



Will CCTV be removed from The Causeway?

By Janet Maitland

The busy pathway running behind East Finchley tube station is scheduled to lose its CCTV cameras at the end of March even though a recent survey pinpointed it as the area where local women and girls feel the most unsafe.

In October 2020 a girl walking home from school was subjected to a serious sexual assault on The Causeway. Just five months later, a man followed and exposed himself to another girl in exactly the same spot before attacking two police officers.

This triggered a campaign by Causeway residents, supported by local councillors, culminating in a petition for CCTV and better lighting, signed by over 3,500 people.

Jan Lovell, from the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team has also patrolled The Causeway with local councillors, to check on lighting and overgrown hedges.

CCTV only temporary

Barnet Council told us it installed temporary CCTV and cut back foliage last September and the lighting was “upgraded a year ago”. We asked a spokesperson why the CCTV was only temporary and they said it has been “commissioned until 31 March, when we will determine its effectiveness as part of a wider review of CCTV”.

Councillor Alison Moore and her East Finchley colleagues Arjun Mittra and Claire Farrier are arguing that the CCTV should at least be “retained until the new policy, which will have a greater emphasis on evidence and

intelligence-led criteria, is developed during the summer”.

The fact that the crime statistics have improved since the CCTV was installed, may, ironically, impede efforts to make it permanent. “There’s been no reports or recordings of crime,” said Finchley Church End Councillor Jennifer Grocock, Chair of the Safer Communities Partnership Board, adding that “this is a low crime area, compared to others in the borough.”

Tell your story

Barnet Council may be influenced by a recent Met Police survey, which has revealed that local women and girls feel the least safe on The Causeway. As a result, Hampstead Garden Suburb (HGS) Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT), whose patch includes the footpath, have tweeted that it is now “top of our priority list”, and are asking people to email their experiences to gardensuburb.snt@met.police.uk.

The retention of CCTV on The Causeway could also be helped by the government’s 2021-2024 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWAG) strategy, which includes £25 million funding for making public spaces safer for women and girls, by improving lighting and “increasing CCTV coverage so people think twice before committing a crime”.

Fencer hits home against national champions

Greg Allen, 49, of East Finchley, won the men’s épée title at his first attempt at the recent British Veterans Fencing Championships in Manchester.

The format for these championships, which are open to all fencers over the age of 40, is two rounds of poules, in which groups of six fence each other, followed by direct elimination, where the winner is the first to score 10 hits.

Greg, who fences at Haverstock Fencing Club in Chalk Farm, was senior national champion 20 years ago, but only ninth seed after the poules in this 72-competitor event.

However, he breezed through the early rounds of direct elimination, then beat number one seed and former champion Chris Howser 10-7 in the quarter-finals, followed by former silver medallist John Leahey 10-4 in the semis.



Swordsman: Greg Allen

In the final he faced number two seed and reigning champion Neal Mallett, 64, who has won this title eight times, more than any other fencer. But the 15-year age difference was too great and Allen won comfortably by 10-5.



Leaner and cleaner: GoodGym members get in shape for a litter pick in Cherry Tree Wood...

Good exercise and good deeds

By John Lawrence

GoodGym started more than ten years ago with the idea of getting people out of their gyms and into their communities to exercise through volunteering.

Runners come together weekly to provide social support visits to older people and manual labour for community projects like clearing leaves in a local park or shifting soil in a community garden.

Locally, GoodGym members have carried out litter picks in Cherry Tree Wood and cleaned graffiti from the side of the Phoenix Cinema. Volunteers have also visited isolated older people and given their help with one-off tasks like DIY or gardening.

Paul Salman, co-ordinator for GoodGym Barnet, said they were hoping to boost their participant numbers again after the uncertainty of the pandemic hindered some meetings. “What’s great is that you can pick and choose when, where and how often you get involved,” said Paul. “We encourage running if possible to the venue event and we may do additional exercises depending on the circumstances and the leader.

“We have a great website that allows you to see what’s going on and sign up for events all over Barnet or other local boroughs in London. As well as having volunteer-



... and repaint the side of the Phoenix Cinema.

ing activities we have training sessions, a running club, walking groups, and online fitness sessions.”

Find out more at www.goodgym.org/v3/areas/barnet



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