



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

## Pavilion to be demolished

By Diana Cormack

**After more than 30 years of standing empty, the future of the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood has at last been decided. The derelict building is to be demolished after hopes of restoring it as a café were finally abandoned.**

In 2012 'Pepe' Dostezad was granted a 25-year lease on the pavilion, with plans to open a coffee bar. In the interim, he took over Cherry Tree Wood's kiosk café, next to the tennis courts, which he now proposes to enlarge and enhance, making it suitable for use all year round.

Two years into Pepe's lease, restoration and repairs on the derelict building proved to be a greater problem than originally thought and, after the theft of valuable tools and equipment, major work ceased.

### Settlement reached

There have since been protracted discussions between him and Barnet Council about the terms of the lease and condition of the premises. Pepe has told *The Archer* that he has surrendered the lease to Barnet and come to a monetary settlement with them. However, he maintains that all this has not been easy and has expressed his gratitude to Councillor Alison Moore for her help and support.

A Barnet Council spokesman confirmed that the surrender of the lease had been agreed, and a settlement fee had

been paid to its former lessee.

The spokesman said: "We are currently awaiting quotations for the building to be safely demolished. Once these have been received and evaluated we will programme the works for as soon as is practicable."

### Past and future

The decaying pavilion has become a major safety hazard over the last decade and has been fenced off with metal barriers for several years. Its removal will enable the restoration of a large area of woodland alongside the entrance path into the park from the High Road.

Originally built in 1926 as an electricity sub-station, it was replaced with the building we see today in the late 1950s. It was used as a changing room for sporting activities when football matches regularly took place in the park and also housed a playgroup for some time.

There have long been differing opinions on what should happen to the structure. Whilst some favoured razing it to the ground and letting nature take its course, others hoped it



Days are numbered: The derelict pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Mike Coles

could be put to good use, preferably in a way beneficial to the community. Over the years some suggested projects came to nought, whilst the amount of vandalism and dilapidation increased.

*What are your memories of the Cherry Tree Wood pavilion? Email us: the-archer@lineone.net, or write to The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 2DE.*

### In this issue

Sainsbury's opens..... p3  
Safer Neighbourhoods..... p4  
Phoenix fight steps up..... p5  
AgeUK cookery TV stars..... p6  
Cause of Grange fire unclear..p7  
Grant for Community Souls...p7

## In appreciation of John Omar

**Following our report last month that Manor Park Road shoe repairer John Omar has been forced to retire through ill health, a crowdfunding campaign has been launched to buy him a farewell gift.**

Customer Darren Mitchell started the fund as a way of doing "a good deed for a gentleman". He hoped many in the community would be willing to make a donation to say a big thank you to John for his services over the years and to show him how much he was appreciated.

John ran his shoe and luggage repair shop from his tiny



John Omar

workshop in Manor Park Road for 30 years. A recent sudden illness forced him to shut up shop permanently while he makes the slow road to recovery.

Donations can be made on the GoFundMe website by searching for 'John Omar' or you can drop cash into the special donations tin in the Galaxy Drug Store, Church Lane, N2, just a couple of minutes' walk from John's workshop.

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