



Karen Pepper, Jayne Lobley, Emily Burnham, Harriet Connides and supporters! Photo by Jim Saunders.

Thousands support safer roads campaign

In just 11 weeks, well over 2000 local people have signed the WALKSAFE N2 petition for improved pedestrian and road safety along Church Lane, the High Road and Creighton Avenue.

Jayne Lobley of WALKSAFEN2 says: "We want to say a big thank you to those local shops and schools holding our petition (honourable mentions to Amy's and Cootes for collecting the most signatures on the High Road!). Thank you also to all parents, carers and other residents who helped to gather signatures and who wrote supporting letters that make an essential case for the aims of the campaign."

Local schools Martin Primary, Holy Trinity CE Primary, Eden Primary and Oak Lodge are formally backing the campaign, along with Newstead Children's Centre, East Finchley Development Trust and East Finchley Village Residents' Association.

Holy Trinity Church, East Finchley Methodist Church

and East Finchley Baptist Church have all written letters of support, as have East Finchley Library Users Group and Barnet Green Party. The former police sergeant of the Safer Neighbourhood Team, Andy Matthews, has written of his concerns about the junction outside the Martin School.

Campaigners were aiming to present their case at Barnet Council's Business Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 29 February 2012. Councillor Brian Coleman, Cabinet Member for the Environment, has shown an interest and has agreed to meet with campaign members to discuss action to improve these road safety hotspots.

To hear more about the campaign, email walksafen2@yahoo.co.uk

Support for free school hits target

By Catherine Whitelock

Campaigning group Local Schools for Local Children says it has been overwhelmed with support for its proposed new free school, with initial survey results showing that the school would be over-subscribed even in its first year.

As we reported last month, the group is proposing to open TheArcherAcademy, a co-educational, non-selective school, to fill the gap in secondary school provision in N2, N3, NW11 and parts of N12. The school would open in 2013, with current year 5 pupils making up the first intake.

Support from local parents

As part of the application process, the group has been required to show that there is demand from local parents, and so far, more than 1,000 have said they would be prepared to put the school as their first choice. Crucially, almost 200 parents of year 5 children have said yes to the school, which would more than fill the five forms that it is planning to offer in its first year.

Local parent Justine Csaky is one supporter. She said: "We are really worried about where our daughter will go to school in Year 7. There is no state secondary for us to apply to where we live in East Finchley. The Archer Academy would be a fantastic solution for us and countless other families living in this area of Barnet."

Next stages

Plans for the school are well underway, with an educational plan, budget, staffing structure and a timetable already set out. The school would specialise in

maths and English.

The application has been delivered to the Department for Education and will now be assessed for funding provided by the government's Free Schools initiative. The school's location would be decided at a later date.

Local MP Mike Freer has given the campaign his backing, and Barnet Council has acknowledged the lack of non-denominational, co-educational school places in the areas that The Archer Academy intends to serve. The issue was addressed at a packed public meeting on 19 January attended by Mr Freer and Labour Councillor Alison Moore.

Sarah Cohen, from Local Schools for Local Children, commented: "We can never have too much support, so if you haven't yet signed our survey or want to throw your weight behind our campaign, please get in touch." The campaign can be contacted at www.localschoolsforocalchildren.org.uk or by email at localschools@live.co.uk

Late News

As we went to press, Barnet Council announced a shake-up of secondary school places in the borough. The Compton, Christ's College and Copthall schools will be expanded to provide a total of an extra 90 pupil places from 2013 while the under-subscribed St Mary's High School in Hendon could close and be merged with the nearby St John's CE Primary to provide an all-through school from reception to age 18. Announcing the changes, Councillor Andrew Harper, cabinet member for education, children and families, said: "Free schools can also play an important role in meeting the growing pressure for school places. The council will continue to engage with groups with proposals for free schools where there is a proven demand, a robust business case and available property."

Abandoned dogs in need of new homes

By Nick Young

It is a sad fact of modern life that many dogs, over 100,000 in the past year, are abandoned in the UK. Many are put down, but some can be rescued and re-housed. Although most councils have dog wardens, much rescuing and rehousing is done by charities, including N2-based All Dogs Matter (ADM), which operates from Aylmer Parade.

Most of the dogs that ADM deals with are strays or abandoned dogs that can be re-housed. In North London, many dogs picked up by councils are Staffordshire bull terriers that have been bred for fighting and then abandoned, a phenomenon that has been in the news a lot recently and featured on the BBC's *Panorama*.



Abi has a loving home with Ira Moss from All Dogs Matter but many of the stray dogs brought into the charity are Staffies like her. Photo by Nick Young

"Dog welfare is in a major crisis because of the Staffies, basically; well, not the Staffies but the people who keep breeding them," explains ADM's Ira Moss. "There's a trade on the internet. They advertise them for free and just pass them on; people get them and don't know what they're doing."

Making all dogs matter

Each abandoned dog found by the charity is given a thorough check-up by a vet and is microchipped, vaccinated and neutered. Potential new owners, who can get in touch with ADM via their website, are themselves assessed by the charity before they are allowed to adopt a dog.

ADM is also involved in education, visiting many schools in North London to teach children about their work. Chaired by the actor Peter Egan, the charity has been running for three years. As well as its office on Aylmer Parade, it has kennels in Bushey where most of the rescue dogs are kept. For more information, visit www.alldogsmatter.co.uk

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