



“You can’t vote, you’re not on the list!”

By John Lawrence

We’ve occasionally seen reports of elections going chaotically badly in new democracies or developing countries but in May the same type of shambles was visited on the voters of East Finchley.



Early morning voters are turned away from the Youth Theatre. Photo Mike Coles

Hundreds of people wishing to cast their votes in the London Mayoral and London Assembly elections turned up at polling stations in Strawberry Vale, East Finchley Library and Finchley Youth Theatre only to be turned away because their names weren’t on the voting list. Thousands were affected in the same way at the 155 polling stations across Barnet.

As we all found out very quickly, Barnet Council had sent out the wrong voting lists. Council chief executive Andrew Travers has since stepped down over the blunder and an independent investigation has been launched.

Disenfranchised

THE ARCHER heard about the problems just 10 minutes

after the polls opened at 7am. Readers got in touch to tell us they were being turned away. Many were on their way to work and some said they wouldn’t have the chance to return later in the day.

“I’ve voted for many years but I wasn’t on the list and neither was my wife. But then my teenage son was,” said one of our deliverers. “The man in front of me was in the same situation and was shouting ‘You’ve disenfranchised me!’”

There was further confusion when people were told they would be able to vote if they brought their polling cards. Many did so and were still prevented from casting a vote.

Investigation

East Finchley’s councillors

Alison Moore, Arjun Mittra and Alon Orbach alerted council officials from the polling stations. The situation finally settled down more than three hours later around 10.30am when the council set up a system of emergency proxy votes and delivered new lists to polling station staff.

A Barnet Council spokesperson said: “Following problems with electoral registration lists on Thursday 5 May, which meant that some Barnet residents were unable to vote, the council is launching a full independent investigation.

“The terms of reference will include a full review of the issues that arose as well as the appropriateness of the arrangements in place for the EU Referendum in June. The review will conclude by the end of May and the findings will be presented publicly to the General Functions Committee.”

Ewe won’t want to miss the fair

Highgate’s annual fun day out The Fair in the Square returns on Saturday 11 June and coincides with the country’s big weekend marking the Queen’s 90th birthday, the theme for this year’s fair. The annual free event fills N6’s Pond Square and South Grove from 12.30pm to 5.30pm with live music, stalls and children’s activities.

Royal fun will be had by children playing Hunt the Crown and making their own crowns, tiaras and guardsmen’s hats in the Creative Tent being run this year by Cass Art and fair newcomer Mini Mozart telling the story of The Princess and the Pea. There will also be Punch & Judy, Shoot4Goal, fair rides and the ever popular Sheep Show.

Over at St Michael’s Church you will be able to listen to its choir whilst enjoying homemade cakes and tea at its café,

or take a tower tour for views over London. Lots of local businesses, charities and shops will be among the 100-plus



Ginger the sheep shearer at Fair in the Square. Photo Nigel Sutton

stalls selling crafts, plants, clothes, books and international foods. More details from www.fairinthesquare.co.uk.

Man dies on train line

A man died after being hit by a Northern line train on 10 May. Emergency services were called to reports of a man lying by the side of the tracks at Woodside Park station just after 6am. Officers from the British Transport Police and the London Ambulance Service arrived shortly afterwards, but the man was pronounced dead at the scene.

A police spokesman said: “The man’s injuries were consistent with being hit by a train. The death is not being treated as suspicious as there is no indication that a third party was involved.”

At the time of going to press, police were preparing a report for the coroner who will hold an inquest to determine the exact

cause of death. Officers were working to identify the man and inform his family.

Following the discovery of the man, the Northern line was suspended between Finchley Central and High Barnet, while services on the rest of the line were disrupted for several hours.

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