

# newsletter

Friern Barnet & Whetstone Residents' Association



## Is Barnet Council Ignoring its own Planning Policies ? *The unanswered questions about the Lodge Lane Car Park proposals*

In early 2018 Barnet Council adopted some special planning policies for North Finchley Town Centre which are set out in the snappily named "North Finchley Town Centre Framework Supplementary Planning Document" (SPD).

The objective was to encourage the revitalisation of the town centre and its transformation into "a vital and vibrant town centre playing an enhanced role in serving North London".



*At present, the market in the Lodge Lane Car Park takes place every Tuesday and Friday. If the proposed development goes ahead, this market will only be a memory.*

The Council wanted an improved shopping experience, an improved environment, an enhanced local character, new public spaces and with pedestrians given greater priority, together with more housing. Much of the housing would be in blocks of up to 12 storeys height.

The SPD identified six "Key Opportunity Sites" (KOS) with potential for comprehensive mixed use development, to "drive" the town centre's regeneration.

Lodge Lane car park ("Lodge Lane") is one of these "Key Opportunity Sites".

FBWRA understands it is intended an application for planning permission to redevelop the car park will be submitted later this year by developer Joseph & Partners. The application would be made in accordance with the provisions of the Joseph's agreement with the Council - the "Phase 1 Application". Council planning officers have been in discussion with Joseph & Partners with regard to this (such discussions between developers and planners are quite normal).

Lodge Lane's attractions to a developer- and also to the Council as its owner- are obvious - a large site with no long

term tenants to be removed before development can commence.

However, inconveniently for both a prospective developer and also for the Council (as landowner, who would usually expect to receive a share of the profits) the redevelopment of the site in advance of other "Key Opportunity Sites" identified in the SPD would be in conflict with the provisions of the SPD, which as a policy document should guide decisions affecting the area to which it applies, including, of course, Lodge Lane.

### Redevelopment of Lodge Lane Site

Some of the relevant provisions of the SPD are as follows (the paragraph numbers are those of the SPD).

**6.57** A new strategy and location for the North Finchley Market will be required PRIOR to the redevelopment of the site. The Market is expected to move to the new public realm space at Ballards Lane.

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## Local musicians give a series of nine concerts to show appreciation for the NHS and Carer staff in their Holly Park community during lockdown



*(From left to right) Joana Valentinavicutė (violin), Stan Popov (viola) and Roberto Sorrentino (cello) played a concert of two string trios by Beethoven - String Trio No 1 in E flat major, opus 3 and Serenade in D major, opus 3. The concert took place outside Joana and Stan's apartment in Holly Park Road, on Sunday 28th June. Joana and Roberto are members of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Roberto is a colleague of Joana and Stan, and does not live in the Holly Park area.*

In appreciation for the efforts given by local NHS and Carer staff and wanting to give something back, local professional classical concert musicians gave a series of nine concerts.

The driving force behind the series of concerts was violinist Joana Valentinavicutė, for without her it is doubtful if the concerts would have taken place. Joana was given critical support by her husband, who looked after their little boy while she was playing (except for the last concert when a family friend took over child minding).

At each concert the musicians played two pieces, variously by J S Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Brahms, Dvořák as well as lesser known composers - Jean Marie Leclair, Geoffrey Collings and Bohuslav Martinu.

The residents of Holly Park Road listened from their front yards, open front doors, some from their open windows, others stood on the pavement or in the road - at all times, staying safe and obeying the 2-metre rule.

The conditions for outside concerts were as good as they could get during the lockdown. There was no background

noise from the North Circular Road traffic; no airplanes flew overhead; no trains thundered through New Southgate station and only a few cars/delivery vans passed by.

Three of concerts took place in the front room of Joana and Stan's apartment. On four occasions Joanna was joined by local pianist Nicola Elmer - Nicola played from inside her apartment, while Joana played on the pavement. For one concert, Joana was joined by Colin and Helen Callow which took place outside Colin and Helen's house in The Crescent (Helen played piano from inside).

Audience numbers varied from about 50 to about 80. It was hard to estimate how many in a room were listening from their open windows. For the concert in The Crescent, some people stopped working on their allotments and came over to the fence to listen. Each concert lasted between 40 and 70 minutes.

One of the benefits of these events was to bring the local community together - some neighbours talking to neighbours to whom they had never spoken to before.



*Continued from page 1*

**6.58** *The new development should reprovide the number of existing public car parking spaces at Lodge Lane, recognising the importance of this car park to the town centre function whilst minimising related vehicle movements. A decked car park up to two levels or another car parking solution which responds to the sensitivities of the site, should be explored. A clear strategy will be required to ensure minimum disruption to town centre parking during the redevelopment of the car park.*

**6.63** *Development should retain or reprovide existing retail frontages and residential units or other town centre uses above. Existing public car parking levels should be maintained.*

**7.42** *In addition to the July 2017 car parking survey there is a need for a specific town centre parking strategy.*

**8.3** *In order to achieve the significant growth potential which will secure North Finchley's regeneration a coordinated and comprehensive approach is necessary.*

**8.9** *Whilst the Council recognises that development itself may come forward in a phased manner, it will require that proposals are part of a comprehensive approach in order to avoid piecemeal proposals that are prejudicial to the overall vision.*

**8.10** *Where proposals are for significant developments in the SPD Area, the Council will want to see these brought forward accompanied by an overall masterplan with associated planning application(s), to demonstrate they are part of and/or contribute to the comprehensive regeneration approach."*

Back in May we asked the Council some questions to explore the conflict between the official planning policies and the developer-friendly "Lodge Lane first" strategy that it appears is actually being pursued.



*Where will we park to go shopping when the Lodge Lane disappears ? according to one consultant (when asked the question), replied "somewhere else"; but, there isn't anywhere else.*

specific North Finchley town centre parking strategy, and how does that position differ from that which applied 12 months ago?

**3.** Who will be responsible (Council or developer) for producing the "clear strategy .... required to ensure minimum disruption to town centre parking during the redevelopment of the car park"? What is the current position on preparing the strategy? When will a draft of the strategy be published?

**4.** What is the current position with regard to settling "a comprehensive approach in order to avoid piecemeal proposals that are prejudicial to the overall vision" and will the Lodge Lane planning application be a part of that settled comprehensive approach or will it be a piecemeal proposal?

**5.** At the point the Lodge Lane planning application is submitted will it be part of an overall masterplan with associated planning application(s), to demonstrate the Lodge Lane application is part of and/or contributes to the comprehensive regeneration approach?

Answer came there none. Readers will be able to draw their own conclusions- see Lewis Carroll's "The Walrus and the Carpenter".

So we ask the Council another question -

**why is Barnet ignoring its own planning policies?**

## **The Council has to answer these questions**

**1.** What is the position with regard to settling a new strategy and location for the North Finchley Market, and relocating the Market to that location prior to redevelopment of Lodge Lane ?

**2.** What is the current position with regard to the

David Thompson

## Intense development proposal for former Desira car showroom site spells disaster to adjacent Coppetts Wood Nature Reserve

The Coppetts Wood Nature Reserve, which is protected Metropolitan Open Land, is under threat from a proposed housing and retail development planned for the former Desira garage and car showroom site in Colney Hatch Lane (near Tesco).

Montreaux Colney Hatch Lane Ltd has applied for planning permission to demolish the existing buildings and to replace them with 2 buildings of up to 7 storeys in height, with 204 flats and a food store (earmarked for Lidl) at the ground floor of the northern building, with the residential units above. There would be 102 car parking spaces, mostly at basement level for the 204 flats and 65 for the food store.

*"This proposal if it were to go ahead would be a disaster for the local area"* - comment from local resident.

Although Barnet's Council's housing demand analysis is that the greatest need is for larger (3 bedroom +) homes for families, the developer plans just 12 larger flats, together with 108 2 bedroom and 84 1 bedroom units (our view is that to be in line with the Council's assessment of housing need there should be 99 3 bedroom, 83 2 bedroom and just 22 1 bedroom flats - quite a contrast).

The Council's website records 176 comments about the planning application. Of these 174 are objections, including FBWRA's. The lack of support from local people is quite telling. The Council website reads *"Comments Received. 176. Objections: 174 Supporting: 0"*.

The Nature Reserve lies immediately to the west of the Desira site and the concerns for the Reserve focus on the issue of disturbance. The old car showroom and garage was a use which was oriented towards Colney Hatch Lane, thus limiting disturbance to the Reserve.

The Montreaux proposals are very different, with the rear of the site, immediately adjacent to the Reserve, likely to be much more intensively used. At the rear will be the service yard for the food store and close by the entrance to the residential car park. As well as noise the Nature



*There is always another site to be developed for housing. The Government requires Barnet to provide another 2000-3000 annual units in the next years (otherwise facing financial penalties). But, there is only one nature reserve. This nature reserve needs to be cherished by the Council. Putting up large blocks of flats which reach to 2 metres of the nature reserve is unacceptable. This piece of land was light industrial and should remain so.*

Reserve and the wildlife it hosts are likely to be disturbed by light pollution from the development. The wood adjacent to the site boundary is described as a foraging site for bats and a sensitive bird roosting/nesting site. Further, the windows of the upper level flats would be at risk of bird strikes.

*"The Nature Reserve and the wildlife it hosts are likely to be disturbed by light pollution from the development."*

Of course, as well as the potential impact of the development on the Nature Reserve and its wildlife, the interests of the local residents should not be forgotten. Many of the objections that have been lodged mention the increased congestion and pollution in Colney Hatch Lane (which is frequently gridlocked) that will result from the traffic generated by the development and parking and congestion in neighbouring roads due to inadequate parking provision within the scheme.

There are also frequent references to the already generous provision of supermarkets in the local area, such that there is no need for another and to the high density nature of the development and the height of some of the proposed buildings, which will be out of keeping with the locality (*"The two blocks of flats would be perfectly at home in Central London BUT not in a primarily residential suburban area,"* wrote one local resident objecting to the proposals) and extra pressure on doctors surgeries, primary schools and other local services.

*David Thompson*



## FBWRA VE Day 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary photographic competition

As members for whom we hold email addresses, and who are therefore the happy recipients of FBWRA's periodic "Member Update" emails, will recall, in April we invited entries for pictures of decorations (including homes, gardens and even cakes) celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of VE Day - the end of World War 2 in Europe.



*Janine's Front Garden*

We worried that we would receive no entries. Happily, our fears were groundless – our members (and guests) did not let us down, and we had a good response. We chose two winners-

Grace Russell, aged 13, from Friern Barnet, for pictures of her cake (a 3-layer sponge, coloured and decorated with raspberries and blueberries) and Janine Young, also from Friern Barnet, for a picture of her very patriotically dressed home with a well populated (with appropriate social distancing) front garden, which we judged a winner because of the sense of



*Grace's Cake*

participation that it conveyed. Congratulations to both our winners, who have been rewarded with boxes of chocolates. See above for their winning entries –

## New LED lighting in Barnet changes the view at night

### But who gets the money from electricity savings?

Many years after Barnet residents converted their domestic lighting to LEDs, Barnet Council in the last months has got round to have LEDs installed in the street lamps in the Borough.

The change in the night cityscape is remarkable - some don't like the change, others are enthralled by the new mood the lighting has created. Where the new lighting is near to a tree the richness of the illumination may well make one stop and look a while.

The advantages of LEDs are well known - they consume less electricity; they last longer and hence have lower maintenance costs. Of course, Barnet Council doesn't use direct labour to run and maintain its streets lamps - this service is contracted out to a private company.

It is rumoured that the lighting service company get a sizable percentage of the cost savings. Why the lighting service company should benefit by more than the cost of purchasing and installation of the new bulbs is unclear to some residents of the Borough.

The residents of the Borough should be told the nature of the deal (for example, how many years the cost savings will run for), as well as the 1 year and five year savings to the



Borough. Such information can be provided without breaching commercial confidentiality.

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## Peaceful anti-racist protest in Friary Park

Following controversial and sometimes violent Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests elsewhere in London and in other cities, in Friern Barnet local people organised a peaceful and socially-distanced anti-racist protest in Friary Park, Friern Barnet on the afternoon of Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> June.

About 150 people attended including 20 or so children, some in push-chairs. Those attending were mostly young (25-40) adult white and black people – but there were few Asian people. There were 2 policemen, one of whom confirmed our estimate of numbers.

Most people seemed to be family groups, many with masks and reasonably socially distanced. There was a general air of being at a picnic, an escape from “lockdown”. Many of the children were too young to appreciate the background and the issues. There were quite a few home-made and computer generated small banners, some Black Power salutes (and one Arsenal scarf).

One mixed race gentleman (30's) walked past, shouting out that the BLM organisation was racist and that, actually, “All lives matter.”

The event had been publicised on the “NextDoor” website and whilst the initiative drew praise and support from some, it drew criticism from others.

The organisers of the event responded to this criticism by seeking to distance themselves from the BLM organisation- “We have nothing to do with the organisation. We are a group



*A number of protesters took the knee, some others also gave the Black Panther's salute.*

*of local people who are wanting to take the anti racist agenda forward.” Back in the park, no-one was taking any notice of the statue – Queen Victoria gazed down serenely.*

*David Thompson*

## Membership

Membership of FBWRA costs only £5 per household per calendar year. It provides quarterly newsletters, e-mail updates, social events, meetings on local issues, and a chance to influence what happens in your neighbourhood.

Application forms from FBWRA.org or from FBWRA Treasurer, 12 Macdonald Road N11 3JB

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### 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' Associations of Barnet
- The Finchley Society
- Friends of Friary Park
- Open Spaces Society
- The Friern Barnet & District Local History Society
- Coppetts Wood Conservationists
- The London Green Belt Council
- Love Whetstone

### Forthcoming Events

Incognito Theatre, Holly Park Road Performances are Sunday at 6pm, Monday - Friday at 8pm, Saturday at 3pm and 8pm.

**All shows cancelled until further notice**

FRIERN BARNET & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY  
start 7:45 p.m.

**Meetings postponed until further notice**