



Letters

Burden on nursery
Dear Editor,

We write to you as a group of concerned parents from Monkey Puzzle nursery East Finchley. Following the latest plans for the nursery site, Monkey Puzzle has worked hard to secure a new location to protect their business and our children's early year education (*The Archer*, November 2025).

However this move will be hugely disruptive to the families of those 120 children, aged six months to four years. As such, we are publicly asking:

Barnet Council, please allow the nursery to stay at its current site until September 2026. Monkey Puzzle cannot pay rent for two sites from March, and the disruption, especially for 2026 school starters, will be severe. Can you commit to waive the rent for our children's wellbeing? If not, do you have a confirmed tenant for the Park Road site before September 2026?

Places for Barnet [Cherry Tree Quarter site developers], you must appreciate the financial burden this move places on Monkey Puzzle. With nursery fees already high, any further increase could price families (likely mothers) out of work for good. What funds will you commit to support this move, which is a direct result of your poor planning and appalling communication?

Sadly, the site could sit empty for months or years whilst planning stalls. Yes, housing is desperately needed in the UK (reminder: none of the Cherry Tree Quarter homes will be affordable), however Labour policy also promises childcare that helps children thrive. Barnet Council's actions have directly gone against this. The council has failed to competently respond to parents concerns. Coming to *The Archer* feels like our last resort.

Ella Doltis,
And 32 Monkey Puzzle
parents as co-signatories
Editor's note: The Archer has asked Barnet Council and Places for Barnet for their responses

Tesco parking
Dear Editor,

The news of another Tesco Express (*The Archer*, November 2025) is a concern. This will further corporatise the character of East Finchley High Road and introduce unwanted pressure on our independent stores.

However the absence of parking or loading areas outside the site opposite the tube station is especially problematic.

So, will Tesco's articulated trucks park illegally on the zig-zag markings by the pedestrian crossing? Or block the road by taking over the parking bay from the traffic island to Dan and de Carlo's? Neither is feasible, so where and how would deliveries be made?

My concern is that Barnet Council will fail to make this a condition of the premises licence in the same way that they failed

at Tesco's branch at 208-10 High Road. Here, dangerous and illegal parking is condoned several times a day. Trucks park with impunity from penalty charges and as a consequence shopper's cars and vans follow suit.

At the existing branch the trucks park on a double yellow line and block the cycle lane. This forces southbound traffic into the northbound lane with that traffic pushed into the other cycle lane, whilst traffic exiting Hertford Road or pedestrians crossing the High Road have no clear view.

This must be addressed before any permissions are granted.

Andy Stone,
Address supplied.

Phoenix window
Dear Editor,

In the archive section of your September edition, you rightly praised the extensive restoration project at the Phoenix Cinema 15 years ago, which included the first-floor café and balcony. At the same time, the then Manager, Paul Homer, was delighted that Ruth Kersley made the Phoenix stained glass window, donated in memory of my late husband, Ralph Crisp, a local campaigner who sadly died during the window's fabrication. The beautiful window was widely admired but where is it now? The popular café has also sadly gone, along with the balcony. I contacted the artist who told me the previous executive director Rob Kenny assured her last December that he wanted to re-instate the Phoenix window in a light-box, identifying the wall in the foyer at the start of the staircase, saying it would be installed in March 2025.

Since then, my understanding is that the artist, despite sending many emails to the new executive director Kathryn Smith since May 2025, has received no replies or acknowledgments. You reported that the recent sale of the land to the rear of the cinema would ensure its long-term future but this does not appear to include re-instatement of the Phoenix window, much missed and admired by many.

Sue Crisp,
Brackenbury Road, N2.
Editor's note: The Archer approached Kathryn Smith at the Phoenix for a response. She told us: "Currently the window is in storage whilst we're still looking at additional works to take place at the cinema. We want to keep it safe whilst we align our plans."

Overflowing bin
Dear Editor,

Is it just me or do other people have problems with Barnet's green bin collection? I paid £100 for the bin to be collected every fortnight and not once have they managed it. Endless form filling, sending in

complaints and practically pleading with staff over the phone to send someone to empty my green bin has not improved things. It's now been six weeks since my bin was emptied and it's overflowing. Surely it just can't be me... can it?

Denise O'Reilly,
Juliana Close, N2

Online decline
Dear Editor,

The East Finchley Medical Centre apparently along with every other practice in the country is now stopping phone communication and offering only online services. For those who are too old or who do not use or are unable to use online services, too bad! Yet another step in our declining country. Time for us to wake up and push back on behalf of those who are unable to protect themselves.

Antony Perry,
Address supplied.
Editor's note: East Finchley Medical Centre, in Baronsmere Road, N2, sent a message to patients saying a full triage system was being introduced from 3 November via eConsult, an online consultation form. All requests for appointments and medical advice should be made via eConsult. Anyone unable to use the online service would be helped by phone.

Eat locally
Dear Editor,

We recently celebrated my 41st birthday at the wonderful Silvi restaurant on the High Road. Paulo, the owner and chef, always makes us feel so welcome with our little boy (and in this case, extended family). We have visited many times over the last 12 months and it's a little slice of Italy in East Finchley.

Hospitality is an extremely challenging industry right now with huge costs put onto restaurants over the past 12 months which means small, family-run restaurants like Silvi need East Finchleyans to show support and spread the word. Pay a visit, you'll have a great time and leave knowing you've supported a lovely local business.

Timothy Love,
Sedgemere Avenue, N2.



Send your letters to:
news@the-archer.co.uk

Letters without verifiable contact addresses will not be printed. Contact details can be withheld on request at publication. We reserve the right to abridge letters for reasons of space.

Ask Joy: How can I get rid of my guilt?

Here at *The Archer*, we have introduced an advice column to give help and support. Joy is a trained counsellor and an East Finchley resident, and she'll be tackling issues that matter now.



No problem is too big or too small to be shared. Every email will be answered by Joy and we will anonymise those that go into print, so confidentiality is assured. Joy trained as a counsellor in the 1990s and worked in education for 20 years with young people and parents. She has many years' experience of listening and problem-solving. It's always good to talk, so don't hesitate to reach out.

Email Joy at askjoyatthearcher@gmail.com.

Dear Joy,

I'm a mum to a wonderful toddler who's truly the light of my life. She was born prematurely, and the past two years have been completely consumed by caring for her and making sure she thrived. Thankfully, she didn't really have any issues and is doing brilliantly, and I'm only just starting to feel like I'm getting my own life back.

But here's the dilemma: whenever I take time for myself, whether it's focusing on my career, picking up old side hustles, hobbies I loved, seeing friends, or even just having a quiet moment, I'm overcome with guilt. I worry that I'm neglecting my role as a mum, even though I know she's happy and well cared for. How do I let go of this guilt and embrace this new chapter without feeling like I'm failing at motherhood? **RK**

Dear RK,

Understandably you put your life on hold when your daughter was born. It must have been a frightening time. But she is thriving now and you're looking for balance. Being a mum is hard work. It's demanding of time, emotion and headspace. Trying to do this job perfectly is unrealistic and isn't healthy for either of you. If you're busy being the perfect mum, does that mean

she has to be the perfect child?

Try to let go of perfection; maybe good enough IS enough. Instead of expecting to be the best mum, accept that sometimes you won't be. That doesn't mean you're failing, it means you're being human. Show your daughter that it's OK to make mistakes and also how to get past them.

You want to send her out into the world as a strong, independent and fully rounded human being. Perhaps the best way to do this is to lead by example. See your friends, invest in your job, work on hobbies and side hustles, carve out some quiet time for yourself. This isn't you being selfish, it's you showing your child how to find fulfilment in life whilst being a good-enough mum, and you really are.

Where to look for help or advice:

www.bliss.org.uk - type 'parents' into the search bar and it will take you to what is on offer from Bliss (for babies born premature or sick)

www.tommys.org - offering help and support including premature births; type 'premature' into the search bar and you will see a whole page of resources for parents