



Local News is our Aim

THE ARCHER



March 2016 No. 266
ISSN 1361-3952

20p
where sold

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Legal action as Strawberry Vale residents are left with no gas supply

By Daphne Chamberlain

Long-suffering residents of Strawberry Vale have started legal action against their housing association The Peabody Trust after being left without a gas supply for a month. They are seeking an injunction to have their gas supply restored or to be provided with proof why this cannot be done.

Solicitors representing residents said many had been left without hot water or heating at the coldest time of the year and estimated around 240

households were being forced to use expensive electric cookers instead of their gas ovens.

In January, the British Red Cross set up a temporary emer-



Strawberry Vale residents without gas enjoy their pop-up lunch at The Green Man. Photo Mike Coles

gency service in the Green Man Community Centre to give Strawberry Vale families a hot meal.

Law firm Hodge, Jones and Allen said: "There has been no consultation by the Peabody Trust with residents on the decision to move from gas to electric. Many are on low incomes and must choose between running up unaffordable bills or going without basic cooking facilities.

"We have launched legal proceedings to compel the Peabody Trust to restore the gas supply. At present we have had no meaningful explanation for the Trust's failure to do this and can only assume this is a cost-cutting exercise, aimed at saving the housing association money at the expense of vulnerable residents."

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Library news

The first vote by Barnet Council on changes to the borough's library service is expected on Wednesday 23 March, with a decision expected to be referred to Full Council on Monday 4 April. Both meetings will start at 7pm at the Town Hall in Hendon, with protest meetings outside from 6pm.

The Save Barnet Libraries Group has been advised by lawyers that if the council votes through its proposals without addressing alleged flaws in their second consultation, they will be open to legal challenge.

Seven thousand signatures on the latest petition means that library supporters can address the Full Council meeting. Barnet's proposed changes include reductions in library staffing and opening hours.

Homes plan for Esso garage site

By Janet Maitland

Barnet Council has confirmed that there is a plan to build nine homes on the site of the former Esso garage on the corner of Church Lane and the High Road.

However, it is only a plan at this stage. No details of any kind about the development are as yet available. "A pre-application enquiry was made with nine houses provisionally proposed, however, no planning application has been submitted for the site," said a council spokesperson.

Esso informed THE ARCHER

last December that it had got as far as exchanging contracts on the land and expected to complete the sale in the first half of 2016.

We asked Esso whether the land immediately behind the site belonged to them and, if so, whether it was also included in the sale. The land is a narrow strip running behind the back gardens of Leopold Road and Church Lane, separated from the old garage site by a high metal gate that is kept pad-locked.

"This land does not belong to Esso," said a spokesperson. It is not known who does own it or whether the prospective buyers of the Esso site are trying to buy it too.

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