



Station forecourt. Photo by Tony Roberts

Blood donations thwarted

By Diana Cormack

Despite the adverts on television, it seems that some people are still unaware of the vital service that blood donors provide for their fellow citizens. This lifeline is given freely by individuals, often at one of the mobile units of The National Blood Service. In East Finchley this unit usually parks for the day on the concourse outside the tube station.

Regrettably, the session scheduled for 6 August had to be cancelled at very short notice, so short in fact that people with appointments were phoned that day, while those who just turned up saw a blood service van instead of a mobile unit and learned that their efforts had been in vain.

Coned off

According to the National Blood Service based at Colindale, the reason for this was that although cones had been put in position to ensure there was a place for the mobile unit, these had been removed and motorists had left their cars in the space provided. So, with nowhere for

the large mobile clinic to park, there could be no donations.

No penalties

Although station staff cone off an area used for picking up or dropping off customers, London Transport say that they have no way of issuing penalties to perpetrators, nor were they able to tell me who, if anyone, could do so. Whilst the Blood Service believed that once the cones were put out the situation was being monitored, a station manager told me that they haven't enough staff to do that. Another donating session on 17 September was almost abandoned, but the driver managed to park with great difficulty.

No notice

Surprisingly, there is no notice indicating what the coned off space is to be used for. The station does not have one, so I suggested to both parties that this might be a solution to the problem. A representative of the NBS said that she would contact London Transport and that "hopefully" the station could be supplied with notices.

There were many young people donating blood and it would be a shame to discourage them, as well as other donors, by cancelling sessions. Future sessions are scheduled for Fridays 3 December and 7 January.

Threat to East Finchley Advice Service

The legal advice sessions provided by the East Finchley Advice Service are threatened with closure, owing to a shortfall in funding from Barnet Council. The service is a non-profit making charity that provides first stop legal advice free of charge to all comers.



Manager, Terry Stone, with client. Photo by Garth Morton

On Tuesday evenings, between 7pm and 8pm, the centre is staffed entirely by unpaid volunteers comprising solicitors, barristers and an administrator. It has been said that access to the legal system should be open to all, irrespective of their wealth, and this is exactly why these free legal advice sessions are so vital. If you are unsure of your rights in law, then a legal advice session lawyer will be there to help you. The service will do its best to help whatever your legal problems.

Lost funding

Over many years these sessions have made a difference to thousands of lives. Now Barnet Council, who provide the core funding for the centre, will not be paying the £900 additional indemnity insurance which is required to keep the legal service going.

During the day, the EFAS provides advice free to all on a vast range of topics, but as the Manager Terry Stone, its sole salaried employee, stated, "We also need to keep the evening legal advice sessions going. Normally, ten to twenty people attend each session with questions that require an expert legal opinion, which we cannot provide in the day. The evening, also, may be the only time when working people can seek help."

The centre has engaged the services, through the London Advice Services Association, of a fund raising specialist. The challenge is that the funding required is core in nature and this is less easy to find than short term project funding. Therefore, if Barnet Council does not step in to save the day, this very valuable service may well be lost forever.

Institute seeks building money

By Daphne Chamberlain

Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute is appealing for £4-6 million toward the cost of building their new headquarters on the former Neurological Hospital site, next to East Finchley station. Some Suburb residents have received letters asking for financial assistance.

Costs have doubled

Institute Principal Fay Naylor told *THE ARCHER* that delays in obtaining planning approval have increased costs from six million to an estimated 11-13 million pounds. Octagon Developments have bought the site for two blocks of flats and the Institute HQ, but the Institute has to bear its own building costs.

Ms Naylor said that plans will go ahead in any case, as two banks have already guaranteed a mortgage, but that the Institute has never been in debt and wants to continue that tradition. It has seven million pounds available itself, but needs to raise the remainder. Fundraising plans are in hand, but she is hoping for individual donations, with donors of larger amounts being given the opportunity to name specific rooms – or even the Institute.

Public transport links

The new building, which will cover about 40,000 square feet, will be three storeys high plus a basement car park. When

asked about car parking, Ms Naylor said that green spaces policy allowed them only 30 spaces, but that many of the Institute's users were not drivers anyway. She hopes too that the proximity of the Tube and buses to the new building will encourage more students to use public transport.

The Institute is delighted with its temporary accommo-

dation in Park House, which it refurbished at its own expense. Ms Naylor hopes that when this year's lease is up, an arrangement can be made to rent it for another couple of years – which is how long the new building is expected to take. The Thomas More, Muswell Hill and Central Square annexes will not be absorbed in the new building, and will continue as they are.

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