

barnetfirst

issue 46 July 2011



Building for the future
How Barnet is changing

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Leader's column



I took over as leader of the council in mid-June after my colleague Lynne Hillan resigned due to ill health. Any new leader would like to be able to make promises about how they will introduce a range of new services and transform the borough. This is not however the time for such promises.

The council is coping with a limited budget – less next year than this – and a growing demand for our services. The information published in the middle of this magazine makes clear the scale of the challenge – the rising demand for services for children and older adults alone could take up the entire budget of the council if we do not make judicious changes.

I hope I will be able to bring my experience in business to planning the future of the council. I know that a successful business needs to minimise day-to-day costs while making the right strategic decisions about the future.

Barnet is a successful borough, wealthier than the national average but still with pockets of deprivation. I hope the decisions we make will support that success in difficult times, and help ever more residents share in Barnet's success.

Yours

Richard Cornelius

Contacting your council

Corporate Customer Services

tel: 020 8359 2000

email: first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

Contact us and we will identify the correct service or person you are looking for

Street-based services

tel: 020 8359 4600

Covering refuse collection, holes in the road, abandoned vehicles and graffiti

Parking enquiries

tel: 020 8359 7446

email: parking@barnet.gov.uk

Planning and licensing advice

tel: 020 8359 3000

Social Care Direct

tel: 020 8359 5000

Out of hours emergencies

tel: 020 8359 2000

Barnet First is published by Barnet Council's Communications Team. Please contact Sue Cocker on 020 8359 7039 or email barnet.first@barnet.gov.uk

News in brief

A bargain to be had at borough's first furniture reuse centre

A warehouse with a difference has opened its doors in Barnet, offering high quality used furniture at discount prices.

The Barnet Furniture Centre on Queens Parade Close, Friern Barnet, offers a huge variety of restored items such as sofas, tables, chairs, beds and wardrobes, as well as a wide range of bric-a-brac.

Hundreds of residents have already taken advantage of the bargains on offer, with the centre selling more than £10,000 of items in just ten weeks.

The centre also gives people the opportunity to donate good quality furniture they no longer want or need.

The warehouse, run by an independent charity, is looking for more volunteers to help prepare the growing number of items within the centre's workshops. Volunteers will be able to develop new skills and it could be a step towards full-time employment.

The centre's founders hope it will help divert more than 125 tonnes of furniture away from landfill each year, supporting Barnet Council's waste prevention efforts.

For more information, or to volunteer visit

www.barnetfurniturecentre.org
or call 020 8361 6802.

47th Mayor of Barnet sworn into office



Councillor Lisa Rutter was sworn in as the 47th Mayor of Barnet at the annual meeting of the council at Hendon Town Hall on May 17 2011.

The Mayor's Escort will be her husband Mr Mark Rutter with Councillor Barry Evangeli appointed as her Deputy with his mother Dora as Deputy Mayoress.

During her Mayoral year, Councillor Rutter will support three charities: Barnet Young Carers and Siblings 'BYCAS', The Outward Bound Trust and The Alzheimer's Society, which leads the fight against dementia.

The new Mayor said:
"I'm honoured to have been given this opportunity to represent

Barnet as its First Citizen. I look forward to meeting residents from all walks of life across the borough, and hopefully, as Mayor, make my own contribution to borough life."

Elected in May 2006, Councillor Rutter serves the Brunswick Park Ward.

Works underway at Dollis Valley Green Walk



With phase one footpath improvement works now complete, preparation is underway for the second phase of footpath improvements in Windsor Open Space in the Dollis Valley Green Walk.

Footpath improvements can be seen at **Brook Farm Open Space** (from Totteridge Lane to Western Way), **Brookside Walk** (from Hendon Lane to Bridge Lane) and **Brent Park** (from Bell Lane to North Circular Road).

Riverside Walk and Windsor Open Space are also set to be revamped into fantastic new play facilities such as the one opened by former Mayor of Barnet, Councillor

Anthony Finn, at Brookside Walk in May.

The next stage of works is to carry out repairs and maintenance of bridges along the length of the Walk, such as those already completed at Dollis Road (pictured overleaf).

The Walk received a grant of up to £400,000 from the Mayor of London's Help a London Park Scheme after winning a public vote.

Help a London Park was established to invest £6million in improving the quality and safety of London's parks.

The Walk provides an important green corridor for wildlife and recreational use through the heart of Barnet.

For more information visit www.barnet.gov.uk/dollis-valley-green-walk

Mayor of Barnet unveils new school buildings and children's centre



Childs Hill School and Children's Centre is the tenth scheme to

have been delivered on time and on budget within Barnet's First Class Schools Programme.

Pupils, parents and staff celebrated the official opening of their new £3.1million school facilities, children's centre and a dedicated Autistic Spectrum Centre (ASC) – Pathways.

The Worshipful the Mayor of Barnet, Councillor Lisa Rutter, officially opened the school by cutting a ribbon and unveiling a plaque outside the new Foundation Stage Building.

Childs Hill School and Children's Centre have been brought together under one roof, providing state-of-the-art education and recreation environments for the local community, built by Kier London.

For more information on the First Class Schools Programme, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/first-class-schools

Volunteers show the way with public transport mentoring scheme

Volunteers are being sought to take part in an innovative project designed to help mentor people with learning disabilities in how to safely use public buses.

The 'Going Places' scheme will see volunteers with learning

disabilities given training which allows them to pass on their travel skills to others living with similar disabilities.

Barnet Mencap, which is running the project, is looking to recruit as many as 12 Volunteer Travel Assistants.

The pilot stage of the scheme was supported by Barnet Council's Community Support Team and is being funded by the Metropolitan Police's Safer Travel Team.

The volunteers will be aged 18 or over and will already be able to confidently use public transport.

Potential mentors will be given training in how to safely use public transport, and support in areas such as improving their communication skills and asking for directions.

They are then matched with someone looking to build up the skills and confidence needed to get about the borough independently.

Once trained, the volunteers will be rigorously assessed before being allowed to mentor anyone without supervision.

For more information, or to volunteer, please contact Shelley Gibbons or Judith Green at Barnet Mencap on 020 8349 3842.

Royal Wedding street parties a hit with residents



Hundreds of residents in Barnet joined celebrations to mark the Royal Wedding by staging dozens of street parties.

On 29 April, families living in 54 streets transformed their roads with yards of colourful bunting, balloons and flags as they set about organising parties in honour of the Royal couple.

The borough's enthusiasm for marking the big day meant that Barnet played host to more street parties than almost anywhere else in the capital.

To make organising parties as easy as possible, the council cut the red tape and covered the cost of public liability insurance once residents agreed on the Barnet Pledgebank page of the council's website that they were willing to host an event.

Community-minded residents still have the opportunity to use Pledgebank to get projects in their area off the ground.

The site is based on the simple principle that the person making

the online pledge will work to make it happen 'but only if' a number of other people commit too.

For more information, and to make a pledge, visit pledgebank.barnet.gov.uk

Can you judge if the council is performing well?

Last year, we launched the ideas.barnet.gov.uk website, asking for your suggestions, comments and ideas that would help us face the challenge of a smaller budget. Now, we want to extend its success to the way we measure and communicate how well we are providing your local services.

This summer we will be re-launching the ideas website and we want to know:

- what information you would like to see about local services so that you can judge whether they are performing well
- how we could collect and publish this information
- how you might want to use that information to make a difference to your community.

For updates, visit the council's website or email performance@barnet.gov.uk.

You can also view our most recent performance results at

www.barnet.gov.uk/cp-annual-performance-monitors

Heybourne Park now open

Spring saw the opening of Heybourne Park, the green hub at the heart of Barnet's Grahame Park regeneration.

Barnet Council, along with Genesis Homes and Countryside Properties welcomed guests from the local community to the project. Councillor Anthony Finn, former Mayor of Barnet, was joined by John Carleton, Managing Director of Genesis Homes, and Matthew Offord MP to cut the ribbon and officially open the park to the public.

The park boasts a bio-diverse environment and remodelled wetlands for everyone from local residents to conservation groups to enjoy and has already seen its first visitors, with swans flocking to the new ponds.

Over the next 12 years, the regeneration of Grahame Park will aim to transform this huge area of Barnet into a thriving community. Once the site of an old aerodrome, residents in the local area will benefit from 3,000 new homes along with improved community facilities, shops and the creation of new jobs.



A libraries strategy for the 21st century

To keep pace with the changing needs of the borough's residents, Barnet Council is considering changes to the library service to make sure it is in tune with what people want.

The proposed strategy has been designed to focus firmly on some simple principles:

To increase literacy and learning opportunities for children and to promote literacy and learning among adults. In addition, the strategy aims to invest in more books, improve community spaces and access to resources, including increasing opening hours and adapting to a changing world where less information resides in books.

This would be delivered through a network of accessible sites:

- **landmark libraries** – these will be in the busiest centres where people regularly go and will have specialisms in higher education, further education and the arts
- **leading libraries** – these libraries will receive additional investment, to make sure all have Wi-Fi, self-service technology and be used to offer a greater range of services to maximise the use of library buildings

- **link libraries** – these new, innovative library services will be based at joint sites with partners and will be designed around the needs of individual communities – including developing initiatives to promote literacy and skills.

It would also see a Reading Direct service developed to include initiatives such as an online branch including e-books and a pilot scheme for electronic reservations and delivery facility in addition to existing home and mobile services targeted for people who most need them.

This strategy has already been the subject of two phases of extensive consultation to gauge the opinion of residents. The second phase of this closed in June. This can still be viewed by visiting engage.barnet.gov.uk

The strategy will now be considered by Cabinet on 26 July.

Councillor Robert Rams, Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships, said: "It is crucial that our library service adapts to a changing world. This strategy has literacy and learning at its core and is intended to deliver a service tailored to the needs of our residents."

Pay by phone parking

No change? No problem.

Call
020 3362
2000

Join the quicker, easier and safer way to park

The number of motorists in the borough who have registered to use cashless parking continues to soar.

To date, more than 81,111 Barnet motorists have signed-up to the council's pay-by-phone scheme, which was rolled out across the borough last July.

Pay-by-phone parking is a convenient alternative to using on-street parking machines.

Motorists with an account can phone or send a text message detailing the vehicle registration, the parking location number (displayed in each car park and on street parking signs) and the amount of time the

motorist would like to park for. Payment can then be made by either credit or debit card, making the whole process a lot easier, quicker and safer.

Registered users can also opt for an automated reminder text to be sent to their mobile phone when their time is running out, so they never need to get a Penalty Charge Notice (PCN).

Registering online is the quickest and easiest way to set up a pay-by-phone account. Once registered, motorists can use the same account if they wish to park in other boroughs that use the same system.

Civil Enforcement Officers are equipped with high-tech hand-held devices to monitor which cars have purchased cashless parking and when their time will run out.

"Registering online is the quickest and easiest way to set-up a pay-by-phone account."

For more information about cashless parking and to register visit

www.barnet.gov.uk/cashless-parking-pay-by-phone

www

My Barnet

For Civic Award winner Prem Patel, living in Barnet has always been inextricably linked to his faith and the Shree Swaminarayan temple where he worships regularly.

Prem has called Golders Green home since the mid 1980s but spent much of his childhood in the Hendon area after he and his family moved to Britain from India in the 1960s.

Sitting in the office where he works as a solicitor, Prem recalls his early days in the borough – clearly enjoying the opportunity to reminisce.

“I’ve been living in the borough for most of my life, I went to Bell Lane School then to Christ’s College and on to Middlesex Polytechnic where I studied law, so I’ve always been very much connected with Barnet – a lot of good memories.

“In those days the university buildings were a bit shabby and not a great place to study but you look at it now with that central reception area, it’s amazing, something Barnet should be very proud of.”

Not far from his home is the Shree Swaminarayan temple in Golders Green which plays a chief role in his life. Prem is one of around 600 people from the Swaminarayan community, a branch of Hinduism, who worship there regularly.

The temple provides a vibrant base for the community to worship, but also for youth and charity projects, inter-faith programmes, traditional dance classes and for the temple’s renowned bagpipe band – the idea of His Guru Shree Muktajeevan Swamibapa back in 1970.

It was this inter-faith work, which included forging links with a nearby synagogue and church, which led Prem and colleague Mahesh Varsani to receive a Civic Award for their efforts earlier this year.

“Religion is central to my life, you’re taught that from a very young age. But the temple isn’t just about the spiritual side of things.

“It’s also about going there to try and inspire young people to achieve the highest aspiration, this is an idea that the current head of the faith, His Divine Holiness Acharya Pusrushottampriydasji Swami Maharaj, is spreading across the globe.

“I can really relate to that, it’s my passion.

“We’re very proud of the pipe band, it’s performed all over the world – New York, Madrid, Paris. I was a pipe major myself so I love the sound, the pibrochs, the jigs and the Bollywood tunes, you’ve got a great fusion there.”

But Prem enjoys life in Barnet for a variety of reasons.

“Golders Green is best known for its large Jewish population but there is a wider community here. When you look down from the clock tower there is a real mix of cultures when you look at the restaurants, the shops and what they’re selling. There is a buzz about the place.

“Where I live, there is also a little known park called Princes Park which I love, it has got some tennis courts and a nice quiet area.

“That mix is one of the things I most like about Barnet. If you head north you have the leafier parts of the borough and wide open spaces, and in the other direction, you can head to Brent Cross for shopping or into London.”

Tell us your story

If you would like to be featured in future issues of My Barnet, please email barnet.first@barnet.gov.uk with no more than 100 words describing your life in Barnet.



Prem Patel in the Shree Swaminarayan temple



Middlesex University



Princes Park



Band practice at the temple



Golders Green



Prem Patel

Helping you take the first step

Breaking the cycle of domestic abuse

Domestic violence accounts for 27 per cent of violent crime in Barnet, yet the number of domestic violence offences reported has been steadily falling in the borough over the last five years.

Councillor David Longstaff, Cabinet Member for Safety and Resident Engagement, said:

“It’s a major concern that some victims experience domestic violence several times before seeking help. We know the knock-on effect of domestic violence on victims and their children can be terrible if people don’t break the cycle of abuse. It’s important women confide in someone and understand they aren’t to blame.

“If they don’t wish to go to the police, they can talk to a friend, a work colleague or call a confidential helpline.”

We spoke to two local women who have suffered domestic violence over a number of years to try and understand their stories.



Domestic violence can relate to any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or physical, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional abuse between adults who currently are, or have been, in a relationship.

It knows no boundaries, affecting people irrespective of race, gender, culture, faith, sexuality, disability, age or social and economic status.

For secure and confidential advice, practical and emotional support or just a chat call

020 8359 2244*

* Calls will go to the National Domestic Violence Helpline (24 hours)
Local call rates apply.

or Elevate

0845 6000 331

For more information
visit www.barnet.gov.uk/domestic-violence

"I thought all men were like that" *Kerry*, 34*

"My husband Nick* was very complimentary and attentive during our first year of marriage, but gradually he changed and I didn't know why. He started calling me names like 'fat' and 'ugly'. I felt hurt but didn't confront him. I assumed naively this was how men treated their wives.

"Nick demanded that I should change the way I dress. He said I should wear long sleeve polo neck tops, long skirts and tie my hair back when I went out. I changed from being confident and outgoing to quiet and withdrawn.

"After two years I became pregnant and that's when the physical violence started. Nick would go out for long periods and return home drunk and abusive.

"My mum told me his behaviour wasn't right, but I didn't believe her.

"The flashpoint came when he knocked my mum over during a drunken row. The police were called and I was referred to Elevate, a domestic violence support service.

"They were fantastic, and through counselling helped me understand Nick's behaviour wasn't either normal or acceptable. I wish I'd known about them before.

"If anyone else is experiencing something similar I'd like them to know this sort of behaviour isn't 'normal', people in loving relationships just shouldn't treat one another that way."

*Names changed to protect identities.

"I felt too embarrassed to admit my husband was violent towards me" *Anita*, 43*

"Being with Dave* was like living with two people. When he was on good form, he was the best person in the world. When he was in a bad mood you'd better watch out.

"During one of his bad moods, the smallest thing would make him snap and hit me. When it first happened I was hurt and shocked, but he slipped back into being the 'Nice Dave' and I thought I was imagining things.

"We had two small children and I truly believed marriage was for life so kept thinking that I mustn't make him cross.

"But I noticed that the gaps between Nice Dave and Nasty Dave were getting smaller and smaller until I realised that I was too scared to go home. I didn't know what mood he would be in.

"I began to worry about what sort of environment I was bringing my children up in yet I felt too embarrassed to admit my husband was violent.

"One day I had enough – my parents were visiting some friends for a family get together and Dave had threatened me if I contacted them. I knew I couldn't go on – I had to escape with the children. When Dave left for work, I threw a few things in a case, grabbed the kids and jumped in a taxi to my family.

"Initially they were shocked when I told them what was happening. Their support and love made me feel so special. I felt as if a weight had been lifted off me.

"I know I should have left Dave way before, but I always hoped he'd change. Now I realise I should have confided in someone. If it's happening to you it's important to realise it's not your fault and get help."



DO YOU HAVE GREAT IDEAS FOR ADDRESSING LOCAL ISSUES?

DO YOU FEEL PASSIONATE ABOUT MAKING A POSITIVE IMPACT IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

DO YOU NEED HELP FOR YOUR GREAT IDEAS TO FLOURISH?

Barnet's Big Society Innovation Bank



Community-minded local residents and groups are being invited to take part in a new initiative started last month.

Not-for-profit groups and individuals can bid for sums of £500 to £50,000 to kick-start their projects from Barnet's Big Society Innovation Bank.

The Big Society Innovation Bank, which was launched at the artsdepot on 15 June, will receive £600,000 of council funding over three years.

The bids will be awarded to those people with creative ideas or entrepreneurial solutions to help make Barnet an even better place to live.

The projects could vary from finding new ideas to solve old problems to coming up with a new, innovative approach to providing a council-run service. If the council feels the idea has potential, it will provide the cash and support to make it happen. Councillor Robert Rams, Cabinet Member for Customer Access and Partnerships, said: "We have funded the Big Society Innovation Bank with reductions in senior management pay as the council has adapted to the changing financial climate.

"We believe a small amount of money can help us unleash a lot of energy to develop entirely new ways of addressing local issues.

"The people often with the best solutions to tackling local problems are those with their ear closest to the ground and we would love to hear from you."

If you have an idea, you will need to send it to us by 29 July. You will find the 'idea' form, email address and everything you need on the Innovation Bank website at www.innovationbankbarnet.org.uk. This includes getting help with completing your application form or developing your idea.

WWW

For more information email innovation.bank@barnet.gov.uk



Keep up to date with Barnet planning alerts

An online 'planning alerts' service now gives residents the chance to keep up to date with new developments in their area.

The free Barnet Planning Alerts service allows residents to sign up for regular email alerts from the council giving details about every new planning application in their neighbourhood.

Residents wishing to receive the alerts are asked to provide their email address along with either their postcode or the ward of the borough they are interested in.

Those who enter their postcode are then asked to specify whether they would like details of applications within 200 yards, half a mile or a mile of their home.

They will then receive alerts by email, giving them updates on applications that have been lodged for properties in their street or local area.

Barnet Planning Alerts has been designed in conjunction with MySociety, a not for profit organisation responsible for public involvement websites such as the Number 10 petitions site.

Planning alerts are one of a series of new web-based initiatives being established by the council, including FixMyStreet, an e-petitions webpage and Barnet Pledgebank.

Councillor Joanna Tambourides, Cabinet Member for Planning, said: "Public input into the planning process is incredibly important, so I'm delighted that this free online service will further open up our planning service and help residents to keep an eye on developments in their neighbourhood."

For more information and to sign up for Barnet Planning Alerts visit planning.barnet.mysociety.org

www

Contact your councillors

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For details of surgeries, call 020 8359 2000

or email first.contact@barnet.gov.uk

July - September

Be a Circus Star in Barnet Libraries

Summer Reading Challenge 2011

Roll up, roll up this summer for our Circus Stars Summer Reading Challenge. Books are taking centre stage in Barnet libraries for a summer full of razzmatazz and reading.

Children of all ages are challenged to read six books of their choice between 16 July and 10 September 2011. Those who want to be 'Star Performers' can read up to 12 books. Children will get a pop-up paper stage to keep track of what they have read and create their own performance scene. After every two books read, they will receive stickers and other prizes. On completion, children will receive a certificate and medal.

There will be lots of free and exciting summer events taking place in libraries across Barnet so look out for the leaflets and posters in a library near you.

For more information contact your local library, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries or contact Justina Gore on 020 8359 2869 or justina.gore@barnet.gov.uk

WWW



The Ukulele Project

Date: Saturday 16 July, 8pm, artsdepot Pentland Theatre, £15/13 concessions.

The UK's freshest and funkiest act set the stage alight as they play everyone's favourite music – uke style, rock, pop, hip-hop and classical.

Clive: Summer Beach Party

Date: Saturday 23 July, 7pm, artsdepot, £5

It's getting hot this summer at artsdepot as we welcome back the Beach Party for Clive, our club night for young people aged 14 – 25 with learning disabilities, and their friends and family.

Labyrinth

Date: Saturday 6 August, 4 – 11pm, artsdepot, free

Hear live music; watch drama and dance; view visual and live art, as you find your way through a maze of creativity. For more details email ignite@artsdepot.co.uk

Meet Shane Rimmer, the voice of Thunderbirds' Scott Tracy

Date: Saturday 24 September, 2.30pm, Chipping Barnet Library

Shane Rimmer will be talking about his career and his new autobiography 'From Thunderbirds to Pterodactyls'. Booking required, call 020 8359 4040.

Wall of the Words Poetry Competition and Open Mic Poetry Night

Date: Thursday 29 September, 6.30 – 8pm, Hendon Library Café

During the summer, Barnet libraries will be running its first adult poetry competition. The poems will be judged by Sarah Wardle, a lecturer in poetry at Middlesex University. First prize is £100 and second prize £50.

For details on how to enter, visit www.barnet.gov.uk/libraries

Working hours

Martin Campbell is the Hendon Area Operations Manager for the council's Greenspaces Team. He has worked for the council for 15 years and is responsible for highways and parks maintenance, including grass cutting, pruning, seasonal planting and sport pitches.

Q How did you become interested in horticulture?

A I first got involved at a very young age helping my Dad in the garden – it has grown from there really!

Q How many flowers does the council plant each year?

A Quite a few! We plant around 89,000 summer and 83,000 winter plants with around 6,000 bulbs planted throughout the year in different flower beds across the borough.

Q How many flower beds and displays does the council maintain?

A We have 35 annual bedding sites containing 137 beds, which have two seasons. Summer bedding and winter bedding.

Q What feedback do you receive from residents when they see the floral displays around the borough?

A Overall it's very positive, we are often complimented on the variety of different plants we use and the vivid colours they produce.

Q Do you have one favourite piece of gardening advice?

A Apart from 'put the plants in green side up!' I'd say prune hard to encourage strong new growth.

Q What is the team like that you work with?

A They are a good bunch and we all get on well. They even volunteered me to do this article while I was on annual leave!

Q Do you have any particular hobbies/interests?

A Outside of work, I enjoy DJ'ing for different occasions such as weddings and birthdays.

Q What is your favourite place in Barnet? Why?

A It's got to be the Old Court House Recreation Ground. It has something for everyone, a bowls green, café, playground and lovely flower beds!



www

For more information, visit
[www.barnet.gov.uk/
environment-planning](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/environment-planning)