoriously prone to waterlogging; in fact, watercress was grown there in the past for this reason. But rarely has it been so flooded in mid-June.

Festival committee member Cathy Duvergier took a photo of her dog swimming in a massive puddle in the middle of the field on Thursday 14 June and three ducks were spotted in the same stretch of water the day before. Sally-Anne Wigfield at the kiosk café said that it was the first time she'd seen ducks in the five years she had been in the park.

Summer's here

"The English summer has set in with its usual severity."
 - Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 1772 - 1834.

Balloon protest at Old Barn

By Janet Maitland

Crowds of local people attended a protest meeting outside the Old Barn on Tarling Road on 24 May. They tied balloons to the fence to register their anger at the loss of their community centre. The protesters included a group of young people who used to attend the Monday Youth Club at the centre, run by Maureen Clemetson.

The centre used to be a busy hub of community events and activities. For 25 years it helped to keep children off the streets and provide support for local parents with its pioneering out-of-school services. But since a group of new trustees led by Reverend Geoffrey Muhoro took over the Old Barn nearly two years ago, all services have been discontinued, forced to move out, or closed down because of health and safety concerns.

applied to become members of the Old Barn so that they could put pressure on the management to run the services the community needs, but the applications were not accepted.

The day of the protest was originally the date for a formal meeting between the community and the trustees. It was instigated by Barnet Council and Community Barnet, who wanted to give the management of the centre another chance to demonstrate their commit-

ment to involving the local community in the centre. The Reverend agreed to the meeting, but cancelled it a few days before. Instead he organised an Open Day at the Old Barn on 21 May.

The Old Barn Action Group has been campaigning to restore the community centre to local people for the last 18 months. "Only a handful of people went to the Open Day," said Will Hudson from the action group. "The extent of the management's promotion was a couple of small signs on the perimeter fence."

If you want to help the action group, contact Will Hudson on 07870 647 284 or endofstrife@hotmail.co.uk

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