



# Campaigners fear Newstead Centre closure

By Linda Sansom

Parents fighting to save a local children's centre from funding cuts fear it could still close, in spite of Barnet Council's assurances to the contrary.

Under the new funding proposals, Newstead Children's Centre, in Fallows Close, will open for only 38 weeks a year, instead of the current 48 weeks, forcing parents to find alternative childcare for the school holidays. And they are worried that lack of take-up would lead to a complete closure of the centre's childcare provision.

The council currently funds 13 children's centres and eight linked outreach venues with a £4.3m budget. The total sum will remain the same for the financial year 2012-13, but will be redistributed among the centres, all of which will remain open. The council claims this will target the needs of the most vulnerable families in the borough.

### Holiday childcare

Newstead is one of only two centres proposing changes to their childcare delivery. Councillor Andrew Harper, Cabinet member for education,

children and families, says the centre has a significant drop in demand for places over the school holidays, and that any family affected by the changes will be helped to find alternative childcare arrangements during this time. But Councillor Alison Moore, who chairs the Newstead Advisory Board, says the effect would cause a disproportionate impact on low-income families, who would be forced to look for other childcare during the holidays.

And campaigners are worried that working parents will be unwilling to sign up to the new timetable arrangements, causing the centre to close its childcare provision entirely through lack of children.

Parent Cheryl Connell says: "I wouldn't want my children to be at Newstead in term time and be looked after by someone totally different during the holidays. That is just not normal."



## Right, where's the fire?

Youngsters queued eagerly to sit behind the wheel of a real fire and rescue truck when Finchley Fire Station threw wide its doors for a public open day on Sunday 22 July. Alfie, four, and his two-year-old brother Sonny, pictured, were lifted into the cab by firefighter Ollie Ramsey. Hundreds turned out for the event at the Long Lane station, which featured rescue demonstrations and a chance to get hands-on with plenty of fire equipment. Photo by John Lawrence.

## Your local Guides need you!

By Toni Dietmann, 4<sup>th</sup> East Finchley Guides Leader

Girl Guiding UK is the largest voluntary organisation for girls and young women in the UK. Guiding teaches girls new skills, gives them a safe place to have fun, helps them reach their full potential, and Guiding itself is a valuable part of the community.

A young girl's involvement with Girl Guiding starts at 5 years old with Rainbows. At 7 years they move to Brownies and on to Guides at 10 years.

Sadly, 4<sup>th</sup> East Finchley Rainbows closed in May, because the Leader could not continue for personal reasons. We desperately need adult volunteers to re-open it. Lisa, who runs 4<sup>th</sup> East Finchley Brownies on her own, also needs additional support.

### Can you help?

Women of East Finchley, can you spare some time to get involved in East Finchley Guiding? Please don't leave it to someone else... Please don't risk these vital community groups closing forever. Training will be given. Lisa and I will personally mentor and support anyone who volunteers.

You will give young girls experiences that will stay with them their whole lives. As an

Adult Leader you will gain friends, skills, and experiences that will last your lifetime.

Interested volunteers can contact Toni at 4theastfinchleyguides@googlemail.com 4<sup>th</sup> East Finchley Guides also have 4 spaces available for 10 year olds. We meet on Thursdays 7.30 - 9pm. Both 4<sup>th</sup> East Finchley Rainbows (4 - 5pm) and Brownies (5:30 - 7pm) meet on Thursdays at Holy Trinity Church.

For general information on Guiding, go to <http://girlguiding.org.uk>

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