



Letters to the Editor

Agro to ambulance left me shocked

Dear Editor, I was terribly shocked by the behaviour of a woman motorist recently. She was screaming and hooting her car horn at the ambulance trying to treat my mum who couldn't breathe and was in severe pain in Sedgemere Avenue. She argued with the paramedics, saying she had a home to go to and wanted them to move the ambulance.

The paramedics said to her: "What if it was one of your family being treated by the emergency services and someone was tooting the horn and saying 'hurry up'. Haven't you heard of reverse?"

Where has the community spirit gone lately?

Name and address supplied.

Playground must be saved not sold

Dear Editor,

I was interested to see mention of the "run down" Halliwick Recreation Ground in the October issue of THE ARCHER. Back in September, a Haringey resident who belongs to Friends of Coldfall Woods informed me of rumours that Barnet Council might be planning to develop the park for social housing.

Initially, I expressed scepticism at my friend's concerns. However, my thoughts quickly turned to our council's current determination to sell off Stanley Road Playing Fields. What guarantee was there that Halliwick might not be next?

Curiosity took me on a dog walk to Halliwick. I can recall in the 1970s a reasonably well-kept park with attractive shrubberies, rose beds and ornamental flowerbeds. There was also a quaint little building used as a tool shed, known as "The Pavilion", which sported a working clock. In addition, the park had full-time staff most of the day.

All these have disappeared, ripped out, razed to the ground, or made redundant by municipal vandalism. Two modern vandalised playgrounds have replaced the old-fashioned stuff. One was "closed until further notice" and the other one, for children up to seven years, bore graffiti proclaiming: "Thug life forever".

Last January, Barnet Council leader Mike Freer claimed at his Leader Listens meeting in East Finchley that Stanley Road Playing Fields must be sold to pay for the refurbishment of local primary schools. The news that Barnet Council has probably lost £27 million in the Icelandic banking saga is well known. Less well known is that this sum was part of the £40 million earmarked for improving all Barnet's primary schools.

If the improvement programme is not to be almost totally abandoned, Councillor Freer's logic would ominously dictate the selling off of many public spaces.

Yours faithfully, Steve Norman,

43 Elmshurst Crescent, N2.

Editor's note: Councillor Mike Freer was quoted in a recent edition of the Hendon and Finchley Press denying that any of the £40 million borrowed by Barnet Council for the school regeneration scheme was part of the £27 million deposited in Icelandic banks. He said any loss would be covered by the council's reserves.

Whose interests are being served?

Dear Editor,

Janet Maitland's excellent article on page 1 of the November edition of THE ARCHER raises a matter of concern, not just for the people directly affected, but for everybody in Barnet. When the London Borough of Barnet planning department says the revised application was "submitted as a new application", this means that objections relating to a previous application are not taken into account, and new objections should be made.

However, the previous objectors do still have a valid interest in the new application, and the planning department should recognise this and give them proper notice of the new application, rather than using the fact that it is a new application to provide an excuse to ignore these people. Indeed, it could be argued that their previous objections make it essential that they are notified, which clearly did not happen in this case.

The LBBC planning department would no doubt say that it followed the due process to the letter, but if some enterprising planning consultant retained by the objectors thinks otherwise, and decides to lodge a judicial review, LBBC could find itself facing all the costs and expenses of having to prepare for a court case. If this is lost by LBBC, it could find itself with a bill for several hundred thousand pounds. All of this, of course, will ultimately be paid for by the long-suffering Barnet Council taxpayers.

Speaking as one, I object to this. Even if it doesn't happen this time, if the planning department continues to take this view, it will happen sooner or later. Why can't it make sure that it notifies everybody who could possibly be affected, whenever an application is received?

It is time that our elected representatives took a close look at the activities of the LBBC planning department to ensure that it looks after the interests of everybody, including council tax payers.

Yours faithfully, John Dearing Address supplied.

Supermarket fears are no false alarm

Dear Editor,

Alexandra Rook (Letters, THE ARCHER, October 2008) condemns the 'negativity' that has characterised the response to proposals to turn the empty unit in Stag Court into a supermarket. However, in constructing her argument she relies too much upon supposition and caricature of opponents' views.

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While all local residents would like to see the empty unit in use, yet another convenience store, to go along with the other three in the immediate area, is not the answer.

To suggest that 'false alarms' have been raised about the impact of the proposed store on other traders is to ignore the very real concerns of several local traders, one of whom took the trouble to organise a petition against the proposals.

This is less a case of wanting to snuff out the opposition than a recognition that 'more of the same' will not help the vitality and diversity of the High Road, but could, in these precarious times, result in one or more of the existing shops going out of business.

However, it is when she comes to the issue of parking, that Ms Rook's arguments really fall apart. Dismissing concerns about increased congestion and parking problems, she argues that most shoppers would go to the store on foot. Yet, there is already severe displacement of parking into adjacent Leslie Road, caused by people stopping there to use the shops, offices and facilities around the corner on the High Road, which would only be exacerbated by the proposed supermarket.

If the shop was successful, people would park somewhere on Leslie Road in order to pop in, ensuring that even fewer parking spaces were available for residents along this street.

Just as some of us were motivated in our objections to the Waitrose development not by nimbysism but by a concern that it was just in the wrong place on the High Road, so, in this case, objectors will have considered the advantages and disadvantages of the location, and decided that the latter significantly outweigh the former. To suggest otherwise is to misrepresent the debate.

Yours faithfully, Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin Leslie Road, N2.

Goodbye to Dorothy, 104

By Daphne Chamberlain

Mrs Dorothy Jerrome's funeral took place on 29 October, her 104th birthday. She might have had a chuckle about that, because Dorothy loved to laugh.



Dorothy Jerrome (then Ditcham), aged seven

Born Alice Helen Ditcham, she came to East Finchley in 1911, when she was six. Apart from brief spells working away as a young woman, and early married years in Church End, she lived in Lincoln Road for the rest of her life.

An accomplished pianist and dancer, Dorothy also played the double bass. She worked for 50 years with the WVS, loved her garden, pot plants and cats, was always immaculately dressed, and was a prolific reader and puzzle-solver.

Her neighbour, Sue Southery, described her as a thoughtful friend and "incredibly strong in spirit". After the deaths of her husband, Sidney, in 1999, and then her brother, Russell, in 2002, she lived alone in her large

house. When it was broken into, her response was: "Just wait till I get my hands on them!"

After a stroke a couple of years ago, she was determined to return home to look after her cat, Twiggy. Dorothy was a remarkable woman, who appreciated her good fortune, and enjoyed to the full her long and happy life.

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