



Rebuilt community centre may house another nursery

By Janet Maitland

Barnet Council has unexpectedly proposed that almost half of the ground floor of the planned new community centre on Tarling Road should be designated as a nursery.

Plans for a new two-storey community 'hub' on the site of the Old Barn were submitted last November after months of often heated consultation. Twenty one people have objected to the scheme. Local residents had expected a final decision in January, but instead received a letter notifying them of the plan for the nursery and asking for comments by February 12th. A final decision will now be made "sometime in the spring".

Traffic concerns

Several residents have objected to the nursery, asking why one is needed when there already is a nursery opposite the Old Barn. "The entrance to Fallows Close is already congested enough from the users of the Newstead nursery," said one resident. "To expect the already busy narrow residential streets round the centre to take further traffic is unbelievable."

Council's case

Why the change of plan? A council spokesman said a nursery was in keeping with the former use of the Old Barn centre as a nursery. "We're responding to a local needs analysis and a shortfall of child-care places in the local area," he said. "We intend to engage with groups, including nursery providers, which provide clear demonstrable community benefit. A former charitable nursery

tenant of the Old Barn is currently working alongside the council to participate in a business case exercise to assist with developing this methodology."

The council informed *THE ARCHER* that adding a nursery had no implications for its intention to lease half the new building to the Somali Bravanese Welfare Association (SBWA) in order to replace the facilities they lost when their centre on Coppetts Road was destroyed in a racist arson attack in 2013, other than making the centre "a more viable prospect overall".

However, the nursery plan means that the council have had to move the plant room into space provisionally offered to the SBWA. "This has reduced the space on offer to them," said a council spokesperson.

Other ideas

Julia Hines, Grange Big Local Partnership Board member, said that local people they'd consulted wanted useable space in the area for young people, including teenagers. "We also see a need for flexible spaces for people of all backgrounds to meet informally, for example in an on-site cafe, for information and advice and for supporting local enterprise and employment," she said.

We asked Newstead nursery if they would like to comment, but they declined.



Race the Neighbours: last year's start.

Starting gun fired on race return

By John Lawrence

The successful Race the Neighbours event, staged for the first time last June on a route between Cherry Tree Wood and Muswell Hill, is coming back in 2016, with even more places for runners.

Last year 250 amateur athletes of all ages took part in the 10k run. This year race organisers are aiming to create spaces for up to 330 participants and they've set the date as Sunday 10 July.

Supporting charity is the prime aim of the event and money raised this time will help the nationally known Bobath Centre for Children with Cerebral Palsy on East End Road. In return, the charity will be providing volun-

teer marshals on the day to steer runners along the course.

Greg Swimer and Avi Freeman, two of the race organisers, said: "This year we're planning to open up the field just a little but we're very keen not to lose the small and intimate race that everybody loved last year."

Friendly rivalry

As before, the same friendly rivalry is back with runners signing up to race for East Finchley

or Muswell Hill. N2 won the Cherry Tree Cup in 2015, but N10 participants will be determined to restore their neighbourhood pride in 2016.

And the same route will be used, taking in Parkland Walk, Alexandra Palace, Highgate Wood and starting and finishing in Cherry Tree Wood. Entries will open on Monday 18 April. To join the mailing list email racetheneighbours@gmail.com

Actor saddles up again

By Nick Allan

A 630-mile cycle ride in July from London to Geneva in Switzerland is the latest undertaking for a local actor in his endeavours to raise more money for Action Medical Research. Peter Noble, of Brackenhurst Road, N2, is determined to complete the gruelling long distance ride in memory of his daughter Michaela, who was born prematurely in 1999 and died just after her second birthday.

Seasoned campaigner Peter has already raised thousands of pounds for this charity but claims he is not a natural athlete. He told *THE ARCHER*: "I'm not really looking forward to it and it's certainly not for the love of cycling. My daughter spent many months in hospital and underwent bowel operations and a liver transplant, so I was inspired to support Action Medical Research as it is funding studies into premature birth."

Demanding ride

Peter will join 49 other

cyclists who will take six days to achieve this year's challenge which will take in rural Burgundy and climb the tough Col de la Faucille, the 4,341 ft / 1,323m high mountain pass which in the past has featured in the Tour de France.

He has been helped in his quest by local bike shop Bike and Run who helped him select his 'steed' for the venture. So, if you see Peter out on his bike around East Finchley give him a wave or even better, sponsor him at www.action.org.uk/sponsor/waywardmagic.



Ready to ride: Peter Noble. Photo Mike Coles



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