



March 2008

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 Post Office Advisory Panel
 - The Finchley Society
 - Friends of Friary Park
 - The Friern Barnet & District Local History Society
 - Coppetts Wood Conservationists
 - The London Green Belt Council
 - North Finchley Local Agenda 21

Solution at last for Friary House?

WITH all the "Friars" and "Frierns" around us, you may be uncertain which is "Friary House", but it is the solitary brick building in Friary Park, which has a long and chequered history as home to a now flourishing café, a park keeper and various minor council officials.

For the last few years it has been empty, after a (luckily frustrated) attempt by the local authority to sell it (which caused a mighty furore) or to settle two local charities in it (which would have been appropriate).

Now a fresh and promising approach is being made to find an acceptable use for the building and the *Barnet Voluntary Service Council (BVSC)* has linked up with *Community Matters* to survey which local voluntary organisations might be interested in, and suitable for, occupation of rooms in Friary House on a more or less permanent basis.

On the 4th of February two meetings were arranged and headed by these two bodies at Avenue House, one for potential occupiers as partners, the other for existing local interested parties, such as the *Friends of Friary Park* and your Residents Association, to establish what kind of legal and financial structure could take over a medium length lease from Barnet Council and what restrictions and preparatory work the local authority would have to put into the neglected edifice to satisfy potential tenants.

Representatives from the *BVSC* gave assurances that the café would remain in its location and that there would be no car park established within Friary Park for any new



The future of Friary House looks more assured than before

users of the House.

Your officers are fully involved in this at the present consultative stage and hope that our next issue of this newsletter will be able to report that the *BVSC's* endeavours have achieved a solution which promises to last and will avoid interfering in any way with the many uses the Park is now offering to all ages of residents of the borough.

KR

Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents Association

AGM

**Wednesday 16th April
2008 at 7:30 p.m.**

**Jubilee Room, adjacent to St James'
Church, Friern Barnet Lane, N20**

All Members Welcome

**The meeting will be followed by
an talk on "Community"
by Mr Robert Newton**

Family house in Oakleigh under threat

'The residents of Oakleigh Park area were disturbed by the threat to demolish the delightful mock-tudor house at 15 Oakleigh Park North and have it replaced by a four story block of flats. Local residents have also been infuriated by the way the formal notifications were handled.

The Council sent out letters for neighbourhood consultation in mid-December and wanted returned comments by January 3rd, which in no way takes account of the Christmas/New Year holiday delays and closures at the Post Office, and so giving residents little time to respond.

Also, the formal Site Notice which was issued on 13th December was posted on the lamp post outside number 14, whereas it is numbers 28 & 30 which are opposite number 15.

When local resident Bruce Standing learned of a planning application not long before Christmas he decided to deliver a leaflet to houses in Oakleigh Park North to give an early warning. This was appreciated by local residents, and following a flurry of phone calls to Barnet Council extra time was allowed for comments because of the Christmas period, when many people would be away.

Michael Soliatis, a resident of Oakleigh Park North, organised an effective campaign which resulted in a large number of letters in opposition to the planning application, and also contacted the Barnet Times who published a report and photograph of

protesters outside the existing large Tudor style house. Karl Ruge wrote a letter opposing the planning application on behalf of Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents Association.

Prior to the planning application being submitted someone cut down a lot of trees in the garden of number 15 — there are number of trees still left standing in the large garden. Conifer trees line both sides of the garden and provide the flight path for



The threatened 15 Oakleigh Park North (right) nestles well into this quiet neighbourhood

bats living in the area.

Your Association's environment officer, Dr Oliver Natelson, checked and found evidence of bats in the area. Local residents say they have seen bats in the area. Dr Natelson wrote to the Council insisting that Barnet Council inform the developer that an Environmental Impact Assessment must be carried out, and that he must on no account fell any more trees or demolish the house or any structure in the garden that may contain bat roosts.

With everyone prepared for a fight it was a relief when the planning application was withdrawn. Residents are however on guard in case a new application is made.

BS

Friern Barnet Library

Wednesday 16th April -
A Miscellany of History,
Poetry and Prose by
June Smith

10.30 - 11.30 am.,
Friern Barnet Library,
Friern Barnet Road

All you need are hands

In our last issue of the Newsletter we reported that the hands on the clock at the old Friern Barnet Town Hall (now called *The Chambers*) had been removed. We feared that they had gone for good. However, we are pleased to report that this was only a temporary measure. The clock hands have been returned to their rightful place and, even more good news, the clock tells the correct time.

HG



Illegal advertising signs removed



The Glebelands Nature Reserve along the North Circular Road, before (above) . . . and after ((below)



Two giant advertising boards were erected on the Glebelands Local Nature Reserve on its boundary near to the North Circular Road some time before August 2007. They measured 22 feet long by about 16 feet high and caused much shading of the Nature Reserve behind. Local residents active in maintaining the reserve were particularly aggrieved over this.

The presence of the giant advertising signs was reported by our Environmental Officer, Dr Natelson, to two local councillors and the London Wildlife Trust (Barnet Group); and, they in turn contacted Stewart Murray, Head of Planning and Environmental Protection for Barnet Council

Mr Murray took up our concerns and very speedily organised other council officers to investigate.

An order was quickly served on the company to remove the billboards by 31st January, and by 29th they were gone. The huge steel posts which held up with billboards were removed a few days later.

There are so many giant billboards erected these days that it seems anyone can erect one and hope to get away without obtaining planning permission. There are many billboards in Barnet erected in inappropriate places (close to green spaces and public parks). We wonder if there is any group, or person in any of the council's departments, that has responsibility for monitoring what billboards are erected where, and by whom.

Council promises action over derelict site

Barnet Council has promised to tackle long-running problems caused by a derelict building site at the top of Bellevue Road, N11, after angry residents protested that for six years the property had been semi-abandoned, thus inviting fly-tipping, rubbish-dumping and other hazardous practices in this residential area.

A local resident, Jim Corrigan (of the Holly Park Residents Association) wrote to local councillor Kate Salinger detailing the detrimental effects the property was having on the area and calling for a tough approach to be taken with the 'developer'. Cllr Salinger took the matter up with Council officials and they have promised to get the site cleared and to consider ways of forcing the developer to complete the building work speedily.

In his letter, Jim Corrigan recalled that six years ago, a construction company had begun building offices on this plot (which lies in Bellevue Rd behind the corner property of 95A Friern Barnet Road), but that work soon ground to a halt. "What happened after that has been repeated time and again over the years. As the property begins to take on an abandoned look, people begin chucking rubbish and fly-tipping into it. Eventually, residents make a fuss to the Council, the builders then return and clear the rubbish, do a bit more work on the building – and then disappear again."

Jim Corrigan pointed out that, apart from the potential health problems caused by rubbish thrown into the property, there had been at least one fire burning in the junk there. "Another safety concern is that the high metal fences running along the side of the Bellevue Rd pavement come under more and more strain as more and more items are fly-tipped into the property. The danger is that these fences will fall (or be forced) outwards and over – and will injure a pedestrian on this busy school run. He said another undesirable aspect was that litter thrown into the property frequently blew out again into Bellevue Road,



Junk piles up inside the semi-derelict property in Bellevue Road

which already suffered serious litter problems. (Jim pointed out that all the streets in the Holly Park area were busy pedestrian thoroughfares, including for three local schools, and that litter had long been a problem, despite the efforts of a number of local residents).

"Residents and businesses adjoining this Bellevue Rd property had told me they hoped to erect a gate across the small lane known as Bellview Mews, which runs behind the property, with the aim of smartening the area up and improving security. They were waiting for the 'new building' to be finished before embarking on this – and they have had some wait! So the abandonment of this property has had adverse consequences on the wider area."

Jim concluded by saying it was about 18 months since any work at all had been done on the building supposedly under construction on this site. He urged the Council to resolve the matter once and for all.

JC

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF FRIERN BARNET AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wed 28 March
Finchley Common
by John Heathfield

Wed 23 April
History of the Women's Institute
by Dorinna Diggins

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.

incognito theatre

Mon 31st March to
Sun 6th April 2007

Breaking the Code
by Hugh Whitmore

Performances start at 8 p.m.
Doors open at 7:30 pm.

Incognito Theatre is located in
Holly Park Road (behind the
Health Centre) Friern Barnet,
London N11 3EB
Tickets 0791 287 5700

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