



East Barnet Residents Association

Incorporating Friends of Oak Hill Park

March 2012

We've had a surge of interest in the East Barnet Residents' Association following the publicity we have given to the various threats to our park and parking the Council's been planning. So a very warm welcome to all of our new members! By increasing our membership we can have even more clout when representing your views. So if you've been passed this newsletter from someone else, or you have friends or neighbours who are not yet members, we do encourage everyone to join up. It's only a nominal £2 per household per year. And if you haven't already done so, please let us have your email address so we can contact you quickly - some of these consultations are launched without notice and only last for 3 weeks so there is no hope of getting a paper newsletter delivered in time. If you don't have email, do you have a friend neighbour or family member who could receive messages for you? Thank you,

Rob White

Contacting the Association

Rob is our point of contact.

See website: eastbar.net

Committee Officers

Chairman: James Bradshaw
 Vice-Chairman: George Irons
 Treasurer: Sheila Solbé
 Newsletter Distribution: Yvonne Ward
 Membership & Communications: Rob White

Committee Members

Pat Gladwin; Pauline Coakley Webb; Rosina Down; Sussanne Hassel; Alan Kelley; Peter Robinson

Dates For Your Diary:

EBRA All-Members Meetings: These are at **8:30pm on Tuesday 20th March**, 10th July, and 2nd October 2012 in the Small Hall, Brookside Methodist Church, 2 Cat Hill, EN4 8JB

(Please note that these are on a different day of the week and at a different time than in previous years)

Chipping Barnet Residents' Forum: Thursday 14th March 2012 at 6pm at Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, N20 0EJ

Big Fun Walk on Sunday 1st April - please support local octogenarian Larry Ross who is doing the 7½ mile walk to raise money for the North London Hospice (see page 6 for full details)

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Fun Day: At The EB Royal British Legion on Saturday 2nd June (see page 2 for full details)

Brunswick Health Centre Is Still Empty!



In February the counter on our website eastbar.net showed that **750** days had elapsed since the fire, so I wrote another email to Barnet NHS (and copied our MP Theresa Villiers) to ask what the NHS has done, and what their plans are.

After a few weeks I received a reply from Tony Hoolaghan, the Associate Director of Primary Care, NHS North Central London who apologised for the lack of communication, explained some of the reasons for the delays and what their current plans are.

In summary, the letter says:

- They have identified funds, subject to business case approval - expected by the end of March 2012
- It would then take 12 weeks to do the work - from April to June 2012
- Dr Okonkwo and Dr Lakhani would then relocate into the refurbished Health Centre

They don't say what would happen to Dr Lakhani's existing building (currently also being used as Dr Okonkwo's surgery) - we shall have to wait and see.

I copied the letter to Theresa Villiers, and she circulated it to the many constituents who have also written to her about the Health Centre. In April I will check with Tony Hoolaghan that the business case did gain approval, and Theresa assures us that she will be closely monitoring the position to ensure the 12 week development mentioned is adhered to. You can download a copy of the letter from our website eastbar.net if you wish, and while you are there see how far the daily counter has increased...

Rob White

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebration

East Barnet Royal British Legion are organising a family fun day with all money raised in aid of The Poppy Appeal

It will be at 38 Brookhill Road, East Barnet, EN4 8SL on **Saturday 2nd June**

Children's entertainment including bouncy castle and 40ft assault course

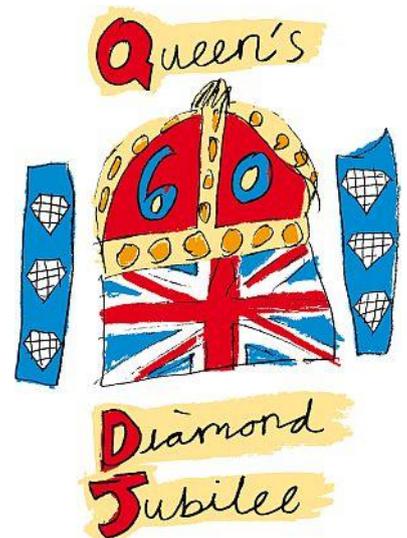
Live entertainment - afternoon & evening

Various stalls

Hog Roast

Barbecue

Bar open from 12pm to late, for refreshments



Cat Hill Campus Plans

We've reported before how the **Campaign For Cat Hill** (spanglefish.com/campaignforcathill) has been set up to ensure any development on the previous Middlesex University campus is appropriate. They have worked relentlessly over the past year to lobby Enfield Council to reject the plans for hundreds of houses and flats, and a decision is expected on 7th March. We wish them all the best.

Events In The Park

Hundreds of residents responded to this sham "consultation", rejecting the ridiculous idea. But at the Council's cabinet meeting, the scheme was passed regardless. We have yet to learn whether Oak Hill Park is still regarded as a "suitable" site for private events, but rest assured we are monitoring the situation very closely. We already have many volunteers who will prevent or disrupt any such events attempting to take place.

Parking...

The Council has decided to expand the highly unpopular, and loss-making pay-by-phone scheme, and on 1st March quietly launched a consultation to introduce this to three of our previously free car parks:

- Osidge Lane
- Brunswick Park Road
- East Barnet Village

The car parks in Osidge Lane and Brunswick Park Road are hardly used (see this photo of the Osidge car park taken on a weekday afternoon - just six cars there) and there is plenty of free parking in the streets around them, so the Council will almost certainly receive no income in return for the expense of implementing the scheme there.

The car park in the Village is used by shoppers supporting the local shops, and used by parents to avoid blocking the local roads when dropping off or collecting pupils from St Mary's School. It's a key asset to the Village. The proposed charges are £1.05 for 30 minutes; £2.10 for 1 hour; £3.15 for 90 minutes; £4.20 for 3 hours, and £5.25 for over 3 hours. Pay-by-phone or scratchcards, 9am to 5:30pm Monday to Saturday.

Some residents are already worried that when the car parks are abandoned and the side roads are full, the Council will use that as an excuse to impose residents' parking zones at even more expense and inconvenience to us all.

The consultation only runs until **21st March**. So please write as soon as possible to:
Barnet Council Design Team,
Building 4, North London Business Park,
Oakleigh Road South,
London N11 1NP

Email e&o.consultation@barnet.gov.uk (if your email program rejects that ampersand in the address, you could try pamela.wharfe@barnet.gov.uk - the Council executive who put her name on the notices)

The Quality Shop in Church Hill Road has a petition opposing these charges which will seriously affect local traders. Please show your support for the local shops by signing Mr Shah's petition.

On a brighter note, Councillor Andreas Tambourides has been assured that the 30 minutes free parking permitted at Hampden Square should be continuing.



Digital TV Switch-over: Beware of Scammers

TV signals in the London area are going digital from 18th April 2012. Analogue TV is being switched off and con men are beginning to cold call on elderly people trying to sell them new TVs and aerials. These are not required.

If you have Sky TV, or FreeSat you won't need to do anything. If you have Freeview, BT Vision or Top Up TV digital boxes you will need to retune them on both the 4th April and 18th April.

If you have a TV that only has five or fewer channels you will need to convert your TV by installing a digital box. These are readily available, for example in larger supermarkets.

For details on how to retune your TV see the TV/digital box instruction booklet or contact the BBC helpline www.digitaluk.co.uk or freephone **08456 50 50 50**



If you are over 75 or if you have lived in a care home for 6 months or more or

get (or could get) one of these benefits: disability living allowance; attendance or constant attendance allowance; mobility supplement; or if you are blind or partially sighted, you are entitled to help including free equipment to convert one TV from the help scheme. Call freephone **0800 85 900** or www.helpscheme.co.uk

If you get pension credit, income support, income related employment and support allowance or income based jobseekers allowance, you are entitled to free advice from the help scheme and may be entitled to a converter box for a fixed rate of £40. Details as above.

David Howard

Barnet Care & Repair Schemes



The Care and Repair Agency is a Barnet Council service for vulnerable older people and adults or children with disabilities living in privately owned homes. They help you to organise adaptations or repairs to your home without the headache of arranging building works yourself. They check you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to and help you apply for those you are not receiving. They start by visiting you at home, with no obligation to you. They inspect your house and discuss with you the work that could be carried out. They will then advise you on the help that is available from them. It is then your decision whether you wish to have all or some of the work carried out and if you require their assistance.

If you do decide to go ahead, they will prepare plans and specifications of work relating to the jobs you require, liaise with your occupational therapist when designing adaptations for you, help you to get quotations from reliable contractors, help you apply for any financial assistance you are eligible for, supervise the work all the way through until it is completed to your satisfaction.

There is a variety of funding which may be available to you, and they can help you explore the possibilities. For example: Minor adaptation grants, Disabled facilities grants, House proud loans, Charitable assistance, Insurance claims. The initial assessment visit is free and there is no means test or upper savings limit applied to receive information, support or advice from them. They will charge a fee for any works they organise or supervise at your home, but where the work carried out is paid for by a council grant then the fees are met by the grant. Therefore, most people will get the work done free without paying a fee

For an information pack or advice, telephone them on 020 8359 7462 or visit their website at: www.barnet.gov.uk/barnet-care-and-repair-agency

SuDS For Schools Project in Pymmes Brook Catchment

We have been contacted by the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) to raise awareness of their project in the Pymmes Brook catchment.

SuDS for Schools is a project being run by the WWT in partnership with the Environment Agency and Thames Water. Over the next two years, the project will focus on engaging schools in learning about and creating new, wildlife-friendly wetlands in the heart of London, improving local streams and adopting a more sustainable approach to water-use in the school and local area. They are offering ten schools in the Pymmes Brook catchment funding for school ground improvements that will help pupils learn about the sustainable use of water, and wetland ecosystems through hands-on experiences. They will work with participating schools and the local community to build a range of features that demonstrate sustainable water management which may include rain gardens, reed beds, green walls, green roofs and rainwater tanks (to be located in the school grounds).

These sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will help



reduce pollution reaching Pymmes Brook, will help to reduce flooding and create habitat for wildlife.

SuDS will be writing to schools in the Pymmes Brook catchment to invite them to express interest in taking part in the project, and hope to also involve the wider community surrounding their project schools. We will let you know how this interesting initiative progresses.

Rob White

Be Alert / Be Our Eyes and Ears!

We have heard reports of a couple of unusual activities recently and would like to ask you to let us know if you spot anything similar going on:

- 1) Parking Wardens at the crack of dawn putting tickets on cars if they were parked slightly awkwardly. This was reported in Brookside, and may simply have been in response to a complaint, but if it is more widespread and the start of a Council revenue-gathering wheeze, please let us know. We have advised in the past to be very careful how you park - not on a bend or with wheels on the kerb, for example.
- 2) Surveyors in the park - we have had two separate sightings of surveyors using their theodolites in Oak Hill Park, but nobody seems to know why they were there. If you spot some, please do talk to them and let us know what's up!

Thank you.

Barnet Market

Although not in our immediate area, you may be interested to know that Barnet Market was sold to The Spires at the end of last year.

As a result, The Friends of Barnet Market are much more positive about the future and would like to ask you a few questions about the gradual improvements the market is undergoing, and whether or how it should change and evolve.

You can contact Chris Smith at FoBM on this email address:

csdes@dircon.co.uk

The Friends of Barnet Market have a website at www.fobm.co.uk

Or maybe you could have a chat with the stallholders next time you visit...

Big Fun Walk



Last year, when I entered the "Big Fun Walk" which is a seven and a half mile walk through London parks from East Finchley to Westminster, in aid of the NORTH LONDON HOSPICE, I said to myself (and to some others) "this is my last time". I was 78 and realised that "next year" (that is, THIS year) I would be in my eightieth year, and 'enough is enough'.

Since then, I have changed my mind. I have had the privilege of visiting the Hospice much more frequently, because a dear friend, who used to do these walks with me, died there. Having seen for myself the wonderful care and concern that was so freely given in that very special place, I decided not to be a wimp and do that walk one more time. Yes, it's on April 1st this year, and I may indeed prove to be an April old Fool, but I'm doing it, through Cherry Tree Wood and Highgate Woods to Hampstead Heath and Parliament Hill Fields, up Primrose Hill and down into Regents Park, then Hyde Park, Green Park and St. James's (maybe the best of all?) to come out in Westminster.

So who is going to sponsor me? I want to make a record amount of money, and you are the ones to enable me to do so! All you have to do at this stage (please don't send me any money!) is to let me know, either by e-mail (see address above) or by phone or by word of mouth, that you are going to sponsor me (never mind the amount, anything from £1 up is welcome) and confirm you are eligible for gift aid with your address and postcode, and I will get back to you (if and) when I complete the walk.

Thank you all VERY MUCH and please be as generous as you can.....

Larry Ross

20 Haslemere Avenue

East Barnet

London EN4 8EZ

t: 020 8361 3186

e: larryross@osaka.free-online.co.uk

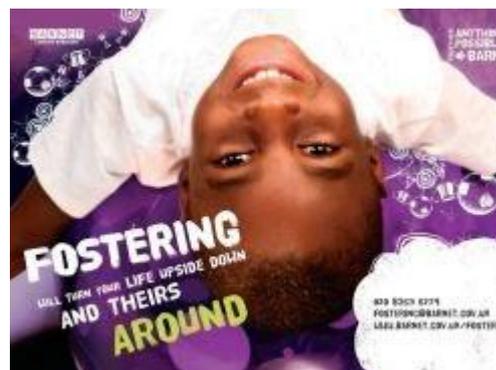
Would YOU Consider Fostering?

We have been contacted from time to time by Barnet's Fostering group...

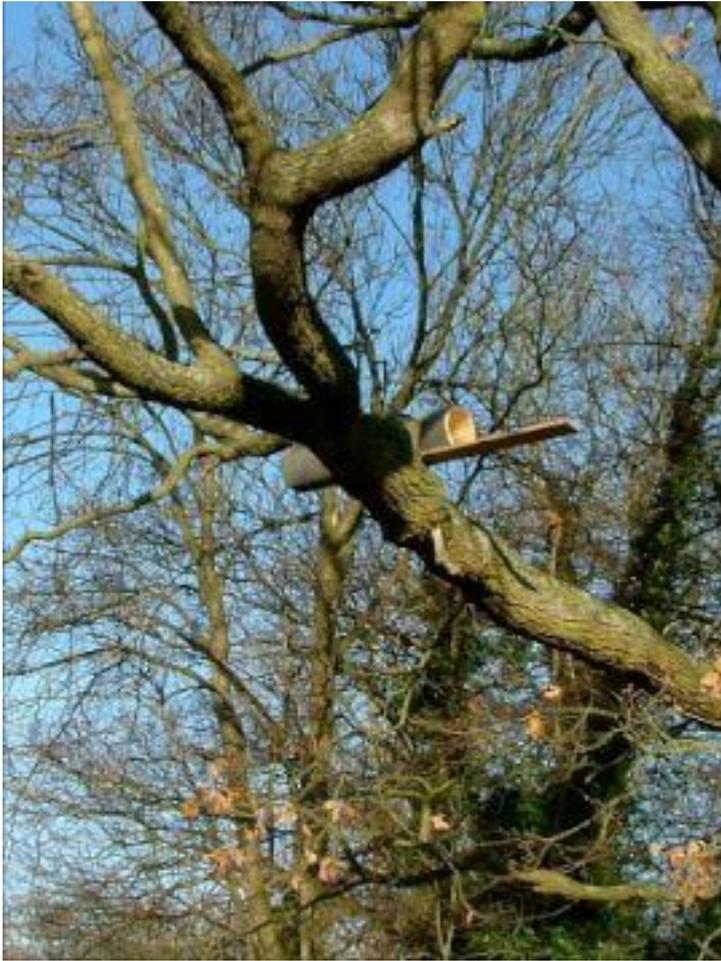
Would you like to meet a foster carer and find out what it is really like to foster? Then why not book an appointment at one of their information sessions. Appointments last roughly 30-45 minutes and give you the chance to chat one-to-one with a Barnet foster carer. Call 0208 359 6274 or email fostering@barnet.gov.uk to book a slot.

Much more information is available on the Council's website:

www.barnet.gov.uk/fostering



The Little Owl Box



Our most recent addition to the Committee, Alan Kelley, contacted us in our capacity as "Friends of Oak Hill Park" about how to gain permission to put up a nesting box for the 'Little Owl' he could sometimes hear in the fields beyond his back garden in Cedar Rise. We advised him how to get in touch with the Theological College because they own most of the land between Chase Side and the golf course in the park.

So, long story short, Alan managed to contact Carl, the Estates Manager / groundsman, who was quite enthusiastic about promoting wildlife generally within the college environs. The box (pictured left) is installed there now, not far from a cattle gate and water trough.

Alan is hopeful the little owl he heard may adopt it as its home, but says that if a pair arrives he may need to install a second box because they usually prefer to nest separately!

The EBRA Committee

As the story above illustrates so well, we are always delighted when enthusiastic residents contact us, especially when they care about our lovely valley as much as we do.

We invited Alan along to one of our monthly committee meetings to have a chat, and he says he was pleasantly surprised to find how diverse we are, and (as our constitution states) we are not connected to any political or religious organisation - our membership is open to everyone with an interest in the area.

Alan came back to another couple of our meetings and is now a full committee member, contributing to our discussions about all local matters.

So if you too would be interested in helping us help and inform the community, please do get in touch. We could always do with some additional assistance, for example someone to take the minutes at our meetings (a couple of hours ten times a year), or people to help distribute the paper newsletters to those members who are not (yet!) on email.

And our chairman James has often hinted that he would be happy to hand over to someone else as Chairman, one day soon...

If you are interested, why not have a word with us at the All Members meeting on 20th March?

Weeds!



One of our most spectacular spring flowers is a despised weed that most gardeners would love to eradicate from their lawns. The humble dandelion actually flowers in all seasons, but flowering peaks in spring, when verges and fields are covered in swathes of bright yellow. Its Latin name is *Taraxacum officinale*, *officinale* referring to its value as a medicinal herb, from the word *officina*, meaning a workshop or pharmacy. It is a childhood myth that just touching it makes one wet the bed, but its leaves were used as a diuretic, and it is still an ingredient in herbal 'water tablets'.

Dandelions were grown in greenhouses in winter in Victorian times, blanched, that is covered with an overturned plant-pot to keep the leaves pale and less bitter, and served as winter salads. Petals can be sprinkled on salads. The root, roasted and ground, was used as a coffee substitute during the Second World War, and can still be purchased in health food shops. (Dandelions are related to chicory which is used in the same way.) Dandelion wine uses the flowers only, scalded with the addition of orange or lemon, raisins and sugar.

Dandelions are valuable plants for pollinating insects, such as bees and hoverflies. Insects see a different light spectrum from us, and for them a dandelion has a light border and a dark spot in the middle, to guide them to the centre of the flower. Insects, needed for pollinating crops such as peas, beans and fruit, are becoming scarcer, and wild flowers are important to feed them. I have heard it said that an early flowering dandelion can save the



life of a bumble bee. Once pollinated, the flower closes, and transforms into the ephemeral 'dandelion clock' seed heads so beloved of children.

It is a pity that the dandelion has nothing to recommend it as a garden plant. Its flowers don't last very long, and the seeds go everywhere. As a cut flower it is useless, because it closes up within hours of being picked. It has an unpleasant sap that stains hands, and a minimal scent. Poor dandelion! However, as a harbinger of spring, it is magnificent, so let us enjoy it before we begin to wage war on it again.

Sylvia Javes

Chas R

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Chas R Lowe Estates are proud to sponsor the East Barnet Residents' Association newsletters.