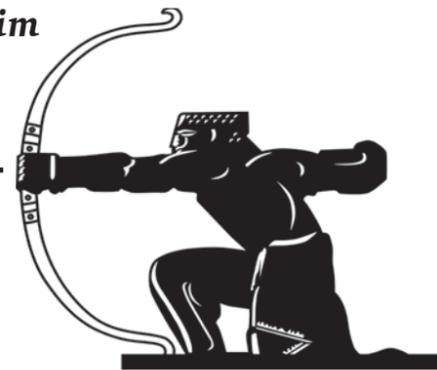




Local News is our Aim
25 years 1993-2018

The Archer



ISSN 1361-3952

20p
where sold

February 2018 No. 286

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Call for action after sharp rise in street robberies

By Janet Maitland

Latest figures from the Met Police reveal that there were seven street robberies in East Finchley in December, the highest level in a single month for 18 months.

In four of these robberies all the victims, and the perpetrators, were teenage boys. They took place in the streets surrounding the tube station between 6pm and 11.30pm over the week between Christmas and New Year.

Knife threat

One robbery involved a possible knife. At about 9.15pm on 30 December two boys in their mid-teens were threatened outside the station by two youths who said they would be knifed if they didn't hand over their cash and phones. One robber was described as black, aged 17-18 and wearing dark clothing, the other as of east-African appearance, aged 16-17, with a squeaky voice.

Facts and figures

The number of robberies in East Finchley last year rose by 60%, with 32 robberies compared to 20 in 2016. Twenty-four of them occurred between July and December.

The situation is considerably worse in Fortis Green ward, with 46 robberies in 2017 compared to 19 in 2016, a year-on-year increase of 142%. Thirty-three occurred in the second half of the year.

Data for the month of December is not yet available for Hampstead Garden Suburb, but of the ward's 29 robberies between December 2016 and November 2017, eight were in Beaumont Close, N2, near the rear entrance to the station and The Causeway, the long footpath leading up to East End Road.

Local resident Sara Boxer, whose son was one of those

mugged near the station in December, urged the community to work together to petition for better CCTV and street lighting. She plans to organise a public meeting along with her husband Jonathan Black, to see what can be done to make the area safer.

Broken CCTV

Foster Percil, the Acting Inspector of Neighbourhood Policing, said that police action in the short term will include high visibility patrols in the vicinity of the station between 6pm and 11pm and, in his words, "liaison with the council regarding CCTV in the area which has not been working recently".

We asked Barnet Council about the broken CCTV and if they planned to increase the number of cameras. They told us two of the eight CCTV cameras needed fixing and that the average repair time was eight days. "We regularly review where our cameras are deployed and take into account the reported offences in East Finchley," said a spokesperson.



Margaret and Kieran move on

After 22 years running Madden's in the High Road, Margaret and Kieran Madden have decided it's time to retire and put the pub on the market. Turn to page 5 for the story.

Free basketball club gets off the ground

By Janet Maitland

A new free basketball club for children in years five and six is starting up at Christ's College Finchley, off East End Road, with support from the Grange Big Local project.

The club is run by Ted Polson of Barnet Bulldogs, an experienced coach who already runs sessions at CCF that are open to young people from any secondary school.

The new club is for any primary school children from the East Finchley area who would benefit from taking part in a team sport and from having the chance to be in a secondary school environment before they transfer themselves.

Julia Hines, from Grange Big

Local, said: "We are supporting the classes because we know there are not that many activities for children in the area that are free or low cost. We think Ted will be able to provide fun and at the same time give the kids that attend a boost in confidence."

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