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THE ARCHER




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Lottery money is vital to library's future

By Daphne Chamberlain

The planned re-organisation of the borough's library service underlines the importance of East Finchley Library's bid for lottery funding.

Barnet Council has decided to designate its libraries as 'Leading' or 'Local'. East Finchley will be a Local library. The Council estimates that the High Road building needs rewiring and emergency lighting replacement. If the lottery application is successful, that cost will be covered by the funding, which will provide Barnet Council with £857,000 from September 2007 to April 2011.

If the bid is unsuccessful, East Finchley will have to take its turn in the Council's general maintenance programme, governed by availability of funding and health and safety prioritisation.

Local means lower grade

Barnet Council told *THE ARCHER* that even if the lottery bid is successful, East Finchley will still remain a lower-graded library. Current opening hours will not be extended, though the bookable upstairs space would

be used "for as many hours as possible" for activities including dyslexia support, reading groups and basic skills classes.

Barnet told us that the services offered at East Finchley Library would be enhanced by the commitment of local groups, including the police, the Health Inform project and the Credit Union.

Library User Boards

Borough-wide, proposed Library User Boards are intended to promote local volunteer help for services such as housebound readers and mentoring of young people.

Barnet's market research shows strong support for more accessible libraries, but improvements will again be focused on Leading libraries, chosen for size and location.

In fact, most of these do not fit the Council's criterion of being within the commercial footfall, and Barnet told *THE ARCHER* that, although there are no plans to close or relocate any libraries at the moment, the Council will follow up "good and affordable" locations when they become available.

A decision on whether East Finchley Library will be granted lottery funds is expected in October.

Public meeting: how to safeguard our Wood

Users of Cherry Tree Wood will have an opportunity to express concerns and share ideas about the park's future at a public meeting in the park on Sunday 9 September.

The meeting follows Barnet Council's decision to axe the Wood's full time park keeper, which many park users believe has resulted in an increase in uncollected litter, graffiti and anti-social behaviour. 400 local residents signed a petition calling on Barnet Council to reconsider reinstating a park keeper but the Council to date seems unmoved.

There is also concern that, without active management, the woodland will fall further into decline. The Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, who are organising the meeting, hope it will be an opportunity to put forward positive ideas and to plan action to safeguard the wood's future. One idea already being floated is for local residents themselves to become more active in managing the park. David Atfield of the Friends said, "People are becoming increasingly angry and concerned for the park's

future. We want to bring everyone together to discuss ideas for turning the situation around".

The meeting is being held at 11am at the park's café and will be followed by the Friends of

Cherry Tree Wood's annual general meeting. Everyone interested in the future of the park is invited to attend. For more information, the Friends can be contacted at info@cherrytreewood.co.uk.

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Emergency services were called to the scene of an accident in the centre of East Finchley. Picture by John Dearing

High Road casualty

By John Dearing

At around 13:30 on Saturday 4 August, a pedestrian crossing the High Road by the lights at the junction with Fortis Green and East End Road was hit by a vehicle travelling south.

Emergency services were called, the High Road closed between Leicester Road and Fortis Green and traffic diverted, causing large queues to form (including no fewer than seven 263 buses, south-bound). The Air Ambulance helicopter was called, and landed in the London Underground Station car park. The casualty, an elderly woman, was taken to a North London hospital.

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