



Libraries: a proposed structure

By Daphne Chamberlain

After two Council meetings and many questions, Barnet is going forward with another consultation about their proposed cuts to our library services. The public clearly rejected the three options presented to us nearly a year ago, but the Council has now come up with another proposal.

This divides libraries into three categories. There will be a Core group, with basic stock, opening hours and community use. Branches in this range are East Finchley, North Finchley, Burnt Oak, Golders Green, Hendon and Osidge. For anything beyond the most basic provision, these libraries will have to depend on the Core Plus branches of Church End, Chipping Barnet, Edgware and Grahame Park. This leaves the Partnership or Community Libraries, run by volunteers. Partnership branches will be Childs Hill, East Barnet, Mill Hill and South Friern.

Cameras to replace staff

Although some details have been changed, proposals very definitely rejected by the recent public consultation are still on the table. Barnet is still going ahead with 'technology enabled hours', with staff replaced by CCTV cameras. East Finchley, for example will be staffed for only 16 hours a week.

Barnet say that Core libraries such as East Finchley will concentrate on services for children and older people, but when no staff are present, unaccompanied children and younger teenagers will not be able to use the library.

For the moment at least, East Finchley Library will remain in its own building, but

library space will be reduced from 5,000 sq ft to about 2,100 sq ft. We don't know how this will be achieved. Across the borough, 46% of Library staff will lose their jobs,

bringing about expected redundancy payments of £1.5 million. Full details of the Council's proposals are on www.barnet.gov.uk. We have no details as yet of the consultation.

First street party is a big hit

By Lucy Chaumeton

A weekend in mid-September saw the inaugural edition of the Ringwood Estate Street Party. After extensive canvassing of their neighbours, enterprising local residents Maura O' Neill and Ruth Kay persuaded Haringey Council to close Twyford Avenue to traffic between Beech Drive and Ringwood Avenue from 11am to 3pm, making room for table tennis, junk modelling, games, "beat the goalie", an ice cream parlour and pavement art. Meanwhile the sound stage revealed much untapped local musical talent.



Middle of the road: The street party in full swing

Residents volunteered time, drinks, and some delicious home-cooked food, and enjoyed the opportunity to get to know each other better. Said Kevin Liffey, from Twyford Avenue: "A lot of people wondered why we hadn't done this before and started to feel that we could do more as a community. In fact, we may have to: an Italian family came along who had only been on Twyford Avenue for a week, and they probably think London is always like this!"

The spirit of goodwill spread beyond the immediate community: donations from participants, as well as generous spon-

sorship from Tatlers, JGBryson Printers and the Clissold Arms and spot prizes from The Bald Faced Stag, Finch Restaurant, Haven Estates, Maurizio's Deli, Oxygen and Snappy Snaps, meant that after covering event costs the organisers were able to make a substantial donation to Cancer Research.

If you would like to help with next year's Ringwood Estate street party contact Ruth and Maura at: theringwood-estate@gmail.com.



A walk in the park

By Daphne Chamberlain

This is local artist Laura Fishman's personal impression of Stephens House and Gardens. A couple of years ago, I saw a production of A Midsummer Night's Dream there, and Laura's paintings recreate the gardens as an enchanted, dreamlike place. She has been artist in residence there this year, and until 20 November we have the chance to see an exhibition of her work.

Her brief was to show the history and nature of the estate, which was bequeathed to the people of Finchley by "Inky" Stephens. "Inky" had a smoking room in the tower part of the house, and it was this room which became Laura's studio. She worked from there, and in the grounds themselves.

She works in oil, watercolours, ink and charcoal. At one point, she painted with natural brushes, made from twigs and dried wild flowers collected in the grounds.

Laura says that her primary motivation has always been nature and the world around her, explaining that on her walks nature becomes a magical place where images are

discovered in sunlit spaces or shadowy recesses. She tries to hold onto what she senses in fleeting moments, and the feeling a place evokes. At Stephens House and Gardens she finds constant inspiration.

American-born Laura has degrees in Fine Art from the State University of New York and Middlesex University, London. She also studied textile design in New York. Her work is held in collections throughout the world.

This exhibition runs at Stephens House and Gardens, 17 East End Road, N2 3QE until 20 November. Tel. 020 8346 7812. Find out more about Laura on www.laurafishmanart.com.

Carol concert for libraries

East Finchley Methodist Church is hosting a carol concert on Saturday 12 December in aid of the Save Barnet Libraries Campaign.

London Metropolitan Brass, the band who played on this year's library marches, will provide the music and accompany the carol singing. EFLUG's Polly Napper hopes it will be a positive community event "to celebrate the library service we're fighting to preserve."

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