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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.

Save our library from these cuts

By Daphne Chamberlain and Sheila Armstrong

People who care about the future of East Finchley library are being urged to join the campaign against proposed budget cuts that will result in fewer staff, shorter opening hours and a reduced service.

In an open letter (see page 11), the East Finchley Library Users' Group warns there is little time left to fight the proposals to cut Barnet's library budget by £326,000. A final decision is expected to be made by the council in March.

East Finchley library would be the worst-affected single library, with its funding cut by £57,000. To achieve this, the plan is to close the library every day from 1-2pm and one evening a week, and to

reduce the staff by two.

Barnet would make the rest of the savings by slashing £200,000 from the borough's media fund used to stock library shelves with new books, CDs and DVDs, by reducing other library posts, by replacing the libraries network and by cutting school library resources.

In the letter Adam Gee and Polly Napper write of the "severe" cuts that will see East Finchley

downgraded to a community library, making it vulnerable to future cutbacks.

"These cuts are not yet final, but we do not have much time to fight them," they write. Urging everyone to contact council leaders before it is too late, they say: "Letter writing is not a glamorous campaigning activity, but it really does make a difference in sufficient quantities."

Leslie Gilbert, a member of the borough-wide Friends of Barnet Libraries, told *THE ARCHER* that he began using East Finchley library 48 years ago and had never seen the staff as over-stretched as they are now.

He said: "Now, on top of last year's cuts, the council is proposing to reduce the staff by a further two full-time posts. If this is allowed to go on, what will become of our lovely library? It is not too late to demand that the proposal should be abandoned."

A Barnet Council spokesman said library cuts were due but that every effort would be made to ensure the same range of stock and availability through all libraries.



In too deep. Photo by Paul Chapman

Rising tides in Muswell Hill

By Paul Chapman

Maintenance work on a water main led to some flooding for local residents at the bottom of Muswell Hill Road in December. Sandbags were needed to protect some houses in the area and the traffic was blocked on this route between Highgate and Muswell Hill.

Firearms discovered in The Grange

The Barnet Homes team on The Grange estate were shocked to discover a cache of firearms while they were preparing for the weekly refuse collection, just before Christmas.

On 18 December, they were moving the large rubbish bins out of their alcoves in each building, ready for collection. At Hilton House a sawn-off shotgun, complete with ammunition, was found hidden behind the bins, and at Middleton House an antique muzzle-loading pistol was found.

The police were called, and the local Neighbourhood team attended. They decided to call the Police Firearms group, who made the weapons safe and took them away. The police investigation is on-going.



East Finchley library photo by Erini Rodis

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