



Rough sleepers found homes within a week

By Janet Maitland

It has taken Barnet Council just a week to house almost all of the borough's rough sleepers. This remarkable feat was in response to a government request at the end of March giving councils 48 hours to house everyone sleeping rough and to find alternative accommodation for people in hostels and night shelters in order to stop the spread of Covid-19.

"These are unusual times, so I'm asking for an unusual effort," said Dame Louise Casey, who leads the government's response to Covid-19 and rough sleeping. "This is a public health emergency."

Studio flats found

A Barnet Homes spokesperson said that, as of 7 April, they had housed 88 rough sleepers. Ten people refused offers of accommodation, but the organisation was continuing to work with them to ensure their health and safety.

The Archer asked where and how people had been housed. The spokesperson told us: "They're in self-contained studio flats in a range of locations in Barnet and neighbouring boroughs, sourced by our temporary accommodation providers who procure properties via private sector landlords. We have not currently placed rough sleepers into social housing, bed and breakfasts or hotels."

Funding and the future

The government request to house rough sleepers was

unfunded, but councils were referred to the allocation of £1.6bn allocated to local authorities to help them respond to Covid-19.

Before the crisis, Barnet Homes was given £637,000 by the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Government to help reduce the number of people having to sleep on the streets. They had planned to spend it on refurbishing a hostel in Friern Barnet Road to create a "safe place to stay hub". It is not known if these plans will now change.

"We need to see a package of support so that when the outbreak subsides, people do not return to the streets," said Jon Sparkes, the chief executive of the homeless charity Crisis.

Matthew Downie, the charity's director of policy, added: "We should recognise that it has taken a global pandemic to sort out an absolutely solvable problem; it is possible to get thousands of people off the streets and out of night shelters in the space of a week."

True tales of toilet roll troubles

By Diana Cormack

The recent run on toilet rolls in shops is over, we hope, though it did cause some to think of a replacement for this much-needed cleansing material, evidenced by initial reports of sewage pipes being blocked by kitchen roll, wet wipes and newspaper.

It reminded me of childhood days staying with my grandparents at their remote home in west Wales. Their toilet or 'ty bach' (little house) was situated in a far corner of the back garden and was not a pleasant place to go to at night. Nor in the daytime either, for with no running water any flushing was done by carrying buckets from the water butts to do the job. Instead of toilet paper there were hanging pieces of printed paper, always the *Radio Times*. I've never worked out why.

Nor was there much comfort at home for our nether regions. Hard, non-absorbent paper was the norm, with our mother preferring Bronco or Izal and, even years later when softer paper was readily available, she had one of each on the go. Izal made good tracing paper and I also remember having a note from a friend written on royal toilet paper after she'd attended a Buckingham Palace garden party.

Could class be reflected in the quality of toilet paper, then?



Some time later I decided to investigate this at County Hall, formerly the headquarters of the Greater London Council and Inner London Education Authority. After a request for soft toilet paper in our school's staff toilets was refused because "you ladies will use it to wipe off your makeup" I visited the loos on each floor of the building. I found that the higher you went, the better the quality of paper.

Another eye opener was during a 1970s shortage. I was visiting a French friend who was lodging with a peer of the realm. The walls of his lordship's bathroom were lined from top to bottom with toilet rolls. Come to think of it, that could probably be the case in many homes today!



Moving on: Onur Erden, centre, and family say goodbye to their East Finchley store.

Goodbye to popular corner shop owners after 13 years

The Archer team is sorry to say goodbye to one of the hardworking families whose food store has stayed open since the start of the coronavirus lockdown. Their business, however, is still very much up and running, under new management.

Onur Erden and his family have run the Onur grocery and off licence on the corner of the High Road and Creighton Avenue for 13 years. Their friendliness and well-stocked shelves have made their store a popular place to shop for residents all around and for families on their way home from Martin Primary School.

Onur said their decision to move on had come after many months of planning and they hoped to return to their wider family in Istanbul. He said: "East Finchley has been very kind to us over the years and will always be a special place for me. We didn't get a chance to say goodbye to some of the locals today so I hope this will reach those of you who wonder where we've gone. Stay safe and well."

After just one day's closure the store reopened and is now run by Erkan Soylari, a close friend of Onur's, who told *The Archer*: "We're looking forward to being here." At present he and his family live elsewhere in north London but he is considering moving closer and perhaps living 'above the shop'.

RICKY SAVAGE ...

"The voice of social irresponsibility"

Ferrari farrago

Welcome to the world of burning rubber as Formula One prepares for another season of whining drivers, wailing engines and over-excited commentators. It will be delayed by the pandemic but when it does kick off it will be the 71st time that a team from a small town in Northern Italy, Triesto, wins. The thing is, Ferrari may be the most famous name in motor racing but that doesn't mean they are the best.

They may have been around since the whole circus kicked off in 1950, but they have rarely been the super charismatic model of efficiency. A lot of the time they've been hopeless. Some years they have just made up the numbers.

Enzo Ferrari is spoken of in hushed tones as if he was some minor demigod, who created the greatest and best team. He wasn't and he didn't. He flunked his engineering course and spent the First World War shoeing mules. In the 1920s he hung around with racing drivers, becoming almost good at driving himself. For winning one minor race in 1924 Fascist Italy gave him the title of *Commendatore*, a bit like awarding a knighthood for winning the Leyland Paints Cup.

Once he'd stopped driving he managed Alfa Romeo's team and in 1948 set up his own company which he ran like a medieval court complete with backstabbing and petty politics. Yes, he was pretty successful, picking up four championships in the 1950s, but once British companies like Lotus and Cooper got going he couldn't compete.

Apart from John Surtees in 1964 Ferrari did not win a world championship until Niki Lauda arrived in the mid-1970s. From 1979 to 2000 Ferrari often made up the numbers. Usually the problem wasn't the drivers; it was the team, the cars and a big dose of Italian incompetence.

At Red Bull Sebastian Vettel could do no wrong, at Ferrari he can do no right as he heads down that usual route for Ferrari drivers of the career graveyard. And even though they are claimed to be the most Italian of teams, the last time an Italian won the World Championship in a Ferrari was 1953. Somehow it doesn't seem right that they get bunged extra cash for having been around longer than everyone else. It's a bit like chucking extra money at Arsenal for having been in football's top flight since 1918.

Maybe that's why Lewis Hamilton isn't driving for them; maybe he's got more sense and maybe he just likes beating those blood-red cars. And maybe the suspension of motor racing until later in the year will enable Ferrari to get their act together. Just don't count on it.