



## From the Leader's Mouth

By Daphne Chamberlain

### Items discussed at Leader Listens meeting

**East Finchley Youth Facilities:** Cllr Freer said this area is one of the better served in this respect.

**Herbert Wilmott Centre** was demolished because of asbestos. Two-thirds of **Stanley Field** must be sold to provide cash to rebuild schools. A "rolling base" for youth provision, i.e. a kind of mobile youth club, is the way forward.

**Church Lane** is not a priority area for accident prevention, but a survey, taking about six weeks, can be carried out.

Cllr Freer thinks that **Long Lane** is "one of the most horrible streets in Finchley", and its East Finchley end is beyond saving as a conservation area.

**East Finchley Village centre** has "a resurgent look, better than Church End".

**Library:** No plans to close. Although there is a smaller stock budget, this is misleading, as previous buying methods were inefficient. Will have automatic checkout system, which should free up staff. A question about the division of libraries into "leading" and "local" did not appear to be answered.

**Blocked drains:** Residents said they had been told that leaves were not cleared away until they had all stopped falling, but pointed out it was then January. Cllr Freer said he would look into it. He will also investigate leak outside **Stokes Court**.

**263 bus:** The Barnet Leader can do nothing but nag, but will continue to do that.

**Phone masts:** The Government has control over these.

**Crime:** Cllr Freer said that non-knife crime has gone down.

**Cherry Tree Wood:** This will, it is hoped, become a Green Flag Park and a Premier Park this year. Until then, cannot have a keeper.

**Pigeon Corner:** Hawks are not popular!

## Chosen residents meet the Listening Leader... from page 1

### Fade-out for Forums

Are the new Leader Listens meetings another nail in the coffin of Residents' Forums? Recently, Forums have suffered from extensions of their catchment areas, so people have to travel further to reach them. Barnet Council denied that there were plans to run them down, saying that the Leader Listens sessions were a means of trying to reach people who

might not ordinarily attend an area forum, and gathering direct feedback on council policies.

However, the Forums are open to everyone, including the media. They happen about every six weeks and councillors do attend, usually keeping a low profile and not engaging in party political backbiting. Barnet's paid officers (senior workers in Council departments) are also present. People can return as often as they like, whereas Leader Listens meetings are by invitation only.

Cllr Freer told the East Finchley meeting that existing Residents' Forums were not well attended. A show of hands revealed that only six people had ever attended one. The Leader Listens meetings have so far attracted numbers ranging from six to 80. Details of Forum meetings can be found on [www.barnet.gov.uk](http://www.barnet.gov.uk).

## Curb your parking tickets

By Diana Cormack

**Ingram Road resident Rachel Kolsky contacted The Archer to alert readers to another "over zealous" traffic warden incident.**

In her part of East Finchley parking restrictions are between 10am and 6.30pm so, as well as purchasing annual parking permits, locals need a supply of visitor vouchers. These cost £1 each per day for any length of stay.

When Rachel's brother-in-law Lewis Lawton was visiting in early February he dutifully scratched out the required details and placed the voucher on the dashboard of his car, where it was clearly visible. It was still in clear view when he returned, only to find that a parking ticket had been placed under the windscreen wiper.

Apparently, the reason for this was that the voucher should have been folded over at the top and held in place by the closed window nearest the kerb: "so that the details below are clearly visible from outside the vehicle." Lewis Lawton regrets missing that particular instruction but, in a letter to Barnet parking authority, he maintains that it is written in the wrong place.

### Poorly placed instruction

He feels that instead of being above the fold line it should be included below in the numbered instructions for using the voucher, making it more noticeable. Mr Lawton has asked for the current wording to be reviewed and appropriate changes made.

Rachel has also written to Barnet, pointing out that a car window could be disturbed and the voucher displaced, but on the dashboard it would remain permanently visible. Mistakes are not allowed because: "Once completed, altering any details on this permit will invalidate it".

At the time of writing both Rachel and Lewis have had their appeals to Barnet Council acknowledged but not answered.



Lilian Chavert Photo by Daphne Chamberlain

## Prize winning Lilian keeps them guessing

By Daphne Chamberlain

**Lilian Chavert wants to make this clear. She has not drawn the following character from life.**

*"The chief smiler, who also ran the place, was a tidy, plump, rather short man. Pastor James, they called him. His hands were soft, his nails manicured. His tie and shirt and socks and sweaters were always colour-matched. But there was something about his smile that was different. It was the smile the wolf would have had when he saw Little Red Riding Hood."*

Pastor James is the villain in Lilian's short story, *Ibiza*, which won her the first prize in a fiction competition run by Writers' Forum magazine last October. As the magazine put it, it is "easy to recognise the characters in this pacy winning story, but not so easy to spot the ending".

This is by no means the only award won by Lilian, a Yorkshirewoman who moved from North Finchley to Stokes Court in East Finchley 13 years ago. A former teacher of children with

special needs, who later moved on to training special needs teachers, Lilian has been a published writer for 25 years. She is best known locally as one of the founder members of the East Finchley Writers' Group, but she also runs a poetry-reading circle in Stokes Court. "There is such a lively social life here," she says. "It's quite brilliant. My friends are always asking to come to our parties."

East Finchley Writers' Group, for published and beginners alike, meets every Wednesday at the Old White Lion at 6.30 pm. (See our Regular Events listings.) The Writers' Forum magazine ([writers-forum.com](http://writers-forum.com) for details) Lilian describes as the best magazine available for writers of any age.

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