



Recycling

By Ann Bronkhorst

Do you struggle to grow plants in poor London soil? And have you got some old sandals you'll never wear again? The link, and the answer, is recycling.

Barnet residents are rather good at it. Last year Barnet, out of the seven boroughs in the North London Waste Authority, was the one to collect the most rubbish for recycling. The bad news is that we produce ever more rubbish, throwing out our own weight in waste every ten weeks. The good news is that recycling is booming and next year Barnet may hit its target: to recycle 18% of all its rubbish.

Mad About Waste?

Friends of the Earth would approve. Pressure from their supporters helped get the Household Waste Recycling Bill through Parliament recently. All local authorities must provide doorstep collections for all recyclable waste by 2010. FoE. are targeting children with a pack for KS3 and another, 'Mad about Waste and Recycling', for primary schools. Information from freephone 0808 8001111 or www.foe.co.uk/learning

Changing Rooms

Nine million of us have watched *Changing Rooms* on TV where Oliver Heath promotes the recycling message. He says "I like new uses for ordinary products – plastic bottles turned into fleeces, glass bottles into paving, circuit boards into lampshades . . . it's cheaper and you can use your imagination."

Charity Shops

Here in East Finchley three charity shops are kept busy recycling our cast-offs by selling them on. What happens to the goods they can't sell? The clothes are processed to make, eventually, paper; even handbags and shoes can be recycled. So those dreary sandals could go to a charity shop or into your doorstep black box.

Why No Green Bins?

Garden waste isn't collected yet from East Finchley except when there's a Block Cleanse – next one due in January or February, details from 8359 4600. Until then, what about our Christmas trees? The Recycling Centre in Summer's Lane will take them but some lucky Barnet residents just put their trees next to their green wheely bins. I tried to find out why we're not entitled to the Green Garden Waste Collection. I was told "It will be expanding by 10,000" but not when it will reach us. Letters to the Waste and Sustain Team, North London Business Park, Oakleigh Road South, N11 1NP might speed things up, perhaps. And the good news is that from the same address you can buy composters at less than half their retail price, including tumblers and worm bins. Prices go up in April. Call 8359 4654 for information.

January's a time for resolutions. Mine will be to recycle a lot of old clobber via charity shops and paper collections and to dig into my garden some good compost for the worms to recycle for me.

Leave It Out

By Daphne Chamberlain

In mid-November a stretch of pavement along the northern part of the High Road disappeared. It wasn't seen again until well into December. A routine short walk over where it used to be (opposite Oak Lane) became unpleasant and potentially dangerous. This main road pavement had turned into one long, vegetating puddle.

It was a wet and windy autumn, and leaves were falling. What was Barnet's game plan to deal with this? According to the Council's Customer Care department, nine people, divided into three teams of three, were moving round the Borough to remove leaves.

They started around the middle of November, which I suggested might be a little late, and would continue "while they were needed". These were temporary workers, taken on for the leaf-fall season.

I was told that as Barnet is a big borough, with a lot of trees and green spaces, these people's work was never done. Yes, indeed – but was there no attempt to prioritise? It seems not, although anyone who complained about excessive leaf-fall should have their

problem sorted out "within five working days".

What happens to leaves when they are finally removed from underfoot? They go to Cambridge to be composted, along with all the binfuls of garden waste. The Summers Lane Recycling Centre told me they shift about 15 tons of garden waste a week at this time of year, and about 30 to 40 tons in the summer.

Wasted opportunity?

The composters get this waste for nothing, and can dispose of it how they like. Some authorities – Enfield, for example – take the compost back, and sell some to the public. "It's cheaper than buying it from garden centres," said the man at the recycling Centre. "Barnet have considered it, but they're not doing it yet."



Mayor Cohen officially switched on the East Finchley Festive Lights on 8th December, watched by Lawrie Chivers, and Councillor Coleman. Photo by Toni Morgan

Thank you for the Christmas Lights

According to the chaps who erect our festive lights, they think that our lights are the best in the borough. Well done, East Finchley!

It was a shame that we couldn't put the clown outside Martin School and the Christmas trees in front of East Finchley station. When the council put the new lampposts up they forgot to put connectors in these posts; they say they will rectify this for next year. I am amazed at the generosity of our community. One of our Canadian cousins gave me £180 towards the light fund. Many people have stopped me in the High Road with donations.

The most significant has to be the £20 donated by the 4th East Finchley Brownies. These young people are our future, it's good to see their public-spirited participation. Well done, Maureen Antoinette, the lass who helps with the Brownies.

Lastly our thanks to Deno of East Finchley Electrical, Christopher of Tony's Continental and all the businesses in the High Road who contributed to supplement the council's grant.

Acting for Families

A charity based in East Finchley is hoping to recruit more volunteers at a theatre event to be held in February.

Home-Start Barnet, which runs from The Old Barn Community Centre in Tarling Road, is staging an evening with Playback Theatre, a group which acts out stories or events told by members of the audience.

Aim of the evening is to attract volunteers to help the charity, which supports families in Barnet with at least one child under five and who are experiencing difficulties.

The evening starts on 4 February at 7 pm. For more information contact Home-Start on 020 8371 0674.

Renewal

By Helen Fletcher

The year draws slowly to its close,
Yet still the rosebuds come.
More slowly do the flowers unfold,
Responding to late sun.

Shaken by wind and lashed by rain,
Roots rocked loose in the soil,
Still shoots come and buds appear.
The strength in the bush no stars can find.

The bush is old, the shape is poor,
Pruned back through many a year.
Vigour has gone, the branch is weak,
And this lesson is clear.
Old stock cannot produce prize blooms.

Though as I view my little plot
From the garden door,
My spirits lift.
Scent, sight and sound
Bring joy to my heart once more.

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