



Raw sewage and chemicals poison allotment streams



Discoloured: One of the polluted allotment streams

By Margaret Crockett

“Raw sewage, ammonia, methane, hydrogen sulphide. It is wrong, it is unhealthy for people and wildlife, it is dangerous,” laments Dr Mary Poulter, Chair of the East Finchley Allotment Holders Association, on reading the findings of water quality investigations undertaken in May.

Two streams bisect the allotment site off Plane Tree Walk, N2. On contemporary maps they both begin and end within the site boundaries but they originate further south and flow north under houses in East Finchley's county roads, where formerly cress beds were cultivated, and under Creighton Avenue.

For many years now the streams have been bubbly and smell of detergent, polluted by Thames Water drainage systems. More recently sewage, including wet wipes and condoms, appeared in the water. There are also two known properties with misconnections affecting the streams. This is where toilets and household appliances are incorrectly plumbed to the surface water sewer instead of the foul water sewer.

The neighbouring Fuel Land allotments, as well as nearby Coldfall Wood, have similar issues where the polluted water reaches them.

Unacceptable

Allotment holders have been appealing to Thames Water to fix this problem for years with no improvement. In November the East Finchley Allotment Holders Association enlisted support from local MP Sarah Sackman.

Thames Water responded to her letter, stating: “This is unacceptable to us, and we completely understand the concerns raised.”

They reported that they attended in January to check the connections from the county roads, to clean and conduct a CCTV survey of the pipework. An interceptor trap in some private pipework in one of the county roads was also unblocked.

Quality testing

Thames Water plans follow-on work to continue investigations and testing at other properties to check for misconnections. In the meantime, water quality testing by Thames21, an environmental charity working with communities to restore and look after rivers, water and nature across the Thames Basin, found the east stream results to be particularly troubling, with consistently high ammonia levels and an unpleasant smell.

East Finchley Allotments was established in 1917 and is one of the largest sites in Barnet. Leased from Barnet Council it is managed by plot-holders as a community-run concern.



Show time: Youngsters on stage at the end of a Fixation Academy production

Theatre and dance academy makes the top 100 in the UK

Business partners Laura Davitt and Carly Pryke are celebrating after the Fixation Academy of Performing Arts that they run at Finchley Youth Theatre in the High Road, N2, was named among the top 100 children's activity providers in the UK.

Their studio classes for ages three to 18 in dance, singing and acting were placed at number 34 in the list put together by clubs and activities app and website Club Hub.

Entries were assessed by expert judges, focusing on five key areas: activity benefits, safeguarding, inclusivity, com-

munity impact and business achievements.

Carly said: “To be recognised on a national level is an honour and a reflection of everything we stand for. Thank you to our incredible team, our families, and every child who walks through our doors. You are the heart of everything we do.”

Primary school children celebrate Eid

Eid al-Adha is the second of the two main festivals in Islam alongside Eid al-Fitr, occurring in Dhu al-Hijja, the twelfth and final month of the Islamic calendar. This year it was celebrated from 5 to 9 June, and on a very warm afternoon on 13 June, the children, staff and parents of Martin Primary School were excited to hold their own Eid celebrations.

All sorts of activities were involved, but the main focus was on the delicious food and drink provided by the parents. Amid the enthusiastic throng, headteacher Ziz Chater welcomed Finchley and Golders Green MP Sarah Sackman as a special guest who happily joined in the festivities. Ziz told *The Archer*: “Inclusivity is at the centre of everything we do at Martin, and it was so special to be able to hold our very own Eid event.”



Food and fun: Pupils, parents and staff enjoy the Eid celebrations

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