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THE ARCHER



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June 2005 No. 145 **20p**
ISSN 1361-3952 where sold

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.



Holy Trinity Church - the centre of controversy. Photo by Erini Rodis

Protests at plan for church phone mast

A plan to install a mobile phone mast in Holy Trinity Church has sparked protests from people living close to the building in Church Lane. These residents claim the mast would be a potential health risk and a threat to the value of their homes.

The Parochial Church Council has agreed that Holy Trinity Church should house a mast within the bell spire. The church authorities say it would improve reception for mobile phone users in East Finchley and provide better access to the new 3G mobile services like music and video.

Before going ahead with the installation, Holy Trinity Church was obliged to consult with local residents ahead of a final decision by the Diocese of London.

Health risk?

Some of those near neighbours raised serious concerns about the proposal and a petition was organised in an effort to get the plan dropped. At the time of going to press they had gathered 122 names.

Bob and Patti Owens, who live opposite the 159-year-old church, called on the Diocese of London to adopt a precautionary approach, such as has been taken by Kent County Council, which has banned the installation of mobile phone masts on its property on health grounds.

The couple said, "In our view, mobile phone base stations and masts should be sited only in places well away from houses, schools and hospitals, until such time as it can be shown conclusively that they represent no health risk."

Campaigners against phone masts claim that some research indicates that exposure to electromagnetic radiation from the masts is a danger to those living nearby but other international studies have found no appreciable risks.

No problem

Revd Laurence Hill of Holy Trinity Church wrote, in a letter to nearby residents, that base stations were already installed in several hundred churches around the country without any problems.

He continued, "Indeed, the installation itself might well reduce the number of aerials required locally, since it is likely that one high aerial in the church would do the job of several lower aerials sited more conspicuously

around the neighbourhood."

Holy Trinity Church, which has few reliable sources of income, will be able to charge an annual fee, said to be less than £10,000, for hosting the mast.

The deadline for comments on the plan has passed and residents must now wait to see if their objections were sufficient to cause the Parochial Church Council to reconsider.

Dixon of ... East Finchley?

By Francis Coulson

Policing in East Finchley is to become more visible and more responsive to the community with the chance of a mini police station opening on the High Road.

This was the message given out by Inspector Nick Davis as he launched the Safer Neighbourhood initiative at the East Finchley Constitutional Club on 28 April.

The Safer Neighbourhood initiative is about three things: first, a visible police presence with a beat officer; second, using police resources not only to combat crime but also to free local communities from the fear of crime; third, involving the community by creating avenues through which local people's concerns can be fed back to the police.

These resources are: one sergeant, one constable and three Community Support Officers. The CSOs have powers of detention and enquiry but are there to act as eyes and ears for the police proper rather than as substitutes for them.

PC Carter will continue his role as community liaison officer. Indeed, the whole Safer Neighbourhood team is intended as an addition to and not a substitute for

current policing arrangements.

Safer neighbourhoods

Currently, East Finchley policing is done from Golders Green and Colindale. The plan now is to open a 'mini cop shop' in the High Road as a headquarters and public access point for the team.

The location for this local police station is expected to be the premises of the recently closed Chivers Brothers' A1 Motors shop.

Finally, the police are seeking to establish a local focus panel, with whom they will meet regularly to ensure feedback of current local concerns. These are not to be confined to 'heavy' crime such as burglary and robbery but include anything which 'makes the locals feel less safe', including graffiti, anti-social behaviour and small-time drug-dealing or drug-taking.

The East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood team can be reached on 020 8721 2845 and 07887 632767.

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