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THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Bobath centre in crisis

By Daphne Chamberlain
 Staff at the Bobath Centre in East End Road do not know how long they can continue providing specialist care for children with cerebral palsy. The crisis has come about because the flow of patients referred by NHS primary care trusts is drying up, leaving the centre facing a financial deficit of £280,000. In November 2010, 20 children were receiving two weeks each of intensive treatment; in November 2011, there were only nine.



Service under threat: MP Mike Freer watches Alan and Amanda Campbell support their six-year-old son Joshua through a treatment session at the Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy.

Delays and refusals
 Bobath staff acknowledge the difficulties faced by primary care trusts hit by budget cuts and an estimated loss of 40% of their commissioning posts, but say that funding is being delayed, refused, or beset with obstacles. Mandy Franklin, appointments and funding manager, gave examples: "One child's doctor called to say he had been sent a 60-page funding application form to complete. I receive refusal letters with all the contact details removed so that I can't respond, and more often, I am simply unable to get through on the phone."

tough and we empathise with our colleagues in the Health Service. However, it is critical that children with cerebral palsy are treated as early as possible. Delaying funding threatens their future wellbeing, and the inevitable health problems they will face later in life will only be more costly to treat."

MPs lend support
 The Bobath Centre is unique and internationally respected. As a small charity, though,

it is vulnerable, and staff are very grateful for fundraising from supporters and for the generosity and involvement of local people.

They recently explained their problems and asked for support during visits by local MP Mike Freer and Blackpool and Clevelleys MP Paul Maynard, who belongs to the All-Party Parliamentary Disability Group. Paul Maynard, who has mild cerebral palsy himself, sat in on a treatment session with six-year-old Sammy Wright, who was visiting with his mother Rachel from Southend.

Finchley and Golders Green MP Mike Freer officially

opened the charity's new Students' Learning Zone. The Bobath Centre recently raised £12,000 to improve teaching facilities for students, adding to its world-class reputation for treatment and for training of physio, occupational and speech and language therapists. Mr Freer met staff and students and watched the treatment session of six-year-old Joshua Campbell, who was visiting with his parents Alan and Amanda from Great Sampford in Essex.

For more information about the centre, or to get involved in fundraising, call 020 8444 3355 or visit www.bobath.org.uk.

Man stabbed in children's park

By Janet Maitland
 A young man was stabbed in the children's playground on Park Road at about 11pm on 27 January. A local resident who was first on the scene believes the incident should be a wake-up call about the lack of facilities for young people in East Finchley.

The resident, who asked not to be named, was at home when he heard the sound of an argument coming from the park. He looked out of his window and saw a young man he recognised, clutching his side and obviously in pain. The resident hurried to the park and found two groups of young people shouting at each other.

Aggressive
 "I got the victim and his friends out of the park," said the resident. "A youth in the other group looked very aggressive and I didn't want him stabbing anyone else. When we got to the High Road I called an ambulance. The victim told me later that a nurse said if the knife had gone a quarter of an inch deeper, he would have died."

"They told me they'd just been messing around, playing on the swings, when this group of youths came into the park. One of them asked the victim for a cigarette. Then words were exchanged and the youth suddenly pulled out the knife and stabbed him."

"I ran the football team at the Monday Club for three years but since the demise of the club and the question mark hanging over Stanley Road Playing Field, we have no provision for young people in East Finchley at all. Believe me, we need to invest in our young people, now."

A doctor from the air ambulance service treated the victim in the ambulance before he was taken to hospital. He was given stitches and discharged the following day.

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