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Chance comes at last for darkened underpass

By John Lawrence

A £20,000 scheme to transform a dark and concealed underpass beneath the Northern line and make it safer for pedestrians is getting under way and could be completed by the summer.

The isolated walkway that dips below the train tracks to connect Trinity Road and Manor Park Road in N2 is currently badly lit, riddled with graffiti and often strewn with litter and puddles.

Hundreds of local residents and schoolchildren, particularly those heading to and from Bishop Douglass School in Hamilton Road, use it every day but many say it's an unpleasant experience and some avoid it altogether. The passage has four blind corners that add to the feeling of insecurity.

Security and lighting plans

Now the Grange Big Local project is putting in £10,000 to be joined by a further £10,000 from Barnet Council to bring in new lighting, new fencing and security mirrors.

It's also hoped that local schools will get involved to paint a giant mural artwork on the wall of one of the bordering houses to give the underpass a greater sense of being a social space with a cheerful atmosphere.

Tamper-proof mirrors would be installed at the blind corners to let pedestrians see who is approaching and solar-powered lighting could be installed to replace the inadequate lamp-posts that currently cast only pools of light.

New fencing would be

erected either side of both the long approaches from Trinity Road and Manor Park Road and new bins would be installed.

Community event

Local councillor Alison Moore said it was a great project and if it came off it could make a real difference to a forgotten corner of East Finchley.

Alison said: "I tend to use the underpass with caution but there is one lovely older lady who uses it resolutely and walks through it daily. She regularly calls me to make sure the leaves

and blocked drainage get sorted.

"There is also an outline plan to have a community engagement event in the spring for

the residents at either end. It's a bit of a forgotten corner but there's a real determination to transform it."



Unsafe passage: The underpass as it is now. Photo (above) by Lois Lawrence and (top) by Mike Coles

Greener driving

Barnet Council is trying to encourage cleaner driving by allowing more cars into its green emissions band, qualifying for free parking permits and previously only given to electric vehicles.

From April, low emissions cars which will also qualify for a free parking permit will include: Lexus GS 300h, Mazda 6.22 D, Ford Mondeo hybrid, Fiat 500 1.2 hatchback three-door and Audi A6 2L 2di.

Since January 2015, the council has run an emissions-based residents' parking permit scheme which charges motorists based on the carbon dioxide emissions their cars emit. The aim is to improve air quality.

Recital in memory of Alma Rosé

East Finchley violinist Eleanor Wilkinson and pianist Helen Crayford are staging a recital in memory of Alma Rosé, the leader of the women's orchestra in Auschwitz, who died in the concentration camp.

The concert at Burgh House in New End Square, Hampstead, on Friday 13 January at 7pm will include works by Fritz Kreisler, Kurt Roger and Erich Korngold. Tickets priced £10 (£7 concession) are available on the door and include a glass of wine and money raised will support helpmusicians.org.

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