



Letters to the Editor

Tidy up our rubbish system

Dear Editor,

I write in relation to the article 'What a load of rubbish!' in your February issue. The design of both the current bins is poor and impractical, particularly the blue bin. Do those who impose such things on us ever really consider the practicalities or even recycle themselves?

The Council may say that it doesn't matter if the blue bins fill with water when it rains, but this is clearly ridiculous as even cardboard disintegrates over the course of several days and the binmen would quite reasonably object to carrying bins half full of water.

The elasticated covering nets perish, letting items fall out if the bin is stored upside down to keep out rain, and would probably do so even if it is stored right-way-up.

Most of the houses in East Finchley (and probably other areas in the borough) do not have indoor storage space for the bins and many houses (such as mine) have only a small amount of space at the front. The result is that quite decent roads now look like slum areas, with at least three bins in front of each house. Even if back gardens are bigger, in terraced houses bins would have to be carried through the house.

Personally I refused to have either bin for these exact reasons, but would be happy to use a communal wheelie bin as they do on the continent. There should also be a communal green waste bin (again I refused one for lack of space). There used to be communal bins for a variety of recyclable materials on East Finchley High Road, near Martin Primary School, which I used for years until they suddenly disappeared last year.

Another more practical method would be to use hessian (or woven plastic) sacks as I believe is done in Haringey, at least for green waste. When there is no waste these fold up quite small and can more easily be stored.

Finally, at a time when we are being encouraged to reduce all household waste, why is it impossible to obtain replacement small-size domestic waste wheelie bins? If the council wishes to economise by providing only one size, then it should be the smaller one, which is quite adequate for small households and, if the rubbish were disposed of properly (e.g. flattening cardboard boxes and tins) should also be big enough for the average family. The large wheelie bins are far bigger than the standard metal bins we used to use.

Yours faithfully,
Valerie Teague,
Leopold Road, N2.

Why the Stanley Road sports bid failed

Dear Editor,

The decision of Barnet Council to reject the SportEF proposal for the Stanley Road Playing Field is the result of poor organisation.

(1) Democracy deficit: there were only two large public meetings in six years.

(2) Inconsistent activity: there were long periods when nothing was being done.

(3) Field unused: for several years the legal status of the field was in limbo, giving many opportunities for events on the field, few taken. Once boarded up, the opportunities became very restricted. For example, activities of the Community Festival could have spilled over into the field.

(4) Elections: politicians in the last general election were

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not forced into taking a stand on the field.

(5) Publicity: little effort was made toward a nationwide publicity campaign. Given the local political calculus, that was necessary to save the field.

(6) Youth: the people who would have benefitted the most from the field, the poorer youth in the surrounding area, were not involved. There were some children's events, but very few teenage activists.

Playing fields are disappearing all over London. We did nothing to show the council, nor the rest of the country, that this field was something special. At most we filled only a small corner of the field in protest, and correspondingly we will get at most only a similarly small corner.

Yours faithfully,
Dr Robert Simon,
By email

December daffodil

The Finchley Society has heard that a daffodil was seen in flower in a garden near Henly's Corner in early December. We would all like to know if anyone can beat that. A dated photo would be brilliant, but not compulsory!

Giveacar for charity

In "Unwanted cars raise cash" on page 8 of our February edition, we reported on Noah's Ark Children's Hospice being involved in a novel fundraising scheme. Unwanted cars are collected free of charge by Giveacar, with proceeds from their sale being donated to a chosen charity.

Sarah Austin, Noah's Ark Community Fundraiser, called it a win-win situation. For further information about Noah's Ark Children's Hospice please visit www.noahsarkhospice.org.uk and for information about how old, unwanted and unused cars can benefit the charity email support@giveacar.co.uk

Find out when your bus is really due

By Daphne Chamberlain

Infuriating, isn't it, when your bus stop doesn't have an arrivals board, and nobody in the queue knows when the last bus came along or when to expect the next one? Next time you're pacing around in a tizzy, remember your mobile phone could have the answer. Or, better still, ask your computer or smartphone before leaving home.

Transport for London has urged us to do this for ages, but a lot of us still don't know about it, haven't tried, or have been put off by someone complaining that it doesn't work. Of course the information you get isn't going to be 100% accurate every time, because nothing ever is, but for a regular bus-user an occasional blip is surely better than hours of frustration, irritation and second-guessing.

Here's how it works. If

you're already at the stop, look for its special code. That's the number on the plate above the timetable. Text that number to 87287. A return text will list expected actual arrival times of the next few buses. To be really organised, check before leaving home. Go to www.countdown.tfl.gov.uk, and click on "live bus arrivals". You can find your bus stop code there, plus codes of other stops you use regularly, as well as bus routes and maps. Give it a go. I have.

Get ahead of the Games

With the Olympic Games fast approaching, London will inevitably be much busier than usual this summer. With this in mind, the Government, the Mayor of London, the London 2012 organisers and the UK's transport networks (including Transport for London) have launched a new campaign to enable people to 'Get Ahead of the Games'.

The aim is to show people exactly when and where London's roads and public transport networks will be busier than usual. By logging onto the website www.getaheadofthegames.com or following @GAOTG on Twitter, you will be able to get the latest updates, travel information and advice on how to plan ahead and avoid "travel hotspots".

According to the website: "The campaign will span online, radio, outdoor and national and regional newspapers, urging those in affected areas to reduce, reroute, retime or remode their journeys to avoid the hotspots at the busiest times."

It is estimated that Get Ahead of the Games adverts will be seen and heard "over a billion times" by the public.

Appreciate good music

Age UK Barnet's Music Appreciation Group brings together volunteers with a love of music, and older or disabled musicians and music lovers. The group meets once a month to listen to and talk about music.

Many members are partially sighted and/or mobility impaired. More able-bodied members provide transport and a helping arm so all can meet and attend music events.

If you would like to join or help the group, contact Sian Jones on 020 8432 1416. They would especially like to hear from anyone who can offer to host a meeting in their home, play for the group, suggest suitable concerts or offer help with transport and organisation.

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