

## *East Barnet Residents Association*

*Incorporating Friends of Oak Hill Park*

### **Season's Greetings**

Dear residents, this has been a very busy year - the 30th anniversary of being established in May 1982.

At that time the threat was a housing development planned for the Saxon Field (the open space at the junction of Avondale Avenue and Church Hill Road).

This year, the main threats to our community were the crazy plans to impose parking charges and restrictions which would have badly affected the traders battling to survive the recession and providing such valuable local resources. Car parking in The Village, Osidge Lane, and Russell Lane was under attack, but thanks to the excellent way local businesses and residents worked with the East Barnet Residents' Association and local councillors, all of these plans were scrapped. We have received many grateful messages from traders and residents for our work this year, but we could not have been so successful without the support of our members.

So a big THANK YOU to our committee, members, and councillors, and let's hope 2013 is a bit more peaceful!

On behalf of the committee, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

*Rob White*

### ***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:** 8pm on **Tuesdays 5th February 2013, 4th June**, and **8th October** in the Small Hall, Brookside Methodist Church, 2 Cat Hill, EN4 8JB

**Chipping Barnet Forum:** **Wednesday 16th January 2013, Wednesday 13th March, Tuesday 25th June, Tuesday 22nd October** at 6pm at Barnet House, 1255 High Road, Whetstone, N20 0EJ

### **Contacting the Association**

Rob White is our point of contact: **Web:** [eastbar.net](http://eastbar.net)

## Matters Arising...

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

- **Brunswick Park Health Centre** – There are encouraging signs that the refurbishment is almost complete, and that doctors' surgeries will be moving into the health centre early in the new year. It would be excellent if this could be as soon as 4th January, the **third anniversary** of the small fire which caused the health centre to be closed. But perhaps a bit too optimistic... We would like to thank the Brunswick Park councillors, the Council Cabinet Member for Public Health, and our MP, for their unstinting assistance over the past three years to try to bring this matter to a close.
- **Russell Lane Crossings** – The plans for three paved areas across the greensward in Russell Lane were rejected at the Council meeting on 16th October. Shop keepers rejoiced that parking spaces would not be reduced by double yellow lines. Local residents are planning to form a working group to preserve and restore this historic lane. More details on this as the plans evolve.
- **Cat Hill Campus** – Our MP Theresa Villiers spoke at the planning forum held by Enfield Council in early December about the residential housing proposal for the former Middlesex University site. Mrs Villiers and our three East Barnet councillors are firmly opposed to these planned 'tower blocks' which are out of character for the area, may cause traffic and parking problems and may harm wildlife and trees.
- **Parking Charges** – Barnet Council have promised that the currently free car parks will remain free in 2013.

## Burglaries

We have been contacted by many residents who have recently either suffered a burglary themselves, or are aware of what seems to be an alarming rise in the number of burglaries in the Brunswick Park and East Barnet wards.

At Barnet Council's cabinet meeting in November, Brunswick Park Councillor Andreas Ioannidis asked "What is the Cabinet Member doing in his leadership role on crime and community safety to help the police reduce the number of burglaries in Brunswick Park?" The written reply from Councillor David Longstaff provided a list of "tactical options" being utilised. Many of those options described ways residents can help themselves to be safer, and for the police to target known offenders.

The Christmas newsletter to Neighbourhood Watch coordinators from the East Barnet Safer Neighbourhood Team was similarly gloomy. As they noted "*It is not pleasant reading re burglaries. Not only do they break into houses when we are hard at work but also if you happen to be in and don't answer the door. PLEASE do not ignore unusual noises - or even someone knocking at the door. We have had residents watching TV and ignoring the door (which we all have done) and they have forced their way in!*"

Our committee member Wendy has written an article (see page 6) about setting up your own Neighbourhood Watch, and we your residents' association will do whatever we can to help.

We would be interested to know what our members think about burglaries. Please contact us or attend our members' meeting on 5th February. Maybe we as a residents' association can perhaps try to influence a local solution to this worrying problem.

In the meantime, here's some advice from the SNT:

Burglaries usually take place in the daytime and via a back door.

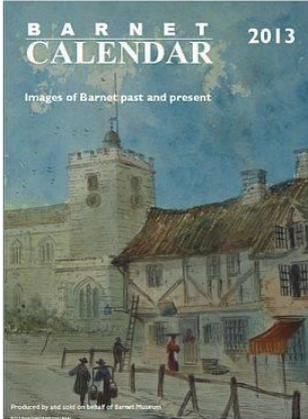
Keep tools in back gardens and sheds locked away to stop them being used.

Close your curtains at Christmas; while tempting to show your tree, it also shows what you have to take!

**Rob White**

## Barnet Museum

### BARNET CALENDAR 2013



Images of Barnet past and present

Information on images

Dates in Barnet's history



Barnet Museum & Local History Society have produced a calendar for 2013:

It's A3 size, and is available from Waterstones (at The Spires), I John Newsagents (142 East Barnet Road), and the Museum. The RRP is £12.99 but the Museum is selling at a discounted price of £10.

Two exhibitions about the Foundling Hospital will take place in Barnet Museum from December to January, 2013.

'The Barnet Foundling Hospital, Monken Hadley, 1762 – 1768' exhibition considers one of six small hospitals set up by the Foundling Hospital, London. It had views over Enfield Chase, and its manager Prudence West lived in Barnet itself. A variety of objects directly related to some of the children who were placed in the Barnet hospital, and also to Mrs West, will be displayed during the exhibition; these include coin tokens left with the children as babies and letters written by Mrs West. The exhibition has been curated by Yvonne Tomlinson and provides a glimpse into important research undertaken over the last few years.

The 'Foundling Voices' exhibition is one of the outcomes of the Foundling Museum's recent project of collecting oral histories by people who were the last to be cared for by the Foundling Hospital. It is the last of a series of touring exhibitions, following a major exhibition held in The Foundling Museum in London last year. In 1954 fostering became 'the norm' and the 'hospital' or residential school building in Berkhamsted became a local authority school. The exhibition will include extracts from some individual histories – as audio clips, transcriptions and on film.

The two exhibitions will complement each other in that the children's lives will have been quite similar in many ways, even though they were separated by two centuries. The truth and honesty of recent experience may allow insight, at least in part, to the stories of the foundling children of the distant past.

Barnet Museum is at 31 Wood St, Barnet, EN5 4BE

## Members Please

As mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, the success of the EBRA is largely dependent on our members. The more members we have the more clout when countering threats to our community.

We often hear comments that people have never heard of us. So if you have friends and neighbours or acquaintances who don't know about us or who can't be bothered to join, please spread the word and encourage them to contact us. The membership slip on page 7 is great for new members too, so why not pass this newsletter on to them when you've read it? Our subscription fee of £2 per household per year is one of the lowest around, and only just covers our running costs – room hire, postage, paper, and so on. But it does also mean we have a verified number of genuine members, not just names on a mailing list or petition.

Thank you.

**Rob White**

## PPI Scams & Spam

"Reclaim your PPI". We've all had the texts, emails, phone calls and seen the adverts on TV, in newspapers and magazines – it's everywhere! But what does it mean, does it apply to you and how do you stop the annoying spam getting through in the first place? Here's a quick explanation of what you can do...

**What is PPI?** It stands for Payment Protection Insurance and is a product often provided alongside loans, credit cards, store cards, mortgages, car finance, overdrafts, catalogues – any form of credit. The insurance protects payments on these products if you're unable to pay due to job loss or sickness. It can be a good product if you decide it's right for you but the problem we have at the moment is that banks were mis-selling it to people for years. And if that was you, you can ask for the money back, easily and for free.

**What counts as mis-selling?** The PPI seller needed to check the product was suitable for you at the time you got it. In many cases it didn't do this, which is why the financial regulator's fined several banks and told all of them to pay the money back. Typical examples of what went wrong include: people being told the cover was compulsory to get a loan, it being added without permission, unemployment cover being unnecessarily sold to the self-employed, unemployed or retired, and failure to give information on the exclusion of pre-existing medical conditions. In general, if you weren't given the correct information about the policy you can complain.

**You don't need to pay to reclaim.** This is where the adverts come in. As there's such a lot of money owed back to consumers, estimated to be around £13 billion and rising, claims management companies are getting in on the act. They promote themselves as 'no win, no fee' but don't explain this means taking around a third of any refund from you. But reclaiming is easier than you think. Claims handlers aren't necessarily quicker or easier - you'll still need to send them the details of your complaint. Instead, it could just take one call or letter to your bank. Give them a call to see if you had the insurance and to find out its complaints procedure. You could be rewarded with £100s or £1,000s in return.

**How to stop the spam.** It's impossible to stop it 100% but things can be done to reduce spam.

**Phone calls:** If you feel like you're being bombarded with random calls you're not alone. They are just that though, randomly dialled computer generated numbers. The rule seems to be, the more calls made the more chance someone will pick up. If you want to stop random calls from UK companies, register your home and mobile numbers with the Telephone Preference Service (online at [www.tpsonline.org.uk](http://www.tpsonline.org.uk) or call 0800 398 893). This makes it illegal for UK firms to spam call - but this does not apply to firms operating from overseas, unfortunately.

**Mail:** The Mail Preference Service isn't as enforceable at the telephone version, but should substantially cut junk mail. Register at [www.mpsonline.org.uk](http://www.mpsonline.org.uk) or call 0845 703 4599.

**Texts:** If you get spam texts (ie, from unknown senders), don't reply even if they say to reply with 'stop' – because doing that would show them they have reached a real number. Forward the text to 7726 (87726 on Vodafone). If enough people do it, the number can be blocked.

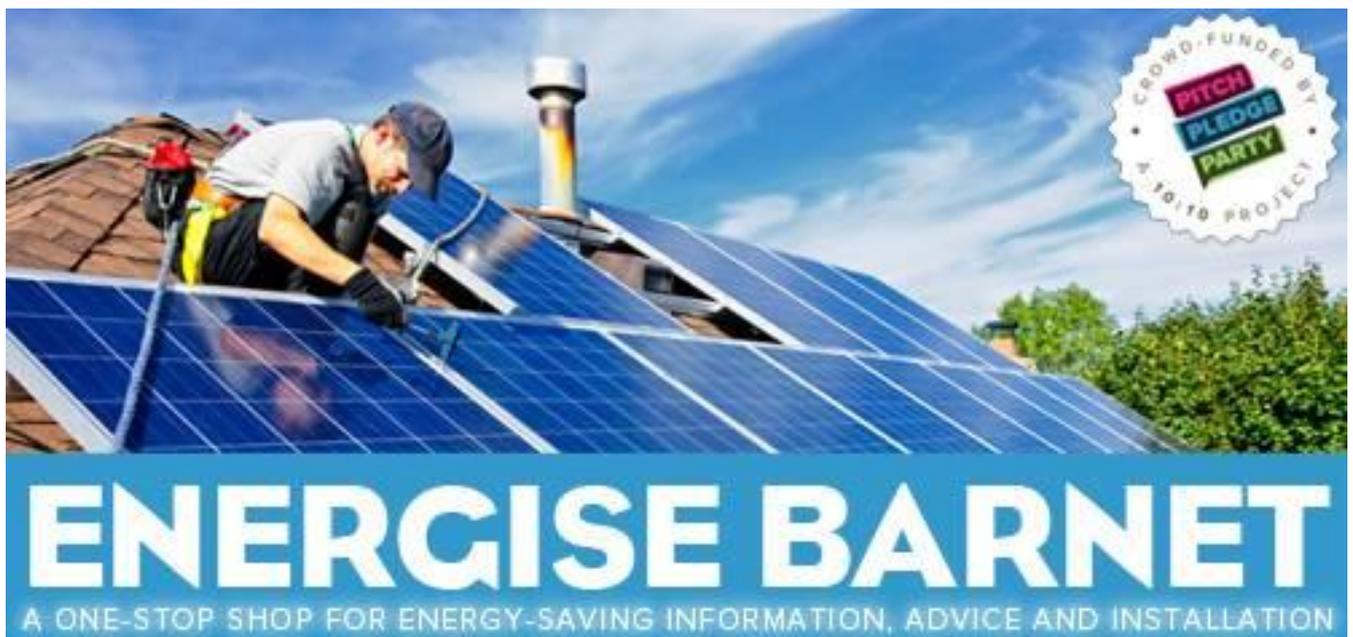
**At home:** If you get lots of cold callers to your home, a No Cold Callers sign can help. Stick one to your door and energy salesmen are banned from knocking, while other callers should be put off. If they're not, just point to it politely and say "No cold callers please" and close the door.

**If you've found this useful, please tell a family member, friend or neighbour. The more people who know how to protect their finances for free, the better!**

## Barnet Police Not Merging

In October, the Metropolitan police briefed London borough chief executives on plans to merge the senior command structures of various police forces; that would have meant that Barnet no longer had its own police borough commander.

But following representations from our elected representatives, the Mayor of London issued assurances that the command structures for Barnet police will not be merged with another borough.



Local resident Nigel Farren, who gave a talk at our members' meeting in October 2011, has now launched a £200 million Green Deal plan to Energise Barnet. Nigel founded the community interest company (social enterprise) "Energise Barnet CIC" and has submitted a plan to Barnet Council to create £200 million of social, economic and environmental benefit through the installation of energy saving measures and renewables in 40,000 homes and buildings.

Under the plan, the CIC proposes that it provides the operational hub, generating leads for Green Deal Providers and other delivery partners through its network of community organisations, businesses and tradespeople. Nigel says "most of the 140,000 homes and buildings in Barnet are uninsulated and hardly anyone generates their own energy. As a result, owners and tenants spend more on gas and electricity than they need do. Barnet also has the highest carbon emissions of any London borough, some of the UK's highest energy consumption areas and there could be 50,000 residents in fuel poverty with associated health problems that adversely impact NHS costs."

He continued: "Through the Big Society Innovation Bank, the Council asked us to develop an effective approach to solve these issues and draw up a plan for delivery of the Green Deal which will enable people to improve their homes with no upfront cost and save money in the process."

Our MP Theresa Villiers says "Climate change, alongside a diminishing supply of fossil fuels, means that it is ever more important that we look for ways to save energy in our homes and businesses. This scheme is great for providing practical advice and guidance on the changes people can make to their own homes in order to save energy."

Energise Barnet's responsibilities include operating a call centre, community engagement and providing awareness-raising sessions to health professionals on how to recognise and refer people that are in fuel poverty.

As a result, it is receiving referrals from hospitals and doctors concerned about patients living in cold conditions at home and directly from residents who have seen bus shelter posters and leaflets displayed in surgeries, hospitals and community centres.

You can find out more about Energise Barnet and how they can help you and people you know, at [energisebarnet.org.uk](http://energisebarnet.org.uk) or by telephoning 020 8492 3362

## Neighbourhood Watch

As well as working to deal with burglaries in the area our local police are encouraging residents to help protect themselves from becoming victims.

One way to do this is to look out for your neighbours. If there's an attempted burglary on yours or your neighbour's property, or you spot anything suspicious, don't hesitate to tell your local Safer Neighbourhood Team. The more people who contact them the more resources they are given to help deal with the problem. Of course in an emergency always dial 999.

You can also contact the SNT if you would like crime prevention advice (lots of information is also on the [www.metbumblebee.org](http://www.metbumblebee.org) website).

The contact details are:

East Barnet 020 7161 9010/11

Brunswick Park 0207 161 8020

Or send details online via <http://content.met.police.uk>



Another suggestion is to set up or join a Neighbourhood Watch scheme, where a group of individuals come together to make their communities safer, with support from the police. The aim is to help people protect themselves and their properties and to reduce the fear of crime by improving home security, greater vigilance, accurate reporting of suspicious incidents to the police and by creating a community spirit.

If you're interested in setting up a local group (whether it's within a specific street, neighbourhood or area) the first step is to talk to your neighbours and see who is interested and how they'd like to improve the area. The more residents there are who want to get involved, the more successful a scheme will be but not everyone in a street or neighbourhood needs to join a scheme for it to work. You can start a group with a lot of interest or only a little. Many start very small and then grow once residents see what it's all about.

Once you've found some support contact your SNT and they will tell you what to do next. It's as simple as that. When you're up and running you will be sent information on what's going on locally and you can hold meetings, send out a newsletter or even set up a Facebook page to share the details with your community, keep everyone in the loop and work together to beat crime. There can also be discounts of up to 10% on your home insurance.

**Wendy Alcock**

## Woodside Park Eruv

Woodside Park synagogue applied to the Council for permission to define an eruv for their residential community. As is explained on their website:

"The eruv defines an area as an enclosed residential communal entity thus allowing people to carry from their homes to the street or to other peoples' houses or the synagogue... An eruv allows members of the community with poor mobility, such as mothers with babies, people with disabilities and the elderly, to come to the synagogue and visit friends and family on the Sabbath."

At the planning meeting on 23rd October, Barnet Council approved the Woodside Park eruv, which may include a perimeter wire crossing Russell Lane (near the filling station) supported by poles. The synagogue's website continues "the poles will be inconspicuous amongst existing lampposts and telegraph poles and will be painted in muted grey".

## Newsletter Deliveries

Overcome with guilt at the quantity of old correspondence I have allowed myself to accumulate, I had a recent clearout. How I admire the "Bin it when read" brigade. Perhaps the advent of computers has helped the paper hoarders, but not me.

However, to the point. In old records I found reference to my taking over newsletter deliveries from Valerie Nelms in 1998. It was Valerie as Membership Secretary who originally set up the whole delivery system when we began in 1982.

I also found her letter welcoming my husband and me when we joined in July 1982 (see what I mean about hoarding?)

On a list were the names of the 1982 first volunteer newsletter deliverers. Many of them are still doing the job today! To them I want to give an especially big "THANK YOU". Think of it, all those extra years of angry letter boxes and flights of slippery steps and collection of subs too. Looming over all is Mr Murphy with his law that the last house at the end

of a very long road is the one needing a paper copy.

During the ensuing years we have had many more volunteers who are mostly still with me. Some faces may have changed but the wish to be helpful has not.

And so to the ladies and gentlemen - oh! yes, we have men too, some using their cars for more far-flung members - my heartfelt thanks. It may be that the bundles are lighter now but there are still over 200 members who prefer to read our news from a hand-held paper copy - I'm one.

So, my sincerest good wishes for the coming season and also a HEALTHY HAPPY 2013 TO FOLLOW.

*Yvonne Ward*

(In case you are wondering, we are 20 strong)

## 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 a few subscriptions have not been renewed yet. If you are on the paper distribution and 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](http://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**

Dec 2012

## Wagtails

Wagtails are small birds, about the size of sparrows, but with much longer tails which, as their name suggests, wag up and down constantly as they run about looking for insects. There are three species of wagtails in Britain, two of which are regularly seen in the park.

Pied Wagtails are grey, black and white. They like short grass, and are particularly attracted to large, mown lawns, such as those seen at stately homes. In the park they can often be seen feeding on the football pitches and the hillside, as well as running about on the paths. Pied Wagtails often form roosting flocks in town centres at dusk, where they find shelter on office blocks and shopping malls.

Hospitals are popular, especially those with enclosed courtyards with shrubs. Local roosts have been reported at Welwyn Garden City (around The Howard Centre) and Chase Farm Hospital. A few years ago there was a roost at Sainsbury's in New Barnet, but a recent dusk visit didn't find one. Pied Wagtails build their nests in holes in walls, buildings, or old nests of larger birds. Grass and mosses are used to construct a small cup-shaped nest. They will also use open-fronted nest boxes.

The other wagtail seen in the park is yellow underneath, with a grey back, and an even 'waggier' tail than the Pied Wagtail. Confusingly this is called the Grey Wagtail. They are normally seen around the brook - on a muddy bank close to the water, or in the wood along the stream. They may visit garden ponds. They nest in crevices in banks close to streams,



probably nesting along the stream in the wood. Grey wagtails are badly affected by harsh winters, and because of recent moderate decline it has been placed on the amber list of species of conservation concern, so it is particularly pleasing to have this bird in our local park.

Yellow Wagtails, unlike the previous two species are summer visitors, and in this area are only likely to be seen as they pass through in spring or early autumn. Yellow wagtails are a bright yellow, with an olive green back. They like feeding alongside cattle in damp meadows. You may possibly see one in Totteridge Fields, or in farmland around Enfield, but not in Oak Hill Park, unless you are very lucky. Yellow Wagtails are sometimes seen during migration at The London Wetland Centre in Barnes, where they feed close to the resident cattle which stir up insects.

*Sylvia Javes*

## Flying The Flag

Recent changes in Town & Country planning rules mean we are permitted to display many more types of flags. The legislation changes are detailed at [legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2372/regulation/2/made](http://legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2372/regulation/2/made) Does anyone have any suggestions for an East Barnet flag perhaps?

Chas R **L O W E** ESTATES  
EST 1876  
tel: 020 8440 6449 [www.chaslowe.com](http://www.chaslowe.com)

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