



L to R Kim George (Chairman of Credit Union), new member Josie Poulter, Green Man Community Centre Manager Martin O'Donnell, new member Barbara Montague, Rudi Vis MP.

Credit Union Expands

The Finchley Credit Union, launched in May last year, has opened its second branch at the Peabody Trust's Green Man community centre on Strawberry Vale, East Finchley.

Launched at a special event held at the centre on 13 January, the credit union offers a basic financial service for those who wish to borrow at a low rate of interest or who want to save a small amount regularly.

Paul Edwards, from the Barnet Council Employee's Credit Union said "Less than five years ago there was no credit union in Barnet, now there are three, with nearly 1,000 members. The three credit unions have total assets of a third of a million pounds, and have lent out more than half a million pounds in loans." "These loans have been generated by local people with local money for the benefit of local people and the local economy".

Martin O'Donnell, manager at the Green Man community

centre and credit union representative, said: "It is incredible to think that one in ten households are denied access to a bank or building society account, while one and a half million households have no access to financial services at all. Now local people have a real alternative to door to door loan sharks charging extortionate amounts."

The Finchley Credit Union will be at the Green Man Community Centre from 3 to 5 pm on Wednesdays. A service is also available on Saturdays from 10 to 12 noon and Wednesdays from 7 to 8.30 pm at the Neighbourhood Centre, Church Lane. For further information contact Kim George on tel: 020 8444 8673 or Martin O'Donnell on tel: 020 83687902.

Are you insured?

By Daphne Chamberlain
A Stanley Road resident has contacted Watchdog about his mother's rejected insurance claim for £6,000.

Pensioner Margaret Hughes was visiting her other son in Gloucester when burglars entered her home by forcing a downstairs window.

The window had been bolted, and police said they could see "no problems" with the claim. However, Royal Sun Alliance refused to pay, on the grounds that they had sent out letters in April, warning that all downstairs and basement windows must have a key-operated locking device.

Not explicit

Sean Hughes maintains that the letter to his mother was not explicit enough. It didn't give details of the locks required, or where to get them. (In fact, he says that it costs around £100 to have them fitted.) His argument with the company is that the letter was not only vague, but was a one-off communication which could easily

be misunderstood or ignored among the average householders' flood of junk-mail.

Sean himself lost several possessions, including his mobile phone, which the burglars used to contact someone in the Archway area.

A Double Loss

The Hughes family and their neighbours are not aware of any other burglaries in their road, but police called to the house said that it was their ninth that day. Against that background, Sean Hughes is adamant that insurance companies should make their requirements absolutely clear.

Nothing can replace stolen articles of sentimental value, and Mrs Hughes is very distressed by the loss of her late mother's jewellery. People should be made fully aware, he says, that they may have no financial recompense either.

Traffic & Transport

Local Agenda 21 report
In partnership with the council, we can work together to resolve local issues.

Church La and Market Pl
The priority issue is addressing problems arising from the heavy volume of traffic using Church Lane and Market Place. Most vehicles using these roads have no alternative route so it is a matter of trying to improve the environment for residents, including reducing excessive speeds and obstructive parking. We have recently had a "walkabout" with Barnet Council Traffic Engineers who will prepare proposals for our next meeting.

Controlled Parking Zone
The Council is awaiting delivery of "pay and display" machines. Work should start in February and take approximately six weeks. Explanatory leaflets will be sent out to all households and businesses during February.

Underground Station
The problems at the Underground Station have already been well aired in articles and letters in *The Archer* and often arise in discussion at LA21 meetings. We have previously raised issues through the Council's liaison committee but will now try speaking directly with London Underground.

Crossing at Station
For a long time this busy crossing has not functioned safely. Observations show that people approach and use the crossing in various ways, mainly not as the layout intended, which suggests that the design needs looking at.

If you would like to be involved with the group, meeting dates are as follows: Wednesdays - 21 February; 16 May; 15 August; 21 November - 8pm at the Neighbourhood Centre, Church Lane. Peter Hale is the coordinator on 8444 5837.



The end is nigh! The George public house in Market Place. Photo by Diana Cormack

Another one bites the dust

by Diana Cormack
Not one of the Young Archer's wish list came true for the year 2000 but, as the year drew to a close, one of them took a turn for the worse!

The children had hoped that The George public house on Market Place could be turned into a weekends-only disco centre. Sorry kids, but at the time of writing the pub and its car park have been fenced off and planning permission is being sought by Michael Shanley Homes for redevelopment. They want to build fourteen two bedroom flats in a part two, part three-storey building with parking space for fourteen cars.

Flat race

Some residents are upset about the loss of a characteristic local pub to yet more flats. A postman who works at the nearby sorting office expressed his concern about parking in the vicinity, which is incredibly difficult now and can only be made worse when men come to work on the building site.

Should the proposed building of flats behind Budgens happen simultaneously, there

will not only be another bunch of builders looking for somewhere to park, but also a lot of shoppers used to conveniently leaving their cars in Viceroy Close.

The block of flats at the junction of Market Place and East End Road is nearing completion; no doubt it will house some residents on the look out for a place to park.

Take a look out of your window and see if you can spot the next space ripe for re-development!

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