



Three-fold Rise in Some CPZ Charges

By Kevin Finn

Barnet Council has announced that, with effect from March 2004, fees for Resident Parking Permits have changed from a flat rate per vehicle to an escalating charge based on the number of vehicles at a home.

Swingeing increases

The new fees mean that the charge for a first vehicle is increased to £35 p.a., an increase of over 16.5%. However, if a household has more than one vehicle the charges are yet greater. A second vehicle attracts an annual fee of £65 (a formidable 216.7% increase) whilst a third car attracts a massive 300% rise at £90 per year. Key workers such as District Nurses, Doctors, Social Workers, who must have a car to serve the community, do not get any relief from the new rates, according to Barnet Council's Parking Office. One

can question whether these fees are reasonable for residents and local taxpayers to be permitted to park near their home for the one hour per day that the CPZ affects.

Penalising the less well-off

Designed to discourage car ownership, this new scheme has the net effect of penalising the less well off. While affluent members of society may have a drive or garage and are unaffected, the shortage of affordable housing means multiple occupancy homes for the many. Even family homes need two bread-winners to

afford mortgage, and may have grown up offspring living at home. People who cannot afford to buy or rent their own home often live in house-shares or bed-sits. The first-come-first-served basis on which the charge is calculated means that the second and third people moving in are penalised.

Little alternative

Residents could join the long waiting-list to rent a garage, but this is about to get even longer as the Council prepares to demolish garages in Norfolk Close.

The CPZ was introduced to prevent commuters from outside the area clogging residential streets while they went into London. Now it seems to be a revenue-raising mechanism for Barnet Council. The Council has not yet disclosed what the charges for a fourth vehicle might be, nor has it responded to written enquires on some of the points raised in this article.



Another busy morning at East Finchley tube station. Photo by Bob Janes

'Situation Normal' on Northern Line

As most of us now know the Northern Line is now running normally, meaning the trains, rather than the commuters, cross over at Camden Town.

THE ARCHER has been given a report explaining the reasons for the derailment on 19 October 2003.

The report concludes that the derailment was caused by a rare combination of a design weakness in the points, plus a number of other factors. The report made recommendations, which include the introduction of new switchblade designs, improvement to engineering standards and further improvements to London Underground's emergency response arrangements.

Whereas some residents had started to like the certainty of all Barnet trains going to Charing Cross, for East Finchley

commuters to and from the City the arrangement had been far from ideal. A regular commuter told THE ARCHER that Monday 8 March 2004 was bliss - being able to travel directly from East Finchley to Moorgate. The platform crowding at Camden Town had been an accident waiting to happen.

Of course by 'normal' we really mean 'usual' rather than 'acceptable'; the delays, cancellations, terminations and incorrect indicators soon manifested themselves and now that the points are working again we hope renewed effort can be put into improving the service generally.

Spring Cleaning

Coldfall Wood (off Creighton Avenue) and Muswell Hill Playing Fields (north of the wood) are open spaces that may be less well known to East Finchley people than Cherry Tree Wood. But like Cherry Tree Wood there's a Friends group looking after these precious open spaces.

It meets regularly at the Vampire Sports Club, off Coppett's Road, providing a forum for the views and concerns of local residents and dog-walkers.

Occasional clean-ups of the fields and the wood are organised by teams of volunteers. The next one, for the field, is on Saturday 24 April, starting at 11am, and a Coldfall Wood clean-up is planned for 15 May. Details from Linda Allison on 020 8883 9205.

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