



Bring this neglected corner back to life

A long-time resident has started a campaign to smarten up a neglected corner of the old village. Paula Goodchild says the open area at the junction of Long Lane and Church Lane is in a shameful state.

The brickwork on three circular planting areas has fallen apart, the soil is bare and the pavement is uneven. Paula says the condition of this busy corner reflects badly on the area as a whole.

"There are some lovely shops and houses around here but this spot looks a mess; it's such a shame," said Paula. "Schoolchildren and passers-by sit on the bench but it's not very pleasant for them. The loose brickwork and bumpy surface are dangerous. So many people come this way every day, it needs

to be tidied up."

As well as living near the junction for 33 years, Paula has a personal connection to the spot. Her architect husband Ray helped redesign the public area in conjunction with Barnet Council back in 1983. The planting areas he introduced then are the ones that are falling apart today.

Paula says she has been in touch with Barnet Council about the state of the corner for many months. Officers have been sympathetic but so far no action has been taken.



Crumbling corner: Paula Goodchild wants to see the public area near her home restored to its former smart appearance. Photo by John Lawrence.

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Beware bogus police officers

By Janet Maitland
Elderly people are being targeted in a telephone scam by fraudsters pretending to be police officers. A bogus officer rings the victim to inform them that their bank card has been used fraudulently and asks them to withdraw £5,000 from their bank so that an 'officer' can call round to take and mark the notes.

They are asked not to tell the bank why they are withdrawing the money as this might 'upset their investigation' to trap the thief.

If the victim is suspicious, the 'officer' tells them to call 999 for verification. By not hanging up, the fraudster keeps the line open and so the victim unknowingly reconnects with him when they dial 999 and then has all the details confirmed by an accomplice.

In some cases the 'officer' tells the victim to call their bank, and again keeps the line open. The accomplice then confirms the so-called fraud and convinces the victim to reveal their PIN number. In one recent case the fraudster got the PIN and then arranged for a courier to pick up the card 'for finger printing'. Fortunately, the courier company manager became suspicious and contacted the police.

How to spot a scam

"These con men practise at this day after day and can be very convincing," said Detective Chief Inspector Gary Randall. "But remember that a bank will never ask you for cash or for your PIN number over the phone."

Police have produced a free booklet with lots of helpful information about how to avoid fraud, called The Little Book of Big Scams. You can get a copy by calling 020 7230 1228 or downloading it at www.met.police.uk/fraudalert. The site also gives up to date information about the latest scams. Further information and advice is available at www.actionfraud.police.uk and www.elderabuse.org.uk

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Mitchell Tovee was runner-up in the national contest to find a cover model for Men's Health magazine.

Mitchell muscles his way to the top

Hard training and some scientific know-how helped fitness instructor Mitchell Tovee reach the finals of a national search to find a cover model for Men's Health magazine.

Mitchell, who works at the MighteeFit Health Studio in East End Road, made it to the final five of the competition in a field of 1,000 entries, and only came runner-up by the narrowest of margins.

The 23-year-old's physique was plastered all over the magazine's website for a month-long public vote, and he was thrilled to get as far as he did.

Science know-how

When Mitchell sent his photo for last year's competition, he didn't even get a reply, but this time round he focused strictly on his nutrition and food intake to make his body fat low and his build in the right shape to get noticed.

"I've always been interested in the science behind it: the proteins and the nutrients you need to get the right results," he said. "I'd fall asleep in French at school but in chemistry and physics I soaked everything up."

Mitchell started boxing at 14, went on to work as a lifeguard and then joined a

gym at 18 before becoming a full-time personal trainer. His national exposure has brought him plenty of respect from fellow gym-goers along with some unwanted attention from female fans of all ages.

"It's attention I could do without," laughed Mitchell, who is engaged to Rebecca, with whom he has a two-year-old daughter. "I could have done with it when I was single. Now I have to just politely say no."

Mitchell is one of a team of health coaches at MighteeFit. For more details, call the studio on 020 3224 3043 or visit www.mightteefit.com

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