



The charred remains of the shed at East Finchley Allotments.

Arson at the allotments

A burnt-out lawnmower and charred cups and gardening tools lie among the blackened remains of a shed that was destroyed by arsonists at East Finchley Allotments in the last week of June.

The wooden structure burned for a couple of hours and destruction was total. Residents in Creighton Avenue and Bedford Road reported seeing huge plumes of black smoke above the scene. Fire crews were called to the allotments and brought the blaze under control. One theory is that the arsonists climbed over the fence from Coldfall Wood and set about causing damage.

Invasion of the recycling bins

By Sheila Armstrong

From October the recycling service in Barnet will change and it means an extra bin for every household. Some homes, even those with small gardens, will need to find space for three large wheely bins.

Bin number one will be the regular rubbish bin we all have now for household waste that cannot be recycled. Bin number two will be blue and is for all items that can be recycled, taking the place of the existing small black and blue bins. Glass, paper, cardboard and more types of plastic will go in here.

Bin number three will be for green and all garden rubbish. Only the green bin is optional; however it's not clear yet what you do with garden waste if you don't opt for a green bin – make your own compost, perhaps.

All these bins are the usual 240-litre size, but Barnet Council says the new blue bin's footprint is only a very little bigger than that of the current blue and black stackable bins. Nevertheless, it's still three bins instead of two if you want the full recycling service.

Black and blue bins will be collected on the same day from October, green bins on a Saturday. The old black and blue boxes may be kept by residents if wished, or taken to the recycling centre in Summers Lane.

In addition, residents will be given a new food waste recycling bin, which is very small, also blue, and can be taken outside without much difficulty. More than 30% of what we put in our black bin currently is food waste and if collected separately it can be turned into compost.

The changes are being made because the Government has asked all local authorities to recycle more on the basis that it's possible to recycle 70% of household waste. Pressure on landfill sites will be lessened and Barnet's environmental impact will be reduced.

All the new arrangements are for houses. Those for people living in flats will be very little different from now, mainly just relabelling of the bins currently in use.

At the time of writing, the new bins are due to be delivered around 14 October. Letters will be sent to residents in July and August detailing arrangements. Keep up to date on the Barnet website www.barnet.gov.uk/14-october, phone 020 8359 4600, or e-mail first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

The future of East Finchley Post Office

A public meeting organised by the Communication Workers Union was held in East Finchley Library on 3 July to oppose plans to close the Post Office on Viceroy Parade and incorporate it into a local shop.

Simon Berman, senior stakeholder manager for the Post Office, told the meeting that the Crown Office network was running at a loss of £40 million per year and was under Government instructions to break even by March 2015.

Plans to achieve this include franchising 70 Crown Offices. These will be run by a private owner alongside another retail business. Simon envisaged the same range, level and continuing provision of services as at present.

Doubts and warnings

This was doubted by some. East Finchley councillor Arjun Mittra reminded the audience that, despite similar promises in Finchley Central, the Post Office had closed and the service was completely lost to local residents. He raised concerns about the effect on our local business community of losing our Crown Post Office, which would reduce footfall on the High Road even further.

Ian Ward, CWU postal executive council member, commented that there was no suitable outlet on the High Road large enough to accommodate the six counter serving positions and private space for customers presently provided by the Crown Office. Any moves would mean a reduction in counters available and a severely reduced service, he claimed.

He said that Post Office staff could opt for redeploy-



Left to right - Cllr Arjun Mittra, Ian Ward, Cllr Colin Rogers, Simon Berman, Anita Turner (PO) Photo by Diana Cormack

ment or voluntary redundancy to the detriment of services to customers and that there would also be no long-term guarantee, as the franchisee could give up the contract at any time.

Questions from the floor included concerns about the effect on the elderly and infirm.

Unanimous vote

At the end of the meeting chaired by Councillor Colin Rogers, a vote against the franchising was carried unanimously.

Bids for the franchise closed on 27 May. A formal six-week consultation period will follow any announcement should a retail partner be found. In the event of no agreed franchise partner, East Finchley will remain as a Crown Office.

Apple a day

By Jane Howard

With a bumper fruit harvest in prospect this year, East Finchley Abundance plans to hold another Apple Day on 12 October. They may be able to help local residents pick fruit from their apple (or any other) trees.

They would love to hear from any volunteer fruit pickers to join the team! Most of the fruit will be given to the owners, who will be asked in exchange to donate some for juicing and distribution on the Apple Day.

Anyone interested, or with already picked surplus fruit that they are happy to donate, is welcome to contact EFA at efabundance@btinternet.com or on 020 8815 0197. Otherwise, just pop along to one of their meetings at the Old White Lion pub next to the station on the first Monday of each month at 6.30pm.

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