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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.

Education under-funding hits East Finchley schools

While the local community has been absorbed by the debate about a supermarket development, another 'development' has hit the school community with potentially devastating consequences - the Barnet education budget.

The shortfall is estimated at 8% across the borough, the brunt seeming to be borne by secondary schools. In the case of Christ's College, East Finchley, Headmaster Paul O'Shea in a letter to the parents advised a shortfall of around £450,000, equivalent to 12.5% of the school budget. He has been

placed in the unenviable position of having to warn of the possibility of significant staff cuts, increased class sizes, reduction in books and equipment, a massive reduction in the already overstretched premises budget and even the possibility of not being able to deliver the national curriculum.

Several staff have already been advised that their short term contracts will not be renewed and the School is in consultation with the Trade Union Representatives concerning the selection criteria to be used should further staff reductions become necessary.

Register your concern

The school is a successful one, as evidenced by the fact that it has recently been granted specialist status and is oversubscribed. In order to preserve this singular achievement Mr O'Shea has urged parents to lobby their MP (for example using www.faxyourmp.com) and local Councillors and register their concern. Of course anyone else concerned for the future of the East Finchley community could consider doing the same.



Pathetic - Vandals have destroyed fifteen saplings in the Glebelands. Photo by Erini Rodis.

Trees Vandalised

Last month North Finchley's Agenda 21 funded a project to plant fifteen downy birches at the edge of the sports pitch in the Glebelands, in a bid to make the area more attractive for local people to use. Within three weeks though, vandals had destroyed every single tree.

Sited just west of Coppetts Wood nature reserve, the Glebelands is one of the last open spaces remaining of the Finchley Common, which was originally used for grazing and collecting firewood, and then for playing fields and allotments.

The trees, Latin name: *Betula pubescens*, were described by Mark Evison, green spaces development officer for Barnet Council as, "a native species, which should attract a good amount of the right invertebrates and birds". Sadly, thanks to the mindless actions of a few, we will not have the chance to see the benefit of these trees.

Accident Appeal

Police are appealing for witnesses to a road accident in Highgate on Saturday 22 March, in which a pedestrian was injured.

A Volkswagen Polo collided with a male pedestrian at about 1 pm in Highgate High Street, and carried him for a short time on the bonnet. It is believed the driver drove in zigzags down the road in an attempt to throw the pedestrian off.

The car then continued north up the High Street and turned right into Southwood Lane. The pedestrian, a white man in his early 40s, was taken to hospital suffering head injuries. He remains in a serious but stable condition.

The car, which has not yet been recovered, is a dark coloured, possibly blue, VW Polo registration V923GLK. Police have established the plates were false. The driver was a white male.

Anyone who witnessed the incident or has any information about the suspect car should contact the Major Incident Room at Holborn police station on 020 8733 6596, or alternatively if you wish to remain anonymous call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111. The officer investigating is DS Ian Clark.

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