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Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, on request at publication.

Pavilion plan publicity

Dear Editor

You have published a number of letters that suggest there is wide support for the scheme to rebuild the pavilion and turn it into a café/leisure centre.

The proprietor of the existing café, who is the proposer of the scheme, has clearly enlisted a lot of friends to write to you. She has also published a blog that is very hard to follow, unless you want to read all 11 pages of it. See http://cherrytreepavilion.blogspot.com/.

It is a very lengthy autobiographical piece and the most important aspect is towards the end: that Friends of the Cherry Tree Wood Pavilion have gone back to draw up plans again, which may or may not be available for people to see ahead of submission to the council.

Cherry Tree Wood is not a 'park'. It is woods, namely Metropolitan Open Land, which should be afforded similar protection to greenbelt land.

At the only meeting well attended by local people, held in East Finchley, all but two of the around 100 people attending said they did not want the sort of development described. In particular the late night opening, the suggested entrance in the nearby alley, the increased noise and disruption, and the need to preserve the existing space were mentioned.

This fact of local opinion should count for more than a clever publicity campaign.

Yours faithfully,

Barry H White, Fordington Road, N6

Pavilion website

is no help

Dear Editor,

So Sally-Anne Wigfield wants to "set the record straight" regarding her plans for recreating the Cherry Tree Wood pavilion (THE ARCHER, January 2010)? If the project she kick-started makes her so miserable, could she perhaps just change the record altogether?

Her attempt to offer the full story on her website is no more helpful than a tantrum. Worse still, it exacerbates already fragile relations with residents who do not fully support the plans, with destructive comments such as her feeling those who haven't signed up to

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her particular "vision" must therefore consider the Wood an "extension of their backyard".

I would have been more interested to read her CV than anything else so as to judge for myself the suitability and expertise of Sally-Anne to spearhead such a significant community project.

Yours faithfully,

Name and address supplied

Better idea for pavilion

Dear Editor,

The proposed café/activity development of the derelict pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood is unnecessary and inappropriate for this site. There is no shortage of cafés, social and communal meeting places, or activity rooms in East Finchley. However, green spaces are in limited supply in the area.

Alternative solutions would be to demolish the pavilion and integrate the ground that it covers into the rest of the park or to transform it into a wildlife educational centre similar to the facility in Highgate Woods. The latter would be environmentally and educationally responsible and compatible with Barnet's green spaces policy.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Forbes,

Address supplied.

Happy memories of

Lincoln Parade

Dear Editor,

I read with interest the article about the demolition of the Lincoln Parade shops (THE ARCHER, January 2010). I lived in East Finchley from November 1985 until July 1991, when I was the landlord of The Five Bells on East End Road. I read THE ARCHER on the internet every month to catch up on what's happening in East Finchley.

My time at the Five Bells and living in East Finchley was a part of my life that I will always remember. I am still in contact with a lot of friends and I visit as often as I can. Both my children were born during my time there.

During that time I visited the pet shop on a regular basis to get food for our various pets (dogs, rabbits and goldfish). My daughter was always keen to visit "Auntie Peggy", the pet shop owner, as she was always given some sweets and made a fuss of.

Peggy had what I can only describe as a large Belfast sink in one of the windows that had various types of goldfish in it. On one occasion I bought a couple of catfish that I thought would make an interesting addition to my fish tank. This was a big mistake as they were scavengers and all they ever did was disturb the gravel and cause the water to be cloudy. I happened to mention this

to Peggy on my next visit. "Bring them back and swap them," was her reply. I don't think you would get that at any pet shop these days.

I always enjoyed my daily walk along the High Road and a visit to the pet shop to have a chat with Peggy. Keep up the good work with THE ARCHER. I always find it interesting and look forward to reading it each month.

Yours faithfully,

Steve Oxtoby, Highways Agency, Leeds.

Something for the weekend

Dear Editor,

Regarding your call for memories of Lincoln Parade, the barber's shop was a wonderful old-fashioned place, both in its fittings and its style. The hot water had to be turned on at the back behind a partition separating off the WC. It had not been decorated for years, the linoleum was worn and the ceiling was part missing.

Despite the Spartan surroundings, the services offered really made you feel mollified. You got a manual scalp massage and one with an oscillating spiky attachment, you could have your cut ends singed with an open taper and your neck shaved with a cut-throat razor honed on a leather strap.

Football was always on the radio and there was always "something for the weekend" if you needed it. From the two chairs it dwindled down to one and the barber was well past retiring even then. All of a sudden he was gone and I still miss the time machine that was.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Cormack, Address supplied.

So generous

Dear Editor,

Last Christmas Eve, I was given the ok for my regular fundraiser by Budgens manager R Janakan. I woke up feeling one and a half degrees under and had seriously considered going back to bed, but something inside me said I'd be ok.

I'm truly glad I went, as I had an amazing day. Tannaz Kapadia helped set me up with my usual table of goodies, and made sure I was ready to get started.

The shop was incredibly busy all day, with customers stopping to have a chat as well as throwing money into my bucket. I did notice at around 3pm my money-bag being very heavy, and at 4pm decided to pack up and go home.

To all of you who helped make Christmas Eve 2009 a day to remember, we raised a staggering £300, which will be going to the North London Hospice.

I couldn't have done this without you, and so to you, the manager and

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column.

Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



A most unpleasant evening out

By John Dearing

Last autumn, yet another mobile phone network applied to put yet another array of masts on our roof at Viceroy Close. My neighbours and I duly objected but, to our dismay, the planning officer recommended acceptance, so we attended the planning committee hearing to present our objections in person.

When our case came up, the planning officer presented the details to the committee of councillors. Then we presented our objections; during this, the chairman invited the applicant's agent to speak to clarify some issues. The agent then dismissed all our objections, but in particular the issue of new masts.

With the (willing) help of the planning officer, she said some of the new antennae would be placed on an existing mast in the centre of the roof. In vain we tried to point out that this was not a mobile mast, but an ageing, rusting TV aerial. In stark contrast to his treatment of the agent, the chairman told us we had had our say and should keep quiet. When we protested, the chairman shouted us down.

Losing patience, he guillotined the debate and then, with what can only be described as unseemly haste, immediately voted for acceptance (the chair is not meant to vote at all unless the vote is hung).

This meeting was held in the council chambers, a cold and unwelcoming room reminiscent of a law court, and made us feel like criminals. The manner in which the meeting was conducted can best be described as unpleasant, aggressive and intimidating, and that applied to all the cases, not just ours.

If local politicians want to improve their dreary image, and persuade people to participate in local affairs, they need to do much better than this. I will not willingly attend such a meeting ever again, particularly if it means having to suffer that chairman's appalling behaviour.

I would vote unhesitatingly for any political party that proposed wholesale reform of this process, such as taking it right out of the hands of local councils, and making planning officers directly answerable to the voters.

all the staff at Budgens, thank you so much! I'm proud to be a resident of such a kind and caring community.

Yours faithfully, Sippy Azizollah, East End Road, N2.

Slimming surge

Dear Editor,

I am just writing to thank you for including our Slimmers of the Year in your December issue. Never before have so many people come back to our slimming class, or joined for the first time this January because of your paper. I have lost count of the number of people who have come into our Tuesday evening class clutching a copy of THE ARCHER!

Due to its popularity, I would like to extend the offer of £5 off Slimming World membership to all readers of THE ARCHER. Just mention the paper when

you come to class on a Tuesday at 5pm or 6.45pm at the East Finchley Baptist Church in Creighton Avenue.

Yours faithfully, Natalie Hanna, Slimming World consultant for East Finchley

Lifeline in the snow

Dear Editor,

I wanted to congratulate the drivers and employees of Sodexo, who provide the Meals at Home service in Barnet. They did fantastic work in the recent snow, ensuring that vulnerable older people received a warm meal each day. As the chair of Age Concern Barnet, I was very impressed and grateful.

Yours faithfully, Julia Hines, Age Concern Barnet

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