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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Charity Commission steps in at Old Barn

By Janet Maitland

The Charity Commission has intervened in the three-year battle over the management of the Old Barn in Tarling Road. They informed the trustees that an AGM planned for 21 July could not go ahead as proper procedures had not been followed. But the trustees held an 'AGM' regardless.

The battle for the community centre began when a group of new trustees led by Reverend Geoffrey Muhoro took over the centre following the resignation of the old trustees in 2010. Soon after, services such as the Monday Club Youth group found themselves homeless. In 2011, nearly 100 local people applied to become members of the Old Barn to ensure the trustees ran the services the community needs, but the applications were not accepted by the new trustees.

Membership forms requested

Both the council and the Charity Commission have been trying to resolve the issues. In February the Charity Commission directed the trustees to hold an AGM so that people from the local community could get involved in the running of the centre. In the run-up to the AGM, twenty two local residents contacted the Old Barn for membership forms but by less than a week before the meeting no forms had been received.

The Charity Commission wrote to the trustees to say

that it was not possible for the AGM to be held as they had been supplied with "no evidence that a membership had been established, nor that requisite notice has been given to interested parties/members".

Invalid AGM

Regardless, several local residents arrived at the Old Barn at 2.30pm in the hope of having an informal meeting with Rev Muhoro and other trustees to discuss ways that residents could get involved with the Old Barn and perhaps offer their services as trustees.

Local resident Helen Drake said: "We had also hoped to discuss a timeline for a future AGM. However Mr Muhoro insisted that an AGM would still go ahead that day and expressed disregard for the authority and advice of the Charity Commission. Residents present sat through the 'AGM' and asked questions but made it clear that they were there as observers and not as participants. The Charity Commission has been informed of the situation."



High Road shops sold

The High Road laundrette A Heck of Wash and the Heart of N2 card, sweets and party goods shop (formerly Plummer's newsagent) have recently been sold.

Meanwhile the RSPCA is moving in to a new High Road home in the shop that used to be Teaching Trends. It is expected to be a charity shop combined with a drop-in animal clinic. Look out for more details in the next *Archer*.

Empty homes scheme

Owners of empty homes are able to apply for financial help to bring their property back into use in return for making it available to Barnet Homes tenants for at least three years.

The scheme allows owners to apply for up to £25,000 towards the cost of renovations if their property has been empty for at least six months. Currently, this applies to 2,000 homes in Barnet. For more information, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/emptyproperties.

Happy faces at hospice party

Dozens of families had a fun-filled day at the Noah's Ark Children's Hospice summer ball held at artsdepot in North Finchley. Brothers, sisters and parents of children with life-limiting conditions enjoyed Bollywood and carnival dance performances, face painting, arts and crafts, and plenty of cake and ice cream. The hospice supports children and their families across north London.



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