



Three-year-olds Antonia & Keisha beside tyre ruts in grass. Photo by Diana Cormack

The State of the Estate

By Diana Cormack

"We don't expect miracles, but we would like something spent on this estate," said a resident of Prospect Ring, where two ten-storey buildings provide an impressive view of the surrounding area. Less impressive are the windows through which this scene can be viewed. Except for those on balconies, they are extremely difficult to clean and their old, metal frames with flaking paintwork cause draught problems.

Apparently the promise of replacement double-glazing has long been in the air. Some inhabitants believe this is why any exterior improvements seem to be in limbo. When I saw them, each block had its own particular outstanding eyesore. One had a wide streak of green slime down the side, stemming from an overflow pipe which has been causing problems for months; the other an extensive splattering of white paint across descending windows and walls.

Unacceptable hazards

Another eyesore, but also a potential danger, were deep holes gouged out by the wheels of large vehicles at the edge of the roundabout the flats overlook. They can fill with up to eighteen inches of rainwater, causing a hazard for smaller vehicles, unwary cyclists and pedestrians but particularly young children. On part of this land is the concrete base of an old laundry where people now park, for although the

residents are lucky enough to have some garages provided, Prospect Ring was built in the late 1950s when no one envisaged the rise in the number of car owners.

Another example of previous planning is what might have been a miniature maze and sculpture for a children's play area, which, by today's safety standards, seems unacceptable. Situated between the high-rise blocks, it is perfectly positioned for a playground designed specifically for the under-fives. Although there is a children's playground on neighbouring Park Road, busy mums would be happier if toddlers could play safely closer to home. Some mothers pointed out nearby cracked and unstable walls which they are worried will cause accidents.

Unfortunately as they have already found to their cost, particularly with on-going lift malfunctions, any leaseholders would be hit hard by refurbishment bills. However,

those residents of the Ring who are feeling forgotten are also wondering just what their prospects are.

At the time of writing *THE ARCHER* was still waiting for comments from Barnet Council's press office.

Playgroup Places

Places are available for September at the Old Barn pre-school playgroup for children from two years of age.

Based at the Old Barn Community Centre on Tarling Road, East Finchley, it is open from 9.30 – 12.30 on Mondays to Fridays during term time. There are plenty of activities for youngsters both indoors and on the large, fenced off playing area outside.

Please phone 8349 4613 for details.

Local MP addresses Cypriots

By Erini Rodis

"While the missing are still missing...the struggle must go on!" cried local MP Rudi Vis at a rally in Trafalgar Square on Sunday 13 July. Organised by the National Federation of Cypriots of Great Britain, the speakers also included Simon Hughes and Eddie O'Hara, who impressed the thousands-strong gathering by addressing them in Greek, in a call for freedom and the implementation of human rights in the Republic of Cyprus.

Dr Vis is also adamant that, "since elections have produced the finest coalition government over there for many, many years...the UK government really should assist them," in a pledge for a unified peace.

Hopes for unity

This rally has been an annual event for 29 years. However this year's took on a special significance as it coincided with significant recent changes. Greek and Turkish Cypriots in Cyprus have this year been allowed to integrate for the first time since the invasion and subsequent partial occupation

by Turkey in 1974.

Accompanied by their passports, thousands have been queuing up since Easter to cross the UN Green Line without getting shot. Mixed emotions abound amongst refugees who are now able to drive for an hour or so to meet the occupiers of their ancestral homes. They are currently allowed to stay for up to 72 hours, but only if they can show hotel receipts. Cypriots are nevertheless hopeful that this painful process, together with the accession of Cyprus into the EU, might be a first step towards a full reintegration on the island.



MP Rudi Vis lends his political support to a Cypriot cause. Photo by Erini Rodis

Use It, Don't Lose It!

By John Dearing

Did you receive a thin blue magazine through your door last week entitled Barnet's Community Plan? Did you struggle through a couple of pages of Council Newspeak ("bold common vision", "quality learning opportunities", "trailblazing a borough-wide service"!!), only to give up in disgust and throw it the bin? I nearly did, until I noticed that there is a questionnaire enclosed which will "inform next year's budget setting process" – this must be important, I thought.

After taking advice from a qualified translator, it would seem that all areas of government have 'Community Plans'; the national one is where John Prescott announced his intention to concrete over the whole of the southeast of England and build several million new houses on it. Ken Livingstone has one, and so have all the local councils. In principle, everything they are going to do is in their respective community plan. If anything appears to be missing, it is because they are not going to do it!

Speaking their language

Barnet Council has given us an opportunity to comment on this important document. Since it is probably the only time they will do this, it is of paramount importance that as many people as possible respond, especially in East Finchley, which is all

too often overlooked in favour of the more fashionable parts of the borough. Please don't send your responses to *THE ARCHER*, send them to the council! We would however, welcome your letters on this subject.

When you fill in the questionnaire, don't be tempted to write things like "I want my dustbin emptied more frequently", because they will just ignore you – you have to respond in Council Newspeak. My personal concern is the over-development of East Finchley, with new blocks of flats sprouting on every corner. I will have to say something like "The creation of good quality community space relieving personal levels of stress is a key planning priority"!

Whatever you do, don't just throw it away – if you send it in, you might win a prize!

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