



Letters

Housing dilemma

Dear Editor,

With the recent approval by the Mayor of London's office of the proposed Great North Leisure Park against the wishes of Barnet's planning committee who voted 8-1 against, I'm rather baffled by both the council and our MP's response.

We have more than 4,000 people on the waiting list for social housing in Barnet, with so many more in our lovely borough unable to move out of their parents' houses or get on the property ladder due to a lack of supply and such high demand.

The Great North Leisure Park development consists of 1,485 new homes, a supermarket, green space and a new leisure centre/lido to be built on the land currently occupied by a large single-storey car park and the Hollywood Bowl/Vue.

Between 23-25% of the homes in the development will be 'affordable', above the aver

age in London. Yes, there are downsides, new residents bring more pressure on local services (buses, police, GPs, schools etc) but they also bring more council tax, more business rates, and, importantly, mandated S106 payments from the developer which fund these new services.

We constantly hear about the housing crisis from our councillors and MPs, who simultaneously often aren't brave enough to stand up for or debate the nuances of these developments out of fear of upsetting vocal opponents (50% are in support of new housing, per latest YouGov polling). Go just 25 minutes north of the site and you're in the Green Belt, where the opposition is just as vociferous by a minority. There seems to simply be nowhere new housing doesn't encounter NIMBYism, a seemingly quintessential human trait. In a world that seems so divided, what are we to do?



High rise: How the leisure park housing development could look

Robin (surname supplied)
Long Lane, N2

Fly-tipping mess

Dear Editor,

A number of years ago, local residents turned a small plot on Tarling Road into a garden, with the help of lottery funding. For decades, it had been used as a dumping ground for old mattresses, chairs, tables, etc.



Another mess: A torn-apart rubbish bag in Tarling Road

However, a local resident keeps leaving black bags filled with household rubbish there. These are often opened, perhaps by a fox looking for food, leaving a big mess of newspapers and food. This is fly tipping. Barnet Council rules state that the illegal dumping of waste carries a Fixed Penalty Notice of up to £500

for a first offence and £600 for subsequent offences. The council operates a strict zero-tolerance policy against environmental crimes, deploying expanded CCTV networks and mobile patrols to catch offenders in the act. Local residents around the Tarling Road plot

are now looking out for a person carrying a black bin bag who may be fly tipping. CCTV is in operation covering this garden and Barnet Council will be notified of anyone found leaving bags of rubbish.

Iayn G Clark,
Address supplied

Make your beds

Dear Editor,

The flowerbeds outside the McDonald's HQ in East Finchley are in a really poor state. The extended section nearest the Tube station has remained unplanted since the steps were removed. Litter is everywhere.



Bare earth: The flowerbeds on the High Road. Photo Mike Coles

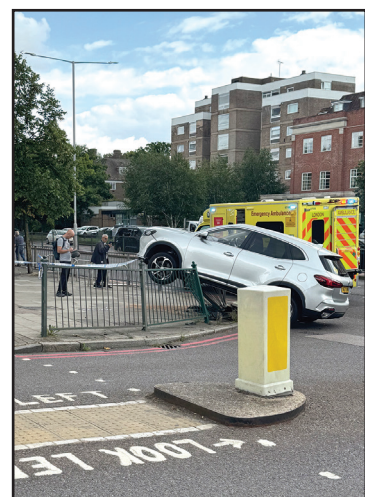
Junction visibility is fine

Dear Editor,

I lived in Ossulton Way from 1965 to 1992 and still use the junction a few times a week. I rode a bike on it from the age of nine, followed by a motorbike and a car. I can't remember a single accident at the bottom of the road and it has always been a perfectly ordinary crossroads with lights.

Having seen your two recent pictures of carnage (The Archer, May 2026), the only reason I can suggest is that if people insist on buying military-style vehicles maybe they are too large to control on urban roads as that is not what they are designed for.

Knowing the junction for over 60 years I can think of no other reasons as visibility there is perfectly adequate in all four directions.



Danger spot? A car is left straddling a barrier after an accident at the Ossulton Way junction with the A1

David Howard
Winston Avenue, NW9

Altogether it's becoming a depressing sight for visitors walking up the High Road. Come on, Maccy D's, with UK turnover of £1.8 billion, surely you can afford a gardener?

David Brindle
Durham Road, N2

Big and ugly

Dear Editor,

The East Finchley Allotments mangelwurzel contest has begun, with all free seeds passed out and the rules explained to tenants. The winner who has grown the largest and the ugliest produce will be determined in the autumn by three judges.

The mangelwurzel is a largely forgotten heirloom vegetable halfway between a sugar



Thing of beauty: A full-grown mangelwurzel

beet and beetroot, which some say looks like Harry Potter's mandrakes. It is delicious mashed, roasted or pickled, and is sweeter and less earthy than a beetroot.

It can sit for a long time in the garden and provide abundant greens. The contest is well underway and pictured is a plant on site 'finding its roots' and heading towards splendid growth with confidence.

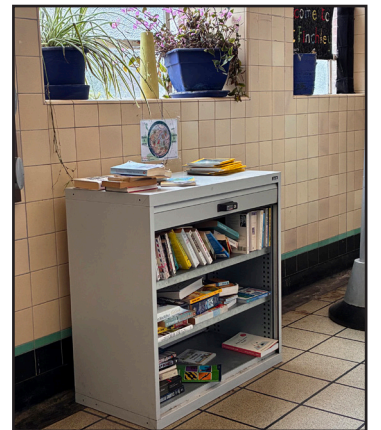
Film the book thieves

Dear Editor,

I was interested but saddened to read Jacky Wood's letter concerning the East Finchley Station book exchange (The Archer, June 2026), as we have had the same experience at our Leopold Road library, which often appeared empty.

On two occasions a man with a suitcase was seen scooping up all our books. The second time he was challenged and also videoed by two neighbours who pointed out that we ask people to take no more than two books at a time.

He was undaunted, replying (probably off the cuff) that he needed them for a library which he ran himself. However I do not believe he has returned, so perhaps a video is the answer.



Borrow not steal: The station bookcase

Valerie Teague
Leopold Road, N2



A young plant starting to thrive

Mary Poulter
East Finchley Allotments

Re-Griddable solution from page 9

Across:

CROW
HAVE
AGED
PENS

Down:

CHAP
RAGE
OVEN
WEDS

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