



Letters to the Editor



Open and shut case for pavilion

Dear Editor

I think many people will be happy that someone is again showing interest in having a café in Cherry Tree Wood, especially after we have lost Sally Ann and her popular refreshment kiosk. I am concerned, however, that short cuts in Barnet Council's appraisal of the venture have been taken which leave several unanswered questions about the look and impact of the new application.

The only public consultation taken by the council was the placement of a notice about the new café proposals in the back pages of some of the local press on 25 June and 2 July.

Sixteen sharp-eyed locals wrote to Barnet Council, and despite at least 11 of them raising queries or expressing concerns, the Cabinet decided to grant a lease for the old pavilion without any further public consultation, or even a planning application, to progress the disposal expeditiously.

Ward councillors' requests to have the application for a café in the wood referred to the local Environment Committee and the Cabinet Resources Committee were rejected by Barnet's Cabinet member for the Environment, Cllr Dean Cohen, and he promptly authorised the letting of the old pavilion for a 25-year period under the council's Delegated Powers.

I think this is nothing less than an attempt by the council to prevent local residents from making representations on matters that concern Cherry Tree Wood. When one considers the co-operative and consultative nature of the last serious proposal for the old pavilion, and the public debate that ensued, I am concerned that although the new applicant is well intended, the choice of who runs a café in Cherry Tree Wood is now being made by edict rather than by public committee.

Yours faithfully,
Colin Rogers,
Ward councillor, East Finchley.

Don't forget our pharmacies

Dear Editor,

Local pharmacies serve many functions. A significant part of their income is generated by making up NHS prescriptions and performing NHS functions, such as giving free flu jabs to the over-65s. East Finchley Medical Practice has leafleted its patients urging them to have their prescriptions made up and delivered by a pharmacy in Leeds, called pharmacy2U, and demanding that if they go to a pharmacy for their flu jabs they must opt out

of the GP provision. They say that using the pharmacist is a "wastage of valuable NHS resources". This commercial war between a GP practice and local pharmacies is unlikely to benefit the rest of us much. Surely, it would be better for local pharmacies to provide the online service if they can?

Yours faithfully,
Alan Ereira,
Summerlee Avenue, N2.

Help for South African babies

Dear Editor,

We would like your help. Patients at state hospitals and clinics in South Africa are typically destitute and malnourished, as well as being very sick or injured. Many are jobless, many are homeless, and many have no loved ones to provide the basic needs for them in hospital. The Ruth Mailbag Group strives to provide for the needs of destitute mums and babies in the maternity ward and neonatal intensive care unit of our local state hospital and several other hospitals in our country who have asked for our help by providing them with a basic baby pack for their new and or sick babies. If you can assist please get in touch with us through joy.coetzee@gmail.com or visit our blog at <http://theruth-mailbaggroup.blogspot.com/>

Yours faithfully,
Joy Coetzee
Founder, The Ruth Mailbag Group

Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page", The Archer, PO Box 3699, London N2 8JA or e-mail the-archer@lineone.net. Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be reviewed or printed. Contact details can be withheld, however, on request at publication.

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International Older Persons' Day

Did you know that 1 October was the International Day of Older Persons? It was created by the United Nations in 1991 as an annual event to celebrate the contributions and achievements of people in later life and to examine issues which affect their lives.

Well, nobody told me and I'm getting older all the time. Here's what I'm missing, according to the UN's on-line information: "In many countries, politicians make speeches, particularly those responsible for government departments that focus on senior citizens, at this time of the year. Some radios, televisions or newspapers publish interviews with senior citizens on various issues such as achievements they made to create a better society."

"The World Health Organization (WHO) and other groups have been actively involved in promoting public awareness and attention on the International Day of Older Persons. Discussions are centred on topics such as: ageing populations and the provision of adequate healthcare for aged persons; volunteer work; social care; and ways to be more inclusive of older persons in the workforce."

I Googled and found three events taking place in London, nowhere near East Finchley. So this day probably passed many of us by again, but why should I care? Two weeks later I'll be celebrating being another year older!

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column. Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



What future our pavilion?

By Mike Gee

The Cherry Tree Wood pavilion was built in 1926 as an electricity sub-station. Finchley Council was responsible for electricity generation in the area right up to nationalisation in 1948 and there was a working power station in Squires Lane where the Pentland Centre now stands.

In the late 1950s a new sub-station was built adjacent to Brompton Grove and the old, rather grand pavilion with its covered shelters on three sides of the building was decommissioned. It then became changing rooms for sports activities but over the years fell into a state of disrepair, dereliction and disuse.

What happens next? There are several contentious issues here, including the fact that this part of the wood is designated Metropolitan Open Land and as such is protected from development in exactly the same way as Green Belt land.

MOL protection

The Barnet Unitary Plan is quite clear: Policy 01 -Green Belt/Metropolitan Open Land states: "Except in very special circumstances, the council will refuse any development in the Green Belt or Metropolitan Open Land which is not compatible with their purposes and objectives, does not maintain their openness and would harm their visual amenity".

It goes on to say that development will only be allowed in very special circumstances and that any change of use of existing land or buildings in MOL is not acceptable except for: agriculture, horticulture, woodland, nature conservation and wildlife use, or essential facilities for outdoor sport and recreation or cemeteries.

However, most people are unaware of the protected status of this piece of ancient woodland and council officers are apparently not broadcasting it. Metropolitan Open Land and Planning Policy is quite clear, however: commercial activity is not acceptable.

I understand from LBB Property Services that the developer wishes to retain the pavilion substantially as it is, repairing the roof and adding new windows and doors, but issues such as felling of trees, parking within the wood and café opening hours have not been clarified. Nor has the future of the kiosk café in the park.



This year Stewart Duncan Opticians are very proud to celebrate 50 years in East Finchley. We would like thank all our customers for the support they have been showing us and we hope to keep providing friendly service for many more years. **THANK YOU!**



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