



Barnet mums on the march

Local mums and children are joining the second annual Mothers March against cuts, poverty and discrimination.

Concern over cuts has already been shown by the recent demonstration in support of artsdepot and protests in support of East Finchley Library and Newstead Children's Centre.

The Mothers March is an opportunity to highlight the impact of the cuts and other government policies on children and their parents or guardians. It is hoped that mothers and anyone else who supports these concerns (including men) will join the march.

No easy answer

Emily, a mother of three, says: "Mothers do a huge amount of unpaid work, raising children and working in our communities. We depend on and must defend local services and low cost activities, libraries, open spaces and allotments. Barnet's Easy Council won't be easy for us."

Mother of two Zekiye says: "As a single mum with no income, I work day and night for my children, volun-

teer in my son's school and study to improve my family's future. I must pay council tax but do not receive benefits. We mothers give 100% and get no help or resources in return. The radical cuts will make the life of my family and others an everyday struggle, now and in the future."

The Mothers March is organised by the women's rights group, Global Women's Strike. Last year's march was endorsed by prominent individuals including the natural childbirth campaigner and author, Sheila Kitzinger, and the child psychologist and author, Oliver James.

The march starts at Trafalgar Square at noon on Saturday 12 March. Local supporters will meet at East Finchley tube station at 10.45am and are welcome to bring their demands on signs and T-shirts. For more information, visit www.globalwomensstrike.net or contact zekiye.kartal@ymail.com or ewb.ewb@talktalk.net.

Opportunities for all at Green Man Centre

By Daphne Chamberlain
The Green Man Centre held its first Opportunities Fair in January and organisers hope to make it an annual event. One of the centre's aims is to play a bigger part in community life in East Finchley.

Centre Manager, Mark Healey, told *THE ARCHER*: "Around 300 people attended, including 35 organisations from across Barnet who joined us to promote their work to the local community. We have had a lot of positive feedback."

Those of us on the *ARCHER* stall certainly found it an excellent opportunity to network and discover more about Barnet's groups and organisations.

Green Man benefits

It was also an opportunity to showcase the centre. The Green Man is the largest and most modern of East Finchley's meeting places, but is often overlooked because of its position at the extreme north of the N2 area by the North Circular Road.

Mr Healey is keen to rectify this. He has just launched a membership scheme, open to all East Finchley residents as well as everyone on Strawberry Vale. Benefits will include discounts when booking a space at the centre, which has two meeting rooms, a main hall and kitchen.

East Finchley Advice Service moved in at the end of January with new drop-in hours of Monday to Friday, 10am-1pm, plus 2-5pm on Tuesday afternoons.

Transport for London has cleared overgrown vegetation and debris between the centre and the flyover, and Mr Healey



Ann Bronkhorst on *THE ARCHER*'s stall. Photo: Steve Davidson

wants to convert derelict land nearby into a proper garden. Inside the centre, he has earmarked the smaller of the two computer rooms as a community resource, offering nine computers and a music/film studio.

Wedding party

In the immediate future, the management committee want to organise a celebration for the Royal Wedding in April "that will be remembered for years to come". Volunteers to help make this happen will be very welcome.

Keep up to date with what's happening at the Green Man Centre via Facebook at www.facebook.com/greenmancentre, or by contacting Mark Healey on 020 8815 0703 or reception on 020 8883 4916. To check availability when booking events, email Mark at centremanager@greenmancentre.org.

Green power project

Teenagers meeting at the Green Man Community Centre over the next few months will be building a mini solar power pod to be used at community events throughout the summer.

Central Barnet Woodcraft Folk Venturers group won £500 from their national organisation to complete this project, which will help to power activities at East Finchley festival in June and at the national Woodcraft camp in Sherwood Forest in August.

Oscar Hender, 15-year-old Venturer, said: "We already use two solar power panels at our summer camp but this project means we can get more advanced technology and make a mobile lightweight pod which we can use everywhere. It's great to understand how stuff works."

The power pod is just one project. The programme of events for 13 to 16-year-old Venturers who meet each Friday evening during term time is driven by what the children want to do. Already in the next few months they will be building a clay oven to bake bread in, growing plants on a local allotment and doing drama. Other regular features of Woodcraft group nights include discussions and debates.

The Venturer group is hoping to grow; if you are interested in joining, contact Kate on 020 8444 4652.

Save our theatre

Jake McConnell asked people on the High Road what they thought of the potential closure of Finchley Youth Theatre. Chris, from Tony's Continental: "It's a loss to East Finchley as a whole, and especially to the youth. I saw West Side Story there and it was fantastic. We need to safeguard institutions like the theatre; they're a valuable asset and we need to encourage the youth."

Mr Greenberg, who lives just off the High Road: "Some cuts are necessary. It's difficult to determine between right and left. It's hard to decide which stance to have on it."

Paul Walhaus, of Twyford Avenue: "It's bad, but it's not the council's fault, it's the fault of the central government. It's a terrible loss to the community. I know children who go there from my children's school Tetherdown. The council needs to consider the health of the community."

Margaret Donachie, of Hertford Road: "It's tragic, but cuts need to be made because Labour have spent all our money. I've seen all shows at the theatre for the last four to five years, and they're great. My daughter was a member. The council should keep it open as it's a great local facility and there's not much for kids to do around here. You have got to save money somewhere though."

Another shopper: "It's utterly short sighted. As usual, the government are protecting their friends and making everyone else pay for it. The council should have a backbone and stand up against the Tory government for the local people."

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For more information
please contact the Church Office
Tel: 8883 1544 (Minister: Simon Dyke)

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