



New playground project buoyed by local businesses

By David Melsome

Fundraisers bidding to bring new life to the neglected Market Place Playground have praised local businesses and individuals for helping them bring in more than £27,000 for the transformation project.

In December, the Friends of Market Place Playground partnered with Aviva's Community Fund in a final chase for cash to turn the tarmac site near Holy Trinity Primary School into a green space and natural playground.

Aviva's crowdfunding initiative supports projects that

our part of north London a better place to be for everyone. We'd like to thank every single one who made a donation, no matter how small."

Supporters of the project include: Alan's Record Shop, Amici Delicatessen, Amy's, A.W. Luck & Sons, Casa Pepe, Clichy Cars, Cup of Joy, Dan



Rejuvenation: Market Place playground users Monica, Poppy and Mara look forward to it becoming a more nature-friendly space

bring nature back to urban spaces and their match funding meant that every pound donated was doubled. The money raised in just a month will go towards planting trees, hedgerows and shrubs.

Michelle Frith and Samantha Haycock, co-chairs of the Friends, said the community of East Finchley was as generous and supportive as ever but it was local businesses who helped push the crowdfunder over its original target by giving financial support, publicity and donations in kind.

Deep commitment

"Over £5,000 came from N2's business community," they said. "We are overwhelmed but not surprised by the kindness of East Finchley's traders. The companies that backed us represent the diversity of the business community from eateries to estate agents, fitness to finance, but the one thing they have in common is a deep commitment to making

& Decarlo, Debutots, Fish & Flame, Gertie Brownes, Going Greek, The Happiness Boutique, Iris Garden Services, Jeremy Leaf & Co, Meze & Shish, MighteeFit, N2 Food Centre, P.O. Joyce, Securebase, Tatler's Estate Agents, TaxAssist Accountants, Tony's Continental, Tops Dry Cleaners, Untitled Projects Management, UOE Store, The Windsor Castle, Yasar Halim and Zio Peppe.

Buoyed by this show of support from the community, the Friends are working with their design consultants Aileen Shackell and Phil Doyle and Barnet Council's project team on the final details and will have plans to announce very shortly. Find out more at www.friendsofmarketplace.org.uk

There is still time to donate to the project. While most money has been raised, key pieces of equipment and signage still need funding. Get in touch with friendsofmarketplace@gmail.com

Talent show and bake-off contest both postponed

East Finchley Town Team was sadly forced to postpone the two events they had planned for the end of January.

East Finchley's Got Talent and East Finchley Bake-Off were scheduled to take place in the Phoenix Cinema. Unfortunately the cinema's managers ran into complications with obtaining a film to show in conjunction with both events. The Town Team decided that the only option was to postpone them.

Town Team have now con-

tacted all those who have entered, the judges, and their contacts from schools and other groups.

Phoenix manager Ewelina Sadlowska told *The Archer*: "We're very sorry to have to postpone East Finchley's Got Talent, owing to programming difficulties and we look forward to announcing a new date very soon."



End of story: Black Gull Bookshop has no choice but to shut, says former leaseholder Chris Overfield, right

Shock at closure of much loved High Road book shop

By Ruth Anders

Staff and customers were dismayed to learn last month that East Finchley's much-loved book shop Black Gull is closing after 16 successful years in the High Road.

It's understood the decision was taken after the shop's new leaseholder was unable to come to an agreement with the landlord over the terms of his lease renewal.

Previous leaseholder Chris Overfield, who now owns Black Gull Flies South bookshop in St Leonards, near Hastings, said he couldn't express his sense of loss at his business leaving East Finchley forever.

He told *The Archer*: "When I moved to the south coast four years ago, I looked for a new owner. We were confident we had found the right person in Chris Masson, who runs our sister shop Boom Cat in Camden Market. But after months of negotiation, the landlord's stipulations became impossible to meet and Chris decided to pull out.

"Sixteen years embedded in this lively, creative community has been a profound pleasure... stimulating, challenging conversations with interesting, enthusiastic people who shared so generously."

He went on to explain that in order for booksellers to make a success of their business

they really need to own their building.

The sudden closure news was distressing for Black Gull staff Brian Schwartz and Robin Tomens and for many regular patrons who streamed in over the weekend of 20-21 January to express their bewilderment and commiserations. A farewell event is planned towards the end of this month, date to be confirmed.

Last literary event

In the meantime, Black Gull's last literary event will be on Sunday 18 February at 6.30pm when two translators

who worked on a new volume of the poetry of Simone Weil will talk about the process and read some of her poems.

Silvia Caprioglio Panizza, from the University of Pardubice in the Czech Republic, and Philip Wilson, from the University of East Anglia, published *Mirror of Obedience* through Bloomsbury last year, translating the French philosopher and political activist's poetry into English for the first time. Admission is free and there will be refreshments available. To book a place, email tierney-helen63@gmail.com

David Hillel Optometrist
BSc(Hons) FCOptom DipCLP MPhil DOptom

Dr David Hillel Burns is an experienced specialist in eyesight.

119 High Road N2
Tel: 020 8444 2233
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Indoor car boot

The next Muswell Hill Indoor Car Boot Sale takes place on Saturday 24 February from 10am to 1pm at Hornsey Parish Church Hall, on the corner of Cranley Gardens and Park Rd, N10 3AH. Buses W7, W3 and 144 stop nearby. Admission is 50p and refreshments are available. More information from 020 8368 8180.

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