

‘Wiff Waff’ Comes Home to East Village E20

- **Free to play table tennis tables have arrived at the former Athletes’ Village to celebrate three years since London 2012 and part of Ping! London’s free ping pong festival**
- **Britain’s number one Table Tennis player - and London 2012 Olympian - Paul Drinkhall was joined at the launch by the under-16 British champion, James Smith**



Today, East Village, the former London 2012 Athletes’ Village, celebrated the arrival of two new table tennis tables. Marking three years on since London 2012, East Village has partnered with Ping! London to get its 5,000 residents active, socialising and discovering a new hobby.

According to the Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, table tennis was invented on the dining tables of Britain. To celebrate the coming home of the sport originally titled ‘Wiff Waff’, East Village invited Britain’s number one, Paul Drinkhall to launch the two tables.

Olympian Drinkhall, who represented Great Britain at the London 2012 Olympic Games, was invited to battle it out against the up and coming Table Tennis champion, 14 year old James Smith. The young talent is being sponsored by Get Living London, the owner and manager of the privately rented homes at East Village, through SportsAid as one of our future Olympic champion hopes.

Paul Drinkhall said: ‘I was delighted to be invited back to East Village to support the launch of the table tennis tables. It is incredible how much the area has developed since I stayed

here three years ago during the Olympics. I have so many fond memories of my time and I'm thrilled to launch these two new tables to encourage the new residents of East Village to get into the sport.'

James Smith, 14, commented: 'Playing against my biggest idol was a great experience for me. I was eleven years old during the 2012 Olympics and it fuelled my passion for the sport even more. It's a great honour to be back at the site of some of the biggest moments in British sporting history - and I loved playing against Paul!'

Neil Young, Chief Executive Officer at Get Living London said: 'It has been a pleasure having Paul Drinkhall back at East Village and witnessing the talent of the next generation in James Smith. Almost three years on from London 2012 it's fantastic to see more than 5,000 residents living in the former Athletes' Village. The arrival of these Table Tennis tables in East Village coincides with our programme of free summer events and we look forward to seeing people enjoying them throughout the summer and beyond.'

The two table tennis tables are situated at different locations in East Village to enjoy at any time. Residents will need to come and borrow bats from the Get Living London Welcome Office and use them for 45 minutes at a time for a £5 refundable session.

Throughout the summer, East Village will be hosting coaching sessions with Table Tennis England's coaches. The aim is to encourage people of all ages to learn the basics of the game in a fun and engaging way. The sessions will be free for anyone to join, as each class will be tailored to the number of people attending. Under 10s will need to be accompanied by an adult.

More information: www.eastvillagelondon.co.uk and 020 3714 8080

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About East Village:

- East Village is London's newest neighbourhood and first Olympic legacy village on the doorstep of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park
- Set in 67 acres of breath-taking parkland, East Village includes more than 25 acres of mature parklands, new parks and open space
- Positioned next to the world-class sporting venues of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, East Village residents have easy access to a further 560 acres of parkland, waterways, and nature trails connected by paths for jogging, cycling and walking
- One of the best connected neighbourhoods in London with Stratford International and Stratford Regional stations offering links to key locations such as the West End in 20 minutes, St Pancras International in seven minutes (by High Speed 1), Canary Wharf in nine minutes and London airports within an hour
- East Village is a thriving place for residents and visitors, offering a world-class education campus Chobham Academy for students aged 3-18, a state-of-the-art health centre and plans for an eclectic mix of 30 shops, restaurants, cafés and bars
- Homes at East Village are available through two landlords:
 - Get Living London - is the residential owner of East Village managing a variety of homes for private rent
 - Triathlon Homes - manage the affordable tenures at East Village, comprising social rent, intermediate rent and shared ownership

More about Paul Drinkhall

Paul Drinkhall, British table tennis player, is currently ranked British number one winning the English Championships four times and representing his country at the London 2012 Olympic Games. Taking up the bat at the young age of seven, Paul was scouted as having great talent immediately and has since been a National Champion in every age group so far eligible to compete in. This success was highlighted by being shortlisted for the BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year twice. At the Commonwealth Games he has won two silver medals and one bronze and recently at the European Games in Baku in June he was seeded as world number 16.

More about James Smith

James Smith is a 14 year old young table tennis champion from Orpington, Kent. So far in his short career, he has taken part in four major tournaments including the Spanish Youth Open, National Championships and the National Cadet Masters. He has got to the semi-final twice and is being sponsored by Get Living London at East Village, through SportsAid, as one of our future Olympic Champion hopes.