



East Barnet Residents Association

Incorporating Friends of Oak Hill Park

September 2012 Newsletter

In the last newsletter we mentioned how effective "people power" can be. Here's another example:

In June we leafleted 1,000 houses and businesses in **Russell Lane** and the surrounding roads to alert them about the plans for double yellow lines and for three pedestrian paths across the central greensward. We have heard that the Council received over 850 letters emails and phone calls about this, which is an unprecedented response. Thank you all for getting involved, and welcome to the many new members we now have in that area.

The decision on whether or not to proceed with this proposal will be taken at the Area Environment Sub-Committee meeting on 16th October which follows straight after the Chipping Barnet Forum. Please show your support for Russell Lane and its shops by attending.

Rob White

Contacting the Association

Rob is our point of contact:

Email: rob@eastbar.net

Website: eastbar.net

Committee Officers

Chairman: Daniel Hope

Honorary Secretary: Rob White

Treasurer: Sheila Solbé

Newsletter Distribution: Yvonne Ward

Vice-Chairman: George Irons

President: The Revd James Mustard

Committee Members

James Bradshaw; Pat Gladwin; Pauline Coakley Webb; Rosina Down; Sussanne Hassel; Alan Kelley; Peter Robinson; Steven Cowen, Wendy Alcock

Dates For Your Diary:

EBRA All-Members Meeting: 8:30pm on Tuesday 2nd October 2012 in the Small Hall, Brookside Methodist Church, 2 Cat Hill, EN4 8JB

Chipping Barnet Forum: Tuesday 16th October 2012 at 6pm at Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, N20 0EJ - Please attend this forum and stay for the Area Environment Committee meeting straight afterwards which will decide the fate of the Russell Lane double yellow line and pedestrian pavings plan.

Barnet Christmas Fayre: Sunday 2nd December: procession at noon; music and dance stages, craft and community stalls, fun fair, food fair and other entertainments in the High Street and The Spires until 5pm. Bygone Barnet music in Barnet Church, Crafts Fair in Church House, exhibitions in Tudor Hall and Barnet Museum and storytelling in The Mitre and new attractions in the refurbished churchyard.

Full details will be available at barnetarts.org.uk

Matters Arising...

Here's an update on various items that have featured in previous newsletters:

- **Budgens Car Park** - We featured this in our December 2010 newsletter. The car park behind Budgens is their private land, intended as a place for their customers to park for up to an hour. The signs clearly say that if you exceed the free period, you agree to pay a £75 fee. This is unenforceable, and the consensus of advice is to ignore any invoices you may receive even though they may look like official parking fines. But we also believe that residents should play fair, and if you intend to park in the village for more than an hour (especially if you're not shopping at Budgens) then please park elsewhere.
- **Zealous Parking Wardens** - we heard that wardens are still swooping at the crack of dawn in Brookside and punishing any minor infractions. We asked EB Councillor Joanna Tambourides if there was a reason why Brookside was being singled out, and she asked the parking operations manager to investigate. They said that warden teams are in the EB Village area anyway and include Brookside in their patrols because it's close to the village and because complaints have been received from members of the public about incorrect parking there. So motorists must be very careful to ensure that they do not double park, obstruct any dropped kerbs, disabled bays, or yellow lines, and do not park on the pavement unless there is a marked bay.
- **Barnet Furniture Centre** - We had some good feedback from Beth, the project manager at the centre, that our article in the June newsletter set their phones and tills ringing. It's good that we can help them to help us by collecting and re-using our unwanted furniture and other spare items. Please visit the warehouse store at Queens Parade Close, Friern Barnet, London, N11 3FY or telephone 020 8361 6802 to buy or donate.
Websites: barnetfurniturecentre.org and [facebook.com/barnetfurniturecentre](https://www.facebook.com/barnetfurniturecentre)
- **EBRA AGM** on 5th July
 - Our guest speaker was John Dix, a local resident and one of the 'Barnet Bloggers'. He gave us his perspective on the Council's One Barnet transformation programme which aims to improve efficiency and cut costs by outsourcing some of the services the Council provides. The Council's information about this is available on their website at <http://go.eastbar.net/one>
If you missed John's presentation, you can watch a video at <http://go.eastbar.net/dix>.
 - During the AGM itself, our long-standing Chairman James Bradshaw announced that he was unwilling to accept nomination as Chairman again. As no written nominations had been received, nominations were invited from the floor. Daniel Hope was nominated, seconded and accepted unanimously. The rest of the committee and officers were re-elected en masse. The EBRA's president has traditionally been the rector of St Mary's, so we are pleased that the new rector, the Revd James Mustard, has joined our committee.
- **Brunswick Park Health Centre** - The press officer for NHS North Central London has recently confirmed that the building works are still on track to be completed before the end of the year, in or around early December. Dr Okonkwo's practice will be moving back into the centre and discussions about what other services will be provided at the centre are ongoing.



It appears that Tesco have bought the Venezia Bathrooms shops at 1-5 Hampden Square. They have applied for planning permission to change the shop front and install an ATM and new signs etc., but it seems they do not need permission to actually open the shop because originally it used to be a Co-Op supermarket.

A Tesco Express could revitalise the square with more visitors, but one concern could be the very limited parking available in the vicinity - please let us know if you have any views.

Council Tax Benefits Consultation

The Government are allowing councils to set their own levels of council tax benefits. Barnet Council are consulting with residents to decide the support and 'discounts' they should offer. Full details and a questionnaire are available at <http://go.eastbar.net/tax> or phone 020 8359 2302 to ask for details by post. There is a Council roadshow at **The Spires** on Tuesday **18th September** from 11am to 2pm. Please respond before the **deadline of 24th October**.

Enfield Council Civil Enforcement Officers

If you visit Southgate, you may notice Civil Enforcement Officers prowling around with CCTV cameras on their chests. Beware! This is not Dom Joly filming another spoof for his *Fool Britannia* television series, this is for real.

If you accidentally drop a piece of litter or a cigarette end, the officer will demand to know your name and address and issue you with an £80 fine. They have zero tolerance and no discretion to waive the rules. If you refuse to cooperate they will call the police. It's not clear what would happen if you simply walked away before the police arrive - the enforcement officers can't 'arrest' you.

If this cash-generating policy is enough to make you spit, please be careful because Enfield Council have asked central government to approve a new by-law to make that illegal too, with an £80 fine...

Neighbourhood Watch

If you're thinking about setting up or re-starting a Watch in your road, please contact us so we can help.

Membership Subscriptions

Many of our members renew at our stall in the East Barnet Festival in July. Unfortunately the festival had to be cancelled this year due to all the rain and flooding, so quite a few subscriptions have not been renewed yet. If you are not sure if your subscription has expired please ask your local road steward or phone me on 020 8144 8469 (please leave a message if no reply) and we will let you know.

We do encourage you to pay online by credit or debit card at eastbar.net/subscribe because this saves us

the administrative effort of cash and cheques. And of course if you would like to receive the newsletter by email, that saves the cost of printing, the big distribution effort, and is environmentally friendly. Also, if you let us have an email address then we can contact you much more efficiently as and when urgent matters arise. We do not send 'spam' and will not reveal your email address to anyone.

Our Road Stewards are happy to accept your subscription, or you can fill in the slip below and send or bring it to me. Thank you.

Rob White

I enclose £_____ for _____ years' subscription to the East Barnet Residents' Association (£2 per year per household)

Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Please send cash / cheques (payable to "EBRA") to Rob White, 16 Woodfield Drive, East Barnet, EN4 8PA

Herons in Oak Hill Park

The Grey Heron is a regular visitor to Oak Hill Park. Standing about a metre tall, with a wing span of nearly a metre, it is one of the largest species of bird in Britain. A heron can often be seen wading in the brook, searching for prey, but what it could possibly find to eat there is a mystery. They do eat frogs, or small mammals, as well as fish, so maybe it is occasionally lucky. Whether it is a regular heron or various different ones, is hard to know, but it is surprisingly tame and doesn't worry too much about people getting close to it. When perching in its favourite place in a partly fallen tree in the hedgerow beyond the football pitch, it sits hunched, in a relaxed pose with its neck folded down, and looks like a completely different species. The herons don't breed locally but probably come from the wooded islands in the reservoirs at Walthamstow, where they breed in one of the largest heronries in Britain.

The Walthamstow heronry has recently attracted the first breeding Little Egrets in Greater London, and in the past few winters, one or two, probably from there, have spent their days in Oak Hill Park. They are unmistakable birds: smaller than the Grey Heron, but pure white with black legs and yellow feet. They are flighty birds, flying up and down the brook, or loafing around on the remnants of flooding on the field where they can find worms and so on. When the park flooded badly in June there were up to eight egrets reported on the field and in the trees on the golf course. Little Egrets began to colonise – or rather re-colonise Britain, in the 1980s. Little Egrets were common in Medieval times, but a combination of hunting and very cold winters meant that they disappeared. Now they are



becoming fairly common, perhaps not because of climate change, but because there are protected habitats where they can thrive.

There is also a large breeding colony of cormorants at Walthamstow. Cormorants are almost the size of herons, but have short legs. They appear black but have a blue/green sheen, and are said to have an almost reptilian appearance. They can sometimes be seen along the Thames with their wings outstretched to dry them. These birds dive for fish in rivers and lakes and are hugely unpopular with fishermen. They certainly wouldn't be interested in Pymmes Brook, would they? But they can often be seen flying over the park, presumably going to a lake somewhere, and not too long ago I saw two perched in a tree over the brook in Arnos Park. So if you see a very large 'crow' perched in a tree, take a closer look. It may just be a cormorant.

Sylvia Javes

Chas R

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ESTATES
EST 1876

tel: 020 8440 6449 www.chaslowe.com

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