

BARNET SOCIETY

CAMPAIGNING FOR A BETTER BARNET SINCE 1945

SPRING 2020 £1

Plans to revive town centre

Consultants preparing proposals for a new Chipping Barnet Community Plan aimed at regenerating the town centre were bombarded with ideas at the first public hearing, **writes Nick Jones.**

There was standing room only at Barnet College when residents were told what would happen over the next six months.

A team of architectural, retail and transport advisers, hired by Barnet Council at a cost of £60,000, will try to get agreement on five potential projects for improving the High Street and town centre neighbourhood.

Once feasibility studies and costings have been completed – and there is “a shared vision for the future of Chipping Barnet” – the Council says it will be able to seek possible funding for any agreed projects.

Similar community-based consultations have recently been conducted in other parts of the borough: a strategy and business case has been developed for improving the centre of Golders Green and the council is hoping to secure money for developing a central square at Finchley Central.

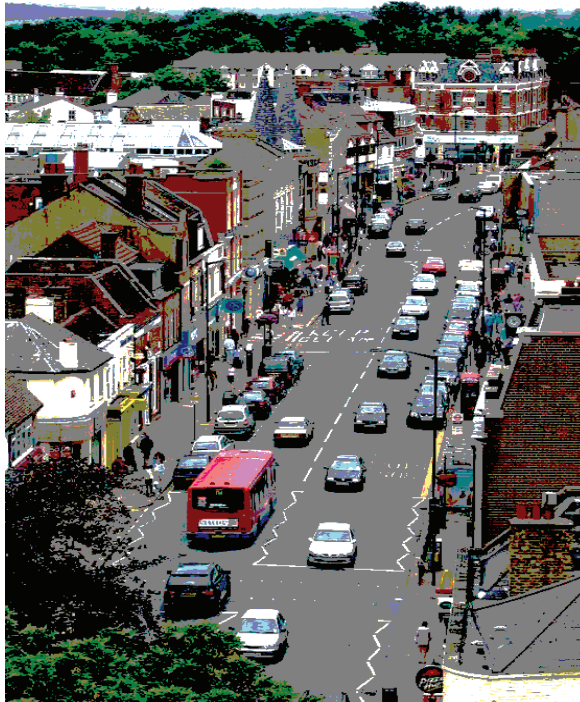
High Barnet did benefit nine years ago from the Mayor of London’s Outer London Fund when both Church Passage and the garden at the parish church were improved and landscaped and trees were planted in the lower and higher sections of the High Street.

Consultations on a new Chipping Barnet Community Plan began in December and the consultants have already held discussions with groups such as the Barnet Town Team, the Barnet Society, and other community groups and organisations.

Ashley Watkins, Barnet Council’s town centres investment manager, welcomed well over 100 residents who filled one of the halls at Barnet College, for the start of what he hoped would be a “process of engagement” with the community.

He believes Chipping Barnet benefits from a stronger sense of community than many other parts of the borough and he is confident that as the consultants hear more about what residents think are the opportunities and priorities for the future there should be a consensus on the way forward.

Consultants were needed to conduct



the research and formulate ideas because it would require evidence-based plans before the council could unlock investment money and seek external funding from sources such as the Mayor of London and central government.

Sarah Hollingworth, a consultant with Architecture 00, explained the steps that would be taken to help residents unite around what they thought might create a more successful town centre.

Together with other consultants working on the project, including Studio Weave, Retail Revival and Urban Flow, Architecture 00 would be holding a series of community engagement events until March in the hope of creating “a shared vision”.

Between

May and August, the consultants would develop feasibility studies on the five potential projects which might then be able to go out for possible funding.

“We want to work collaboratively with the community to test ideas between now the end of March.

“We will then produce a number of firm proposals that can then be considered by community workshops ready for a public exhibition in April. From this we will hope to have a short list of five projects, and we will have prepared feasibility studies before we leave the project in August,” said Ms Hollingworth.

After the formal introduction, residents split into six groups looking at various aspects of town centre improvement, including retail, transport and the environment.

Judith Clouston, former chair of the Barnet Society, said the challenge for the consultants would be to see if the community could concentrate on a few ideas which might be fundable.

Her experience in 2011

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Sarah Hollingworth of Architecture 00 conducted one of the workshops at the first public hearing into the new Chipping Barnet Community Plan

COMMUNITY PLAN

Continued from Page 1

with the Outer London Fund showed that it was possible to get funding for improvements, although she feared that it might be much more difficult given today's squeeze on council funding.

"We did succeed in tidying up the gardens at the parish church; we did succeed in getting rid of a lot of clutter in the High Street; and we did get trees planted in the High Street, down towards the tube station and at the Hadley Green end.

"Although the pavement build-outs are nearly finished, we are still waiting nine years later for the trees to be planted and my fear is that, given the current squeeze on council funding, it might be much harder to get new funding today," said Ms Clouston.

Her concern was shared by Barry Swain, a co-founder of the newly established Barnet Tourist Board, who feared that Barnet Council was encouraging the community to come up with a wish list of improvements for which there no sign of any funding.

"We went through all this in 2011

when the bill for the consultants was again tens of thousands of pounds and all we got was some hanging baskets along the High Street and a few trees.

"Yet again it looks as if the community will do all the work, the consultants will get paid, and the town will get precious little out of the whole exercise.

"I want to get High Barnet promoted as a place to visit and that would help with the regeneration of the town centre. I don't think this is the way to do it," said Mr Swain.

Around the walls of the college hall were maps pinpointing sites around the town centre which the consultants considered were "potential sites for a conversation" about their future.

The published plans are clearly in

Come to our open meeting on the Community Plan on Tuesday March 24, 6.30pm, at the Bull Theatre



Ashley Watkins, Barnet Council's town centres investment manager, gives local residents Flavia Woodhouse (far left) and Sue Simpson a run down on ideas that might be considered as part of the Chipping Barnet Community Plan

need of updating, because included in the list are sites where planning decisions have already been made, such as Brake Shear House, which is about to be demolished and redeveloped for housing, and the former market car park, where planning approval has been given for a new Premier Inn hotel.

No limit for the talented Skys

In years to come, they may look back fondly on their bandstand gig at the Barnet Christmas fair as they go up to collect their awards at the Brits.

Perhaps they might even cite it as a seminal moment in their then burgeoning career. Who knows? What the Cavern Club was to the Beatles, the Bandstand could be for the Skys.

But what's for sure is that these three students from the Wren Academy won a few more fans for their energetic renditions of 1960s covers by the Monkees, Kinks and the aforementioned Beatles. Judging by the applause for The Skys – singer and guitarist Frankie

Adams (15), guitarist Denis Filby (14) and drummer Francis Wilson (15) – there was no shortage of support for their packed programme.

Bob Burstow, founder of the teenage market, said the Christmas fair was a great opportunity for a young band to gain confidence and deciding to close Barnet High Street for the fair was praised by the mayor, Councillor Caroline Stock, as an inspired initiative that has paid handsome dividends in sustaining a great community spirit. When she opened the 2019 fair by cutting a red ribbon close to the parish church, she recalled how she had been a regular visitor to High Barnet's Christmas

festivities since the 1990s.

"What began with some stalls in the Spires shopping centre has now become one of the highlights of the year for local organisations and charities and it is greatly appreciated by their supporters and local residents.

"Persuading Barnet Council and the Police to close the High Street to traffic for the day was a very brave thing to do and over the years it's helped bring the community together just before Christmas."

Barnet Borough Arts Council and the Bull Theatre took over the task of organising the fair in 2004 and since then she said it had gone from strength to strength.

"This is a free event run by volunteers and helps to promote the High Street and its shops, cafes and restaurants as well as raising the profile of local charities."

After cutting a red ribbon across the High Street, Councillor Stock and her consul and husband, Dr Richard Stock, were marched off by the band of the 1st Barnet Boys' Brigade and Girls' Association.

This was the third year that the band, under its leader and conductor, Alan King, had taken part in the Christmas fair and the 21 band members – and their instruments – were kitted out for the seasonal celebrations.



The Skys playing on the Bandstand outside Waitrose

VICTORIA QUARTER

Housing density doubled on gas works site



ALMOST TWICE as many blocks of flats are to be built on the former gas works site beside the main railway line at New Barnet if Barnet Council approves the scheme, **writes Nick Jones.**

Plans unveiled at a public exhibition reveal a new lay-out for the Victoria Quarter development with the number of flats increasing from the 371 agreed in 2017 to a new total of 692.

One of the blocks of flats would be 14 storeys high; some would be 10 storeys; and the majority between four and eight storeys in height.

Victoria Quarter is being developed jointly by the housing association, One Housing Group, and their new partner, Fairview New Homes. They are promising that 35 per cent of the new flats – of one, two and three bedrooms – would be affordable.

All that remains of the decommissioned gas works is the steel framework of the gasholder and it would be kept as part of the development.

Originally purchased in 2009 as the possible location for an Asda superstore, the site was acquired by One Housing Group in 2015 and it obtained planning permission in 2017 for the construction of a series of blocks providing 371 flats.

Plans have been revised because the cost of work to decontaminate the site, which has been vacant for the last 10 years, were higher than expected.

When combined with changes in the housing market and rising construction costs, the housing association decided that the earlier plan was unviable and it has entered a partnership with Fairview to nearly double the number of flats on offer and provide more affordable homes.

Remediation work, including the removal of contaminated material, was completed in November last year and a public exhibition at St Margaret's Nursery, New Barnet, was the first stage in a new consultation process.

Residents were told that their initial feedback would be taken into consideration and then a further consultation would be held in the spring with the aim of seeking planning permission in the autumn and starting construction in late 2020 or early 2021.

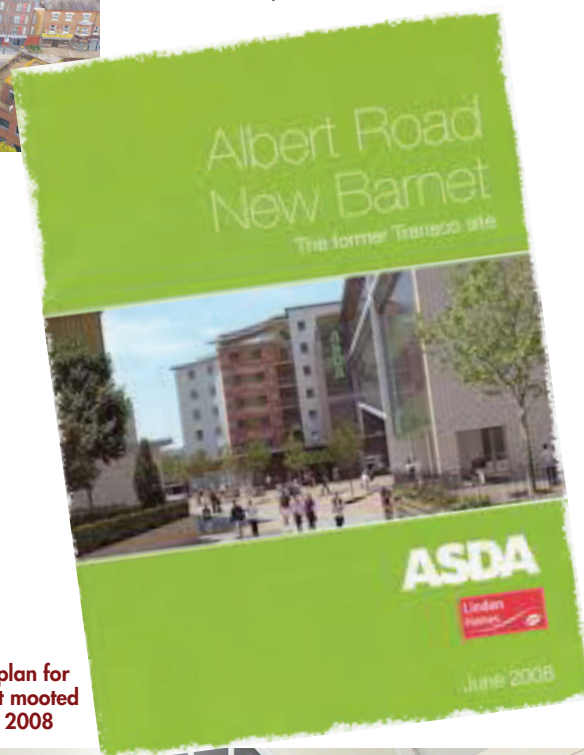
If the plans are approved, Fairview will offer 65 per cent of the 692 new flats for sale and the remaining 242 will be affordable homes, 60 per cent of which will be offered by the housing association at affordable rents and the other 40 per cent in shared ownership. As part of the redevelopment 615 square metres will

be available for mixed commercial use. Residents are being asked whether they would prefer a convenience store, coffee shop, creche and nursery, office space or other options.

The development will include 1,317 cycle parking spaces and 404 car parking spaces, of which 79 will be at the surface and the rest undercroft.

In addition to new landscaping, the existing trees lining the site's boundary with the railway line and the Victoria Recreation Ground will be protected.

For more details of the scheme see www.victoriaquarter.consultationonline.co.uk



An earlier plan for the site first mooted by Asda in 2008



Robin Bishop (chair) and John Gardiner of the Barnet Society were shown plans for the layout of the Victoria Quarter development in New Barnet by Kieran Linale, of Terrior Landscapes

Wood Street eyesore no more

A MASSIVE PILE of rubble, beams and planks was all that was left of Barnet's blot on the landscape – the derelict nurses' home for the former Victoria Maternity Hospital in Wood Street.

Heavy mechanical equipment moved into the Marie Foster Centre site just before Christmas and the demolition was completed within a day.

There had been a short delay in starting work on clearing the site, ready for the construction of a 100-room care home, which is to be built on the 2.5-acre site fronting Wood Street and Cattley Close.

Demolition of the maternity hospital's nurses' home follows the demolition in 2016 of another derelict and abandoned nurses' home opposite the Arkley public house, which has now been replaced by the new Elmbank housing estate.

Barnet's nurses' homes have had a chequered history: in addition to the two that have now been demolished, an uncertain future faces the former nurses' home in Bells Hill which is in a poor state of repair and is currently protected by scaffolding.

However, work is underway fitting out Graseby House, at the corner of Fitzjohn Avenue and the High Street, which will provide accommodation for nurses at Barnet Hospital.

Signature Senior Lifestyle, which purchased the Marie Foster Centre site from NHS Property Services, obtained planning approval for the construction of the £22 million care home last February.

Architects say the design of the new building will be compatible with the Wood Street conservation area.

It will be of two to three storeys in height and will offer studio flats and one-bedroom flats suitable for couples, together with a secure dementia wing.

Facilities will include a ground floor café and restaurant, a second-floor bistro, community area suitable for events, and a small cinema.

Construction of the new home is likely to take around 18 months. It is due to open in 2021 and will provide about 120 full and part-time jobs. Recruitment will start six months ahead of opening.

When it opened in 1973, the former Marie Foster Centre, named after a Potters Bar housewife, was the first purpose-built home in the country for the care of young people suffering from multiple sclerosis.

Inside the entrance to the centre was a commemorative plaque unveiled by the Duchess of Gloucester when she opened it.

The Barnet Society hopes the plaque can be preserved and incorporated inside the new building.

The foundation stone for the Victoria Maternity Hospital – which can still be seen in the Cattley Close garden – was laid by Mrs Stanley Baldwin in 1923 when the hospital moved from Barnet Hill and was re-established in Cedar Lawn, formerly an elegant Georgian House fronting Wood Street, which has been converted into flats.

The Royal Free Charity, which includes Barnet Hospital, purchased Graseby House from Barnet College last year.

When opened in 1994, it provided student accommodation and a teaching area for students on beauty and therapy courses.

The ground floor has been converted into offices for up to 100 medical, clerical and support workers from Barnet Hospital and the upper floors are being converted to provide over 60 one-bedroom units for nurses and other key workers at the hospital.

Going...



...going,



gone



Mixed bag on the Green Belt front



Robin Bishop writes

THERE'S BOTH good and bad news regarding the Green Belt.

We've supported an application for Totteridge Academy's farm, which would appropriately re-purpose their meadow near the Dollis Brook. Because of the benefits for the education and wellbeing of both its students and the community, this is one of very exceptional circumstances that would permit building in the Green Belt. The few structures proposed rest lightly on the earth. It's also a chance to improve the land drainage of the adjoining public right of way, which is sometimes too waterlogged to walk on.

We're very concerned, however, about the proposed gas peaking station off Partingdale Lane. First, it would be built on that lovely tract of greenery that has miraculously survived between Totteridge and Mill Hill. Power generation is not one of the very exceptional circumstances explicitly permitted.

Secondly in view of our climate emergency, how can the loss of Green Belt vegetation – a benefit of which is carbon capture – be justified by burning fossil fuel? According to the proposer, no alternative sites are available and 'The contribution this development will make to the Government's objective nationally to securing a reliable source of low carbon electricity supply... constitutes very special circumstances'. We may not be able to challenge their energy case, but we will energetically object to the loss of Green Belt.

We still await a date for the Whalebones estate application for 152 homes go to Planning Committee, also for TfL/Taylor Wimpey's application for High Barnet Station. Other significant cases are summarised.



Visualisation of Academy farm by Assemble Design

Approved

Kingmaker House – 139 flats in former offices. (We opposed them).

2 Bruce Road – A house for multiple occupation. (We opposed it).

133 High Street – 5 flats above KFC.

164 High Street – 58 flats and houses plus affordable workspace on the Brake Shear House site.

37 Dury Road, Hadley – Replacement of a residential extension. (We supported it).

Shell filling station, Stirling Corner – A welcome organic replacement for the present station, with half the petrol pumps replaced by electric charging points.

Londis. (We objected).

Meadow Works, Pricklers Hill – Replacement by 57 flats. (We opposed it, and the Planning Inspector agreed).

5G masts behind Barnet & Southgate College and by Whalebones field.

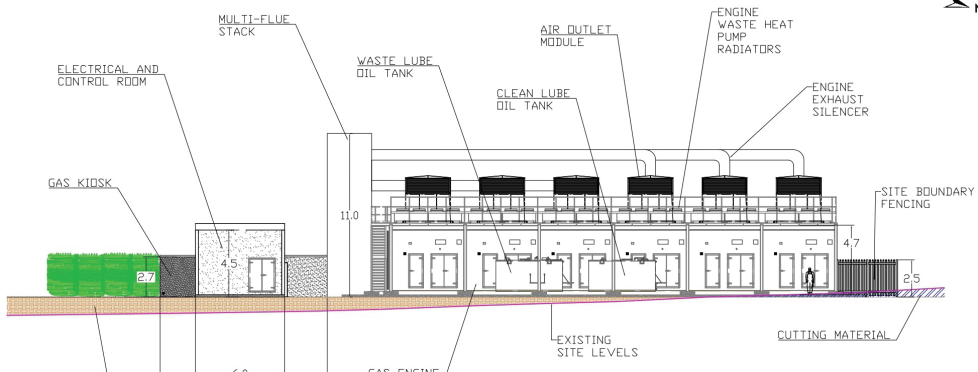
Others worth noting

Old Courthouse Surgery, 27 Wood Street – Proposals to extend it have been withdrawn.

17 Park Road – After six unsuccessful attempts to get approval for micro-studios in this commercial building, a 7th application has been withdrawn.

Refused

46-48 High Street – Roof extension above, and block behind, the former



Elevation of gas plant by ESB & TNEI



Students at work on the new farm

Monken Hadley celebrates its role in Barnet history



Rev Dr Frederick Charles Cass (Nick Reed), Carole of Chappaqua (Claire Fisher), Lady Mary Wilbraham (Sarah Lloyd-Winder) and rector (Peter Neville-Jackson)

AN AMBITIOUS and imaginative portrayal of local history delighted packed audiences at a Son et Lumière held at Monken Hadley to celebrate the 525th anniversary of the parish church of St Mary the Virgin.

Audiences at six performances were warned there would be flashing lights, smoke effects and loud noises inside the church.

They were certainly not disappointed: a series of gripping filmed sequences and live performances stepped back in time to tell the history of Barnet.

Dramatic flashes and sounds of a 1944 air raid captured the moment the east window of the church was blown out in the Second World War and a puffing steam engine pulled into a re-named "Hadley Wood" station on the Bluebell Heritage railway line.

The Saturday night finale – sold out in advance weeks ahead – ended with the ceremonial lighting of the Monken Hadley church beacon.

Guiding the audience through the first act were two American visitors, Carole (played by Claire Fisher) and Anne (Siobhan Dunne), from St Mary's church in Chappaqua, New York State, which was completed in 1906 to replicate the design of St Mary the Virgin Monken Hadley.

Life in Victorian Monken Hadley was re-enacted under the guidance of rector and historian, the Reverend Dr Frederick Charles Cass (played by Nick Reed) who explained the relevance

of various church artefacts as he gave a history lesson to children from Monken Hadley.

A hermitage on the site of the church dated back to 1136, and after it was thought the first church was damaged in the Battle of Barnet of 1471, was restored in 1494.

St Mary's became a beacon church because at 470ft above sea level, Monken Hadley was a beacon hill, the highest point between London and York on the original great north road.

Among the other local personalities brought to life were Captain Charles Tempest-Hicks (played by Charlie Fisher), awarded the military cross, who was killed in the Battle of Amiens in August 1918.

He read out a letter sent to his parents in which he expressed the hope that he and his troops would soon be able to "dream of victory" and signed off "your loving son, Charles".

Sarah Lloyd-Winder took the role of Lady Mary Wilbraham, wife of Sir Roger Wilbraham, who in 1616 built the nearby Wilbraham's alms houses in Hadley Green Road for "six decayed housekeepers".

One of the most dramatic sequences was a filmed reconstruction of events surrounding the Battle of Barnet which included images of the re-enactment staged in the summer during the annual Barnet Medieval festival.

Footage from the re-enactment was filmed under the direction of Bill Morris, the producer/director of Son et Lumiere 525 Live, who said the aim of the cast and production team was to take the audience on a voyage through the last 1,000 years of local history.

"As we see this wonderful church through the eyes of those who have trodden these floors over the centuries, we can be rightly proud that we, by our presence within these walls, are contributing to the rich and varied frame work around which our local community thrives today."

Mr Morris, who lives in Hadley Wood and is a member of the church choir, is an award-winning television outside broadcast producer, and it was under his direction that filming took place this summer and voice overs were recorded.

After a welcome each evening from the rector, the Reverend Dr Thomas Renz, performances were opened by the patron of the event, Martin Russell, deputy lieutenant for Barnet.

Proceeds were in aid of an appeal for the cost of strengthening and refurbishing the church house hall and Noah's Ark Children's Hospice.



Martin Russell, deputy lieutenant for Barnet, opened the event amid smoke from a Battle of Barnet re-enactment

UNDERHILL ACTIVISTS

Greta inspires children to have their say on the planet

MOTORISTS TOOTED their horns and pedestrians waved back when children at Underhill School held up their "Save Our Planet" posters all along the school fence in Mays Lane, Barnet.

Inside the playground around 500 children – each holding aloft their own individual hand-painted posters – chanted "Save our planet" to mark the campaign by the climate change movement, GlobalStrikes4Future.

As part of her world-wide campaign, the teenage Swedish activist Greta Thunberg has called for international support for Fridays For Future protests when school children are urged to join in without disrupting their school day.

The Underhill School demonstration was held for 20 minutes at the end of the school day and parents, who had been invited to attend, came along to show their support.

As they left for home, many of the children – aged from three and four and up to ten and eleven – were proudly holding on to their handiwork.

Deputy head Nicola Hayles said the children had been really excited by the challenge to paint their own poster on saving the planet.

It had been a chance for teachers to describe the



Swedish activist Greta Thunberg



Warning on the planet



Underhill School pupils spell out their messages on the environment

environmental challenges facing the world and explain why children across the country were joining protests.

"What was so impressive and engaging for the staff was that the children sensed they had a voice in what is happening in the environment.

"They wanted to express themselves in their own way and this was a fun way to do it."

Ms Hayles said the school decided to join the global strike day for schools after taking part in the 20 September green day for schools.

To maintain interest in environmental campaigning, children at the school are to help planting trees donated by the Mayor of London.

There will be an individual tree for each of the school's classes.

"We think the tree planting will help the children understand what can be done to tackle global warming and it is their chance to engage in what is going on in the world."

Volunteers Needed For Tree Planting

We need help to plant more trees in our neighbourhood.

The Society was founded to protect our lovely green areas, and in the 90s we planted trees on Barnet Hill and Whittings Hill. With climate change, we must plant many more. Possible sites include Barnet Hill, the Meadway/Potters Lane meadow – and you may know others. If you volunteer quickly, some trees could be planted within the next month; but most will be planted this autumn.

No previous horticultural skill is needed – just ability to wield a spade and bend down! Please contact robin.bishop@gmx.co.uk or phone 020 8449 0088.



WANTED

Membership Secretary for the Barnet Society

Our Membership Secretary, John Hay, wishes to step down in June after four years in post, and we are seeking a volunteer to take over.

Tasks are very straightforward, using an Excel database developed by our Treasurer, Derek Epstein, and mainly comprise sending computer-generated renewal notices and chase-up letters, recording and banking receipts, and entering details of new members. The time commitment averages an hour or so per month, plus occasional evening Committee meetings. Anyone interested please contact robin.bishop@gmx.co.uk to arrange a demonstration of the system.

Barnet Society in need

Please consider donating or leaving a legacy to the Barnet Society.

We're committed to keeping Barnet a welcoming and thriving locality whilst encouraging positive developments. Our website and newsletters are high-quality sources for news and our campaigns for a better Barnet,

and our annual open meetings on topical issues attract expert speakers and big audiences.

The cost of maintaining these using modern technology exceeds our annual subscriptions, but we are reluctant to increase the latter because we do not wish to lose any of our 600+ members. Any extra support you can give us via donations or legacies is enormously appreciated. Please give online or by contacting Robin Bishop on 020 8449 0088. Many thanks!



GREEN BINS

£70 charge from April

BARNET COUNCIL has gone ahead with its plan to impose an annual charge of £70 for the fortnightly collection of household garden waste despite the overwhelming opposition of those residents who took part in an online consultation., **writes Nick Jones.** Green garden waste bins will only be collected from April onwards if householders opt into the chargeable service.

A petition calling on the council to scrap the new fee has been launched by Councillor Alan Schneiderman, Labour’s environment spokesperson, and within the first week it had attracted nearly 4,000 signatures.

Introducing an annual charge for collecting garden waste will save the borough an estimated £700,000 a year and the leader of the council, Councillor Dan Thomas, said this would help relieve financial pressure and increase investment in other front-line services such as street cleansing.

Introducing an annual charge of £70 was in line with Barnet’s neighbouring councils and across the country almost 60 per cent of local authorities had made green waste collection a chargeable service.

When Barnet residents were asked last year to give their views, 5,159 opposed the introduction of the charge – 82 per cent of those who responded.

Once householders have signed up to the chargeable service, starting on 6 April, they will be issued with a yellow sticker to display on their bin so that collection crews can identify those who have paid.

Councillor Schneiderman said the introduction of a garden tax was unfair and environmentally unfriendly.

“At the last council elections, the Conservatives promised to maintain bin collections, but since then we’ve had a botched re-organisation leading to thousands of missed collections, the scrapping of the separate food waste collection service and now a new charge for green waste collection.

“Barnet’s waste service budget may be £2 million overspent, but it is simply not fair to make residents pay the price.”

To sign up to Councillor Schneiderman’s petition see <https://www.change.org/p/barnet-council-scrap-barnet-s-proposed-garden-waste-collection-charge>

For further information on the council’s decision see <https://www.barnet.gov.uk/recycling>

There were 6,285 responses to the green bin consultation asking whether or not you agreed with the charge:



- Don't know 24 (0.4 per cent)
- Strongly agree 202 (3.2 per cent)
- Tend to disagree 806 (12.8 per cent)
- Neither agree or disagree 362 (5.8 per cent)
- Tend to agree 821 (13.1 per cent)
- Strongly disagree 4,070 (64.8 per cent)

Clampdown on street and park drinkers

A BAN on the anti-social drinking of alcohol in Barnet High Street and other public spaces around the town centre took effect at the beginning of November.



One of the signs warning against alcohol consumption

This follows the introduction by Barnet Council of similar anti-social behaviour orders for public spaces in Edgware town centre, Childs Hill and Burnt Oak.

Street drinking and rowdy behaviour have been the subject of frequent complaints in recent years by shoppers and residents.

Locations which have fared worst include areas in and around Church Passage, Ravenscroft Park, High Barnet tube station, the rear of the Spires shopping centre, Chipping Barnet Library and Stapylton Road bus stop.

Anyone found drinking or carrying a container of alcohol must stop drinking and hand over any container when asked to do so by a police constable or authorised person.

Refusal to stop consuming alcohol is an offence and could result in a fine of up to £500.

A first breach will be dealt with by a fixed penalty notice of £100 and written warning; a second offence is a criminal offence; and a third breach will result in the individual being referred for prosecution.

The area covered by the High Barnet Public Spaces Protection Order covers the town centre and the area enclosed by Barnet Hill, Wood Street, The Avenue, Alston Road, St Albans Road, Sunset Way, Drury Road, Hadley Common, Woodville Road, and Potters Lane.

This has now been defined as a “restricted area” and anyone who refuses, without reasonable excuse, to stop consuming alcohol or hand over any container commits an offence.

The council says it is satisfied that the order does meet the conditions of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act of 2014 and is justified.

Anti-social consumption of alcohol has been persistent, and is of a continuing nature, and is unreasonable.

The order, which lasts until 31 October 2021, exempts licensed premises or locations where the temporary consumption of alcohol has been authorised.

In addition to the four orders banning anti-social drinking within the borough, the council has imposed an order to control dog walking along the Dollis Valley walk, from Underhill to Totteridge tube station.

This order seeks to curb poor dog control that leads to “harassment, alarm and distress and dog fouling”.

Walking with more than four dogs is forbidden and only two can be left off the lead at any one time.

All professional dog walkers must ensure they carry a copy of their public liability insurance.

LOCAL NEWS



Officers from the blue badge fraud team checked cars in the High Street

Council wants locals to report blue badge fraud

FRAUD OFFICERS from Barnet Council have conducted a sweep of cars parked in Barnet High Street and surrounding roads as part of a stepped-up campaign to detect fraudulent use of disabled blue badges, **writes Nick Jones.**

Checks on the validity of blue badges – and interviews with drivers – came in the wake of complaints from residents in roads close to the Spires shopping centre who claim that there has been flagrant abuse in recent months.

In the High Barnet fraud sweep, together with similar operations last November in Hendon and Edgware, a total of 277 blue badges were checked.

Sixteen were found being mis-used. Five of the badges were seized and the drivers are being investigated for possible fraudulent use and prosecution. In the 11 remaining cases penalty charges were issued.

Officers from Barnet's corporate anti-fraud team carry out at least eight sweeps for blue badge abuse each year and the streets and car parks around the Spires shopping centre and High Barnet tube station are one of the priority areas.

Residents have made regular complaints about the number of vehicles seen displaying blue badges that are clearly out of date and where cars have been left by able-bodied drivers with no sign of a disabled blue badge holder.

When space is at such a premium for their own cars in controlled parking zones, some householders believe their only option has been to place warning reminders on car windscreens if fraud is suspected.

Declan Khan, Barnet Council's head

of counter fraud operations, told the Barnet Society that the counter fraud team advised against the use of do-it-yourself warning notices.

"We would far prefer residents suspecting blue badge abuse to contact the counter fraud team directly by using one of our phone lines, by emailing us the details or by going via the council's website. (see below for list of contact details)

"Our pro-active operations are intelligence led and the more complaints we get the more likely we are to carry out a sweep.

"High Barnet is one of the pressure points, because of parking restrictions around the Spires, the High Street and the tube station and in such areas, we try to do one street-by-street check a year or more if possible.

"Once we are told a blue badge number by a local resident, we can

identify it immediately in the system. "We will know whether it is valid, lost, stolen, counterfeit or a forgery.

"We will also be able to tell whether the badge holder is male or female, their age, and whether or not they live in the area. We will know from the registration number of the car whether this is a persistent offender.

"Stickers or notes left on windscreens only assist people mis-using blue badges as it alerts them and as a result, they to try park somewhere else.

"This can be counter-productive for the fraud team as it can disrupt our own surveillance.

"We take full advantage of local CCTV and we build up intelligence on where blue badge fraud is taking place and the vehicles involved, so obviously we don't want that surveillance to be interrupted."

According to the anti-fraud team's annual report, there were a total of nine intelligence-led street checks in the borough during 2018-19 – including sweeps in High Barnet, Finchley, Golders Green, Temple Fortune, Hendon and Burnt Oak – which resulted in the seizure of a total of 43 blue badges.

These checks are carried out by the anti-fraud team supported by NSL parking enforcement officers and Barnet Police.

During the last 12 month period for which figures are available, the anti-fraud team dealt with a total of 412 cases of blue badge misuse; there were 69 successful prosecutions; 109 cases were closed with a caution; and 83 cases were dealt with by a warning letter sent to the badge holder or misuser.

Details for contacting the counter fraud team regarding blue badge misuse:

By telephone:
0208 359 5017
0208 359 3822
0208 359 4674

Or telephone Barnet Council's fraud hotline –
0208 359 2007

Email: CAFT@barnet.gov.uk
Or via the council's website:
<https://account.barnet.gov.uk/publicaccesslive/selfservice/citizenportal/login.htm>

New lease of life for mountain bike



Lucas Salazar (left) of Cycle Confidence repaired a defective mountain bike for Daniel Lax who was full of praise for the free repair café organised with the help of a team led by Barbara Herridge of the North London Waste Authority

AN OLD MOUNTAIN bike that was about to go to the tip has been restored and is ready for use by a ten-year-old High Barnet schoolboy after his father visited one of the weekly repair cafes being held by the North London Waste Authority, **writes Nick Jones.**

These are free sessions where broken and damaged items are repaired by specialist teams in a bid to reduce the amount of defective household equipment that is going for recycling, incineration or landfill.

Daniel Lax took the mountain bike along to the Saturday afternoon repair café held at Wesley Hall in Stapylton Road after being given it by his next-door neighbour and reading on Facebook that a free repair session was about to be held in High Barnet.

"This old bike was in next door's shed and was about to go to the dump. When I discovered that free repairs were on offer, I bought some new cycle tyres so that it could be restored for my son Jacob who is longing to have a bike."

Mr Lax was just one of many High Barnet residents who took along defective household items. Next in line for repair was a lawnmower with a broken starter cable.

A total of 21 repair café sessions are being held across North London during the winter months.

To help local people get items and equipment back into working order specialist teams of repairers have been hired to do the work for free and also give advice.

Among the items that were being repaired in the High Barnet repair café session – which is to be repeated on Saturday 29 February – were cycles, computers, electronic equipment, and also clothes and textiles that needed repairs such as a new zip.

Mr Lax's mountain bike was repaired by mechanic Lucas Salazar of Cycle Confidence, who said he found the work inspiring and satisfying.

"It's great that I can help get a bike back into working order. In addition to fitting the new tyres, the brakes needed sorting out, and I am able to give advice on how to care for the bike and how to fix it if anything goes wrong."

Barbara Herridge, external relations manager for the waste authority, said the repair cafes were proving highly popular and were helping to stop defective items going to landfill.

"Lots of clothes and textile items go for incineration when all they need is mending. By doing a simple repair, or fitting a new zip, we can make a big difference."

The waste authority, which serves seven boroughs including Barnet, manages the disposal of rubbish collected in north London.

Refuse is sorted at a plant in Edmonton where it can be recycled, used to generate electricity in the Edmonton power station, or sent to the Hendon transfer station where it goes by rail to other waste plants or for landfill.

For more information about the free repair services on offer at the next High Barnet repair café to be held on Saturday 29 February (11am to 3pm) go to www.wiseuptowaste.org.uk/repaircafes

Young asked what they want to see changed in Barnet

TEN THOUSAND young people, aged from 11 to 19, across the London Borough of Barnet have been asked what they love about Barnet and what they would like to see improved.

The study has been launched by the Young Barnet Foundation. The foundation was established four years ago with the aim of encouraging community-based organisations across the borough to assist groups that support children and encourage youth enterprises.

Currently, 190 charities and communities belong to the Barnet foundation and over the last three years local groups have been provided with £320,000 worth of financial support which has been given by donors and benefactors to support Space to Grow, the foundation's children and young people's fund.

A Secret Santa appeal provided a Christmas present for children living in poverty across the borough and among those to benefit were children on the Dollis Valley estate.

info@youngbarnetfoundation.org.uk

Have your say!

Have Your Say – and help the Barnet Society speak on your behalf with greater authority, **writes Frances Wilson.** We were established 75 years ago to safeguard the Green Belt.

Our aim is to go on helping to represent the views of the community on critical issues.

Two developments about to have an impact on the town's character are the latest plans for large-scale housing schemes on land around High Barnet station and in the fields at Whalebones.

Unfortunately, we still lack an email address for around 20 per cent of our members and they are missing out on the consultations we conduct online.

We do want to hear as many comments and opinions as possible in order to help the Society speak with greater confidence on your behalf.

If you are not receiving our emails and would like to know more about the Society's work and events, and engage with our online consultations, please provide your email address to our membership secretary, John Hay (membership@barnetsociety.org.uk)

Winning triptych of Emin and Hirst gets top billing



Paintings, caricatures and cartoons on display

A TRIPTYCH featuring Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst – which was on display at the Barnet Guild of Artists' annual exhibition – was also given pride of place in the entrance to the Reel cinema in Boreham Wood.

Over Christmas and New Year, two walls of the cinema foyer gallery were filled with paintings, cartoons and caricatures by Barnet artist, Simon Ellinas.

Mr Ellinas was “flabbergasted” when his painting of Brit artist Tracey Emin was voted the most popular entry at the annual exhibition last October.

He was then delighted when offered the chance to exhibit at the Reel

cinema, which is a regular show case for members of the guild.

His triptych of Emin and Hirst seeks to exploit the Brit art phenomenon.

“I did the painting of Damien Hirst in two halves because he made his name depicting sharks and cows cut in half, and also in doing a lot of pictures full of spots, so I hope my portrait is seen as a satirical depiction of a leading Brit artist.

“After I had done my painting of Tracey Emin, I realised the three images belonged together with half of Damien’s face on either side of Tracey.

“I was amazed when my portrait of Brit art’s femme terrible Tracey was voted the favourite painting at the annual show – usually the accolade goes to one of the landscape painters like Chris Barker.”

Mr Ellinas trained as a graphic designer and worked for magazines and newspapers. When short of commissions he began drawing cartoons and caricatures.

Over the years he has produced illustrations for a wide range of magazines and websites as well as leading newspapers, such as the Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph and formerly for the News of the World.

He has been a Barnet resident for the last 30 years, and currently resides off

Bells Hill. “As I have always had a career in cartoons and caricatures, friends suggested I should join the Barnet Guild of Artists, which I did three years ago.

“I am so glad I joined because it has re-ignited my first love of painting which I had left behind at art school.

“I got the canvasses out and started work – mainly oil paintings of celebrities in films, theatre and the art world, and my oil painting of Tracey Emin is a product of that reawakening.

“My inspiration – has always been peoples’ faces, although in my triptych on the Beatles’ Abbey Road cover (also on display at the Reel) I concentrate of legs and feet and the famous zebra crossing.”

Mr Ellinas’ daughter Charlotte (26) – a former head girl at Queen Elizabeth’s Girls’ School – has followed in her father’s footsteps.

She is a character entertainer at London attractions and does portraits of people and animals in water colour and pencil.

“I do live caricatures of people at performances and events – and Charlotte has that same inspiration.”

Mr Ellinas’ work can be seen at www.caricatures.org.uk and www.artelli.co.uk His daughter’s website is: www.charlotteellinasart.co.uk

Council urged to do more for the arts

AFTER HAVING spent years complaining about the lack of support and funding for the arts, drama, and music, local groups are hoping that Barnet Council might be “more receptive” to the contribution the arts scene is making to local life.

As a first step the groups want more of Barnet’s local authority buildings – such as libraries and leisure centres – to be made available to help provide a showcase and platform for local talent.

Barnet Borough Arts Council, which speaks on behalf of over 100 groups and societies – and which is celebrating its 55th anniversary – says there is so much more Barnet Council could do to encourage the arts.

“I feel Barnet councillors are at last becoming more receptive towards to the appeals we have been making for

more support for the arts,” says Pam Edwards, secretary of the arts council.

“What we are so in need of is space in public buildings where artists can display their work, for small exhibitions, or perhaps, for example, where musicians might give performances.

“We would like to see Barnet’s libraries opened up in this way to support and encourage the arts scene.”

Ms Edwards’ appeal for more local authority support was made at a special general meeting held at the Bull Theatre, Barnet, to agree to the updating of the arts council’s charitable status to become a charitable incorporated organisation.

The arts council’s co-chair, Councillor John Hart, endorsed Ms Edwards’ call for more support from Barnet Council.

“My hope is that the two new leisure

centres that were opened last year – in New Barnet and Mill Hill – will be made available for displays and exhibitions, perhaps in the foyer.

“If there is an empty wall around the reception area why not let it be used to display the work of local artists? There might be room for all sorts of small exhibitions.

“I am disappointed that the council is doing nothing like it could be doing to support the local artistic community.

“We all know that culture has suffered from council expenditure cuts which is why the council now needs to be far more pro-active where it can help.”

Councillor Hart (Conservative, Mill Hill) became co-chair 12 years ago when Barnet Council used to give the arts council a subsidy and councillors were directly involved.

Early TV adopters sought

Was your family one of the first in Barnet to have a television set?

If so, the Barnet Society would love to hear from you as part of our research into the Society's early life and the sort of activities we organised for members.

The Society was established in July 1945 and one of our very first social events in August 1946 was a demonstration of a working television set which had been installed temporarily for public viewing at Ewen Hall in Wood Street.

The BBC television service from Alexandra Palace, which had been shut down during World War II, had re-opened on 7 June 1946 and the timing of the demonstration two months later would have made it very topical. Sales representatives from local shops – then offering mainly wirelesses -- were on hand to advise members on the availability and cost of installing a television set.

This was the programme that August afternoon:

- 3.00pm Broadcast from TV garden
- 3.15pm 3rd Test match against India at Oval
- 3.40pm Test match continued but with vision only
- 3.55pm Test Match with sound and vision
- 4.15pm Nothing
- 4.30pm Test Match until 5.00pm
- 5.15pm Closing remarks

Please contact info/voice@barnetsociety.org.uk if you have an interesting story to relate regarding early television or other Barnet Society anecdotes.



Chair's Report: Help us plot future for High Barnet - and the Society

CONSULTANTS have started work on the Chipping Barnet Community Plan, and Nick Jones writes on Page 1 about the first public meeting, which was held on 23 January.

We'll discuss the Community Plan in our annual open meeting, which will be at **6:30pm on Tuesday 24 March at The Bull Theatre**. By then, the longlist of projects to be studied in more depth by the consultants should have been identified. This will be a good chance for you to comment on them – or name others that may have been overlooked.

The second part of the meeting will be about the future of the Society. The Committee has ideas about ways we could improve our image, communicate better and recruit more members that we'd like to discuss with you – and we want to hear your ideas too.

For that reason, this issue of the Newsletter includes a survey of your views. I'd be grateful if you'd complete and return it to me before 24 March. My addresses are on the form.



Work has started again on High Street

This year is the 75th anniversary of the Barnet Society. We look forward to seeing you – and other old friends and supporters – at Christ Church on Thursday evening, 11 June for a celebration and AGM. Please put the date in your diary!

If you would like to help organise these (or other) events, please let me know at robin.bishop@gmx.co.uk or phone 020 8449 0088.

Finally, progress on the High Street pavements has seemed glacial, but the Council engineer assures us that trees and street furniture will arrive soon.

Let's hope so, because the Chipping Barnet Town Team is planning a Spring Festival in May, with a relaunch of Barnet Market, classic cars processing along the High Street and a clean-up of the town centre.

Details will be announced in due course.

Robin Bishop



Half a crown to join in 1945

Searching through the archives at Barnet Museum we discovered the following:

- The Barnet Society was formed on 21st July 1945
- There were 299 members
- Subscription was 2/6d per annum

I am amazed any of us bought a television if this was the most exciting programme on offer!!!!

Frances Wilson

