

THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Parking row moves to Forum



By Daphne Chamberlain

The proposed East Finchley parking scheme was debated at November's Finchley Forum. Objections came from three sides: - from the Traders, from a Hertford Road resident who didn't want his road included, and from a Bedford Road resident who didn't want his road left out.

Firstly, the Traders: Mike Jacobs, of Universal Office Equipment, presented their petition. East Finchley is a small community, he said, and all his colleagues are in agreement. Why were trade permits, at £125 p.a. each, more than five times as much as residents' permits?

The Chief Engineer replied that in other authorities the price was £250.

"How do we know that ours won't go up to that next year?", asked the Traders - adding that permits don't even guarantee parking spaces. There were too many cars in the area for this type of scheme. Chair, Kathy McGuirk, promised to arrange a meeting with the petitioners.

The Hertford Road resident was against parking permits for the same reason. They don't guarantee a space near your house. He told the Forum, "I

have to travel regularly to East London. Using public transport would take all day, so I have to use the car. When I get back, all the spaces are gone."

He was particularly annoyed by the "pay and display" areas allocated to the top of Hertford Road, which were included in the second round of plans. These proposals, he said, were not sufficiently well advertised, and he felt that his neighbours had been bulldozed into accepting them.

On the other hand, a request was heard from Bedford Road residents to have their area accepted into the scheme.

Chair suggested a meeting with the Chief Engineer, remarking that parking was a problem throughout London. That was one comment with which everyone would agree, but have we reached the best solution in East Finchley?

Questions in the House

Rudi Vis MP (pictured above) has been asking questions in the House of Commons about the secondary school selection issue.

Naomi Burgess, of the campaign against selection, explains why:

Since last year the number of signatures needed to trigger a ballot to remove selection by ability to Barnet secondary schools has risen from 6036 signatures to 7029 and the number of eligible primary schools from 69 to 78.

All the extra schools are outside the borough or are independent and fee paying. Our MP, Rudi Vis, has been asked to raise the issue of the authenticity of these expanded figures.

Excluded

In Barnet itself only 31 of our 94 primaries qualify as eligible. This means that the overwhelming majority of Barnet parents with children in primary schools have no chance to vote at all, because they do not send

enough children to the three local Grammar Schools.

Forty seven of the qualifying schools lie outside the borough, making it difficult to collect signatures.

A right vote

I believe that we are correct to ask Rudi Vis to ask questions in the House. The DFEE maintains that ballots are costly to run and so we have to show 20% of the eligible parents are interested in balloting. But I believe that all Barnet residents should have a right to vote, just as in national and local elections. An administrative justification stating that we must collect signatures from other borough parents/parents of children in fee-paying schools to entitle us to a vote on a local issue is totally wrong. Education is far too important for these vote-limiting games.

Accountability is also an is-

sue, which Rudi Vis will raise. The accountability procedure of the Electoral Reform (Ballot Service) Limited only applies to petition signatories, not to submissions of names of feeder schools by the Grammar schools. Each and every signature in the petition is verified by child's name, but the Grammar Schools concerned do not have to provide lists of children's names only the lists of schools.

Is this fair?

The most we can hope for is that we could change the procedure to an Area Ballot, which would mean collecting only 20% of signatures of parents with children in Barnet primaries to ensure a ballot. This would, of course, be fairer and more democratic. But unfortunately the stipulated regulations don't permit this. Are you surprised that we have asked Rudi Vis to question these procedures?

Dark Warning

By John Larimer

Parents have been warned by police not to let young children out on the streets after dark.

The warning comes after an 11-year-old girl was indecently assaulted in East Finchley. A man grabbed the girl before carrying out the attack which took place on Wednesday 29 November at around 5.30pm at the junction of Lyttelton Road and Gurney Drive.

DC Gavin of Colindale Police Station said: "It is extremely important that we catch this man. We can only warn parents not to let young children out on the streets after dark. It's simply not safe."

The man is described as white, 25 years old, 5ft 8in to

6ft tall, clean-shaven, wearing jeans and a white shirt.

Anyone with any information should contact DC Gavin at Colindale police station on 020 8733 5808.



E-fit of the attacker

Bernard

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