



Are you ready for benefits changes coming your way?

An advice service is offering help to people affected by a raft of changes to the benefit system that could seriously affect the amount of benefit they receive. These changes include existing and new claimants.

Help with Money is a free service provided by Barnet Lone Parent Centre that can explain the changes to you and determine if you and your family are affected or not.

Its specialist advisers can support you on an individual, personal basis with benefit applications, challenging benefit overpayments and taking your case to tribunal as well as debt and budgeting advice.

Check these changes

The biggest changes will be for Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit for families with more than two children. For Child Tax Credit, elements will not be included for a third (or more) child born on or after 6 April 2017 unless an exception applies. Elements will continue to be included for all children born before 6 April 2017.

For Universal Credit, elements will not be included for the third (or more) child who joins the family on or after 6 April 2017 unless an exception applies. Elements will continue to be included

for all children who were part of the family before 6 April 2017.

There are other changes to Employment Support Allowance for new claimants and single parents with young children claiming Universal Credit.

Other help available

Help with Money organisers say: "You will see the same friendly adviser throughout and have a cup of tea if you want one. We have good links with other supportive charities that provide additional help such as free respite breaks and help with putting food on the table."

Barnet Lone Parent Centre also runs a Stay and Play Toy Library on Tuesday mornings at the Green Man Community Centre, Strawberry Vale, N2. All children aged up to five years and their parent or carer are welcome to come along.

For more information or general advice, call Barnet Lone Parent Centre on 020 3828 4834 for an appointment or just pop in for a friendly chat.



N2 United crowd doubles

The success of business network N2United's speed dating event to mark Valentine's day in February meant the turnout for the next meeting in March was so large that organisers had to upgrade to a bigger room.

Forty people attended last month's meeting at the Clissold Arms, more than twice the number in February, and there are hopes that the local group supporting traders and self-employed business folk will continue to expand.

Speakers for the March meeting were Ed Kerry, who is running from castle to castle around Britain to raise funds for brain tumour research, and Hilary Townley and Roger Chapman who updated everyone on the forthcoming East Finchley Summer Festival in June.

The next event will be on 13 April, again at the Clissold Arms in Fortis Green, at 7pm. Everyone is welcome. Organisers are also looking for speakers for future meetings, which is a chance to promote your business or event.

Well, that makes it easier to climb!

The high winds that swept through our part of the world in late February felled a tree on East End Road and, as shown in our photo, also brought down one of the largest and longest-standing trees in Cherry Tree Wood. Seemingly split down its trunk and now lying on its side across the park's grass area, the tree has become a low-rise adventure for youngsters. Here Abi, Zoe, Hannah, Leo and Zara, all from Eden Primary School, have fun amongst the branches. Thanks to David Noble for the photo.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

This lark ain't descending

Once upon a time when youth was wild and the internet hadn't been invented, there were two sorts of music: 'proper music' listened to by grown-ups on expensive hi-fi systems and 'that pop racket' loved by anyone under 25.

Proper music meant classical music and dead composers like Brahms, Beethoven and Mozart. It was deep and meaningful and long, sometimes very long. The Beatles could sum up the human condition in three and a half minutes, but Wagner took a couple of days. And then someone invented Classic FM.

Classic FM is the go-to place for 'proper music' for people who don't understand music, but love a good tune. It is for people who have the attention span of a goldfish and could not listen to a complete symphony without sedatives, but love the bit from that advert. It is never going to be challenging, exciting or thought provoking, but it will be nice and to make it even nicer, the music is selected by computer and presented by the bloke off Gardeners' World.

This is a world of really easy listening. This where they came up with theme CDs to make it even nicer. They've had music for babies, for dinner, for relaxing and, coming soon, music for making babies. And, once a year, there is the Hall of Fame, the 300 favourite pieces as chosen by you, but not by me.

In a bizarre parallel universe where music really matters, the best 300 pieces of classical music would be interesting and weird. Not in Classic FM land. The top 20 is as predictable as instant coffee. There is always Vaughan Williams's *Lark Ascending*, the second Rachmaninoff piano concerto, Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto* and plenty by Mozart. It's a bit like the top four in the Premiership. Unless Max Bruch does a Leicester City you just know what to expect.

The good part of the Hall of Fame is you get music from the movies and the theme tune from some video game. So watch out for a stunning climb up the charts for the theme from *Game of Thrones*, something from Super Mario and the least bad bits from *La La Land*. But don't hold your breath waiting for the winner, because Vaughan Williams's lark is unlikely to be descending.

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