



Safer Neighbourhood team may be axed

By Janet Maitland

Have you noticed that far fewer Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) are patrolling our streets? Their numbers have been progressively cut since 2010 and soon we may have none at all. The Metropolitan Police is considering scrapping all 1,017 of the PCSOs working in London neighbourhoods in order to meet expected Government spending cuts of £800m.

PCSOs may have fewer powers than police officers, but their presence makes a significant difference to levels of crime and antisocial behaviour. "All the evidence shows that fewer police on local streets means higher crime," said Andrew Dismore, London Assembly Member for Barnet and Camden.

Crime prevention plus

But PCSOs do not just patrol the streets. The PCSOs based at the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) on the High Road, have provided invaluable crime prevention advice over the last 10 years, both in the community and at surgeries in their office, including an email service warning residents when a crime was committed in their street. They also kept an eye on vulnerable people at particular risk of crime.

Jan Lovell, the last remaining PCSO in East Finchley, saved the life of an 89-year-old man when she checked on him and found him close to dying from hypothermia one cold winter's day in 2010.

"PCSOs are not just tested familiar faces in our communities but a valuable source of intelligence and a vital part of neighbourhood policing," said local councillor Alison Moore.

Cuts without consultation

In East Finchley our SNT has been progressively cut from nine officers for each ward to just one Police Constable and one PCSO. If PCSOs are abolished, it seems

unlikely that the SNT office will remain open if just one Police Constable remains.

Met Commissioner Sir Bernard Hogan-Howe has warned that the budget cuts could mean the overall loss of up to 8,000 officers in the capital. Police stations may also be sold, leaving

only Colindale station for the whole of Barnet.

Andrew Dismore said these decisions will be made in December, after no consultation with local people. He urged residents to register their concern by writing to the Mayor at City Hall SE1 2AA.



Victory Auto Services are on the move

By John Dearing

Victory Auto Services has been located in East Finchley for some 26 years. Originally based in the High Road, principals Mark Bharadia and Wayne Adams moved their operations to the current site in Fortis Green about ten years ago.

Last year their lease expired but they have been allowed to remain on a monthly basis. Mark said that although they fully intended to stay in East Finchley for as long as possible, it had become apparent that they would eventually have to move as the owners intend to redevelop the site for residential use.

As a result, they moved to the former Clarendon service garage in Muswell Hill, at 57 Coniston Road, off Alexandra Park Road, and have been operating from there as a second site. Wayne said the garage was formerly used by a limousine hire company that used to bring film stars into London from Heathrow.

Mark said he was upset about having to leave East Finchley and many of his customers had also expressed concern to him. He thanked them for all their support over more than a quarter of a century. All existing customers are very welcome at the new site and Mark hopes they will be willing to drive just a little further in order to continue receiving the service they are used to.

It is likely that the Fortis Green site will remain empty for an extended period, given that the owners have yet to apply for permission to redevelop.



Movement classes at the Ann Owen's Centre. Photo Mike Coles

Keep your motor running

By Toni Morgan

'Move Every Way Every Day' was the message at the Ann Owens Centre in Oak Lane, N2, as part of an international scheme to encourage older people to stay active.

"You don't have to be super fit to benefit from exercise," said Cynthia Robinson, chief executive of the EXTEND Exercise charity, as she dropped in on an exercise class led by Lesley Chowen (a former ARCHER deliverer).

The class is one of several that take place at the centre each week and some of the members have been attending for several years. Apart from providing regular exercise, the classes offer vital social contact, entertaining music and

good fun too.

Exercise has been proven to deliver improved movement, enhanced mood and reduced stress levels. EXTEND Exercise delivers classes nationwide to 25,000 participants, almost all of whom have muscular, joint or circulatory conditions, or even all three. The charity has run an international day for older persons since 1991.

To find out more about available classes at the Ann Owens Centre, contact the team there on 020 8203 5040.

Bishop Douglass Christmas party

The Bishop Douglass Christmas party this year will be held on Thursday 10 December from 5-7 pm. All East Finchley residents who are over 65 are welcome and you should book your place without delay.

As usual, you will be welcomed with a glass of sherry by Year 10 students and enjoy a three-course meal followed by carol singing and entertainment by pupils and staff. Games of bingo and a gift from Santa Claus will round off the evening.

Transport can be provided for those who need it. To book your place, phone 020 8883 0433 and leave your name and a contact number and someone will get back to you.

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