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BARNET FC ARE heading for promotion back to the Football League as they enter the final month of the season. Victories this season included a 7-0 win over Tamworth in August Credit Nick Sandamas

Campaigners slam cuts to council tax support

BY MAYA SALL

Anti-poverty campaigners in Barnet say cuts to council support for low income residents will leave many struggling to buy food.

The almost £3million cut to Barnet Council's council tax support scheme (CTS) came into effect on 1st April. CTS subsidises the council tax bill of the borough's lowest earners, and the cuts have impacted almost 18,000 households.

Families with two or more children are the most affected, with just over 5,000 households losing

monthly support worth £17.61.

"The problem is, a lot of these families are already really struggling to make ends meet" explains Bob Bevil, campaigning and Advocacy lead at Chipping Barnet Foodbank, "we see them in our food banks, and we know the debt they most pertain is council tax".

Households receiving Universal Credit must now pay 30% of their council tax bill, despite the Citizens Advice Barnet's recommendation for a full council tax subsidy. The changes make Barnet's CTS the joint-second least generous in

London, after Enfield.

"The council wasn't starting from a generous position, and these stringent cuts aren't doing anything to change that," says Bevil, who warns of the repercussive "downward pressure" of the cuts. "A lack of council tax relief creates a vicious cycle of anxiety, which impacts both physical and mental health."

"Food is the elastic part of a budget – if money is tight, we buy less from the supermarkets. Therefore, with families £20 quid worse off a month, their food security will be directly impacted."

Barnet Council says the net savings of £1.3m will contribute towards "reducing the future budget gap, ensuring the council can continue to provide essential services", such as housing and social care.

However, Bevil labels this "a false economy". According to Citizens Advice Barnet, clients with council tax debt, 39% at risk of eviction, and "the effect of council tax debt on other local government services: increased risk of children going into care, physical

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ABOUT

Barnet Post is the borough's free community newspaper: written by and for local people, giving you the chance to learn more about what is going on in your area and to read (and write) stories about what matters to you.

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Tories slam Labour after Barnet councillor resigns “under a cloud of darkness”

BY DAVID FLOYD

Barnet Conservatives say that residents are “footing the bill for Labour’s shortcomings” after the mysterious departure of a Whetstone councillor last month, prompting another by-election.

Liron Velleman dramatically quit his seat on 2nd April after it emerged that he had been removed from the borough’s Labour group the previous day.

Barnet Post asked Barnet Labour group for clarification of the status of Velleman on 1st April after it emerged that his party affiliation had been changed from Labour to ‘independent’.

However, the request for comment was passed to the Labour Party’s London regional team who told the *Post* on 2nd April: “Liron Velleman has resigned from Barnet Council and is no longer a member of the Labour Party.”

When asked for clarification, the spokesperson said that they were not currently able to comment further.

It was confirmed later that day that Velleman had also left his

position as head of politics at the Community trade union.

Having been asked whether the former councillor was still employed by the union and (if not) the reasons for his departure, a spokesperson for the union told the *Post*: “Liron Velleman no longer works for Community.”

The former councillor’s account on Twitter/X was initially amended to reflect the fact that he had quit, however all his social media accounts were subsequently deleted entirely.

Velleman, who was elected in 2022, had recently become chair of the borough’s pension fund committee. The upcoming by-election to replace him in Whetstone ward, follows February’s poll in Burnt Oak after former cabinet member for finance Ammar Naqvi quit having made false claims about his employment history.

In their statement, the Conservatives claimed the latest resignation raised “serious questions about the calibre of representation Labour is providing to our community”.

They added: “This year alone,

Barnet has seen a by-election in Burnt Oak triggered by Labour’s finance chief found to be a fraud. Now their pensions chief has been kicked out of the party and forced to resign under a cloud of darkness.

“Each by-election burdens local taxpayers with significant costs. This is money that could have been spent on vital services like road repairs, schools, or community safety, not cleaning up Labour’s mess.”

Commenting on the resignation, Conservative group leader Peter Zinkin told the *Post*: “Labour promised better for Barnet, but their track record speaks for itself.”

He added: “Two by-elections in just a few months show a pattern of instability and poor judgment.

“Whetstone residents deserve reliable, committed Conservative councillors – not Labour failures who don’t deliver.”

Velleman was elected for the first time in Whetstone ward as part of Labour’s victory in the 2022 elections. Although the ward was regarded as being new due to boundary changes, Velleman and his Labour colleague Ella Rose defeated incumbent Conservative councillors Tom Smith and Sachin Rajput.



Former councillor Liron Velleman



Former Chipping Barnet MP
Dame Theresa Villiers Credit: parliament.uk

Former MP is made a dame

BY DAVID FLOYD

The former MP for Chipping Barnet has been made a dame as part of former prime minister Rishi Sunak’s resignation honours list.

Theresa Villiers was the MP for the constituency for 19 years between 2005 and 2024. She served twice as a cabinet minister, as Northern Ireland secretary under David Cameron and environment secretary under Boris Johnson.

Reacting to the announcement, Dame Theresa told *Barnet Post*: “I feel deeply honoured to have been given this award.

“As it recognises the work I did as MP for Chipping Barnet

“I feel honoured to have been given this award”

for 19 years, it is an honour which I would never have received without the support and hard work of my team of staff and volunteer helpers. I therefore want to take this opportunity to thank them for all the work they did, which has made this award possible.”

The news was welcomed by Dame Theresa’s successor in her former seat, Dan Tomlinson MP.

Tomlinson, who defeated Dame Theresa at last year’s general election, told the *Post*: “Many congratulations to Dame Theresa Villiers on the recognition she has received for her 19 years of service as our MP.

“No matter our political differences, I’m genuinely heartened to see two decades of commitment to Chipping Barnet and public life recognised in this way.”

Ex-hotel manager jailed for rape

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

A hotel manager who raped a woman and sexually assaulted three others has been jailed for ten years.

Ahmed Fahmy, aged 46 and of West Heath Drive, Golders Green, was found guilty of one count of rape and three counts of sexual assault after a trial last July. On Wednesday, 23rd April, he was sentenced to ten years’ imprisonment, plus three years on extended licence. Fahmy was also placed on the sex offenders’ register and banned from employment in the hospitality industry.

A Metropolitan Police investigation had been launched in January 2024 when officers received reports of rape and sexual assault by two women who had been staying at the Anchor Hotel in West Heath Drive where Fahmy

was working at the time.

Fahmy abused his position to enter guest rooms without permission, where he made sexual advances. One of the victims woke up to find Fahmy licking her feet. Later, Fahmy coerced a woman who had misplaced her hotel key into sharing his room, where he raped her.

Detectives also uncovered and linked Fahmy to two additional sexual assaults going back to 2008, which largely centred on Fahmy touching women’s feet. These offences took place at a hotel in Newham and at a residential address in Wembley.

The Met is now appealing for any other potential victim-survivors to come forward, as they believe Fahmy’s offending was more widespread.

Detective Constable James Gomm, who led the investigation,

said: “Fahmy used manipulation to abuse his position as a hotel worker and get close to his victims. He demonstrated a clear pattern of offending and abuse.

“We believe there may be other victims and I would encourage anyone affected to get in contact with us.”

The Met is keen to speak to anyone who may have met Fahmy while he was working at various hotels across London. Fahmy is confirmed to have worked in five hotels across the city, though detectives believe there could have been more. In addition to Anchor Hotel in Golders Green these were at Royal Victoria Dock in East London, Alliance Close in Wembley, South Way in Wembley, and Bridge in Marlow.

Survivors can contact the police by emailing NWMailbox.Sapphire@met.police.uk or calling 0208 733 6311

Participants in March's swimathon Credit GLL



‘Swimathon’ at Barnet leisure centres raises cash for cancer charities

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Residents in Barnet have raised over £1,000 for cancer charities in an annual swimathon. Seventy-five residents took part in Swimathon Foundation’s annual swimathon, each swimming between 400 metres and five kilometres. Finchley Lido, Barnet Copthall, and New Barnet leisure centres, all run by Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) under their brand name ‘Better’, have been involved with the campaign for several years. Lara Bone, GLL’s community sport manager in the region, attended the event, which took place over the last weekend in March. She said: “There was a lot of friendly competition, there were families that came along, some people swam as a family, some

had them there to support them. It was a very good crowd, it was good to see everyone come together.” Lara added: “Some people do have a connection to cancer and different illnesses. One person who took part is actually going through cancer and some have been through it. It’s open to everyone as long as you can swim 25 metres.” Swimathon Foundation has run an annual fundraising swimathon at participating swimming pools across the UK since 1988. The event has taken place for several years in Barnet, gaining more popularity each time according to Lara. Cancer Research UK, Marie Curie, and the Swimathon Foundation, all selected by the foundation itself, were the three recipients of the money.

Council facing ‘real pressure’ of temporary housing costs as homeless numbers soar 22% in a year

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The number of Barnet families in temporary housing has risen by 22% in a year, a new report reveals. Barnet Council said “acute supply and demand challenges” are driving temporary accommodation (TA) numbers and next year is on track to be higher still. A report presented to cabinet last month stated there were set to be 2,880 households in TA by the end of 2024/25 and 3,100 by the end of 2025/26. By the end of December there were 2,750 households, compared to 2,253 at the same time in 2023, rising by around a quarter in just one year. Ross Houston, the council’s cabinet member for homes and regeneration, said everyone in the cabinet was “aware” of these numbers and that it represented a “real pressure”. He said: “That’s just a reality of the temporary accommodation crisis we’re living with.” Cllr Houston listed the mitigations Barnet Homes, the arm’s length management organisation in charge of the council’s housing stock, had put in place. These include the hiring of a mediation officer

and senior prevention officer to take on effective prevention activity. Kate Laffan, group director of resident services at The Barnet Group, the parent firm of Barnet Homes, added: “It’s part of our DNA to be stretching ourselves to be ambitious, to keep driving improvements wherever we can. “Our targets are based on insight and data and, notwithstanding this very challenging environment for homelessness, we’ve achieved the highest level of homelessness prevention in five years. Clearly we’re not resting on [our] laurels.” From around January to September last year Barnet Homes delivered 1,080 ‘prevention outcomes’ which the report said exceeded the outcomes delivered in the same period over the previous five financial years. Other solutions to reducing the number of households in TA are improving re-let times, with Kate adding the council was getting “much-needed social housing units back in circulation.” She said: “A couple of years ago, pre-Covid, we were the best in London in terms of letting turnarounds and we want to get back to that point.”

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NEWS

Mother of autistic boy paid nearly £4,000 compensation over Barnet Council failures



BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A mum has been paid £4,000 in compensation by Barnet Council after a watchdog found it failed to adhere to her son’s education, health and care plan (EHCP). Nadine Arthur said her son was not provided with age-appropriate educational support after the council agreed mainstream schooling could not meet his needs. Her son also did not receive physiotherapy, a requirement of his EHCP. Nadine said her case was not unique and many families “never reach the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman because councils delay, deflect and discourage complaints”. Nadine’s son, who has autism, was given autism resourced provision (ARP) for approximately three years from 2020 until May 2023. However, the ombudsman only investigated the complaint starting from August 2022. Despite finding her concerns “valid” prior to this date, the watchdog said: “Given the passage of time, the availability and reliability of evidence may be limited, making it difficult to determine with certainty what support was in place and where it met her son’s needs.”

Nadine said the council’s education arm, Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS), told her to complain to the school providing the ARP, which she did. However, she found out later it was the council’s responsibility to ensure the EHCP was enforced. Nadine said the council had “caused a delay” and “denied responsibility for years”. The ombudsman found the council had twice delayed reviewing Nadine’s son’s EHCP, a statutory process that ensures the plans remain relevant and up-to-date. The first review, which was held in December 2021, was not finalised until September 2022, which represented a “significant delay”. The second review, which should have taken place within twelve months of the review held in December 2021, was instead held in March 2023 which was another “significant delay”. The ombudsman found “a full curriculum was not delivered” and targets were not set for Nadine’s son either. Therapy services were also not provided, although the council stated it was not told this and it did not have the capacity to “follow up each child’s delivery”.

The ombudsman acknowledged this but maintained that, ultimately, the council was responsible “regardless of whether it was informed of any issues”. Nadine said her son was forced to take part in activities and learning aimed at children with higher needs than his and that they were “not developmentally appropriate”. She said her son’s mental health declined, he became angry, and she felt it was “not safe for him to stay at the school”. In May 2023, by which point her son was ten years old, she removed him and said the council “failed again” by offering “another unsuitable placement”. Nadine then took the case to a special educational needs tribunal, which she won, and her son is now in a school that follows his EHCP and meets his needs. The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman ordered the council to pay £3,712.50 for the missed provision between September 2022 and May 2023 as well as £300 for the stress imposed by the delays experienced. Responding to the decision, a council spokesperson said: “Barnet Council accepts the findings of the ombudsman’s ruling and have apologised to the family. “We are committed to supporting children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities to ensure they receive the support outlined in their EHCPs. “We work closely with families, schools, health partners, and other agencies to deliver the best outcomes for children and young people in Barnet. Each child’s needs are unique, and we remain focused on ensuring that provision is appropriately tailored and delivered in line with statutory requirements. “We take learning from complaints, be they directly received or via the ombudsman very seriously and are always seeking to use that learning to continually improve how we deliver our services.”

Dan Tomlinson outside High Barnet Post Office
Credit: Office of Dan Tomlinson MP



MP Tomlinson hails ‘victory for our community’ as post office is saved

BY DAVID FLOYD

Chipping Barnet’s MP has described last month’s announcement that a local post office will remain open as “a tremendous victory for our community”. Dan Tomlinson had been campaigning alongside local residents to save the High Barnet branch after the Post Office announced in November 2024 that it was under threat of closure, along with the other remaining branches directly managed by the company and, in February, the MP met with local and national managers to make the case that any plans to close the branch should be dropped. A Save Barnet Post Office petition set up by Barnet Labour attracted over 2,500 signatures. In a statement issued on 8th April, the Post Office announced that all the remaining branches “will be franchised by the autumn” adding that: “This means that those communities that currently have a directly managed branch in their area will continue to be able to access Post Office services either at, or near to, the same location.” Responding to the news, Tomlinson told *Barnet Post*: “This is a tremendous victory for our community. The Post Office is vital to High Barnet and serves thousands of residents. Working with

residents across Barnet, we’ve demonstrated what can be achieved when a community unites behind an essential service. “I understand that Post Office staff are concerned about changes within the organisation that may take place, and I have spoken to CWU directly since the recent announcement. I will continue to work with and support union members as we find out more from the Post Office about the exact nature of future plans.” The Post Office’s decision was also welcomed by Finchley and Golders Green MP Sarah Sackman who had been campaigning to save branches in her constituency. She told the *Post*: “I am delighted to hear today’s announcement today that Golders Green and Cricklewood post offices will be staying open. Having met with residents who use the post office in Golders Green and staff who work there over the winter months, I was struck by the strength of feeling amongst local people who wanted it to remain open. It made me more determined to campaign to keep our local service.” She added: “Though I am pleased with this announcement, we must ensure that residents do not see a change in service. I will be writing to the Post Office to ask for a guarantee that steps are being taken to ensure services and opening hours remain the same.”

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NEWS



A banner protesting sewage spills in the River Lea

Council promises to ‘pursue enforcement’ against properties pumping sewage into rivers

BY GRACE HOWARTH,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Barnet Council has said it will “pursue enforcement” against freeholders of properties found to be pumping raw sewage into local streams.

An investigation carried out by news outlet *London Centric* found seven developments across the capital, including three in Hendon, Finchley and Whetstone, were discharging untreated human waste into streams due to plumbing misconnections.

Rob Gray, a member of the Friends of the River Crane Environment group, said misconnections happen when builders or homeowners plumb toilets and domestic appliances into pipes designed for rainwater, instead of the ones meant for foul water.

According to Rob this is the “largest issue” London faces in terms of river pollution, with the streams affected ultimately flowing into the River Thames further downstream.

Clementine Court in Finchley, which comprises 24 private two and three bedroom

apartments, and Admiral Court in Hendon, which has eleven leasehold flats, are both under investigation after Thames Water reported the misconnections there.

In the case of Admiral Court, waste is being released into the Silk Stream. Dollis Brook, which is not far from Clementine Court, has also been affected by misconnections.

Due to the difficulty in tracking down the original developers as well as agreeing on who is responsible, given the properties are privately owned, no solution has been found for these properties yet.

A Barnet Council spokesperson said: “Our investigations into these properties are ongoing and we will pursue formal enforcement if the freeholders do not undertake the required work to rectify the misconnections.

“We are continuing to work

collaboratively with the Environment Agency and Thames Water to ensure future cases can be dealt with as quickly as possible.”

Both Dollis Brook and the Silk Stream are tributaries of the River Brent, which eventually flows into the Thames.

Campaign group Clean Up the River Brent, plus environmental charity Thames21, have both launched campaigns to clean the polluted local waterways.

Crest Nicholson, the house-builder of the third Barnet-based block where misconnections were discovered, at Totteridge Place in Quayle Crescent, claims it has resolved the fault previously reported there.

A spokesperson for Crest Nicholson said: “We are aware of a historic miss-connection issue which has now been resolved. An independent survey, conducted with the agreement of Barnet Council, confirmed that no further works are required.”

“Polluted streams ultimately flow into the Thames”

Continued from Page 1

and mental health consequences and homelessness means it’s difficult to see how this is a cost-effective initiative.”

A discretionary fund of half-a-million has been reserved for the “most financially vulnerable”, and a further £15,000 has been earmarked for costs incurred on additional resources used when processing and distributing the fund.

Bevil described this as a “victory element” to the council’s changes to CTS, but adds: “It’s a token gesture in the right direction, but it won’t be enough.”

As an example of the wider situation, the Colindale Community Trust told the *Post* that an average of eight people a week struggling to pay their council tax debt, many of whom are working, have other debts, and/or rely on foodbanks.

A spokesperson for Barnet Council told the *Post*: “Our commissioned prevention services, delivered by partners in the VCS (Barnet CAB, Age UK, Barnet Mencap), work with residents to support them to ensure they receive all benefits they are entitled to. We also have a dedicated later life planning service, provided by Age UK, which supports older people to plan ahead for old age.

“In Children’s services we have Section 17 monies [this refers to financial assistance provided by local authorities to children and their families who are considered ‘in need’ under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, aiming to safeguard and promote their welfare.] which we use to support families who are suffering extreme hardship.”

They added: “We also signpost residents to the financial calculator so they can claim benefits they are eligible to but have not claimed.”

The council specified that “[debt collection] enforcement agents are only ever used as a last resort, and where there is no other means of recovery and we have been unable to enter into a suitable payment arrangement”.

Zahra Beg, cabinet member for equalities and the voluntary and community sector, said: “The service providers in this field for the council – Equita and CDER – have committed to follow the Civil Enforcement Association’s code of practice that states that residents are signposted to debt advice throughout ‘the entire collection lifecycle.

“Cllr Simon Radford [cabinet member for finance] and officers are engaging with the service providers to ascertain how well this and other parts of the code, aimed at protecting vulnerable residents, are being achieved.”

Going forward, Bevil believes that the council could increase its support to those at risk of or experiencing council tax debt by getting workers on-site at local, public facing organisations such as Chipping Barnet Foodbank. Responding to this idea, a council spokesperson said: “The right support for individuals would be Citizens Advice Bureau. The council does not have debt experts; however, we have partnered with the Money Adviser Network, in order to refer residents to them and their debt advisors.

“So far, we have referred over 120 people to them as well as 77 at outreach sessions. In addition, residents have used the financial calculator to identify £12m of benefits for which they are eligible but were not claiming.”

INTERVIEW

‘I think we could see that emergency response was not going to be enough’

David Floyd talks to Dr Lynne Guyton, chief executive of John Lyon’s Charity, about the challenges facing local organisations

Dr Lynne Guyton
Credit: John Lyon’s Charity

Running a local charity providing supporting children and young people means a constant battle to find much-needed grant funding. This situation became even more difficult than usual during the Covid-19 pandemic when many charities faced the combination of an increased demand for services and a lack of fundraising options. John Lyon’s Charity (JLC) was one of the grant funders that stepped in to help at this critical point. The charity provides grants to benefit children and young people up to the age of 25 who live in nine boroughs in north and west London including Barnet – and has provided over £20million in funding to Barnet organisations since 1991. For a brief period during the pandemic, many grant funders moved quickly to provide emergency funding but JLC chief executive Dr. Lynne Guyton tells *Barnet Post*: “I think what we could see was that that

emergency response was not going to be enough.” JLC was concerned that, following a brief period of lots of money being available, many charities were on course to run out of cash in a few years’ time. Lynne went to the charity’s trustees and said “this is the rainy day” and got their support for a £22million programme over six years in addition to the charity’s regular funding programme. She explains: “We thought the three main pillars in any child’s life are home, school and community: so we started to look at the funding required to make sure that local community charities were sustainable through a really difficult period of time.” While the programme has successfully supported many charities since 2020, Lynne explains that “we couldn’t save everyone,” adding: “I think the funding market is even tougher now.” She explains that after the pandemic

in 2022/23: “We saw something like a 75% increase in applications to us. That was because of increased demand, just because charities needed money, but also because of what was happening in the funding sector.” Lynne explains that some other grant funders “have paused their grant making, have closed their funds, and have chosen to reflect on what their strategy should be going forward, which I have to say I find absolutely exasperating.” She adds: “We’ve managed to walk and chew gum at the same time.” Alongside this, while councils often provided much of the support for local organisations, this core funding has been “completely been swept away” over the past decade as “there’s no statutory responsibility for local authorities to provide youth services. So it’s been an easy area to cut.” Lynne says this funding landscape



has led JLC to fund charities in a different way. JLC has moved from giving an average grant of £30k per year for three years to an average of £50k–£70k per year for five years. Lynne says: “It’s quite a big difference to an organisation to feel that I’ve got time to breathe, and can actually get on and do stuff, instead of thinking, it’s that time where I need to start applying for grants again.” One of the main ways JLC supports charities in Barnet is through Young Barnet Foundation, a membership organisation for local youth organisations which provides support and advice, and can put in consortium funding on behalf of smaller organisations. Local organisations in the borough currently funded by JLC include: BritSom, based in Mill Hill, which supports over 500 refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants each year with services including a homework club and a youth programme; Barnet Community Projects, based on the Dollis Valley Estate, whose services include a foodbank, employability and youth work; and Terapia, who provide psychotherapy and counselling to support children’s mental wellbeing within six Barnet schools. Lynne would advise Barnet residents thinking of setting up a community organisation – or seeking to support existing organisations in the borough – to get in touch with Young Barnet Foundation. Despite the challenges, Lynne is hopeful for the future of children and young people’s charities: “One of the refreshing things is the resilience of the sector. People don’t give up and, when we go out and we see those groups in action and the work that they’re undertaking, the optimism of children and young people is still there. “The children and young people are our next generation. We need to make sure that they don’t become cynical and disillusioned and that we can give them as much support as we can.”

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FEATURES

Lifelong impact of Finchley school abuse

In 1988, a 14-year-old school boy called Gareth was living with a secret. He says his afternoons were spent having sex with his 27-year-old teacher: an attractive woman called Sally Anne Bowen.

She was employed to teach chemistry at Christ's College in Finchley, which back then was an all boys institution. Gareth and her began chatting as they rode the bus together after school. Then one lunch break he says Bowen caught him with an adult magazine and, pointing at a graphic image, she told him that's what she looked like naked.

Within days he says they were having sex at her house. Gareth had barely kissed a girl before this and says the relationship with Bowen consumed him, but he didn't tell anyone about it because she impressed on him that it had to be kept between them.

But former pupils and staff say it was an open secret: the couple were often seen sneaking off together or walking arm-in-arm near the school. Gareth says one day Bowen told him that senior members of staff, including the headmaster, confronted her, telling her they knew about the relationship and as a result she would have to leave the school at the end of term.

But Gareth says no member of staff ever intervened to stop the relationship. A former teacher at Christ's College says he believes the school wanted to make the problem quietly go away without the risk of bad publicity.

Now in his 50s, Gareth is trying to make sense of what happened to him, but he has struggled to find people who are willing to



Investigative reporter Chloe Hadjimatheou on her podcast's shocking revelations about the behaviour of a Christ's College Finchley teacher

▲ Christ's College Finchley
Credit DJ Harwood, Creative Commons

talk. He suspects the reason is because the person he alleges abused him was an attractive woman.

Many people still struggle to see sex between a willing young boy and an adult female as child abuse. That's why Gareth approached me, an investigative journalist at *Tortoise Media*, to look into the case. It was a familiar patch for me because I grew up in East Finchley.

When Bowen ended the relationship in August 1988, Gareth was devastated and at the age of 15 found himself unable to cope

emotionally. Over the next few months his behaviour deteriorated and eventually the school told his parents he would have to leave.

By the time Gareth was 16 he was homeless and by 23 he had tried to kill himself several times. Although he harboured a lot of resentment towards the school he never blamed Bowen. He felt responsible for her losing her job and blamed himself for pursuing the relationship.

It was only when his own son turned 14 years old that he began

“
A former teacher believes the school wanted to make the problem go away
”

to question why Bowen had wanted to have sex with a child. When he looked her up online for the first time he realised she was still teaching and wondered whether, over her 30-year career, there might be other victims out there.

In 2018 Gareth approached the Teaching Regulation Agency, which looks into allegations of professional misconduct in the profession. Having heard all the evidence the panel found that, on the balance of probabilities, she did engage in acts of a sexual nature with Gareth in her home. Sally-Anne Bowen maintains she is innocent and has lodged a court appeal against the finding.

I spent a year doing the research for what would become the podcast series *Lucky Boy*. During that time I found two other former Christ's College pupils, now men in their 50s, who say they had similar experiences with Bowen.

Since the podcast, *Lucky Boy*, was published even more former students have come forward with their memories of Bowen's behaviour at the school.

Bowen told *Tortoise Media* that all the allegations are false and that she believes Gareth and the other men who have made these claims about her are in need of psychiatric care.

Christ's College Finchley failed to respond or provide any kind of public statement about Gareth's allegations.

Gareth says he hopes his story will encourage others to come forward.

If you know anything about this story or want to get in touch with the team behind the podcast please contact: podcasts@tortoisemedia.com

You can listen to the Tortoise investigative series, 'Lucky Boy', on Apple, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts.

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NEWS

Fears over flooding risks from major
Burnt Oak housing scheme

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Burnt Oak residents are calling for Barnet Council to review plans for a 13-storey development on land deemed a flood risk.

Plans from the council and developer Bouygues UK (formerly Linkcity) for hundreds of homes at Watling Avenue Car Park were first announced in 2023, with the site sitting next to the Silk Stream.

Despite some support for the plans, especially the proposed new building for Burnt Oak Library and the commitment to 50% of the flats being designated as affordable housing, many residents have also voiced concern over the density and flood-risk of the scheme.

A spokesperson from Bouygues UK said they understood the concern regarding the flooding and said designs had been done in “collaboration with flood specialists” and that they “incorporate recommendations from the Environment Agency to ensure safety and sustainability”.

A council spokesperson added the flood risk was a “material consideration” and was “currently being assessed”.

A planning application for 344 homes has now been submitted and a decision is due to be made by the council’s planning committee this summer. However, local residents are seeking further reassurance before the decision is made.

Mark McLoughlin, who lives near the car park, recalled previous flooding events, when the Silk Stream would “back up” and water would start to come out of roadside drains “like a fountain

The Watling Avenue Car Park plans by Bouygues UK Credit DLA Architecture

and into our homes”.

He said he’d been in his property since 2008 and had experienced around seven or eight floods over the last 17 years.

Mark accused the council and developers of not taking the flooding risk of the development “seriously” and described consultations as “tick-box exercises”.

Michelle Burke, who lives in nearby Montrose Avenue, is also concerned. She said: “If they push this through, not only is it on a flood plain [as] Watling Avenue Car Park frequently floods, it will be overlooking neighbouring homes.”

Michelle said she felt “hemmed in” and worried people would

no longer “have privacy in their back gardens”.

She added: “We’re a working-class community, I have friends on the Watling Estate. Will the affordable social housing rent be genuinely affordable?”

“What I call affordable and what the council calls affordable are two separate things and people are being pushed out of the area.”

In response, Bouygues UK explained in more details what methods it will use to mitigate the flood risk.

The spokesperson said: “The key flood mitigation measures are: raising building floors above predicted maximum flood levels; creating a

flood storage basin within the landscaped park area to manage excess water naturally; designing open, permeable spaces beneath buildings to allow floodwater to flow freely; shaping land levels to maintain natural water flow paths; installing a raised pedestrian and cycle bridge to ensure safe access during storms.”

The developer added that, according to the London Plan, the Burnt Oak development was not considered “high density”. The definition of high density housing in the plan is defined as “at least 350 per 2.4 acres” but the proposal for Watling Avenue has a density of around “191 homes per 2.4 acres”.

Regarding the affordable housing component, Bouygues UK insisted it was committed to “ensuring accessibility to a diverse group of individuals” and that the affordable housing was not “solely targeted at young professionals”.

The council spokesperson added: “We have been working with Linkcity [Bouygues UK] on proposals for Watling Car Park, and flooding is one of the material considerations which is currently being assessed as part of this project, alongside other matters raised such as density and housing.

“There has been regular dialogue with residents on this scheme, including through the Burnt Oak Partnership Board.”



The full planning application can be viewed via Barnet Council’s planning portal using reference number 24/4556/FUL:
Visit barnet.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-applications-and-permissions

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NEWS 10

Warning over ‘relentless rise’ of council tax

BY ADAM CARE, DATA REPORTER

Barnet Council charges less for council tax than the average across England, new figures show but this has doubled since 1997.

It comes as a think tank warned the “relentless rise” of council tax was “unsustainable”, and called for a complete rethink of the tax system.

New figures from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government show the council tax rate for a Band D property in Barnet, excluding local parish precepts, is £1,545.14 for the current tax year.

This was a 4.98% increase on the year before.

It also means council tax in Barnet has more than doubled from £566.5 in 1997, when current records began.

Council tax is the main source of locally raised income for many councils, with the amount payable on a property depending in part on its allocated council tax band.

Band D is the standard measure of council tax, with all other bands set as a proportion of this rate.

The council tax bill may be made up of several elements, including council tax collected for county councils, the fire

and rescue authority, police and crime commissioner, combined authority, and parish or other smaller local councils.

A spokesperson for the Local Government Association said council tax was an important funding source, but is not enough to pay for all local services in the face of “significant financial pressures”.

They added: “Councils need a significant change in our funding to stabilise local government finances so we can deliver the services local people want to see.”

The figures show the average Band D council tax set by local authorities in England, excluding parish precepts, for 2025/26 will be £2,236, which is an increase of £106 on 2024/25.

Most councils raised tax last year, while eight froze it, and one cut it.

Legally, the most that councils can raise tax by in a year is 4.99% – anything higher would require consent from the voters in a referendum.

Dr George Dibb, associate director at the Institute for Public Policy Research, said it was “no surprise” so many councils had raised bills to the legal limit, saying at least £15 billion in local

public assets had been sold since 2010 “just to keep essential services running”.

He added: “Council tax is one of the least fair and worst designed taxes which makes its relentless rise unsustainable.

“Multimillion pound mansions in Kensington pay the same taxes as a normal semi in Stockport. In the long run, we need a fundamental rethink of this outdated and regressive system.

“A proportional property tax would lower costs for many households, reduce regional discrepancies, and still ensure councils have the funding they need.”

An MHCLG spokesperson said: “We are under no illusion about the scale of financial issues facing councils we inherited and our work is underway to fix the foundations and bring long-term stability to the sector.

“And while councils are ultimately responsible for setting their own council tax levels, we have been clear that they should put taxpayers first and carefully consider the impact of their decisions.

“That’s why we are maintaining a referendum threshold on council tax rises, so taxpayers can have the final say and be protected from excessive increases.”

“Councils need a significant change in funding”



Hendon Town Hall



Record number of children in Barnet living in poverty

BY SONJA TUTTY, DATA REPORTER

A record number of children in Barnet were living in poverty last year, according to “heartbreaking” new figures.

It came as charities urged the government to stop planned welfare reform, warning the changes will push more families into poverty.

Figures from the Department for Work and Pensions show 10,763 children under 16 in Barnet were living in relative poverty in the year to March – up from 9,508 the year before and the highest since comparable records began in 2013/14.

It meant 13% of children in the area were in households whose income was below 60% of the average income, and also claimed child benefit with at least one other household benefit.

Across the UK, 2.7 million (22%) children were living in relative poverty, including 300,556 (18%) children in London.

This national number increases to over 4.4 million children when looking at income after housing costs and including kids aged between 16 and 19 in full-time education – the highest number

since national records started in 2002/03.

Save the Children warned that, without immediate action, “this could be the first Labour government that oversees a significant rise in child poverty – a record no one wants” and described the latest data as “a source of national shame”.

The End Child Poverty coalition added the data should be seen as a “stark warning” to government, adding record-high numbers of children in poverty “isn’t the change people voted for”.

The government’s own impact assessment, published in March, estimated welfare reforms planned by Chancellor Rachel Reeves could see 250,000 more people, including 50,000 children, fall into poverty by 2029-30.

However, the chancellor told Sky News she is “absolutely certain” her reforms will not push people into poverty.

Reeves added: “We know that if you move from welfare into work, you are much less likely to be in poverty.”

Charities urged a U-turn

on the plans, saying the announced cuts to disability and incapacity benefits will “push more disabled people into poverty and worsen people’s health”.

Oxfam’s domestic poverty lead, Dr Silvia Galandini, said: “These latest poverty figures are as damning as they are heartbreaking.”

She added: “This is before [March’s] brutal cuts, where the chancellor chose to remove vital security and safety from those who need it the most instead of taxing the super-rich.

“It is unconscionable that the government is cutting social security while willfully ignoring the huge potential revenue of a tiny tax on the super-rich, one that is overwhelmingly backed by the British public.”

Work and pensions minister Sir Stephen Timms the House of Commons that the latest figures “show just what a huge challenge” the “very high level of child poverty that’s left by the previous government” is for Labour.

“This would be the first Labour government that oversees a significant rise in child poverty”

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12 ARTS & CULTURE

Barnet Council launches new campaign celebrating local creativity and culture



West Hendon Carnival
Credit: Barnet Council

BY DAVID FLOYD

Barnet Council has launched a new campaign which “aims to shine a spotlight on and celebrate the borough’s most diverse artists, venues, and events, and to inspire people to showcase their creative talents”.

Art in Barnet, which launched last month, is a five-week campaign celebrating the borough’s “cultural landscape” as part of the build up to a boroughwide cultural celebration in 2026, supported by the Mayor of London’s Cultural Impact Award.

The campaign has a dedicated section on the council’s website which will feature video case studies of local arts activity, alongside information on how residents can get involved.

Anne Clarke, Barnet Council’s cabinet member for culture, leisure, arts and sports said: “Barnet’s arts and culture scene is thriving, and this campaign is about making sure everyone knows about it. From grassroots initiatives to major cultural organisations, creativity is at the heart of our borough, and we’re committed to helping it flourish.

“Through our 2024 Culture Strategy, we’ve worked closely with community groups to shape a vision for culture in Barnet, and Art in Barnet is a key step in bringing that to life. Securing the Cultural Impact Award is another exciting milestone, and we can’t wait for residents and visitors to experience what’s in store, from this year’s campaign to the Award celebrations in 2026.”

To find out more go to: [barnet.gov.uk/community/arts-and-culture](https://www.barnet.gov.uk/community/arts-and-culture)

SPORT Barnet FC closing in on league title

Nick Sandamas on the Bees’ impending return to the Football League

Barnet FC are on the brink of securing the National League title and long-awaited promotion back to the EFL.

As the Bees ended March with a 3–1 win over Gateshead, they held an eleven point lead over second-placed York City and it seemed only a matter of time before the National League title and promotion to the EFL were in sight.

However the next three games yielded only two points and, with York continuing to win, the gap between the two clubs was cut to four points (with three games left) as the sides entered their Easter Monday games.

Defeat at Braintree at the start of April, with ex-Bees legend John Akinde scoring a late penalty,

was not only a blow but it also ended the leaders’ 25-match unbeaten run stretching back to October.

Then two successive home draws were further hiccups in the Bees’ quest to wrap up the title as quickly as possible.

First, local rivals Wealdstone cancelled out Ade Oluwo’s goal to equalise ten minutes from the end through Harrison Sonha.

Then, on Good Friday, Eastleigh also left The Hive with a point; Paul McCallum taking advantage of a mistake to open the scoring and, although Danny Collinge levelled before half time, the Bees were unable to find a winner.

Therefore on Easter Monday, all eyes were on Gander Green Lane and the LNER Stadium with York hosting play off contenders

Oldham whilst the Bees travelled to face Sutton United.

The Bees got the early goal they craved against Sutton with Mark Shelton sweeping in the opener.

Nerves were jangling on 33 mins when the U’s levelled from a spot kick but second half goals from Shelton from the spot and Ade Oluwo late on secured the win and, with York only drawing, just one more point was required from the final two games to clinch top spot.

By the time you read this, the Bees will hopefully have got the point required and the trip to AFC Fylde to wrap up the season will be a match of celebration for boss Dean Brennan and the team, with the chance to reach the 100-point barrier for the first time in club history.

Let’s get the party started!



The Bees in action against Eastleigh at The Hive last month

13 ARTS & CULTURE

Review: *In Other Words* at Artsdepot

BY HARRIET JOYCE

Translated into multiple languages, performed across four continents and soundtracked by the warm vocals of Frank Sinatra, Matthew Seager’s *In Other Words*, tells the love story of Jane and Arthur. Spanning across 50 years and exploring the effects of Alzheimer’s disease, Artsdepot’s studio theatre was the perfect place to stage such an intimate story.

Sinatra’s discography guides you through the trials and tribulations in the couple’s life story as the play, despite minimal set design, transports its audience from the bar where the couple first meet through to the coldness of the hospital where Arthur is first diagnosed.

For those who have watched their loved ones suffer through the disease, the play feels like the closest thing to understanding the isolation they must be feeling. Simultaneously, it manages to make those who are caring for somebody with Alzheimer’s feel seen and without guilt.

Throughout the play music is a powerful presence, as it is for many who suffer from dementia. As the audience take their seats, *You Make Me Feel So Young* plays softly, and every other song or sound effect chosen feels just as symbolic and purposeful. The play opens with *That’s Life* and

“*Sinatra’s music guides you through the trials and tribulations in the couple’s life*”

►
In Other Words
Credit
Artsdepot



as Jane, played by Lydia White, shrouds herself with her blue cardigan, we’re consumed by her thoughts. Bobby Darin’s *Beyond the Sea* is as transformative in the play as it is for Arthur, played by Seager himself. While music brings back fond memories for Arthur, it also helps punctuate between the past and present. The non-linear narrative shifts between watching the couple’s story unfold for

ourselves and the characters breaking the fourth wall to narrate. This is another immersive technique that makes it feel like the characters are personally telling us their love story.

Not only do we see Arthur’s journey with Alzheimer’s but the overall impact the disease has on the couple. The characters are boxed into a spotlight by square shutters, sometimes in a split stage to focus

on how both characters are trapped by the diagnosis. The stark white and steely blue colouring helps to set the hospital’s location before flickering to pull us into Arthur’s world, marking his confusion by distorted ringing and muffled echoing.

With no costume changes, the design was carefully selected to remain timeless as the characters age and move through the 1960s to the 2000s. We largely rely on both White’s captivating demeanour and Seager’s evocative physicality to help show how Arthur is deteriorating. His gait becomes hunched as the condition progresses; just one example of how the acting truly made this raw and at times humorous play so moving. The play was then shortly followed by a Q&A. This was not only a chance for the audience to get a deeper understanding on how the play came about but for those members of the audience whose loved ones had been affected by the disease to speak on how deeply they had been moved by such a realistic portrayal.

For more information:
Visit artsdepot.co.uk/whats-on
Visit linktr.ee/InOtherWordsTour

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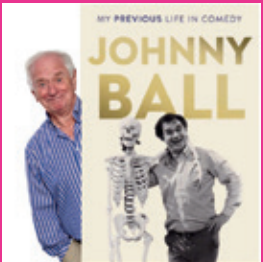
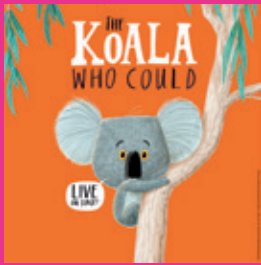
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EAST FINCHLEY

Plans for 70 new homes prompt resident fears over density



The plans for Cherry Tree Quarter
Credit: Places for Barnet

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL
DEMOCRACY REPORTER

RESIDENTS HAVE CRITICISED the scale and communication of plans for a nursery in East Finchley.

Developer Places for Barnet wants to build 70 new homes at Park House, which is located at 16 High Road and used by Monkey Puzzle Nursery and other education providers.

Places for Barnet is a partnership between Barnet Council and London Placemaking, formed to assist in the future growth of Barnet.

On its consultation website the developer says the project, named Cherry Tree Quarter, would provide a new space for the nursery onsite as well as a “unique opportunity to celebrate an important gateway location”.

But more than 247 objections have been submitted by locals who say the proposals do not adhere to Barnet Local Plan’s capacity guidelines for the site and the interim and eventual replacement nursery “should be the same size” as the current one and have “privacy”.

People have also said they had “six days notice” to attend a pre-consultation meeting, which took place last month.

According to the Local Plan adopted in March, Park House has an ‘indicative residential dwellings’ figure of 19.

Resident Tim Isaacs said: “The early proposals for 70 flats on a small site are deeply worrying for local residents and bear no relation to what is in Barnet’s Local Plan. The future of a cherished nursery and educational institution is threatened.

“Narrow residential streets will be nightmarish for 18 months if used for huge construction vehicles. It is also very concerning that

these early proposals appear to take little account of Barnet’s own rules around planning which would be strictly applied if a householder wanted to extend their property.”

Plans are at the pre-application stage but a spokesperson for Place for Barnet has responded saying they are “aligned with relevant planning policies”.

The spokesperson said: “We are pleased to announce that the initial consultation on the proposals for Cherry Tree Quarter, showcasing early design work, has taken place. We extend our gratitude to everyone who has taken the time to share their feedback. This valuable input has been considered as part of the ongoing design process.

“Looking ahead, there will be further consultations on more detailed plans, providing the public with additional opportunities to make their voices heard. These plans have been informed by discussions with planning officers at the pre-application stage and are aligned with relevant planning policies.

“We appreciate the community’s continued engagement and look forward to your participation in the upcoming consultations.”

More information on the scheme can be found at cherrytreequarter.co.uk

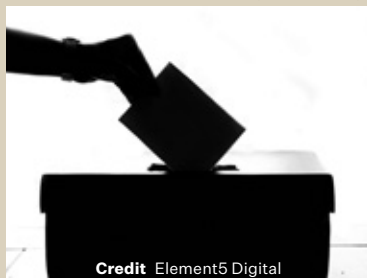


WHETSTONE

By-election date confirmed

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL
DEMOCRACY REPORTER

BARNET COUNCIL HAS confirmed a by-election will be held in Whetstone on Thursday, 15th May.



Credit: Element5 Digital

The by-election was triggered after Labour’s Liron Velleman resigned last month in mysterious circumstances (see page 2).

The Conservatives are hoping that former councillor Tom Smith will be able to regain the seat he lost at the elections in 2022, while Ezra Cohen is aiming to hold the seat for Labour.

Polling stations will be open across the ward from 7am to 10pm on 15th May.

The council has reminded voters to bring a valid form of voter

identification when voting at their polling station.

Eight candidates in total have been nominated to stand in the election, with the others being: Luigi Bille (Liberal Democrat), Richard Hewison (Rejoin EU), Martin Hudson (Independent Trade Union and Socialist), Brian Ingram (Independent), Adrian Kitching (Reform UK) and Charli Thompson (Green).

For more information on the election and how to register to vote: Visit barnet.gov.uk/news/election-held-whetstone-ward-thursday-15th-may

HENDON

Sopers Yard before and after the illegal ‘car joint’ was closed
Credit: Barnet Council



Businessman fined £26k for running ‘unlawful car yard’

BY DAVID FLOYD

A BUSINESSMAN WAS ordered to pay nearly £26,000 earlier this year after he pleaded guilty to operating an “unlawful” used car yard which had prompted multiple complaints from local residents.

Aaron Schwebel, who managed the ‘Car Joint’ dealership at Sopers Yard in Bell Lane, had been issued with a notice by Barnet Council in January 2020 to cease use of the land.

The land Schwebel managed on behalf of Buren Holdings Limited, a Gibraltar-based offshore company, was being used for multiple purposes including open-air storage, waste transfer and processing, and a used car sales lot without planning permission.

Residents had complained to the council about the comings and goings of vehicles, a party bus regularly parked outside the yard, preparation and delivery of vehicles to be sold, and the use of jet wash equipment.

Schwebel appeared at Willesden Magistrates’ Court on 20th February, where he pleaded guilty to failing to comply with the requirements of an enforcement notice issued by the council.

He had previously claimed that there was existing planning permission in place because the site was previously used by the council to store parks maintenance vehicles, however council officers concluded this was not the case.

Schwebel initially appealed the notice but his appeal was rejected by the planning inspectorate.

Following the court decision, Barnet Council leader Barry Rawlings said: “The defendant chose to ignore the action being taken against them, and to continue running this car yard for multiple uses which were clearly affecting residents living nearby.

“Planning regulations are there for a reason and this prosecution sends out a very clear message to anyone intent on flouting the law that we will take action, and that ultimately we will bring them before the courts if they refuse to do what is required.”

Last year, Barnet became the first council in the country to launch a new system designed to make it easier for residents to appeal planning decisions and report a planning breach: barnet.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control



COMMENT

Australia under-16 social media ban: should UK follow?

Aya Pfeufer highlights how the Land Down Under is combatting the negative effects of technology on young people’s lives

Australia has implemented a social media ban for individuals under the age of 16, due to raised concerns of platforms’ negative effects on young people. This decision has been carried out in response to the possible damaging implications for young people, such as social media addiction, grooming, and peer pressure.

Social media has impacted many young people since the rise in popularity of platforms such as Instagram and Tiktok. While these platforms have numerous benefits, like keeping in touch with family and friends, socialising, and expressing oneself online, there are several downsides as well.

Platform algorithms are specifically designed to keep users hooked for as long as possible. Features like endless scrolling, and algorithms specifically tailored towards our interests, keep us engaged and perhaps make us subconsciously stay on apps longer than anticipated; before we know it, a few hours have just passed.

These algorithms are powerful, and central features such as ‘likes’ and ‘comments’ make younger generations interact with one another’s content, and this can sometimes be a form of validation. Excessive social media use can impact you in more ways than you realise, if you are feeding into content that makes you compare your life to others. This can result in a “false sense of reality”, as teens often compare themselves in this way, setting unreasonable standards of themselves; for instance, what it means to be successful and beautiful.

This culture of constant comparison can leave you feeling unsatisfied with your own life, and result in self-esteem issues. Most of what we see online is not an actual depiction of someone, and often only portrays “the best aspects of people’s lives”.



It does not accurately illustrate the full picture.

Social media platforms can also increase societal pressures, as viewing the lives of others may make you think that you have not achieved enough for yourself. Peer pressure is another negative consequence of social media. Some trends on social media may encourage individuals to conform and change their behaviours. The yearning for social validation through online engagement, ‘likes’ and ‘comments’ can make users seek external validation and approval, and follow a lifestyle that does not align with their true selves, just for the sake of attracting more attention online.

Although social media has many benefits, like keeping in touch with family and friends, it also has numerous pitfalls. One of the most severe risks is the potential for both exploitation and online grooming. Predators can make fake profiles, to contact underage individuals like children and teenagers, groom them to gain trust, and manipulate them for the predators’ benefit.

Additionally, social media presents the rise of influencer culture, where social media personalities carry out lifestyles that can also contribute to pressure on young people, and make them want to adopt the same lifestyle.

With algorithms designed to provide content that users interact with the most on their feeds,

social media platforms have the potential to spread misinformation. With a constantly developing mind, young people may be more vulnerable to false information and only follow certain narratives. Sensational content often gets the most attention; it can play on emotions, and make us want to find out more on a topic, feeding on our anxieties.

While the objective of the Australian ban is on young people, the repercussions of social media extend to everyone, regardless of age. Platforms like X (formerly known as Twitter), can be used to spread political information and ideas. Unregulated practices can result in misleading information being circulated.

Exposure’s Extreme Caution campaign focused on spreading awareness of the implications that social media poses, especially towards more vulnerable groups, like young people.

The campaign also stressed the importance of changing the way in which we interact with content online, as social media has the potential to manipulate our perception and take a psychological toll. Overall, I believe Australia’s decision to ban social media for those under 16 is a forward-thinking approach to guarding young people against the threats of social media platforms.

This article was originally published by youth communications charity, Exposure: exposure.org.uk

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Birth of a Borough Exhibition
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CHOIR

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Every Thursday, 7:30pm
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Facebook /TheBIGCHOIRLondon

CONCERT

Music for Centuries – Finchley Symphony Orchestra
Wednesday 7th May, 7:30–9:30pm
Trinity church, 15 Nether St N12 7NN

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Visit finchleysymphony.org

COMEDY

Allsortz Comedy Club
Wednesday 7th May
8pm–10.30pm
The Queen’s Arms,
Great North Road EN5 1AB

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Free
Facebook /allsortzcomedy

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Thursday 8th May, 5–7pm
St John the Baptist Church, 2 Wood
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Visit barnetparishchurch.org.uk

LUNCH

Tuesday Friendship Lunch Club
Every Tuesday, 12–2pm
Crescent Road, East Barnet

Join this welcoming lunch club run by Friend In Need for older people in the community. Two courses and tea/coffee for just £8.

Facebook /fineastbarnet

THEATRE

Cheshire Cats – Theatre Production
8th–10th May, 7:30pm
Incognito Theatre,
106a Holly Park Road N11 3HB

Catch this uplifting and heartwarming play about friendship, fitness, and fundraising tells the story of a group of friends on their journey doing the charity Moonwalk.

£15
Visit ticketsource.co.uk/zips-theatre-company

MUSIC

Birds, Beasts and Bugs – A Musical Menagerie
Saturday 10th May, 7:30–9:45pm
Nether Street N12 7NN

Discover how composers across centuries have interpreted the same creatures in remarkably different ways. Hear Thomas Vautor’s Suffolk Owl alongside Elgar’s haunting take on the same bird. Explore the musical bees of John Wilbye and Frank Bridge, or the newly premiered piece by Cecilia McDowall.

£2, £15, £18
Visit fcchoir.co.uk

DANCE

Balhalla Balboa Nights – The Fletcher Henderson Project
Wednesday 14th May, 7.30–11pm
The Southgate Club,
17 Chase Side, Southgate N14 5BP

Wax the soles of your most delicious and dazzling foot attire for another of our Balhalla Balboa Nights and we have musical feast for your delight... The Fletcher Henderson Project of Trinity Laban Conservatoire is a collective of thirteen students studying Jazz who specialise in jazz of the 1930’s and early big band compositions for dancers.

Visit butcherblock productions

VOLUNTEERING

Action for Silk Stream – River Action Day
Thursday 29th May, 11am–3pm
Meeting point to be confirmed

Join us for our Action for Silk Stream monthly volunteering day. We will be in Barnet to do Himalayan Balsam bashing (this means pulling out the plants from the river bank). Dress for the weather.

Visit book.plinth.org.uk/e/c3F00Bxl8uG9wGGHK7Cy

RUN

Oak Hill Parkrun
Saturdays, 9am
Oak Hill Park, East Barnet EN4 8JS

A free, weekly, timed 5k run open to all ages and abilities. Participants are encouraged to register before their first run and bring a printed copy of their barcode to receive a recorded time.

Visit parkrun.org.uk/oakhill/?_com

Compiled by Leïla Davaud



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