

THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Avoiding the Issue

The traffic island constructed to prevent Baronsmere Road being used as a rat-run is proving to be more of a danger than a hindrance.

Situated across the entrance into the High Road, the intention was to prevent cars turning from Baronsmere Road into the High Road and to allow them to turn into Baronsmere only from the left when travelling south down the High Road. Thus drivers would no longer be able to cut through to avoid the traffic lights at the High Road and Fortis Green junction. The traffic lights have not been altered, causing tailbacks, which are made worse by the fact that the left-hand bus lane finishes only a short distance before the lights.

To escape from this situation some drivers are doing dangerous things, which have already caused several crashes in the High Road. They are ignoring the "No Entry" sign on Fairlawn Avenue and driving up this L-shaped one-way street, endangering residents and any law-abiding driver coming down the correct way.

Three point danger

Another habit is observed on a regular daily basis by Ray Easter, who works in the Bernard Tomkins and Co. Estate Agent's office, which overlooks the new island. Drivers queuing up the High Road towards the traffic lights do a three point turn, backing into the stream of traffic they are trying to leave, then negotiate the edge of the island, squeeze left into Baronsmere Road and continue their previous rat-running ways.

Ray is convinced that sooner or later there will be a serious accident, particularly as people crossing from the island to the pavement may not be noticed by a driver looking back as he reverses into heavy traffic, then rushing forward to make his escape.

Turning Point

He also questions the legality of doing a three-point-turn on a trunk road. Despite plenty of warning signs, people are still driving along Baronsmere Road to exit right into the High

Road. They then either cross the carriageway to go up the hill or do a dangerous U-turn to go downhill.

Shops suffering

As *The Archer* reported in July, "Some locals are puzzled as to the efficacy of the plan ... One shop owner feels that the council should have first implemented the CPZ scheme to see what effect that would have on local roads". Several shop owners are now being very badly affected by the building of the traffic island. Delivery lorries, which used to have access to the alley serving the backs of their shops, now have difficulty parking in the High Road. This causes congestion as well as obscuring the view of other motorists.

Financial Penalty

But traders are also suffering financially, with some losing over £200 a day. Customers who used to come by car are now less likely to do so because of access and parking problems. Paresh Shah of Andrews Pharmacy was told by an old customer, "You're my local chemist, but you are no longer convenient".

It is puzzling that, at a time when we are trying to support and encourage local businesses, an action by the local council is having the opposite effect! It is meant to be on trial for six months, so your comments about it can be sent to: -

The Chief Executive, Barnet Council, Hendon Town Hall, The Burroughs, Hendon, London NW4 and The Chief Highway Officer, Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, London N20 0EJ as well as your local MP.

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Celebrating in style: Doris and Geno Sidoli (centre) with Chandos Road residents sharing their celebrations. Photo by Gavin Rodgers. See page 2 for details.

Strawberry Vale murder

By Daphne Chamberlain

A man was found dead hours after allegedly being involved in a fight outside the off-licence on Strawberry Vale.

Craig Phillips, of Old Farm Road, was found by his girlfriend on the floor of their bathroom the morning after the alleged incident took place.

A post mortem examination showed the cause of death as a head injury. A man has been charged with murder.

Mr Phillips, 40, was described to *The Archer* as a familiar figure in East Finchley, recognised by his ponytail and his dog.

Many residents of Strawberry Vale are depressed and upset by the negative publicity surrounding his death.

"Here we go again," one told *The Archer*. "All the papers will be full of dreadful Strawberry Vale. Nobody will believe there are a lot of very nice people living here."

Another said, "I could take you to neighbour after neighbour, all decent, honest people. It's only a very small minority who are not. Certainly a lot of youths hang around the centre, but not nearly as many as has been reported. To say there are 90 on a Saturday is definitely an exaggeration; 19 would be more like it. They're noisy and rowdy, but not necessarily aggressive. Unfortunately, the culture now is for kids to be loud, and they

swear worse than sailors. The girls are as bad as the boys. We don't like it, but I can't say I've ever been particularly frightened."

Some residents who have bought their homes would like to move away, but can't sell. As one said, "I have a beautiful house,

but who would buy it?"

A new Community Centre is due to open soon, and people are hoping that various projects being developed by the Peabody Trust, who own the estate, will improve the life of the estate and its reputation.

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