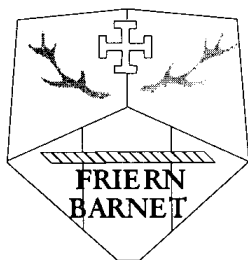


Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association



October 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

Future of Friary House 'cloudy'

The long running attempt to secure a future for Friary House in Friary Park appears no closer to a solution—in fact matters have become distinctly cloudy.

Since 2004 the Council and local residents have been searching for suitable occupants after your Association thwarted Council attempts to sell off Friary House, by the producing the Will of Sydney Simmons, the original benefactor.

In the earlier months of this year your Association were engaged in consultations with "Community Matters" and the Barnet Voluntary Service Council (BVSC). These two bodies have produced a 75-page report, mysteriously entitled VERSION V 3.0, and subtitled "Feasibility Report concerning the redevelopment of Friary House as a voluntary and community sector resource centre."

Whatever a "resource centre" constitutes (and this document is full of jargon which would merit a glossary), we had hoped to establish one as a result of the various meetings (a "stakeholder group meeting" last February and another one March, of various locally based organisations) was to pinpoint bodies who would consider Friary House, or part of it, suitable for their needs, so that a pattern could be worked out to provide for these. At the same time it would have to be established whether one or several such users could and would act as managers or whether the BVSC would be expected to act



Only part of the ground floor of Friary House is in use as a popular cafe

in that capacity. Thereafter the essential alterations and improvements in the building and the need to comply with legal stipulations could be assessed and costed.

Although something like half a year has passed, the impression is that no material progress has been made. Could it be that no organisation consulted is seriously contemplating the use of the house, even though some local charities are clearly in need of rehousing and were involved in the meetings in the Spring?

It would appear that we are back at square one and we can only hope, in the absence of any more helpful communication, that either the Council or the (BVSC) are exploring some of the options detailed in the report or are working on alternative solutions.

Meanwhile, let us enjoy the green-flag quality of the park, the autumn warmth and the friendly quality-service of the Café staff and the popular park keeper.

KR

The Leader listens – but to whom?

In our last issue we raised the matter of the unwanted, unloved, unused public toilet placed outside the old Friern Barnet Town Hall, pointing out that the Council has a special responsibility for this ‘listed’ building. At a meeting on June 30th, entitled “The Leader Listens”, the question of the location of this public toilet was raised by one of your association’s officers, who suggested that the toilet be relocated to a more suitable location; for example, it could be placed outside the Town Hall in Hendon.

Although the meeting was titled “The Leader Listens”, the Leader himself (Cllr. Mike Freer) could not be present and his place was taken by the Deputy Leader, Cllr. Matthew Offord (Matthew is a charming chap, so it was almost the same thing as having the Leader himself present).

In the minutes of the ‘question and answer’ session Cllr. Offord said that “... the location of each of the 27 public toilets would have been subject to the Council’s rigorous planning process. As a result, the location of each public convenience would not be considered as out of keeping with the overall area. This is particularly the case outside the former Friern Barnet Town Hall.”

Cllr Offord doesn’t seem to be able to take on board that planning permission was granted when the Council occupied the old Town Hall and before the old Town Hall was made a listed building and that this toilet is not used.

In a section of the official minutes of this meeting called “resolution” (presumably after Cllr Offord had the opportunity to raise the matter with Council officers), it states:

“There are 7 automated public conveniences (APCs) located on the public highway. There is no income from these APCs as all are free to use. However, the APCs are maintained and operated on the Council’s behalf by J C Decaux who provide the service for 5 units free of charge in lieu of advertising panels in selected locations in the Borough.”

Of the 7 automated public conveniences which the Council officers claim “all are free to use”, we know of at least two where you have to pay to enter them. (No matter, we take this mistake to be a little transcription error that has managed to creep into the minutes.) We would like to know more about this contract with JC Decaux, for example, ‘what is the length of contract?’, ‘what is the performance criteria required by JC Decaux?’ and ‘under what conditions can the contract be made null and void?’.

On Saturday 13th September your officers went out and examined the three public toilet pods in the Friern Barnet and Whetstone area, with the following results:

Old Friern Barnet Town Hall — this toilet required a 20p to open its door. The facilities for hand washing were a bit limited — no soap came out of the dispenser, which didn’t matter too much as there was no water being dispensed.

High Road, Whetstone— this pod is located outside *Walsingham House*, which is about 15 yards from the *Al Fresco* restaurant - the *Demos* supermarket is just across the road. The only problem with this toilet is that although it would accept a 20p entrance fee, the door wouldn’t open and the money was not returned. (Earlier in the week we had visited this toilet and found the door would open when a 20p coin was put in the slot.)

North Finchley— this toilet is located in the car park behind the Autumn House public house. This pod had a red ‘OUT OF USE’ displayed and the door would not open.. Earlier in the week we had visited this APC and found that the toilet paper so jammed in its holder, that only 1/4 of a square inch could be torn off at a time.

The “Leader Listens” could be a more valuable meeting if the Leader or his Deputy took on board what local residents had to say.

HG



Friern Barnet—20p entrance fee



Whetstone—20p entrance fee



North Finchley—free

A small victory for common sense in Holly Park Road

At the end of February this year the residents in the vicinity of Holly Park Road and Bellevue Road intersection, were given notice that the council proposed some traffic management measures for roads close to Holly Park School. The council intended to impose double yellow lines on the corners where the Holly Park Road and Bellevue Road intersect. As well as the double yellow lines at the intersection, the council were also going to introduce dropped curbs at all four corners.

Mike Freestone, Director of Environment and Planning for Barnet Council said that these changes were intended *"to introduce a range of practical measures to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport on the journey to and from school"*.

In the last few years the traffic in school time has been of concern to the parents of children at the school, local residents, the school authorities and Council. Every morning there was traffic chaos in the vicinity of Holly Park school. Something needed to be done.

Local residents had no objection to the dropped curbs but the imposition of double yellow lines was of great concern. However, Holly Park Road and Bellevue Road have been over intensively developed in the last 10 years. A great many of the terraced houses have been converted to flats, and the flats to single room accommodation, so there is intense pressure for parking places.

The plan for double yellow lines would mean that local residents would lose valuable parking space, not just at school times but in the evenings as well as weekends and school holidays (it should be remembered that there are less than 200 school days a year).

A number of local residents objected to the proposed changes and suggested a number of alternatives for traffic management in the area in school time. With the help of local councillor, Kate Salinger, the Department of Environment and Transport were persuaded to come up with an alternative plan, which is to impose waiting restriction between 8:30 to 9:30 & 2:30 to 4:30, Monday to Friday. This is pretty near to the alternative proposal suggested by local resident Richard Perry.

How are the new parking restrictions working out in the first few weeks? The residents are keeping off the yellow lines in the restricted hours (they do park on them overnight). But, there are a few parent/carer drivers who park on the yellow lines in the restricted hours, as well as the zig-zag lines in front of the school, especially in the morning. The number of recalcitrant parent/carers is not great, maybe about ten or fifteen a day. The majority of children walk to school.



There is always one who has to be different

Lack of planning—an age old problem

To Dr Lewis

Dear Doctor,

London is literally new to me; now in its streets houses and even in its situation; as the Irishman said, "London is now gone out of town." What is left of open fields, producing hay and corn, I now find covered with streets, and squares, and palaces, and churches.

I am credibly informed that in the space of seven years, eleven thousand new houses have been built in one quarter of Westminster exclusive of what is daily added to other parts of this unwieldy metropolis.

Pimlico and Knightsbridge are now almost joined to Chelsea and Kensington, and if this infatuation continues for half a century, I suppose the whole of the county of Middlesex will be covered with brick

These and other observations, which I have made in this excursion, will shorten my stay at London, and send me back with a double relish to my solitude and mountains.

Yours always,

Matt Bramble

London May 29th

(from *"The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker by the author of Roderick Random"*, Tobias Smollett, printed 1771, written probably late 1760s)

Friary Park Summer Show

Well – that was a surprise! Following the five-day weather forecast presented by the BBC for the ‘Woodside Park’ area of N12, we were convinced that the whole weekend of 16th and 17th August would be extremely wet. Not a bit of it. We were really lucky and had two fine, but very windy days.

Yor Residents Association and the Friends of Friary Park set up stall together, where we both had photographs on display boards, membership forms and information for all those who wished to find out about our two groups. But did you see what happened to our gazebo on the Saturday? One minute it was upright, and a gust of wind later, the whole thing had come off its moorings and landed two feet behind where it had been pegged down. Two of the joints were broken beyond repair, as was one of the plates that held one of the upright poles. After much re-arranging, we had just three tables to display our collective papers, and some very heavy stones to keep them from blowing away. Sellotape came in very handy. Our display boards had to be condensed as they could only be propped up against the tables.

By Sunday, we had gained squatters rights under the Agenda 21 gazebo, and the three community groups were happy to share until close of play.

The weekend gave us stuntmen on a ‘Wheel of Death’, a dog show, a baby show, dancers, food, drink, horticultural, art and craft competitions and exhibitions. Some say that the height of the weekend was the dog show, others insist it was the sight of Father Adrian on the Wheel of Death. Adrian showed his fearlessness but did not reveal what is beneath his cassock. The Sunday evening firework display was not spoilt, even though the rain did it’s best to make it a damp squib.

It was good that many of you came and chatted with us. We certainly enjoyed our weekend, and we hope that if you came along, you did too.

HH



Reasonable weather meant there was a greater turnout than in the last few years

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF FRIERN BARNET AND DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Wed 22 October
A Historical Gallimaufry
by John Heathfield

Wed 26 November
A Brief History of London Underground
By Peter McMahon

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

Monday 20th October to
Saturday 25th October 2008

The Churchill Plot

by Tony Bilbow &
Mike Fentman

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

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