



Letters to the Editor

Scrap this pricing racquet

Dear Editor, The plans for the Cherry Tree Wood pavilion (THE ARCHER, August 2008) rightfully place high emphasis on education and health. I'm sure I was healthier during the recent years when I played tennis for free in the same park before my daily knock-up with friends was stopped by the re-introduction of court fees that I cannot afford.

The opening of the Lazy Sally kiosk meant that Barnet Council once again had someone to collect the money and my racquet is back in the cupboard.

Come on, Barnet Council - Sport For All, obese kids, doing our bit for 2012, quality community amenity - all high-cost objectives? This one is staring you in the face for the sake of a few quid.

Yours faithfully, Ken Behan, Ingram Road, N2

Field of dreams

Dear Editor, I was delighted with the Area Assembly in Muswell Hill playing fields (or is that Coldfall Woods playing fields?). The atmosphere, with music and food, was wonderful. Are all assemblies like this? Can't wait for the next one.

Getting the involvement of the children in how the fields should be enhanced was a great idea. Let's hope they stay involved and so committed to preserving both the proposed new facilities and of course the beautiful old woods themselves.

I'll be looking out for the proposals questionnaire in October. Good news that most of the Ringwood

estate will be included in that, and even better news that there is half a million quid in ring-fenced money to pay for the new facilities.

Maybe us local artists can get involved with the designs? Later on, what about launching an annual summer festival on the fields for when it's all in place? I'd be happy to meet with anyone who'd like to get involved. Email me on efo@e-fish.demon.co.uk.

Yours faithfully, Adam Justice-Mills Beech Drive, N2.

Be positive about supermarket

Dear Editor I am dismayed at the negativity that the proposed use of the long empty unit on the ground floor of Stag Court in the High Road arouses (Letters, THE ARCHER, August and September 2008). Surely it is better to have a retail use than a dull office, which has never been attracted to the site since it was built, and the planning department at Barnet should have had more nous to know that when it gave permission; certainly better to have a retail use than no use.

The usual false alarms that are raised about adverse impact on the High Road shops are daft. There are several corner-type shops that sell a variety of foodstuffs, and Spar and Budgens, all of which happily co-exist, or compete. A critical mass of similar stores actually helps (look at Tottenham Court Road electrical stores, for instance).

Okay, so that is 'comparison goods' in the jargon, where people do shop around, rather than 'convenience goods' or everyday food shopping and other immediate needs, but would there have been such an outcry if the proposed use

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had been another restaurant (or betting shop)?

Would it attract more parking problems and traffic congestion? I doubt it. It's designed to be used by local people and the odd passing trade will pop in and be gone within 20 minutes. I suspect those that shout most about parking problems are the very ones that create them. Don't use your car for local shopping, then.

Spoil East Finchley's 'village' atmosphere? Why would it? That atmosphere is as much generated by people as it is by shops. And anyway it's not a village anymore but a more urban High Street, so let's forget the nostalgia and get real.

East Finchley is getting a lot better. We have a cafe culture of sorts but still lack many essentials such as a butcher that make up a truly vibrant and diverse High Street. Down the Creighton Avenue/library end, there is very little. I for one, would welcome another small and independent supermarket, which I understand was the applicant in this case (I would wholeheartedly oppose a chain such as Tesco Metro).

So hooray to the 62 people who actually bothered to write in support of the shop plan. Let's support something positively for once, especially local business and enterprise, and stop the whingeing.

Yours faithfully, Alexandra Rook Park Road, N2.

Telecare scheme is a life-saver

By Janet Maitland Vulnerable residents are being urged by Barnet Council to consider the Telecare scheme, after it saved the life of an elderly dementia sufferer from Edgware.

The Telecare scheme helps vulnerable people maintain their independence and stay in their own homes by providing equipment such as fall detectors, bed and door exit monitors, and smoke, heat and flood detectors. Any alert is sent to a call centre, which instantly sends a message to the relevant emergency services and relatives.

"The system recently saved the life of Eileen Moore, aged 94, when a fire started in her home," said a spokesperson from Barnet. "Within minutes the Fire Brigade were at her

house and her daughter was on her way to the property."

Anyone who wants to find out more about Telecare should call the council on 020 8359 4693 / 4307.

Pina Thobhani

In last month's article "Surprise of medical centre plan", we attributed a comment to Pina Thobhani of Corey Bros, the High Road pharmacists. We should have said Cootes Pharmacists, not Corey Bros, and would like to apologise for any confusion caused.

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Sixty years of helping ministers

By Daphné Chamberlain Sixty years ago, the National Health Service was born, the Methodist Ministers' Housing Society was started, and the Reverend Ronald Frost began his ministry. What is the link?

Ronald Frost has been "retired" for 13 years but is a volunteer preacher on the Barnet, New River and Islington Methodist circuits (including East Finchley and Ballards Lane), a Boys' Brigade Captain, and a private tutor in GCSE maths, English and religious knowledge.

Four years ago, he received an OBE for youth work, but told THE ARCHER: "I don't want this article to be all about me." He wants us to know more about the MMHS, a provident society and registered charity, started by a group of individuals to assist retired ministers and deacons, and their widows and widowers.

A home at last

On official retirement, a minister has to leave his house, and many are unable to afford new accommodation. Before the MMHS, they often had to move in with family or take on another tied job. The Society, which owns and maintains almost 1,000 UK properties, gives them the option of a home of their own, from where they can continue contributing to the

community.

The Reverend Frost told us that an added bonus is that ministers now have a say about where they settle. Having lived in Twyford Avenue while he was Superintendent Minister at Archway Central Hall, he wanted to stay in London, where he has many friends. So the offer of "an absolutely wonderful" house in East Finchley delighted him. "It's easy to run," he says. "There is a beautiful new kitchen, and with my little microwave I manage very well."

Bevan's helping hand

What is the link with the NHS? Nye Bevan, Health Minister in Clement Atlee's Labour government, also had responsibility for Housing. When a Mrs Hoult gave a group of Methodists a house and land at Barrow-on-Trent, Bevan, son of Baptist and Methodist parents, secured planning permission for a further 20 flats to be built in the grounds. From that grew the MMHS.

The Society has added to its property through Benevolent Funds, organisations and



Rev Ronald Frost

individuals, but demand still outstrips supply. For further information, contact the Society on 020 7467 5272 or at admin@mmhs.org.uk.

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