



Met Police rolls out new channel for crime news

By Janet Maitland

Do you want to find out more about local crime than social media posts can tell you? If yes, you may want to sign up for new online service Met Engage, described by a Met spokesperson as “the place to get information directly from officers who are out in your neighbourhood”.

You’ll receive emails from East Finchley’s Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) with updates on local crime cases, warnings about scams, advice on crime prevention and opportunities to share your concerns. A Met spokesperson said SNT will do this “as part of their regular role”.

The force says Met Engage is part of a renewed emphasis on neighbourhood policing, necessary because “the number of Police Community Support Officers has halved since 2010, foot patrols are down and there has been a noticeable decline in public confidence”.

It is not yet known if our SNT will receive any of the Neighbourhood Policing Grant for the Met, which translates into 420 extra police officers and 50 Community Support Officers across the whole of London, which has 600 SNTs.

The East Finchley SNT has one Police Community Support Officer, two Constables and a Sergeant. Back in 2008 there were six support officers, two

Constables and a Sergeant.

How to sign up

To access Met Engage you create a password and tick the crime types you want to hear about. Other questions, not compulsory, cover your demographics such as disability status and national identity. You can select who will see your data and send you messages, and there are questions about your crime concerns. To sign up for Met Engage go to metengage.co.uk

You could also go to www.met.police.uk/area/your-area/ and search for East Finchley. This doesn’t send you emails, but you can message the SNT directly and it provides data about local crime rates, with annotated maps so you can see where each crime took place. You don’t need a password.

A Met spokesperson said this site will not be replaced by Met Engage despite the overlap and that details such as police priorities will be available across both platforms.

Open House

Everyone is welcome to come along to the community café at Tarling Road Community Centre in N2 every Thursday morning from 10.30am to

12.30pm. There are free hot drinks and wifi available. Email info@grangebiglocal.org if you would like to join the café’s WhatsApp group.

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Blanket coverage: The Celebration quilt stitched by sewers in Barnet

Quilt-makers join the threads

By Gail Norcliffe

A silver lining from the dark cloud of social unrest involving a number of immigration centres back in the summer of last year was the advent of a project to make a community quilt for Barnet.

Over the course of ten months of stitching by individuals and groups, three beautiful quilts have been created, paraded through the borough, and are now being displayed in various locations, including in East Finchley.

The process of creating the quilts has been particularly crucial to those at the heart of the endeavour. Each of the quilts has its own name, Unity, Celebration and Solidarity, to reflect the spirit in which they were made.

Dozens of patches were hand sewn by a wide range of community groups and a number of workshops were arranged for the purpose. Some contributors were expert in

needlework and others complete beginners, but the creative process enabled friendships and networks to be developed.

Sewing sessions

Input from East Finchley has partly been through the involvement of the Grange Big Local project. A group of N2 friends held sewing afternoons to make their patches, which included supportive multicoloured hands across an outline Barnet map, an embroidered heart emblazoned with the word ‘community’ in gold, and one featuring East Finchley’s very own Archie the Archer at its centre.

Charli Thompson who was one of those behind the original project idea and a driving force

in developing the quilts explains, “The inspiration was primarily from wanting to find a way to connect communities through a positive and creative project. We wanted to do something to counter the riots by creating safe, inclusive spaces and ways for people to express solidarity with those under threat. It has been a very powerful exercise and will continue to grow.”

One quilt has been exhibited in the Tarling Road Community Hub in N2 as part of the walking tour for the London Festival of Architecture. The plan is now for the quilts to be displayed in a number of Barnet libraries and other community facilities, and possibly for another parade to be held next year.

Absurd return for young actor

Seven years ago, Iulian Szalla had his first London stage appearance at the Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road, N2. Now, he is returning to the stage in north London to perform at the Camden Fringe Festival in August for the first time.

He, his father Martin Szalla and a group of London-based friends are known as AB Drama, presenting a show comprising ten short-plays that are partly Kafkaesque, partly Pythonesque and always absurd.

An Evening of Phantasmagorical Absurdity is at the Libra Theatre Café in Chalk Farm Road, NW1, on Wednesday 6 August at 8pm and on Tuesday 11 August at 4pm.

Find out more at www.abdrama.uk and camden-fringe.com/events



On stage: Iulian Szalla



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