



Ann Owens Centre: Three months left

By Daphne Chamberlain

Conventional day centre services at the Ann Owens Centre will definitely stop next March. Hopefully other activities will continue there, but *THE ARCHER* was told last year that the lease on the building runs out in March. We have asked AgeUK Barnet whether the lease is being renewed, but have not had an answer.

Closure of the day centre services was always on the cards. Originally scheduled for last March, they were given a year's reprieve, although at the same time funding was withdrawn for the ambulances which take elderly people there on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

'Neighbourhood services' instead

At AgeUK's AGM in October, it was confirmed that these services would close, both at Ann Owens and the Meritage Centre, Hendon. This is in line with Barnet's policy of neighbourhood services for over-50s which, in practice, means various service providers, including AgeUK, starting up classes and courses in many different subjects for anyone over 50.

Barnet and AgeUK report in glowing terms that these activities are reaching many more older people, and nobody would deny that that is excellent.

However, whether all the people are going to venues in their immediate neighbourhood (which is supposed to be the aim) is another matter. And why should they? People have a right to choose where they spend their time. The point is that they are able to get themselves there.

Ambulance transport axed

On the other hand, people who rely on ambulances to take them to the traditional day centre meetings are being excluded, even if they live in the next road. Those who come from some distance away are often people with conditions such as memory loss, and who enjoy the company and the outing.

THE ARCHER has asked AgeUK Barnet how many elderly people are going to lose their daytime services, and what alternative is being offered them. Again, we have had no reply, and their website gives only the most fleeting reference to day centre closure. If we hear more, we will tell you.

Ann Owens bring and buy

The Ann Owens Centre is holding a Christmas bring and buy sale. Cakes, mince pies, jewellery, good quality clothes and accessories, bric-a-brac, and unwanted gifts are welcome.

Proceeds go to Age UK Barnet. The fair is on Tuesday 9 December from 11am to 2pm at the Centre in Oak Lane, N2 8LT.



The new (small) house on King Street has a £600,000 price tag. Photo by Mike Coles

Is this East Finchley's diddiest dwelling?

As new-builds go, it's certainly bijou! This house in King Street is still under construction but it's already on the market for a whopping £600,000.

That's a price tag that would easily buy you a four or five-bedroom family house in some parts of the country but here in N2 you get a little less for your

money. The whole house measures, approximately, just 10m (32ft) by 6m (19ft) and has been squeezed on to what was a

vacant back yard plot just off Church Lane.

So what's inside? Well, downstairs there are two bedrooms, each about 4m by 4m (13ft by 13ft), with a bathroom in between, just wide enough to accommodate a bath. The whole of the upstairs is the main living area with an integrated kitchen. There's a tiny balcony but no garden.

Of course, as estate agent Jeremy Leaf & Co says, buyers will be getting themselves a spanking new build which will be fitted out to a very high specification. But if your hobby happens to be swinging cats, perhaps best to look elsewhere.

Schools expand

The Wren Academy is to be one of two new 'all-through' schools in Barnet from September after planning permission was given to build a new primary school on its site in North Finchley.

The Wren will offer 60 reception places each year, enabling pupils to remain at the same school from the age of four through to 18. The London Academy in Edgware will offer a similar number of new primary places.

Development of the Wren site will provide new school buildings, enhanced playing fields and improved parking. On-site parking will be

increased and a drop-off / pick-up zone for parents will be introduced.

Separately, a planning application has been submitted for the expansion of Oak Lodge Special School, off East End Road. The secondary school, which specialises in teaching students with moderate or severe learning difficulties, would provide an extra 35 places taking student numbers to 200 in total.

Awards for making a difference

Do you know an individual or group living or working within Barnet who deserves recognition for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the borough? If you do, Barnet Council is seeking nominations for the 2015 Barnet Civic Awards.

The awards, now in their 15th year, are an opportunity for the borough to recognise officially the commitment and hard work of those who strive to make a positive difference to the lives of others.

Winners will be announced at an awards ceremony in March 2015 hosted by the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Hugh Rayner. Nomination forms are avail-

able from Hendon Town Hall, all of the borough's libraries, North London Business Park reception (building 3) or by downloading a form from the council's website www.barnet.gov.uk/civic-awards

All suggestions must be received no later than 31 December 2014. Nominees must be either residents or work in Barnet.

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