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THE ARCHER




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CARS & COURIERS

August 2015 No. 259 **20p**
ISSN 1361-3952 where sold

A community newspaper for East Finchley run entirely by volunteers.

Children march to save our library

Children will lead one final protest march in a bid to stop Barnet Council imposing cuts that would see East Finchley Library dramatically reduced in size or closed altogether. The demonstration is being planned at a time when the council's own figures confirm just how popular the library still is.

Campaigners are asking for a massive turnout of children, families and all library users

for the march on Saturday 12 September. It will start at East Finchley Library at 10.15am and go along East End Road to Church End Library where it will be joined by a brass band and a red bus before moving on up Ballards Lane to North Finchley Library.

Decision time approaches

As we were going to press, Barnet Council was due to publish the results of this year's public consultation on the library service. The council's final report, spelling out how the cuts will be made, will be published on 11 September. The community may be asked to run East Finchley Library itself but there is no guarantee this will be feasible. The library may be moved to much smaller



Father Gray Featherstone, back row, and the members of Holy Trinity Church enjoy their summer barbecue on Sunday 12 July, where younger members of the congregation were sporting T-shirts, stickers and balloons in readiness for the library march in September.

premises, or it could be shut completely.

The report will be considered at a council meeting on 21 September, and then probably referred to a full council meeting on 20 October.

September's protest march is therefore one of the last chances for library users to show their feelings. If the photos on this

page are anything to go by, very few young readers want to lose East Finchley's service.

What the numbers say

Figures obtained through a Freedom of Information request and passed to *THE ARCHER* show that East Finchley Library has seen an increase in children's borrowing of 18% over the last five years.

Seven in ten people living in N2 are registered users of the library and East Finchley has the highest frequency of visits in the whole borough.

East Finchley Library costs £150,000 a year to run. Campaigners point out that this is far less than the £180,000 salary paid to Barnet Council's chief executive. Together, Barnet's five threatened libraries account for less than 0.25% of the council's budget.

10,000 borrowers

Parent Susie Huntington told us: "Every year more than 10,000 people borrow books from East Finchley Library."



Save our library: Young readers and students put their message across.

That doesn't include the many people who use the library for other reasons like revising for exams, after school clubs, internet access, community groups and surgeries run by our local councillors. The library is particularly important to the children and young people of East Finchley."

March organiser Polly Napper, of East Finchley Library Users Group, said: "We are throwing a final big effort at our children's march on 12 September. We need as many people as possible to come!"



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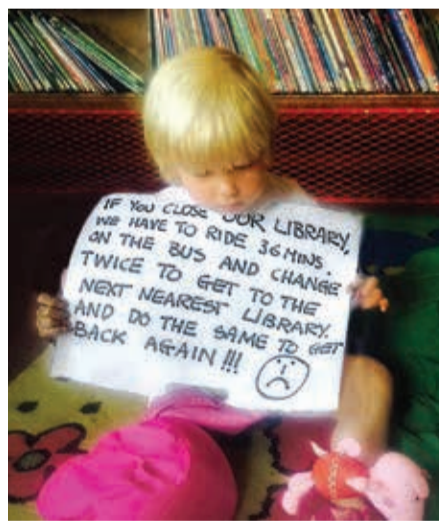


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