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THE ARCHER




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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Pavement tax protest by traders

By Daphne Chamberlain

Traders are warning that a council decision to tax them for use of the pavement outside their premises is threatening their businesses and will change the image of East Finchley completely.

Until this year, Barnet allowed traders free use of 10% of the pavement, provided that at least two metres was left clear for pedestrians. This February, however, the council has followed other boroughs in adopting the amended Local Authorities Act of 1990. This states that anyone trading on the pavement, or any other public area, within seven metres of a road or footway, must be licensed.

"Trading" includes putting out shop front displays, and tables and chairs. According to the size of the area, six-monthly licence fees range from £100 for three square metres to £900 for 15-25 square metres. When Barnet were considering introducing licences in 2004, local traders told *THE ARCHER*: "This would kill us."

"Ghost town" warning
Now REEF, East Finchley's traders' association, has written to Barnet's Licensing Team, asking them to reconsider the charge. REEF makes the point that East Finchley has a special atmosphere, recognised by Barnet when it was designated a village, rather than a town centre.

Their letter says: "A key factor to the village feel is that many of the shops display their goods on the street: fresh flowers, fruit and vegetables, people enjoying coffee or a glass of wine. If businesses could not use the pavement, the village would look like a ghost town. Diverse businesses, the vast majority of which are independent, have made East Finchley a pleasant place to live, work and visit. We want to keep it this way."

Part of the rationale for the charge is to discourage traders from cluttering the pavements and obstructing pedestrians but

REEF claims that footway space is not an issue in East Finchley, where pavements are wide.

At a meeting in East Finchley in January, Barnet Council Leader Mike Freer praised the "resurgent look" of our village centre, comparing it favourably with other parts of the borough.

Poor consultation

The traders say the tax will damage that image and also complain that they were not consulted beforehand. Barnet Council told *THE ARCHER* that notification was placed in a local newspaper, giving 28 days to make representations, but no representations were received. It is not practice for all newspapers to carry this type of notice, and *THE ARCHER* was not included.

Should shops and cafés be allowed to place goods and tables outside their premises? Tell us your views by writing to *THE ARCHER*, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA, or emailing the-archer@lineone.net.



Fun in the sun. Photo by Alison Roberts

Another festival to remember

See page 6 for our festival photographs.

Post Offices close

Two Post Offices serving people in East Finchley were closing in June despite calls from customers to keep them open.

The East End Road branch closed on 19 June and the branch just over the North Circular in High Road, North Finchley, was due to shut on 30 June.

Customers told *THE ARCHER* in May that the loss of the services would hit elderly people particularly hard, and

create longer queues at main Post Offices for everyone. Post Office Ltd is closing 155 branches across London, and many more nationwide, to cut down on costs.

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