



Campaigners from the Local Schools for Local Children group lobby Mike Freer MP at the East Finchley Festival in June.

Plans for new primary school

By Daphne Chamberlain
Haringey Council has received a planning application to build a Jewish primary school at 79 Creighton Avenue. There have been three applications to develop this site in the last eight years, with variations on a care-home/nursing-home theme. This new plan, however, is for a three-storey school, to be named Eden Primary.

At the time of writing, the application has not yet been granted, but reactions to Haringey's consultation, posted on their website, are favourable. It is understood that the school would start with one class of 30 pupils and increase annually to an eventual total of four classes.

Neighbouring Fortismere School has apparently offered temporary accommodation for the first class in September.

There are currently two primary schools situated within the boundaries of N2: Holy Trinity Cof E and Martin School. Brookland School NW11, Tudor School N3, and Garden Suburb School NW11 also include large parts of N2 in their priority catchment areas. Children may also attend faith schools outside the area such as St Theresa's and Our Lady of Lourdes, N3.

Secondary school campaign intensifies

By Helen Drake

Local dads lobbied Finchley and Golders Green MP Mike Freer when he visited the Local Schools for Local Children campaign stall at the East Finchley Festival in June.

Tibor Szemmelveisz, whose son and daughter are at Martin Primary, said: "Those of us who want local community schooling for our children are left with very few options."

MP raises issue in House

This lack of choice was emphasised by Mr Freer in a speech in the House of Commons on 24 May. Statistics he quoted revealed that only 62% of Barnet children secured their first choice school, with that figure rising to 85% when including second preferences. This was well below the average for other parts of the country where 85% of children get offered their first choice school, rising to 96% when second choices are included.

Mr Freer told the House the problem could get worse, saying: "Barnet is forecasting that pupil numbers in the maintained secondary sector will continue to grow and that they will grow by 22% by 2015-16."

The solution he put forward was to expand the existing popular schools but the problem was lack of investment to do so. Mr Freer reported having received over 200 emails from worried parents in the fortnight leading up to the debate.

Parent Avis Johns, who is leading the campaign, said: "We now have hundreds of families in our email group (localschool

s@live.co.uk), Facebook group and following the campaign on Twitter (@localSchoolsN2), and the volume is increasing by the day."

Public meeting

As a result of his speech in the House of Commons, a meeting took place on 6 July between Mr Freer and Nick Gibb MP, the Schools Minister, and members of Barnet Council. At the time of going to press, parent campaigners were expecting an update from Mr Freer at a public meeting due to take place on 21 July when he and Councillor Alison Moore would address parents and hear their concerns.

Shares plan for pavilion regeneration

People may be given the chance to buy shares in Cherry Tree Wood pavilion to redevelop the dilapidated building as a community café, art gallery and activity space.

The proposal, which has been developed by existing park kiosk operator Sally-Anne Wigfield with the help of a local architect and specialist business advisors, is to create a trust so that the building will be owned by, and run for the benefit of, the local community.

It is the latest bid to bring new life to the pavilion building in the wake of planning and funding obstacles and objections from some local people in recent years.

Under the scheme, the trust would sub-let the space to a community café to be run by Sally, who would be expected to meet local needs as dictated by the trust, including opportunities for young people.

So far, she has been in talks with Ambitious about Autism, who operate TreeHouse School in Muswell Hill, who could potentially use it as a resource for work experience opportunities.

The cost of refurbishing the building is put at £175,000 and Barnet Council is inviting bids

now. Sally said she was hoping people would commit to buying shares in the trust.

How it would work

Shares are withdrawable (in other words you can sell them back to the trust, in line with certain financial constraints), and the trust can also pay interest on any investment made. Shares will be priced at £100 and you can buy up to £20,000 worth, or simply make a donation.

Sally said: "This model of ownership parallels that which many village communities are now employing to re-open their village shop. By all buying shares in the new business, the community raises money needed for capital expenses and then has a say in how the shop is run."

"The council is inviting bids for the pavilion right now, so the whole project needs to get going urgently if we want to avoid it being taken up by a burger bar. If you think you would like to invest in the trust, please visit our website www.ctwpavilion.org.uk."

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