



# What's happening at the Old Barn?

By Janet Maitland

The new community centre on Tarling Road, N2, is months behind schedule. It was meant to open next spring, but work to demolish the Old Barn, which it will replace, is not likely to even start until then.

A Barnet Council spokesman said the original timeline had been modified because of a lack of interest from the construction market. Furthermore, although the council planned that a head lessee to manage the centre would be appointed by the end of the summer, no one has yet been shortlisted. "We have market tested with a number of groups over the summer," said the spokesperson.

East Finchley councillors Arjun Mitra, Alison Moore and Alon Orbach met with Barnet Council chief executive John Hooton in mid-October to raise concerns about the stalled progress and the future management of the centre.

## Councillors suggest ways forward

In a joint statement to *THE ARCHER*, the councillors said they supported the view of local people that a community group should take on the lease and management of the building. As the council had not yet been able to identify anyone in a position to take on this on, they suggested some other community group options to Mr Hooton and these are now being pursued by the council.

"We are very keen that all the hard work to get the Old Barn back into community use should not go to waste and that a centre that is used by the whole local community is built," said Cllr Mitra

They were concerned that the council wanted to rent the building at full market rates, which would be unaffordable to many local groups. The council has since confirmed that a community group would receive a discount on the rent, making it more affordable.

The three councillors said the council had proposed a commercial nursery to be the head lessee, but this would mean less space for the local community and less flexibility for the space because the nursery would occupy a large

part of the building permanently.

They plan to meet council officers in a few weeks' time to see what progress has been made on the ideas they discussed.

# Long Lane rapist jailed

By Janet Maitland

A man who grabbed a young woman off the street and raped her has been jailed for ten years.

The woman, aged in her 20s, was walking down Long Lane near the junction with Vines Avenue close to Victoria Park shortly after midnight on 11 June when she was attacked from behind by Ricky Otusi.

Otusi pulled his victim into a nearby front garden, struck her in the face several times and then raped her. He also asked her for money. She handed him the £25 she had in her purse and he left.

Otusi, 24, of no fixed abode, was sentenced at Southwark Crown Court on 3 November for two counts of rape and one of robbery. He pleaded guilty to these charges at the same court on 5 August.



Convicted: Ricky Otusi

"This was an extremely nasty attack which has left the victim very distressed," said Detective Inspector Christine Edgar. "I must commend her on her bravery and courage in coming forward and supporting the police investigation."

# In memory of two train drivers on the Northern line

Tube staff on the Northern line have put up one of three plaques in the crew mess room at East Finchley station in memory of their train driver colleagues Andy Viner and Mick Turrell.

Andy was killed in 2011 when a car driving on the wrong side of the road crashed into him, killing him almost instantly. Mick died in 2012 from a heart attack outside Moorgate station on his way home from work.

Since then the Northern line North branch of the train drivers' union ASLEF has held an annual football tournament called the Viner/Turrell Tournament to raise money for charity and the plaques. The other two plaques have been placed in the crew mess room at Golders Green station and on the staircase of the crew building at High Barnet.

ASLEF branch secretary Deborah Reay said: "The tournaments have been a great success and are getting bigger each year. Andy's favourite charity was the RNLI and the first year we donated most of the proceeds to them. Mick's wife is from Nigeria and this year's proceeds will be going either to sponsor a child or to help build a school there."



Remembering Andy Viner (left) and Mick Turrell

# Live and learn well into your third age

A network whose members are in the 'third age of life' – mainly retired and no longer in full-time employment – is on the point of coming to the Hampstead Garden Suburb area.

The University of the Third Age, or U3A, already has branches in North London, Barnet, Belsize Park and Islington. All are growing rapidly and now there's a call to meet demand for its activities in the Suburb.

Trustee Ian McCannah said: "Each U3A is run on a self-help basis with all interest groups being led by fellow members. 'The Teachers Learn and the Learners Teach' is the guiding ethos. Groups range from art appreciation to archery, from philosophy to Pilates, through music and operettas to Mah Jongg."

No entry qualifications are required, no certificates are awarded and there is no campus. Just 'Learn, Laugh and Live'. If you are interested in joining U3A in the Suburb and neighbouring areas, contact Ian by email on IJMCCANNAH@aol.com or phone him on 01707 870142.

For more information about the U3A generally, and branches in London specifically, go to www.U3A.org.uk and www.u3alondon.org.uk.

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