



Three bins outside the tube station, East Finchley

By Kate Brown

The story of 'Three Bins Outside the station, East Finchley' might not have the ring of the Oscar-nominated film *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* but it does share one common theme, namely: "Who will take responsibility?"

If you use the station every day you might not have noticed, but to any new visitor to East Finchley the squalid condition of the area outside our Grade 2 listed tube station is making a big statement about the neglect of public space in East Finchley.

The story so far

Bin number one was attached to the wall below the station bank garden some years ago by Transport for London for safe disposal of cigarette butts. Since it was attached to the wall, it has never been emptied and now hangs precariously by its hinges at just the right height for a child to swing from it.

The other two bins were functional but have been in decline for some time and in the current state (see picture) for some weeks. First, they lost half of their outer casing but still had innards and whilst looking very scrappy, they did function as bins.



One bin: An overflowing cigarette depository on the station wall. Photo Roger Chapman

More recently they have lost their innards and no longer serve as bins at all. However, in a surreal way, the passing public still dispose of their cigarette butts into the imaginary bin.



Two bins: Commuters still try to use these bins just outside the station entrance, even though they are just shells. Photo Roger Chapman

Presumably if it half looks like a bin, it must be a bin.

Step up, TfL

The problem is clear but who will take responsibility for the solution? When I enquired at the station, I was assured that the bins belonged to Barnet Council and were nothing to do with East Finchley Station or Transport for London (TfL). But then our local councillor Arjun Mittra and our MP Mike Freer correctly identified it as a TfL responsibility. Cllr Mittra has contacted them and is awaiting a response.

Just as the beautiful spring bulbs and hellebores are blooming on the station bank community garden, the N2 Gardeners are having to spend time with litter pickers harvesting empty drink cans. Is there any chance of a common-sense solution of a temporary bin being installed immediately and a permanent solution very soon indeed? Please.

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Ways to overcome loneliness

By Morgan Saunders

"Are you lonesome tonight?" asked Elvis Presley. According to a Gransnet poll last year, three quarters of older people in the UK would answer yes. Loneliness may appear trivial when compared to life-threatening medical conditions. In reality, it can be a silent killer.

During periods of loneliness, more stress hormones are released, which amplifies the risk of arthritis, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, dementia and suicide. Researchers from Brigham Young University found that social isolation increases your risk of death by up to 60%. So what can be done?

Befriending

"Inclusion is key to addressing loneliness. Befriending offers a vital lifeline," says Sian Jones, who helps run the successful face-to-face befriending scheme at Age UK Barnet.

Over 70 local volunteers visit older house-bound people in their homes for a cup of tea and a chat. Volunteers have also accompanied their senior friends to doctor's appointments and theatre performances. A telephone befriending service is also offered.

Varied activities

Group-based activities, many run at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2, also help tackle loneliness. Age UK Barnet runs weekly Tai Chi classes, which have been proved to help prevent falls, reduce stress and offer arthritis pain relief.

Sixth form pupils from Bishop Douglass School and Christ's College Finchley run digital literacy classes. The teenagers teach web surfing, e-commerce, e-mail, and online scam prevention. As a result, the digital divide is narrowed and the opportunities for inclusion dramatically expand.

Engaging known groups in the community is another way to combat loneliness. Opening Doors and Age UK Barnet have collaborated to run advice sessions and social events for LGBT people aged 50 and over.

For more information on Age UK Barnet's activities call 020 8203 5040 or email info@ageukbarnet.org.uk. For more information on Opening Doors call 020 7239 0400 or email info@openingdoorslondon.org.uk



Peter Barnett (right) with Paul Jones. Photo Mike Coles

Fishmonger hooks

London accolade

By Diana Cormack

East Finchley fishmonger A Scott and Son has been rated as one of the best in the capital by Time Out London. For the last seven years it has been run by Peter Barnett with his assistant of 25 years Paul Jones.

Originally set up 70 years ago at 94 High Road, the shop's current name derives from the owners who ran it in the 1980s. It reached a height of popularity not long after that, much of it due to parents of children attending a nearby Japanese school. This trade was lost when the families followed the school's move to west London.

Mouth-watering praise

However, the establishment did not lose its reputation as a fishmonger of distinction, which has been underlined by this latest accolade from Time Out London.

The guide commented: "From its maritime blue awning to its ice-bedded displays of flappingly fresh seafood, Scott's is an archetypal neighbourhood fishmonger with years of experience under its collective apron.

"An ever-changing line-up covers everything from oysters, mussels and clams to monkfish,

red snapper and sashimi-grade tuna, while jars of pickled herrings, frozen fishcakes, undyed smoked haddock and bundles of fresh samphire bulk out the shop's wide-ranging offer."

Community involvement

As well as keeping customers happy, Peter plays a prominent role in community affairs. It was because of his long-term persistent badgering of Barnet Council that pizza delivery scooters were no longer allowed to park for free in the bays outside Budgens, thus freeing up parking for potential customers to shops and traders.

Peter is a founder-member of the local business network N2United and is a regular supporter of local school and community events. He told us that he is on first-name terms with many of his customers. "I've had a very happy time here," he said. "East Finchley really is a lovely place to be."



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