



Public has its say on Memorial Hospital

By Janet Maitland

More than 50 local residents attended a public meeting on 15 July to have their say about NHS Barnet's plans to build a new hospital on Bow Lane playing fields in North Finchley and then decommission and demolish Finchley Memorial Hospital.

The meeting was chaired by Martin Cowie, Head of Barnet Planning and Development. Representatives from NHS Barnet also attended the meeting, along with the architects Murphy Phillips, who have designed the proposed new hospital. Detailed plans will be submitted to the planning authority in the autumn.

Although a few people welcomed the plans, the majority of those who spoke were opposed to them. Most of the objections were about the impact of the big increase in the number of people using the hospital.

It was confirmed that not only would the hospital have new treatment facilities, four pharmacists and 15 GPs, but that parts of the hospital and the green space around it would be available for everyone in the community to use as a 'health campus'.

Some people therefore wanted to know why the

planned car park was for only 200 cars, others why it wasn't sited underground, others why improving public transport links seemed to be such a low priority. Others wanted to know why anyone other than a patient or visitor should be welcomed into a hospital.

Several people were angry that this was the first public meeting about the development for over two years and that identical points were being raised. One resident recalled the loss of the open air swimming pool by Squires Lane, and hoped history wouldn't repeat itself. "We were promised a state of the art replacement, and all we got was a piddling little pool."

Martin Cowie emphasised that all of the points raised had been noted and would be taken into account by the planning authority, other than concerns about declining property values which are not a material planning consideration.

Sea sickness sufferer sails the seas

By John Lawrence

Simon Kane is a big fan of ocean racing but he is also a chronic sufferer of sea sickness so he has had to content himself with following the America's Cup from his armchair.

Until now - because the 51-year-old TV presenter has won a place in the 2009-2010 Clipper Challenge. He'll be racing on a 68ft boat with a crew of nine on a Pacific journey from China to San Francisco in 35 days, then on to the Panama Canal and Jamaica.

Simon has no previous yachting experience but his enthusiasm and determination got him through the interview stage and three tough weeks of training at sea.

So how does he feel when he's at sea? "It's very intensive but take the sea sickness away and I can cope," said Simon. "When you stand on the deck with the huge sails above you, it's so exhilarating and something I've always wanted to do."

"I always promised myself



Simon Kane will be sailing across the Pacific.

in my mid-life crisis that I'd do something like this and never got round to it. Now I have."

Simon climbs on board in February 2010 and will be at sea until May. He's accustomed to travel and adventure from his job presenting shows on the Travel Channel.

Simon lives in Hampstead Garden Suburb but hopes to move back soon to a flat he

owns in Leslie Road. By coincidence, Leslie Road is also home to Lauren Mead, the 21-year-old student who will be the youngest woman in the race (*THE ARCHER*, June 2009).

Considering that race organisers have been recruiting team members from across the world, what are the chances of two people from Leslie Road taking part in the same event?

Pounding the streets of New York

Victoria Davenport, of Durham Road, ran the London Marathon in April in aid of Kids Company. In November, she's heading to New York to run the city Marathon for the same cause. Here, she explains why.



Victoria Davenport

If you haven't heard about Kids Company, let me give you some of the facts. It is an exceptional organisation, with exceptional people working for it (like you and me) helping children from the inner city to have a life they never otherwise could have.

The clients of KidsCo are exceptionally vulnerable: 52% presented with potentially life-threatening circumstances, 83% reported having had

an experience of at least one significant trauma in their life. Prevalence of mental health issues is dramatically higher than the national average.

As for the good work KidsCo has done, 60% of kids have been rehoused and 77% had their living conditions improved; 53% achieved the goal of returning to education or training. KidsCo is now working in 38 schools across London, reaching 12,000 children.

Its team of psychotherapists, social workers, art facilitators, in-class support workers and volunteers provide a programme

of one-to-one and group therapy, drop-in counselling, lunchtime and after-school clubs, arts workshops play sessions and day trips. If you are interested in learning more about Kids Company, please go to www.kidsco.org.uk. Or if you wish to sponsor my NYC marathon run, please go to: www.justgiving.com/victoria-nyc.

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