



Stop parking restrictions killing our businesses, say traders

By Diana Cormack

Early last month a group of local traders welcomed Cllr Dean Cohen, Cabinet Member for the Environment, to a meeting about problems caused by parking restrictions and about possible solutions. It was organised by Peter Barnett of A. Scott and Son Fishmongers, who had canvassed all the businesses on the High Road and Fortis Green. Cllr Cohen said it was the largest attendance he had seen at such a meeting.



East Finchley traders discuss parking issues with Councillor Dean Cohen Photo by John Dearing

Everyone contributed keenly to the debate, many emphasising their loss of trade. Motorists no longer pop quickly into shops such as Josephine's Florist or Tony's Continental Store, whilst the Phoenix has lost customers because parking restrictions don't allow enough time to view a complete film.

There were calls for a period of free parking to ease the situation, but Cllr Cohen emphasised that this had not been in place previously and was not guaranteed to work, as had proved to be the case in other parts of the borough.

Many traders responded that all areas are not the same, so specific issues and needs should be taken into account when decisions are taken. If not, what would be the point of these meetings? Elliot Jacobs of UOE was forceful in requesting that

the council consulted with locals before any changes were made.

Bus stop removal

A change to create more parking spaces by removing the bus stop outside Kokos was suggested. Buses using it stop only a short distance away in East End Road, the High Road and Fortis Green, then again at East Finchley station.

On the question of payment, Cllr Cohen ruled out the return of cash machines which are difficult to maintain and need paid staff to empty them. Credit or debit cards and mobile phones would be used.

A council official took notes and feedback from the meeting will be sent to the traders. Cllr Cohen said it would be approximately three months before any tariff changes came about and that new parking meters would be installed in less than a year.

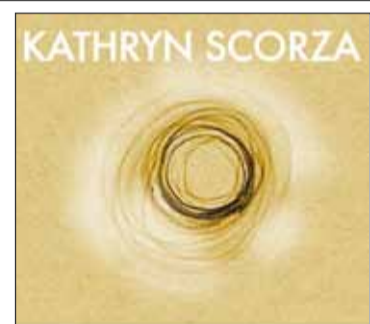
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Fun day

Martin Primary School holds its annual summer fun day on Saturday 15 June from 12 noon to 3pm. Pop along to the school in Plane Tree Walk to celebrate its centenary with barbecue food, tea and cakes, a bouncy castle, lots of stalls and fun for all the family.



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Martin Stone serves up at the Muswell Hill Soup Kitchen

Soup kitchen feeds homeless amid the affluence

By Daniel Weir

Despite Muswell Hill being one of the most affluent areas in London, homelessness is a big, but often overlooked, problem.

The Muswell Hill soup kitchen, founded in 1994, has been established to help some of the least fortunate people in our community. Crisis, the national charity for homeless people, estimate that rough sleeping has risen 43% in the last year in London.

The kitchen operates next to the Muswell Hill Baptist Church, just off the Broadway, and serves around 50 people each night. It was set up after many requests for food after evening church services.

These people mainly come from North London and are aided "by giving food, one-to-one advice, signposting to homeless agencies" and through "art, music and poetry" according to the centre's leader Martin Stone. The centre is open five days a week, from Sunday to Thursday with doors open for an hour from 7.45pm.

Martin himself got involved with the centre due to his role as a university lecturer on housing and economics, specialising in

homelessness.

Year-long harvest

The food the guests receive comes from a local "friendly" butcher and they also receive food from supermarkets, especially Sainsbury's who donate cakes and bread weekly, as well as receiving donations from local restaurants.

They fundraise through street collections and collecting outside Sainsbury's. Last year they held a sponsored walk in a push for funds.

If you are interested in getting involved, the centre runs an art group, a craft group and a soup kitchen school for volunteers. You can also help by donating food for the centre. Donations always leap around Harvest Festival time, but are very welcome all year round.

The website is www.mhbc.org.uk/community/soup-kitchen.html and those interested in getting involved can email soupkitchen@mhbc.org.uk

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