



Above: The Cherry Tree Wood toilets just before Christmas and below: repainted again on 13 January. Photos Mike Coles



Old Barn: Now's the time to have your say

By Janet Maitland

A public meeting about the future of the Old Barn will be held at 7pm on 11 February at Martin Primary School. This is your chance to turn up and have your say.

Barnet Council announced its plans to refurbish and extend the community centre on Tarring Road at a public meeting last November. The plans include a new wing, linked to the main building, for the local Bravanese community, whose centre on Coppetts Road, Muswell Hill, was burnt down in an arson attack in June 2013.

Consultation

The news about the extension was a surprise to many people at the meeting. Concerns were raised about the lack of prior consultation by residents who live in Brownswell Road, which backs onto the site.

This is the last public meeting before the council submits a planning application in March. However, a spokesperson from the council stressed that it is

not the last opportunity to comment, because once the application is made, all parties can then "participate in the formal planning consultation process".

Future management

The Old Barn charity has now been formally dissolved. The lease has been given back to the council, who have appointed the social and community group Mobilise to explore options for managing the centre. Several existing local organisations have expressed an interest.

One option is for a new local organisation to take the reins, such as the Big Local, which has £1 million of lottery funding to spend on the area bounded by Church Lane, the High Road, East End Road and the A406. Anyone interested in

the Old Barn's future should contact oldbarn@mobilise.org

The Old Barn was a thriving community centre for over 25 years until it was taken over in 2010 by a group of 'trustees' who discontinued all the services. The centre was finally reclaimed last October by Mobilise, who were appointed as temporary trustees by the Charity Commission. Now the charity no longer exists, Mobilise are no longer trustees.

The council is consulting on how best to manage all Barnet's community organisations. Anyone interested should go to http://engage.barnet.gov.uk/commissioning-group/draft-community-asset-strategy/consult_view. The closing date is 13 February.

Graffiti pulls somebody's chain

Without wishing to give undue publicity to people who leave graffiti sprayed across our public spaces, we couldn't help noticing the tug of war that's being going on in Cherry Tree Wood recently.

The toilet block near the tennis courts was repainted towards the end of last year but within weeks its clean white walls had been daubed with painted messages.

Days later, however, the walls had been repainted and restored to their pristine state. Was this a case of super efficiency on the part of Barnet

Council and the contractors it pays to look after the park, or was it a local resident who decided to take matters into their own hands?

Either way, the clean look didn't last long, because the graffiti painters returned shortly afterwards and the toilet block was defaced again. This one could run and run...



Good Companions: The Talkie Walkies.

Talkie Walkies

Fancy having a healthy stroll followed by a friendly chat (and possibly a delicious cake)? Talkie Walkies is a group of local people who meet up on Friday afternoons outside Boydens Café on Church Lane, N2 at 1pm, go for a walk together and then end up back at the café by 2pm. All are welcome including dogs and children but please be aware pushchairs are a bit tricky off road and slings may work best for little ones!

Laura Roberts, who set up the group, says: "The walks are free and we really welcome new members. It's a fun way to meet your neighbours." Contact laura@createyouridealfuture.com for more information.

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