



## Sport returns to Stanley Field

By John Lawrence

Sport is alive and well again on Stanley Field 15 years after the open space was last used regularly by the community. Football, rugby, basketball, archery and martial arts are all thriving in the new facilities belonging to the Archer Academy.

The return of community sport is a fulfilment of the condition made in 2013 as part of the arrangements for the academy to build on the field off Stanley Road. Staff and pupils moved onto the site in September and the school's outdoor and indoor spaces were immediately made available for public hire on evenings and weekends.

### 21 groups and rising

There is a floodlit football and rugby pitch with all-weather artificial grass, an enclosed multi-use hard surface for basketball and tennis, an indoor sports hall with a climbing wall, an all-purpose hall with enough space for performing arts, a studio suitable for dance or martial arts, and classrooms with space for meetings or meditation.

So far, 21 groups regularly use the facilities. The Barnet Bulldogs basketball team plays there, a karate club is starting up this month, and weekend mornings are popular for football amongst organised clubs and groups of friends.

### Schools Plus

Anyone can book a pitch or hall for use on weekdays from 6-9pm (outdoors) and 6-10pm (indoors). On Saturdays and Sundays, facilities are bookable for a maximum of six hours per day. Prices start from £30 an hour and all bookings are handled by Schools Plus, which manages 40 school sites across

the country.

Venue manager Stan Karol Stanczak said: "Besides managing the booking process, we are on site to make sure the facilities are ready for people to use. Then at the end of every evening and weekend we put everything back so that the academy finds the halls and classrooms just as they left them."

### Other users

The Archer Academy's operations director Jane Gibson noted that it's not just super-fit people in sports kit who are using the school's facilities.

"A community choir uses our piano every week and spaces are beginning to be booked for children's parties," she said. "Holiday clubs for primary age children are another area we are keen to explore as there are so many working parents living locally."

"We were very fortunate to be given the opportunity to move on to Stanley Field. We always understood that it was previously a community site and our planning all the way along has been to keep it that way."

Bookings can be made online at [www.schoolsplus.co.uk/archeracademy](http://www.schoolsplus.co.uk/archeracademy). All users are encouraged to travel by public transport or on foot as there are only a limited number of parking spaces available off Eagans Close.

## Champion athlete inspires at school opening

By Charlotte, Iris and Niamh, Year 7

There was a very exciting event in our school on 5 October when the Archer Academy's Stanley Road campus was officially opened by Paralympic champion and member of the House of Lords Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson.

Many students had the pleasure of meeting Tanni and seeing her open the school officially. Our own writer Iris says: "I think I was very lucky to meet Tanni and see her open the school. My form was one of three that got to see her actually cut the rope. It felt amazing to be one of the people who got to experience this."

### Sport, politics and passion

As Archer student writers, we asked Tanni a very challenging question: "Which is more important, politics or sport?" Tanni thought about it for a minute before answering. "I think you need to learn both. You need politics to learn sport because you need to know what you can and cannot do and you need sport to keep you active and awake for politics, so I think they are both equally important."

Tanni's reply as to how her school compared with The Archer Academy was: "My school also had good facilities and passionate staff. The passion of the staff and the students here is amazing."

After answering questions, Tanni addressed the whole school and told us many interesting stories about her life and childhood. We learnt that she wanted to be a lawyer and even though she started working in politics later on, she had been interested in it from an early age.

Tanni's message from the stage to all the students gathered in our new sports hall was: "Don't



Tanni Grey-Thompson opens the Archer Academy Stanley Road Campus. Photo Mike Coles

be afraid to try!" She was very firm and passionate about achieving goals and dreams. The students' enthusiasm for Tanni was expressed in a huge round of applause. Overall, not only did she give us facts, she also gave inspiration.

## Sing-along for singles

Singing in London is launching a new monthly event for singles and the unattached to share the singing experience. The Sing-Along for Singles will put the emphasis on fun as well as reaching a high standard of singing in a short time. Familiar songs will be easy to sing and the sessions will be a chance to make new friends.

Starting on Wednesday 25 November, then Wednesday 30 December, events will take place at the Clissold Arms, Fortis Green, N2, from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. There is also an option for an early bird dinner at 6.30pm. Book places in advance at [www.singinginlondon.com](http://www.singinginlondon.com) or on 07874 629959.

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