



Lone parent charity comes to sudden end

Family support: One of the Barnet Lone Parents sessions at the Green Man Centre on Strawberry Vale before the organisation was forced to shut down

By Ivor Gaber

A charity based in East Finchley that has been providing valuable services to local lone-parent families is closing. Barnet Lone Parents Centre, based at the Green Man Community Centre in Strawberry Vale, is shutting down with immediate effect after 17 years serving hard-pressed families.

The Centre provided two main services, a toy library and a Money Advice Centre, which last year alone managed to claim back almost half a million pounds of benefits on behalf of Barnet's neediest families.

Insufficient funds

Nina Gentry, who led the team at the Centre, said in a message to the community

on Facebook: "We have truly enjoyed being a part of your life for so many years and are proud of the work we have done for the community. We will miss you."

The charity has been forced to close because its main funders did not have sufficient funds to meet all the many worthwhile causes that they try to support. The Green Man Community Centre has said they will be working with the funders "to explore ways to reinstate some of the much-needed services that have been so valuable to the community".

Best start in life

Speaking to The Archer, Green Man trustee Julia Hines said: "We wanted to give children the best start in life. We have always understood that to achieve that it is more than just supporting children, it is

about supporting their families, neighbours and communities.

"Finchley Toy Library, a stay-and-play space for children aged 0-4, with their parents or guardians, gave children a chance to experience toys, books, messy play, singing, a warm space in winter and a garden in summer. It gave their parents the chance to get support from each other and the dedicated, caring staff. Last year we proudly supported 94 families and 130 children."

East Finchley's Councillor Alison Moore said: "I was very sorry to hear of the untimely closure of the Barnet Lone Parent Centre, and the loss of the valuable services they provide. Nina Gentry, who with her team has been a key support to many families in our community over the years, will be much missed."

Neighbours take action against dog fouling

By Mike Coles

One of the most unpleasant anti-social behaviours in our streets and open spaces is dog fouling, caused by owners who don't clean up after their pets. It's a health hazard, particularly for toddlers and young children who don't recognise the danger.

The problem became so acute in Lincoln Road, N2, recently that residents took the matter into their own hands by posting signs on every available tree and lamppost asking dog owners to be more thoughtful.

It seems each London borough has its own policy. Islington, for instance, takes it very seriously posting warning signs of heavy fines and a hotline to call to report irresponsible owners.



Get the message: One of the signs tied on trees in Lincoln Road by residents fed up with thoughtless dog owners

In Barnet there is no hotline but residents can report incidents by going to www.barnet.gov.uk and searching 'dog fouling'. This takes you to an online form where you

can include photographs. The council aims to respond within three days but gives priority to cleaning streets with the highest footfall.

Energy livestream talk

Muswell Hill Sustainability Group is hosting a free livestream evening talk and Q&A with science and environment author Jean-Baptiste Fressoz. Livestreamed from Paris, the evening will offer the chance to question him about his thoughts on energy and the environment.

It takes place at Muswell Hill Methodist Church, Pages Lane, N10 1PP, on Tuesday 18 March. Doors open at 7.15pm and the event starts at 8.15pm, also online on YouTube. For tickets and further information, visit <https://wegottickets.com/event/650338/>.



Environment expert: Jean-Baptiste Fressoz



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