



Well earned: The wellbeing walkers take a break at the Cherry Tree Café with leader Louis fourth from left

One year of walking, talking and making new friends in the open air

Louis Victor is a well-known face in East Finchley, delivering The Archer, volunteering at Finchley Foodbank and the East Finchley Festival. A year ago he decided to organise a weekly wellbeing walk, open to all. Here, on its first anniversary, he reflects on its progress.

At the beginning of March participants in the East Finchley Wellbeing Walk celebrated a whole year of walking, talking and making new friends. The weekly walk began in March 2023 with the purpose of helping people to share the mental and physical benefits of walking and socialising in green spaces and it has been gratifying to see just how many people have benefited from taking part.

Walkers from a wide range of backgrounds and ages (seven months to over 90 years) and from all across the borough have participated, some to

rebuild fitness after medical problems, some to find activities between jobs and some just to enjoy being outdoors in good company.

When you start something new you have no idea whether it will actually be something that people need or want. It has been really pleasing to find that the walk is enjoyed by so many and, even more, to discover what a warm, friendly and inclusive group it has turned out to be. Here are just a few comments from Wellbeing Walkers:

“It’s a great success... with always a regular core that enjoy walking and chatting together.”

“As a fairly new member I was welcomed into this group... interesting and friendly people (and Pip the dog) keep me returning week after week”

“Each week we have new walkers, all of whom have an interesting story to tell.”

“Great group of people and so well organised and led by Louis and Caroline... Everyone is so friendly and welcoming, no pressure to walk at a fast pace or to walk for the whole hour.”

The East Finchley Wellbeing Walk meets every Wednesday at 10am opposite East Finchley Station (behind bus stop H) for a gentle-paced, one-hour stroll through local green spaces. No need to say whether you are coming, just look out for the walk leader in a bright green tabard. Everyone is welcome and the walk proceeds at the pace of the slowest walker. For more details email efwellbeing-walk@gmail.com

Maureen gets taken away on Saturday night

By Diana Cormack

When East Finchley youth club leader Maureen Clemetson’s daughter arranged a guided black cab tour of London for her last month, the pair had no idea that this Saturday night treat would lead to Maureen being recognised everywhere she went. Maureen, who has run the Monday Club for 18 years, was somewhat surprised at the tour guide’s request to stop outside a large building to pick up some papers, but daughter Rochelle (who knew what was going on) assured her mother that everything was all right.



Surprise, surprise: Maureen Clemetson is greeted in the Saturday Night Takeaway studio by Ant and Dec

Her surprise grew as the cab moved forward into the building and magnified when the passenger door was opened by Dec Donnelly welcoming her to the *Ant and Dec’s Saturday Night Take Away* show in front of a cheering live audience.

As she stepped out of the cab, Maureen was quick to take off her jacket and casually hand it to Dec who dutifully carried it for her. He and Ant McPartlin accompanied mother and daughter to the two seats reserved for them, explaining Maureen’s support for young people in the community to the applauding audience.

“I thought I was in a dream,” Maureen told *The Archer*. “Since the show went out, I have been recognised by so many people.” How she handed

over her red jacket to Dec is what stuck in people’s minds. In fact, she was invited back to the studio the following weekend to record a voice-over link for the programme referring to the incident.

Regular readers will know that over the years Maureen has received awards for her work with the Monday Club youngsters who come mostly from the Grange Estate and Strawberry Vale. Now the ITV show has awarded her a holiday for four abroad.

Maureen regrets that she was unable to speak to Ant and Dec about the lack of youth clubs. She is passionate about the need for them and would love to air her views on ITV lunchtime show *Loose Women*. Watch this space!



Where to donate your unwanted household items for recycling

- Batteries to EF Electricals and Sainsbury’s, High Road
- Bicycle inner tubes to Bike & Run, High Road
- Cables and small electrical items to EF Electricals, High Road
- Crisp packets to Cherry Tree Café, Cherry Tree Wood
- Dental products (toothbrushes and heads) to Cavendish Dental Practice, East End Road
- Electrical cables to Everything Electrical, High Road
- Ink jet cartridges to UOE, High Road
- Lightbulbs to Amy’s or EF Electricals, High Road
- Make-up to Oakdale Pharmacy, High Road.
- Paper, cork, ribbon, foil, wood off-cuts, buttons, stationery, sequins, carpet samples to Amy’s, High Road
- Spectacles to Stewart Duncan Opticians and David Hillel Opticians, High Road

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