



Have your say on the future of Stanley Field

By Daphne Chamberlain

There will be a public meeting for the people of East Finchley to say what they want the future of Stanley Field to be. It will be held on Tuesday 17 January at Holy Trinity School (just off Market Place and beside the field). The meeting proper will start at 7.30pm, but doors will be open from 7pm for informal discussion.

"We want as many people as possible to come along, so we can decide together where we go from here," said Roger Chapman, of the East Finchley Development Trust. The Trust is backing local proposals to make the field a centre for sports development. "Even if you don't agree, come along and let us hear your views," he added.

MP Rudi Vis, local councillor Colin Rogers, the FA's Roger Reed, and George Davis, organiser of a successful sports development centre in south London, similar to the scheme proposed by local people for the field,

have all been invited. Architect Chris Hampson will be there to go through the plans he and his architectural partner have drawn up for the field.

Council leader Brian Salinger has told Mr Chapman and Mr King of The Walks Residents' Association that the future of the field will be decided early this year. It is believed that building developers are waiting in the wings.

The meeting organisers will be distributing leaflets and notices throughout East Finchley in the New Year. Come and have your say on 17 January.

Home-Start praises children

Organisations such as East Finchley's Home-Start Barnet play a vital part in the work being done to safeguard local children, the organisation's annual general meeting was told.

Paul Fallon, Barnet's Head of Children and Families, was guest speaker at Home-Start's eighth AGM, held in the Old Barn Community Centre in Tarling Road.

He told the audience of volunteers and representatives from other local youth and family organisations that children were portrayed in the media as either angels or devils. Every generation thought its children were worse than the one before. "We are strangely ambivalent about our young people," he added.

Mr Fallon highlighted government policies, both good and bad. The former included a reduction in child poverty and more parental choice, although not for the kind of parents normally visited by Home-Start volunteers.

He said it was the local authority's job to make things better for children, and that involved a partnership between the statutory and voluntary sectors. Locally they were now seeing a decrease in the number of children in care in the borough, from 400 two years ago to a current 365. The reason for this was because of organisations such as Home-Start Barnet.

He pledged continuing financial support from Barnet for the following year and urged those present to encourage friends to become volunteers.

Home-Start Barnet supports families who live in the borough, have at least one child under five and are experiencing difficulties. This can be anything from post-natal depression to feelings of isolation or finding it hard to cope with twins or triplets.

Volunteers are recruited and trained, then matched with a family they visit once a

week for up to three hours and help in a variety of practical or emotional ways. It is a lifeline for many families, and is known to help prevent family crisis and breakdown.

The scheme is always looking for volunteers. The next (free) training course starts on Tuesday, 17 January and runs for eight weeks on the same day each week. If you are interested, or can help in any other way, please call the Home-Start office on 020 8371 0674.



Councillor Alison Moore (left) and Christine Watson admire the Grand Draw prizes at the Winter Fair. Photo by Helen Drake

Local artists create an impact

By Helen Drake

A framed print from Tark Butler, a stoneware pot from Peter Hale and a photographic print from Ketan Majmudar were the prizes won by the three lucky winners of the Grand Draw held at the East Finchley Open (EFO) Winter Fair held on Sunday 20 November.

The prize winners were announced towards the end of the event by Councillor Alison Moore, who picked out the winning tickets alongside Christine Watson, one of the organisers of the Fair, which this year attracted an increased number of visitors.

Martin School was once again awash with original artwork as 37 exhibitors set up their displays in the two main halls. Alongside established exhibitors were newcomers such as Ketan Majmudar (cards and prints), Patricia O'Brien (etchings and monoprints), Ann Froomberg (paintings and hand-painted silk scarves), Romaine Dennistoun (wildlife paintings) and Lesley Brooke

(jewellery).

Monica Peiser, one of the Fair organisers, said, "We're excited to have ferreted out so many artists and craftspeople from the locality and we're sure there are plenty more hiding away."

She added that the group had a wide range of different skills that complement each other, but observed that it would be "nice to have some textile workers" and appealed to weavers, woodworkers and toymakers to get in touch.

Visitors to the Winter Fair were asked to pay a voluntary entry fee of £1 to be given to local charity East Finchley Neighbourhood Contact (known as Contact). The

organisers of the Winter Fair would like to thank everyone who came for raising an amazing £600.

Find out more from www.eastfinchleyopen.org.uk

Charity cheats

By Ann Bronkhorst

Decluttering after Christmas seems such a good idea. Those clothes collection leaflets that drop through the letterbox suggest a worthy way of clearing out wardrobes while helping... well, whom, exactly?

I have seven different leaflets in front of me. Between them they claim to distribute clothes to needy people in 'third world countries', 'deprived areas of the world' and 'Eastern European countries'. One refers to 'our local heritage and environmental project' (no details given) while another urges us (vaguely) to 'help those who really need support'. Kosta Ltd says: 'We support HKL Charity' and Help & Trust assures us that 'God will reward for your good hearts' (sic).

A closer look reveals a marked lack of usable contact information. Phone numbers, where provided, don't answer, or "The answerphone is full". One number is in Lithuania! Occasionally there's an email address or a company registration number so the company could, in theory, be tracked down.

On their track

Rupert Jones of *The Guardian's* Jobs & Money section

did some tracking last August, exposing several firms that have been investigated by local trading standards departments, the Office of Fair Trading and the Advertising Standards Authority.

Pippa Coombes, a licensing officer for Leeds City Council, says 48 prosecutions have been brought since 2002. Often the companies, told to withdraw leaflets and to stop suggesting that they are bona fide charities, simply re-name themselves. Ambertop's leaflets have reappeared headed Orellana, while Kraslava Service Ltd. now seems to be Europe Suppliers Ltd. but keeps the same company registration number.

On the make


These scams are profitable: a two-person operation can make on average £170,000 a year. Methods include setting up fake collection banks next to genuine recycling bins. Items donated in good faith are sold on for up to £600 a tonne in Eastern Europe and Africa, while legitimate charities lose an estimated £1m a year by not receiving these goods.

If you fancy some detective work, find out from Barnet or Haringey if the collector named on your next leaflet has been licensed, or phone the Charity Commission helpline on 0870 333 0123.

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