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The burnt-out shell of the archery club building. Photo by Gill Steiner.

Archery club pavilion burnt to a shell

By Janet Maitland

After its pavilion was destroyed by fire the Aquarius Archery Club on Southern Road has received the support of members from all over the world. The wooden pavilion, built in 1923, was burnt to a shell in the early hours of 13 April.

A neighbour who was woken by the crackle of flames called the fire service at 4.10am. About 20 firefighters tackled the blaze and managed to put it out by 5.30am. It is not yet known how the fire started and investigations are underway.

Bereavement

"We've lost all our history, all our records and photographs," said Maggie Woolf, the club's coaching officer. "It was such a beautiful old

building. Members are rallying round: one made tea for all the firefighters and everyone's offering help. We've also had condolences from old members as far away as China and India.

"People who aren't members are asking what they can do to help and some even want to join the club. We're linked with the archery club in Coblenz and they've told us they're in mourning. Well, it does feel like

a bereavement. I've been here since 1976 and I knew every square inch of it. I even dreamt I was cleaning it last night, but now it's gone."

Members raised all the money for the building themselves, including the cost of a new roof and central heating, improvements which have only just been completed. They hope to rebuild and the club has no intention of disbanding. In fact everything planned will carry on, even an Olympic Open Day in September.

If you would like to offer your support to the club, leave a message at www.aquarius-archers.org.uk.

Expansion plans for Martin Primary School

By Diana Cormack and Helen Drake

Barnet Council has issued a formal consultation about its proposals for the expansion of Martin Primary School. Recently rated "outstanding" by Ofsted, this popular school formerly had two classes for each year. The proposal is to expand it permanently from a two to a three-form entry establishment from September 2012, so that eventually it would cater for 630 pupils from reception to Year 6.

Last September, as a then one-off response to the needs of local children without school places, Martin Primary opened an additional reception class. Now plans are being made to accommodate the "bulge" reception class children within the main school building when they enter Year 1. Future planning, should the permanent expansion proceed, would involve additional financial investment plus logistical issues, as well as the need for extra teaching staff.

These proposals have come about just as the school enters its centenary year, completing a century of many changes. Writing to parents and carers, headteacher Helen Morrison explained that the plans were at an early stage and would be subject to a full consultation process.

Meeting hears plans

On Wednesday 18 April, Mick Quigley, Barnet's assistant director for schools and

families, met staff, governors and parents to talk about the expansion proposal. "We are not a faceless bureaucracy," he said. "This is a genuine consultation. There is a community in East Finchley which needs schools."

If the expansion goes ahead, the meeting was told, money would be ring-fenced to create a £2million pound budget for building works.

School field

Parents raised concerns about how expansion would affect the current pupils and their families; road safety; and the shortage of secondary school places. The greatest concerns expressed, however, were about changes to the building and particularly about the impact of possibly building on the school field.

Mr Quigley stressed that there was "no automatic plan to build on the school field" as it was protected and had other restrictions. He pointed out that the existing site was fairly large and might include areas which could accommodate sympathetically-designed changes.

Following the meeting, the present consultation stage was due to close on 4 May. After this the council will decide whether to publish a statutory notice, with a further six week representation period. Having taken into account any responses, it will then take a final decision about whether to proceed with the expansion. To view the consultation document visit <http://engage.barnet.gov.uk>

THE ARCHER would like to have your views about this topic. Please write to us by email or post, or find us on Twitter and Facebook. Our contact details are on page 2.

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