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The Broadwalk Centre, which will be demolished under development plans Credit David Floyd



## Developer's use of consultants “risks undermining” Edgware process

BY DAVID FLOYD

**O**pposition councillors say a developer has risked “undermining the consultation process” after it emerged that the vast majority of consultation responses in support of a controversial development were obtained by a company that claims it can help developers “overcome objector noise”.

Your Shout was hired by developers Ballymore and Transport for London to engage with local residents in Edgware to get their views on The Broadwalk Centre development which secured outlined planning permission at a meeting of Barnet Council’s strategic planning committee last month.

Both before and after the meeting, local residents objecting to the scheme had expressed concerns about the role of paid consultants in securing statements of support for the project, submitted via the council’s planning portal.

While comments made directly via the portal show a split of 2,384 against compared to just 592 in favour, there was a far more event split in the number of letters uploaded to the site.

Now *Barnet Post* can reveal that the consultation company has been trumpeting its success in amplifying positive perspectives on the development.

Writing in its email newsletter published on Friday 25th July, the company reports on the result of last month’s committee vote on the Edgware scheme before going on to highlight its role in the process.

In its description of the result of the vote Your Shout tells its readers: “In Barnet, councillors voted 6-3 to give outline permission to redevelop Broadwalk Shopping Centre and surrounding buildings in Edgware as 3,365 homes (35% affordable) and 463 student or co-living homes in buildings up to 29 storeys.”

It adds: “They asked about impact on the local high street, consultation, need for housing, affordable homes, light impact, and parking. 2,665 supporters wrote letters of support in favour of the application.”

Apparently highlighting the role it played in securing support for the project, it adds underneath: “Want 2,298 letters of support, like we helped obtain for one project this week? Help overcome

objector noise by building narratives of support.”

Describing its work on its website, Your Shout says that it “undertakes professional community consultation for the built environment”.

It adds: “We work for developers, local authorities and other clients who wish to contact, consult and listen to people in a specific community, neighbourhood or area.”

There is no suggestion either that the responses obtained by Your Shout are not genuine or that seeking to obtain supportive responses is against planning rules.

In response to questions to the developers, TfL and Ballymore, about the role of Your Shout in the consultation process, a project spokesperson told *Barnet Post*: “We understand that with such a transformational scheme of this size and ambition, there will always be diverse views.

“After almost five years of engagement with the local community, [Barnet Council’s] decision to grant consent to our outline planning application is a welcome recognition of the support that exists for the proposals.”

*Barnet Post* understands that the role of Your Shout was agreed in

advance with the council’s planning officers to increase the reach of engagement with residents.

Responding to questions about the role of paid consultants in the consultation process and committee members’ understanding of that role, a council spokesperson said: “The planning committee reports set out details of all respondents supporting or opposing a planning application for members of the strategic planning committee to consider.

“All committee members undertake training to identify and consider relevant material planning considerations and understand how to take into account those comments in planning decisions. The volume of responses either in support or against a planning application is not in itself a material consideration.”

In response to specific claims about officers’ awareness of Your Shout’s role, a council spokesperson said: “Barnet’s planning officers were aware the applicant had engaged Your Shout as part of their consultation team.”

They added: “However, officers had no direct involvement in agreeing Your Shout’s role in the application process. Your Shout worked purely under the direction of its client, Ballymore (Edgware) Ltd.”

Reports of the role of Your Shout have provoked a strong reaction from Barnet’s Conservative opposition.

In a joint statement issued on behalf of five councillors\*, a spokesperson raised a series of questions about the developers’ use of the company.

They told *Barnet Post*: “For Edgware, this was the most important planning application in a century. Our Conservative committee members told us that they went to the meeting ready to listen in good faith to all residents’ submissions.

“They were fully aware of the work of Save Our Edgware campaign but were not aware of any consultancy involvement in soliciting positive responses. They still voted to refuse permission because they had deep concerns about the application.”

Contrasting the role of a paid consultation company with local

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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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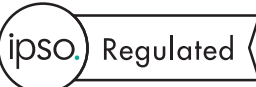
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# High-rise plans for over 3,300 homes in Edgware win 'outline' approval

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

**D**ivisive plans to build more than 3,300 homes across multiple high-rise blocks along with a new bus garage have taken a big step forward – despite local opposition.

Developers Ballymore and Places for London – Transport for London's property arm – want to build 3,365 flats, including 1,150 affordable homes, in blocks up to 29 storeys in height on a site next to Edgware Underground Station.

In addition, the huge scheme in the heart of Edgware includes 463 student units, a replacement bus station and garage, new library, community centre, and retail and leisure space.

The site is currently occupied by The Broadwalk Shopping Centre and the existing Edgware Bus Station.

Addressing a packed meeting of the council's planning committee last month, Ballymore's developments director, Simon Ryan, said the town centre had "suffered from decades of underinvestment".

Simon said: "We recognise that a proposal of this scale naturally generates strong views but this level of ambition is exactly what's needed to deliver lasting, meaningful regeneration in Edgware."

The application is an outline plan for the first phase of the project, which is set to be delivered by 2031 and includes 1,000 of the 3,365 homes, a new Sainsbury's store, the bus station and garage,

a cinema, office space and the library and community centre.

The meeting on 23rd July was punctuated by jeers from members of the public and the campaign group Save our Edgware, with people shouting "shame" after the vote to approve took place.

Many locals have fiercely opposed the plans, with more than 5,500 objections submitted against the development.

Local concerns centre around the structural integrity of the underground electric bus garage, which will have residential blocks built on top of it, and contain around 190 buses.

In October 2024, London Fire Brigade (LFB) wrote to Barnet Council raising concerns about the garage. It stated: "The potential for

so many EV buses poses risks that are not fully understood by the industry at this point in time."

People are also concerned about adequate space for the new bus station, which will move from behind Edgware Underground Station to the front of it, in Station Road, as well as the height of the tower blocks.

Edgware ward councillors Shuey Gordon and Lucy Wakeley, both Conservative, as well as Edgware-bury Tory councillor Lachhya Bahadur Gurung and Reform's Hendon councillor Mark Shooter, all gave deputations.

Cllr Wakeley, who wanted the scheme deferred, said putting out an EV fire was "very difficult" and added "most fire brigades" chose to leave them to "burn out" as it was the "safest option".



She added: "The solution for when that fire is under thousands of homes is unclear."

However, Anton Schwartz, a resident and supporter of the scheme, said he grew up in the area but his family were "priced out" due to a "profound dearth of housing and a lack of investment" and he wished to return.

Iyabo Johnson, a planning consultant for Savills, who Ballymore often collaborates with, spoke about the phases. She said the plan had a condition that relevant reserve matters would have to be signed off before the outline application commenced and another condition around transport sought a detailed "interim scheme" before the "cessation of the existing bus services".

In response to councillors' questions about the fire risks the developer said the bus garage would "not go ahead unless the fire risks were sorted out".

Anuta Zack, who heads Save our Edgware, asked rhetorically "what happens if [the bus garage] can't be built?"

She said: "There is no safe way to build this garage now or in the foreseeable future, there is no back-up plan. On top of this the scale and massing, the tower blocks are totally wrong for Edgware's suburban setting; there is no gentle transition, just an abrupt overwhelming leap."

Following a nearly three-hour meeting, councillors voted six to three, along party lines, to grant planning permission.

## Financial picture at Barnet Council improving, according to senior councillor

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER & DAVID FLOYD

**S**enior Barnet councillors have claimed the council's financial position has improved compared to this time last year.

A report was presented to cabinet members last month stating Barnet Council's overspend for 2025/26 was now predicted to hit £5million. This is after £3m of planned reserve drawdowns.

Cabinet member for finance Simon Radford said: "While there is an overspend, in terms of the governance and scrutiny we've put in, our reforms are actually working and we're coming in

closer to budget."

He also said the council would be "continuing to press" the government on its fair funding formula, which is currently being reviewed and consulted on.

Departmental day-to-day spending for local councils will increase by an annual average of 1.2% over the next three to four years. Core spending power will increase from £69.4bn to £79.3bn by 2028/29 and there will be increased funding for adult social care of over £4bn.

Cllr Radford added: "While there is more to potentially ask the government to do in order to help, I think it's also clear this is a contrast in attitude towards council

funding compared to the 14 years [of Conservative rule] that preceded this government."

Council leader Barry Rawlings agreed the situation had "changed" and was "better" but noted there was "still lobbying and influencing to do". He added that the council wouldn't have "total clarification" on its financial position until November.

Responding afterwards to the Labour councillors' statement, Conservative opposition leader Peter Zinkin said: "This year's 25/26 budget already has a £50m hole, which the Labour administration could not balance and had to receive special permission from Angela Rayner to borrow money

to plug. That borrowing will have to be repaid by Barnet residents in the future."

"The comments of the senior cabinet member are quite frankly delusional. Not only has no progress been made in eating into the £50m loan-bridged deficit, but the current cost savings are not even sufficient to meet the current budget. Now we learn that the £50m deficit is actually growing by another £5m, which Labour is somehow treating as a success. How is that progress?"

"Barnet is in deep financial trouble and it is only getting worse. This administration has known about this for years and has so far done nothing to fix the £50m hole."

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NEWS



Council’s call for gambling regulation

BY GRACE HOWARTH,  
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

Barnet Council has joined over 40 councils from across the country calling for gambling laws to be reformed. Labour councillor Emma Whysall, while delivering a motion at a full council meeting last month, said the council had resolved to write to Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport Lisa Nandy and relevant government departments urging for immediate reform of gambling laws.

Over 40 councils, led by Brent, have written to Nandy backing a ‘six point plan’ for reform.

The plan calls for the government to reform the “aim to per-

mit” policy, to allow councils to refuse gambling premises that pose risks to local safety, introduce greater restrictions on gambling advertisements, and direct proceeds from the statutory levy on gambling operators to fund harm and prevention treatment.

Speaking at the meeting on 8th July, Cllr Whysall said the council’s current position when considering licensing applications for gambling establishments was “to permit”, a result of a “permissive” local legislation.

She said the council was not given the opportunity to “lim-

it the number of gambling establishments or the ability to control the density of establishments in an area”.

Cllr Whysall said: “This leaves both our residents and those of us who represent them deeply frustrated. Something has to change and the only way it’s going to change is to change the law.”

She added that the gambling industry’s profits for 2023/24 were £15.6bn, up 10.2% compared to pre-pandemic figures and £2.5bn of this figure was solely from gambling machines, up 24.5% compared to pre-pandemic figures.



Labour councillor Emma Whysall tabled a motion on gambling

Credit: Barnet Labour

Continued from Page-1 ▶

volunteer campaigners they said: “Save Our Edgware, who spoke persuasively at the meeting, arranged thousands of comments from residents in Edgware who opposed the development. They are a voluntary resident group. Committee members were also told during the meeting that a ‘silent majority’ of residents supported the plans and that thousands had sent comments in support.”

They added: “We are told that Ballymore paid a consultancy to fish for supportive comments and that consultancy is now using its ‘success’ in Edgware as a marketing tool. There is a strong chance that these comments

came from people who do not fully understand the development and its implications for Edgware.

“They said the use of consultants risks undermining the consultation process. It also widens the already large power divide between residents and applicants”.

“The strategic planning committee and the residents of Edgware deserve to know what really happened. The council must hold Ballymore to account or they will be held to account themselves.”

In response to the online publication of this article, Ballymore asked us, via its legal representatives, to include the following statement: “Our client retained Your Shout to assist

with local engagement around the proposed Development.”

“The engagement of consultants such as Your Shout in respect of proposed development projects, in order to promote local understanding and to counter any mis-information, is common practice;”

“Your Shout collected both positive and negative responses in relation to the Development, which were passed on to the Council as part of the consultation process and ahead of the planning decision;”

“The Council, as recorded in the Committee report dated 23 July 2025, was fully aware that the services of such a consultancy had been retained and satisfied that the processes were ‘sufficiently robust’. This

Cllr Whysall continued that 1.3 million people were “experiencing harm” from gambling and NHS England reported a 130% increase in referrals for gambling addiction last year.

Julia Brown, a Golders Green resident, who leads a charity supporting young people’s mental health, gave a deputation earlier in the meeting highlighting the “spread of gambling outlets” in the borough.

She said she had seen the “devastating impacts” of “too many gambling establishments” and there was an “increasing concentration” of bookmakers and adult gaming centres on Golders Green high street.

“Problem gambling destroys finances, breaks up families and pushes people towards eviction, poverty and crisis,” she said.

Julia also voiced her support for the council’s motion.

Conservative councillor Jennifer Grocock delivered a counter-motion, which crossed out some lines from the Labour group’s motion and added all the fault could not be placed “at the door of the industry”.

She said: “As a council we need to be wary of scapegoating the industry instead of supporting those who need the help.”

However, the Conservative’s counter-motion was voted down and Cllr Whysall’s motion was approved with 34 votes in favour, made up of the Labour councillors.

There were no rejections or abstentions and, since Labour have a majority, the motion was carried.

information was available to all councillors, the press and the public over a week before the relevant committee meeting took place.

“Our client did not pay, nor authorise Your Shout to pay, any individual to provide any letter/representation in report of the scheme.”

Barnet Post has at no point disputed any of these points and is grateful to Ballymore for providing clarification on its position.

\*The comment was made on behalf of five councillors: Conservative group leader Peter Zinkin along with Lucy Wakeley (Edgware), Nick Mearing-Smith (Edgware), Shuey Gordon (Edgware) and Lachhya Gurung (Edgwarebury).



Local NHS monitoring service axed as part of government shake-up

BY GRACE HOWARTH,  
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The provider of local services that help monitor NHS patient feedback has expressed its dismay at news they will be scrapped as part of the government’s new ten-year health plan.

Healthwatch groups covering Barnet and Haringey will be closed down next year following the government’s concern the NHS was failing to “listen to patients”.

Like similar groups across the country, Healthwatch Barnet and Healthwatch Haringey aim to understand the needs, experiences, and concerns of people who use health and social services.

A spokesperson for Public Voice, the service provider for Healthwatch groups in Barnet and Haringey, as well as two other London boroughs, called the move a “major change” and said it was “hard to square” the sentiment that patients needed someone to speak up on their behalf with the decision to scrap it.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting said the current system was “too complex” and the NHS needed “more doers and fewer checkers”.

A Public Voice spokesperson said: “It is easy to imagine how alternatives – like patients giving feedback on their care via the NHS app – could lead to greater inequalities and further marginalisation of the seldom heard.

“As a provider of local Healthwatch services in Barnet, Croydon, Haringey and Hounslow, Public Voice has seen first-hand the positive impact of engaging communities, gathering evidence of local issues and inequalities, and working together to improve services and commissioning.”

The service provider stressed its work went beyond delivering Healthwatch but added it was “saddened” by the change.

The Dash Review, which contains the proposal to close the service and forms part of the government’s ten-year health plan, will be enacted into legislation around “late 2026”.

Public Voice said until then Healthwatch would continue to operate as normal.

“It is easy to imagine how alternatives could lead to greater inequalities”

NEWS



Plans for Claremont Quarter  
Credit Chase New Homes

# Developer blames “indecisive” Barnet Council for affordable homes delay

BY GRACE HOWARTH,  
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

The number of affordable homes due to be built on a Cricklewood development is at risk of being cut and the developer says Barnet Council is to blame.

In a statement last month, Chase New Homes said that despite the company’s “comprehensive marketing campaign” over 30 registered housing associations had declined to acquire the affordable homes on an industrial site in Claremont Road.

The developer received planning permission early last year to build 251 new homes across three blocks, including around 38 affordable homes. Of the affordable housing, 23 homes were designated affordable rent and 15 London shared ownership.

However, Chase New Homes said that, to date, the only offer it had received was from the neighbouring Brent Council. and that this offer was refused by Barnet due to “internal political reasons”.

The only alternative, the house-builder said, was to cut the homes

and to make a financial contribution to Barnet so it could fund equivalent provision elsewhere.

Chase New Homes added “progress” and “agreement” on the matter was “lacking” and as such the construction of the affordable housing block had been “forced to halt”.

When asked why the sale was not permitted a council spokesperson said the offer from Brent would mean the homes would not be provided “on the site for Barnet residents”.

The spokesperson said: “Barnet Council has a great track record of working with developers to get homes built so it is disappointing to hear Chase

criticise the council for the issues it is experiencing.

“Chase notified us in November 2024 that the housing provider they had been working

with had pulled out of a deal to provide affordable housing on this site and that they were progressing a tender to obtain a new provider.

“By mid-January we had notified Chase that their new potential provider, who would offer

the homes to a neighbouring council, was not acceptable to us as it did not comply with the Section 106 agreement to provide affordable housing on the site for Barnet residents.

“Since then, we have been in discussions to try and help Chase resolve this issue either by finding another provider who will allocate the homes to Barnet residents or by offering an equivalent financial contribution so that we can plough the money into homes.

“We will continue to engage with Chase, as we have been throughout, to help them try and resolve this issue.”

A spokesperson for Chase New Homes described the council as “indecisive” and said the situation highlighted a “wider national issue” but it was “committed to working with all stakeholders to find a resolution”.

The spokesperson said: “If housing associations are unable or unwilling to acquire affordable units, local authorities must act swiftly to accept commuted sums – enabling affordable homes to be built or purchased elsewhere. Failure to do so is worsening the housing crisis and stalling developments that would otherwise benefit thousands.”

*“Local authorities must act swiftly to accept commuted sums”*

# Community safety scheme in Colindale deemed ‘success’

BY GRACE HOWARTH,  
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER

An initiative to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour has been a “success” on an estate in Colindale as anti-social behaviour has reduced 33%.

The ‘Clear, Hold, Build’ strategy involves police arresting suspects and removing them from the area; followed by ‘Hold and Build’, where officers work long-term alongside other local agencies and community groups to ensure the issue doesn’t return.

Barnet was the first London borough to trial the scheme, which began 18 months ago at Colindale’s Grahame Park Estate.

Kaya Comer-Schwartz, deputy mayor of London for crime and police, said the estate was chosen as one of the “first sites in the country” to pilot the scheme as it was “blighted by criminals”.

The Metropolitan Police said 300 arrests for a “range of offences” were made in the ‘clear’ phase. In the first year of the project violence against a person with injury is down 11% and without injury by 9%, which has “continued into year two”.

There has been a 33% reduction in anti-social behavior (ASB) calls and a 50% fall in residential and non-residential burglary.

Councillor Sara Conway, chair of the safer communities partnership, which discussed the results on Wednesday 16th July at an overview and scrutiny committee, said: “We have come on a journey from a point where it was a really bad situation 18 months ago, to something we can all be proud of.

“I am looking forward to seeing how we can continue to ‘hold’ and ‘build’ here on Grahame Park to achieve further success together.”

Cllr Conway added the scheme had translated into a “very effective, collaborative, innovative, and creative local partnership”.

Highlighting this needed to happen “elsewhere”.

She said: “It’s had an impact beyond anything I and very very traumatised communities in Grahame Park over 20 years could ever have imagined and

in my own ward of Burnt Oak. “In Burnt Oak ASB is down 65% in June there was one burglary where this targeted collaborative approach is delivered, it delivers.”

*“There has been a 33% reduction in anti-social behaviour”*

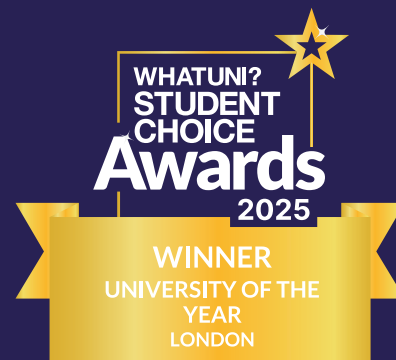


Kaya Comer-Schwartz met those involved in Clear, Hold, Build at Grahame Park in Colindale  
Credit Barnet Council

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Toney Smith

While not getting their expected A-Level results might be disappointing at first, going through Clearing is a fantastic opportunity for students to reevaluate and find the perfect course which can lead to their dream career. Students have spoken of the simple Clearing process at Middlesex and not looking back.

"I ended up applying through Clearing because I did not get the expected results," said Matthew Nderu, who is studying a BSc in Pharmaceutical Chemistry.

"I remember results day, and it was slightly disappointing but I didn't lose hope.

"I immediately researched different universities around London and saw Middlesex as one of my top options from its website and course content.



On the first day on campus, I instantly knew I had made the right decision."

Using the chatbot on the Middlesex University website to send his application made the Clearing process "easy", added Matthew.

BA Product Design student Toney Smith also found the process easy. "Applying to Middlesex through Clearing was actually very easy and quick. I got a letter through the post a week or two later saying congratulations. And then I was off."

Praising his "supportive lecturers", Toney added: "If I could go back and change anything, I don't think I would."

Fashion Marketing student Angel Adegbuyi was upset about not getting her desired A-Level results but soon delighted at how things turned out after choosing Middlesex University through Clearing.

"I cried when I didn't get the grades to get into my first option," she said.

"But I feel like everything happens for a reason, and I'm definitely glad I didn't get the grades now."

Angel praised the number of available clubs and societies at Middlesex University, adding: "Every day at Middlesex is literally so much fun and an adventure, I love it so much."

**Find out more about Clearing and how to apply: [mdx.ac.uk/clearing/what-is-clearing](https://mdx.ac.uk/clearing/what-is-clearing)**



Angel Adegbuyi

FEATURES

Should the Bees come back to Underhill?

Ahead of last month’s vote on Barnet FC’s plans to build a new stadium on Barnet Playing Fields, Leïla Davaud talked to local residents on either side of the debate

**B**arnet FC’s bid to return to Underhill with a new stadium has reignited old loyalties and created new tensions. The club, which left the area in 2013 for The Hive in Harrow, put in a planning application to build ‘New Underhill’ on the southern section of Barnet Playing Fields, which was rejected by Barnet Council last month.

Before the vote (see Page-15), *Barnet Post* talked to those campaigning for and against the stadium, along with residents using the playing fields, to hear their perspectives.

The Bring Barnet Back campaign, comprising long-time fans and local businesses, argues that the club has always belonged at Underhill. Nora Walsh is the landlady of a pub near the old ground, and she advocates for the return of her cherished team.

She explains: “We show Barnet FC games here at The Railway Tavern when they are broadcast live and do get a decent Barnet support group, especially if

► Barnet Playing Fields where Barnet FC had hoped to build their new stadium  
Credit David Floyd



they are unable to attend the game. I am convinced if the team were to come back, it would still be a massive financial boost for the area and its cafes, bars and restaurants.” Down by the playing field in Underhill, others see it as a welcome attraction, like 19-year-old stadium kiosk worker David. He tells *Barnet Post*: “Yes, it brings noise and a lot of traffic, but we’re not talking about bringing

Arsenal or Tottenham to Barnet. The fans are different, it would bring revenue for the pubs and shops and some much-needed entertainment.” From the new basketball court, he stares at the open green space in front of him and nods as his friend, Ogi, says: “I understand why people care about this place. I do too. But it doesn’t have to be a bad thing either.”

Further down the footpath, Georgia, a nursery assistant who frequents the fields with her children almost every day after school, has fond memories of the original Underhill. She tells *Barnet Post*: “I used to go to the stadium when I was a kid. I loved the atmosphere. Some people mention it is unsafe to have it built so close to the children’s playing ground, but I don’t remember my parents or me feeling unsafe at the time. It would be a family place too.”

On the other side of the debate stands the Save Barnet Playing Fields campaign. An increasingly vocal group of residents, dog-walkers, retirees, and community advocates who view the stadium proposal as a threat to one of the area’s last accessible green spaces.

For many, the real issue isn’t football, it’s the land. “The fields pre-date the stadium”, says Catherine, from the opposition campaign. “What people call their local park would be taken over by a private

company. Instead of kids playing for free, we’d pay to watch.”

This argument is supported by Robert Verill, chair of the Save Barnet Playing Field campaign. He tells *Barnet Post*: “The flexibility this park has provided for 100 years, enabling a multitude of varied activities, entertainments and recreations, as well as educational use, would disappear for the sake of a private football club playing 23 matches a year.”

Concerns about the erosion of public spaces clearly dominate the opposition’s argument. Retired users Vina and Dili Patil walk the fields daily. “It would be a shame to lose this calm space,” says Vina. Dili adds: “If they take this, which space is next? We need more green areas, not less.” Shailish Popat, another local retiree, expresses distrust in the process:

“I wish I could trust the council to do the right thing.”

Even among supporters of the stadium’s return, there’s hesitation. Tim, a teacher, captures some of the nuances. He tells *Barnet Post*: “We are not against football, we love the sport. Love the atmosphere! We hated seeing the stadium go away and would be happy to have it back here.

“What we are against is attacking this beautiful green space that is properly used by the community. Also, we live really close and there is no way we will accept struggling to park in front of our house.”

The decision of the council’s strategic planning committee on 14th July has dashed the hopes of stadium supporters for now but, with the club vowing to continue the fight to return home, there is likely to be more twists in this tale.

“We’re not talking about bringing Arsenal or Tottenham to Barnet”

PLEASE HELP FIND RODNEY



Rodney was last seen in Mill Hill on 28th May. He is all ginger, lighter tip to tail and freckles on his nose/mouth. If someone you know is looking after him, please let them know he has a loving home, and his family are missing him. If you have any information about where Rodney is please call 07966 248566. Photos are helpful, thank you.

NEWS

Compensation for Childs Hill estate residents left weeks without water

Residents on an estate in Childs Hill have received at least £100 each in compensation from Barnet Council after they were left without water for “days on end”.

Barnet Homes, the housing arm of Barnet Council, awarded residents at Granville Road Estate £15,000 in total after water outages affected the three-block estate.

Finchley and Golders Green MP Sarah Sackman, alongside councillors Nigel Young and Giulia Innocenti, said the disruptions, which happened on and off starting from January, were a “deeply difficult time for residents”.

A Barnet Homes spokesperson said the loss of water at the blocks was “thought to be caused by a burst pipe” and the construction company Mullaley, which had been carrying out work nearby, was responsible.

Mullaley denied any wrongdoing but did award residents £3,000, bringing Barnet Homes’ £12,000 offer to £15,000.

Barnet Homes said it had worked with the construction company and Thames

A total of £15,000 has been paid to residents of Granville Road Estate after water outages affected the three-block estate, reports Grace Howarth, Local Democracy Reporter



Granville Road Estate  
Credit: Google

Water “to resolve issues”. A spokesperson said: “There was a delay in fully resolving the issue due to the nature of the problem being more complex than initially assessed.”

Some residents went weeks without water and some had dirty water.

Sackman said: “While I am proud to have been part of the campaign for compensation, residents

deserve better.

“I am still calling for a formal apology or an acknowledgement of wrongdoing from those responsible for the disruption and a promise for a future prevention strategy.”

A Barnet Homes spokesperson said: “Barnet Homes acknowledges that in the initial stages of the

water supply issues, communication with residents was not as frequent and effective as it should have been.

“Barnet Homes has implemented changes to its processes so that residents are kept more informed during any future incident.

“All residents living in the blocks affected by the water supply issues were written to by Barnet Homes’ chief executive, providing a complete explanation of the issues, an unreserved apology, and an offer of £100 compensation.”

The housing arm added it had sent reminders to residents who had not yet claimed the compensation, which was offered in early July.

The spokesperson said, while all the residents affected would get £100 each, Mullaley’s “additional goodwill gesture” would be divided between “residents identified as being most affected by the water supply issues”.

They added they would remain “committed” to working with Mullaley to ensure that “incidents of this nature are not repeated”.

Mullaley was approached for comment.

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“St Mary’s is a happy place where children can really thrive.”

# FEATURES

10



Credit: Ehimetolor Akhere Unuabona

## More than statistics: rethinking femicide

*Anya Wadhwani explores society's role in enabling gender-based violence*

In my English class, while discussing male-female power dynamics, we touched upon the murder of Sarah Everard. The boy next to me shuffled in his seat uncomfortably and defensively remarked “Miss is making it seem like men just kill women”. The problem is, they do. My concern is that many men fail to recognise the gravity of this issue. Something that desensitises people to the seriousness of femicide is how it's often talked about in terms of figures and

percentages. Statistics reduce every life and death, each in their own ways simple and complex, to just another tally mark. Therefore, I want to refrain from stuffing this piece full of rates and stats, shocking though they are, and instead will focus on a time that I found impactful. Instances of gender-based violence are too often removed from their wider context and seen as stand-alone tragedies. They become just another example that begs women to change their behaviour or gets tied to an easier-to-confront social issue, like male mental illness or gang violence. Last summer, when Kyle Clifford murdered Louise, Carol and Hannah Hunt in their own home, just a ten minute drive from mine, people were horrified and outraged.

I was deeply disturbed by the murders, but I was also taken aback by the aftermath. The conversation, in person and online, was entirely skewed. People called for a review of cross-bow legislation, as if the weapon used was the root cause of the problem. Family members sat me down to talk about noticing abusive tendencies in men, as if the blame somehow fell on Louise Hunt for having dated and broken up with Clifford. In media coverage of the murders, the three women were lumped together, dehumanised, and reduced to a mere ‘incident’. Headlines referred to the ‘triple murder of John Hunt’s family’, failing to fully acknowledge the women in their own right. These were three ordinary

women simply living their lives. An event like this could happen to any woman, because the fault doesn't lie in their choices, behaviours or lifestyles, but in the societal message that women's lives are worth less. It's clear why the murders were reported on in this way: to shock and gain clicks. But it's also clear that this is unjust. The language used in reporting issues like this is of critical significance. While people disregard the importance of words, they often fail to realise that the way we speak about a topic shapes both our conscious and unconscious beliefs about it. According to the ‘Pyramid of Violence’, developed by Tatiana Piper and Jackie Strohm, the first step toward physical violence begins with our attitudes and beliefs, which are formed through societal messaging and language. As a result, when we put the onus on women to protect themselves, and treat this with higher importance than changing attitudes to women or raising socially conscious and emotionally intelligent men, we are sending a harmful message. This allows these belief systems to fester and this behaviour to continue. What was an offhand comment from the boy next to me in class is reflective of a larger issue: the way we talk about femicide, or rather, how we don't talk about it enough. He doesn't know about it because he doesn't think he has to, while I, along with so many other young women, am hyper-aware of it. Femicide is usually framed as a women's issue, placing the burden on victims rather than perpetrators, allowing men to avoid accountability and perpetuating silence. To create change we must change the narrative, speaking louder and more frequently about gender-based violence until it's universally recognised and addressed.

This article was originally published the the youth communications charity, Exposure: Visit [exposure.org.uk](https://exposure.org.uk)



## Summer holiday fun in libraries

BY CATHERINE LUSTED

Now the summer holidays are well underway, you may be looking for ways to keep children entertained. Libraries are here to help. Children aged four to eleven can sign up for ‘Barnet Book Detectives’ at any Barnet library during staffed opening hours. Children will receive a reading journal packed full of activities to keep them busy as well as space to record the books they have read. Best of all, it's free! By reading six books over the summer, children will help Detective Woof and the Book Detectives identify the mystery Book Crook who is stealing books from around Barnet. They will receive a certificate and other rewards and will be entered into a prize draw when they finish. Children can read any library books they like – from chapter books, comics or information books. They can also read eBooks or comics on our Libby app or listen to eAudiobooks on our BorrowBox app. Research shows that keeping children engaged with reading over the long summer break helps to ensure that reading levels don't drop. Taking part in Barnet Book Detectives is a fun way for children to enjoy books. Libraries have a fantastic events programme throughout the school holidays to help keep children entertained all summer long.

For more information on Barnet Book Detectives and other library news, sign up to the library newsletter for children and families at: [barnet.gov.uk/librarynewsletters](https://barnet.gov.uk/librarynewsletters)

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This is to inform that I **Ameer Abdulkareem Taher Al-Azraqi**, residing at **67 Geneva Court, 2 Rookery Way, NW9 7GA**, has lost my Iraq passport (Password No: A20323326) in the United Kingdom on or about **15/01/2024**. The document is no longer in my possession and is presumed lost.

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# 12 ARTS & CULTURE

## Review – Julius Caesar

From the start, it was clear that this was not a traditional production of *Julius Caesar*. The director, Naomi Smallwood, has taken a skilful editor’s pen to the play and produced a sensitively abridged script that tells the story simply and well, without the pace ever lagging, bringing the show in at under two hours.

This is a production in which every element has been carefully thought through and crafted. The music was atmospheric, and both it and the lighting were cleverly used to reflect the action at every point.

In a play where there are a lot of deaths (with some actors dying three or four times as different characters), the awkwardness of seeing a supposed dead person get up during the blackout was resolved with stylised movement and often a suggestion of some lingering aftereffect – most powerfully when Julius Caesar rises after his assassination and removes his laurel wreath, holding it out for both Anthony and Brutus to attempt to grasp.

The costumes were modern day, but with a hint of the play’s original setting, with armbands and sashes used over suits to suggest political affiliations. The set was stark but striking, with a raised platform and columns to suggest the Roman background.

The whole cast was pitch perfect and had been tightly directed, so that much was conveyed with just a look or a movement. Steve Chapman conveyed Anthony’s political savvy with great

### Mary Groom on the latest performace at Friern Barnet’s Incognito Theatre

Credit John M Watson Photography



authority, commanding both the crowd in the play and the audience in the funeral speech. Matthew Pert gave us a conflicted, relatable Brutus, showing his sincerity and attempts to do what he thinks is right.

Harry Harding was a scheming

Cassius, manipulating Brutus at almost every turn and yet also showing a genuine affection for him. Andrew Wolstencroft’s Caesar conveyed the main character’s statesmanship, while allowing us to see hints of the ruthlessness that had fatally turned people against him.

“*The whole cast was pitch perfect and had been tightly directed*”

In a play not over blessed with female roles (as written), the director cast Catherine Little and Louise McKie as the conspirators Casca and Cinna, both providing compelling performances and giving a more universal feel to the bubbling dissatisfaction with Caesar. Maria Casey’s Calpurnia was also given more to do, working with Anthony in the second half to vanquish the conspirators and regain control of Rome.

She was cold and purposeful when necessary, but also showed a softer side when trying (unsuccessfully) to persuade Caesar not to go the Senate. Molly Wells as Portia also played a more important role in this production, with her reactions to both the conspiracy she perceives and the aftermath of the assassination providing a more emotional and human reaction to the horror of lives being taken. She also provided a beautiful moment when the ghost of Portia sings to Brutus.

Able support was also provided by David Middleton, opening the play with a powerful speech, and Julia Osterly, playing many roles, in particular the hapless Cinna the poet, who gets mistaken for Cinna the conspirator.

This was a stylish, enjoyable, well-told production, with not a foot put wrong. I feel sure the Bard himself would have approved.

‘Julius Caesar’ by William Shakespeare was the latest production by Incognito Theatre, based in Friern Barnet. For information on future shows: Visit [incognitoteatre.co.uk](http://incognitoteatre.co.uk)

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NEWS

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North London mental health body told to improve following inspection

BY JAMES CRACKNELL

Mental health wards run by a local NHS trust at four North London sites have been urged to improve by the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

CQC inspected the mental health sites for working age adults and psychiatric intensive care units (PICUs) spread across Enfield, Haringey, Barnet and Camden boroughs and all run by North London NHS Foundation Trust (NLFT).

The inspections in February and March this year included mental health wards at Chase Farm Hospital in Enfield, St Ann’s Hospital in Tottenham, Edgware Community Hospital, and Highgate West Mental Health Centre.

The sites were all brought under the responsibility of NLFT – a new organisation formed from the merger of Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health NHS Trust and Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust – late last year.

The merger prompted CQC to arrange fresh inspections last spring and the health watchdog published a report last month in which it rated the NLFT sites as ‘requires improvement’.

The mental health wards for working age adults and PICU were previously rated ‘good’ at both trusts – before the merger – in February 2022 and January 2023 respectively.

The CQC inspection was also prompted in part to follow up on a number of deaths and serious incidents, both when they were run by separate trusts and following the creation of NLFT, to see if improvements had been made.

Under the safe, effective and well-led inspection categories, the mental health sites have all been rated ‘requires improvement’, while under the caring and responsive category . However, they’ve been rated ‘good’ under the caring and responsive categories.

Jane Ray, CQC deputy director of operations in London, said: “When we inspected these wards, we were concerned to find the trust didn’t always provide care that was safe or personalised to people’s needs.

“We found that whilst there had been some lessons learnt from serious incidents, there was more to do. For example, staff weren’t always carrying out observations safely or checking on people regularly while they were in seclusion, despite additional training, which could place people at serious risk of harm.

“Some safeguarding incidents also hadn’t been reported, including incidents of assaults between people in the service. This meant there was a risk of these incidents not being addressed appropriately.

“Some people said that at times they didn’t feel there were enough staff and this made them feel unsafe, particularly at night, when there could be

“We know we have further to go but I am confident that we are in a good place”

delays in receiving support. Whilst there were bank staff available, there were still some unfilled shifts which could impact on people’s care.

“We also found some inappropriate blanket restrictions in place. On some wards people did not have access to hot or cold drinks and snacks without asking staff.

“Staff didn’t always monitor people’s physical health well enough, and inspectors saw one incident in which staff failed to administer insulin to a person with diabetes.

“We’ve told the trust where improvements are needed, and leaders have begun work on an action plan to address our concerns. We’ll continue to monitor these services closely, including through further inspections, to ensure these improvements are made quickly and people receive safe care while this happens.”

Inspectors also found some people

waiting a long time for beds, staff feeling pressured by management to discharge people they felt weren’t ready, and staff giving some people medications that weren’t included on their consent forms.

However, staff reported that they understood how to respect people’s rights under the Mental Health Act, were passionate about quality improvement projects the trust was running and felt that managers were accessible and that they could raise concerns about people’s care when needed.

Asked to respond to the findings, a NLFT spokesperson decided to focus mainly on the positives and said: “As a newly formed trust, NLFT has done a great deal of work since its formal establishment in November 2024 to ensure that the very best aspects of our predecessor organisations and component services are used as the benchmark for the quality of care, safety and experience of our patients and their families. Our community deserves nothing less than the very best.

“I’m pleased to see that [the] report confirms we have prioritised important aspects relating to safety of the services we provide, including ensuring staff can identify and report any issues of concern, and that we hold safety huddles, and have robust reviews of all reported incidents.

“We know we have further to go but I am confident that we are in a good place to move forward further and faster with this vital work.”

They added: “The formal inspections undertaken by CQC and other bodies are an important part of how we measure progress in our continual improvement, and I’m grateful to the inspection team and all the staff, patients, families and carers who made time to share feedback and information about the progress we’re making in our journey towards creating better mental health, better lives and better communities.”

To read the full CQC report: Visit bit.ly/4kSyReH



## EAST FINCHLEY

## Fears over loss of mature trees

The mature trees in East Finchley  
Credit: Roger Chapman



BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL  
DEMOCRACY REPORTER

FIVE 70-YEAR-OLD MATURE TREES in East Finchley may have to be felled as part of a housing development.

The silver birch trees stand outside Park House, home to Monkey Puzzle Nursery opposite East Finchley Station, where developer Places for Barnet is set to build 75 new homes and replace the nursery.

However Roger Chapman, chair of Friends of Cherry Tree Wood, said the developer was showing “utter contempt” for the value local people placed on the trees. He added retaining them would be in keeping with Barnet Council’s Local Plan 2021–2036.

In regards to Park House the Local Plan states under “site requirements

and development guidelines” the area of green space “with the mature trees”, in front of Park House, should be “maintained and improved”.

Places for Barnet, a partnership between the council and London Placemaking, said “unfortunately” the trees needed to be removed to enable the redevelopment to “come forward” but it was “exploring” whether the trees could be “retained and replanted”.

Roger explained that, back in 2005, he had requested the council place a tree preservation order (TPO) on each of the five trees but this was rejected as there was “no threat to them at that time”.

Now, over 700 people have signed a petition, both online and offline, requesting the trees be placed under TPOs.

Roger said a council tree officer confirmed last month that an assessment on whether to grant or reject TPO status for the five trees would be carried out.

Aware the proposals included plans to replace the five trees with eleven new trees, Roger said: “Promising a few ‘sticks’ to replace such fine trees is typical developer tripe.”

A council spokesperson said the petition would be heard by the strategic planning committee in September “at the earliest” but “prior to this” a report from the tree officer, assessing the trees’ “suitability for inclusion” within a TPO, would be carried out.

However, a spokesperson for Places for Barnet emphasised the removal was a necessity.

Places for Barnet’s spokesperson said: “The single tree protected by a TPO on-site (the yew tree adjacent to Hamlet Gate) will be retained. Five existing trees will unfortunately need to be removed in order to enable the redevelopment to come forward. We are currently exploring whether the trees can be retained and replanted.

“Overall, we will provide eleven new trees and considerable other planting across the site, which will show some areas of considerable uplift in biodiversity on the site.”

## MILL HILL

## TfL slammed over 40-minute waits at tube station

BY GRACE HOWARTH, LOCAL  
DEMOCRACY REPORTER

A MAN WHO MONITORED services at Mill Hill East Station for over two weeks during May and June has complained of last-minute cancellations and up to 40-minute delays.

On weekdays from Friday, 9th May to Monday, 2nd June, during peak hours, Mill Brook Park resident Jay Hostan noted down when trains arrived.

Having lived in the area for around four years, he said he sometimes waited up to 40 minutes for a tube to arrive and the service had started to “degrade”.

“I wanted to trigger some change,” Jay said. “Whenever we need to go into the city, sometimes we have to wait there for 25 minutes, 30 minutes, sometimes 40 minutes, and if you have to do it twice a day then you are wasting a fair amount of time from your day and you cannot really plan for it.”

Hendon MP David Pinto-Duschinsky said he had lobbied Transport for London (TfL) to “demand improvement” while Chipping Barnet MP Dan Tomlinson said residents “deserve better”.

In response, a TfL spokesperson said: “We acknowledge the current dissatisfaction with service levels on the Mill Hill East branch of the Northern Line and are working hard to improve services for customers.”

According to TfL the Northern Line should run trains every eight to 15 minutes on the Mill Hill East branch.

Jay highlighted the area had become more developed in the last few years and yet trains were running “less frequently”. He said apps like Citymapper or TfL’s online website were not helpful, as they estimated arrival times, while the board on the platform used GPS which was more accurate.

“We’d like to get proper information,” Jay said. “That’s the main thing, they could fix the data on



the apps and the website, so even if there is no train people walking to the station could plan around it.

Pinto-Duschinsky said: “Passengers who rely on Mill Hill East have been let down by a poor tube service for far too long.

“It cannot continue. I have been lobbying TfL on this for some time to demand improvement, and I will continue to press them to ensure they deliver a service that is up to scratch.”

Tomlinson added: “Residents using Mill Hill East station deserve better. The delays, no shows, and huge gaps in services during peak times are unacceptable, and I have been supporting residents who have gathered this data.

## COLINDALE

Residents attend the Colindale Gardens Summer Fair Credit: Redrow



## Residents attend summer celebration

BY ROSHNI RAY

RESIDENTS CAME together in Colindale last month to celebrate summer with a day of fun activities.

The event on 22nd July at Redrow’s Colindale inner park was organised by residents’ group Colindale Gardens Social Committee and was their fifth annual Summer Fair.

The community gathering included multiple attractions, from energetic arts performances to a plethora of food stalls.

Performances featured local dance group Colindale Bachata and Salsa Fitness and a children’s entertainer who amazed the audience with magic tricks and balloon animals. The committee also arranged face painting and arts and crafts tables for the children and their families.

Local small businesses

were given the opportunity to run stalls at the event, from handmade crafts to food offerings including crepes, pizzas, Mexican food and ice cream.

Alongside the annual Summer Fair, each year the Social Committee also runs the Colindale Gardens Moon Festival and Diwali Festival.

Kamal Hersh, chairman of the Colindale Gardens Social Committee, said: “From the incredible performances and delicious food to the laughter of children enjoying the activities, the day was a true celebration of what makes Colindale Gardens such a special place to live.”

James Holmear, sales director at Barratt Redrow, added: “At Redrow, we know how important a tight-knit community is when choosing a place to live and we’re always looking to support local initiatives that bring people together.”

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SPORT



The Bees in pre-season action against Wycombe  
Credit: Nick Sandamas

Bees gear up for the new season

Nick Sandamas on Barnet FC's return to the Football League

While there was disappointment off the pitch for the Bees with the news that their application for a new ground next to the club's old spiritual Underhill home was turned down by Barnet Council, on the pitch it's been business as usual for last season's record breakers as they prepare for the EFL after seven years away. The first game back is against Fleetwood on Saturday 2nd August and manager Dean Brennan has been busy strengthening his squad, signing no less than ten players before BP went to press. Scott High, Ryan Galvin, Adam Senior, Emanuel Osadebe, Romany Crichlow, Oli Hawkins, wing back Kane Smith and Dennis Adeniran have joined, while goalkeeper Owen Evans is back following a

successful loan spell in the second half of the season. Also joining the ranks is 21-year-old striker Joe Hugill on a season-long loan from Manchester United U21s. Brennan's squad has been further boosted by agreeing new deals with Danny Collinge, Nik Taveres and Idris Kanu, however Ben Coker and Jordan Cropper were amongst some to be released. Pre-season started well with victory over Sheffield in two behind closed doors friendlies. This was followed by a 3-0 win over Hitchin with a double from Rhys Browne and a goal from new signing Senior. There then followed a 2-2 draw away to Dean Brennan's old club Hemel Hempstead, with Anthony Hartigan and Browne on the scoresheet. Next came a Crystal Palace XI who left The Hive with a 3-1 win followed by two games behind closed doors which ended in a draw against Dorking Wanderers and defeat at Stevenage.

Up next was Leyton Orient and, after the rain initially caused the game to be called off, the weather improved sufficiently that a behind closed doors game was then played which ended in a Bees win. By the time we went to press, the Bees will have hoped to have got through their Carabao Cup tie against Newport and a home game against Championship Millwall. Then it's home comforts for the Black & Amber as they begin their league campaign against Fleetwood. The other games in August see a home game against last season's play-off semi finalists Walsall with trips to Bromley, promotion favourites Swindon, Cheltenham and the visit of Colchester to The Hive at the end the month. It's been a long wait to get back but, like all Bees supporters, we're looking forward to pitting our wits against the very best in League Two and seeing what impact they will make. Come on you Bees!

Fans disappointed as Barnet FC stadium application refused

BY DAVID FLOYD

A disappointed Barnet fan left the room shouting "elections in May" after the football club's bid to return to Underhill was rejected by councillors last month. Barnet Council's strategic planning committee voted on 14th July to refuse the club's bid to build a new 7,000 capacity stadium on Barnet Playing Fields, close to the site of their old Underhill home. It was standing room only in the committee room, as supporters of the new stadium from the Bring Barnet Back campaign, were joined by opponents from the Save Barnet Playing Fields group, each clapping and cheering points made in favour of their side, despite repeated requests from committee chair Nigel Young not to do so. However, the fact that council officers had strongly recommended the refusal of the bid, meant it had a very low chance of success. At the meeting, Robert Verrill of Save Barnet Playing Fields said: "For a century, Barnet Playing Fields has been a cornerstone of our community." Explaining that the group had gone door-to-door talking to local residents and finding strong opposition to the plans, he said: "The important thing about this community is that its main asset is the local park – not a stadium in the middle of the park." Iain Botterill of Bring Barnet Back cited the wider benefits the proposed new facilities would offer the local community saying: "This isn't just a stadium, it's a belief about what Barnet can be." He also called on the committee to help the club – which claims to be losing £1million a year since moving away to The Hive in Harrow in 2013 – improve its sustainability adding: "Councillors, you are not to blame for Barnet's financial

position but you are responsible for what happens next." In response to a question from Conservative committee member, Joshua Conway, on whether he would like to comment on claims made by council leader Barry Rawlings at a recent council meeting that the club had been offered "three or four" alternative sites, Iain said: "It's nonsense. Cllr Rawlings has not named those sites." He added: "What are the sites? Name them." Another Conservative councillor, Shuey Gordon called for a vote to defer the bid. He said: "We can't possibly understand the nature of the special circumstances, until we understand the options the club has." While Cllr Conway outlined his dilemma noting: "The council is saying there are alternative sites and the applicant is saying there aren't." He asked if the committee could make a request for the list of alternative sights mentioned by Cllr Rawlings to be made available to the committee. When the application was put to a vote, Conservative councillors abstained, while Labour councillors voted to refuse, and the application was refused. Following the meeting, *Barnet Post* asked the council: "Which sites in the borough have been offered to Barnet Football Club as alternative sites for a stadium?" and "Has the council now received a response from the club – if so, what was it?" In response, a council spokesperson told *Barnet Post*: "We have never offered Barnet FC alternative sites, rather, following an initial discussion with the club, we committed to exploring potential locations that could be considered further by them. "The club conducted its own assessment of these options and chose to proceed with a planning application for Barnet Playing Fields."



Barnet fans gathering outside the town hall before the meeting Credit: Leila Davaud



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