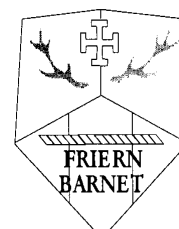


## Friern Barnet and Whetstone Residents' Association

- We are non-political
  - We work for all residents in the area
  - We discuss issues with Local Councillors and Council Officials
  - Associated with the following bodies
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • The Federation of Residents' Association of Barnet | • The Friern Barnet & District Local History Society |
| • The Finchley Society                               | • Coppetts Wood Conservationists                     |
| • Friends of Friary Park                             | • The London Green Belt Council                      |
| • North Finchley Environmental Forum                 |  |



August 2011

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## Whetstone residents continue two year fight against overdevelopment scheme

***Plans submitted to Council will destroy valuable green open space***



*No brownfield site this—view of a house in Langton Avenue from the green field open space, which ends at the back of the gardens of residents living in Langton Avenue and Buckingham Avenue*

Whetstone residents in the square bordered by Langton Avenue, Buckingham Avenue and Chandos Avenue continue the fight against a housing development proposed for the land at the end of their back gardens.

The residents of the three tree lined roads live in low rise, low density detached houses with flowered front gardens (often), driveways and garages. Not only are they being faced with a housing scheme that is out of character and out of proportion with existing housing, they also face the loss of the large green field which exists at the bottom of their gardens.

The site, formerly known as the Old Owens Playing Fields, is currently owned by the Haringey

Gospel Trust (HGHT) and has been used for religious purposes for the last twenty or more years. It has two prayer halls which are big enough for 500 people and two houses for groundsmen. There are also portakabins which are currently used for a religious school of the HGHT movement. The rest of the site is simply a large green field.

The residents association RAD (Residents Against Development) was formed following the first public meeting in June 2009, when the HGHT unveiled plans to build 147 homes on the site. RAD has campaigned for and on behalf of residents and at a public meeting called by Barnet Council in June 2010, to listen formally to local concerns, over 120 people turned up, when only about 30

# Boris's supporters worship the tracks he travels

Local residents may have received the unsolicited free four-page newsheet "Barnet Record", through their letterboxes recently. For old time students of the cold war, this paper may remind them of the "cult of personality", propagated in the Stalinist era. Good old Boris has his picture reproduced many times:-

page 1	2 times
page 2	2 times
page 3	3 times
page 4	2 times

Many of the pictures show that he's a man of the people, in his hard hat with shovel in hand, or on his bike (without helmet), or travelling on the underground like an ordinary bloke.

Nothing wrong with that as such, he is a kind of good looking bloke, with a magnificent blond Barnet (slang: Barnet Fair = hair).

"Boris" or "Boris Johnson" is mentioned many times:-

page 1	11 times
page 2	9 times
page 3	12 times
page 4	15 times

there are other references to simply "the mayor" and "Mayor of London" but those are not counted.

Much is made in this edition of the "Barnet Record" of the multi billion pound improvements to the underground system but we are not told how many billions. The financial deal that the mayor has struck is claimed to be far superior to the multi billion pound deal for the underground made by the previous mayor.

To be fair to the previous mayor (and the Barnet Record has no intention of being fair to the previous mayor), the disastrous PPP (Public Private Partnership) scheme was forced on the previous mayor by the previous government.

What the Barnet Record fails to point out are some of the major shortcomings with the present transport that are not scheduled to improve.

First there is the high fares—the highest in Europe. The cost of the investment program is not going to reduce fares.

Second is the ventilation problem, especially on the Victoria Line. Step onto a Victoria Line train in Central London and your first thought is, "Crikey, this carriage is about to explode with the heat!" The heat problem on the Underground was why the previous mayor suggested that tube passengers carry a bottle of water with them at all times.

The Barnet Record points out that it has been paid for by voluntary donation and at no cost to the taxpayer. We are relieved to hear this. Distributed throughout Barnet and printed in three part colour, it must have cost a bob or two (slang: bob or two = a lot of money).

If only the money could have been put to something useful, like saving Friern Barnet library. Maybe our new entrepreneurial Council could have come to arrangement with Boris's people, something like "give us the money for the Library and we'll rename it the Boris Johnson Library".



## Forthcoming Events

**Incognito Theatre: 25 September - 1 October "Just Between Ourselves" by Alan Ayckbourn**  
Tickets £9 students £5

**Friern Barnet and District Local History Society: "The History of the Travelling Funfair" by Mel Hooper**  
Wed 28 September  
All meetings take place at St John's Church Hall, next to Whetstone Police Station, Friern Barnet Lane. Starts 7:45 p.m.; cost £2 to non-members.

**Barnet Walks 'East Barnet Village'** A historical walk through ancient and modern East Barnet  
Saturday 1st October 2:30 pm. Meet outside East Barnet Library, Brookhill Road  
£7:00, accompanied under 12s £3:00.

<b>Barnet Museum, Wood Street</b>	<b>Going ?</b>
<b>Friern Barnet Library</b>	<b>Going ?</b>
<b>North Finchley Library</b>	<b>Going ?</b>
<b>Church Farm Museum</b>	<b>Out for the count!</b>

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## Tesco set to take over Friern Barnet business

Tesco are about to open up further premises in Friern Barnet. This time they are converting the Orange Tree pub to a Tesco Express. To some this may seem strange as there is the very large Tesco Extra just down Colney Hatch Lane, not 1000 yards away. The advantage to local residents is that this branch of Tesco Express will not be subject to the same closing rules as the big Tesco.

It is a feature of our planning laws that Tesco or any other group can take over any pub and convert it to a supermarket without having to get planning permission from the local council.

Central government talk about giving local communities powers to affect and control how their communities develop. On the other hand the same government talk about getting rid of red tape that hinders entrepreneurial development. It is unlikely that there will be change to prevent this kind of conversion happening in the next four years.

Undoubtedly this new Tesco Express will affect other businesses around the Friern Barnet intersection. Some small businesses will struggle, others will go bust. The Co-op has served the local community for decades and may well have trouble surviving.

Tesco will claim that they are benefiting the local community by providing jobs. This job creation has to be balanced against the jobs that will be lost by local shops that cannot stay in business.

The traffic impact on Friern Barnet is not negligible. As seen by recent works on the Orange Tree, vehicles coming out of the site and turning right cause the northbound traffic on Friern Barnet Lane to come to a stop and consequently cause total blockage of the Friern Barnet intersection. Traffic blockage will also occur when vehicles travelling south along Friern Barnet Lane try to turn right into the Tesco Orange Tree.

Tesco have taken a lease only on the ground floor. The upper floor is leased to Woodhouse Estates and is to be converted to residential units. The work being carried out by Woodhouse Estates is due to be internal modifications



*Many vacant shops in Friern Barnet Road near the Orange Tree*



*Decorative mouldings above Orange Tree first floor window*

only, they are not supposed to be carrying out any external repairs. Some local residents have expressed concern about the long term future of the decorative mouldings, above the window on the first floor, which are part of Friern Barnet's heritage. These mouldings were part of the 1905 rebuilding of the Orange Tree and depict oranges in honour of Nell Gwynne, who was supposed to have slept in a previous building on this site. It is hoped that alterations to the windows will not affect the mouldings.

HG

## Whetstone residents continue two year fight against overdevelopment ...

were expected. The Council, local councillors, the local MP and the HGHT can be in no doubt about the strength of feeling against this development.

Suggestions have been made by RAD and local residents to consider alternative use for the site for, for example, a school, health centre, GP surgery or sports facility. These suggestions which are badly needed and would be appropriate for the area, should be taken up by Barnet Council.

The HGHT say that they have voluntarily offered to enter into a covenant with Barnet Council upon the grant of planning permission. In principle, the covenant would bind the land to a maximum of 70 dwellings. However, such a private treaty could be construed as outside the legal criteria for determining a planning application. The covenant could be challenged as irrelevant and an immaterial planning consideration, and so such a covenant would become an irrelevant tool in planning terms.

After such statements, RAD are rightly concerned about the future of their community. Plans have been lodged by the HGHT with Barnet Council (perfect timing as this was done in the main holiday season). Permission being sought

by the HGHT is for 70 residential units, made up of mostly one or two storey houses and with one four storey block sited behind the M&S store. But, this must be considered as only an outline planning permission request, i.e. permission to develop the land.

Once property developers have bought the land, they will make their own planning application, which may well ask for more than 70 residential units. They may well ask for an intensive overdevelopment like that in Russell Lane.

The proposal has minimum parking spaces and the traffic flow will be from Wellgrove into Chandos Avenue which, along with the surrounding roads, is the main parking area for commuters to Oakleigh Park station. Chandos Avenue also provides access to the High Road. Barnet Council has made it clear that the main traffic flow will emanate from the Wellgrove exit and not the 'new' High Road exit, which is a Right of Way past the new hotel.

RAD need all our support to prevent the ruination of this part of Whetstone and to ensure the wider community benefits from land which over the last twenty years had exclusive use by a minority of local people.

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## Long term future of Friern Barnet Library still in doubt

The residents of Friern Barnet have been distressed to hear about threatened closure by Barnet Council of Friern Barnet Library. The Council has convinced itself that the way to make up the shortfall of income against the cost of services is to close three of its smaller libraries. Such savings will hardly make a dent in the savings they say they have to make.

On Saturday July 16th a fun day was held outside the Friern Barnet Library. It demonstrated the strength of feeling amongst the community

to keep the library open. Families turned up and children played games, fancy dress and face painting were organised by the Save Friern Barnet Library local residents group.

There were many stalls providing food, more games and a petition. Live music for the afternoon was provided by local musicians. The rain did not stop the partying. Helping hands were provided by Friern Barnet residents, the British Legion's social club and representation from the local allotments association. A hand made red letter box was filled with letters, from residents to Barnet Council, asking to keep the library open.

Following such demonstrations of local feeling against the downgrading of the library service, at a Council committee meeting on 26th July to discuss its Library strategy, the Council has come up with a revised strategy that is full of holes and confusion.

It is stated (in the *Barnet & Potters Bar Times*) that the Council hopes to raise some £3 million by selling off its library buildings. Some of this money would go to develop the *artsdepot* as a library (no indication how much such a development would cost), which would take over services provided by the Friern Barnet Library and the North Finchley Library. (First the Council have to get all the planning permissions required for such a development.) The Council want to spend library money on upgrading its landmark libraries (no costings), as well as enhancing electronic facilities in its other libraries (no costings).

But, as no timescales are given, local residents fear a repetition of the Totteridge Library fiasco. The Totteridge Library was sold off by Barnet Council with the promise that a new, better equipped library in a more suitable building would be provided nearby. The Council got a lot of money for the building and spent it. Later, when pressed on what was happening about the new library, residents of Whetstone were told that there wasn't any money for a new library and that they could use the Chipping Barnet or North Finchley libraries instead.

To counter such fears, Councillor Robert Rams, Cabinet Member said (as reported in the *Barnet & Potters Bar*



*Children led the demonstration against the closure of Friern Barnet Library.*

Photograph by kind permission of David Morris

*Times*), "We have to make sure the gap in provision is weeks rather than months." We take that to mean that the Friern Barnet and North Finchley libraries would close one Saturday evening and a few weeks later the *artsdepot* library would open. However, until Barnet Council sell off the libraries they won't have any money to develop the *artsdepot* library.

Another item that came out of the July 26th Committee meeting was that residents have been given until October 31st to come up with "community initiatives" to run their libraries more efficiently. This is taken to mean (*more efficiently = cheaper*) that local residents are invited to man their libraries with volunteers. This would be in line with Barnet Council's strategy in getting the voluntary and charitable sectors to provide essential services. However, local residents want a library service provided by full time knowledgeable professional librarians.

As for Barnet Council's consultation process, many local residents felt that this was a publicity stunt as the Council had already made up its mind. There was not a question about the closure of the Friern Barnet library in the consultation process.

The Council is coming to the end of how it can exploit the voluntary and charitable sector. There are only so many people who are prepared to put in the committed hours to provide vital services.

Another way to save money is to look at some of Barnet Council's extravagances such as the Council's propaganda newsletter, *Barnet First*, 16 pages printed in 3-part colour, and distributed to every household in the Borough, four times a year. This journal should be handed over to volunteers to write, edit, format with a desk top publishing package and distribute. The cost of printing could be raised by contributions from friends and admirers of our councillors. Also, the Council could make efforts to gather the uncollected £16 million in unpaid Community tax.

For further information on saving the Library see:  
<https://sites.google.com/site/savefriernbarnetlibrary/>

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