



Door-to-door recruiters from the Howard League for Penal Reform.

Changing the system

Sophie Willett explains why a national charity is looking for local support to create a safer community for us all. **The Howard League for Penal Reform is a national charity that works to create a society with less crime and safer communities. Too many people come out of prison and reoffend, there are too many victims of crime and too much money is spent on a system that doesn't work.**

We work with parliament and the media, with criminal justice professionals, students and members of the public to achieve meaningful change. To be successful in changing the criminal justice system we need to recruit thousands of new supporters who will become part of a huge mobilisation programme to change the attitudes of the public and the government. Our door-to-door recruiters are visiting homes in designated areas in London with the aim to recruit thousands of supporters to our cause. We ask people to give a regular donation to the Howard League and become members. Over the last month we have been calling at homes in East Finchley and have engaged with many residents about our work. Our door-to-door scheme allows us to speak to people about our vital work and, in turn, we can answer any questions prospective supporters may have.

We have had an overwhelmingly positive response from East Finchley and now have a high level of support in the area. You may have seen us at the East Finchley Festival and visited our stall, where we signed up a great many supporters and had a chance to talk to local residents about issues that affect them.

We may have called at your house to talk to you about our work and our commitment to

creating a safer community where fewer people are victims of crime. We need more support to create a mass movement for change. Every voice counts and we ask you to add yours. To find out more visit www.howardleague.org.

Sophie Willett is press officer for the Howard League for Penal Reform

Warning to drivers

We were grateful to receive this letter from a reader who wishes to remain anonymous. Most will know that it's illegal to leave your engine running when you're not in the car, so let this be a warning for all drivers.

"I watched in horror on 3 July as a man locked up the gate of the Fuel Lands allotments on the High Road opposite St Mary's Catholic Church, East Finchley. He left his car running on the side of the road while he locked up the gates.

"The next minute, a car pulled up opposite and the passenger jumped out, crossed the road and got into the man's car. The man turned round, shocked to see his car disappearing up the High Road.

"The thief's colleague, in their car, did a U-turn and sped off after the man's stolen car. Luckily the registration of the thieves' car was taken and a description of them was given to police.

"This may have been the act of opportunists or planned, but I think people often leave their car running while they jump out to post a letter, lock a gate or whatever. So, be warned."



Pop-up protest for Old Barn

By Janet Maitland

The Old Barn Action Group held a pop-up photo protest outside Martin school on 6 July to gather support for their mission to return the community centre to local people.

The Old Barn has been a centre for community events and activities for 25 years, helping to keep children off the streets and providing support for local parents with its pioneering out-of-school services. After a change in management last year, however, many community groups moved out and an after-school club was shut. The council owns the building but has not accepted any rent payments from the new managers as it does not recognise them as legitimate.

Safe meeting place for children

The protest was successful, signing up 100 parents to the campaign. "The Old Barn is a local resource that we cannot let sit idle," said one parent. "Each day this saga continues it costs us all money in lost revenue to the council, and lost opportunities for our children."

"I think it's vital that the council act quickly to resolve this issue before the summer is over and the evenings get darker," said another. "We need the Old Barn open so our

kids have a safe place to gather rather than hanging around on the streets."

Solution needed soon

The action group has been campaigning for the management committee to recommence community services in the building, or to leave. Ninety-four local people applied to become members of the Old Barn earlier this year, but the committee refused to accept their applications.

"We're very concerned at the time it's taking for the council to resolve this issue," said Will Hudson, leader of the action group. "Groups who've expressed an interest in moving to the Old Barn could look elsewhere if they're delayed too long. We've just had a meeting with Community Barnet, who will submit a complaint to the Charity Commission about the failure of the new management to provide services or accept new members."

To help the action group, contact Will Hudson on 07870 647 284 or email him at endofstrife@hotmail.co.uk.

Teenagers stabbed

By Janet Maitland

Two teenagers were taken to hospital with multiple stab wounds following an attack on the Grange Estate on Saturday 18 June. Police are appealing for witnesses.

Police were called to the estate at 10.30pm after a report that ten young men were attacking another male. One victim, aged 15, was found on the junction of Leopold Road and the High Road, with eight stab wounds to his buttocks and back. Police then found another victim, also 15, at St Pancras Court. He had been stabbed in his left leg and buttock.

The injuries were not life threatening in either case and the victims have since been discharged from hospital. A third boy was with the two victims when they were attacked, but

was not injured.

Four boys have so far been arrested, three aged 15 and one aged 14. They are on police bail while police await the result of forensic evidence. Police believe more suspects were involved in the attack.

"If anyone knows any of the suspects or saw the incident, please call us," said DC Charlie Pulling, the officer in charge of the case. Anyone with any information is asked to call 101 or, if they wish to remain anonymous, call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, quoting crime reference number 2414943/11.

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