



Dad campaigns for more playgroups

A father is campaigning for more playgroups in East Finchley after being turned away from several local play groups that were full to capacity.

Adam Porter, who runs his own Dads' Club for fathers looking after children, said he has witnessed many parents, carers and their children being refused entry to playgroups, both church and nursery-based.

Adam, of Leslie Road, said: "This is particularly concerning when the weather is cold and there is a lack of indoor play facilities in our area. These groups are vital for the community. Many parents, especially single parents, feel isolated and these groups connect them to the community, providing them with support.

"They are also essential to the development of pre-school

children as they are able to play and socialise with other children, which in turn prepares them for school."

Playgroup petition

Adam has started a petition entitled 'We need more playgroups in East Finchley'. More than 100 people have already signed and he expects much more support in coming weeks. He plans to present the petition to Barnet Council and various local businesses in order to gain active support.



Adam and his son Dylan

Practising what he preaches, Adam has started running a new playgroup at a Sure Start Children's Centre in the grounds of Highgate Primary School, every Wednesday from 9am-12pm.

Adam says it is designed to encourage fathers with children to become more involved in playing with their children. Mums are of course welcome too. For more information, go to <http://thedadsclublondon.blogspot.com/>

Church Lane traffic campaign gathers speed

By Caroline Broome

The first East Finchley Village Residents Association meeting of 2010 opened with the largest turnout of members to date. In addition to regular members, we welcomed several new local residents as well as guest speaker PCSO Sam Hedger from the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team.

The main agenda item was Church Lane traffic control problems. In response to requests made by chair Bob Owens on behalf of EFVRA, Barnet Council conducted traffic surveys in Church Lane over a four-day period in December 2009. An increase in average speed to 29.5mph, from 22mph in a previous survey, proved that traffic is getting faster. The maximum recorded speed was 56mph.

Cars are also continuing to drive over the railway bridge the wrong way, particularly during rush hour, making a fatal accident increasingly likely. Several local residents have reported vehicle confrontations at the bridge. EFVRA is planning a meeting with police and Barnet Council to discuss these concerns.

PCSO Hedger reported that in response to requests by EFVRA, a police presence was arranged on Church Lane at the bridge between 7am and 10.30am one morning in early January. Further surveillance of this nature is planned.

PCSO Hedger also said he would liaise with Barnet Council regarding reduction or clearance of obstacles such as overgrown plant displays at the Church Lane junction with King Street, in order to improve visibility for pedestrians.

Marking property

An initiative that the Safer Neighbourhood Team is hoping to instigate more widely in N2 is the "Smart Water" Scheme, similar to the old Neighbourhood Watch Scheme. This involves the marking of personal property for identification. If stolen it can be matched with DNA prints, leading to 100% conviction rates. Police are piloting the scheme in Abbots Gardens, and then extending it to the county roads, while advertising it in the area to deter burglars.

Contact EFVRA at east.finchley.village.residents.association@virginmedia.com. The next EFVRA meeting will be held at the East Finchley Constitutional Club, The Walks, N2 on 22 March at 8pm.

Bogus police officer

By Janet Maitland

Barnet Police have been informed that a man posing as a police officer has been knocking on doors in Hendon.

He claims to be doing a survey and is carrying leaflets with the words Colindale Police on them, but has no form of identification. If you are approached by this man, or have seen any such leaflets, please contact the police on 0300 123 1212, or contact Paul Hammond from Boroughwatch at Paul.Hammond@Barnet.gov.uk

One for your diary...

This year's East Finchley Community Festival takes place in Cherry Tree Wood on Sunday 20 June.

An excellent line-up of music, entertainment, food, drink and fun activities is promised. Could someone book the sunshine?

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Olivia 19 months, Adam 5months, Elliot 15 months with their mums who come from Poland, Italy and England.

New baby group is born

By Diana Cormack

Last June, a much-needed toddler group opened at East Finchley Methodist Church on the High Road. EFM Toddlers works on a first-come, first-served basis and has proved so popular that not all those who turn up for the 9.30am start on Thursdays can get in.

For the lucky ones who do, an increasing number of games and toys are available, the most recent being a travel-cot ball pit and a variety of play mats. A climbing frame is on order.

Organisers Linda Askew and Chris Fairclough paid tribute to the minister Michael Giles for this abundance of activities. "He is fully supportive of what we are doing and makes no charge for our use of the hall," they told THE ARCHER, "so the money we take can go towards providing things the group needs."

Baby club

One recent acquisition is a nappy changing unit, which

should prove beneficial to the next phase planned. On 4 March a group specifically for babies from 0 to walking age is starting. Like the toddler group, it will be open to all faiths and will give new mothers the opportunity to socialise and get advice and support with any problems they might have. It will also give adults a chance to relax while the little ones play, helped by a ban on the presence of older siblings.

The baby club will run on Thursday afternoons between 12.30pm and 2.00pm. For more information on both groups call Linda on 07905 102 721.

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