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THE ARCHER




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CARS & COURIERS

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A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Stanley Field goes to Academy

By Daphne Chamberlain

By the time you read this, Stanley Road Playing Field will have been sold to the Archer Academy, East Finchley's new free school. Barnet Council were due to sanction the sale at the Cabinet Resources Committee meeting on 25 February. *THE ARCHER*, which has no connection with the school, heard the news just before our deadline for this issue.

Community use

The freehold purchase price is £3.55 million, to be paid by the Department of Education. The site will be developed to include a school building where the Herbert Willmott Centre stood. This will house younger pupils of the Academy, which already has premises in the former Institute building in Beaumont Close. A sports centre, all-weather pitch, and ancillary community facilities will be on the playing field, with community sports use available outside school hours. The sale is subject to planning permission limiting built development, and an agreement ensuring community use. However, details of this agreement are not yet worked out.

Barnet Council acknowledges that Sport England have to give consent to the loss of playing fields, but hope that a limit on building development and improved community sports facilities "should mitigate the risk of objection".

Questions raised

The council also says that Sport EF considers this scheme would meet the aspirations of the local community, blaming the "swift" bidding process for a lack of public consultation. When Sport EF began negotiations with potential property developers last year, it was on the understanding that the East Finchley community would be consulted throughout the process.

Questions are already being asked. Many people in this community are particularly concerned about what will happen if and when the Academy outgrows this field and tries to sell. Would developers re-enter at that stage?

Next month, we will look at all these questions in depth. Meanwhile, please let us know

your views, and remember to follow *THE ARCHER* on Facebook and Twitter. Our contact details are on page 2.

A public meeting

Supporters of Stanley Field are meeting at Holy Trinity Primary School, Eagans Close, N2, at 7pm on Wednesday 13 March to discuss the topic: Should the Archer Academy purchase go ahead? The supporters are establishing themselves as a regular organisation, with a president, secretary, treasurer, steering committee, and voting members. They say, "Please come, join the Supporters, and discuss the future of the playing field".

Valued space

Although Stanley Field has stood locked and empty for years, East Finchley has always valued this three-acre green space, and campaigned against it being lost to housing development. When Barnet Council offered the site to bidders, Sport EF submitted a business plan to create a multi-sports facility for the whole community, with backers including the Marathon Trust and Sport England. Barnet rejected the plan, but asked Sport EF to work with private bidders towards a mixed development (*THE ARCHER*, January 2012).

Post Office up for grabs

By John Lawrence

Changes could be on the way for East Finchley's Post Office after the announcement that it is one of 70 Crown offices that the national network hopes to hand over to a private operator.

Our High Road branch may be converted into an open-plan space that is part-shop, part Post Office, or the postal operation may be moved entirely to the premises of another retailer in the area.

Consultation

A spokeswoman for the Post Office told *THE ARCHER* that it was committed to having a branch in the area and that the High Road office would stay open if a franchise partner couldn't be found. She also said no compulsory redundancies were planned as part of the strategy.

"East Finchley Crown Post Office has been identified as a branch that could potentially be partnered with a retailer; it will be subject to a six week public consultation to gather the views of the local community," said the spokeswoman.

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Children at Martin Primary dressed in Edwardian clothing to celebrate the school's 100th anniversary. Turn to page 7 for the full report.

First Big Local meeting

The first meeting to discuss the Big Local initiative for the regeneration of The Grange area and surrounding roads in East Finchley (The Archer, February 2013) will take place on Tuesday 12 March at 6.30pm at Boydens Pantry, 42 Church Lane, N2.

This first meeting is particularly for those residents who want to get involved and help spread the word through the community. Big Local rep Paul Bragman is always ready to help or simply chat. Please let him know in advance if you plan to attend this first meeting. His contact details are 020 8442 2379, 07887 721825 or paul@communityregen.net

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