



Letters to the editor

Too close to home

Dear Editor,

It was interesting to read recent letters about the Oasis café and shisha bar in Church Lane, printed in *THE ARCHER*.

It's worth noting the authors do not live in close proximity to the establishment as many of those objecting. For those who live within 10, 50 or 100 metres, the objections are more valid than the letter writers would have you believe.

Those objecting do so only against the new shisha area at its rear, not the restaurant itself. If people like Mrs Broome enjoy the food or décor, they still could, even if a shisha smoking area for 43 people was not granted planning permission.

Why does it need to have a smoking area for people to gather, until 11.30 at night, to smoke shisha pipes, just metres from residents' homes and children's bedroom windows? That is the central question.

Mrs Broome wrongly states that it is an area "under cover". By law it has to have an open roof, so all the smoke can escape and guess where much of the stench and smoke goes? Into nearby gardens, and if windows are open, into homes. In summer months must those close by have to have the sickly smell in their homes, or accept the smoke and odour in their gardens?

Each shisha produces 200 times more smoke than a cigarette, so even a mere 10 pipes equals 2,000 cigarettes being smoked at once. Would anyone *honestly* want that a few metres from their children's windows?

Imperial College wrote to Barnet to say he calculated at peak use it would produce 40,000 litres of smoke per hour, containing heavy metals, carcinogens and harmful chemicals. Barnet Environmental Health detected it at Martin Primary School. The local paediatrician, treating our children, has objected on their health grounds. Are these fully independent experts really "reactionary" as Mrs Broome states?

Mrs Broome wonders why the establishment is so often "empty". Perhaps most locals support their fellow residents who have lived here

a long time, and are already being directly impacted by one business and its strange desire to create an all day and night smoking area near homes. That would be my guess.

Yours faithfully,

Ralph Morris,
Leopold Rd, N2.

Am I dreaming?

Dear Editor,

I wonder if any other East Finchley natives remember the large stone statue on East End Road between the main road (as was) and the automatic laundromat. I think it was meant to be a standing badger. It was perhaps four feet tall and at Christmas some wag would usually adorn it with a tinsel crown.

This would have been in the late 1960s until the very early 1970s when, without warning, the statue vanished. I'm certain I am remembering this correctly. My husband says I am confusing reality with dreams again. What would he know, he was born and raised in Hendon! Help!

Yours faithfully,

Angela Kelk,
Address supplied.

Feeders not fair

Dear Editor,

The people who run the Archer Academy have made their decision about admissions for September 2016. I still don't think naming four feeder schools and leaving the two closest primaries off the list is the right answer.

Although it may redress the balance in the short term, so that parents in N3 and NW11 at least have a chance of sending their children to the Academy, I'm worried that in the long term the maths will tip the balance away from children at Martin and Holy Trinity schools in East Finchley.

As sibling places are granted, it means that the feeder schools will have their guaranteed places each year PLUS a place for siblings further down the line. This all multiplies up and in not many years' time it could mean N2 parents not getting their fair share of places.

Yours faithfully,

Lesley Mills,
Address supplied.

Splash out with some colours

By Daphne Chamberlain
This is your chance to have fun and be creative! Local artist Laura Fishman is running a Watercolour Workshop at Stephens House and Gardens on Sunday 8 May. Go along and paint your own picture of the Gardens, in your own style. It doesn't matter if you have never lifted a brush before. Laura wants you to enjoy yourself, but who knows? You might end up with your own picture for yourself or your family or friends.

Some of you may have visited Laura's own exhibition of Stephens House and Gardens paintings last autumn, when she was Artist in Residence there. Now the Art Curator, she wants to really get workshops up and running. To join this one, the only qualification is to be over 16 years old.

The day runs from 11 am to 3 pm, with a break for lunch. Hopefully, the weather will be good enough to work outside. Come prepared for light rain, but if it gets heavy the workshop will move indoors. All required art materials are listed on the application form, and can be purchased from Laura if necessary.

The workshop fee is £35, but there is a 10% reduction if you mention *THE ARCHER*. Get your booking form from artcurator@stephenshouseandgardens.com, and see www.laurafishmanworkshops.blogspot.com for interest.

Stephens House and Gardens, formerly known as Avenue House, is at 17 East End Road, N3 3QE. Tel: 020 8346 7812.



Charity cheque

The annual Hampstead Garden Suburb winter fair in aid of the veterans' mental health charity Combat Stress raised £5,120. Former MP Martin Bell, pictured right, handed the cheque the cheque over at a reception in April. The 2016 Winter Fair is already being planned for Saturday 29 October from 11am to 4pm. Youngsters will be able to bring entries to the happiest pumpkin competition.

Recycling scam

People who use online advertising platforms where items are recycled or offered for free are being advised to watch out for a new scam.

After listing items on the website, fraudsters tell would-be collectors that they have recently moved from the area they had said they were living in but can arrange a courier to dispatch the items for a fee. The payment requested for this service is usually via Money Transfer such as MoneyGram or Western Union, or an e-money voucher. Collectors find they never receive the items they were promised and any attempts to contact the advertiser to gain a refund are

unsuccessful.

To protect yourself from this scam, stay within the auction guidelines stipulated on the website, ask to view the item in person and be very cautious of making advance payments to a stranger via Money Transfer or e-money products. If the item advertised seems too good to be true, it probably is.

If you believe that you have been a victim of fraud you can report it online at www.action-fraud.police.uk or by telephone 0300 123 2040.

Any reader who feels strongly about any matter is invited to use this "Soapbox" column. Please note that opinions expressed are those of the writer alone.



20mph limit is a farce

By Charles Lewis of Cherry Tree Road

I am at a total loss to understand why Camden Council thought it necessary to impose the new 20mph speed limit on Spaniards Road from the pond almost to the pub and tollgate. There are no houses, schools, shops or hospitals on that road and, in fact, as you approach the only danger point, the narrow tollgate, you are suddenly allowed to travel at 30mph. What on earth were they thinking of?

Obviously I'm not the only person thinking along these lines because, having travelled that road back and forth many times, I can assure you that no one, and I mean no one, including buses, is keeping to the new speed limit.

I wonder if anyone on the council has ever tried driving that road or any other road at not more than 20mph? They might conceivably have got away with it if they had specified 25mph, but the pathetic crawling pace of 20mph is totally unsuitable and completely unenforceable, unless the council imposes a speed camera and hopes to raise revenue for other purposes that way.

Is there, in fact, any sensible thinking behind the reduced speed limit, or is it simply a reaction to the obvious fact that if you hit a pedestrian at 20mph you are going to do less injury than if you hit them at 30mph? If that is the only logic behind the rule, the next step will be to decrease the speed limit further, because at 10mph you are not going to do any injury at all.

Another thing to consider is that, once you impose a speed limit, it will operate day and night. So, for instance, it seems to be requiring motorists travelling from Hampstead to Chalk Farm in the middle of the night to putter along at 20mph. Why? Nobody will do this.



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