



# Café ownership still in the balance

By Poppy Jacobs

Campaigners got the news they didn't want to hear in late December when the City of London Corporation confirmed that the independently run cafés in Queens Park, Golders Hill Park, Parliament Hill Lido and Parliament Hill Fields will be taken over by the chain Daisy Green.

However, no decision has yet been made on the café in Highgate Woods (The Archer, October 2025). Current operator Hoxton Beach has told us that it is hoping to stay on.

Since the Corporation's announcement, a petition has been launched calling on the City of London Corporation to reconsider its decision and to "prioritise the voices of the community who stand by these cafés and their operators". The petition has garnered more than 19,000 signatures.

The Corporation has defended its decision, saying: "Daisy Green is set to deliver high-quality food, welcoming community spaces, and significant investment, creating an even more enjoyable experience for visitors".

The changes of management were planned to take place



*Under review: Highgate Woods's café may change ownership.*

Photo Mike Coles

almost immediately, with the current operators set to leave by 31 January and Daisy Green aiming to be fully operational by spring 2026.

Daisy Green is keen to reassure the community that its plans aim to preserve the spirit of the much-loved spaces. Co-founder Prue Freeman states: "We want these cafés to remain welcoming spaces where everyone feels included and connected to these very special spaces."

## Brain works

Neuroscientist Professor Catherine Loveday is giving a talk hosted by Age UK Barnet revealing how brain chemicals influence how we think, feel and behave.

"From dopamine and serotonin to cortisol and oxytocin, I will separate fact from fiction and explain what these chemicals really do, and what they don't," says Catherine.

The talk takes place on Wednesday 25 February from 6.45pm-8pm at the Ann Owens Centre, Oak Lane, N2. It's open to everyone and it's free, but donations are welcome. To register, email [teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk](mailto:teresa.gallagher@ageukbarnet.org.uk) or phone Teresa on 07502 989 403.

## The Archer on the move

The Archer's website is now easier to use on your mobile phone. Our online pages have been redesigned to make it quicker to find important information like contact details and deadlines, and simpler to read our latest edition or search and browse past editions of the newspaper in our archive stretching back to 1993.

So now you really can take The Archer with you wherever you go. Bookmark our website at [www.the-archer.co.uk](http://www.the-archer.co.uk)

## Six of the best

Young readers are being invited to choose their favourite book from a shortlist of six for Biblio-Buzz 2026, the Alexandra Palace Children's Book Awards.

The longlist was chosen and curated by Muswell Hill Children's Bookshop and the 2026 shortlist by educationalists, school librarians, authors and volunteers.

Readers aged nine to 12 at participating schools will read the six shortlisted novels, take part in literary challenges and vote for their favourite book ahead of an award ceremony at Ally Pally in April.

## Free concert at the church

Free Sunday evening concerts have returned at East Finchley Methodist Church on the High Road, N2, opposite Creighton Avenue.

The next is on **Sunday 8 February** at **7.30pm** and features The Hummingbirds guitar and ukulele duo playing a wide-ranging programme of folk, pop, country and Americana. Free admission with a collection in aid of The Hornsey Food Bank. This venue is fully accessible.



Team spirit: The Archer Academy football team is on the lookout for players of all ages

## Team opens transfer window

An East Finchley football team is looking for more players to join its squad for 10-a-side sessions on Wednesday evenings.

The team was originally formed by dads of Archer Academy pupils in 2013 but there is no need to be a dad or parent of a pupil to join. Players aged from their 20s to their 60s are currently on board and the squad is particularly keen to welcome more veteran players.

Player Richard Bradshaw said: "It's one game a week

amongst ourselves on a Wednesday from 8pm to 9pm at the Academy. We're not part of a league or anything like that. Bibs and balls are all provided. Players provide their own kit and need astroturf-ready boots. "The team has been a great community builder with the players forming great bonds on and off the pitch. We welcome

anybody who can play fairly, competitively and with respect. We don't want too many crunching mistimed tackles as we all have day jobs to get to."

Players can sign up to be in the squad for 10 games for a cost of £80 / £8 per game. There is also a list for casuals who pay £10 per game. Find the sign-up form at <http://tinyurl.com/archerfootball>

## Anniversary year for choir



Festival favourites: The Archer Community Choir at East Finchley Festival

The Archer Community Choir, started under the auspices of the Archer Academy in East Finchley by one of the school's founders and former governor Sarah Cohen, is enjoying its tenth anniversary year.

Sarah's vision was to have a community choir for all who loved singing, where no auditions or musical knowledge were required. Members are enthusiastically led by Royal Academy of Music graduate Laurence Morgan, the choir's fifth director, who also plays in a band and teaches singing.

Sarah hosted a party late last year to celebrate the choir's anniversary, with guests including previous choir directors and members past and present. Laurence and his predecessors entertained guests as well as leading a rousing singalong of songs learned over the years.

Several founder members still sing with the choir, but its connection to the Archer Academy has loosened over time and it is now firmly based in the East Finchley community. However, it still performs regularly at Archer Academy events, plus the East Finchley Community Festival.

It was at last summer's Festival that newest members Len and Pauline Murrill heard the choir's "lovely singing" and saw that "everyone looked like they were having a good time". They subsequently came along to a free taster session and are now full members.



On song: The choir's leaders

The choir rehearses every Tuesday evening during term time at the Archer Academy, from 7.00-8.30pm. It is almost at full capacity but, if you are interested in joining the choir, contact Isabelle at [archercommunitychoir1@gmail.com](mailto:archercommunitychoir1@gmail.com) for more details.