



Good news: Kevin Lukau, second left, with his basketball training team on the Cherry Tree Wood court. Photo Mike Coles.

Unsafe basketball and tennis courts to be resurfaced

By David Melsome

The ageing basketball and tennis courts in Cherry Tree Wood will be rebuilt over the next few months after Barnet Council found the funding and appointed a contractor to carry out the resurfacing work.

Last September, *The Archer* reported on calls from regular users to repair the badly damaged courts following years of deterioration and an incident where a basketball player was injured during a game.

A Barnet Council site inspection revealed that the one basketball and two tennis courts all required a complete rebuild. They were kept open in the short term thanks to regular sweeping by the council, players and volunteers from the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood.

Plans are welcomed

Once funding was assigned, Blakedown Sport & Play Ltd was appointed as the contractor to carry out the rebuild. This same contractor undertook the refurbishment of the tennis and multi-sport courts in Victoria Park, off Long Lane, N3, last spring.

The Cherry Tree Wood works will replace like for like, leaving the two tennis courts and one basketball court in the same dimensions, adding new nets and posts for both sports and erecting new surrounding fencing.

Roger Chapman, Chair of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, said it was really good news for a much-needed local facility. "It's great to see such desperately needed investment in our local park. Parks and open spaces have particularly

proved their value for our physical and mental health and wellbeing over the past year and it's great to see this value being recognised," he said.

Equipment standards urged

Regular basketball player Luke Tiratsoo thanked the council and everyone who worked with them to secure the funding. But he pointed out that it was important for the renovations to use regulation posts, hoops and backboards recognised by sporting bodies so that Cherry Tree Wood could be used for competitive games between amateur teams from across the region, as well as for leisure games. "It may sound like a minor issue, and obviously we are all massively thankful for the resurfacing. We just feel that it's really important we get this thing right," he said.

Grange Big Local reveals first list of grant winners

By John Lawrence

Music therapy and a community garden are among the projects being supported by the first round of cash grants from the Grange Big Local (GBL) team, it has been announced.

GBL put out a call last year for ideas that will make a positive difference to people living in its regeneration area, centred on the Grange estate and the northern end of East Finchley, as well as the wider N2 area.

On offer were grants of up to £500 for individual residents and up to £10,000 for local organisations to get the projects off the ground.

The GBL team said the judging panel "had the difficult task of narrowing down a brilliant pool of applications to just a small handful of recipients". So, in response, they increased the budget for the programme and have announced funding for nine local residents and nine organisations. Among the organisation projects being supported are:

Wild About Our Woods: an eco-therapy and wellbeing pilot based in local community forest garden Barnwood N2, off Tarling Road, offering a tailored programme of nature-based workshops and activities for local residents aged 55+ to

reduce isolation and promote healthy aging.

Something Out The Ordinary (SOTO): a programme of free, online, arts-focused activities in dance, drama, and music for disadvantaged and marginalized children and young people aged between five and 25, aiming to boost mental health and confidence.

North London Music Therapy: The Wednesday Group is a weekly online music therapy group for young people to come together, using lyric writing and online music software to build a community of music makers.

Little Volcanoes: working hand in hand with two local schools, these online science workshops will feature hands-on experiments, drama, and singing, motivating children to not only learn science, but to enjoy the process as well.

Friends of the Archer Academy: The Archer Academy Parents Association are building an outdoor classroom at their lower school site in Eagans Close, N2, that will be

open to students, staff, and the wider community as a space for reading, counselling, gardening and animal therapy.

Akana Theatre: an online programme offering local residents the chance to build their confidence, problem-solve, and work as a team through the medium of improv theatre.

Acting for Health: a community arts project that uses theatre and acting to tackle issues around health and wellbeing.

Tarling Road Little Garden: to celebrate the completion of this community garden funded by Grange Big Local's first Community Grants programme in 2019, Tarling Road Little Garden plan to have a celebration event bringing local residents together later this year.

To find out more about the individual projects Grange Big Local are funding, check their Instagram and Facebook @grangebiglocal or follow them on Twitter at @GrangeBL

Safety fears over Sunday parking

By John Lawrence

Residents of the Thomas More estate in East Finchley say inconsiderate parking by churchgoers is becoming a nuisance and potentially putting their lives at risk.

A small chapel in the East Finchley Cemetery, off East End Road, is hired out by the cemetery's owners, Westminster Council. The congregation who arrive to use it on weekends park their cars on Thomas More Way immediately opposite and sometimes inside the private roads of the Thomas More estate.

One resident told us: "The cars are parked across dropped kerbs and they block our roads. There was one incident where a fire engine couldn't get in. Thankfully, there wasn't a fire that day but we need to keep our roads open for emergency vehicles. "We go to church elsewhere in East Finchley and have no problem with people using the



Packed: Cars parked outside homes in Thomas More Way, with the chapel beyond.

chapel but they must respect the neighbourhood where they're parking. These are not short services and seem to last for hours at a time. We have spoken to the priest and the situation did improve for a couple of weeks but then went back to being bad." Residents are asking for road markings and warning notices to be placed on Thomas More Way, which is under the juris-

diction of Barnet Council. The other roads on the estate have parking restrictions imposed by the estate manager Optivo. East Finchley councillor Arjun Mittra said the matter had been raised with Barnet Council but there was little they could do as Thomas More Way was not connected to an existing controlled parking zone and it was not possible to set one up for a single road.

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