



Gates to stay as underpass work goes on

By Matteo Lanzini

Following a longer than planned closure over the summer and autumn months, the pedestrian underpass beneath the Northern line between Trinity Road and Manor Park Road, N2, reopened at the end of last year.

The improvements at that stage were most visible on the two footpath approaches: their surface has been renewed, new access barriers and some seating concrete blocks installed, and a dropped kerb removed at the entrance to dissuade mopeds from driving through.

The underpass beneath the railway line itself might not look much different to the untrained eye. However a new drainage system and paving stones were laid to avoid flooding (it has been thoroughly tested over the last two months) and old graffiti removed. A new wall mural is expected to be painted by the commissioned artist in the spring.

Contacted by The Archer, James Masters, volunteer chair of Grange Big Local (GBL), which promoted and drove the project, explained that multiple legal and procedural challenges were encountered along the way due to having two separate public bodies in the shape of Barnet Council (LBB) and Transport for London (TfL) involved with different areas of the work. He said GBL have kept working with the various officials and have recently received reassurance that the remaining works, which include improved lighting and tree planting at both entrances, will be carried out. The underpass is now on Barnet Council's cleaning schedule and also the Public Rights of Way map, allowing

the enforcing of vehicle restrictions by the police.

The more impactful and complex intervention left will involve the widening of some sections of the footpath requiring fence realignment; this will then allow reflectors with poetry from local residents to be installed on the main corners. As a result of this, the metal gates at both entrances will remain in place until all works have been completed.

Monique Gardiner, Director of Communities at Inclusion



Open but gated: The upgraded Northern line underpass last month. Photo Matteo Lanzini

Barnet, which works with GBL and holds the project's Lottery Fund grant money, told our paper: "This underpass project unearthed complex issues and more than a few twists and turns, yet together with TfL and LBB, we achieved a strong outcome for residents. Our hope is that future resident-led projects capture and use this learning."

Tributes after man's death

Police are investigating following the death of a man in Prospect Ring, N2, on Friday 30 January. Officers were called to the Gracie House block of flats at around 4pm where they found an injured man. He was taken to hospital and later died.



At the time of going to press, a Met Police spokesperson said the investigation was ongoing

but gave no further details and did not release the dead man's name. On the weekend after the incident, floral tributes covered a motorcycle left parked outside the block, pictured left.

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Final chapter: Nalin Shah is giving away sets of children's books as he gets ready to close Galaxy Drug Store. Photo Mike Coles

Goodbye to Galaxy and Nalin

By John Lawrence

For many of his loyal customers and friends it is a day they hoped would never come... but Nalin Shah has taken the decision to close his Galaxy Drug Store in Church Lane, N2, after an amazing 47 years behind the counter.

Nalin and members of his family have opened his treasure trove of a shop six days a week since 1979 selling toiletries, kitchenware, electrical items, children's toys and catering for a lot of the disappearing small services like changing watch batteries.

His customers are his friends and he has time for all of them as they drop in to make a purchase or just have a chat. Which is why it's been difficult for Nalin to decide that now is the time to shut up shop.

"Some customers I've had since the day I opened," he said. "Or I might know their children who still keep in touch. I've enjoyed every day being here and that's always been because of the people. But I'm 77, and now is the time.

"The success of Galaxy would have been impossible without the blessings in work ethics my parents gave me and my siblings, and the support we received from previous owner Martin Beckworth and his parents, retail reps and suppliers and of course our customers and fellow traders."

When Nalin started up in 1979, Galaxy could have been a jewellery store as he had connections in the trade but it quickly changed into a baby products emporium and then the general store that has kept him in business for almost five decades.

"We were the first store in the UK to stock Pampers nappies in 1980," he said. "An American lady came in asking for them so I rang Proctor and Gamble who were just about to launch the brand in the UK and they sent some to me, making me

their first outlet in this country." Before Nalin goes, he wants to help young families again by offering a free set of Ladybird books featuring fairy tales and Beatrix Potter, to any mother who drops in on a first-come, first-served basis.

He expects to bring down the shutters for the final time later in March, 47 years to the month since he first opened. With his new-found spare time, he hopes to refurbish the premises, potentially to make it ready for another shop, and spend more time enjoying his garden.

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