



Tracy honoured as volunteer of year at the food bank

By Jane Marsh

Volunteers at the Finchley Foodbank were surprised recently by a visit from Charmaine Carr, representing the Barnet Group Community Awards, which celebrate local community heroes. She came to present volunteer Tracy Simons with an award for being voted Volunteer of the Year 2025.

Tracy's nomination stated that she has been an incredibly dedicated and active volunteer at Finchley Foodbank for many years. "She has overcome the challenging barriers of being deaf and having to communicate with volunteers and donors. In her role she helps restock the foodbank on a weekly basis and recently has become a session leader, managing a team of 11 people to ensure the smooth running of the restock and intake of deliveries. "Tracy's willingness to learn and incredible patience, enabling her to thrive in a busy environment where her communication is limited, is inspiring. She brings a positive energy to every interaction, making sure that the team feels supported. We are exceptionally fortunate to have her, she is a motivated and highly engaged volunteer, whose dedication to Finchley Foodbank is much appreciated." Tracy started volunteering at the food bank during lockdown and says "it is an excellent team, so well run and organised.... I love going." More importantly, she



Trophy and flowers: Food bank volunteer Tracy Simons is presented with her award by Charmaine Carr

highlights the constant support she has received over the years from Foodbank Manager Rachel Nelson and fellow volunteer Louis Victor, who have always gone the extra mile to help her when needed.

The Finchley Foodbank is always looking for more volunteers so, if you are interested in joining Tracy and her colleagues, please email finchleyfoodbank@gmail.com.



Frank and forthright: Dr Miriam Stoppard, third from left, with the Age UK Barnet team

Miriam Stoppard on intimacy in later life

By Karen Williamson

Age UK Barnet welcomed author and TV presenter Dr Miriam Stoppard for a frank and no-holds-barred discussion about sex in mid-life and beyond, and about her new book *Sex, Drugs and Walking Sticks*.

Dispelling the myth that we lose interest in sex and intimacy as we get older, she claimed that "we're all sexual beings until the end!". Miriam shared lots of great tips to a packed hall at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2, about learning to love your ageing body.

Research from Age UK highlights that, despite three in five over 50s believing that a

healthy sex life is important for a relationship at this age, 39% feel uncomfortable discussing this. Many people assume that sex and intimacy fade with age, but for countless older adults they remain meaningful, comforting and deeply personal parts of life. At the same time, illness, hormones, bereavement and disability can all shape how

we experience closeness and connection. Age UK's new guide *Sex, Relationships and Intimacy* covers changes in sexual function, the impact of health conditions and medication, shifting relationships, new partnerships and online dating. To request a copy, call 0800 169 6565 or you can find it on the Age UK website www.ageuk.org.uk

Artisan bakery celebrates 10 years in East End Road

By Nick Allan

The team at Margot Bakery, the artisan bakery on East End Road, N2, celebrated their ten-year anniversary in February. What started as a bold leap of faith in a rather sorry-looking former post office has quietly become one of those places the neighbourhood seems not to be able to do without.



Ten years and rising: Michelle Eshkeri at Margot Bakery

Founded by baker Michelle Eshkeri, who started baking sourdough at home, the premises was transformed into a light-filled, modern space thanks in part to architect Lucy Tauber's design that preserved industrial elements like steel and ribbed glass.

Specialising in naturally leavened sourdough, the bakery produces fresh daily loaves, flaky sourdough pastries, babka, challah, and other treats made on-site with high-quality ingredients.

Over the decade, things have grown steadily. A production and retail site opened in Holloway, the Holloway Model Bakery, followed by a second shop in Highgate on Archway Road.

Sessions that tap into inner energy

After more than four decades in East Finchley, Gill Davis is bringing a deeply personal journey back to the community she has long called home.

A North Londoner with roots in Archway and long-standing ties to the area, Gill's career has spanned the City, property development, hypnotherapy and executive coaching. Yet beneath professional success lay a lifelong search for deeper meaning.

That search led Gill to Kundalini Awakening, a transformative energy practice that works beyond the thinking mind. During a session, participants lie down, close their eyes and listen to carefully curated music. An energetic transmission then gently activates their innate Kundalini energy to rise naturally, supporting the release of stored emotion, stress and limiting patterns.

Experiences vary widely, from emotional release and deep relaxation to moments of insight or inner stillness. Sessions take place in a small, safe container where participants are gently guided through the process. Many leave feeling lighter, calmer and more connected to themselves.



Gill Davis, second from left, leads a Kundalini Awakening session

Weekly sessions begin in April at Finchley Yoga (Saturday 4pm-6pm) and Finchley Youth Theatre (Monday 9.30am-11.30am). A one-day full immersion is planned for 7 June, with a six-day retreat scheduled in the Catalunya mountains of Spain in July (11-16). For further information or booking details, contact Gill at Gill@gilldavis.com or visit: www.tickettailor.com/events/the-humanexperience/2096692

Nature nurtures

Professor Catherine Loveday will be giving a talk for Age UK Barnet on the impact of nature, fresh air and natural environments on memory, mood and mental health plus tips on how to use nature to boost your thinking skills.

It takes place at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2, on Wednesday 6 May from 6.45pm to 8pm. Contact Teresa on 07502 989403 or email teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk