



Why were we blocked from voting in the General Election?

Barnet Council is facing accusations of a second voting shambles after people were blocked from casting their vote in the General Election when they turned up at polling stations.

Four readers have contacted us directly and we have heard anecdotally of several others who were unable to vote. All had registered online in the weeks leading up to the election and had been told that their registration had been passed to Barnet Council.

No follow-up email

However, it seems none of them received a follow-up email asking them to verify their details by sending in proof of address, passport details and confirmation of their National Insurance number.

This follows problems at last year's Referendum on membership of the European Union, when hundreds of voters were turned away because the wrong electoral lists were sent out to several polling stations, including East Finchley's.

No verification

Maisie Avery and her husband were among those who couldn't vote on 8 June. "When I called to check why my polling card had not arrived, Barnet Electoral office confirmed that while I was registered to vote,

I was not verified," said Maisie. "It's incredibly frustrating. They didn't inform us of the verification process."

Ruth Clark and her husband Nick Keane live in The Causeway, N2. Ruth told us: "We only got our votes because I made a fuss at the last moment and sent my passport to the leader of the council, Richard Cornelius. I know others who didn't bother. The council should have been more proactive and done something to deal with everyone who was affected."

No comment

The Archer has been told that a number of students, all of them first-time voters, had missed out on being able to vote for the same reason.

A Barnet Council spokesman told *The Archer*: "We did not experience any widespread problems with electoral registrations or verification in Barnet. Those queries that were raised were investigated thoroughly and resolved where possible. As is routine in Barnet, we will carry out a review of the General Election process to evaluate

and assess how the process was conducted."

Oh, what a night!

By Zoe Walsh

If you come from a large family, you'll understand how momentous it is to get everyone celebrating in the same place at the same time. Add in a special anniversary and some big announcements and you'll guess how it felt to be at GLH's joint 34th annual staff awards and 50th anniversary celebrations.

All the GLH teams attended the glittering event to mark 50 years since first opening their doors as a family-run minicab service on East Finchley High Road. To say that they've seen a lot of changes since then would be something of an understatement considering they now provide national and international delivery operations.

At the celebration, GLH's Managing Director, Robert Scott, gave a passionate speech about the future, touching on the local company's expansion into new premises, their new systems, website and rebrand.

The GLH head office has recently moved out of its home opposite the tube station to larger premises in Bounds Green, giving the company extra capacity to continue to serve residents in East Finchley and the local area.

Arts Festival early line-up unveiled

It's never too early to mark up your diaries for the East Finchley Arts Festival! This year there is something to enjoy every day from Friday 6 October to Sunday 15 October.

Here is the programme in brief: Friday 6th, Art Exhibition; Saturday 7th, Massive Violins, Sunday 8th, Schools Concert and Robert Powell; Monday 9th, Masayuki Tayama; Tuesday 10th, London Mozart Players Chamber Ensemble; Wednesday 11th, Kosmos schools workshop and evening concert; Thursday 12th, Metropolitan Brass Band; Friday 13th, Tim Arnold; Saturday 14th, Come and Sing; Sunday 15th, Pop Up Opera.

Watch out for more details in future issues of *The Archer*.



Poem power: Adisa the Verbaliser inspires pupils at Martin Primary School.

Stories of how we all came to be here

By Andry Moustras

Martin Primary School is leading a lottery-funded community project about migration called Destination East Finchley. It explores how the people of East Finchley have to come to live and work here, and celebrates our multi-cultural community.

The project is already well under way with the setting up of an intergenerational community choir, which sang on the community stage at the East Finchley Festival last month.

In May, Martin Year 6 students also interviewed local community members and business owners about their journeys to London and the area. One local resident said: "I've lived in East Finchley since 1970. I wouldn't live anywhere else. It's very community-based." And another remarked: "The people are friendly here, even strangers."

Festival tent

These interviews were displayed in the Destination East Finchley story-telling tent at the festival. Alongside were artworks on the meaning of 'home' made by pupils at Martin's during Refugee Week and poems they wrote with the help

of performance poet Adisa the Verbaliser.

The tent was a real highlight of the event and many in the local community came to tell their stories about their journeys to East Finchley. Visitors marked their countries of origin on a large map of the world and the UK, and contributed to an evolving exhibition of postcards.

Martin Primary headteacher Rebecca Bakar said: "We are an outward looking community school and this is a wonderful opportunity for us to collaborate with and bring together local organisations, businesses and individuals."

More events are being planned and discussions are under way with the Museum of Migration for the work to go there as a permanent home. To keep up-to-date on the project follow DestinationN2 on Twitter and Facebook.

Castle to castle run

You may remember Ed Kerry from our March 2017 edition. He will be running 1,130 miles in 22 days, visiting all the castles of the UK and Ireland's capital cities to raise money for The Brain Tumour Charity in memory of his elder sister who was lost to a brain tumour 14 years ago.

Well, the time for his endurance challenge is almost here as he sets off from the Tower of London on 5 August. There's still time to sponsor Ed or even join him running for a few miles (you don't have to go the whole way). Find out more and donate at www.castletocastle.co.uk.



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