



Workshop: Tutors and jobseekers practise their device repair skills at the 2second Chance charity

Everyone gets a fair shot at work

By Lynn Winton

East Finchley residents Debs Good and Caroline Graham are part of a tiny team of seven running the groundbreaking Barnet charity 2second Chance, which is having significant success in getting young people and adults facing barriers to employment into the workplace.

I went to speak to them at their office and workshops in Hendon, where their main focus is on delivering the accredited six-week training course Tech10, which trains jobseekers to repair and recondition all types of donated secondhand computers, tablets and phones.

They told me these items are then given to people who cannot afford them or sold via eBay with all profits ploughed back into the charity. The course also includes social skills such as punctuality, how to address work colleagues and how to attend a meeting, so that trainees come out 'work-ready'.

Caroline made this appeal: "Archer readers, we desperately need your old computers, devices and phones. You can drop them in to East Finchley Library, or you can contact us for collection. Please spread the word. And tell anyone you know who you think might benefit from our courses." Find the charity's website at www.2secondchance.co.uk.

Trainees are often referred to 2second Chance by organisations including Mencap, Finchley Food Bank, Barnet Homes, Oak Lodge School and Tarling Road Community Hub, but Debs and Caroline were keen to stress people can contact them directly as well. In their buzzy workshop filled with tutors and trainees I also spoke to co-founder Adam Goodman. Born with a deformed left hand and learning difficulties, he found it hard to fit into a world that didn't always understand difference.

While others described him as unique and special, his disabilities often made him feel isolated.

Adam's job applications were repeatedly turned down, and the employment process was exhausting and disheartening. Without meaningful work, his days lacked structure and purpose, and he often didn't leave his home.

Today in his early 40s Adam is an integral part of the charity. He has learned the skill of public speaking and visits schools and companies to inspire others and share knowledge of the work the charity is doing. He also teaches other vulnerable adults.

In addition to the computer refurbishment courses, Debs Good has used her professional creative skills to run another initiative under the 2second Chance umbrella, called Reframed, hosting ethical picture and photo frame workshops for people experiencing mental health challenges.

Debs said: "It's ethical because we have a huge choice of various donated frames that are repurposed for new orders, with a strong focus on circular economy principles and reuse. Again, all the money from orders goes directly back into the charity, helping to fund and sustain the courses. Anyone is free to visit, bring your old frames, have frames made, or take part in one of the workshops."



Framed: 2second Chance co-founder Debs Good

Nature thriving in Cherry Tree Wood

By Debbie Linton

A community Bioblitz event in Cherry Tree Wood recorded in a single day 47 plant species, 10 mammal and amphibian species, including tadpoles, and nine bird species.

The nature numbers were given at the annual general meeting of the Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, attended by 20 people in January, to look back on 2025 and ahead to coming months.

Other conservation updates included hedgehogs spotted, bulbs planted, hazel coppiced, new compost and flower beds established, brambles bashed and progress made on the orchard and forest gardens. Thanks were given to the many volunteers including the Gardening Group, Good Gym and Duke of Edinburgh Award helpers. The meeting discussed the Tree Preservation Orders won by the Friends for the five silver birches near the High Road entrance of the park, on land earmarked for development as the Cherry Tree Quarter housing project.

A new hawthorn tree fund appeal for the wood had also been started, raising nearly £800 with support from a local exhibition by East Finchley artist Denise Wyllie.

The Flooding and Drainage Group were thanked for making progress on solutions for the waterlogged field. A grant of £40,000 is being made available for a Sustainable Urban Drainage System to help capture and slow down excess water.

Coming up, the next litter pick is on Sunday 8 March from 2-3pm. Meet near the café.

The next BioBlitz event is on Sunday 12 April at 10.30am-12pm. Children and adults are welcome to come along and help identify plants, animals and insects in the wood. Meet near the children's playground.

For more information on the work of the Friends group, email friendsofcherrytree-wood@gmail.com

From The Archer archives...

By Jane Marsh

**10 years ago:
March 2016**

Barnet Council confirmed it had received a pre-application enquiry proposing the building of nine houses on the former Esso garage site opposite the Martin Primary School field on the High Road, N2. Esso confirmed that it expected to complete the sale of the site by the middle of 2016. However, a question mark arose over ownership of a strip of land behind the garage, accessed from the site. Problems arising from this situation may partly account for the fact that, ten years on, the site has yet to be developed.

**15 years ago:
March 2011**

Also at the Clissold Arms, we reported that Kinks leader and songwriter Ray Davies and drummer Mick Avory made a return trip to the pub where Ray started out with his brother Dave, to celebrate the naming of the Kinks Room. Among items now on display are a signed copy of the group's first single, a cover of Little Richard's Long Tall Sally, a guitar and many photographs. The Davies family lived at 6 Denmark Terrace, across the road from the Clissold Arms

**25 years ago:
March 2001**

Not for the first time, the danger facing pedestrians crossing The Bishops Avenue at the East Finchley end was highlighted, following an accident at the junction in November 2000. After consultation with Barnet Council, local MP Rudi Vis confirmed that funding was not available then for any junction improvement scheme and, 25 years later, pedestrians still take their lives in their hands when crossing the wide avenue where it joins the High Road.

Orchestra brings three of the best

Finchley Symphony Orchestra and conductor Christopher Stark will be performing a varied trio of works at their next concert this month.

Opening with Faure's serene Pavane the programme then features Violin Concerto No.1 by the African-American Florence Price.

Completing the programme is Shostakovich's Ninth Symphony, an unusually playful piece for him.

The concert takes place at Trinity Church, Nether Street, N12, on Saturday 14 March, starting at 7.30pm.

Tickets are £18, £15 for those under 26 and over 60, £2 for those under 18 and you can save £1 per ticket by booking online at www.finchleysymphony.org