



Letters

Unliveable homes?

Dear Editor,

Robin's letter in the July edition of The Archer supporting the building of 1,485 homes at the Great North Leisure Park in North Finchley rather misses the point.

We do need new homes but these must be fit to live in. As I write we are in our third heatwave of the year, reminding us of the urgency to cope with a changing climate. This excessively dense proposal at the leisure park (four times greater than recommended for the poor transport) with blocks close together will create an urban heat island.

It does not leave sufficient space between blocks for cooling green spaces and trees. Many of the flats cannot cool their homes at night by opening windows each side as they only

have windows facing one way. The so-called affordable units are the worst affected.

Flats there will have tiny outdoor spaces so there will be no chance of escaping to a cooler garden. And where is the external shading to windows?

Barnet Council recognised this poor design but unfortunately sheer numbers outweighed all the planning guidance for good home design.

We have known the planet is heating up for more than 20 years yet still new housing is not being designed for climate resilience. This is an opportunity lost to bring well designed housing to Finchley.

Mary Hogben
Finchley Society



High rise: An artist's view of how the leisure park development will look

Waste of space

Dear Editor,

As I compost most of my general food waste by using my garden composter, I must advise that the new Barnet Council collection system introduced in March 2026 for meat and fish waste etc is not working for me.

Since the inception of this scheme, I find today, for the third time, Barnet has failed to collect my food waste. Short of inventing a robotic collection box that can attract the attention of the collection team, I have decided with regret not to participate in the scheme any more.

It's a pity and sorry to kick up a stink about it.

Michael Thomason
Abbotts Gardens, N2



Uncollected: Food waste brown bins



Nice to meet you: Prince Edward chats to passing Archer Academy students during his visit to Leopold Road, N2

Royal encounter

Dear Editor,

We were on our way home from school one day in June when we came across a wonderful surprise. We happened to see Prince Edward visiting the community garden on Leopold Road and were introduced to him.

He asked us about our plans for the Duke of Edinburgh Award and made us feel comfortable and at ease. He was very friendly, and it was a really special and memorable experience. We felt very proud to have had the opportunity to meet him.

Lucy and Maya
Year 9, Archer Academy



Where East Finchley gets its news

News team: Our article in last month's edition

Keep up the good work

Dear Editor,

I very much enjoyed Margaret Crockett's "Where East Finchley gets its news" in the July edition of The Archer. I remember the early days of the paper. From the beginning it soon became one of East Finchley's gems, helping to cement the strong sense of community that the area has always had.

I used to write pieces for it that I came across now and again; think of it as citizen journalism. And I was pleasantly surprised to see in this May's Archer Archives of 25 years ago that you had pulled out a piece about the windscreen of our local milkman's float being deliberately smashed with stones. I just happened to be walking past after it had happened. I took a photo and sent it in.

Although I moved from East Finchley to Whetstone over 20 years ago, some of my family and friends still live in the area and I still have a deep connection with it. Keep up the good work.

Martin Earl
Simmons Close, N20

Errant sign

Dear Editor,

At the eastern end of Squires Lane, where it joins the A1000, facing the ramp on to the North Circular, there is a large Road Closed sign on a tripod. It has been there for at least a month but there is no road closed ahead.

Is it the work of a prankster or did road workers forget it after some works? Either way it needs to be removed. We locals know to ignore it. Pity the poor visitors who might change their planned route.

Fr Terry Tastard,
East End Road, N2



Misleading: The Road Closed sign

Information is power when it comes to fines

Peter O'Shannessy never imagined that collecting his daughter from East Finchley Tube station would end with a lesson in the power of a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. Here he explains what happened.

On the evening of 23 April this year, roadworks were in place along the High Road between the Tube station and the junction with East End Road. Temporary barriers created a contraflow that directed traffic into the bus lane.

Like everyone else, I followed the car in front, with several more vehicles following behind me. A couple of weeks later, I received a £100 Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) for driving in the bus lane.

I appealed to Barnet Council, explaining that the temporary traffic management had directed vehicles into the lane, and suggesting that other motorists may also have been caught out.

I even suggested that better communication between the roadworks team and the council might have avoided the situation altogether.

To my surprise, my appeal was rejected. Although the council accepted there had been a contraflow, they said I should have left the bus lane before the enforcement camera and then rejoined it afterwards. Reluctantly, I paid the fine rather than risk the charge increasing.

The whole thing didn't sit right with me, so I submitted a Freedom of Information request. It was free, easy to do and, as it turned out, very revealing.

The figures showed that the camera usually issued fewer

than 10 PCNs a day, generating around £400. On 23 April, however, it issued 170 PCNs, bringing in £10,800.

Not long afterwards, I received a letter from the council thanking me for bringing the problem to their attention. They acknowledged the error, confirmed that my PCN would be cancelled and refunded, and said that everyone else affected would also be contacted and reimbursed.

If you were one of the 170 drivers caught by the East Finchley High Road bus lane camera that day, keep an eye on your post.

Receiving a PCN is one of the more annoying perils of modern life. Therefore, it stands to reason there are little more joyful things than possibly having 170 PCNs cancelled. Sometimes, simply asking the right questions really can make a difference.

How to make an FOI request
Make a Freedom of Information request by writing to the organisation concerned by letter, email, social media or by online form if they have one.

You should give your name, a contact postal or email address and a detailed description of the information you want.

For example, you might want all information held on a subject, or just a summary. The organisation has 20 days to respond to your request.

Advertise to our readers across N2

Advertise in The Archer and you will reach 10,000 homes and businesses around East Finchley every month. We estimate that could mean up to 20,000 potential customers see your advert. We want to spread the word about your business and we always offer competitive rates and generous discounts. Find out more at www.the-archer.co.uk/ads_index.php or email us at advertising@the-archer.co.uk

Re-Griddable solution from page 9

Across:
SHOW
LIVE
OVEN
PERT
Down:
SLOP
HIVE
OVER
WENT

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.