



Could you be a volunteer at the Festival in 2026?

By Catherine Stewart

East Finchley Festival organisers are appealing for volunteers for this year's event as they make plans for the hugely popular annual fixture to return to Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 21 June.



Fun in the crowd: Festival goers enjoying last year's event in Cherry Tree Wood. Photo Mike Coles

Organisers are looking for volunteers to help out in a range of areas, both before the festival and on the day. Roles include an activities coordinator, stewards and traffic marshals, raffle ticket sellers and helpers for set-up.

They are keen to hear from anyone who can spare an hour or two on the day of the festival or who would like to join the organising team to be part of the final preparations.

East Finchley Community Festival, now in its 52nd year, is free to attend and funded entirely by donations and sponsorship from local businesses and organisations. As always, there will be live music and performances across two stages, and festival-goers will be able to enjoy a variety of international food and drink, a large craft and makers' market, along with sport and children's activities.

Festival manager Alison Roberts said: "Whether you can commit an hour or two a week, or just some time on the day, we have areas that need the support and expertise of our local community.

"We have a great team here at the Festival, who work hard to put the best possible event on each year, and we have a lot of fun doing so.

"We'd love to welcome anyone in the area who wants to join our group and help out in any way they can, so we can continue to make the festival such a wonderful day for everyone in and around East Finchley."

For more information about volunteering or sponsorship, please visit the East Finchley Festival website at www.eastfinchleyfestival.org

Town Team's first town square event

East Finchley Town Team along with residents and local groups are set to gather on Saturday 2 May between 2pm to 4pm to mark the opening of the newly improved public space on the High Road, N2, and to launch a campaign for its future as a town square.

Outside Amy's there will be music and performances to enjoy by Fixation Academy and local singing groups, along with a glitter bar and Tai Chi.

The recent removal of one of the shrubbery beds, supported by a small grant from Barnet Council, has created a more flexible, event-friendly area (The Archer, April 2026). The space is intended to support markets, community events and activities that bring more people onto the High Road. Details are on display in Egg and Bake, 122 High Road, N2.

However, the changes have also prompted discussion locally, particularly around

the loss of planting and how the space can best reflect wider ambitions to increase greenery and biodiversity.

Kate Brown, Chair of Town Team, said: "This is a first step, not the finished scheme. We've created a space that works better for the community; now we want to work with the council and local people to make it greener, more attractive, and something East Finchley can be truly proud of."

The Town Team would like to hear your ideas and suggestions on how the High Road can be improved and ideas for what they should do next. You can contact them at eftownteam@gmail.com



Back yard beauty: Visitors soaking up the atmosphere at Patsy Bailey and John Rance's garden in Muswell Hill

Get inspired by garden ideas

By Lynn Winton

It's the time of year when keen gardeners are frantically preparing to open their gardens to visitors for the National Garden Scheme, which raises millions of pounds for a host of nursing and healthcare charities, including Macmillan Nurses.

Visitors supporting their efforts will be able to enjoy a beautiful garden, tea and cake; and some will have a plant stall and various craft items for sale. It's a wonderful way to spend some time gathering ideas for your own garden, asking the owners for tips or just to while away an afternoon sitting in someone else's garden and meeting local friends.

Coming up on **Sunday 10 May** is perennial favourite 17 Princes Avenue N10, where owners Patsy Bailey and John Rance are busy taking cuttings and dividing plants for their plant stall, keeping slugs and snails off their renowned

Hosta collection and planning what cakes to make, including gluten-free and vegan options. There's a real garden party atmosphere with music from the Secret Life Sax quartet. It's a combined £6 entry with their near-neighbour's very different garden at 28 Princes Avenue.

In the heart of East Finchley, artists Stephen and Ruth Kersley are opening their beautiful garden at 66 Abbots Gardens, N2 on **Sunday 7 June**. There's a combination of dramatic grasses and fused glass, with mosaics surrounding a water feature. Fused glass amphorae, feathers, and leaves catch the eye amongst grasses,

ornamental shrubs, and perennials. A rose-bedecked archway leads to a quiet space with a vegetable plot, silver birches, and a slate pebble fountain.

Opening on **Sunday 19 July**, there's another local gem at 24 Twyford Avenue, N2, where Rachel Lindsay and Jeremy Pratt have created a traditional 'tea garden' set amidst vibrant cottage garden planting, with hidden shady nooks to explore.

Information about all the gardens is available online at ngs.org.uk and in the 'Yellow Book' available in garden centres, libraries and at the open gardens themselves.

That's worth a cuddle!

North London charity All Dogs Matter celebrated a £7,170 donation from new partners Raffle House, enough to support their animal welfare work for a week following a recent surge in pets being abandoned.



A gesture of appreciation from a happy dog

The charity, headquartered in East Finchley with a shop in Muswell Hill and kennels in Waltham Abbey, was founded

in 2009 by Ira Moss and actor Peter Egan. Its largely volunteer staff take about 30 calls each day and rehome between 350 and 400 dogs every year.

Last year, All Dogs Matter entered into a partnership with Raffle House, a prize draw provider that gives away multi-million-pound homes. When purchasing tickets, players can decide which charity they want to support.

"Already, the funds have made a big difference, being equivalent to the cost of an entire week of our operations," said Ira Moss. "We need £1,000 a day to run All Dogs Matter including veterinary costs, medicine, food, kennels and emergencies.

"Like other kennels in London, we are being overwhelmed as owners give up pets they can no longer take care of, many of which were purchased from unscrupulous breeders."