



**A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.**



Five-a-day: The Monkey Puzzle children and their carers shop at the N2 Food Centre in the High Road.

## You're never too young to support your local shops

**Monkey Puzzle nursery, based opposite the tube station, is getting its young ones into good habits early by taking them out on mini shopping trips, and making sure they shop locally.**

"Whenever our little ones do a cooking activity we take them to our local shops to buy ingredients and get to know our community and the lovely people in it," said the nursery's Jenny Eracleous.

"In early January we made pizza, so the children visited a local shop to buy all the ingredients they would need. As well as getting to know their community, it helps the

children develop their maths and communication skills and to learn about road safety and healthy eating."

## Playground pick-me-up

**There are hopes that the well-used but poorly maintained children's playground in Market Place, N2, close to Holy Trinity Primary School and The Archer Academy, could be freshened up.**

Members of the Grange Big Local regeneration group met Barnet Council last month

to discuss ideas and hope to follow this up with some positive changes this year.

The playground is a popular stop-off point for young families after school and is also used as a meeting point by teenagers. Some items of play equipment are missing after falling into disrepair and others will need replacing soon.

## Campaigners call for full inquiry into library cuts

**Campaigners fighting to reverse the cuts made to East Finchley library and Barnet's library service in general over the last two years are calling for a full inquiry.**

Barnet Council has already said it will be announcing a review of the changes it has made to the library service when the Community Leadership and Libraries Committee meets on Thursday 7 March.

### Dress up to protest

This happens to be World Book Day when children and other Save Barnet Library (SBL) supporters stage their annual protest outside East Finchley library against what they say has been a huge loss of access and facilities.

The campaign group is inviting residents, families, school groups and library users of all ages to dress up as their favourite book characters and join them to demand that the council's review is a thorough and independent public inquiry into the impact of the cuts.

### Failure to meet needs

Last year, SBL put forward evidence to the Minister at the Department for Culture (DCMS) to make the case for an independent inquiry.

Emily Burnham, of SBL, says: "The law says the council

must provide a library service that meets the needs of all users, yet we know that young people, people with disabilities and others are excluded by un-staffed libraries.

"This is discriminatory. Despite this, the council's recent annual in-house Equalities Assessment didn't even consider libraries. That's why we need a proper independent inquiry."

### Effects on children's library use

Changes to East Finchley library begun in 2017 have left it without professional staff for 53 of its 69 opening hours each week, and a PIN entry system. Nobody under 15 is allowed in during those unstaffed hours unless accompanied by an adult. Before the changes, fiction borrowing by East Finchley children had risen by almost a fifth between 2011 and 2015. SBL says that figures it has seen from Barnet Council show teen borrowing in our library has since fallen by a third, and across Barnet take-up of the children's Summer Reading Challenge was down by a half. The campaign group can be followed at [savebarnetlibraries.org](http://savebarnetlibraries.org), or on Facebook and Twitter @savebarnetlibs.

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