



SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS

LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Jan Lovell, of the East Finchley Safer Neighbourhood Team, updates us on the latest crime news. Jan and the team can be contacted by email at: EastFinchley.snt@met.police.uk, or by phone on 020 7161 9014. Follow the team on Twitter @MPSEastFinchley.

Stencils

A main concern for us all in East Finchley is the prevention and detection of crime using mopeds to steal phones. A very low-tech initiative across the borough will be to keep folk mindful and aware of their surroundings when using their phones. Stencils will be applied to footpaths where these crimes most occur. In East Finchley these will be initially by the tube station, Fortis Green, and by bus stops on the High Road. Ward officers PC John Kenny and PC Phil Scottow located a stash of four stolen mopeds on the ward in September, thereby preventing multiple crimes and anti-social behaviour.

Forensic tagging

Operation Venice is the Met's response to scooter theft and scooter enabled crime. The Met is trialling the use of 'forensic tagging' spray to help identify suspects and scooters involved in crime.

Forensic tagging spray is a uniquely coded water-like substance, containing a fluorescent dye that glows blue under a UV light. The spray is discharged from a hand-held canister onto the suspect, and the vehicle they are riding. Suspects, vehicles, clothing and property found with marks on them can be analysed to determine the time, date, location and circumstances when the spray was discharged.

Neighbourhood Watch

Several of you felt there should be more Neighbourhood Watches; to promote this in your street please contact www.barnetboroughwatch.co.uk. There you can register your interest in beginning a Watch and they will assist you.

Council matters

Fly tipping, dog mess, litter, graffiti are unpleasant. They can be reported directly to Barnet Council at www.barnet.gov.uk. Follow the links to report these issues, the phone numbers are there too.

Drones

The Metropolitan Police has begun an eight-week trial of an unmanned aerial vehicle or drone to support its policing operations. It will be available to officers dealing with incidents where air support would be of use, such as high risk missing people, serious traffic collisions, searches for suspects, weapon sweeps and identification of cannabis factories.

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Shock at lead poisoning risk in drinking water

By John Lawrence

A couple are urging Barnet Homes to take action after making the shock discovery that drinking water was being fed into their flat in East Finchley through lead pipes that were outlawed in the 1970s.

Tahir Bhimji and Rahimah Ibrahim stumbled across the pipes during building works at their ground-floor three-bedroom flat in Elmshurst Crescent, N2, and they suspect that hundreds of their neighbours on the estate could be affected in the same way.

Cumulative effect of lead

The couple have lived in their flat for 10 years and immediately raised the risk of lead poisoning with their freeholder landlord Barnet Homes. Tahir said they were told their pipes were not a high priority.

Tahir told us: "When we raised the issue we were told there's a backlog of these things but lead pipes were banned in new homes more than 40 years ago. Elmshurst Crescent was built 50-60 years ago, before the ban, but they should have got round to sorting it out by now."

"We'd like to start a family but we are worried about the risk of lead poisoning. When the inspector came round he was visibly alarmed at seeing lead pipes. A survey found lead levels were within legal limits but no one has any idea of the cumulative effect. It's very worrying."

Tahir and Rahimah are private owners but pay a £160 service charge each month to Barnet Homes on top of the council tax they pay to Barnet Council.

Replacement programme

A spokeswoman for Barnet Homes said: "We are working with Affinity Water to replace lead pipes in the communal areas as well as our tenanted flats as part of the Lead Water Mains Replacement programme across the borough and we plan to complete all these works within the next five to six years."

"We are currently procuring a contractor to undertake another survey of lead pipes in the area. Once we have done this, we will contact residents and inform them of when this replacement will start and the duration of these works."



Screen time: The busy computer club at the Five Bells pub.

Nice cup of tea and a slice of computer help

By Toni Koppel

Every Tuesday between 2 and 4pm, our computer club gets together at the Five Bells pub in East End Road, N2, to share tips and chat about anything internet-related. Participants bring along their smartphones, laptops and tablets and other members of the group are available to help with friendly advice.

All help is offered free of charge, and the tea and coffee is only £1 per cup. The pub is very welcoming; a group of tables is reserved for us at the back of the pub, and the manager often puts out some free biscuits or chocolate bars for us.

The group was started about three years ago as part of a Barnet Council initiative to reduce isolation and loneliness. Between 10 and 20 people turn up regularly.

So what goes on? At our latest meeting Gillian helped James adjust the touchpad sensitivity and turn up the volume on his phone to make it easier for him to use while Martin helped Paula check that her tablet was able to connect to the internet.

Girdari spent time with Alan transferring photos from his iPad to his iPhone using Air-drop. Josie, who had never used the internet before coming to the club, is now happily searching on Google for local events to attend, and for jazz songs that she loves to hear again.

Spare kit welcome

The club also welcomes donations of unwanted tablets and laptops as long as they still have their power supply and can connect to the internet. Please bring them along to the group on a Tuesday.

Find out more by emailing FiveBells.ComputerClub@gmail.com, or just turn up on a Tuesday afternoon.

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