



The Old Barn building site in November. Photo Mike Coles



How the new community centre might look when it's finished

# Building work begins on new community centre

By Janet Maitland

Construction work has finally started on the new community centre in Tarring Road, N2. Its much-loved predecessor the Old Barn has been crushed and used in the foundations for the new building.

Despite the long delays, it is still not known who will run the centre, how the space will be used and how it will operate on a day-to-day basis. Barnet Council told us that the user group, which includes local people, will be consulted about all these decisions.

In December, the council sent out invitations to potential management organisations to express an interest in running the centre. We asked the council if it was still their intention to appoint a community group rather than a commercial organisation to manage the centre and pay a reduced rent. They said they were looking for an experienced organisation which would pay a rent "calculated to ensure the centre is self-sustainable".

We also asked if they still planned to lease half of the building to the Somali Bra-

vanese Welfare Association in order to restore the space they lost in the arson attack on their centre in Coppetts Road, Muswell Hill, in June 2013. "This is the only commitment the council has made," said the spokesperson. "The chosen management organisation will be expected to fulfil it."

### Community use essential

It will be up to the management organisation, in consultation with the user group, to

select who else can run services at the centre. Potential core users include a theatre group, an after-school club and a music school.

"By this time next year we should have a brand new community building, a real phoenix, on the site of the Old Barn," said East Finchley councillor Alison Moore. "It's important that as well as the core organisations who will underpin the centre's financial sustainability, there is

still space for local community use."

Julia Hines from the Grange Big Local also stressed how vital it is that the centre can be enjoyed by everyone, saying: "The Old Barn has been sorely missed, and we so need community space that is available for low-cost and free activities. We're really pleased that the council has included space for a community café. It'll be the heart of the centre."

# Speed warning signs attempt to calm traffic on cut-through

New traffic control measures have been installed on Church Lane, N2, in response to the concerns of residents who witnessed two crashes in the space of one week in what is supposed to be a 20mph zone (*The Archer*, November 2017).

East Finchley's neighbourhood police team carried out a speed monitoring operation in the wake of the collisions. They reported that the majority of drivers were surprised to discover they were over the limit by driving at 25-30mph.

Councillors Alison Moore and Arjun Mittra took residents' concerns to Barnet Council, who



Take aim: A police officer monitors driving speeds on Church Lane.

responded by improving signage along the road that is heavily used as a cut-through between East End Road and the High Road. New signs reading '20' and 'Slow' were painted on the road surface at key points.

Church Lane has long been a problem thoroughfare. It turns from two-way to one-way, has a blind spot over the railway bridge, then runs for a long,

narrow downhill stretch to a difficult bend at the junction with King Street.

Parked cars have been damaged by speeding motorists and in some cases cars have demolished front garden walls. Residents and parents walking their children to and from Martin Primary School say they feel unsafe using the narrow pavements.

# Search is on for little helpers

By Hilary Townley

Last month the East Finchley winter festivities that for five years have included carol singing, stalls and street entertainment took a rest and it's become clear that everyone, traders and community alike, really missed them.

In 2018 we hope to celebrate again but this time with a difference. To make it work we need to spread the festive load a little more, so it won't surprise you to learn that we are looking for volunteers.

To organise this year's celebrations we would like to form the Christmas 2018 Committee involving the N2United business network, traders and members of the community.

We are asking for one person from every five to 10 businesses along the High Road, East End Road and Church Lane to step up

and be festively counted. They would only be responsible for co-ordinating activities with the few businesses on either side. So, everyone will be involved, but with very little to do!

The more people who get involved, the easier the organisa-

tion will become and the more fun will be had. Please get in touch with us via *The Archer* if you want all of East Finchley's trading streets to become centres for celebration in December 2018. Email: the-archer@line-one.net.

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