



Pigeon corner makeover?

by Diana Cormack

Since last autumn the local LA 21 Partnership has been holding meetings to discuss the refurbishment of the area around the Budgens and Iceland stores. "Three East Finchley Town Square Concepts for Development" were reviewed at a meeting held at the Neighbourhood Centre, Church Lane. They are to be put on public display later this year and people will be invited to vote to show their preferences.

Local Agenda 21 Officer Debby Stevens chaired the meeting. Other borough representatives were Suresh Patel (speaking about the maintenance of the project) and Landscape Architects Megan Williams and Avra Ploumi. A significant speaker was the newly-appointed East Finchley Town Centre Manager Jo Cole. Part of her brief is the financial aspect; although there is a basic budget of £35,000 from Barnet, money will need to be raised from other sources such as private sponsorship.

On the question of vandalism at the proposed site, Jo reported that the zero tolerance of Town Keepers introduced in East Barnet, along with the Neighbourhood Warden scheme, has led to a dramatic drop in such activities. Hopefully East Finchley will soon have the benefit of those officials here.

Three concepts

The three concepts for development involve either building on the existing design, creating a feature corner design or an open corner design. The raft of plans will be displayed in East Finchley library for two weeks and can also be viewed in Finchley Youth Theatre on as yet unconfirmed dates in

June. *THE ARCHER* will keep you informed of these dates and of any further developments.

The ongoing question of a Waitrose store and how it might affect the proposed improvements was raised. However, the Borough representatives were unable to comment on this issue.

Ambitious proposals

Already the proposals include ideas for planting, seating, sculpture, a water feature and mosaics. Decorating the tree permanently with lights or putting an impressive clock on the pavement are other suggestions, along with an archer or arrows to tie in with the station sculpture. A statue of Peter Sellers, our best-known former resident, has been suggested. The sad news of the death of his fellow goon Spike Milligan reminds us that East Finchley was often mentioned in that immensely popular radio comedy, so how about a tribute to *The Goon Show*?

Over to you

But do you want Pigeon Corner to be redeveloped? Do you want the pigeons to go? Do you have any other ideas? What do you think of the title "East Finchley Town Square"? It's not too late to air your views, so let *The Archer* know.

Burglary Prevention Accessories

By Femke van Iperen

In an attempt to help elderly and vulnerable people in Barnet who are subject to distraction burglaries, Barnet Police held a one-day seminar for water companies, district nurses and members of the local authority who have regular contact with the victim group.

According to the police, the criminals work in teams of two or more, knock on doors pretending to be from utility companies or nearby building workers and sometimes ask for a glass of water, a pen or paper. Once inside, the distraction continues, sometimes leaving the victim initially unaware of his or her loss.

Memo minder

In the seminar, details of Crime Prevention accessories were displayed, like the Memo Minder, a message-recording device which can be attached to the door to remind you to secure the door chain before opening. Other recommendations included a strobe light door-alarm and the Barnet Boot, a device fixed to the

door that prevents it from being pushed open.

Joyce Thaku, Barnet Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator at Barnet Police Station, has a regular supply of these items which can be ordered on 020 8733 5187. Further information can be obtained from DI Paul Anstee at Colindale Police Station on 020 8733 4525.



Bringing a whole new meaning to "bus queue" - five 263 buses in a row. Photo by Kim George

Finchley Forum Report

By Daphne Chamberlain

The Finchley Forum met on 20 February at the Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale. The following subjects were among those discussed.

143 Bus Petition

A petitioner described the service as unreliable and badly run, with rude staff and poor management. He said that his correspondence with the garage could go no further, and that Metroline should "get its act together" regarding this bus route, which is an important connection to many points around the Borough.

Speaking in support, another member of the public said that it seemed we had to turn to Local Authorities, the Transport Commission or the Ombudsman, because London Buses and the various companies kept passing the buck backwards and forwards.

Mike Freestone, from Barnet Planning and Highways, said he took the problem seriously. He would report back.

The 263 and People Power

Chair, Councillor Kathy McGuirk linked the 143 problem with the 263, remarking that the issue was about people power. She said, "Because of users' concern, Councillors and MPs have been instrumental in withdrawing control from Arriva and giving it to Metroline with a lot tighter control. We always take action with bus companies".

Safety Scheme for East End Road / Church Lane / Ossulton Way.

Petitioners were concerned about safety aspects of traffic waiting, dropping off, loading, etc. Chair McGuirk said they had met with Council Officers and with Councillor Alison Moore, and were working towards a solution.

Car Parking Concerns in North Finchley

It was reported there would be about 250 parking spaces in the new Tally Ho Centre, with 170 earmarked for residents of the new complex, and 40 for Marks and Spencer. Residents in the area expressed great concern about the lack of dedicated parking for users of the Arts Centre, and about the proposed Controlled Parking Zone in general.

Next Finchley Forum

The next Forum will meet at 6.30pm on Wednesday 17 April at Avenue House, N3. Attendance is open to everyone.

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New improved 263 buses?

By Daphne Chamberlain
Are they better? Are they worse? Have you just given up on public transport anyway?

In January we expressed the hope that the new buses would be more reliable, comfortable and convenient to use. East Finchley has had a raw deal for much too long.

During the past couple of months, I have heard comments along these lines; "This 263 is a joke. The seats are so small you just can't fit in." People have reported waiting half an hour or an hour, sometimes even longer.

What do YOU think?

What do you, the people of East Finchley, want to do about our bus service? Please let us know.

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