



Parents are asking for better secondary school provision for East Finchley. Photo by Cath Bourne

Parents call for a new secondary school

“We’re not happy with the secondary school provision and we’d like a new school, please,” was the view of around 60 local parents who attended a public meeting on 7 April, organised by the campaign group ‘Local Schools for Local Children’.

Group organiser and parent Avis Johns said: “There has always been a problem with secondary places in this area, particularly for girls, and particularly west of the High Road, but this problem is now becoming more acute.

“The current pressure on primary places is going to filter through to secondary level, making the problem even worse, with East Finchley children losing out on places at the most popular schools.

“We have excellent primary schools that foster a wonderful community ethos and it’s a disgrace that there isn’t a non-faith secondary school, within walking distance, to which all our children, boys and girls, can transfer.”

Implications for young families

Discussion at the meeting focused on concern about Fortismere School’s shrinking catchment area (this year first-round offers were made only

to those living within 0.44 of a mile of the school) and the fact that Christ’s College is a single-sex school, taking in boys from a large catchment area, and is now applying to become an Academy. Questions were also asked about what local politicians have been doing to fix the problem and whether setting up a Free School might be a solution.

“This is a community problem which needs a community solution, otherwise East Finchley will become a no-go area for young families,” said Avis.

To get involved with the campaign email localschools@live.co.uk or join the Facebook group “Local Schools for Local Children” or follow Twitter “LocalSchoolsN2”.

Does East Finchley need another secondary school? Send your views to the-archer@lineone.net or The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA.

Anchor’s away

It’s unwieldy and weighs half a ton, but someone still managed to steal a ship’s anchor from outside the Finchley Sea Cadets’ hall in Long Lane. The massive iron anchor

had been in place outside the main entrance for 15 years but was carried off by thieves in late March.

The cadets’ leaders have now welded down its companion but they are keen for anyone who spots the stolen ironware to contact the police.

In the meantime, the cadets are gearing up for a busy summer of activities and new young members, boys and girls, are always welcome. For more information, call 020 8346 1828 or email finchleyunit141@btinternet.com.



Recycling centre protest

Residents are protesting at plans to build a recycling and waste management plant on land once used for sewage treatment. The site is alongside the North Circular close to Muswell Hill Golf Course and the Friern Barnet Retail Park.

They claim the 30-year contract to create “sustainable waste facilities” in Pinkham Way will destroy the existing wildlife on the site and become a health and noise nuisance to residents and schools nearby, as well as to the wider communities of Muswell Hill, Friern Barnet and East Finchley.

Three companies have submitted bids to run the plant for the North London Waste Authority. It would process rubbish from Barnet, Haringey, Enfield, Camden, Islington, Hackney and Waltham Forest. A preferred bidder will be selected in 2012.

Delay decision, say campaigners

Campaigners in the Pinkham Way Alliance say it will be one of the largest mechanical and biological treatment plants in Europe and will operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The result, they claim, will be increased traffic congestion and noise pollution on and around the North Circular, more air pollution, a reduced quality of life and the destruction of natural habitats.

They argue that the public consultation took place so quickly most people would have missed it and the land has already been sold to the NLWA for £12 million. They want the views of all residents and businesses to be heard before a final decision is made. To find out more about the campaign, visit www.pinkhamwayalliance.org

The NWLA in turn says the plant will help the boroughs of north London to meet their recycling targets and will divert more waste from landfill. Barnet Council has approved the draft plan for the site.

Cherry Tree Wood pavilion plans on hold

By Diana Cormack

After three years of consulting, organising and planning, Sally-Anne Wigfield’s proposals for the redevelopment of the pavilion in Cherry Tree Wood have hit an unexpected snag. Though Barnet Council liked her ideas, Sally learned last November that the project was not eligible for the finance she was seeking from the Social Investment Business.

This would have been in the form of a grant/low interest loan but failed because Sally has been operating the kiosk café near the tennis courts as a sole trader and not as a social or community organisation. Trading as either of these for at least six months is a requirement for funding.

A request that Barnet should consider a previous Asset Option from Sally was refused and “For Sale” boards were placed at the pavilion. The original signs were changed at her instigation as both stated “Park Café”, despite the fact that Sally was and still is running the kiosk there.

Still hopeful

She recognises the possibility that the pavilion could be taken over by a property developer who might have little

concern for the local community whereas Sally, her husband Robert and a board of trustees would like it to be used by the community. They envisage the ground floor as a healthy eating, alcohol-free café and believe the top floor could be hired by community groups for exhibitions and leisure activities such as yoga and meditation (see *THE ARCHER*, August 2010).

Despite this setback and though some residents still object to her plans, Sally is searching other avenues, with particular emphasis on community involvement, which might allow the project to proceed. For more information visit www.foctwpavilion.org.uk or look out for regular updates posted outside the pavilion itself.

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