

Be a friend of Market Place playground

The Friends of Market Place Playground is five years old and is looking for new committee members to ensure it remains an N2 community space to be proud of in the coming years.

Samantha Haycock, on behalf of the group, said: "We formed in January 2021 to save Market Place Playground from development and campaign for a new green space full of nature, play and community. Together we have achieved that, and more.

"If you are interested in play, arts, nature, improving the local community and making new friends, and have four to eight hours a month to spare, we would love to hear from you. We particularly encourage parents of under-fives and those with an interest in social media to get in touch."

For more details send an email introducing yourself to: friendsofmarketplace@gmail.com



Walk and talk: The current Friends committee members at the Market Place Playground. Image Jonas Stockfleth

An example of the Friends' activities is a new water bottle filling station being installed in the playground at the end of last month. They hope it will be a boon to families during the summer months, as well as helping to reduce plastic waste all year round.

20mph petition

A petition has been started asking Barnet Council to implement a 20mph zone on Fortis Green, N2, from the High Road up to the Haringey border and on the residential roads to the south of Fortis Green.

Organiser John Jo Hammill said Fortis Green and the roads to the south are now an isolated area of 30mph roads, surrounded by areas with a speed limit of 20mph. He said it creates confusion for drivers leaving or entering this 30mph pocket.

The petition states that drivers may think that the nature of Fortis Green as a long straight road and the present 30mph limit means that they can increase their speed safely but this is not the case as Fortis Green is primarily residential with many off-street driveways,

plus it provides the main access for the smaller residential roads to the south, some with limited visibility at junctions.

Collision data suggests six incidents causing injury on this section of Fortis Green during the last 10 years and another six similar incidents on the roads to the south during the same period. This petition runs until Friday 13 March and can be found at <https://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/mgEPetitionDisplay.aspx?ID=392>

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Moments of happiness: Young Ukrainian children have fun with soft toys brought to them by Driving Aid to Ukraine

Call to keep the aid to Ukraine moving

By Lynn Winton

It is now four years since former NHS director Michael Byrne watched the shocking TV footage of Russian tanks rolling into Ukraine and made a promise that he would dedicate his considerable experience and energies into organising humanitarian aid transports until there was no more need of his efforts.

On that day the organisation Driving Aid to Ukraine was born. Fellow East Finchley residents read about his story in The Archer and flocked to his house with offers of goods and donations for hospitals, orphanages and the 13 million displaced people. Some also joined him to co-drive the seven-day return journey across Europe taking trucks to the Polish-Ukrainian border.

There is no sign of an end to Ukraine's nightmare and so Michael carries on the Herculean task he set himself, with ever larger articulated lorries, packed with tons of desperately needed diverse items requested by the aid organisations on the ground, which can range from generators, wheelchairs and crutches to baby food, medical kits, warm clothes and heavy duty tools. An astounding 33 trucks into his mission, Michael is busy fundraising for the fuel for lorry number 34. He said: "We have 14 tons of excellent quality donated goods ready to go, but as always we are limited by waiting for cash donations purely to cover fuel costs." "After the first year I decided to out-source the transports to other drivers as it's crucial I am here organising everything else. There is no problem with the sourcing of items, as we are trusted to deliver by major supply partners like the Goods for Good Charity, but how I'm going to raise the money to deliver them is constantly on

my mind." Locally, Michael has a loyal band of volunteers, led by retired teacher Nicola Cousins, who is the main contact in East Finchley for receiving donated goods. Internationally, it's a huge multi team effort. Recently a Ukrainian delegation requested a meeting with Michael and briefed him on

increasing weekly.

His determination and true grit has already kept thousands of people in Ukraine protected. He knows only too well that conditions are utterly dire and whilst the war rages on he will never forget his promise. Lists of goods needed can be found at www.drivingaidtoukraine.org



Volunteers, including charity founder Michael Byrne, pack up another lorry ready to travel

the task ahead of looking after 72,000 seriously injured servicemen and 2,000 orphaned children, with numbers where you will also find a link to a

donating page and contact numbers. Michael's direct no is 07791 912389. Michael and Nicola would also love to hear from other potential volunteers.



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