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Local News is our Aim

THE ARCHER



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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Northern line to shut at weekends

By John Lawrence

The Northern line will close at weekends for Tube users in East Finchley as London Underground carries out a major programme of upgrading work.

Severe disruption will be caused as passengers are diverted onto bus replacement services. They are being warned that their journey could take up to 40 minutes longer.

Sections of the Northern line will be suspended during virtually every weekend during 2006, starting from Easter, to accelerate the track renewal work being carried out by Tube Lines, the private company that runs the line.

Original plans to shut the Northern line entirely for three weeks in August were scrapped in favour of the weekend closures, after protests from local councillors and passengers.

Tube user Martin Earl, of

Leslie Road, said: "Whatever way they choose to do it, this is going to mean massive disruption for people trying to get into London at weekends, especially families. I imagine most won't bother."

George McNulty, London Underground Service Director, said: "We recognise that the Northern line's performance is not as we would like, but we are looking forward to Tube Lines taking this opportunity to accelerate the amount of track renewal work undertaken. This will mean some disruption for passengers."

Tube travellers are being urged to check for any likely disruption to their journey before setting out.

See page 3 for how your journey will be affected



Protesters make themselves heard outside the library. Photo by Erini Rodis

Library service cuts go ahead

By Daphne Chamberlain

Barnet Council is set to cut East Finchley's library services with little explanation despite more than 1,400 signatures on a petition and over 100 letters of protest.

The Library Users' Group presented its petition before the Council's budget-setting meeting last month, but the administration secured enough votes to enable the cuts to be made in the coming financial year.

From 3 April, the library will shut from 1-2pm each day and will close on Thursday evenings at 5pm instead of 8pm. The library's status will be downgraded from 'Town Centre' to 'Community'.

Local Labour Councillor Colin Rogers told the meeting: "There has been a massive response against library cuts in East Finchley. These cuts will make it easier to close the library or to cut even further in future."

"Why has East Finchley been singled out so unfairly, against the Council's own statistics? Why are reasons not given? The East Finchley people in the gallery tonight care enough about this issue

to show up in the rain."

Councillor John Marshall dismissed this as "nonsense", saying there were no plans to close the library, and users were fewer than at Mill Hill.

Liberal Democrat councillor Susette Palmer said she "could do anger for England" at the way Barnet has decimated library services.

Attacking the plan to downgrade East Finchley's library, Labour Leader and local councillor Alison Moore said: "If East Finchley isn't a town centre, I don't know what is. The Tories believe that people are not interested in libraries, only in council tax. That's not what I hear on doorsteps." She said cuts to the library service would be reversed if Labour won control of the Council next month.

Battle of the statistics

Barnet Council's own statistics reveal that East Finchley is not the lowest-ranking Town Centre library either in terms of visitors or of loans. East Barnet has 13% fewer visitors (but has higher loan figures), while Mill Hill loans 10.4% less (but has more visitors). Both of these libraries retain their Town Centre designation. Nevertheless, supporters of East Finchley library point out that they do not want to see any library in the borough downgraded.

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