



Day services for older people under review

By Daphne Chamberlain
Barnet is planning radical changes in "day opportunities for older people". These do not concern residential care or care for people in their own homes, but will certainly affect day centres like Ann Owens in Oak Lane and existing neighbourhood help schemes. A consultation on the proposals, which began in March, finished last month.

One proposal is that meeting places for older people should be in places like libraries and community centres, which raises a question mark over the future of existing day centres.

The council says that current day services may not offer enough choice, and are only available for a small minority of older people in Barnet. For example, East Finchley is one of the better provided areas, while Totteridge is not. Barnet propose spreading services across the borough and they are likely to depend on volunteers.

Consultation "flawed"

The council has already withdrawn funding from many voluntary services but its consultation questionnaire asked clients of day centres to indicate which services were most important. The council says this will influence cash allocation.

Age UK's Mark Robinson told THE ARCHER that they found the questionnaire very difficult to use, and he said that the whole process was "very flawed".

Age UK is suggesting that existing voluntary organisations should provide the day services, with one of them being the contract holder. Mark Robinson says, though, "It is quite possible that it will go to tender, and we know that outside organisations have already expressed interest. 95% of our clients are saying No to these proposals, and existing providers are saying that any transition should be slower and better organised".

A report of the consultation and recommendations will go to Cabinet on 17 July. Copies of the questionnaire and relevant documents can be seen on www.barnet.gov.uk, under Consultations or Citizen Space.

Burglars caught on CCTV

By Janet Maitland

Three youths broke into David Hillel Opticians in the early hours of Sunday 3 June. They smashed the glass on the front of the High Road shop with a sledgehammer. Once inside they shattered the glass on a display cabinet and grabbed five pairs of Tom Ford sunglasses priced at £300 per pair.

CCTV footage showing every detail of the burglary has been given to the police. "The film is very clear," said David Hillel. "It records full face footage of all three of the youths. It also shows that one of them was stooped and another had a gangly way of moving."

Police informed THE ARCHER that all three of the burglars were white and that one of them was wearing a dark deer-stalker type hat. With the help of the CCTV, police are in the process of locating possible suspects.

Mr Hillel said that the most expensive part of the break-in was the damage done to the premises, but the two-day Jubilee Bank Holiday provided

enough time to repair the damage before the opticians opened again on 6 June.

"I've been in practice for more than 30 years and have never before displayed high-value eyewear in the window," said Mr Hillel. "But two days before the break-in, that's what I did. I was trying to make the premises look less like a clinic. I strayed into bling, but now I think I'll be getting back to eyesight."

If you have any information about this crime, please call the police on 101 quoting crime reference number 2413023/12. If you want to remain anonymous, please ring Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

Multi-coloured swap chop

Local GCSE student Kathryn-Isadora is raising money for the Teenage Cancer Trust by dyeing her hair and then shaving it off. Her initial goal was £500, at which she said she would dye her hair any colour for which people voted. She reached it after much hard work and dyed her hair rainbow as it got the most votes.

She is now looking for help to achieve her goal of raising a further £500, to bring her total up to £1,000 overall. If Kathryn-Isadora reaches this second target, she will shave all her hair off at Ian Michael Hair Design in East Finchley.

Kathryn, who attends North London Collegiate School in Edgware, says many people close to her have died of cancer and she chose the Teenage Cancer Trust because of the excellent work they do and the lack of government funding they receive.

Pictures, information about her progress and opportunities to donate can be found at www.justgiving.com/shavingiscaring



Hair-raising: Kathryn-Isadora (right) is using her locks to make cash for charity.

20mph zone on the cards?

Hot on the heels of winning the reinstatement of safety railings outside Martin Primary School, representatives from campaign group WALKSAFE N2 attended a Barnet Council meeting when new cabinet member Cllr Dean Cohen unexpectedly turned up and appeared supportive.

Emily Burnham, spokesperson for WALKSAFE N2 at the meeting, reported: "For the first time, the highways officer present mentioned the possibility of a 20mph speed limit on Church Lane. After the meeting, the officer told us that localism - letting people have more say in the area where they live - makes sense."

"We were really pleased that the council seems to have had a change of heart but will be looking very closely to see that their actions match the apparent improvement in their attitude to these fundamental local issues." WALKSAFE N2 has been invited to a meeting in early July to find out the Highway Department's detailed response to their demands, including a three-way signalised junction at Church Lane/High Road, a pedestrian crossing on Creighton Avenue and a 20mph speed limit on Church Lane. In the meantime, the campaign group is keen to keep up the pressure and has invited Cllr Cohen to attend a site visit.

Seen and heard...

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