



Keeping Muswell Hill police station open

By Paul Chapman

It is just one year since Muswell Hill Police Station on Fortis Green Road was reopened to the public. This has only been achieved because of a local volunteer programme to man the front counter.

Previously the Muswell Hill police station had been closed to the public for about five years and Hornsey Police Station then became the nearest alternative with public access. The Muswell Hill station is open on all weekdays, except Thursdays, usually providing a more rapid service than larger police stations dealing with many more incidents. The main incidents are petty crimes such as thefts but more serious crimes such as abduction have been reported.

Over 30 police volunteers of all ages have now been recruited. After about eight weeks of training the volunteers take the responsibility of being the initial point of contact with the public; they may also help with community tasks such as school visits.

The volunteers, working in pairs, are usually expected to man the station counter at least twice a month. One of the younger volunteers, Ash, explains that her motivation is "to give something back to the community".

Tom, a volunteer who has



Ash and Tom at work at Muswell Hill Police Station. Photo by Paul Chapman

lived in the area for over 30 years, says, "This frees up more highly trained police officers for other work." He adds that some local knowledge is very useful. The volunteers all enthuse about the camaraderie of the work and opportunities to attend events and venues not open to members of the public, such as the Crime Museum in central London. In some cases the work leads on to other police voluntary work and one volun-

teer has joined Scotland Yard's forensic team.

Diane Dodd, the organiser from the Metropolitan Police, emphasising the importance of engaging with the community, says the volunteer programme is definitely not policing on the cheap because it would be desirable even if resources were unlimited.

She is appealing for more people to volunteer so that opening hours at Muswell Hill can be extended to six days a week, or at least Saturday. That would require a further 20 volunteers.

Muswell Hill police station is open to the public on Mondays and Wednesdays 14.30-19.30 and Tuesdays and Fridays 9.30-14.30. Anyone interested in helping at Muswell Hill Police Station or with other voluntary work can phone the Volunteers Programme on 020 8345 2148 or email MetvolunteersHaringey@met.police.uk.

Lawyers wanted

East Finchley Advice Service is looking for lawyers to work as volunteers to help local people understand legal issues.

Legal sessions are held on Tuesday evenings from 7-8pm at the service's premises in Church Lane.

The volunteer lawyers advise on simple matters and prepare clients for seeing a solicitor in more complicated issues, but do not undertake case work.

If you are a barrister, lawyer or solicitor interested in becoming part of this valuable service to the community, contact East Finchley Advice Service manager Terry Stone on 020 8444 6265.

Condolence book for bomb victims

A condolence book for the victims of last month's London bomb attacks is at Barnet Town Hall until 31 August.

Miriam Hyman, of Holyoake Walk, East Finchley, was one of the passengers killed in the explosion on the Number 30 bus in Tavistock Square. Miriam, 31, was on her way to her job as a picture researcher in Canary Wharf at the time.

Opened by the Mayor of Barnet, the condolence book is available for anyone to add their comments.

The Town Hall is at The Burroughs, Hendon, NW4. Once inside the main entrance, turn left to the First Contact department. The book is available 9am-9pm, Mondays to Fridays.

Mayor hosts Cypriots

Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Andreas Tambourides, hosted a visit by his counterpart from the Cypriot town of Famagusta. Mr Ioannis Skordis, the Mayor of Famagusta, accompanied by a delegation of his own councillors, visited the Town Hall in Hendon at the end of June.

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Commander seeks to reassure public

By John Dearing

Londoners had cause to celebrate on 10 July, when it was announced that the 2012 Olympics would be held in the city, but the celebrations were tragically terminated barely a day later, when three tube trains and a bus were attacked by terrorists, with devastating consequences.

Barnet's Borough Police Commander, Chief Superintendent Mark Ricketts, offered his sympathies to those affected by the attacks, and said that there was an increased police presence around the borough, in order to act as a deterrent to further terrorist activity, offer reassurance to residents and the travelling public, and deter those who would use this event to justify committing hate crimes.

Constant patrols

He said that around 90 officers (over a full day) were currently diverted to patrolling in close proximity to tube, train and bus stations, and mosques, synagogues and churches.

Already there had been seven racial incidents reported,

involving all manner of phobias, not just anti-Islamic.

Contacting the police

He expects that racial incidents will continue, but promised that those arrested will be charged, not cautioned. Tackling hate crime (including hoax calls) is a priority, and he urged people to report all racial incidents. He added that concerns about suspicious behaviour should be reported to the police helpline (0800 789 321).

The Chief Superintendent emphasised that the perpetrators were not Islamic terrorists, just terrorists. Everybody was the target of their attacks. His message was to be alert but not alarmed.

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