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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Chosen residents meet the Listening Leader

By Daphne Chamberlain

Barnet Council leader Mike Freer conducted a one-man 'Leader Listens' meeting at Bishop Douglass School after writing to 1,000 residents of a polling district in the East End Road area.

Issues discussed at the meeting included lack of youth facilities, the demolition of the Herbert Wilmott Centre, the future of Stanley Field and of the library, traffic calming in Church Lane, the "grottness" of Long Lane, blocked drains, long waits for response from the "cop shop", pigeons at Budgen's Corner, leaking water-mains outside Stokes Court, clustering of phone masts, the lack of a park keeper at Cherry Tree Wood, dangerous road junctions at Ossulton Way / East End Road and Fortis Green / High Road, and rats around the Peace Gardens.

However, there were concerns about the meeting being open to invited residents only and about the way it was run on the night.

Councillor excluded

The January meeting was not publicised beyond those residents who were formally invited. Local councillor Andrew McNeil was asked to leave before the meeting began. When some people challenged Cllr Freer's right to exclude Cllr McNeil, he replied that he could do so as the Leader and that the exclusion was because Cllr McNeil was not an invited resident.

Barnet Council confirmed to *THE ARCHER* that councillors not living in selected polling districts had been excluded from previous meetings. Cllr Freer said he didn't want the meeting turned into a party political event.

Those invited included several members of *THE ARCHER* team. One reported

that Cllr Freer said to her before the meeting: "I hope you're not going to write about this." Barnet Council said that the media were not invited as the meeting was for residents.

Close focus on electoral districts

Leader Listens meetings are planned for all 21 of Barnet's electoral wards annually. Each meeting is focused on only one electoral district within the ward, which generally includes between 1,000 and 2,500 electors. With four or five electoral districts within each ward, it could be several years before the people at January's meeting are invited back.

Following the meetings, all residents on the original invitation list receive minutes and updates of work carried out as a result of the issues raised.

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Recent high winds caused a tree to fall on this car. Photo by John Dearing

Car wrecked by falling tree

By Daphne Chamberlain

A woman's car was wrecked and her son and his girlfriend were injured when a tree fell on them. Elizabeth Gardener told *THE ARCHER* that her son, David, had just parked in the driveway of Highgate Edge, Great North Road, when the accident happened.

She said: "David and Trish were going to pick up someone for dinner. David was getting out of the car, and Trish had just undone her seat belt. Suddenly this tree came crashing down on them. They were incredibly lucky that the accident wasn't even worse than it was."

David suffered a whiplash injury and Trish had a nasty

bump on her head and spine. They were taken to Finchley Memorial Hospital, and are still having out-patient treatment.

The car, a seven-year-old Hyundai, was a write-off in the

accident in January. Elizabeth, who lives in St Pancras Court, told us: "It only had 30,000 miles on the clock." She was told the tree had fallen because it had been unevenly pruned.

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