

The Barnet Society

WINTER 2024 | £2 (WHEN SOLD)

Mays Lane travellers' site plan goes to public inquiry

An action group formed by residents is to be a core participant at a public inquiry to oppose plans for a travellers' caravan site on farmland off Mays Lane, Barnet. An appeal has been launched to raise money for legal representation, writes Nick Jones.

Quinta Village Green Residents Association has secured its position as one of the main parties at the inquiry to be held in January.

This will enable the association to present its case against the stationing of caravans on a two-acre paddock which is currently used for grazing horses.

Mays Lane residents fear that if the go ahead is given it would be yet another unwelcome development in the Dollis Valley Green Belt.

An appeal to fund the cost of hiring a barrister to represent the residents – who can ask questions on their behalf – met an immediate response.

Within a matter of days over £3,000 had been raised towards the target of £14,000 including with almost 70 donations ranging from £10 to £250.

www.gofundme.com/f/help-save-the-green-belt-on-mays-lane-in-barnet

Gina Theodorou, the first chair of the newly revived residents' association, was delighted with the response. They had to act quickly because their first deadline is to prepare for a case conference to be held in mid- November which will set out the procedures for the planning inquiry in the New Year

Landowner Patrick Casey purchased the Mays Lane paddock from the adjoining Brethren Gospel Hall, which is now the Centre for Islamic Enlightenment.

He launched an appeal after Barnet



Mays Lane site

“We support the rights of travellers to have a site that they can call home, but we do not believe there should be any development which materially harms the openness and integrity of the Green Belt” *Gina Theodorou, residents' group*

Council refused to grant planning permission for two caravans for residential use, together with hardstanding and adjoining day rooms.

His application for change of use is now to be tested at the planning inquiry in January. There were over 1,300 objections to the original application. Ms Theodorou said the residents' association welcomed Barnet Council's decision to continue its objection on planning merits.

“Our campaign is strictly about preserving the Green Belt,” said Ms Theodorou.

“We support the rights of travellers to have a site that they can call home, but we do not believe there should be any development which materially harms the

openness and integrity of the Green Belt.

“Underhill is the third most deprived ward in the Borough of Barnet with the third highest rate of residents living in social accommodation including flats which have no private gardens.

“Green Belt land is vital to our health and wellbeing, and we have already lost green space in the Dollis Valley when Partridge Close was developed on former farmland and when a meeting hall for the Brethren was approved on the other side of Mays Lane.”

An early opportunity for residents to raise concerns was a meeting with Councillor Tim Roberts, who represents Underhill ward.

Ms Theodorou led the deputation to

Continued on Page 2

Continued from Page 1

explain their opposition to the siting of caravans when Councillor Roberts met the group at his monthly surgery at St Stephen's church hall in Bells Hill.

The association takes its name from the nearby Quinta Village Green – a 7.5 acre playing field next to the abandoned Quinta Club which after a long campaign by the residents was awarded village green status in 2010.

A residents' association, which was first established in 2007 to prevent a football club taking over the playing field, has now been resurrected and named Quinta Village Green Residents' Association in recognition of their original success in preserving an important environmental site and in enhancing the surrounding Green Belt countryside.

"There is now huge concern among residents about a development that would



Residents put their objections to Councillor Tim Roberts (right)

threaten the integrity and openness of the woods, fields and farmland which surrounds our village green," said Ms Theodorou. "Increasingly we are seeing signs from the new government that housing priorities could undermine the Green Belt.

"Approval in the past for Partridge Close and the Brethren meeting hall was given due to 'special circumstances' but

they are a perfect example of precedents undermining and weakening the integrity of the Green Belt and a line has to be drawn somewhere.

"We would support and encourage Barnet Council to work with any travellers who are identified as needing caravan pitches and these could be on brownfield sites within the borough or on sites within neighbouring boroughs such as Hertsmeare and Enfield, where sites already exist or are being considered."

In the build up to the re-launch of the Quinta Village Green association, one resident approached the Chipping Barnet MP Dan Tomlinson to ask if he would meet them at the paddock and take up their case.

In his reply, Mr Tomlinson said he had taken note of the concerns expressed by nearby residents and he was sure the planning inspector would take full account.

Future of 84B bus already in doubt

School pupils are just some of the regular passengers who rely on the reinstated 84B bus service between Potters Bar and High Barnet – a route that needs additional funding if its future operation is to be guaranteed, writes Nick Jones.

Barnet Council and MP Dan Tomlinson are being urged to put pressure on Transport for London to help fund the service at least within the boundaries of the Greater London Authority.

After anger over Metroline's withdrawal of the previous 84 route from New Barnet station to St Albans, Hertsmeare Council stepped in a year ago with funding for a replacement service connecting Potters Bar to High Barnet.

The introduction of the 84B by Central Connect was greeted with relief by many residents in both towns, not least because it provided a reliable connection for patients attending either Barnet Hospital or Potters Bar Community Hospital.

Other regular passengers include pupils from QE Girls' School who take it from homes in Hadley Highstone and Potters Bar.

A year after it was launched with a champagne send off, Hertsmeare Councillor Nik Oakley, who led the campaign to persuade the borough council to intervene, is warning that further pledges of financial support are urgently needed if the future of the service is to be guaranteed.

Sharon Boast, a long-standing High Barnet supporter of the replacement 84B, has campaigned to put pressure on TfL to help guarantee the running of what she says is a vital service.



Further pledges of financial support are needed if the future of the 84B Potters Bar-Barnet service is to be guaranteed

She has asked High Barnet Councillors Emma Whysall and Paul Edwards to urge Barnet Council to help and wrote to the Chipping Barnet MP to see if he could intervene with TfL.

In his reply, Mr Tomlinson said he had been in touch with Barnet and Hertsmeare councils and he would see if there was any chance of future funding of the 84B being considered as part of changes in bus funding under discussion at the Department of Transport.

Barnet, like other London boroughs, did not have the same capacity as Hertsmeare to help fund public transport and Mr Tomlinson agreed that the campaign to get people to use the 84B – which currently averages about 145 passenger journeys per day – would strengthen the case for preserving the route.



Naresh started at Wilkinson's in 1982

Naresh bows out after 42 years

Barnet High Street pharmacist Naresh Maini is retiring after over 40 years of what customers say has been an outstanding record of dependable and friendly service and advice, writes Nick Jones.

He started work at Wilkinson the chemist – at 190 High Street – in 1982 when his family purchased the business, and he soon established a loyal clientele.

Naresh and his wife Kusam say they are looking forward to retirement, but he is hoping to continue working occasionally for the new owners so hopes to keep in touch with the many customers he knows so well.

“I was only 27 when I started in the shop,” said Naresh. “High Barnet has changed so much in the last 40 years.

“Back then the town was much more like a village which had everything. Sadly, over the years, we have lost so much, not least landmarks in the High Street like the Salisbury Hotel.”

Like other essential shops, Wilkinson remained open for business during the Covid pandemic and Naresh remembers so well how much this was appreciated by the community.

“We were open all the time, and we did our best as we knew how much people relied on their chemist.

“What has had a real impact is that over the years we got to know our regulars so well, most of them by name.

“Sadly, we have lost some familiar faces, but we have seen families, and their children grow up and of course, some have moved on.

“We have just become grandparents so that will keep us busy, and we want to do a bit of travelling, but I hope to be back in the shop occasionally as I want to keep my mind active.”

Naresh grew up in Kenya with his parents who moved to the UK in the early 1970s. He went to Bradford University and trained as a pharmacist.

His commitment to the pharmacy remains strong. On the Wilkinson front door is a poster from the National Pharmacy Association promoting the campaign to save pharmacies.

Hundreds are said to be at risk of closure following the Budget changes in employers' National Insurance and the squeeze on NHS resources.

“Ten pharmacies are said to be closing every week because the NHS payments on prescriptions are not enough to keep us all in business,” said Naresh pointing to the poster:

“Time to act. Pharmacies are closing. Sound the alarm. Save our pharmacies.”

Builders Arms nightmare

Bar staff at the appropriately named Builders Arms in New Barnet are trying to limit disruption after it ended up in the middle of a building site.

Construction vehicles have regularly blocked access to Albert Road where Fairview New Homes is building blocks of flats.

Barnet Council designated the roadway outside the pub as the authorised stopping point for the delivery of building materials for the new Park Quarter flats.

The pub had to cease opening at lunch times, losing six hours potential trade a day.

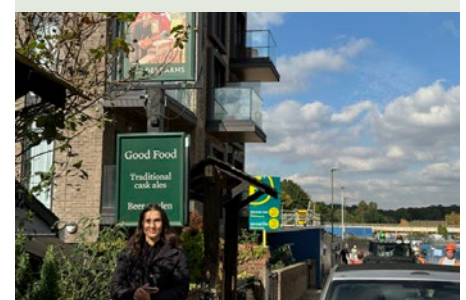
After East Barnet councillor Simon Radford and the Chipping Barnet MP, Dan Tomlinson intervened, Barnet Council issued instructions requiring Fairview to keep the highway clear of work and equipment and to sweep the road surface.

“There has been some improvement, and we have had a face-to-face meeting with a manager from Fairview,” said assistant manager Nina Hristova (below).

“What we have lost is our lunchtime trade because Albert Road is not very welcoming for customers during the day.”

Ms Hristova said the Builders Arms was in correspondence with Fairview about receiving compensation for the loss of lunchtime trade

On some days Albert Road had been completely blocked by builders' trucks.



Town centres

This year's Society Newsletters have focused on key themes of our work: housing, green issues, transport and – in this issue – town centres. Over the next three pages, we focus on the local shopping centres in and around our Chipping Barnet constituency: New Barnet, Greenhill Parade, Whetstone and Barnet High Street, and we look at the probable redevelopment of The Spires.

Robin Bishop writes

The commercial success and environmental quality of these centres have been degrading for decades, as often bemoaned in our Newsletters. But the process has been accelerated by the recent growth of online shopping and services. Under the circumstances, that they've survived Covid-19 is remarkable.

Barnet Council has embedded support for town centres in its new Local Plan in several specific planning policies. The Plan is due to be formally adopted in December. But Council commitment in the form of plans and investment is severely constrained by its lack of finance and planning resources.

In North Finchley, it's working with developer Regal London to build new housing and community facilities on existing car parks. And over in Edgware, Ballymore's outline planning application is in for a massive mixed-use development on the site of the present shopping precinct and bus depot.

In Chipping Barnet, a Community Plan was developed four years ago with input from around 750 local residents and organisations. It resulted in a pop-up bar and workspace on the High Street, but they've now closed and the many other creative suggestions seem to have been shelved.

New housing, therefore, seems the best hope for stabilising our town centres. An influx of mainly younger residents should boost demand for convenience shopping, food and drink, gyms, personal grooming and the like. And developers' contributions via Community Infrastructure Levies and Section 106 agreements should pay for additional health, educational, environmental and other improvements.

The quantity of new homes projected in Barnet Vale, High Barnet and Underhill wards over the next 15 years is considerable. The Local Plan allocates sites for over 1,300 units. Recent planning approvals for the Victoria Quarter, Whalebones and other substantial housing schemes will add another 1,000 or so. Many smaller projects (eg converting space above shops) will also be approved.

A conservative estimate, therefore, might be at least 2,500 new homes in or close to our town centres within the next 10 years. Assuming an average of 2.5 residents in each home, that would mean at least 6,250 new residents. That's a striking 15% rise in the population of the three wards – enough to make a beneficial impact on our town centres, let's hope.



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Aspirations for The Spires

Radical plans surfaced about two years ago. BYM Capital, the then owners of The Spires (including the multi-storey car park and the car park off St Albans Road & Chipping Close) proposed to replace most of the existing buildings, except for those on the High Street & Stapylton Road, with slabs of 4-6 storeys housing around 250 flats.

Our view was that we could accept such a quantity of flats in return for real improvements to the site. BYM's scheme exhibited in April 2023 offered hardly any; on the contrary, it would have worsened pedestrian experience and disrupted existing trade, possibly fatally. Many locals shared our disappointment

Revisions were promised, but by the end of 2023 BYM were bankrupt. Since then, no more has been heard of redevelopment – though it can't be ruled out for long.

The absence of fresh proposals opens up an excellent opportunity to debate what really matters to us in any future proposals for the site. Here are my initial thoughts, together with some examples of what's worked elsewhere:



Hampstead Garden Suburb gateway, Finchley Road – A classic Arts & Crafts shopping parade with flats above.

1 A mixed retail/business/residential development would have more vitality than a single use.

2 An imaginative and sensitive masterplan is needed, with better links to local destinations and potentially the TA site, and conducive to walking, cycling and wheelchairs.



Duke of York Square, Chelsea – A commercially and socially successful new precinct in a blend of traditional and modern styles.

3 A high-density solution is desirable (but not high-rise). Skilful layout and massing can accommodate a high density of residents comfortably

and with privacy in buildings no higher than 4 or (exceptionally) 5 storeys. Excellent examples can be seen in Barnet and elsewhere.



931 High Road, North Finchley – On the edge of a typical Barnet suburb, these mansion flats make an urbane contribution to the street yet retain a domestic scale.

4 Tall blocks would be unacceptable. They would compete with Chipping Barnet's traditional landmarks, St John the Baptist's tower and the twin spires, dominate the Wood Street and Monken Hadley Conservation Areas and overshadow existing streets and greenery.

5 The existing market must be kept (but not necessarily on the same location) and given room for growth, perhaps in a town square.



Barnet Market – A symbol of our town identity for over eight centuries, it's proved surprisingly resilient against development threats and Covid-19.

6 Safe provision must be made for disabled drop-off and pick-up, and improvements made to the Stapylton Road bus interchange and pocket park.



Spires service entrance, Stapylton Road – At peak times, a hazardous confusion of cars, buses, lorries and pedestrians.



Spires pocket park, Stapylton Road – If use of cars is to be reduced, enhancing the experience of arrival and departure by bus must be a priority.



Chipping Barnet skyline – Except for St John's tower (about 26.2m or 9 storeys high), The Spires themselves and Lightfield flats (4 storeys), buildings in and around the High Street don't exceed 3 storeys in height. But higher buildings with stepped building cross-sections, careful siting and other design strategies could avoid harm to the street scene.

7 There could be a considered and managed reduction in car parking.

8 Provision for cycle parking must be improved.

9 New housing must offer a balance of market and affordable homes and variety of unit size, and include provision for key workers.

10 A design solution reusing as much existing fabric as possible (including the two spires of course) would be welcome, and ideally net zero sustainability.

11 We must insist on high design quality of buildings, urban realm and landscape, including better open space for meeting and lingering, plenty of greenery and respect for neighbouring buildings and Conservation Areas.

12 Disruption of shopping by construction must be kept to a minimum, and fair compensation offered for lost trade.

The Spires (previous construction works) – Unless pedestrian and service access is maintained, construction carefully phased and temporary retail accommodation provided, existing tenants will shutter permanently, further accelerating the decline of the High Street.



What next?

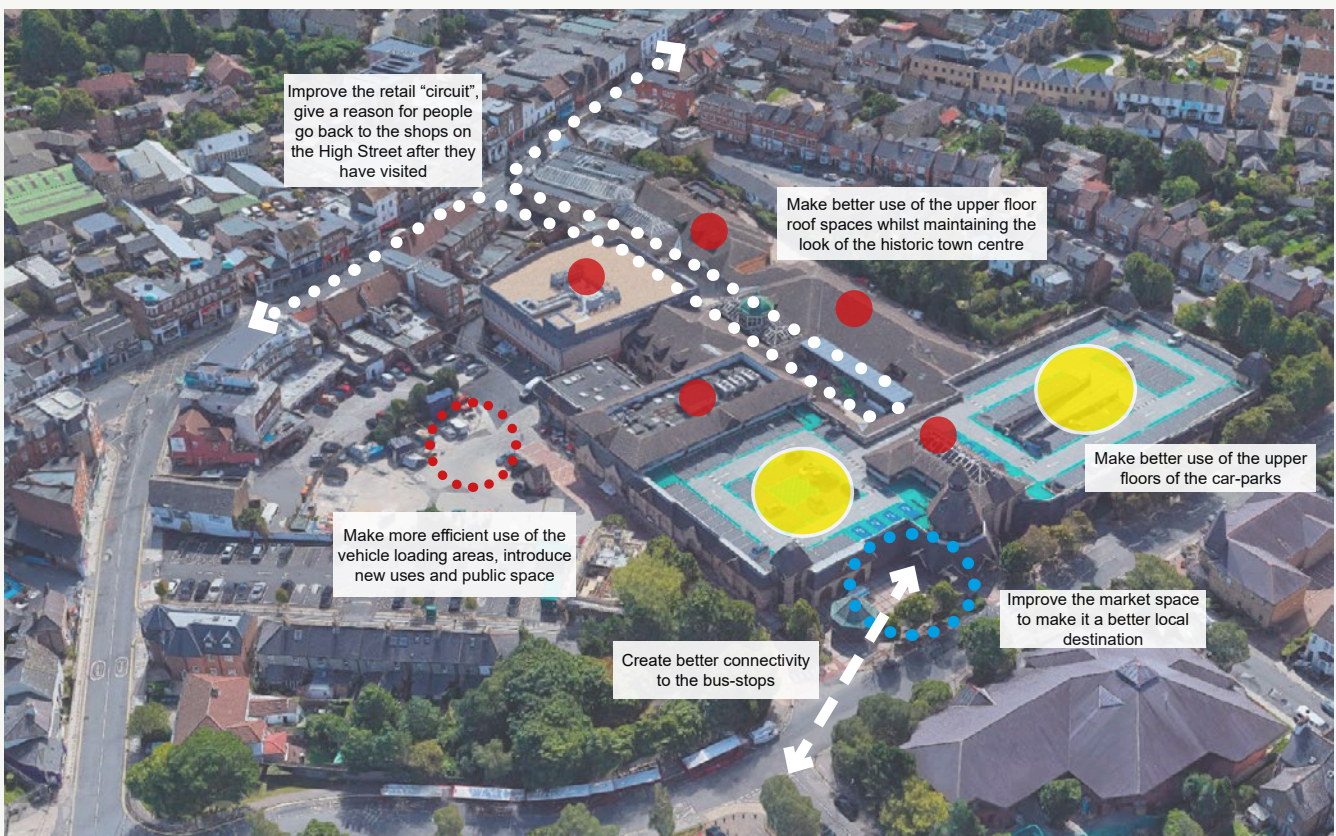
We're keen to contribute to a community vision of a more prosperous and pleasant Spires neighbourhood in collaboration with the Town Team, Barnet Residents Association and all other individuals or groups with a stake in our neighbourhood.

A good way forward could be a series of informal workshops in early 2025 to identify priorities and design principles. Simon Kaufman's graphic (below) illustrates some of the key factors to consider.

Once those are broadly agreed we could consider initial design ideas (though we don't have the technical survey and cost information to offer specific solutions).

If you'd like to offer relevant expertise – and have time to get involved in the new year – please contact me at info@barnetsociety.org.uk

The Spires – Key design considerations for redevelopment (graphic by Simon Kaufman Architects)



Here today, but the unspoilt fields will soon disappear for ever

Final blow to nine-year fight over Whalebones

The Mayor of London has decided not to oppose Barnet Council's approval of 115 homes on the Whalebones fields, writes Robin Bishop.

The planning application was approved by the Council seven months ago but needed signing off by the Mayor, who delegated the decision to his deputy Jules Pipe. On 14 October Pipe decided not to intervene.

Pipe's key point was that '...the proposed redevelopment of the site to provide new housing, publicly accessible open space and a new community/educational building as well as the retention of agricultural activity, is acceptable (on balance) in line with London Plan Policies...'

The Society has never objected to some housing to fund reversion for the artists, bee-keepers and the current tenant farmer, and for maintenance of the estate. But we believe that 115 homes is over-development of the site. It will seriously harm the Wood Street Conservation Area, which at present embodies Barnet's 750-year history from meadow to market, and undermines the protection

“We believe that 115 homes is over-development of the site. It will seriously harm the Wood Street Conservation Area”

that Conservation Area status should guarantee. For our more than 2,000 members and supporters who petitioned the Mayor to save Whalebones, it's also a sad end to nine years of campaigning to keep a unique agricultural and natural resource, and to reimagine the site for new, fruitful and healthy uses.

The story may not be over. Despite years of conception and a legal agreement as part of planning approval, there are no known plausible arrangements to provide and manage the public open space and residual smallholding.

What lessons can the Society learn? First, that our views carry weight because we keep our members well informed via our newsletter and website, and consult

them on major issues such as Whalebones and the Victoria Quarter.

Second, we can make a difference. We persuaded the Council to reject the original application, and a Planning Inspector to support that decision. As a result, the number of homes was reduced by 25% and some greenery saved.

Finally, we can't win big planning cases on our own. At Whalebones, we benefited from hundreds of objections to the planning applications by non-members, from social media and from an online petition organised by others. Next time – maybe if The Spires or High Barnet Station development proposals come back to life – we'll need a broad alliance of all the sympathisers we can muster.



Winter Report

By Robin Bishop

PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT

GOVERNMENT

The Society submitted a detailed response to the Government’s consultation on amendments to the National Planning Policy Framework and other planning reforms. I sent a copy to Dan Tomlinson MP, who promised to raise our ‘Grey Belt’ concerns with the Housing Minister.

Although planning reforms won’t be enacted before next year, applications for major housing and data centre developments have already been submitted for Green Belt land N of Barnet. For details see below.

MAYOR OF LONDON

Sadiq Khan’s deputy declined to save Whalebones from development (Page 7).

BARNET COUNCIL

A recent survey places Barnet planners in the top third of enforcers of listed building consent over the last 10 years. It’s issued



Whalebones

13 legal notices, less than half of those issued by Hackney, Islington, Kensington & Chelsea or Tower Hamlets – and only a 25th of Westminster’s total.

ANTICIPATED

Meadow Works site, Pricklers Hill, A1000

– We’ve been consulted on redeveloping this site for self-storage and some other

commercial uses. The scheme looks more neighbourhood-friendly than previous residential proposals.

Barnet FC The club has consulted the public on a new stadium on Underhill Green Belt. We’ve submitted a number of initial comments and questions.



David Lee (centre)

Unfortunately the Council still can’t offer a date to plant its promised **David Lee memorial tree**.

No word on **The Spires**. See our town centre spread (See Pages 4-6)



Existing South Mimms Green Belt

SELECTED CASES

APPROVED

Intec House, 49 Moxon Street – After an appeal against refusal of a 7-storey block with 96 flats and a new application for eight storeys with 113 flats (none affordable), a compromise has been reached: approval of the latter scheme but including 15% affordable units.

St Mary’s Church House, Camlet Way – We’d welcome a better hall, but objected on the grounds that the structural and economic case for demolition of a locally listed building hadn’t been made, the replacement design is inadequate and external works are insufficiently considered.

REFUSED

Lightfield, 164 High Street (fka Brake Shear House) – Shanly Homes proposed to replace the affordable workspace (for which we fought several years ago) with 9 flats. We objected.

DECISIONS AWAITED

98-100 High Street (fka Foxtons) – Workspace plus 12 flats above. Neutral but with comments.

118 High Street (the Grade II-listed former Barnet Press) – Flats over Costas. Neutral.

Off Langley Row, Hadley Highstone (GB) – Rebuilding of former stables. Neutral.

Fortune House, 49 Moxon Street – Next door to Intec House and by the same developers, but only 6 storeys high and less harmful to the Green Belt, so we were neutral.

Centre for Islamic Enlightening, Mays Lane (GB) – Alterations and additional floor to former Brethren Meeting Hall. We were neutral but asked for some conditions to be imposed.

GONE TO APPEAL



Mays Lane between Chesterfield Farm and Brethren Meeting Hall – We were among 1,304 objectors to two travellers’ pitches in the Green Belt (see pages 1-2).

Abbey Arts Centre, East Barnet – We objected to replacement and new buildings.



APPEAL WITHDRAWN

Intec House, 49 Moxon Street (2nd application) – Withdrawn as part of deal with planners over affordable housing

(see the first paragraph of this story).

HERTSMERE - MAJOR ATTACKS ON THE GREEN BELT

Land North of Barnet Lane, Borehamwood – We and many others objected to 220 houses on the Village Green and adjacent Horses Field. A public inquiry is being held.

Land South of Potters Bar – An outline application is in for about 900 homes on fields north of the M25. The site was specifically excluded from development in the latest draft of Hertsmer Council’s Local Plan, and we’ve objected.

Land East of South Mimms – Two outline applications: one (already approved) for warehousing; the other for three data centres. Together, these are nearly twice the size of the M25 services area. Since the government sees data centres as essential for UK growth, it’s likely to encourage such projects.

If the South Mimms data centres and housing south of Potters Bar are approved, about three-quarters of the Green Belt north of the M25 between Junctions 23 & 24 will be built over – which would be a devastating loss of countryside and biodiversity.

Proposed warehousing & data centres, South Mimms (visualisation by ZOA): bottom L – present M25 services; bottom centre – warehousing; middle – 3 data centres





Funds sought to restore Highland Gardens

A fund-raising appeal has shown strong support for a campaign to restore to working order a pond and waterfall in the centre of Highlands Gardens in New Barnet.

Until recent years a stream ran almost the length of the park and, complete with footbridges and stepping stones, was a magical setting alongside a trail of 12 rare trees.

After falling into a rather sorry state in recent years, Leicester Road resident Ruth Pateman launched an appeal on GoFundMe to see if to see if she could generate interest in saving the pond and waterfall.

Her initial target of £2,000 was reached with ease and has been reset at £3,000.

Ms Pateman acknowledged that restoring what is the park's central feature will be a huge expense,

Although there is basic maintenance of the park, the pond and waterfall have been in a state of disrepair for some years.

After drying out each summer, water collects along the bed of the stream following autumn and winter rain but stagnant pools full of pond weed are a far cry from its former glory.

Much of the area around the waterfall, pond and stream is overgrown and without an operational pumping system, there is no flowing water.

"What I am trying to do is to see whether there is community support for a campaign to get the pond, stream and waterfall back into working order," said Ms Pateman.

"Over the years the Friends of Highlands Gardens have done so much to preserve and maintain the park. We all owe them so much.

"As residents, we also accept that Barnet Council's parks department has very limited resources, so it is up the local community to see if through this appeal we can kick start a rescue."

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/community-project-save-highlands-pond-and-waterfall>

Deceased author's book is launched

A children's story written by a Barnet author before her death has been published by her husband Tony Barnes, who organised a book launch in her memory at Barnet Museum.

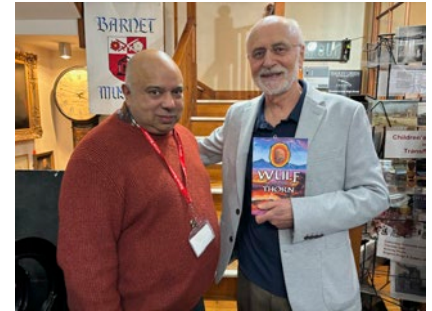
Wulf and the Power of Thorn is the second of three books by Jo Barnes who was a founder member of a local writers' group. Her first book, *Odd Fox Out*, was published last year.

Mr Barnes intends to publish all three in tribute to her dedication in creating exciting story lines for children.

Past and present teachers who taught with Jo at schools across London were among the gathering of friends and colleagues who attended the launch party.

Wulf and the Power of Thorn – aimed at children of ten and upwards – is a historical fantasy set in 1066 after the English won the Battle of Hastings.

Thirteen-year-old Wulf went into battle against the Normans with a good luck charm that his mother gave him.



Tony Barnes (right) with Mike Noronha, curator of Barnet Museum, at launch of new children's book *Wulf and the Power of Thorn*.

Talent on display

Local shopkeepers have every incentive to think up some imaginative festive themes for their Christmas window presentations - this year there is a £300 prize for the most attractive display

Chipping Barnet Town Team is organising the competition in a bid to encourage traders to brighten up the High Street.

Traditional sweet shop Hopscotch Essentials, which has a proud record in thinking up enticing window displays, is promising a creative lookback at the traditions of Christmas.

At the other end of the High Street, staff at Wanders Shoe Shop are working on their seasonal display – possibly based around the classic Christmas tale of *The Elves and the Shoemaker* or its American counterpart *The Elf on the Shelf*.

When Barnet Council dropped the idea of running a window display competition again this Christmas, the Town Team stepped in with the added attraction of a £300 prize for the best display.

Hopscotch's proprietors Alice and Michael Kentish are delighted that the Town Team is doing its best to encourage shopkeepers and traders to brighten up the High Street.

Their shop selling traditional sweets and other essentials finished third in last year's borough wide Christmas window competition.

"We did get a plug in the Barnet Council magazine but the prospect of winning a £300 prize is going to spur us all on," said Alice Kentish.

"What we have in mind is a display which will build on the history of Christmas. I already have some props in mind but I'm not going to give anything away."



Local artists back in the frame

Barnet Guild of Artists have bounced back with a bumper annual show after rebuilding membership and support following the difficult years of the covid pandemic.

There were 156 entries including paintings, lino prints and some ceramics on display at the Wesley Hall in Stapylton Road.

Guild co-ordinator Toni Smith said they were delighted with the response.

The annual exhibition resumed last year after a four-year break because of the

pandemic. Membership has recovered with about 120 active members.

“We now have a new website – www.barnetguildofartists.com – which has been creating interest and our lino printing courses have proved popular.”

Pride of place on the stage was an acrylic garden scene and two lino cuts by former member Marilynne Humphris, who died earlier this year.

The show’s well-attended preview was opened by the Chipping Barnet MP Dan Tomlinson.



Toni Smith, guild co-ordinator, seen above right with membership secretary Helen Leake (left), admiring two paintings by Helena Hung done with Chinese brush drawing on rice paper with ink and colour.



Wow, that’s scary!

Imaginatively dressed scarecrows sitting and standing among the pews added colour and fun to a weekend of events at St Mark’s Church, Barnet Vale, to celebrate harvest festival.

All told there were 25 entries for St Mark’s flower and scarecrow celebration – and the 14 scarecrows spread around the church proved a great attraction.

A range of community and youth groups took part. St Mark’s aim was to give the traditional harvest festival events a fresh twist and welcome newcomers to the church.

Church wardens John and Caroline Hay, who organised the festival, were delighted with the support and interest.

John Hay, who is chair of the Barnet Society, said the entries from the 1st Monken Hadley Guides and the 4th Barnet Boys Brigade and Girls Company had been complemented by several scarecrows decorated at flower arranging classes run by Ursula Stone from the Flower Bank project.

An off-beat entry had the title The Mucklowe’s Bench featuring Kerry and Kurtan, two characters from the TV comedy series *This Country*.

£12.5m special school opens

A new special school for autistic children in Moxon Street, Barnet, is full of surprises. A calm, safe playground on the roof top and a pink and purple sensory room are just two of the many innovative features.

Creating The Windmill

School out of the shell of a former warehouse is being described as “a brilliant example” of how to regenerate a dis-used commercial building for community use.

At a ceremony to celebrate the official opening of the £12.5 million new school, headteacher Ginny D’Odorico described The Windmill - which will eventually have 90 pupils - as an educational space where autism is embraced.

She praised the vision of those within local and national government and the education services who had done so much to establish a publicly funded school for boys and girls between the ages of five and 19.

At the start of autumn term, the school had 34 pupils, up from 15 last September, and this will increase steadily to reach its full intake of 90 within about two years.

Finding a site for a new special school had not been easy but working with Barnet Council, the Department of Education succeeded in purchasing the former clothing warehouse in Moxon Street and authorising the reconstruction.

Capital projects manager Andy Hamer said that as the father of an autistic daughter he believed that a special effort was needed to create schools to give “very vulnerable children” the best possible start to their academic life.

“By taking on an old warehouse and by adapting the shell of the building, which we have extended with a school assembly hall, we have created a brilliant new school...this is the way to utilise old buildings and regenerate the area.”

Perhaps the greatest wow factor on being shown around the school is an imaginative rooftop playground with includes a sheltered, quiet, area of seating, a wide play area and a securely fenced off area for ball games.

Val White, who has taken over as chair of the trustees, said the location in Moxon Street was ideal for the school.

She said: “At one end of the road are King George’s Fields and the Hadley countryside and close by at the other end of Moxon Street is Barnet High Street. Older children can walk up to the shops in the town centre and that is so important for them.”



Capital projects manager Andy Hamer with headteacher Ginny D’Odorico.



Winger Hayley Raso (left) and captain Bethany England (far right) met six-year-old Willow who was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy when she was 18 months old. Willow was the star of Noah's Ark's recent 'From that Moment' campaign, which raised more than £1 million and which was supported by Spurs

Spurs women visit hospice

Two leading members of Tottenham Hotspur women's team spent the afternoon meeting children and families at the Noah's Ark Children's Hospice in Byng Road, Barnet, as part of the club's long-standing support for its official charity partner, *writes Nick Jones.*

Winger Hayley Raso and captain Bethany England played with six-year-old Willow who was diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy when she was 18 months old.

Willow was the star of Noah's Ark's recent "From that Moment" campaign which was supported by Spurs and which raised over £1 million for its work with babies, children and young people with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions.

Sophie Andrews, Noah's Ark's chief executive officer, welcomed Bethany and

Hayley to The Ark and showed them round the hospice's facilities for supporting children and families from across north and central London.

The North London Derby fixture in the Women's Super League between Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal on Saturday 16 November was to be dedicated to Noah's Ark with volunteer fundraisers in the stadium, the Tottenham Experience and Seven Sisters Station.

"We have been really looking forward to celebrating our partnership with Tottenham Hotspur at the North London Derby and the wonderful work the club does in helping our fund raising," said Ms. Andrews.

Hayley and Bethany shared a sensory play space with Willow, who has been supported by Noah's Ark since 2020.

Bethany said she had been highly impressed with the incredible care the hospice gave to children.

"It's clear it's not just the children but also the support network provided for their families that makes the work of Noah's Ark so important."

Bethany was joined for more play with Willow and Ruby.

Ruby's father Simon said his daughter, who is supported by Noah's Ark, was always excited when they drove over to The Ark hospice.

"It was lovely to meet Beth and Hayley. They really took the time to play with Ruby and Willow, even getting in the ball pit. It was wonderful to see."

Hayley was impressed by the Ark's setting and facilities.

"It is an absolutely beautiful building, and it was a joy to meet some of the families supported by the hospice.

"I am proud to raise awareness of all the incredible work they do through Noah's Ark's partnership with the club."

Earlier this year the men's vice-captain James Maddison toured The Ark and visited the therapies wing and accessible playground. He donated a hamper of Spurs-themed games and toys.

After his visit James was so inspired by the work of the charity that he dedicated his annual golf day to The Ark and raised £75,000.

Join the Barnet Society and help carry on its work

Annual subscriptions for new joiners are £10 for an individual or £15 for a family.

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BARNET CHRISTMAS FAYRE

Sunday 1st December 2024

