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Local News Is Our Aim

# THE ARCHER



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*A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.*

## Police Station set to Reopen

By Femke van Iperen

**Following years of residents' and politicians' campaigning to reopen Muswell Hill Police station, a recent public meeting introducing a volunteer scheme has produced more chances than ever.**

On 18 September, volunteers were urged to join a community project to reopen the front desk in Fortis Green which had to close to the public in 2000. About 200 people turned up on the evening, organised by Haringey's Liberal Democrat group leader Councillor Lynne Featherstone. The scheme aims to train and recruit civilian volunteers on a rota basis.

Cllr Featherstone told *THE ARCHER*, "I have been campaigning for the re-opening since it closed about three years ago. An open station is real as well as symbolic; our doors are open and we are part of the community. When there are no police around, you can get into a terrible downward spiral."

Following audience's reactions, the meeting's most persuasive argument concerned the community itself. Said Helen Smith: "Volunteers are so driven to help and support their community as a self-help scheme. It re-lights a sense of community spirit. It is not only an access point for people to report crimes. It's an opportunity for people to feed in local intelligence."

Volunteers will go through seven security checks and comprehensive professional training. Duties will depend on training-levels - the most basic training can be done within six weeks - and will vary from taking minor crime reports to lost-property reports.

Despite public concern, the police insist on volunteers' legal

and personal safety. There will be a system of full management support in place, volunteers supervised by PCs, Sergeants and Inspectors. Ms Smith said: "The volunteers are protected legally, as our paid staff are. In risky situations we make sure our volunteers are safe and help can be at hand within two minutes."

About 55-60 expressions of interest have been made so far. Cllr Featherstone concluded: "I passionately believe in this project. We are all thrilled with the turn out and we believe it might be open by Christmas."



Fortis Green Police Station. Photo by John Dearing

## Residents Win Bus Route

By Diana Cormack

**For years the 234 bus between Barnet and East Finchley via Muswell Hill had its final destination at East Finchley tube station. Empty of passengers, it would then continue up and then down the Great North Road, turning via Bakers Lane for the journey back to Barnet, starting at the tube station. Bus users along that route have had to stand and watch in frustration as the 234 sailed by, their previous attempts to persuade London Transport to change this strange situation having failed.**

### Persistence pays off

However, the Sussex Gardens Residents' Association, were fortunate to have determined campaigner Sheila Elkin in their ranks. With the support of Buswatch, she has fought hard and long to convince Transport for London and

Haringey Council that the 234 bus route extension was both viable and necessary. Now her efforts have paid off for, as from last month, the route will continue on to the 143/263 bus-stop at Woodside Avenue and will start at the one opposite Sussex Gardens. Bus headboards will

read Highgate Wood, accompanied by Sussex Gardens in smaller letters, as Transport for London would not adopt a street name as the main title. So at last residents have direct access to Muswell Hill without changing buses. Congratulations to all concerned! They have proved that by working together and persisting, things can be changed.

Buswatch aims to encourage Transport for London, Haringey Council and Councillors to improve existing services and to fight for new ones. For more information telephone Chris Barker on 020 8347 7684 or email c.barker@lineone.net



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